

Thaddeus Stevens as a Lancaster Politician 1842-1868

by Robert J. Hoelscher

PREFACE

This paper is anything but a complete study of the life of Thaddeus Stevens. Within the last forty years, Thomas Frederick Woodley, Alphonse B. Miller, Richard N. Current, Ralph Korngold, and Fawn M. Brodie have published full-length biographies of this man whose place in Pennsylvania and American history remains important more than a century after his death. All previous scholarly studies, however, have had their main focus on Stevens's work in Congress during the Civil War and Reconstruction, and only Current's *Old Thad Stevens: A Story of Ambition* shows any evidence of extensive research into Stevens's role in the politics of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, from his removal to Lancaster in 1842 until his death in August, 1868. Stevens's work as a member of the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, as a member of the Joint

Committee on Reconstruction, and as a prime force in the impeachment and trial of President Andrew Johnson undoubtedly have the greatest general historical significance. Nevertheless, this examination of his work as a Lancaster County politician — including his relations with his political parties and constituents — will, it is hoped, move beyond the material presented in Current's biography, present a useful narrative of Lancaster County politics in general during the period, and be more than just another study of a part of Stevens's life that has already been "written to death."

A thorough examination of the existing newspaper records of the period, a limited search of the manuscript materials on Stevens in the Library of Congress and elsewhere, and a careful reading of several of the biographies are the major sources for this study. Although this paper is basically a political history, it seems impossible to write a proper account of Stevens as a Lancaster politician without some mention of his place in the community. Hence there will be some notes on Stevens as a lawyer and philanthropist, and there will be comments on his relationship with his mulatto housekeeper, Lydia Hamilton Smith. At various places the historical literature on Stevens will be noted and criticized, and an attempt at the unattainable — a judicious assessment of Stevens's motivation — will be made at the end of the paper.

Without the knowledge and aid of many people this study could not have been written. Special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Ira V. Brown, and to Dr. Philip S. Klein, both of Pennsylvania State University, for their bibliographical assistance and continuing encouragement. Mrs. Charles Lundgren, Librarian of the Lancaster County Historical Society, was most helpful, and Mr. Louis Farina, of May, Grove, Stork, and Blakinger of Lancaster, helped me to discover some previously unnoticed material on Lydia Smith. For their various efforts, the staffs of the Library of Congress, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Lancaster County Library, Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. Library, Franklin and Marshall College Library, and Pennsylvania State University Library all deserve an acknowledgment.

A NOTE ON STYLE

The author has attempted to follow the rules set forth in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 4th ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), to as great an extent as possible. There are, however, the following exceptions to the rules:

1. Since all newspapers cited save one were published in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, references to these papers do not contain the place of publication. All other publications cited as published in Lancaster were printed in that Pennsylvania city.

2. All references to the Stevens Papers refer to the collection in the Library of Congress. All other Stevens manuscripts have their location noted.
3. For convenience, all publications of the Lancaster County Historical Society before 1956 are referred to as contained in *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers*, although the Society's publication title has varied. Similarly, the date of publication is given by year only.

CHAPTER I

STEVENS COMES TO LANCASTER

One can compare Thaddeus Stevens's entrance into the Lancaster community in August 1842 to a collision between two weighty moving objects. Stevens's personality and ambitions had been in the making since his birth in Caledonia County, Vermont, on April 4, 1792, and the political personality of Lancaster County in 1842 dated from well before that time.

Stevens, a Dartmouth graduate, moved from Vermont to York, Pennsylvania, in 1815, where he taught school and studied law until admitted to the bar in Harford County, Maryland, in August 1816. Although he visited Lancaster after his bar examination, the town apparently "seemed so large, prosperous, sophisticated"¹ that he decided to begin his practice in Gettysburg. In the twenty-six years that followed Stevens became known throughout the Commonwealth as an able attorney and renegade politician. He evidently made himself known as an opponent of slavery as early as 1823,² and although the Federalist party to which he belonged was disintegrating, he never aligned himself with the Democratic party which then dominated Pennsylvania politics. Instead, he became an Antimason while serving on Borough Council in Gettysburg and in 1831 was elected on that party's Adams County ticket to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The scope of this study does not permit an extensive examination of Stevens's on-again, off-again career as a Pennsylvania legislator. It is sufficient to note that because of his efforts to crush Masonry through legislative investigation, his championship of Nicholas Biddle's United States Bank, his apparently singlehanded rescue of the Free School Act from repeal in 1835, and his notorious role in the gubernatorial election of 1838 and the subsequent "Buckshot War," this club-footed, sharp-tongued politician was no stranger to the informed Lancastrian in 1842.³ Two pieces of evidence reveal much of the man's political personality. As Richard Current ironically notes:

His closest friend in Gettysburg, the banker John B. McPherson, was a leader of the local Masons, and Stevens' [sic] tirades against Masonry did not ruffle this friendship in the least. In the legislature, while Stevens cried out in vain for laws to suppress the damnable

society, he was busily getting laws passed to benefit McPherson and other bankers, among them the biggest of all, Nicholas Biddle.⁴

Additionally, a letter from his older brother Joshua, a petty judge in Indianapolis, indicates that one could not always trust Stevens to use whatever charm he had to the political advantage of himself or others:

When James Blake returned here this spring i asked him what news from you and he said you were well but that somehow you & he were not very sociable he did not know the reason: since i have got more acquainted with him i like him better and he is a well thot of man and considerable Popular therefore when you see him as you probably will this winter or spring be a little friendly with him and inquire about me &c &c as it may the means of his feeling a little more friendly towards me.⁵

Stevens moved to Lancaster because of a lack of personal ties and a burden of financial and political problems. A bachelor, he had no family to compel him to remain in Gettysburg, and it is evident that he had few close personal friends in the area. On the other hand, Stevens was encumbered with debts caused by losses from his Caledonia Iron Works near Chambersburg and "at least" \$100,000 lost in election bets and personal contributions in the campaign of 1838.⁶ By 1842, Stevens was "land poor," and his extensive properties in Adams County did nothing to reduce his debts, said by Alexander H. Hood to amount to \$217,000 in 1844.⁷ "In danger of being sold out by the sheriff,"⁸ Stevens had to move to a larger town where he could expect a bigger practice to rescue him from what his Calvinist mind considered the sin of bankruptcy. Furthermore, Stevens's political ambitions doubtless had some role in his decision. His career as a Gettysburg politician had won him a host of bitter enemies, and Fawn M. Brodie has suggested that his rumored connection with the murder of a pregnant black woman in that town in 1831 may have provided him additional incentive to move.⁹ His political opponent and biographer, Alexander Harris, notes sarcastically that Lancaster County was "strongly of his political sentiments, and this was a consideration in his view not to be overlooked."¹⁰ Stevens himself probably had both finances and politics in mind when he wrote cryptically to John McPherson in September 1842: "Appearances here seem very favorable."¹¹

Appearances were indeed favorable in Lancaster, for both the City and the County were beginning a period of previously unparalleled growth. The County's population had increased by 9.6 percent, from 74,086 to 81,198, between 1830 and 1840, but was to jump by 17.4 percent to 95,330 in 1850 and by 18.4 percent to 112,854 by 1860.¹² The City was to grow by 47 percent between 1840 and 1850 and have 12,369 inhabitants.¹³ Frederic S. Klein calls this "a period marked by the introduction of new business enterprise . . . and the various effects of the industrial revolution," and notes the growth between 1841 and 1860 of iron ore mines, foundries, and rolling mills, which in 1859 brought in some two million dollars to the County's economy.¹⁴ Despite the growth in manufacturing, how-



H. S. Stevens

Mr. Stevens at the age of 38.
An engraving by Sartain
from an Eichholtz Portrait

ever, the area's people and economy were basically agricultural. Even in 1859, as the total value of manufacturing investment and production was approximately ten million dollars, the total value of farms, farm machinery, and livestock, by the crude (and conservative) data-gathering methods of the day, was about fifty-eight million dollars. Furthermore, most of the County's industries were connected with agriculture, and nearly one third of the income from manufacturing in 1852 was due to flour and meal milling alone.¹⁵ Other important industries tied to the land included leatherworking, lumber milling, and brewing and distilling. This dominance of ag-

riculture continued through Stevens's lifetime, although the value of manufacturing was to double between 1860 and 1870.¹⁶

Lancaster County when Stevens arrived was the leading agricultural county in the Commonwealth and third largest (after Philadelphia and Allegheny) in population, and this translated into political importance. A visitor to the City of Lancaster wrote in 1852:

Like many another county seat, Lancaster has labored under the paralyzing influence of a superfluous population—a population which, whatever its social merits, does nothing but *consume* without contributing to the real production or substantial wealth of a community. The place is literally overrun with professional men. . . .¹⁷

Much of "superfluous population," including most of the local bar, devoted themselves to politics. Among the politically active lawyers of the time were James Buchanan, who when Stevens arrived was Senator from Pennsylvania, Thomas Henry Burrowes, one of Stevens's old political allies, and Amos Ellmaker, who in 1832 was the Antimasonic party's candidate for Vice-President. The Democrats were a distinct minority party in the County, despite the prominence of Buchanan. A faction-ridden Antimasonic party still controlled the County, even though Antimasonry did not have even a state organization left. In order to gain votes from a growing Whig group, this party put several Whigs on its ticket at each election, and the resulting coalition did not view with favor the arrival of Stevens, who had in Gettysburg maintained a "pure" Antimasonic party whenever possible. Stevens had timed his move to Lancaster uncannily, for, despite his concerns about his debts, he had arrived just in time to become embroiled in a fight for control of the Antimasons.

Lancaster's Democratic newspaper, the *Intelligencer*, greeted the Antimasonic convention of August 1842 with an attack on the "Burrowes faction," which, it charged, would pick the ticket "with supreme and high-handed arrogance."¹⁸ With the end of the campaign, however, the *Intelligencer* had reason to boast and a new politician to attack. Not only had John Ehler, a Democrat, been narrowly elected as Sheriff, but he had done so against the opposition of Thaddeus Stevens. "What does Mr. Stevens think of John Ehler *now*?" demanded the *Intelligencer*, asserting that Stevens would campaign more carefully (and would abuse Democrats less) when he would "come to know our people better."¹⁹ One week later, the *Intelligencer* noted:

There was a meeting held at Reed's last Saturday evening, at which we are informed the friends of Ehler were summarily *read out* of the Antimasonic party! Mr. Stevens performed the rites of the Ex-pulsion, aided by a number of his especial followers. Mr. Stevens assumes the sceptre *soon*!²⁰

The *Intelligencer's* prophecy was to prove correct, but the sceptre that Stevens took proved to be no Excalibur.

Allied with Thomas Burrowes and others, Stevens in 1843 attempted to revive "pure" Antimasonry. Endorsing General Win-

field Scott for President, they established a newspaper, the *Lancaster Union*, and split from the "coalitionist" Antimasons, who included John Strohm, backed Henry Clay for President, and had the *Lancaster Examiner* as an organ.²¹ Both groups nominated delegates to the Whig State Convention in August 1843, the "coalitionists" instructing their delegates to withdraw "if the Stevens delegation . . . received any recognition at the state convention."²² When the state convention refused to seat the "pure" delegation, Stevens and his allies decided to run a third ticket. Alexander Harris charges that this was an attempt to split the vote, throw the election to the Democrats, and then "dictate the terms of compromise" to the "coalitionists."²³ Bolting the regular organization was a political sin of consequence, and the *Examiner* went so far as to accuse Stevens of going over to the Democracy.²⁴ Stevens's strategy failed, however, as the entire Whig ticket carried the County, although the "coalitionist" candidate for Congress, Jeremiah Brown, won by but a plurality as the Stevens candidate, Anthony E. Roberts, took almost 1,600 votes.²⁵ As John McNeal notes, this election was "the final death blow to Antimasonry in Lancaster County,"²⁶ and Stevens was forced to turn to another organization. He might have followed Thomas Burrowes to the Democrats; he might have gone with Emanuel C. Reigart to the anti-Catholic, anti-foreigner Native American party, which was to run a ticket in 1844; or he might have attempted to build a local organization for the new anti-slavery Liberty party. Henry Mueller summarizes Stevens's problems:

. . . the Anti-Masonic party had disappeared, the Democrats were impossible, the Natives at best problematical, and the newly formed Liberty party was considered temporarily too extreme, so he held aloof until September [1844] when he came out openly for Clay.²⁷

Mueller fails to note, however, the inducements and the humiliation involved in Stevens's decision. Stevens had been William Henry Harrison's choice for Postmaster General in 1841, but the nomination went to another because of "the open opposition of Clay and the wavering of [Daniel] Webster."²⁸ and hence Stevens had no particular affection for the Whig party and its national leaders. Though Stevens was not a politician who easily forgot, he was able to forget the wrong done to him and remember a peace offering the local Whigs had earlier made—apparently at the instigation of Clay himself. In a speech to a Whig rally in July 1843 Harmer Denny let it be known "that he was authorized by the Whig candidate [Clay] to say that in case of his election, 'atonement would be made for past wrong.'"²⁹ Ralph Korngold argues that this might have been an offer of a cabinet appointment in exchange for Stevens's support, for he "had a large following throughout the state not only among Anti-Masons, but among opponents of slavery."³⁰ Whatever the olive branch involved, Stevens had little choice but to grasp it. He became a Whig and campaigned for Clay, although he had to suffer the presence of John Strohm on the County ticket as Whig candidate for Congress. Since Strohm had refused to side with Stevens in the "Buckshot War" six years before, this was bitter

medicine. Yet far more bitter medicine was to follow. Not only did Strohm win and Francis Shunk defeat Stevens's friend William Marple for Governor, but Clay lost Pennsylvania and the election to James K. Polk, who soon nominated Stevens's old adversary, James Buchanan, to be Secretary of State. In 1827, Buchanan, then a Federalist congressman from Lancaster, had urged Stevens to join with him in moving to the Democrats. Stevens refused, and his ambition must have been tortured by a comparison of where both men had gone in the ensuing seventeen years.³¹ Since he was still deeply in debt and at one of the lowest points in his political life, it was well that Stevens should be "quiescent in politics" until 1848.³²

His law practice kept him occupied, and even Alexander Harris was forced to admit that despite the presence of a distinguished bar in Lancaster upon Stevens's arrival, within six months

... there was no member of that bar that dared to dispute his intellectual and legal kingship. He was crowned by common consent, and wore the diadem to his grave.³³

Undoubtedly other Lancaster lawyers did not especially relish watching a newcomer take away part of their incomes. (Indeed, had they held a monolithic control over County politics and especially valued their professional standing, they might well have considered sending Stevens to Washington as a patronage appointee, the better to be rid of him.) That Stevens did not represent indigent defendants exclusively, although he was known to do so, is indicated by his annual income from his practice, which soon "ranged from twelve to fifteen thousand dollars a year." As Richard Current points out, this was in a period "when day laborers, even if they had the good luck to be steadily employed, could make no more than three or four hundred dollars a year." With this income and the money from the sale of most of his Adams County landholdings, Stevens reduced his debts to a more manageable level.³⁴ Additionally, Stevens took in young men to study law at his office for a two hundred dollar fee—although he did not require the fee of those who could not afford to pay. Perhaps the memory of his days as a poor college graduate reading law in York caused him to do this, but there was also the usefulness of young attorneys as political supporters to keep in mind. Stevens evidently ran the leading "law school" in the region, and Harris writes that most of his students "were attached to him, as children to a father."³⁵ Two of these students, Alexander Hood and Oliver J. Dickey, were to be among Stevens's major political assistants until his death, and Dickey was to succeed Stevens in Congress.

With decreasing debts, increasing supporters, and continuing ambition, Stevens now awaited a new political opportunity. He was to find it and seize it within four years of his humiliation of 1844. Unfortunately for his enemies inside and outside the Whig party, however, he was to claw his way upstairs rather than allow himself to be kicked in that direction.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ROUND IN CONGRESS

Several factors contributed to making 1848 a year of opportunity for Thaddeus Stevens. John Strohm was serving his second term in the House of Representatives, and he could be expected to retire to Refton as no Congressman elected in the preceding twelve years had served more than two terms¹ Furthermore, Stevens could expect to grapple with two issues important to him—protection and the extension of slavery. The Walker Tariff of 1846, a reduction of duties pushed through Congress by the Democrats, was an easy target for protectionist Whigs. Too, the Mexican War had opened up vast new lands in the West which, despite their climate, attracted Southern slaveholders and threatened to wreck the balance of the Missouri Compromise of 1820. If the war had produced a problem for the nation, however, it had also produced a popular Presidential candidate for the Whigs, General Zachary Taylor. Though a slaveholder from Louisiana, his battle-born image was so attractive that even anti-slavery Whigs like Stevens boarded his bandwagon, however reluctantly.² As for Stevens himself, his lucrative practice had greatly helped to reduce his debts; despite his assumption of all the claims on his Caledonia Iron Works early in 1848, his indebtedness was to fall to about \$30,000 by 1849.³ Finally, although Lancaster Whigs were united for Taylor, they were otherwise deeply rent by faction. Three groups competed for control, with the "regular" Whigs, known as the Silver Greys (supposedly so called because of the advanced age of their leadership), in the lead—and backed by Edward Darlington's *Examiner*. Stevens and his friends, called Woolly Heads because of their anti-slavery orientation, and the Native Americans, who were led by Emanuel C. Reigart and had returned to the fold after running unsuccessful tickets in the last two general elections, made up the opposition. It seemed time for Stevens to use all these factors to his advantage.

Stevens's first evident moves for the nomination are seen in a barbecue and rally for Taylor held on the Fourth of July, 1848. More than five hundred people attended, and one can assume that Stevens, one of the principal speakers, was also one of the principal financial backers.⁴ He then induced Emanuel Reigart to place his name in nomination at a Taylor rally on August 5.⁵ Having publicized his intentions, Stevens now had to win at the Whig County Convention, which was to assemble in less than three weeks.

