AMOS KENDALL: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY (JACKSON; KENTUCKY; BANKING)

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Abstract
This study is a political biography of Amos Kendall (1789-1869), a newspaper editor who became one of the principal advisers to President Andrew Jackson. The study is based on primary sources and documents, as well as the standard secondary literature on the Jacksonian period of American history.

Kendall's career in politics is examined in its entirety, including his activities in Kentucky, his tenure as Postmaster General, and his contributions to the development of the Democratic Party. Emphasis has been placed on Kendall's commitment to republican theories of popular government, particularly as he implemented these theories during the struggle between the Jackson Administration and the Bank of the United States. In addition, his relationships with other political figures of the era, including Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and Francis P. Blair, are also examined.

The author concludes from his research that Kendall was a significant figure in the Jacksonian era of American politics. Kendall's standing and reputation should be reconsidered in subsequent American historical scholarship.

Keywords
History, United States, Biography

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AMOS KENDALL: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

BY

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M.A., University of New Hampshire, 1976

DISSERTATION

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the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
American History

May, 1984
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ABSTRACT

AMOS KENDALL: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

by

TERRY L. SHOPTAUGH

University of New Hampshire, May, 1984

This study is a political biography of Amos Kendall (1789-1869), a newspaper editor who became one of the principal advisers to President Andrew Jackson. The study is based on primary sources and documents, as well as the standard secondary literature on the Jacksonian period of American history.

Kendall's career in politics is examined in its entirety, including his activities in Kentucky, his tenure as Postmaster General, and his contributions to the development of the Democratic Party. Emphasis has been placed on Kendall's commitment to republican theories of popular government, particularly as he implemented these theories during the struggle between the Jackson Administration and the Bank of the United States. In addition, his relationships with other political figures of the era, including Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and Francis P. Blair, are also examined.

The author concludes from his research that Kendall was a significant figure in the Jacksonian era of American politics. Kendall's standing and reputation should be reconsidered in subsequent American historical scholarship.
INTRODUCTION

Amos Kendall was not an attractive person. He was short, a "little whiffet of a man," according to one contemporary. His outsized head rested on a thin, almost emaciated body, with stooped shoulders, spindly arms, and long, delicate hands. His face was cadaverous, with sunken cheeks, a long thin nose, and a broad forehead, all of it crowned by a mane of pure white hair. (No one seems to have known the original color of his hair; it had been white since he was young.) His eyes gleamed in a determined fashion from their deep sockets. His mouth was little more than a grim, thin line drawn across his face. When he did speak, which was seldom, it was in a high-pitched voice that got on people's nerves. More often than not, he simply sat and listened, an occasional asthmatic cough intruding upon the conversations.

Not surprisingly, he had a fragile constitution. His bearing, an English visitor noted, "testified of disease." He frequently suffered from headaches, from fevers and chills. He often wore overcoats, carefully fastened, on the warmest of summer days. Many times he said he felt that the cold hand of death was imminent. Yet, he outlived nearly all his contemporaries. And far from being unremarkable, he had a way of impressing, in one fashion or another, all those with whom he came into contact.¹

Throughout his long life he read widely and absorbed new information eagerly. "It is not so much difference of talents as different degrees of improvement" that make some men successful, some
failures, he told his son. "It is true that men's capacities for improvement are very different," he continued, "and that some will improve more than others with the same degree of application. But inferior minds may be made superior by better opportunities or more study; and as a general rule, it is inferior minds highly improved which govern the world." There can be little doubt that Kendall was thinking of himself when giving this advice.²

But new facts seldom led to new perceptions, for he had an extremely rigid mind. "Mr. Kendall," an old friend recalled, "did not possess what is commonly understood as a bright or sparkling mind, nor had he a quick appreciation of passing events — he was much too absorbed for that." Another observer agreed, pointing out that Kendall's mind was "remarkable for acuteness in that range to which it was directed, and for its skill in bringing all its energies to bear on a single point." Most people believed that the point on which he focused was invariably his own self-interest. Henry Clay said that Kendall was true only to his friends, and that his only friend was himself.³

Scholars have usually agreed with Clay's assessment. The earliest study of Kendall, completed in 1940, excoriated him as a mere lackey, Andrew Jackson's "propagandist." Lynn Marshall, whose biography of Kendall in his Kentucky years has become the standard interpretation, was kinder in tone, but essentially the same in substance. Kendall, according to Marshall, was a classic "man on the make." His long career was pocked by inconsistency, Marshall asserted, and he was ever ready to shift his ground to accommodate those who would aid his advancement. Bray Hammond, a stern critic of Kendall, agreed that Kendall's life was
an "explicit example of entrepreneurial behavior." The majority of Jacksonian scholars have adopted these views, dismissing Kendall either as a hack writer of Jacksonian rhetoric, a venal sycophant, a venal manipulator, or some combination of all of these. 4

It cannot be denied that Kendall was an opportunist. He kept a careful eye on the weather gauge of his private interests. But so did most of his contemporaries. Opportunity was an alluring icon in the antebellum period, a time "dominated by the virtue of overcoming scarcity because the contrast between our limited resources and our vast opportunities constantly challenged and tantalized." 5 Few were those who did not at least reach for the main chance. Kendall turned out to be more successful at it than most, because he was more shrewd, and especially more determined. His ambition led him onto unfortunate paths at times. The manner in which he joined the Jacksonians and won their regard will always be the most shameful, the least defensible, part of his career. 6

But there was more to Kendall than unchecked ambition. True, he joined Jackson for personal advancement. Soon after, however, he embraced the Old Hero fervently. "Andrew Jackson was Amos Kendall's idol," an acquaintance of both men observed. "Hamilton did not support Washington, the young Whigs did not idolize Henry Clay, with a deeper devotion." 7 Kendall's devotion to Jackson was based on their similarities of thought concerning government's role in the American society of their day. Quite simply, they believed in minimal interference by government with the activities of "the people." Kendall always divided the world between the "people" and the "interests," between those who toiled for their gain, and those who, "by an alliance

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with government . . . extract from the people a goodly portion of their earnings." He did not believe that government could make "the people" rich, "but may make them poor," with unjust taxes and laws that aided the interests. Believing Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams to be the spokesmen for those interests, Kendall twice refused to enter their service. During his tenures as Fourth Auditor of the Treasury and Postmaster General, he regularly incurred the anger of vested interests by denying them a penny more than was their proper due. Indeed, his performances in these offices were models of rectitude.

During the Bank War, which was the pinnacle of Kendall's political career, a perceptive Democrat took occasion to assess him: "His mind is a peculiar one, particularly fitted for the comprehension of elementary principles and theories, and by no means practical . . . Mr. Kendall's mind is much too doctrinaire ever to permit his being a statesman, but I really believe him to be a man of good intentions." This particular judgment comes closest to being a fair and balanced portrait by a man of Kendall's own time. But only recently have historians come to a similar view.

Consider the words of Richard Latner, in the most recent assessment of Kendall and his doctrines: "To categorize Kendall or Blair as ambitious men-on-the-make endeavoring to replace one established economic elite with another ignores their Jeffersonian antipathy towards banking, their partiality for hard money, and their commitment to the concept of republican virtue." Robert Remini similarly concludes that Kendall joined Jackson "with the distinct purpose of assisting in the reform of the government." But historical interpretations tend to go in cycles. Somewhere, no doubt, another scholar is preparing to
argue once again that Kendall's rhetoric simply masked his ambitious intent.

I agree with Latner's assessment of Kendall as a latter-day Jeffersonian who contributed much to the ideology of the Jackson movement. But I am also mindful of that fact that good intentions do not always lead to beneficial results. Did the farmers and artisans of the Country benefit from the destruction of a Bank which could provide some uniform value to paper money? Was the destruction of a useful corporation, simply because it might become oppressive, a real gain for republican government? Could a faith in the people provide a better society than one based on a sober recognition and accommodation of pluralistic interests? I have my doubts. There is a finite value to rhetoric, however stirring and instructive it might be, however enduring it might become. Too often, Kendall's rhetoric was used to defend the policies of a negative presidency, a presidency distinguished by vetoes. Thus, while I applaud Kendall's eloquent contributions to the rhetoric of republicanism, I have reservations about the results of his political actions.