The convention method of nomination used in those days was essentially a two-step process. First, elections for delegates were held at various locations (usually public houses) throughout the County. All who were members of the party came to these locations during certain specified hours to indicate their choices for delegates, and the candidates for delegate, especially in 1848, were known to each voter as friends of a particular faction. This decentralized

process made it possible, of course, for one group to prevent its opponents from casting their ballots. The only recourse for the beaten would then be to send an opposing delegation to the convention itself and hope for recognition. Even so, the proper amount of intimidation (or "accommodation," e.g. bribery) could result in a *fait accompli*. Additionally, one could stuff ballot boxes in various ways, and, as the caption in one of Thomas Nast's cartoons on the Tweed Ring read, "In Counting There Is Strength." The delegates, however properly or improperly elected, then assembled at a public house or hired hall one week later to make their choices for candidates, and they were expected to hold with their faction unless some compromise was arranged.

Contrary to what Current has written, the delegates had not "already been chosen" when Stevens announced his candidacy,⁶ but Abraham Herr Smith, the Silver Grey candidate, appeared to have won a majority of the delegates at the election, "and his nomination before the assembling of the convention was by himself and his friends regarded as quite certain."⁷ Stevens, meanwhile, denied reports that he would run independently if not nominated. In a public letter supposed to indicate that the office had to seek the man, when in fact the man was ardently seeking the office, he wrote: "As I shall have no agency in bringing my name before the Convention I can hardly be supposed to have sufficient anxiety for the office to oppose the ticket."⁸ Indeed, since a third ticket had failed him in 1843, Stevens knew that he somehow had to capture the convention, for nomination by the Whigs was tantamount to election.

On August 23, 1848, the convention met at Levi Swope's public house in Lancaster. Stevens's first task in gaining the 22 votes needed for nomination was to win a fight for control of the delegation from Drumore Township, where two slates—one Silver Grey and one Native—of two delegates each were presented.⁹ James Hopkins, a Drumore ironmaster, refused a compromise that would have split the delegation evenly and walked out with his Silver Grey friends.¹⁰ Stevens then apparently turned to the Natives after he received 18 votes, only one more than Smith, on the first ballot. Both Stevens and Smith picked up two delegates from Dr. Samuel Duffield, another candidate, and the vote stood 20-19, two short of nomination. One more vote from Duffield and two from Smith won the contest for Stevens on the third ballot.¹¹

That Stevens essentially took the nomination from Smith's grasp is certain. The *Intelligencer* commented:

Those whose word at previous county convention had long passed as uncontroverted law, had for weeks before a ticket "cut and dried" for the occasion, but the infusion of this new element [Stevens] made a woful [*sic*] dash in the reckoning, as the many wry faces bear witness.

Just how Stevens was able to accomplish this feat, however, is not so clear. The *Intelligencer* asserted that Stevens was "indebted" to the Natives "for this triumph over the 'established church' of Whig-

gery,"¹² and his use of Emanuel Reigart indicates that Native support was indispensable. Alexander Harris, however, quoted Stevens's friend Alexander Hood to prove that the Congressman-to-be had "bought" the nomination:

Before he was nominated for Congress, no one here thought of spending large sums of money in order to get votes. Now, no man, whatever his qualifications, can be nominated for any office, unless he answers all demands made upon him, and forks over a greater amount than anyone else will for the same office. It is a most deplorable state of things, but the fact is not to be denied.¹³

The Lancaster Democracy, for its part, picked Judge Emanuel Shaeffer to oppose Stevens after Colonel Reah Frazer declined the nomination.¹⁴ During September, Stevens spoke at various places in the County and defined his position on slavery. In a letter to the Free Soil Committee of Correspondence, he promised to oppose slavery's extension to all new territories and to advocate abolition wherever Congress had constitutional jurisdiction. Shaeffer, on the other hand, replied that the people in the territories, not Congress, had the sole power to abolish slavery.¹⁵ Had Stevens felt strongly enough about slavery extension, he could have used his influence to swing Whig votes to Martin Van Buren, the Free Soil candidate for President. That he did not do so (although David Wilmot apparently did in northern Pennsylvania) indicates that he valued party regularity more than his anti-slavery principles in this election.¹⁶

Stevens, along with the rest of the Whig ticket, easily won in the October election. Although Shaeffer carried Lancaster City — indeed, Stevens was never to win the City except in 1860, when he was unopposed — Stevens took the election by a total vote of 9,565 to 5,464 for Shaeffer.¹⁷ Yet two pieces of evidence show that Stevens knew that he was a Congressman as early as August 24. First, Stevens had begun as early as September to angle for election as U.S. Senator, and spoke outside Lancaster County during much of the campaign.¹⁸ Additionally, the *Intelligencer* had given him a farewell message in late August, and there was behind the intense partisanship of the article some keen analysis of Lancaster politics and Stevens:

The conviction that this county . . . should be represented in Congress by one capable of a more expanded effort of intellect than the drawing out of a sleepy "Aye" or "No," has forced upon the boards one who for years had been banished into political exile, and between whom and the party . . . there is little genuine affinity. Mr. Stevens has never . . . belonged to that fraternity of frail politicians. . . . He has frequently exercised himself in . . . "whipping in" this tractable party. . . .

We have ascribed the nomination of Mr. Stevens to the homage awarded to commanding intellect, but . . . yet more potent reasons exist at the bottom. *He is the sworn foe of the South* — avowedly selected as a champion able and willing to "worry" the representatives from beyond Mason and Dixon's line. He goes into Congress the predetermined agitator of sectional jealousies and divisions. . . . His mission is to be one of Strife, of Division, and of Hatred, and surely there is no one so well qualified to fulfill it.¹⁹

Many a Silver Grey either already agreed with the *Intelligencer* or would come to do so. Nevertheless, Stevens got the support of the *Examiner* in his bid for the Senate. A writer in that paper argued that Stevens's election would be a just reward for a banner Whig county that had never received its fair share of the political pie. Furthermore, Stevens had

labored in the campaign with a zeal and alacrity that strained the powers of his strong physical constitution, and it is not too much to say, that he contributed to the expenses of the contest more liberally than any other individual in the State.²⁰

As Current wryly notes, "Stevens the politician spent money freely at the very time that Stevens the ironmaster was promising his creditors to see them paid!"²¹ All his efforts, however, could get him no further than the House, for he lacked strength outside Lancaster County.

Thaddeus Stevens entered Congress for the first time in December 1849, and it was not long before his actions made him even more unpalatable to the Silver Greys. His most important heresy, in their eyes, was his opposition to Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850. This package of measures, which included a severe fugitive slave law, occupied most of the attention of Congress in 1850, and it was the determined resistance of people like John C. Calhoun on the one hand and Stevens on the other that caused much of the delay in its enactment. To Silver Greys and Democrats, Stevens's recalcitrance meant little less than a desire to see the Union break apart. George Sanderson wrote in his *Intelligencer*:

We have nothing against Mr. Stevens as a citizen and a neighbor, nor do we object to his course because he was elected as a Whig representative from a strong Whig district; but we do enter our protest against Thaddeus Stevens, or any other man, going in opposition to the best interests of the country, and seeking to perpetuate the ill feeling and strife engendered by the abusive attacks made upon our Southern brethren on account of the system of Slavery which exists among them and for the establishment of which they are not responsible.²²

Of similar importance in arousing the Silver Greys' ire were Stevens's patronage policies. As a Congressman, Stevens was part of a system that was expected to distribute favors to the party faithful, and an 1849 letter to Stevens from a Philadelphian who desired appointment as a United States Marshal shows the web of politics involved.

The entire Whig delegation in the City [of Lancaster] and most of the County are united in a letter to Genl. Taylor in my behalf. A letter has also been signed by the Lancaster & Lebanon Senator, and by all the members from Lancaster County but one, whose name I do not remember. I will have many influential friends from here [Philadelphia] as well as in the interior of the State. With all this however I would prefer the active exertions of one or two influential friends like yourself who will be likely to have the ear of the President.²³

About this time, Stevens became involved in a battle for con-

trol of the state Whiggery between Governor William Johnston and Senator James Cooper that focused on the appointment of William D. Lewis as Collector of the Port of Philadelphia — the key patronage post in Pennsylvania. Cooper, popular with the Silver Greys, bitterly opposed Lewis's nomination in the Senate, while Lewis was backed by free-soiler Johnston and others. Calling Cooper "the meanest liar I ever knew,"²⁴ Lewis appealed to Stevens for aid, and the Congressman obliged.²⁵ Such favors, however, were not always restricted to political friends. Stevens's old antagonist, James Buchanan, who held no office at the time, wrote a private letter to Stevens in July 1850 asking that he act if possible to get Buchanan's nephew, James Henry, appointed to West Point, adding:

If you should be perfectly free & yet indisposed to act in his favor, which I can readily perceive you might be, with perfect propriety, I shall then, but not otherwise, have his application presented by some other friend.²⁶

Stevens promptly acted in Buchanan's favor, but was unsuccessful, and his apology to Buchanan for his failure gave Old Buck an opportunity to lecture the freshman Congressman on a few political realities.

Have you not yet learned that there is a certain number of families in Washington who always contrive to have their relatives provided for by the government, whether the administration be Whig or Democratic? Among these the Turnbulls and the Ramseys are not the least conspicuous.²⁷

Despite his numerous "deficiencies," however, Stevens was unanimously renominated by the Whigs in August 1850, while the Democrats put up Dr. Frederick A. Muhlenberg, a professor at Franklin College. By election time, the *Intelligencer* was attacking Stevens for his extremism and his birth outside the County, and was making a veiled reference to his relationship with his mulatto housekeeper, Lydia Hamilton Smith.

. . . . If Mr. Stevens is elected, the charge of Abolitionism and Disunionism—to say nothing of immorality—will be fixed upon us, and we shall be looked upon, throughout the whole extent of the Union, as a band of fanatics and madmen who would not hesitate to apply the torch to the Temple of Liberty itself. . . .

. . . On the one hand, we have presented to us for our suffrages a comparative stranger, who is either unacquainted with the wishes of our people, or else purposely reckless in his conduct. On the other hand, we have a native citizen of the county, who is an ornament to his profession . . .²⁸

Stevens may have gained a unanimous renomination, but he had little support from the Silver Greys, for although he was quite well acquainted with their views, he was "reckless" enough in his conduct to go against their opinions when he saw fit. In these days, there was no such thing as a secret ballot, and campaign workers gave voters party tickets to be put in the ballot box. All those on the ballot received a vote, and it was possible for one faction, given access to a printing press, to "strike" an enemy's name from the

party ticket, thus reducing his total support. Apparently this worked both ways in the 1850 election:

Fearing that he [Stevens] would be "struck" in parts of Lancaster County, some of his adherents, in order to keep him up to the rest of the ticket, resorted to the expedient of "striking" the whole Whig ballot except his name.²⁹

As it turned out, Stevens defeated Muhlenberg by a total vote of 5,701 to 4,069; his majority, however, had dropped from 4,101 in 1848 to 1,632, and he ran behind his ticket by about 150 votes.³⁰ Yet Stevens's "reckless" conduct, and his consequent troubles with the Silver Greys, were only beginning, as Lancastrians were to note well before the campaign of 1852.

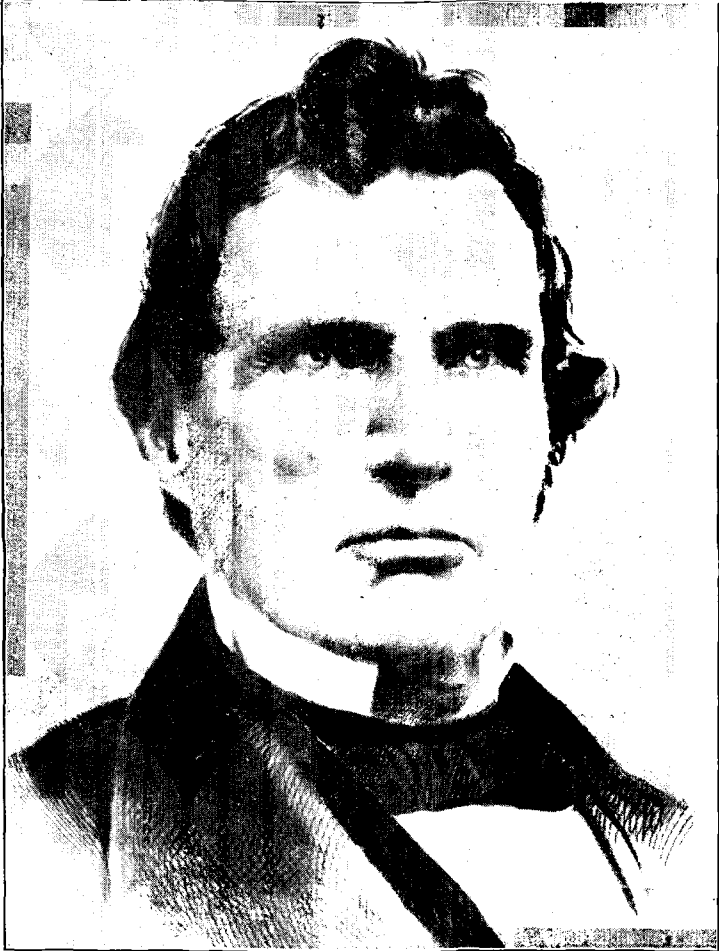
CHAPTER III

THE SILVER GREYS' REVENGE

If Thaddeus Stevens was in need of further proof that he had antagonized the Silver Greys, evidence was not long in coming, for in June 1851 the local Whiggery did not select him as a delegate to the upcoming state convention.¹ Nevertheless, Stevens doubtless attended the convention, held in Lancaster on June 24, and helped to secure the renomination of free-soiler Governor Johnston and the defeat of a resolution endorsing the Fugitive Slave Law.² Instead of this measure, a resolution adopted by a vote of 92 to 27 pledged merely that "the adjustment measures of the last Congress shall be faithfully observed and respected by the Whigs."³ In the ensuing campaign, the Whigs stressed the need for (upward) tariff revision and "were making headway" until the Christiana Riot of September 11 "completely changed the issue and put the Whigs on the defensive."⁴

In this incident a group of escaped slaves from Maryland took refuge in a farmhouse owned by a black, William Parker, located in Sadsbury Township near Christiana. Not only did the escapees have to worry about their pursuing owner, Edward Gorsuch, and the United States Marshal who accompanied him; they also needed protection from the notorious "Gap gang" who made a business of slave-catching (and sometimes the kidnapping of free blacks) in this part of Lancaster County. Gorsuch, the Marshal, and a party that included Gorsuch's son Dickinson and several deputies arrived at the Parker house first and demanded the return of the slaves. When they were refused they turned to two whites at the scene, Castner, Hanway and Elijah Lewis, and ordered them to assist in securing the slaves—as required by the Fugitive Slave Law. Hanway and Lewis, both Quakers, refused. Meanwhile a crowd of blacks had surrounded the Gorsuch party and a melee ensued in which Edward Gorsuch was killed and his son badly wounded.⁵

Reaction, both judicial and political, was swift. Hanway, Lewis, and thirty-seven other persons, on the ground that they had "levied



A crayon portrait of Thaddeus Stevens. Artist unknown. This portrait was presented to the Shiffler Hose company by Mrs. Oliver J. Dickey, widow of Thaddeus Stevens's law partner. Mr. Stevens served as president of the Shiffler Hose company from 1856 until his death in 1868. He was succeeded in the presidency by the Hon. Oliver J. Dickey, who was also his successor in the Congress of the United States. When the volunteer system of fire fighting was abandoned in Lancaster and the Shiffler Hose company disbanded, this portrait, by the direction of Mrs. Dickey, came into the possession of the late Mr. Jacob G. Goodman. His daughter, Miss Carrie M. Goodman, presented it to The Lancaster County Historical Society where it is greatly treasured.

war" against the United States Government, were indicted for treason, with trial set for December 1851. According to the *Examiner*, however, the ultimate guilt lay elsewhere: "The parties really responsible for this occurrence," it asserted, "are the abolition lecturers and their aiders and abettors *in and out of Congress*," clearly including Stevens in this dangerous group.⁶ Pennsylvania voters seemed to agree, for they decisively turned Johnston out of office in the October election, even though his majority in Lancaster County increased.⁷

Stevens mounted a counterattack almost immediately after the election. In December he brought in Edward McPherson, son of his old Gettysburg friend John McPherson, to edit a new pro-Stevens newspaper, the *Independent Whig*. Within two weeks of its birth this paper was locked in combat with the Silver Grey *Examiner*, each accusing the other of trying to wreck the local party.⁸

The Congressman then went to Independence Hall in Philadelphia to help defend the Christiana Riot participants — at a time when Congress was beginning its session. With John M. Read,⁹ a well-known Democrat, he opposed John Ashmead, the United States Attorney, and his old antagonist Senator Cooper, who served as counsel for his native state of Maryland. Stevens, an expert trial lawyer, was prominent in the early stages as he called the prosecution's evidence into serious question, but he left the rest of the case to Read, who ridiculed the charge of treason and effectively destroyed the prosecution's case. Judge Robert Grier, in his charge, caustically attacked the abolitionists for their supposed responsibility but noted that although the defendants were clearly guilty of aggravated riot and murder, their offenses did not "rise to the dignity" of the Federal charge of "treason or levying war."¹⁰ After fifteen minutes deliberation, the jury, whose foreman was none other than Silver Grey James M. Hopkins of Drumore Township, returned with a verdict of acquittal.¹¹

It is unclear why Stevens had Read make the final arguments and "retired from open participation in the case." Alexander Hood simply noted years later: "His share in the trial was not very conspicuous, but there were good reasons for the course he pursued."¹² Richard Current, however, argues that Stevens deliberately put himself in a "heads I win, tails you lose" position: "Now, if the defendants lost, Stevens would escape some of the obloquy. If they won, the trials might become a *cause celebre* not only for antislavery Whigs but also for Democrats disaffected by the Compromise."¹³ Yet this is to miss the point. If Stevens were merely hungry for public acclaim he would have handled the entire case himself, and as for "obloquy," he had by his limited role in the trial already served further to alienate his Silver Grey opponents. It seems most likely that Stevens simply wanted to do his part in securing an acquittal from what he considered an unjust charge. As Hood notes: "The great object was attained, and that was all he desired."¹⁴

Other great objects, however, remained beyond his grasp.

Ralph Korngold writes that in 1852 "Stevens would have had little difficulty in being nominated and elected, but made it known that he did not care to return to Washington and threw his support to one of his friends."¹⁵ The historical record, however, indicates otherwise; it appears that Stevens would not at all have minded to return to Washington, but that his general circumstances and the rabid opposition of the Silver Greys thwarted him.

Stevens's first obstacle to renomination was his age; he would be sixty in 1852, although he continued in generally good health. His debts were again rising, due largely to losses from his Caledonia Iron Works, and would reach about \$60,000 by March 1853.¹⁶ Stevens had throughout his terms in Congress kept up his law practice, however, and if this served to keep his debts down, it also served as a cause for absences from sessions and gave the *Examiner* another point of attack.¹⁷ Then, too, there was the two-term tradition in Lancaster County Whiggery. The most important factor, however, was probably the young champion of the Silver Greys, Isaac E. Hiester, a local attorney and son of a former Congressman.

As early as December 1851 "An Observer of Young Politicians" in the *Independent Whig* had noted the existence of a "young *Genius*" who had previously supported Stevens but whose friends now promised to put him up for Congress in 1852.¹⁸ Hiester was backed by Darlington's *Examiner* and the Silver Greys, and the *Independent Whig* charged in March 1852 this group's followers in Salisbury Township had gone over to the Democrats in order to defeat the Woolly Head candidate for Assessor.¹⁹ There was more trouble to come for Stevens. The national Whig convention, meeting in Baltimore in June, nominated Stevens's man, Winfield Scott, for President, but it also adopted "a conservative platform pledging fulfillment of the Compromise." Just before the convention met, Stevens had made in Congress "a kind of stump speech"²⁰ in which he advocated increased protection. Whether this was for the benefit of the national party or the folks at home, who had heard little from their representative on the tariff lately, is unclear, but the *Independent Whig* reprinted the address in full.²¹

By July the campaign was in full swing, and, judging from the attacks made in the *Independent Whig*, Hiester was the leading candidate.²² The local Whig leaders called a convention for August 11, about two weeks earlier than usual, presumably the better to keep Stevens and McPherson (who was out of town at the time) from getting up a strong opposition. Nevertheless, Stevens made some efforts. In late July, two weeks before the delegate elections, the *Examiner* noted the presence in the field of Emanuel C. Reigart, the man who had helped nominate Stevens four years earlier.²³ A correspondent of the *Examiner* in the City of Lancaster wrote soon afterwards:

I have heard of Mr. Stevens sucking in votes with turtle soup, old rye and bank bills. . . . Messrs. Stevens and Reigart have neither a patent nor an exclusive right for electioneering and delegate elections.²⁴

This writer proved correct in his latter statement at least, for in the city delegate elections Hiester swamped Reigart by a total vote of 729 to 122.²⁵ The *Independent Whig* charged that "known Loco-focos" (i.e., Democrats) were allowed to vote, "detering large numbers of respectable Whigs from attending so that the real Whig vote of the city was polled to a *very partial extent*." As the convention met, the *Independent Whig* had already conceded the nomination to Hiester, who won with 40 votes to 9 abstentions. Reigart, who may or may not have been Korngold's "friend" of Stevens and may simply have called in a political I.O.U. from the Congressman for another fruitless attempt for office on the model of his earlier campaigns as a Native American, was not even nominated.²⁶

Yet even if Reigart were simply a humbug instead of a genuine stalking horse for Stevens, it did not make the *Independent Whig* any more friendly toward the Whigs' nominee for Congress. Although this newspaper put the Silver Grey ticket on its masthead, it continued its attacks on Hiester, whom it called "the most selfish, unprincipled, unscrupulous politician in the State of Pennsylvania."²⁷ Writings like this can be dismissed as mere sour grapes, but other attacks appear to have been strong enough to warrant a suit for libel. Stevens's organ charged that Hiester had duped the Congressman's followers by asserting that Stevens had thrown his support to him, but concluded that

. . . what mainly secured Mr. Hiester's nomination was his perseverance in riding the county—spending money like water—bribing bribable men with presents, books, hats, money, suppers, run of the bars, &c, &c,—making various promises for various offices—and buying up Loco-focos to attend the delegate meetings, be present at the organization, vote down consistent Whigs, put up supple officers, take possession of the polls, deter quiet citizens from approaching, and thus elect his delegates.²⁸

The *Examiner* might well have replied that Hiester had indeed picked up a trick or two from the man he once supported, Thaddeus Stevens, but it chose not to do so. Instead, it asserted that Stevens while in Congress "did not pretend to represent anybody but the negroes."²⁹ Stevens, for his own part, evidently did not appear at any rallies in Lancaster County during the campaign, although he did stump for the Whig ticket in Gettysburg.³⁰

In October, the *Examiner* was pleased to report that despite twelve thousand spurious Whig tickets which had the name of Dr. Nathaniel Sample, the Democratic nominee, in Hiester's place and were "peddled through the County by the Assistant editor [*sic*] and Treasurer of the *Independent Whig*," Hiester had defeated Sample, 8,840–6,456.³¹ More bad news for Stevens was to follow in November. Though as much against the extension of slavery as anyone, in principle at least, he had not supported the Free Soil candidate for President, John P. Hale. Instead, he backed the Whig nominee, his old friend Scott, only to see his man badly beaten in Pennsylvania and across the nation by Democrat Franklin Pierce. Indeed, Scott carried but four

states. The 1852 election, then, was not only the death blow to the national Whiggery, but also a disastrous setback for Stevens.

If this chapter has proven anything, it is that, contrary to the impression one might gain from some major biographies of the man, Stevens did not meekly submit to a Silver Grey victory in 1852. The reasons for his downfall also seem fairly evident to the close observer. It appears that Stevens's bitter-ender opposition to the Compromise of 1850 and his unpopular defense of the Christiana Riot participants — who, incidentally, were never convicted of any crime — had cost him the support of the Lancaster community at large, a support that, overall, had never been red-hot anyway. John F. Coleman has written that the election of 1852 "reflected the widely-shared desire that the compromise measures be regarded as permanent and that further agitation of the slavery question be stopped,"³² and Stevens apparently did not value political office enough to shift with the tide. Richard Current comments that it was to be expected that Stevens would willingly relinquish office, for

there was little to attract him in national politics so long as Democrats controlled the government and seemed immovable. Their alliance of Western frontiersman and Southern planter, of Southern planter and Eastern artisan and merchant, held firm. They managed to ride out the Compromise, whereas the Whig party had gone to pieces as against a rock.³³

Yet Stevens's record was one that showed him capable of letting his party fight him while he went ahead and championed his often unpopular beliefs. Indeed, even as cursory an examination as this one shows that Stevens had little reason, and less desire, to consider himself a Whig until death. He had, after all, stuck to Antimasonry long after it had ceased to exist as a political force of consequence, joined the Whigs at a relatively late date, and, rather than support the Compromise of 1850 as the national party (and much of the state party) did, opposed it so angrily that he was best regarded in 1852 not as a Whig but as an extreme free-soil protectionist.

Many of the charges and countercharges of this campaign seem ludicrous more than a century later, and there were doubtless Lancastrians in 1852 who also laughed at the political circus. Still, politics in this era, though surely good public entertainment, was more than that. The split within the national, state, and local Whiggery over slavery indicated that some people took the issue quite seriously — and those who did not were inclined to think a bit more about it ten years later as the Civil War raged and thousands of men marched off to battle, never to return. One should not ascribe to Stevens prophetic powers or the knowledge that the slavery question would help split the nation, however, for his March 1853 speech in Congress indicates that he felt that his political career might be over.³⁴ Indeed, he might have been ready to live out his life as an ironmaster and lawyer. Still, political life is not static, and if Stevens ever seriously contemplated a quieter existence as he entered his sixty-first year, events were soon to change his plans.

THE USES OF NATIVISM AND THE RISE
OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

When Thaddeus Stevens returned from Washington to Lancaster in March 1853, he resumed his full-time legal practice, and, according to Current waited "to discover a new political cause,"¹ for Lancaster County as well as the rest of the nation seemed to want to forget about slavery. One possibility open at that time was prohibition, which, if nothing else, could appeal to Stevens's own habit of abstinence. In 1852 a Temperance party candidate for Congress had carried about 11 percent of the vote as many Stevens followers found that group "the logical place to turn to show up the [Whig] organization without throwing the election to the Democrats." David Keller has written that the 1,900 votes polled by the Temperance candidate "was probably indicative of Stevens' [sic] support throughout the county,"² but there is no evidence that Stevens ever organized a desertion of his followers to this group in that election. Indeed, the *Examiner* noted a claim in 1853 that Stevens controlled 3,500 votes.³ All these votes, however, were to no avail for Stevens at the 1853 Whig county convention. According to a writer in the *Independent Whig*, "It was enough to outlaw the best man to proclaim him a 'wooly head' — a temperance man — or a friend of Mr. Stevens."⁴ Soon afterwards, when Charles Boughtner asserted that the Whig nomination for Treasurer had been stolen from him and announced that he would run as an independent for that office, the *Independent Whig* supported him.⁵ With Stevens behind him, Boughtner nearly took the election, losing by about 800 votes, while the Whigs polled an average 8,800 votes to 5,500 for the Democrats and up to 3,800 votes for the Temperance candidate in one race.⁶

Yet it is evident that Stevens never wholeheartedly embraced prohibitionism, for the *Independent Whig* did not support the Temperance ticket for 1853. Besides, as Current points out, the Democrats "insisted on being the party of the drys."⁷ Another movement, however, was to come to Lancaster County which would thoroughly upset the existing political balance and yield Stevens his revenge upon the Silver Greys.

The first mention of the nativist Know-Nothing movement in the Lancaster press is contained in the *Independent Whig* of May 23, 1854, although that paper was more concerned at that time with denunciations of Congressman Isaac Hiester for his refusal to totally oppose Stephen Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Since the Know-Nothings were organized in secret lodges, it was difficult to tell just what their potential political strength was; yet both the *Intelligencer* and the *Examiner* were clearly alarmed by the rapid growth of the movement.⁸ They had reason to be frightened, for a secret

ensus of the Lancaster City lodges in late 1854 showed that over 25 percent of the City electorate (or, even more disturbing, almost 40 percent of the average voter participation from 1850 to 1853) were members.⁹

It is known for certain that Theophilus Fenn, an old friend of Stevens and now editor of the *Independent Whig*, was a member of Know-Nothing Lodge 42 in Lancaster,¹⁰ and he must have been a major source of information on the movement for Stevens. Additionally, two expelled members of the order wrote that John Wise, President of the County Know-Nothing Council, "on every occasion was newscarrrier to Stevens, who always knew as much outside as most of the insiders did."¹¹ Meanwhile, the *Independent Whig* was embracing Know-Nothing principles, asserting that it was not religious persecution to refuse to elevate the foreign-born and Catholics (which terms, because of Irish and southern German immigration to Lancaster, were essentially synonymous) to political office. It also noted that the *Examiner*, which was also trying to board the nativist bandwagon, was trying to link abolitionism and foreign pauperism as the two major tenets of its Woolly Head antagonists.¹² Only the Democrats, it seemed, were not attempting to attract Know-Nothing support, and when the Whig convention unanimously renominated Hiester in August, Stevens and his followers made their move.

Thaddeus Stevens had risen to prominence as a vitriolic opponent of all secret societies, and he supposedly reiterated his antipathy toward them in a speech in Center Square during the campaign. Yet he joined a Know-Nothing lodge, taking the "holy aith," [sic] in September.¹³ Quite aside from questions of consistency of principle, one might ask with the two expelled members who later published an account: "What was the necessity of putting Stevens through? Did he not from the time of the . . . Inception, know all about it, and pull at least one wire?"¹⁴ According to the *Examiner*, it was because he wanted to "take command in person, not having heretofore been able to rule it, through his instruments, as effectually as desirable."¹⁵ This may have been the real reason, for Current argues that "Stevens was desperate . . . he believed that his future depended upon the outcome."¹⁶ Perhaps Stevens joined so that he could be sure that his man, Anthony E. Roberts of New Holland, would gain Know-Nothing support in his race against Hiester for Congress. The Know-Nothings had already settled upon a ticket on August 14, but Stevens apparently was not too late, for the *Examiner* reported that part of that ticket "had been supplanted . . . by Mr. Stevens and a few of his followers at a caucus."¹⁷ At an "Independent Mass Meeting" in Center Square on September 23, the Independent — or, more accurately, the Stevens and Know-Nothing ticket — was announced. Quoting the *Inland Daily*, a Know-Nothing sheet printed at the Independent Whig office, the *Examiner* noted sarcastically that when called upon to speak, Stevens "excused himself 'on account of having the *face-ache*,' a complaint with which he was never troubled before."¹⁸ The ticket presented "was an unusual

mixture of Democrats, Whigs and old Antimasons who had been members of various third parties for years,"¹⁹ but it was one that Stevens could support, for Anthony E. Roberts was the Independent candidate for Congress.

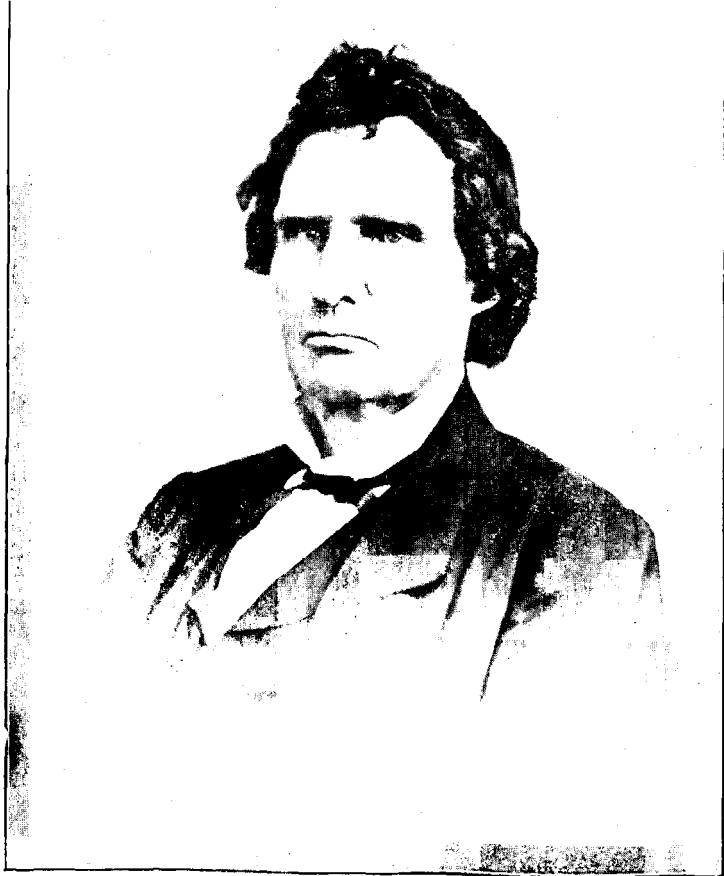
The *Examiner* had been attacking Stevens since August as one who "would confer upon negroes the rights he would refuse to white men born in Europe!" Yet the Hiester-Darlington faction had itself been publishing a nativist sheet, the *Public Register and American Citizen*, which charged that "No man in the county of Lancaster has done so much to introduce foreign paupers within its borders as Anthony E. Roberts. He has established quite a colony in or near New Holland."²⁰ The *Inland Weekly*, a pro-Stevens campaign paper, replied in kind, charging that Hiester paid fifty dollars per year pew rent to the Catholic Church and had the Irish and German Catholic vote in his pocket. Although this journal was confident of a Roberts victory, it warned that his supporters must "be vigilant, active, and wide awake. The Jesuit influence is at work stealthily, with vigor and concentration."²¹

Thaddeus Stevens, if no one else, was most vigilant. He bargained through his agents to get Hugh North, a Columbia Democrat running with Know-Nothing support for the Pennsylvania House, to get his friends to support Roberts in exchange for help from the Stevens faction for North.²² Then, in last-minute instructions to Samuel Evans, Stevens wrote:

I think we will have to look to you to arrange Columbia at this election. I think your poll committee should be appointed *inside*. . . . I send you some tickets. I wish you would change the half of them, by folding, and substituting the Whig state ticket with the county independent ticket and properly distribute them.²³

If Current quotes Stevens correctly, this candidate for Congress in everything but name made, perhaps, a Freudian slip, for it was doubtless the *county* Whig ticket that he wanted replaced with the Independent ticket, even though he had become so disgusted with Whiggery that he may not have really cared whether or not that party's candidate for Governor, James Pollock, got elected. Yet his attitude toward Pollock is but incidental, for it is evident that Stevens, since he forsook a long-held opposition to secret societies, made his racial tolerance laughable in the face of his newly acquired nativist credentials, and was willing to use unethical tactics to fool "regular" Whig voters, wanted to see Hiester beaten as much as he had ever wanted anything.

He was not disappointed. In a close contest, Roberts won, polling 6,259 votes to 5,371 for Hiester and 4,266 for Democrat Joseph Lefevre, and although his 40 percent of the total ballot was well short of a majority, it gave Stevens his revenge upon the Silver Greys. By late November an exodus of Silver Greys to the Democrats was apparent, while Stevens's paper was promoting his name for the Senate, asserting that he would receive the support of the Lancaster County delegation in the legislature.²⁴



Mr. Stevens at the age of 70.