I am also mindful of the fact that a complete portrait of Kendall is probably not possible. The source material is too limited to permit the best of biography: "the desire to mark, to keep alive, the passage of a man by recapturing the life of that man." Kendall's papers are few, and scattered. A corpus existed once and was used by his son-in-law to prepare Kendall's "autobiography." But these have disappeared, apparently destroyed in a fire in 1894. The Autobiography is mainly an edited compilation of Kendall's writings, composed mainly of his published articles and public documents. The second-hand
narrative is vague and suspect. I have used this work only when the words are clearly Kendall's. The rest is of doubtful quality, so much so that one of Kendall's daughters refused to have a copy in her house. Kendall's private life is almost unknown. His investments and property records are scarce and equally obscure. What I have found allowed me to prepare a life of Kendall the public figure.

Kendall is no stranger to Jacksonian scholars. His activities on behalf of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party have been related in a number of prominent studies, and he has been the subject of three previous dissertations. But no one has ever before considered his political career from beginning to end. Believing that his Jacksonian years followed naturally from his experiences in Kentucky, I have undertaken to relate his entire life and political career in a narrative of reasonable length. My task was considerably aided by the works of those who have studied Kendall before. I gratefully acknowledge the special debt I owe to Lynn Marshall's study of Kendall's Kentucky years and to Richard Latner's view of Kendall in his study of the Jackson Presidency. I have, nevertheless, reached different conclusions about Kendall's political life than either of these scholars. Scholars inevitably approach common subjects from different perspectives. In this case, my perspective rests largely on the fact that I have studied the whole of Kendall's career in politics.

I have intentionally given but short notice to Kendall's telegraph career. My major interest has been with his political life. In any event, his years as Samuel Morse's business agent have been definitively presented in Robert L. Thompson's *Wiring a Continent* and I have no desire to replicate this sound and comprehensive piece of
scholarship.

I owe many debts for the production of this study. Dr. Charles A. Jellison, my dissertation chairman, guided me on my path and frequently pointed out errors in judgment and presentation. (Those that remain are mine alone.) Dr. Robert Remini read and commented upon early drafts of the Jacksonian section. Dr. Steve Cox discovered some important items relating to Kendall's Post Office career, and kindly brought these to my attention. The librarians and archivists of some fifty repositories and other institutions, too many to name, helped me find letters and documents that had not seen the light of day for some time. In arranging for copies and films, in helping me determine the provenance for citations, they invariably displayed their traditional patience and dedication. To them, I acknowledge a profound debt.

Finally, I must thank all those who believed I could get through with this undertaking. An array of friends and family kept me going when Kendall threatened to undo me, as he has others. My parents, my colleagues at the Universities of New Hampshire and Wisconsin, my dear friends Deborah Janzen and Nancy Higley, all were sources of support, and without them I am sure I would have despaired. To each and all of them this effort is dedicated.
INTRODUCTION

NOTES


2 Amos Kendall to John Kendall, April 22, 1849, Kendall papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (italics are his).


6 See chapter six below.


CHAPTER I

YOUTHFUL AMBITION

The journey had taken fifty days when the young traveler reached the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky. In this year, 1814, Lexington was the pearl of western cities, a magnet that drew hundreds of ambitious young Americans.

More than eighty miles from that great artery of western commerce, the Ohio River, Lexington still controlled much of the trade for the area. It was to Lexington that Kentucky's farmers brought their hemp and tobacco crops. It was in Lexington that those same farmers bought manufactured goods made in Europe or eastern cities. Many of these goods came to Lexington from a rut-filled and often muddy track, the Maysville Road. The road was, for all its unpretentious appearance, the State's central trade route. Indeed, the young traveler had seen numerous wagons as he approached Lexington that early spring day.