Those who view Stevens as an idealist in politics will be saddened to note this phase of his career; indeed, Ralph Korngold, his most sympathetic modern biographer, does not even mention Stevens's use of nativism. Fawn Brodie notes, however, that if Stevens was "guilty of the cheapest kind of political cynicism," he nevertheless "made no speeches against Catholics and foreigners, content to work secretly for the Know-Nothing slate of candidates."²⁵ Additionally, it should be noted that Stevens was not the only politician to use the Know-Nothings to gain his ends; indeed, James Pollock owed his election as Governor largely to nativist support. The main

significance, it seems, of Stevens's Know-Nothing interlude is as a proof of his desire for vengeance and a reassertion of his views in Congress by a stalking horse. Had Stevens desired only political power, he would have assumed a position of leadership in the Know-Nothings and run against Hiester himself, and that he did not do so indicates that his principles were not totally superseded by his ambitions.

The election of 1854 threw Lancaster County politics into a state of confusion that was to last through 1855. After a series of purges in the early part of the year, there was but one Know-Nothing lodge left in the City of Lancaster. Then, too, the national Know-Nothing party could not put up a national platform because of an inability to agree on the slavery question; the Lancaster organization, for its part, took a strong anti-extension stand.²⁶ Yet large as their problems were, they were nothing compared to those of the Whigs. When their county convention met in 1855, with but twelve men in attendance, a motion to exclude all Know-Nothings was voted down and the meeting broke up in a brawl.²⁷

In the October elections, Democrats and Know-Nothings each took about half of the offices, and the Whigs, who finally managed to put up a ticket, won nothing. Evidently many Democrats returned to their old party, which also picked up a number of former Whigs alienated by the Know-Nothings' antislavery stance.²⁸

Thaddeus Stevens, meanwhile, had failed miserably in his bid for a Senate seat; to the chagrin of the *Independent Whig*, four Lancaster County legislators had voted for Simon Cameron.²⁹ It is difficult to tell exactly where he stood politically in the next few months. A new movement, the Republican party, had begun the year before in the Midwest and was based on opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and any form of slavery extension. Here, it would seem, was an organization to which Stevens could wholeheartedly attach himself. Yet, according to Alexander Harris, when a "political friend" suggested to him that he take the lead in organizing the party in Lancaster County in 1855 he refused.³⁰ His *Independent Whig* supported the Know-Nothing slate in the election, and it can be assumed that Stevens did his bit for that ticket. Nevertheless, Stevens was among several signers of a call for a Republican State Convention to meet in Pittsburgh in September, a meeting that was to nominate Passmore Williamson, an abolitionist Quaker, for Canal Commissioner.³¹ It seems evident that Stevens's conversion to the Republican movement occurred somewhat earlier than his major biographers have asserted.³²

Richard Current writes of Stevens and the Republican party:

Its platform was not a satisfactory substitute for the Know-Nothing creed. When the new party found a group of interested followers in Lancaster, however, Stevens as an antislavery leader had no choice but to join and attempt to take the lead.³³

Yet one ought to note that the Republican platform was a most

satisfactory substitute for that of the Know-Nothings, in terms of both its appeal to Stevens's ideology and its voter appeal. Additionally, it was apparent in 1855 that nativism as a political cause was being shoved aside by the controversy over slavery extension, and Fawn Brodie notes that, as far as the Republicans' stand was concerned, Stevens had "a shrewd awareness of their appeal."³⁴ Finally, it appears from Stevens's role in the call for the Republican state convention that he was not at all dragged into the new party's camp in Lancaster County.

The death of Silver Grey Whiggery in Lancaster became evident as Isaac Hiester joined the Democratic party in early 1856.³⁵ Shortly thereafter a meeting was called for Wednesday morning, May 19, in Fulton Hall, to send delegates to an "Anti-Administration Convention" in Harrisburg. Thaddeus Stevens was beginning to effect a Republican organization in Lancaster County. Fewer than twenty people attended what the *Intelligencer* called "'this Abolition, Know-Nothing, Whig Assembly'" in which Stevens "appeared to be the controlling spirit," and the *Examiner*, still trying to hold together a Silver Grey organization, noted with satisfaction that "no Whigs participated in the meeting."³⁶ By the end of May, Stevens had been chosen as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia (where he was to unsuccessfully push for John McLean's nomination on the grounds that John C. Fremont could not carry Pennsylvania), and had gotten his organization's support in an attempt to put up a united ticket against the Democrats in the fall.³⁷

Stevens had real reason to go to such efforts, for the Democratic nominee for President was James Buchanan, that other (even more) prominent Lancaster politician. By late August, Stevens's local plan was working well. A Union (*not* Republican) convention met, containing old Silver Greys, Woolly Heads, and Know-Nothings. Although Stevens's candidate for renomination, Anthony Roberts, faced opposition from Edward Darlington of the *Examiner*, Dr. Samuel Keneagy of Strasburg, Thomas E. Franklin, and former Congressman John Strohm, he won easily on the first ballot.³⁸ He was to oppose Isaac Hiester, whose conversion to the Democracy was apparently early enough to gain him the nomination, in the October election. The Union ticket gained the support of the *Independent Whig*, the *Examiner*, and the *American Citizen*, a nativist sheet which, according to Current, Stevens "'whipped in.'"³⁹ Evidently Know-Nothing sentiment was still of consequence, for the *Independent Whig* charged that Hiester had been rejected three times for membership in a Know-Nothing lodge. Hiester's conversion did him little good, for Roberts easily defeated him by a vote of 10,001 to 8,320.⁴⁰

The Presidential election, however, was to prove more than Stevens could handle. Millard Fillmore, candidate of the Know-Nothings, threatened to drain enough votes from Fremont to throw Pennsylvania to Buchanan. To meet this danger, Stevens literally

bought the support of nativist editors for Fremont. In late September, Stevens wrote an appeal for funds to the Republican State Chairman, noting: "As I have already expended \$4,000 in securing presses I have resolved to go no further. . . . It is mortifying to need money for the public and not have it."⁴¹ Additionally, he was a prime mover in the plan that set up a common electoral slate for both Fremont and Fillmore. Finally, he went on the stump to denounce Buchanan. The *Independent Whig* had already appealed to racism and to the whiteworker's fears for his economic security:

The anti-Buchanan party is in favor of keeping negroes where they are. The Buchanan party is in favor of extending them all over the country, and if there are not enough in the country for the purpose, they favor the importation of some from Africa.⁴²

Stevens's appeal, however, was more narrow. Referring to Buchanan's silence during the campaign, he said: "There is no such person running as James Buchanan. *He is dead of lockjaw*. Nothing remains but a platform and a bloated mass of political putridity."⁴³ The *Intelligencer* replied in kind:

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 mass of political infamy and moral corruption. He stinks in the nostrils of every decent man. Let the unclean thing alone.⁴⁴

The enmity between the Stevens and Buchanan groups was not confined to verbal assaults. W. Frank Gorrecht tells of an incident, which probably occurred during the 1856 campaign, in which Stevens, making an address from the door step of his house on South Queen Street, was pelted with rotten eggs by a Buchanan group. Defying the crowd, he finished his speech, but a fire company pump-er was brought in the next day to clean the front of the house.⁴⁵

Although Stevens's Union electoral slate carried Lancaster County, with Buchanan winning a plurality of the votes, it did not carry the state, and Old Buck went to the White House. As Buchanan left for Washington in March 1857, politics were for the moment forgotten. Theophilus Fenn, editor of the *Independent Whig*, even expressed his hope that his counterpart on the *Intelligencer*, George Sanderson, would gain an appointment from the new President: "No one in the community deserves it better, and no man will more faithfully and conscientiously perform the duties of any office for which he is qualified."⁴⁶ Thaddeus Stevens, however, could not forget politics, for the effects of both national events and his new political machine were soon to take him to Washington again.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1858

Richard Current has commented that after 1854, "Know-Nothing votes in Lancaster could at any election send Stevens back to Congress, but, with Democrats in power, there was little he could do or be after he got there," and has asserted that the prospect of a Republican majority in the House of Representatives made 1858 the logical year for him to run again.¹ Current here argues from the absence of evidence, for nothing in the Stevens Papers or the Stevens press in Lancaster (now renamed the *Weekly Times*) indicates that Stevens had his eye on, say, the Speakership at this time. There is, however, abundant evidence that both personal factors and political circumstances could have had decisive influence on Stevens's decision to run again.

The Stevens Papers contain a form by which Stevens bound himself in November 1857 for a debt of \$12,600 to Mrs. Sarah Haines of Lancaster.² This could indicate either that Stevens had reduced his debts to the point where others entrusted their money to his care or that he was badly in need of cash for the coming campaign. In any case, he had reason to want the money. James Buchanan was President, and, as Fawn Brodie notes, it "must have been humiliating for Stevens to see this politician he so disliked rise to the nation's highest office out of a political district he counted so peculiarly his own." For Stevens to make Old Buck "one of my constituents" was "a modest ambition."³ Anthony Roberts was finishing his second term in the House, and nativism as a political issue had become submerged by other questions much more important to Stevens. Buchanan's support for the pro-slavery Lecompton constitution for the Territory of Kansas had alienated many voters in the North—particularly in Lancaster County. The Dred Scott decision of 1857, which held that Congress had no power to legislate on slavery in the territories and that no black, even if free, could be considered a citizen, further inflamed Northern opinion. Finally, a new tariff bill had reduced rates below the level that protectionists like Stevens had already considered too low, and the panic of August 1857 was blamed as its major effect. The economy continued to be depressed in 1858, and editorials in the *Weekly Times* thundered for higher tariffs.⁴ Both personal ambition and the opportunity to push for his particular principles moved this sixty-six year old lawyer to run again, but one might note that Stevens did not choose to become ambitious until the issues suited him.

As the time for delegate elections drew near, there was no dearth of candidates, and letters to the *Weekly Times* reveal what Republican voters wanted in their choice. Most, if not all, writers stressed protection, and one who supported Stevens held that his anti-slavery stand was meaningless in the face of the Dred Scott decision and the necessity for a higher tariff:

If, though, he has been an abolitionist, what harm can he do by making an anti-slavery speech or two, since the question of slavery in the territories has been settled and defined, &c., I think he will do no more harm in that way.⁵

Some voters, in presenting Nathaniel Burt as a candidate, took a slap at Stevens's prominent position within the party:

In selecting a man to represent the noble county of Lancaster in the national councils, *must* the people choose someone whose friends claim, that because he has long enjoyed, he still has a *right* to the *spoils of party*, one who by a long course of currying favors and distributing patronage, has claims upon the wire-pullers?⁶

Yet one writer held that Stevens, "a man that [*sic*] contended for the very same principles that the Union party now uphold, years ago,"⁷ was indeed entitled to the nomination.

The delegate election, held August 21, was evidently a rather wild affair. Stevens was able to win all four wards of Lancaster City,⁸ leading the *Examiner* to complain:

The delegate elections in this city afforded the b'hoys an excellent opportunity of getting high at somebody's expense. Liquor flowed freely and was to be had without money and without price. . . . [These elections] no more express the views and sentiments of a party generally, than do gutter wallowers the sentiments and feelings of the high dignitaries of a church. The sooner the whole system is abolished the better for the morals of the community.⁹

For all his success in the delegate elections, however derived, it took Stevens two ballots at the convention to gain the nomination. He gained 54 votes of the required 70 on the first ballot to 31 for his nearest rival, Abraham Herr Smith, with the other 54 votes split among D. W. Patterson, James Myers, Nathaniel Burt, and Alexander Hood. Then, picking up a few delegates from each of the other candidates, he won 72 votes and the nomination. His acceptance speech began with an attack on the Tariff of 1857 and a ringing declaration for protection, but then turned to the slavery question. Stevens argued that Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in states where it already existed, but that it did have the power to prohibit the institution in the territories, and concluded amid laughter and applause:

I am opposed to slavery, not simply because it interferes with the labor of white men (as some people suppose), but also because it is a sin against humanity.—I shall strenuously oppose the touching of it, where it does exist, and if that makes an abolitionist of me, here I am, and you have a good opportunity to see what the animal looks like.¹⁰

He then finished his address with a reference to Buchanan:

If I should be elected, perhaps I may come in contact with the worthy President, who claims this city as his home, and oppose his measures (although I do not hope to be especially noticed by him for it) and also say something against him; but if saying that he is the *meanest* man that has ever occupied the Presidential chair . . . brings his displeasure, *then I shall say it*.¹¹

Asserting that Stevens had gained the nomination "through

the influence of money, trickery, and deception," the *Intelligencer* attacked Stevens's speech: "He ignored all his previous teachings on Slavery and Abolitionism. He thought that now the Tariff question was the all-absorbing topic. Out upon the old hypocrite! Now, as ever, he knows but one topic, and that is Niggerism." Additional columns were filled with references to Stevens's earlier career and accused him of, among other things, fraud in the 1838 election and being "found in the company of Gamblers, handling the cards and dice with professional skill, and winning the money of poor inebriates and others."¹² Stevens then obtained a writ for libel, and the *Intelligencer*, now obviously referring to his housekeeper, warned:

The suit Stevens has instituted will, perhaps, render it necessary for us to bring prominently before the public certain points of his private character of which the community are now ignorant, and which we had no intention of alluding to, had he not, by his own act, thrown us on the defensive.¹³

It is unclear whether this threat caused Stevens to drop his suit, but there is no further mention of the matter in the newspapers.

Meanwhile, James Buchanan had also taken notice of the "People's" (not the Republicans') candidate. Although he had previously applied the lash to any Democrat who refused to support his pro-Lecompton policy and had used party discipline to drive his Kansas bill through the House, a Philadelphia reporter noted in September:

I have heard that Mr. Buchanan has written to his confidential friends in Lancaster that he was willing to dispense with an endorsement of his Kansas policy by them, and even to consent to the nomination of an avowed anti-Lecompton Democrat in opposition to Stevens.¹⁴

The local Democrats, according to the *Weekly Times*, decided that Lecompton should not be mentioned in their platform: "To this, the President, in his anxiety to see Mr. Stevens defeated, has consented, and today will see a Democratic convention, which fails to mention the distinguishing Democratic doctrine [*sic*]."¹⁵ The opposition party then nominated James M. Hopkins, who ten years before had bolted the Whig convention and who now was an anti-Lecompton Democrat, for Congress. To loud applause, the candidate vowed to vote for such tariff legislation "as would put every furnace in the country in blast." The party then adopted resolutions calling for the establishment of a National Foundry in Lancaster for the production of military wares, and appealing to the people

to elect a man who will have influence with Congress and the administration . . . as will advance the interests of the district, instead of one who is known to be unpopular with a majority of Congress, obnoxious to the administration, and a defamer of the President.¹⁶

Buchanan then arrived in Lancaster, supposedly to take a vacation. The *Weekly Times* reprinted a letter to Charley Williams in which the President asked that his razors be sharpened while he was at home, and noted sarcastically: "This we hope will put an end to the story that Mr. Buchanan has come here to manage our con-

gressional election for us. It is not his party, but his beard that has procured us the honor of his visit." But, adding that he had actually gone out on the stump, the paper then lashed out:

It must be very flattering to the Democracy of Lancaster county that President Buchanan should think them unable to attend properly to the election for Congressman, and that he must therefore leave the affairs of State and condescend to array himself personally as the opponent of Mr. Stevens. His Excellency, in this movement, certainly betrays his fear of the great champion of the People's Party, and dreads his power in Congress. . . . This is the first time that the President of the Union has left the White House to enter personally into a political contest with his own constituents, and dictate to them whom they shall and whom they shall not vote for as representatives. . . . Who but James Buchanan would so disgrace his official position?¹⁷

James Hopkins ("King Jimmy of Drumore"), it was asserted, "stood at the Polls and forced his laboring men to vote a certain *Blue* ticket under threat of being discharged from his employment."¹⁸ Special abuse, however, was reserved for Edward Darlington, editor of the *Examiner*, whose paper went over to the support of Hopkins. The *Weekly Times* charged that his continuing ambition for a seat in Congress, coupled with his inability to get a substantial number of delegates, was the real cause. It further asserted that Darlington had promised Isaac Hiester that he would endorse the Democrats in 1856, but changed his mind after attending the Republican National Convention, and accused him of secretly working against Stevens even while supporting him publicly.¹⁹

Stevens did not run a low-key campaign, but rather was scheduled to make thirteen speeches in less than two and one-half weeks.²⁰ The Democrats, for their part, were making a real run against him. Hopkins, an ironmaster like Stevens, was every bit as much a protectionist, and was an anti-Lecompton former Whig to boot. For the *Intelligencer*, the main difference between the two was in their positions on racial questions. Writing of Stevens, it asserted:

The Abolitionists of the county will all vote for him, because he is an Abolitionist of the deepest dye, and advocates the equality of the races.

But no Democrat will vote for him—no old line Silver Grey Whig—no moderate Republican—no straight out American. . . . They are of the opinion—and very properly too—that this is a Government of White Men, and that our member of Congress should be the Representative of White Men and their interests mainly.²¹

To this, the *Union*, a pro-Stevens campaign sheet, replied that the Democrats "consider the slavery question settled, but at the same time their principal war cry against Stevens is Abolitionist — woolly head — nigger worshipper — and other such slang."²² As the campaign headed into its final stages, Stevens summarized the prospects in a letter to Salmon P. Chase of Ohio:

Politics in Penna. are hard to manage. Our population, in the heavy districts South & East, are much less inclined to Republicanism than in the North & West. The only difficulty in my election is that I

am ahead of the people in Anti-Slavery. Still I expect to be elected although our leading Whig & Repub. paper [the *Examiner*] has gone against me. . . . Mr. Buchanan is very busy in aiding to defeat me. The Gov't's money will do much in a population like ours, but still I do not think they can succeed.²³

His prediction proved correct. Although he did not carry the City of Lancaster, where, according to the *Intelligencer*, "MONEY was freely used and the most open and unblushing BRIBERY practised," he won the election by a total vote of 9,513 to 6,340 for Hopkins.²⁴ The effects of his election were felt by some people almost immediately. Edward Darlington gave up at last and sold the *Examiner*, and James Buchanan, according to a story printed in the *Union*, was greatly upset. Assuring friends at the White House on election night that Hopkins would win and would carry Columbia by one hundred votes, the President received a telegram informing him that Stevens had taken the borough by a majority of seventy-five. "As soon as the old man read the dispatch, he jumped up and stamped his foot, and cried out as if in agony 'Oh, Columbia!'"²⁵ Stevens himself evidently expected his stay in Washington to be longer than the last one. Rather than live in a boardinghouse as he had previously done, he rented a house at 219 South B Street, Capitol Hill, to be kept by Lydia Smith. As the *Examiner* was to note years later: "The very reasons that rendered him unpopular in 1852 secured his triumphant nomination and election in 1858."²⁶ And Thaddeus Stevens correctly anticipated that national events and the majority of public opinion in Lancaster County had finally caught up to his views and that these factors, as well as his political machine at home, were to keep him in Congress for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEMS OF POWER

Congress was assembling in December 1859 just as John Brown was going to the gallows in Charles Town, Virginia. "The Republican party is responsible for the recent insurrection and bloodshed at Harper's Ferry," charged the *Intelligencer*, but Thaddeus Stevens was still committed to ending slavery by legal means. When he heard of John Brown's raid and was told by someone, "Why, Mr. Stevens, they'll hang that man," he replied, "Damn him, he ought to be hung!"²⁷ Congress continued to wrangle over sectional issues as the election of 1860 approached.

In this campaign, Democrats raised the specter of disunion as the result of the election of Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln, but were themselves unable to agree upon a nominee for President. The split between supporters of John C. Breckinridge and Stephen A. Douglas carried into Pennsylvania, and Lancaster Democrats, although they nominated an "independent" ticket to run against the "People's" (i.e., Republican) slate, named no candidate

for Congress. Thaddeus Stevens, however, was renominated by acclamation, and the *Union* reported that "the fierce and bitter opposition to Mr. S., which characterized the election two years ago, has died out."²

Nevertheless, all was not easy for Stevens. He had helped Simon Cameron, a Democrat turned Know-Nothing turned Republican, to get elected to the Senate some four years earlier, but now found himself "having to fend against Cameron's encroachments upon his own bailiwick."³ The *Intelligencer* gleefully reported that the majority of the People's ticket consisted of "out and out friends of Gen. Cameron" and that although Stevens was to be reelected, he was to serve his last term and afterwards "be laid on the shelf." Still, noted the *Intelligencer*, "if he is thus passive under the lash of Gen. Cameron, he is not the same man he was ten years ago."⁴ Undoubtedly there was a split within Lancaster Republicans between followers of Stevens and Cameron, as later events were to show, but it is possible that Stevens had made an arrangement with the Cameron wing for the sake of party unity. The *Examiner*, now a pro-Stevens paper, rather than attack Cameron, replied to the *Intelligencer* without answering the charge, simply noting that if Stevens were in need of the *Intelligencer's* help he might as well shut up shop. At any rate, Stevens, along with the rest of the People's ticket, won handily as he took 12,964 votes to 470 cast in scattering opposition.⁵ He now turned his attention to the upcoming fights for the Senate and Cabinet positions under Lincoln.

Another of Stevens's attempts to go to the Senate failed as a Cameron man, Edgar Cowan, won the post. Meanwhile, Lincoln debated whether he should honor a pledge (made by his managers at the Chicago convention) of a Cabinet post for Cameron in exchange for the support of the Pennsylvania delegation. He offered a post to the Senator, revoked his offer after opposition from Stevens, Alexander McClure, and others came to light, and then changed his mind a second time. Stevens himself wanted to be Secretary of the Treasury, but as Richard Current explains:

Whether he entered it [the Cabinet] or not, he must keep Cameron out, if his own position in Lancaster County was not to be jeopardized. A Lancaster adherent of Cameron [Owen Hoppel], begging him to use his influence in naming a postmaster for the district, explained: "We want to beat the Stevens faction which is dreadfully opposed to you." Certainly, with Cameron dispensing patronage from the Cabinet, the Stevens faction would be dreadfully handicapped.⁶

All was to come to naught, however, as Salmon P. Chase was named to the Treasury post and Cameron became Secretary of War. Stevens had to be content to be in the House, where the secession crisis was rapidly depleting the membership and efforts toward another compromise reflected public anxiety over the possibility of war. Current writes:

In local elections throughout the North during the winter of 1860-61 voters showed their disapproval of the program of violence and force.

In Lancaster, at the municipal elections a few weeks after Stevens' [sic] speech of January 29, the people chose a Democratic mayor by a large majority.⁷

Although it is a matter of historical record that Republicans fared poorly in local contests during the secession crisis, to use the Lancaster mayoral contest as a prime example is to stretch the point. That city had always been Democratic (except during the Know-Nothing period) and Stevens was able to carry it only when he ran without opposition. In any case, the attack on Fort Sumter roused the North into a unity never before known. With Republicans firmly in control of the House, Stevens became chairman of the important Committee on Ways and Means.

Such power did not prevent Stevens from having troubles at home. According to Current, a "Union movement," begun by conservative Republicans in Lancaster, threatened Stevens's position. Evidently this group was large enough for one of Stevens's followers, writing from the Customs House in Philadelphia, to ask:

Are you "in the hands of your friends" for next fall's nomination? . . . or are there reasons personal to me, or having reference to the State of politics in our County, which would render it impolitic for me to speak of you as a candidate for nomination next fall?⁸

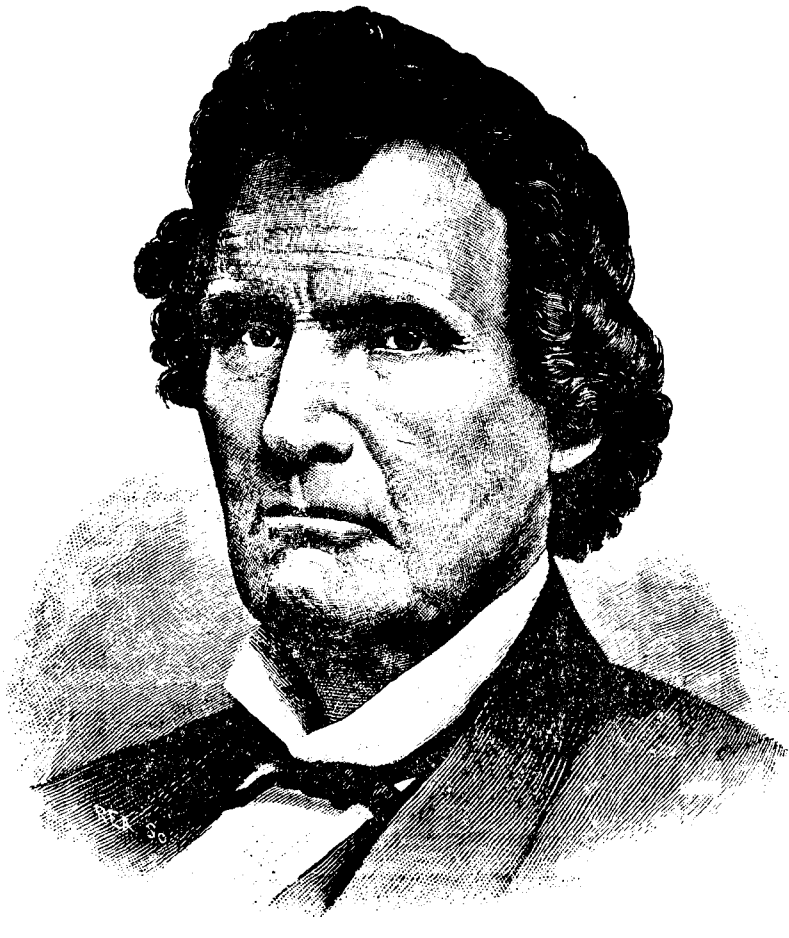
Although he suppressed this group, a secret clique, led by Alexander H. Hood, managed to name a substantial part, if not all, of the local ticket in 1861. Hood's group was supposedly dedicated to preventing the nomination of "foreigners" — i.e. those not born or raised in the County of Lancaster.⁹ It should be kept in mind that Stevens was born and reared in Vermont, while Cameron was a native of Maytown. Yet it should also be remembered that Hood was an early and committed nativist, that he was one of Stevens's law students, and that Stevens later had him appointed to a patronage post.¹⁰ Despite the comments of the *Intelligencer*,¹¹ the record indicates that Stevens was not badly hurt by either movement, for he gained renomination in 1862 without opposition. Indeed, the *Intelligencer* now complained that the convention "was completely under the control of THADDEUS STEVENS — the proceedings were directed by him, and the candidates, with but one or two exceptions, were all wool dyed Abolitionists of the most radical stamp."¹²

Stevens's public campaign in 1862 consisted mainly of two statements. In his speech accepting renomination, he vowed that "if you elect me I shall vote that every man be armed, black and white, who can aid in crushing the rebellion; that every inch of rebel soil be taken and sold to pay the debt of this war."¹³ Then came the battle of Antietam and Lincoln's preliminary proclamation of emancipation, and by the eve of the election Stevens had somewhat softened his tone. Echoing Lincoln, he argued in a circular that "As a war measure, absolutely necessary for our salvation, (without any regard to justice to the slave), I have urged the emancipation of the slaves, paying the loyal men for theirs, not the rebels."¹⁴

Lancaster Democrats nominated George M. Steinman, a member of a distinguished Lancaster family, and flooded the County with a broadside entitled "To the People of Lancaster County! A Few Facts in the Political History of Thaddeus Stevens," which, according to a pro-Stevens paper, was a "base fabrication that even the Democracy are ashamed of, or else Mr. Sanderson would have it published in the *Intelligencer*."¹⁵ Their efforts were to no avail. Although Republicans were defeated throughout Pennsylvania, and although Stevens ran behind the rest of his ticket, he still won handily, defeating Steinman by a vote of 11,174 to 6,650.¹⁶

The year 1863 turned out to be a hard one for the Congressman. In July, about the same time as the battle of Gettysburg, Jubal Early's Confederate raiders sacked and burned Stevens's iron works at Caledonia. Simon Stevens (no relation), one of his former law students, raised a fund of \$100,000 to pay for the damage. Thaddeus Stevens turned it down, although he admitted that he might have to resign from Congress and return to his practice to pay the debts incurred, and eventually the money went into a fund for the Lancaster County poor.¹⁷ Furthermore, Pennsylvania was to select a governor this year, and the election promised to be close. Stevens went on the stump, presenting for the first time his "conquered province" theory of reconstruction in a speech at Christiana.¹⁸ He also wrote for assistance from the Administration. Noting that Union troops had been commandeering horses and wagons from Adams and Franklin counties, he warned Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton: "Unless something be done to make restitution I verily believe that the administration will not win 1/5 of the votes in that region. Before these atrocities on the part of our troops it would have got 4/5."¹⁹ And, because the Republicans would "need every vote we can legally get" in Lancaster County, he asked Treasury Secretary Chase to grant leaves of absence to as many clerks in his department who resided in the County as possible for electioneering, adding with no apparent sense of irony: "I trust you will see that this is no partisan maneuver, but one truly national."²⁰ Andrew Curtin's re-election in October made this time off time well spent.

Stevens was by this time one of the most famous congressmen in the country, but, as Current has noted, "the pursuit of politics was more a humdrum, day-after-day, year-after-year business than dragon-slaying."²¹ There is no better illustration of this point than the numerous requests from constituents and others for jobs and favors found in the Stevens Papers. One volume of his manuscripts covers approximately three months in late 1863 and early 1864, and of the 125 letters contained, 26, or 20 percent, are requests from constituents, with at least 12 favor-seeking letters from others.²² This should not be regarded as a proper random sample, since, as Fawn Brodie notes, Stevens destroyed many of his papers before he died, but it does indicate that Stevens as Congressman had to attend to numerous petty demands in order to keep his fences mended at home.²³ "Strange that almost anybody can get a pull at the public teat except myself," complained Alexander Hood, and Stevens re-



Mr. Stevens at the age of 72.

warded his old friend by having him appointed a Collector of Internal Revenue by Lincoln in August 1862.²⁴ A Lebanon man wrote to Stevens, asking him for a report because "we really have no representation from Lebanon County." Occasionally Stevens had to refuse requests, as he did when he advised two Lancaster County women that he could not secure places for them in the Treasury Department, adding that because of a recently uncovered scandal "I would not advise a respectable lady to take a place there."²⁵ Indeed, Stevens was by this time so entrenched that he could apparently recommend persons other than constituents for positions. In a letter to Chase supporting Philadelphian Robert Reed for General Appraiser, he noted: "I have one or two constituents who desire it, but

they have not in my judgment, the *practical* qualifications necessary.”²⁶

Yet perhaps the best example of what Stevens could do with patronage is his work in getting his nephew Thaddeus named Provost Marshal for Lancaster County. One of Stevens’s other nephews, Alanson, had been killed at Chickamauga and when certain charges were made against Captain A. W. Boleinus, Stevens arranged his transfer and had Thaddeus appointed to the safe job. One disappointed applicant accused Stevens of deception in the matter and noted:

As I think you did me a great wrong by not giving me an equal chance to present my claims by petition, I will bear the disappointment by merely telling you that . . . I could not **beg** the favor, but **claimed** it as a right.²⁷

That Thaddeus Stevens Jr. did his uncle’s bidding promptly is shown by his appointment of a deputy “agreeably to your request.”²⁸ Yet Stevens, however blatant his nepotism, also used his influence in behalf of people who had few friends. When a group of River Brethren asked that Stevens work to prevent the repeal of a commutation law which kept them from having either to perform military service or furnish a substitute, the Congressman promptly obliged, but was unsuccessful.²⁹ Apparently the drudgery and arduous work of a politician’s life occasionally caused Stevens to despair. When Edward McPherson informed him of a plot to remove him as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, he replied: “If they succeed, it will greatly relieve me.”³⁰

In 1864 Stevens faced an electorate weary of war, inflation, and the draft. “The Conscription Act weighs heavily on our people’s judgt. as expected,” he reported to Edward McPherson in July.³¹ Nevertheless, he made clear that the abolition of slavery was for him a prerequisite of peace. After his renomination by acclamation at the Union County Convention, he declared:

When we shall have expiated our great National sin, and purified the public heart, we shall also enter into the land, which, politically and materially, flows with milk and honey. . . . Those who advise negotiations for peace on the simple basis of the integrity of the Union, thereby advise the re-enslavement of a people and offend all good beings among men and angels.³²

The *Intelligencer* by now acknowledged that, odious as Stevens was, he was essentially unbeatable:

Our belief is that he will be elected, and the country will be cursed for two years longer with his presence, at Washington, and then, we suppose, for *another* and yet *another* term, and so on *ad infinitum* as long as he lives.³³

The Democrats then named Hugh M. North, a Columbia attorney whom Stevens had aided ten years before in his campaign for the legislature, as their candidate.

For the *Intelligencer*, the major issue of the campaign was

Stevens's views on race. "The step from *equality before the law* to *social equality* is a very short one," it warned. "Is it not high time to stop?" An article on miscegenation and a reference to Lydia Smith ("a *lady highly scented*/The companion of his bosom") augmented the Democratic attack, and the *Intelligencer* summarized the choice for the voters: "Mr. Stevens represents the interests of the negro, Mr. North those of the white man."³⁴ Meanwhile, the *Examiner* mused that support for North among the "Dutch and Irish" was

... a little strange when we consider that this fellow North is one of the most malignant and bitter know-nothings and persecutors of the foreign element in Lancaster county. He was once elected to the Legislature on the know-nothing ticket.³⁵

New Union victories and renewed public enthusiasm aided the Republicans, and Stevens reported to Justin S. Morrill of Vermont on October 7: "On the 5th we had the largest meeting that I ever saw assembled as a county meeting. I think we shall carry this county."³⁶ His optimism was justified by the returns as he defeated North by a vote of 11,204 to 7,158 and Lincoln later carried Pennsylvania and the election.³⁷

With Lincoln's death and the subsequent split between Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans, Stevens now became Radical leader in the House. Assured of local support, he made his major speech on his confiscation plan for the payment of war debts to an audience in Lancaster on September 6, 1865.³⁸ By early 1866 he was to write to Oliver J. Dickey:

As the convention is near I drop a line—I think it well to entirely omit the name of the President. Then indorse Congress and the rebuke will be better than a resolution of censure. Radical resolutions alone will save us. We shall lose doe-faces at any rate—We must gain correct men.³⁹

Johnson, for his part, did what he could to hurt Stevens in Lancaster as he removed Alexander Hood, John Cochran, and J. K. Alexander from their patronage posts.⁴⁰ The campaign of 1866 was to be the last for Stevens, who was now seventy-four. Lancaster Democrats named Samuel H. Reynolds to oppose him and promptly began the attack. Noting that a black had been admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia, the *Intelligencer* asked:

How long will it be before Thaddeus Stevens presents some negro lawyer to the Court of Lancaster and moves to admit him to practice? ... And how would the honest men of Lancaster county who are chosen at stated periods [i.e., jurors] like to be addressed by a negro lawyer?⁴¹

Reynolds himself raised the racist cry before a mass meeting in Lancaster:

White men where is your pride? Has the blood of your noble and patriotic fathers ceased to flow in your veins, do you forget that at Bunker Hill, Yorktown, and Saratoga the best blood of America was shed to form a white man's government, and will you now give over this government, built on the graves of well-tried patriots, into the keeping of negroes? Never, no, never!⁴²

Stevens, however, had no trouble in this election as he took 14,298 votes to 8,675 for Reynolds.⁴³ Yet this was not an important election for him, for he had his eye once again on the Senate, a race that was clearly to indicate the extent of his political power.