The traveler was Amos Kendall. He had come to Lexington to seize some of the promise of the City and turn it to his own profit. In this and other ways, Amos Kendall reflected the spirit of his time. He was confident, impatient and ambitious. He had traveled better than 800 miles and was now within reach of the goal he had set out for during the previous winter. He knew that success in Kentucky would require all the talents he could muster. But he had an energy that belied his small frame, and an optimism that seemed to be commonplace in his generation. Resolute, then, young Kendall tightened his grip on his travel bag,
increased his pace across the gently undulating countryside, and walked into the City.¹

The Kendalls were old natives, as families went in America, having established their line in Massachusetts five generations before Amos was born in 1789. Amos's grandparents had settled in the township of Dunstable half a century before. Dunstable was one of many small villages on the north edge of Middlesex County, an area that had only recently progressed from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Amos's father, Zebedee Kendall, owned a farm that straddled the New Hampshire border. It was a rather small farm on which he raised rye and corn to provide for his wife and seven children. A stern-eyed Congregationalist and deacon at the local church, Zebedee Kendall raised his children on the Bible and the Westminster Catechism; taught them the virtue of hard work, and forbade them to dance or play musical instruments. He was also Yankee-shrewd, being able on later occasions to loan his sons sums of money that most small farmers seldom saw at one time. He had influence with a variety of local noteworthies and officeholders. Clearly, there was more to Zebedee than his son later chose to reveal.²

It was not long before Zebedee decided that young Amos was not meant for farming. Amos was not robust. He could contribute in small ways, by keeping birds away from the fields, doing minor chores and the like. But he was not hardy enough for the strenuous regimen of agriculture. Once, while helping hunt a fox, he became too exhausted to walk the final half-mile home; his brother had to fetch a horse to carry him. Fortunately, his mother recognized his physical limitations early, and encouraged in him a taste for learning. Mary Kendall was especially
important in urging him to develop a love of reading. He received a romantic bent from her, while from his father he inherited a toughness of spirit and a sense of moral determination.

As Amos became more learned and imaginative than most of his Dunstable playmates, he also became shy and introverted. Large gatherings gave him difficulty throughout his life. He was never what one would term gregarious and always preferred the select company of friends and family. It is ironic that the man who was later reputed to be a master of political organization was also a man who was perpetually uncomfortable at the parades, balls, and barbeques that were the lubricants of politics.

In 1805, having read every book in the small subscription libraries that his father supported, Amos enrolled at New Ipswich Academy in New Hampshire. He spent twenty-eight weeks there, learning classical literature and rhetoric through rote memorization and recitation. He also experienced the jeers of his schoolmates because of his shy ways and rustic manners. The echoes of those jeers were still with him decades later, when he took pleasure in humbling men who thought themselves superior. 3

After New Ipswich, Amos spent two years teaching in various New Hampshire and Massachusetts schools, until, with money saved from his work, he entered Groton Academy to prepare for college. He spent nineteen weeks at Groton, and later remembered that there "more than any other place were both my head and my heart disciplined." After Groton, young Kendall was able, with a loan from his father, to enter Dartmouth College in September, 1808. He was nearly twenty by then, older than most college entrants of his time. His years at Dartmouth reveal much
about his developing character, for here he would show many of the traits that marked him in later life as a clever but difficult man. 4

Dartmouth College was a typical early American institution for higher learning. The small faculty drilled into their charges a prescribed study of Greek, Latin, philosophy and logic. Moral teachings predominated, and discipline was strictly maintained through a rigid set of regulations. Any student who could pass the entrance examination and follow the rules could expect to gain a degree. Anyone who bent those rules, even on small matters, would be flirting with expulsion. 5

Dartmouth's students in 1808 were no pack of howling barbarians, but they were given to a certain amount of uproar as a way to relieve the tedium of their studies. In this, they were aided by the tavern-owners and inn-keepers of Hanover, who supplied them with large quantities of liquor. Zebedee Kendall's son, however, disapproved of drinking. When invited to join in the fun, he went out of his way to condemn his fellow students for their behavior. Seeing matters through his father's eyes, he chided them for engaging in the perfectly normal pursuits of the day and place. He, not they, was the odd one. Openly preaching against drinking, even to the point of circulating a written protest against "intemperance and rowdyism," he was soon alienated from his classmates. His written polemic created a row in which the faculty had to intervene. For months thereafter, Kendall was subjected to verbal and even physical abuse. Several students hurled insults and stones at him while he crossed the green. Others taunted his country manners, including Levi Woodbury, a clever New Hampshire student, who was Kendall's age and one day would be his colleague in Andrew Jackson's cabinet. Kendall did not seem to mind. He clothed himself in a
righteousness that would frequently surface in the future.  