The same county convention that renominated Stevens also instructed all the Lancaster County members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to vote for Stevens for Senator "*so long as he shall consent to be a candidate.*"⁴⁴ When one newspaper reported that this endorsement was "with the understanding that Curtin came in second," Stevens promptly replied that he was Lancaster's first and only choice for the post and accused the editor of trying to "deceive" his readers.⁴⁵ Stevens and his supporters were in earnest about this race, to the extent that a pro-Stevens newspaper complained that "the Representatives of his county do not urge him with the positiveness of their instructions from their constituency."⁴⁶ Yet despite a personal appearance by Stevens in Harrisburg, and even though the Lancaster County delegation voted solidly for him — "our Senators even transcending strict party usages by remaining out of the caucus" — Stevens came in a poor third behind Simon Cameron and Andrew Curtin, gaining but seven votes in the Republican caucus.⁴⁷

Stevens and Cameron, long rivals for power, apparently worked out an arrangement for the distribution of patronage in Lancaster, but it soon fell apart. In March 1867, when it appeared that two Cameron men were to be given jobs, Stevens informed the Senator that he expected the appointments to be rejected in the Senate. When it became clear, however, that Cameron would not go along, Stevens wrote to Secretary of State William Seward, asking him to get President Johnson to "settle an ugly trouble in my Dist." by appointing two Stevens men, although it is difficult to see why Stevens expected his enemy in the White House to do such a favor for him. He then addressed a final note to Cameron: "Do not allow me to be kept in anxiety — it don't [*sic*] become old age. You may need repose also a few years hence." For all his efforts, however, Stevens got but one of the two appointments.⁴⁸

Another prominent Lancaster politician with whom Stevens had some dealings was ex-President James Buchanan. The two were supposedly such bitter enemies that at the wedding of their mutual friend, Dr. Henry Carpenter, one of them failed to notice the other's outstretched hand — although which one gave the insult depends on which version of the story one reads.⁴⁹ Yet it is also related that they secretly met at each others' homes during the war for conferences, and when Stevens accused Buchanan of extravagance in furnishing the White House and Buchanan protested, the Congressman sent the ex-President an apology.⁵⁰ When a *New York Herald* reporter visited Lancaster in June 1867 to interview Stevens, he wrote on the difference in the public standing of the two men, and added a description of the activity around the Stevens home.

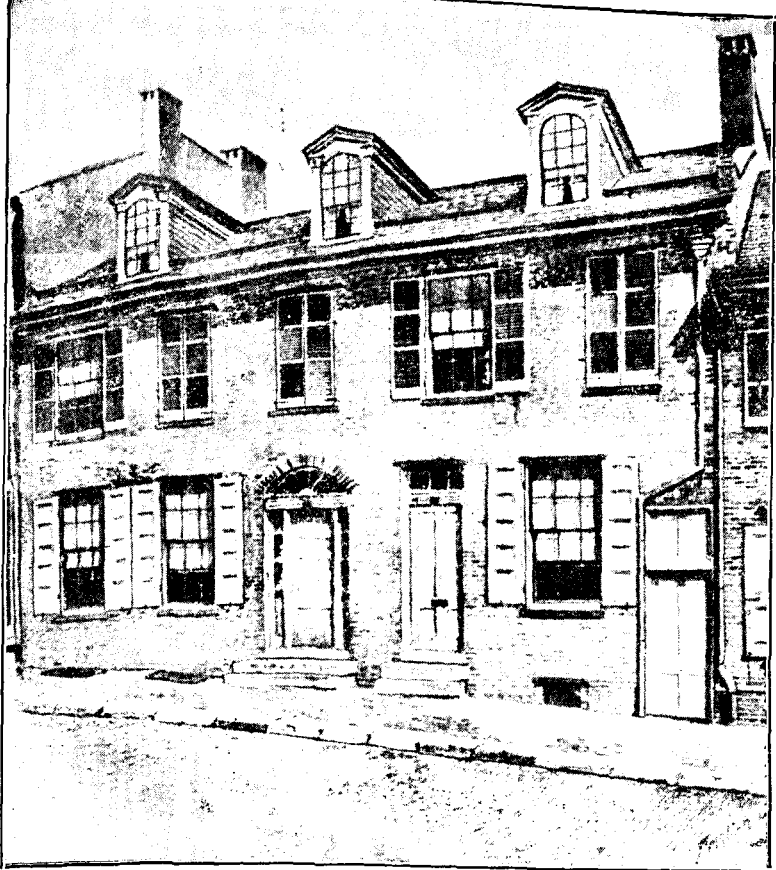
The city of Lancaster numbers among its eighteen or twenty thousand inhabitants two citizens who have figured somewhat prominently in the public affairs of the country—James Buchanan and Old Thad Stevens; and the relative positions these two celebrities occupy at home affords a fair illustration of the political condition of the country and of the tone of popular sentiment at the present time. The one, who has been President of the United States and properly represents the rank copper-head democracy as it existed before the Southern rebellion, lives in close retirement, and receives no more notice or thought from his neighbors than does the humblest resident of the city. The other, who would not object to being President of the United States, and is the representative of aggressive radicalism born of the rebellion, is the center of attraction to all the country around, as well as to persons from other States, and has his goings and comings, his sayings and his doings duly chronicled and gossiped over, day after day. The one is the embodiment of the dead past; the other of the living present. Your correspondent, who reached this place a few days ago, was impressed with these thoughts by the following conversation, held by him with a citizen of Lancaster soon after his arrival:

“Ex-President Buchanan lives near this place, does he not?” inquired your correspondent. “Well, yes. He lives ’bout a mile and a half out,” was the reply. “Is he at home at the present?” “I don’t know whether he is at home or not. I suppose he is.” “Is his health good nowadays?” “I don’t know anything about his health.” “You do not appear to know a great deal concerning so distinguished a fellow citizen.” “Distinguished! Well, we know that such a man as old Poppy Buchanan lives away out yonder, but that’s about all we do know, and that’s about all anybody cares about knowing.” Having arrived at this point, your correspondent sailed off on another tack. “Well, you know Mr. Stevens, I suppose?” was his next question. “Mr. Stevens—who’s Mr. Stevens?” accompanied by a vacant expression of countenance. “Oh, Thad Stevens the member of Congress, to be sure.” “Oh, you mean old Thad!” cried the Lancastrian, brightening up with sudden intelligence. “Well, I guess I do. Everybody knows him. But we call him Old Thad here, and don’t know him by any other name.” “You seem to think more here of Old Thad, as you call him, than you do of the ex-President.” “More of him? Well, I should say we do. We’re democrats, here, in the city; but then we know Poppy Buchanan’s played out and don’t amount to anything. But as to Old Thad, while we mayn’t like his politics, we know that he’s alive, and that he means work all the while.”

Old Thad—to adopt his Lancaster appellation—resides in a plain, substantial, two and a half story red brick house on South Queen street, in the city of Lancaster. It has originally been two houses, now knocked into one, the smaller being used as the owner’s law office and the larger as his dwelling. About the doors, at almost any hour of the day, may be observed some half a dozen or more of politicians, some local and some visitors from a distance, all of whom are anxious for an interview with the leader of the extreme radical wing of Congressional republicanism.⁵¹

When Buchanan died in June 1868, Stevens offered an amendment to the eulogy reported in the House that would strike the words “ability and patriotic motives” from the text, but when he was accused in Lancaster of opposing “due honors” for Buchanan, he wrote a public letter to Dr. Carpenter:

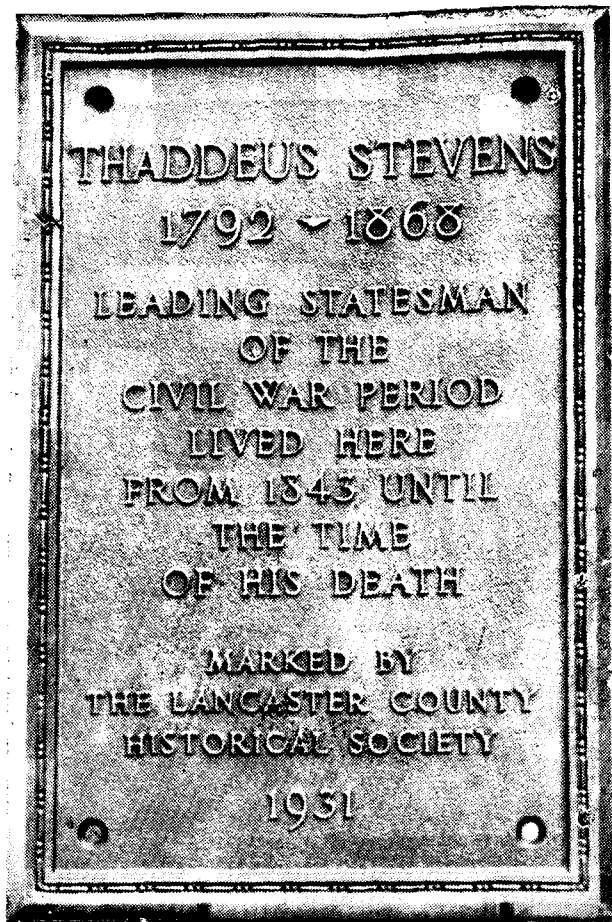
On the other hand, I attempted twice to introduce resolutions laudatory of Mr. Buchanan’s private character and personal history, and asked the House to adjourn to attend his funeral. . . . I am anxious



The home in Lancaster of Thaddeus Stevens, the great Commoner. The building, 47-49 South Queen street, is still standing though much altered. Mr. Stevens had his law office in the room toward Vine street, with the narrow door. He purchased the property on April 17th, 1843, and resided here until his death. It was in this house that his funeral service was held on Monday, August 17th, 1868.

that this mistake should be corrected, for I should be ashamed of such prejudice against the dead.⁵²

By July 1868 Stevens was in many ways a beaten man. He had lost in his attempt for the Senate, failed to remove Andrew Johnson by a margin of one vote in the Senate, and was clearly dying. He had even managed to offend the local Republicans by his stand on the currency question. When he asserted that he would rather go over to the Democracy than support the Republican stand that favored payments to bondholders in gold coin rather than in green-



Bronze tablet erected July 17th, 1931, on the building at No. 47-49 South Queen street, by The Lancaster County Historical Society, marking the site of the residence of Thaddeus Stevens. John Ehlers, sheriff, sold the property, which belonged to George Kleiss, to Thaddeus Stevens, for \$4000.00, on April 17th, 1843. (Recorded in Sheriff Deed Book No. 1, page 317).

backs, the *Intelligencer* sarcastically proclaimed "Thad's Conversion."⁵³ Although roundly condemned for his opinions by the Republican newspapers of Lancaster, Stevens was not in any political trouble. The *Express* denied that it was seeking a replacement for the Congressman, and the *Examiner* held that although Stevens's stand was "ill advised, and highly improper," it was not "the unpardonable sin, which separates Mr. Stevens in any essential particular from the great masses of the Republican party."⁵⁴ Mean-

while, two Republicans mentioned as replacements for the Congressman, Samuel Shock and Thomas E. Franklin, announced that they would not run.⁵⁵ Stevens could have simply lived off his reputation in the Lancaster area and would have been returned to Washington at every election — had he continued to live.

When Thaddeus Stevens finally died at the age of seventy-six on August 11, 1868, even the *Intelligencer* was briefly silent: "We have not one harsh word to utter as we stand in the presence of the dead."⁵⁶ The local Republicans, whose primary election was to be held on August 15, kept Stevens's name on the ballot, and he was renominated. Fawn Brodie calls this action "an extraordinary gesture of respect,"⁵⁷ but lack of time to put forward another candidate seems to have been the primary reason for the move. The *Intelligencer* reported that at Stevens's funeral "A large number of deeply interested Radical politicians from the county were on hand . . . to speculate as to the succession to Congress. There was much cyphering and any amount of caucusing among those who were present." Within a month of the funeral, in a special primary, Stevens's protege Oliver J. Dickey won the nominations to serve Stevens's unexpired and upcoming terms in the House.⁵⁸

Samuel H. Reynolds, Stevens's last election opponent, was chairman of a local Committee on Arrangements, and thousands of visitors came to Lancaster for the ceremonies. Stevens was buried in Shreiner's Cemetery on Mulberry Street, the only burying ground in the city that did not exclude blacks by charter provision. The funeral provided an occasion for the *Intelligencer* to make a final attack on Stevens's principles:

That numbers of decent Republicans were thoroughly disgusted at the sight which was presented in this city on the arrival of the remains of Mr. Stevens, we know. It looked as if a programme had been carefully arranged to force an open recognition of negro equality, on an occasion when to protest against it, was difficult if not impossible. . . . For the time all were prepared to lay aside partisan differences, and to join in the funeral obsequies. This feeling was, however, changed to deep disgust when the place of honor was given to armed negro soldiers, and when, in the sight of all observers, the Radical Councilmen of Washington, some being negroes and others whites, with their negro clerk, filed through the street, arm and [sic] arm. Then were heard murmurs of indignation as well as expressions of natural disgust from men of both political parties. The people of Lancaster were not prepared for this open disregard of all distinction between the two races. The Republicans had heard Thaddeus Stevens advocate such equality, but it was then only a thing of words. They were not prepared to witness this open exhibition of it in all its offensiveness.⁵⁹

Though Stevens could not read this attack, it would not have surprised him. His career as a Lancaster politician, after all, had been largely a story of opposition to his views on racial equality. That he was able to gain and maintain support in the area in spite of these views was, rather than a tribute to the tolerant Lancastrian mind, a tribute to his ability as a political tactician on the local level.

STEVENS AS A LANCASTRIAN—SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Thaddeus Stevens was more than a politician continually seeking office, and some mention of his place in the community helps one better to understand why he was both so ardently loved and bitterly hated.

Stevens, as part of his "law school" on South Queen Street, maintained an excellent law library, from which he freely lent. Yet he and other lawyers, anxious to establish a central collection at the new Court House, formed the Lancaster Law Library Association in the 1850's and eventually set up a library for the use of all the bar. Stevens was president of this organization from its inception until his death. He also served from 1855 as a member and later as president of Shiffler Fire Company No. 7 of Lancaster. Furthermore, although he almost never attended a religious service and was not baptized until the night of his death, there is a record of his contribution to the Lancaster Bible Society in 1852.¹

Despite his often straitened financial condition, Stevens's philanthropy was legendary. When he first acquired his house in Lancaster at a sheriff's sale, he allowed the former owner, "one Klein," then eighty years old, to continue to occupy the place until he died in 1853. Alexander Hood wrote four years after the man's death:

No man, woman or child ever approached Thaddeus Stevens, worthy or unworthy, and asked for help, who did not obtain it when he was possessed of the means. And with this unbounded liberality was associated a strong feeling of pride. . . . He would never confess to a want of money. . . . When in this condition, if contributions were solicited, he invariably found some objection to the object, or to the person. . . . [for] he preferred to have the reputation of harshness or cruelty, rather than be suspected of even occasional poverty.²

Additionally, Stevens, who had a clubfoot, supposedly instructed his physician, Dr. Henry Carpenter, that he would pay him well for every lame boy that he could cure.³

Yet there was one charitable operation in which Stevens had to keep his role undisclosed. According to W. Frank Gorrecht, Stevens used Edward H. Rauch as his agency in a personally financed operation "for the purposes of frustrating the operations of slave catchers in Lancaster County" in the 1850's. Acting under the cover of a slave catcher, Rauch would learn what the numerous gangs operating in the countryside were up to and pass the information on to Stevens through Christopher Dice, a Lancaster grocer. To be sure, for Stevens to act as a protector of fugitive slaves was a direct violation of the Fugitive Slave Law and, if discovered, would have led to his disbarment and the end of his political career.⁴

Stevens's best remembered gifts, however, were contained in his

will. In a codicil, "out of respect for the memory of my mother," he gave one thousand dollars to the Lancaster Baptist congregation toward the building of a church. After several other bequests, he willed the remainder of his estate to his nephew Thaddeus Stevens Jr., to be paid in three five-year periods on the condition that he consume no alcoholic beverages. Apparently aware, however, that his nephew would never stop drinking, Stevens provided that otherwise, if the remainder of the estate amounted to fifty thousand dollars or more, "I give it all to my trustees to erect, establish, and endow a house of refuge for the relief of the homeless and indigent orphans." Directing that it should be established in Lancaster or, if not possible there, in Columbia, Stevens wrote that the orphans "shall all be carefully educated in the various branches of English education, and all industrial trades and pursuits." W. Frank Gorrecht asserts that this school was Stevens's dream for years, but that the burning of his Caledonia Iron Works forced him to postpone the project. True or not, the institution that was eventually built was bound by the man's will to certain other requirements that reflected Stevens's ideals:

No preference shall be shown on account of race or color, in the admission or treatment; neither poor Germans, Irish or Mohammedans, nor any others on account of their race, or the religion of their parents, must be excluded. All the inmates shall be educated in the same classes and manner, without regard to color. They shall be fed at the same table.⁵

Included in the will was a bequest to Lydia Smith; Stevens directed that she could receive either five hundred dollars per year for life or five thousand dollars in one lump sum, and further provided that she was entitled to remove all the furniture in the house she claimed as hers "without further proof."⁶ This doubtless served to add to the continuing controversy over the nature of Stevens's relationship with his mulatto housekeeper.

Stevens hired Lydia Smith, a widow with two sons, soon after he arrived in Lancaster, and she remained with him, both in Lancaster and in Washington, until his death. There were references to her relationship with Stevens several times during his various political campaigns,⁷ but the most open attack in the Lancaster press occurred in July 1866 when the *Intelligencer* learned that Stevens had returned a deed to a Lancaster cemetery that would not inter blacks. In an editorial, Stevens was accused of a desire to be buried beside Lydia Smith, and was also subject to the following:

Nobody doubts that Thaddeus Stevens has always been in favor of negro equality, and here, where his domestic arrangements are so well known, his practical recognition of his pet theory is perfectly well understood. . . . There are few men who have not given to the world such open and notorious evidence of a belief in negro equality as Thaddeus Stevens. A personage, not of his race, a female of dusky hue, daily walks the streets of Lancaster when Mr. Stevens is at home. She has presided over his house for years. Even by his own party friends, she is constantly spoken of as Mrs. Stevens . . .⁸

Stevens, significantly enough, did not sue, even though he had

brought a libel action against the *Intelligencer* when called a gambler by that paper in 1858. An accusation of seduction and adultery in an Alabama newspaper, called to Stevens's attention by W. B. Mellius (who complained that the article was hurting his campaign for election), brought forth a reply in which Stevens merely stated: "I believe I can say that no child was ever raised or, so far as I know, begotten under my roof."⁹ That Stevens denied paternity only, that he once compared himself in the matter of personal vices to Richard M. Johnson, that he had Jacob Eichholtz paint her portrait, and that he insisted that she always be addressed as "Mrs. Smith" rather than "Lydia" is for Fawn M. Brodie evidence enough that Lydia Smith was far more than a housekeeper for Thaddeus Stevens.¹⁰

Ralph Korngold, on the other hand, while admitting that "we can take it for granted that in his younger days Stevens had intimate relations with women," argues that such a relationship with Lydia Smith "appears improbable." He points out that she was a devout Catholic and that Stevens was "on the best of terms" with her confessor, Father Bernard Keenan.¹¹ Indeed, she was buried not with Stevens, but in St. Mary's Cemetery in Lancaster, and it is related that Father Keenan and Stevens often played cards at the "Lamb" on South Queen Street.¹² Furthermore, Charles I. Landis, a Lancaster jurist, has pointed out the following about Mrs. Smith:

In her will she bequeathed to the three daughters of Dr. Carpenter and to his stepson, to one of the daughters of Mr. Burrowes, and to Mrs. Krefoot, the wife of the late George B. Krefoot, small legacies, in appreciation of the kindness which she had received from them. If she had been a woman of bad character, is it likely that ladies of this standing would have shown her any regard? To every one to whom these ladies were or are known, for some of them are yet alive, the question answers itself.¹³

Richard Current adds little to the controversy, except to note that Stevens in November 1867 ordered Isaac Smith, one of her sons, to leave the house and not to return "under the penalty of being considered a Housebreaker," and to add the following cheap shot: "Evidently the daily practice of racial equality had its vexations even for egalitarian Old Thad!"¹⁴

Here the matter rests, and the nature of Stevens's relationship with Lydia Smith remains a matter for individual judgment. It seems evident, however, that if his political followers did refer to his housekeeper as "Mrs. Stevens," they did not care enough about the propriety of the situation to break with him, and that Stevens's enemies in Lancaster, partisan as they were, had enough regard for him not to make his supposed relationship the keynote of each of their campaigns. Additionally, there is some heretofore unnoticed evidence that indicates what kind of woman Lydia Smith was.

Lydia Smith was to live until 1884, and in 1879 she filed a claim of \$350 against the estate of Thaddeus Stevens Jr., who had died a hopeless alcoholic. Five witnesses swore that she had good reason to do so. Jacob Effinger testified that when Stevens's nephew

came back to Lancaster from Caledonia, drunk and with "human filth on him," Mrs. Smith "was sent for when we could do nothing for him." Although sometimes in Washington when called, "she always came when we sent for her," and would clean him up and send for a doctor. According to Hettie Franciscus, during the year she lived with Mrs. Smith, Stevens (Jr.) was there about six times, "sick two and three weeks at a time." Dr. George A. King swore that Stevens "was always broke when he came to Mrs. Smith's," and that this occurred about half a dozen times a year. The doctor, for his part, "would not have cared for him as she did for \$15 a week." Further testimony showed that this went on "for a number of years," and that Mrs. Smith, when her task was finished, would take Stevens to the train station and buy his ticket for his return to Caledonia — from which he could be expected to return after his next bender.¹⁵ This evidence, though it may mean little for the historical reputation of Thaddeus Stevens the politician, says much for the reputation of Lydia Smith, whose devotion to his outcast nephew shows her to be, indeed, much more than an ordinary housekeeper — or an ordinary mistress.

As for Thaddeus Stevens himself, this examination of his career as a Lancaster politician seems to provide adequate evidence for an assessment of his character, if not his historical reputation. Stevens has been called vindictive, and those who examine his underground campaign against Isaac Hiester in 1854 will find more than enough ammunition to support that charge. Yet those who regard him as magnanimous can point to his fabled generosity. If Stevens were a man who hated, he was also a man who was hated, as any number of clippings from the *Intelligencer* will prove. Whether Stevens was more devoted to political power or his unpopular political principles seems incapable of resolution. Yet if he was strictly a political animal, he would not have championed the cause of blacks (who, after all, could not vote in Pennsylvania at this time), would never have risked his position by taking part in the defense of the Christiana Riot participants in 1851, and would have arrayed himself at the head of the Know-Nothing movement in 1854. On the other hand, if he was strictly devoted to his ideals of equality, he would have, like Salmon Chase, joined the free-soil movement in the 1840's and would have had nothing to do with the Know-Nothings. It is unfair to call Stevens a master politician, for James Buchanan, with a much smaller political base at home, became President of the United States while Stevens, despite several attempts, could not even be elected a Senator. It would be equally wrong to call Stevens the epitome of moral fervor in politics, for his record includes the outright bribery of newspaper editors and vote fraud, and his advocacy of equality for blacks pales in comparison to the record of Charles Sumner. A judicious general assessment of Stevens seems to be that, in sum, he was a politician who knew his business but was attached enough to his unpopular ideals to be often indifferent to the political consequences of his acts.

MANUSCRIPTS

Library of Congress, Washington.

Thaddeus Stevens Papers.

Of limited value for this study. Loaded with gaps, the collection contains no political correspondence from February 1843 to February 1849 and deals mainly with Stevens's career during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Stevens's handwriting is practically undecipherable, but the collection does have value for a picture of Stevens's relations with his constituents.

Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster

Thaddeus Stevens Papers.

Contains few original manuscripts, but does contain some photostated letters from the Stevens Papers and a copy of Stevens's will.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Thompson Collection

Salmon P. Chase Papers

Both collections used for letters from Stevens to Edwin M. Stanton and Chase.

Yale University Library, New Haven

Broadside Collection, Beinecke Library.

Contains an 1862 anti-Stevens broadside, "To the People of Lancaster County! A Few Facts in the Political History of Thaddeus Stevens."

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Orphan's Court of Lancaster County. *Accounts and Records*. Book 36, pp. 269-272. Copy of the Office of the Register of Wills, Lancaster County Court House.

Used for testimony on the claim of Lydia Smith on Thaddeus Stevens Jr.'s estate.

U. S. Bureau of the Census. *Ninth Census of the United States*. Vol. 1: *Statistics of the Population of the United States*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872.

Contains a summary of the population of Lancaster County from 1830 to 1870.

NEWSPAPERS

American Press and Republican (Lancaster), 1846-1848. Lancaster County Historical Society.

A nativist sheet.

Independent Whig (Lancaster), 1851-1857. Library of Congress.

Stevens's organ during the years of struggle with the Silver Greys.

Lancaster Examiner, 1842-1868. Microfilm, Lancaster County Library and Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. Library.

An anti-Stevens, Silver Grey newspaper until sold by Edward Darlington in 1858; then pro-Stevens.

Lancaster Express, 1858-1868. Lancaster County Historical Society.

Originally nonpartisan, became pro-Stevens during the Civil War.

Lancaster Inland Weekly, 1854. Lancaster County Historical Society.

Know-Nothing and pro-Stevens.

Lancaster Inquirer, 1860-1868. Lancaster County Historical Society.

Begun as a Douglas paper, became pro-Stevens during the Civil War.

Lancaster Intelligencer, 1842-1868. Microfilm, Lancaster County Library and Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., Library.

Democratic and bitterly anti-Stevens throughout this period.

Lancaster Union, 1858, 1860. Lancaster County Historical Society.

A pro-Stevens campaign sheet.

Lancaster Weekly Times, 1857-1859. Library of Congress.

A continuation of the pro-Stevens *Independent Whig*.

New York Herald, July 8, 1867. Library of Congress.

Contains an interview with Stevens.

Public Register and American Citizen (Lancaster), 1854. Lancaster County Historical Society.

A nativist sheet put out by Darlington to counteract Stevens's capture of the Lancaster Know-Nothing press.

BIOGRAPHIES

Brodie, Fawn M. *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South.* New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1959.

Perhaps the most sophisticated biography of Stevens. Attempts to deal with Stevens both as a politician and as a human being; indeed, Brodie has probably come closer to knowing Stevens than anyone else. More than a psychological study, it is also a valuable general narrative of the politics of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Current, Richard Nelson. *Old Thad Stevens: A Story of Ambition.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1942.

The pioneer revisionist biography of Stevens, this book launched Current on his career as a major historian. Technically superb, but with a distinct Beardian slant and a noticeable anti-Stevens bias. Current holds that Stevens was primarily motivated by political ambition, and his treatment of Stevens and the politics of Lancaster County is invaluable. My debt to this biography is immense and is only partially acknowledged in the footnotes.

Korngold, Ralph. *Thaddeus Stevens: A Being Darkly Wise and Rudely Great.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955.

A sympathetic portrait of Stevens, dealing primarily with the Civil War and Reconstruction years and having no new evidence on the years in Gettysburg and Lancaster.

Woodley, Thomas Frederick. *Thaddeus Stevens.* Harrisburg: Telegraph Press, 1934.

Written by a Bangor, Pennsylvania lawyer, this biography is long, mechanical, and laudatory.

OTHER BOOKS AND HISTORICAL ARTICLES

Coleman, John Frederick. "The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy 1848-1860." Ph.D. Dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1970.

The definitive work on the period, soon to be published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Based to a large extent on manuscript sources, it covers state politics in general.

Current, Richard Nelson. "Love, Hate, and Thaddeus Stevens." *Pennsylvania History* 14 (October 1947): 259-272.

An attempt by Current to defend his "political ambition" thesis of Stevens's motivation.

Gorrecht, W. Frank. "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens." *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 37 (1933): 21-33.

Based on personal recollections and not relied upon by the major Stevens biographers.

Hensel, W. U. *The Christiana Riot and the Treason Trials of 1851.* Lancaster: Press of the New Era Company, 1911.

A detailed account by an amateur historian.

——. "Thaddeus Stevens as a Country Lawyer." *Lancaster County Historical Papers* 10 (1906): 247-290.

A popular account, based on both fact and legend. Originally presented as an address to the Pennsylvania State Bar Association.

Harris, Alexander. *A Review of the Political Conflict in America, from the Commencement of the Anti-Slavery Agitation to the Close of Southern Reconstruction: Comprising Also a Resume of the Career of Thaddeus Stevens; Being a Survey of the Struggle of Parties Which Destroyed the Republic and Virtually Monarchized Its Government.* New York: T. H. Pollock, 1876.

- A bitterly anti-Stevens, anti-Union, anti-black study, dealing mainly with the Civil War and Reconstruction years.
- History of the Rise, Progress, and Downfall of Know-Nothingism in Lancaster County*, by Two Expelled Members. Lancaster: n.p., 1856.
- An anonymous and spiteful account.
- Hood, Alexander H. "Thaddeus Stevens." In *A Biographical History of Lancaster County*, pp. 568-598. Edited by Alexander Harris. Lancaster: Elias Barr and Company, 1872.
- A laudatory sketch, written by one of Stevens's law students and political friends.
- Jolly, James A. "The Historical Reputation of Thaddeus Stevens." *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 74 (Easter 1970): 2-71.
- A professional historian's sketch of Stevens's life, character, and Reconstruction historiography.
- Keller, David R. "Nativism or Sectionalism: A History of the Know-Nothing Party in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania." *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 75 (Easter, 1971): 2-100.
- A Princeton senior thesis, heavily documented and filled with sociological analysis.
- Klein, Frederic Shriver. *Lancaster County Since 1841*. 2nd ed., rev. and enl. Lancaster: Lancaster County National Bank, 1955.
- Useful as an economic portrait of the County during the period studied.
- Landis, Charles I. "A Refutation of the Slanderous Stories against the Name of Thaddeus Stevens Placed before the Public by Thomas Dixon." *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 28 (1924): 49-52.
- An attempt to disprove stories of the impropriety of Stevens's relationship with Lydia Smith, written by a Lancaster judge.
- Mueller, Henry R. *The Whig Party in Pennsylvania*. Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, no. 230. New York: Columbia University Press, 1922.
- Puts Stevens's career as a legislator and Whig politician in the perspective of Pennsylvania's politics from 1832 to 1854. A detailed study which contains both exhaustive narrative and analysis.
- McNeal, John Edward. "The Antimasonic Party in Lancaster County 1828-1843." *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 69 (Easter 1965): 67-150.
- Useful for notes on the impact of Stevens's arrival in Lancaster on the political scene.
- Snyder, Charles McCool. *The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics 1832-1848*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1958.
- The best general study of Pennsylvania politics in the period, based largely on manuscripts and newspapers of the period. Weak on analysis.
- Witmer, T. Richard. "Some Hitherto Unpublished Correspondence of Thaddeus Stevens." *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 35 (1931): 49-68.
- Contains several useful letters found in the Stevens Papers in the Library of Congress.

CHAPTER I NOTES

- ¹ Ralph Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens: A Being Darkly Wise and Rudely Great* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 13.
- ² Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), p. 33.
- ³ For fuller treatment of Stevens's career in Gettysburg and Harrisburg, see Richard N. Current, *Old Thad Stevens: A Story of Ambition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1942), pp. 14-78; Thomas Frederick Woodley, *Thaddeus Stevens* (Harrisburg: Telegraph Press, 1934), pp. 30-188; Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, pp. 14-67; Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, pp. 35-85, which contains an excellent account of Stevens's place in the Gettysburg community; and, for an overall account of Pennsylvania politics in this period, Charles M. Snyder, *The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics*

- 1832-1848 (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1958), pp. 3-151.
- ⁴ Richard Current, "Love, Hate, and Thaddeus Stevens," *Pennsylvania History* 14 (October, 1947): 264.
- ⁵ Joshua Stevens to Stevens, October (?) 16, 1829, Thaddeus Stevens Papers, Library of Congress.
- ⁶ Alexander H. Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," in *A Biographical History of Lancaster County*, ed.: Alexander Harris (Lancaster: Elias Barr & Co., 1872), p. 580.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 583.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ See Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, pp. 35-48.
- ¹⁰ Alexander Harris, *A Review of the Political Conflict in America, from the Commencement of the Anti-Slavery Agitation to the Close of Southern Reconstruction: Comprising Also a Resume of the Career of Thaddeus Stevens; Being a Survey of the Struggle of Parties Which Destroyed the Republic and Virtually Monarchized its Government* (New York: T. H. Pollock, 1876), p. 84.
- ¹¹ Stevens to John McPherson, September 15, 1842, Stevens Papers.
- ¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, vol. 1: *Statistics of the Population of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 58. Percentages are author's calculations.
- ¹³ Frederic S. Klein, *Lancaster County Since 1841*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Lancaster: Lancaster County National Bank, 1955), p. 9.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9, p. 22.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 40.
- ¹⁸ August 23, 1842.
- ¹⁹ October 18, 1842.
- ²⁰ October 25, 1842.
- ²¹ John Edward McNeal, "The Antimasonic Party in Lancaster County 1828-1843," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 69 (Easter 1965), pp. 115-116.
- ²² Henry R. Mueller, *The Whig Party in Pennsylvania*, Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, no. 230 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), p. 90.
- ²³ Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, pp. 84-85.
- ²⁴ *Examiner*, August 15, 1843.
- ²⁵ *Intelligencer*, October 17, 1843.
- ²⁶ McNeal, "Antimasonic Party in Lancaster County," p. 117.
- ²⁷ Mueller, *Whig Party*, p. 107, n. 2.
- ²⁸ Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 582; see also Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 73-76.
- ²⁹ Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 93.
- ³⁰ Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 70.
- ³¹ The story of the 1827 meeting is related in Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," pp. 576-577; see also Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 3, p. 13.
- ³² Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 583.
- ³³ Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 87. For a story of Stevens's life as an advocate, based on both fact and legend, see W. U. Hensel, "Thaddeus Stevens as a Country Lawyer," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 10 (1906): 247-290.
- ³⁴ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 80.
- ³⁵ Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 95.

CHAPTER II NOTES

- ¹ Curiously enough, though Strohm and Stevens had a history of enmity, their political views were similar. While Congressman, Strohm advocated the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and presented abolition petitions to the House. H. Frank Eshleman, "Outline of John Strohm's Career in Congress," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 23 (1919): 62.