Kendall's rejection of alcohol isolated him. He acquired a nickname, the "deacon," and turned increasingly to his studies. He excelled in scholarship. He was particularly good at writing lucid, penetrating essays. Not much impressed with his own talents, he remarked that "a few glowing pieces of composition . . . have more effect in raising the reputation of a student than the reasoning of a Locke, the application of a Newton, or the wisdom of a Solomon." Nevertheless, his academic success won him election to Phi Beta Kappa.  

Eventually, Kendall formed a few friendships with students. These were mainly members of an informal study group, persons who he described as "of irreproachable moral character and sincerely desirous of self improvement." Social contacts, however limited, were good for him. In the company of his friends, he exercised more, taking long hikes in the hills overlooking the Connecticut River. Encouraged by his acquaintances, he even indulged in one of the forbidden pleasures prohibited by his father: he secretly learned to dance.  

Thus, Kendall came to be a bit more tolerant of his fellows. He became almost popular in his select circle. But his politics prevented him from being wholly accepted. In an area so marked by Federalism, he was a strong Jeffersonian Republican. It would appear that in his family, children were as firmly indoctrinated in the wisdom of Jefferson as the trials of Job. With his talent for words, Kendall was an effective advocate for the Jeffersonian cause, much to the consternation of classmates who were followers of the late Alexander Hamilton.  

It was not until the Spring of 1811 that Kendall obtained his
degree. He had had more than once to leave Dartmouth for a term and teach in order to earn enough to continue his studies. But when he graduated, he was valedictorian of his class, a distinguished group which included Levi Woodbury and several others who would attain high places in business or government. That Kendall was not a public spell-binder was made plain this day. Delivering the required Latin oration, he nearly fainted from nervousness. Curiously, Kendall refused his diploma, apparently because he had developed a dislike for the college's president. Exactly why he disliked the man so, and would not take the document that the president had signed, he never bothered to explain. Still, the incident showed that for the time being at least, Kendall was determined to go his own way.

Dartmouth had given Amos an education that few could have hoped to obtain in the young nation. But now the questions remained, what should he do with his learning, his life? Both Zebedee and Mary Kendall pressed him to enter the ministry. But he disappointed them, for he had at the time little respect for religion, and felt that men of the cloth were really "no better than their neighbors." Kendall knew he would be the most hypocritical of ministers. His parents thereupon suggested that he consider medicine or the law, two other professions for which his learning suited him. He was not pleased with these choices either. In truth, with his self-righteous and romantic bent, he had developed a disdain for a normal working existence:

I have seen that man's opinion of right is generally founded upon his interest; that to make a man your friend, you must promote his interest; that difference of opinion, inflamed by continual dispute, begets coldness and suspicion; that honors often depend on popularity, and popularity on accommodation and acquiescence.
Rather than face this world, Amos announced that he wished to devote his labors to further study. Zebedee, however, pointed out that that would never put bread on the table, and settled the matter by telling his son that he could lend him no more money, nor support him. Thus, Amos found it necessary to lay down Aristotle and take up Blackstone.\textsuperscript{11}

Having chosen the law, Kendall now had to find a lawyer who would consent to train him. Here, Zebedee Kendall performed his last, and probably his greatest, service to his son's future. He introduced Amos to William Merchant Richardson of Groton, Massachusetts. Richardson was a talented lawyer, a devoted Jeffersonian, and one of the Republican Congressmen from Massachusetts. A man of breeding and grace, he was equally at ease in the court room and the drawing room. He would have much influence on his new charge, for the philosophy of limited government that Kendall preached throughout his life can be traced in part to Richardson's teachings. His influence was enough to make Kendall declare years later: "My love and respect for Judge Richardson were only surpassed by the love and respect I had for my good old father."\textsuperscript{12}

Like most newcomers to the law, Kendall spent the early weeks of his training running menial errands, sweeping the office, handling routine correspondence, and reading ponderous tomes by the great masters of jurisprudence. But he also got a generous slice of his mentor's views about politics. Richardson distrusted those who held great power in the Nation, particularly those who were associated with chartered institutions, such as banks. Kendall undoubtedly picked up some of his future ideas about government from this man.\textsuperscript{13}