- 2 Stevens had in July 1846 once again begun to push General Scott for the nomination, addressing a "Tariff and Scott" rally at the Lancaster courthouse. Scott, who had also done well in the war, was closer than Taylor to Stevens's views on slavery. There is no evidence, however, in the Lancaster newspapers of a large-scale fight between Scott and Taylor supporters within the local Whiggery. For Stevens, this movement was more a false start than anything else, and the Scott campaign soon "petered out." See Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 82.
- 3 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 81; Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 583.
- 4 Evidently the *Examiner* saw the hand of Stevens at work, for it denounced the rally as a "Mongrel Meeting." Quoted in *American Press and Republican*, July 8, 1848.
- 5 Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 96; see also *American Press and Republican*, August 12, 1848. Current errs when he writes that Stevens "induced a friend of his, one of the Silver Greys, to present his name for candidacy . . ." Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 83.
- 6 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 83.
- 7 Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 97.
- 8 *Examiner*, August 16, 1848.
- 9 The *Intelligencer* accurately noted the nature of the contest on the day before the convention: "The name of the place-hunters is 'Legion,' and . . . the strife for delegates has been loud and fierce." August 22, 1848.
- 10 *American Press and Republican*, August 26, 1848.
- 11 *Examiner*, August 23, 1848.
- 12 August 29, 1848.
- 13 Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 589, quoted in Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, pp. 97-98.
- 14 *Examiner*, September 13, 1848. Even the Democrats were divided into groups for and against the leadership of Benjamin Champneys, a local antagonist of James Buchanan. See *American Press and Republican*, August 18, 1848.
- 15 *Examiner*, September 27, 1848. It must be borne in mind that this statement did not make Stevens an abolitionist of the William Lloyd Garrison stripe. Even the *Intelligencer* retracted an accusation that Stevens favored total abolition by any means; see the issue of September 5, 1848. Indeed, Stevens had in 1844 contributed to the Lancaster County Colonization Society, an organization opposed by many County blacks. See William Frederic Worner, "The Lancaster County Colonization Society," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 26 (1922); 120, 105-122 passim.
- 16 John Frederick Coleman, "The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1970), p. 47.
- 17 *Examiner*, October 18, 1848.
- 18 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 84, especially n. 25.
- 19 *Intelligencer*, August 29, 1848, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 84-85.
- 20 *Examiner*, December 20, 1848.
- 21 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 84.
- 22 *Intelligencer*, September 24, 1850. Yet one should note that Stevens was supported in his opposition to the Compromise by his fellow Woolly Heads. See Amos Ellmaker to Stevens, July 10, 1850, manuscript in the Library of the Lancaster County Historical Society.
- 23 W. L. Boom to Stevens, February 9, 1849, Stevens Papers.
- 24 W. D. Lewis to Stevens, July 21, 1850, Stevens Papers.
- 25 Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 49-54, gives full details on this struggle.
- 26 Buchanan to Stevens, July 31, 1850, Stevens Papers.
- 27 Idem, August 10, 1850, Stevens Papers.
- 28 *Intelligencer*, October 1, 1850.
- 29 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 90.
- 30 *Intelligencer*, October 15, 1850.

CHAPTER III NOTES

- ¹ Mueller, *Whig Party*, p. 180, n. 2.
- ² Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 91.
- ³ Mueller, *Whig Party*, p. 179.
- ⁴ Ibid., p. 182.
- ⁵ The most detailed account of the Riot and the ensuing judicial proceedings can be found in an amateur historian's apparently accurate paper. See W. U. Hensel, *The Christiana Riot and the Treason Trials of 1851*, (Lancaster: Press of the New Era Company, 1911; issued also in *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 15 [1911]).
- ⁶ Quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 92.
- ⁷ Mueller, *Whig Party*, p. 191. In Philadelphia, Democrats took over two thousand votes from the Whigs by raising the specter of disunion and the resultant loss of trade and jobs in the Delaware Valley. Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 66-72, gives the best short narrative of the political effects of the Riot. See also Richard Grau, "Christiana Riot 1851: A Reappraisal," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 68 (1964): 147 ff.
- ⁸ See especially *Examiner*, December 16 and December 23, 1851.
- ⁹ Not "William B." Read, as Current has it in *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 93.
- ¹⁰ Hensel, *The Christiana Riot*, p. 87.
- ¹¹ See, in addition to Hensel's work, Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 584, and Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 93-94, for descriptions of the trial.
- ¹² Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 585.
- ¹³ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 93.
- ¹⁴ Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 585.
- ¹⁵ Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 70.
- ¹⁶ Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," p. 583.
- ¹⁷ See *Examiner*, May 25, 1852, which charged that Stevens had been in his seat in the House but six weeks in the preceding six months.
- ¹⁸ *Independent Whig*, December 16, 1852.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., March 23, 1852.
- ²⁰ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 94-95.
- ²¹ *Independent Whig*, June 22, 1852.
- ²² See, e.g., "Simon's" abusive "How to Electioneer for Congress, or Advice to Young Politicians," in the *Independent Whig*, July 20, 1852.
- ²³ Mentioned in the *Independent Whig*, July 27, 1852.
- ²⁴ *Examiner*, July 28, 1852.
- ²⁵ August 10, 1852. See also the issue of August 17, 1852, for charges of similar conduct by the Silver Greys in Salisbury Township.
- ²⁶ *Independent Whig*, August 10, 1852; *Examiner*, August 18, 1852.
- ²⁷ *Independent Whig*, September 21, 1852.
- ²⁸ Ibid., August 31, 1852.
- ²⁹ *Examiner*, quoted in *Independent Whig*, September 21, 1852.
- ³⁰ *Independent Whig*, September 21, 1852.
- ³¹ *Examiner*, October 20, 1852.
- ³² Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," p. 87.
- ³³ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 95.
- ³⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV NOTES

- ¹ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 97.
- ² David R. Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism: A History of the Know-Nothing Party in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 75 (Easter 1971): 52.
- ³ Quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 96.
- ⁴ *Independent Whig*, September 6, 1853.
- ⁵ Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 53; *Independent Whig*, September 20, 1853.
- ⁶ *Independent Whig*, October 18, 1853; Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 53.

- 7 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 97.
- 8 Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 57. Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 99-101, contains a useful analysis of the reasons for the rapid growth of the order.
- 9 Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 59. The following quotes from letters written by prominent Democrats in Pennsylvania to their friends indicate the fear politicians felt: ". . . you are compassed round about with spies and so am I Men who are your most confidential friends are betraying you hourly;" "they mix with us, talk against themselves and denounce the order. . . . everybody suspects everybody . . . we cannot trust our brothers." Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," p. 109.
- 10 W. U. Hensel, "A Withered Twig," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 19 (1915): 176.
- 11 *History of the Rise, Progress, and Downfall of Know-Nothingism in Lancaster County*, by Two Expelled Members, (Lancaster: n.p. 1856), p. 10.
- 12 *Independent Whig*, September 18, 1854; *Ibid.*, September 25, 1854.
- 13 *History*, pp. 18-19; Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 164; *Examiner*, September 27, 1854.
- 14 *History*, p. 21.
- 15 September 27, 1854.
- 16 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 98.
- 17 Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 58; *Examiner*, September 27, 1854.
- 18 *Examiner*, September 27, 1854.
- 19 Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," pp. 59-60.
- 20 *Examiner*, August 16, 1854; *Public Register and American Citizen*, September 30, 1854.
- 21 *Inland Weekly*, October 7, 1854; *Ibid.*, September 30, 1854.
- 22 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 98. Current errs in calling North a Whig.
- 23 Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
- 24 *Inland Weekly*, October 27, 1854; *Independent Whig*, November 28, 1854; *Ibid.*, November 7, 1854.
- 25 Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 122.
- 26 Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," pp. 68-70.
- 27 *Independent Whig*, July 7, 1855.
- 28 *Ibid.*, October 16, 1855; Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 74.
- 29 *Independent Whig*, February 20, 1855.
- 30 Harris, *Review of the Political Conflict*, p. 172.
- 31 *Independent Whig*, August 14, 1855. Keller's statement that the convention nominated Peter Martin and was "controlled by the Know-Nothings" is in error. See Keller, "Nativism or Sectionalism," p. 73, but cf. Mueller, *Whig Party*, pp. 221-22, and Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," p. 121, p. 129.
- 32 Brodie's statement that Stevens joined the party "in early 1855" is not documented, and her apparent likage of his appearance at the Fulton Hall meeting of March 1856 indicates that she is actually writing about 1856. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 123. Ralph Korngold erroneously writes that the meeting occurred in 1855; Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 96. Richard Current dates Stevens's association with the party from the Fulton Hall meeting, which he dates correctly; Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 101.
- 33 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 101.
- 34 Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 123.
- 35 *Independent Whig*, February 26, 1856.
- 36 *Intelligencer*, quoted in Gerard Brady, "Buchanan's Campaign in Lancaster County," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 53 (1949): 101; *Examiner*, March 26, 1856.
- 37 *Independent Whig*, June 3, 1856.
- 38 *Examiner*, September 3, 1856. Darlington's name was withdrawn just before the vote.
- 39 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 103.
- 40 *Independent Whig*, September 16, 1856; *Ibid.*, October 21, 1856.
- 41 Stevens to Henry C. Carey, September 24, 1856, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 104.
- 42 *Independent Whig*, August 26, 1856.

- ⁴³ Quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 106.
- ⁴⁴ *Intelligencer*, October 14, 1856, quoted in Brady, "Buchanan's Campaign," p. 127.
- ⁴⁵ W. Frank Gorrecht, "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 37 (1933): 29. Gorrecht's article should be taken with a grain of salt, however, for even if his memory is perfect, his historiographical abilities are limited. He argues that Alexander Harris, an enemy of Stevens, praised the man for his philanthropy in his *Biographical History of Lancaster County*, not mentioning that the article on Stevens in that work was written by Alexander Hood and that Harris disclaimed responsibility for Hood's laudatory statements. *Ibid.*, p. 22; Harris, *Biographical History of Lancaster County*, p. 598, n. 1.
- ⁴⁶ *Independent Whig*, March 3, 1857.

CHAPTER V NOTES

- ¹ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 99, p. 108.
- ² Indenture dated November 11, 1857, in the Stevens Papers.
- ³ Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 130.
- ⁴ See the issues of May 12, June 16, and June 30, 1858. *Lancaster Democrats*, however, were not free-traders, and the *Intelligencer* quoted James Buchanan on the first page of each issue: "The country is most prosperous where labor commands the greatest reward."
- ⁵ *Weekly Times*, August 11, 1858.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, August 11, 1858.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1858.
- ⁸ *Daily Evening Express*, August 23, 1858.
- ⁹ *Examiner*, August 25, 1858.
- ¹⁰ *Weekly Times*, September 1, 1858.
- ¹¹ *Intelligencer*, August 31, 1858, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 109.
- ¹² *Intelligencer*, August 31, 1858; the gambling accusation was quoted in the *Weekly Times*, September 8, 1858.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, September 7, 1858.
- ¹⁴ *Philadelphia Press*, September 3, 1858, quoted in the *Weekly Times*, September 8, 1858; emphasis in the original.
- ¹⁵ *Weekly Times*, September 15, 1858.
- ¹⁶ *Daily Evening Express*, September 15, 1858. The idea of a National Foundry in Lancaster was an old chestnut, having been proposed as early as 1840; see Klein, *Lancaster County Since 1841*, pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁷ *Weekly Times*, September 22, 1858.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, September 8, 1858.
- ²⁰ *Daily Evening Express*, September 16, 1858.
- ²¹ September 14, 1858.
- ²² September 29, 1858.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, August 15, 1868.
- Pennsylvania, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 110.
- ²⁴ *Intelligencer*, October 19, 1858. Stevens took about 60 percent of vote, and the statements of Brodie, in *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 132, and Current, in *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 110, that he took about 75 percent are in error.
- ²⁵ *Union*, October 27, 1858.
- ²⁶ Stevens to Chase, September 25, 1858. Chase Papers, Historical Society of

CHAPTER VI NOTES

- ¹ *Intelligencer*, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 125; Hensel, "Thaddeus Stevens as a Country Lawyer," quoted in Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 133.
- ² *Intelligencer*, September 11, 1860; *Union*, August 22, 1860.
- ³ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 133.
- ⁴ *Intelligencer*, September 11, 1860.
- ⁵ *Examiner*, September 12, 1860; *Ibid.*, October 17, 1866.
- ⁶ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 143.

- ⁷ Ibid., p. 142.
- ⁸ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 151; Joseph Gibbons to Stevens, May 13, 1861, quoted in T. Richard Witmer, "Some Hitherto Unpublished Correspondence of Thaddeus Stevens," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 35 (1931): 61-62.
- ⁹ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 151.
- ¹⁰ Hood served on a Native American committee in the 1840's. *American Press and Republican*, April 17, 1847.
- ¹¹ That paper's issue of October 15, 1861 called the nomination of the "HOOD ticket" the "death-blow to the Stevens domination in the Old Guard." Quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 152, n. 7.
- ¹² *Intelligencer*, September 9, 1862.
- ¹³ Ibid., quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 169.
- ¹⁴ *Daily Evening Express*, October 2, 1862.
- ¹⁵ *Inquirer*, October 10, 1862. A copy of the broadside exists in the Broadside Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.
- ¹⁶ *Intelligencer*, October 21, 1862.
- ¹⁷ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 181-183. The editor of the *Examiner* asserted after Stevens's death that the Congressman had forbidden the subscription itself and that no money went to the Poor Fund. *Examiner*, August 15, 1868.
- ¹⁸ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 184.
- ¹⁹ Stevens to Stanton, September 1, 1863, Thompson Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- ²⁰ Stevens to Chase, September 21, 1863, Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- ²¹ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 73.
- ²² Author's computation of Volume Three of the Stevens Papers.
- ²³ Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 94.
- ²⁴ Hood to Stevens, January 8, 1862, Stevens Papers; C. H. Martin, "Federal Revenues of Lancaster County, Pa., from About 1850 to Date," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 27 (1923): 108. Letters from old enemies came, too, as James M. Hopkins supported a Christiana man for a federal job. Hopkins to Stevens, February 29, 1864, Stevens Papers.
- ²⁵ Stevens to the Misses O. Moore and H. Martin, manuscript in the Library of the Lancaster County Historical Society, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 193.
- ²⁶ Stevens to Chase, October 16, 1863, Stevens Papers.
- ²⁷ W. L. Bear to Stevens, February 28, 1864. See also Emma Boleinus to Stevens, February 17, 1864, and A. W. Boleinus to Stevens, February [?] 1864, all in the Stevens Papers.
- ²⁸ Thaddeus Stevens Jr. to Stevens, March 6, 1864, Stevens Papers.
- ²⁹ Jacob Engle to Stevens, January 4, 1864, enclosed in Barr Spangler to Stevens, January 6, 1864, Stevens Papers; see also Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 194.
- ³⁰ Stevens to McPherson, September 22, 1863, Stevens Papers.
- ³¹ Stevens to McPherson, July 10, 1864, quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 201.
- ³² *Examiner*, September 14, 1864.
- ³³ *Intelligencer*, September 15, 1864.
- ³⁴ Ibid., September 15, September 29, and October 6, 1864.
- ³⁵ *Examiner*, October 5, 1864.
- ³⁶ Quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 203.
- ³⁷ *Intelligencer*, October 20, 1864.
- ³⁸ Much of this speech is quoted in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 214-216.
- ³⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 235.
- ⁴⁰ *Intelligencer*, September 5, 1866.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., October 10, 1866.
- ⁴² Ibid., October 3, 1866.
- ⁴³ Ibid., October 17, 1866.
- ⁴⁴ *Examiner*, August 22, 1866. Emphasis in the original.
- ⁴⁵ Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 255-256. See also *Examiner*, October 22, 1866, which contains a similar rebuke of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- 46 *Weekly Express*, January 5, 1867.
- 47 *Ibid.*, January 12, 1867. Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 261-267, provides numerous details of this unsuccessful struggle.
- 48 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 276. Stevens's long battles with Cameron, however, may have been more apparent than real. According to W. Frank Gorrecht, Stevens and Cameron from time to time conferred on political matters in the back room of a mutual friend's business establishment. Gorrecht worked at this store, saw Stevens and Cameron come and go, and overheard part of their conversations. Lee F. Crippen, *Simon Cameron: Antebellum Years*, (Oxford, Ohio: Mississippi Valley Press, 1942), pp. 253-254, n. 67.
- 49 Gorrecht, "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens," p. 25; cf. Current *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 121.
- 50 Gorrecht, "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens," p. 25; Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 242.
- 51 *New York Herald*, July 8, 1867. The version given in Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 281, contains several omissions.
- 52 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, p. 242; *Inquirer*, July 14, 1868.
- 53 *Intelligencer*, July 22, 1868.
- 54 *Weekly Express*, July 25, 1868; *Examiner*, July 22, 1868.
- 55 *Examiner*, August 5, 1868; *Weekly Express*, August 15, 1868.
- 56 *Intelligencer* (weekly), August 19, 1868.
- 57 Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 366.
- 58 *Intelligencer*, August 18, 1868; *Inquirer*, September 19, 1868.
- 59 *Intelligencer*, August 19, 1868.

CHAPTER VII NOTES

- 1 Daniel Strickler, "The Lancaster Law Library Association," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 39 (1935): 3-4; Bertha Cochran Landis, "Early Fire Companies of Lancaster City and County," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 40 (1936): 29-30. David C. Haverstick, "Lancaster Bible Society 1815-1915," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 19 (1915): 51.
- 2 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 113-114; Hood, "Thaddeus Stevens," pp. 588-589.
- 3 This, along with other stories, is related in W. Frank Gorrecht, "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens," pp. 21-35 passim.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31. Carl Schurz also noted stories of these activities in his conversations with Lancastrians after Stevens's death. See *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, quoted in Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 5.
- 5 Copy of Stevens's will in the Library of the Lancaster County Historical Society; Gorrecht, "The Charity of Thaddeus Stevens," pp. 27-28.
- 6 Copy of Stevens's will in the Library of the Lancaster County Historical Society.
- 7 See *supra*, pp. 169, 184, 192.
- 8 *Intelligencer*, July 6, 1866, quoted in Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 91.
- 9 Both the article and Stevens's reply are quoted in full in Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 91.
- 10 See Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens*, pp. 86-93. Johnson was Vice-President under Martin Van Buren, lived openly with his mulatto housekeeper, had two daughters by her, and saw to it that they married white men.
- 11 Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens*, p. 76.
- 12 Bertha Cochran Landis, "Ye Old Time Inns of South Queen Street," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 41 (1937): 130-131.
- 13 Contained in Charles I. Landis, *Thaddeus Stevens: A Letter Written to the Daily New Era* (Lancaster: New Era Printing Co., 1916). See also *idem*, "A Refutation of the Slandorous Stories against the Name of Thaddeus Stevens Placed before the Public by Thomas Dixon," *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers* 28 (1924): 49-52.
- 14 Current, *Old Thad Stevens*, pp. 292-293.
- 15 Orphan's Court of Lancaster County, *Accounts and Records*, Vol. 36, pp. 269-272. Office of the Register of Wills, Lancaster County Court House.

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