Politics aside, Kendall still found the law boring. He showed
more interest in writing literature than briefs and contracts. He wrote several poems each week, and occasionally tried to publish them. Once he wrote a complete drama and sent it to a contest held by the Philadelphia literary magazine, Port Folio. The play was immediately rejected, however, by Port Folio's editor, one Nicholas Biddle. Frustrated in his aesthetic pursuits, Kendall found himself constrained to continue with Richardson.14

Early in 1814, Richardson began negotiations with Republicans in New Hampshire, who wished to have him appointed to their state's Court of Appeals (i.e., New Hampshire's supreme court). Preferring the bench to elective office, Richardson was more than willing to resign his congressional seat and move across the border to Portsmouth. As he would no longer have time to train Kendall, he offered to arrange for another lawyer to tutor the young man. But Amos declined. New England offered little promise to new lawyers, what with the loss of commerce due to the War of 1812. Realizing this, Kendall determined to seek his fortune in one of the newer states. Richardson approved of the plan and offered to help by introducing Kendall to some of his congressional associates. Kendall readily agreed, and after borrowing a further $200 from his father, set off with his patron in the spring of 1814 for the District of Columbia. He was twenty-five, and it would be fifteen years before he saw Dunstable or his family again.

Nine days after leaving Boston, Kendall had his first glimpse of the national capital. He could not have guessed the importance that this city would play in his future, and it was just as well, since he was not impressed by what he saw. He thought Washington had a "gloomy appearance." One of Richardson's friends took him to a Presidential
levee, but he found the affair ostentatious and President Madison himself "very inferior" looking. Still, he was able to meet several western Congressmen, as planned. One of these was Jesse Bledsoe of Kentucky, who advised Kendall to establish himself in some western state and make some contacts before trying to open a law practice. Kendall agreed with the advice, and mentioned that he was thinking of trying to settle himself as an "instructor in some [prominent] family." Bledsoe then remarked that he himself was thinking of hiring a tutor for his children, and Kendall took this to be an offer. In any event, he remembered later that the two men reached a loose agreement that Kendall would go to Kentucky, board in Bledsoe's home and teach his three children. And so, after only ten days in Washington, Kendall said farewell to Richardson and set off for Kentucky.15

Kendall, Dartmouth graduate and half-trained lawyer, discovered that the west country offered a vastly larger school than he had heretofore experienced. On his trip to Lexington, he crossed a third of the continent, by coach, skiff, flatboat, and finally by foot. He saw rivers larger and faster than any in New England, and mountains that surpassed the hills of Massachusetts. He saw villages that were barely a step removed from the surrounding wilderness, and witnessed ways of life that were totally alien from what he had known at home. He began to realize his own ignorance of the real ways that many people lived and thought. As he traveled further west, he was attracted to the land's natural beauty and its obvious economic potential. His journal of the trip is filled with notes, about the coal mines near Cincinnati, the operations of steam mills along the Ohio River, and the price of land in northern Kentucky.16
Kendall's journey from New England brought him into brief contact with several men whose futures were destined to be closely intertwined with his own. In Washington, he had met Felix Grundy, a Tennessee warhawk who would twenty years later be his rival for control of the Post Office. On the coach to Pittsburgh, Kendall had traveled with Lewis Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory and another future member of Andrew Jackson's cabinet. Finally, on the last leg of his journey, Kendall traveled for a brief time with William T. Barry, a Kentucky politician just returning from the battlefields in the northwest. Within a few years, he and Kendall would join forces in building a Jackson party in Kentucky, and together would gain Old Hickory's gratitude in the form of Federal appointments. When Kendall first met Barry, a charming and generous soul who took the young traveler down the Ohio as a guest on his private boat, he concluded that "[Barry] appears to be a very good man, but not a great man."17

Kendall was hardly the first to seek his fortune in Lexington. The City had already become a crossroads for the transmontane area, a meeting place for Americans of every background, profession, and outlook. Its lifeblood was commerce, its leading citizens mainly merchants. But industry had begun to develop also, and on the outskirts of the city ropewalks and textile mills had been built. Outside Lexington, in the so-called Bluegrass area, were the plantations, some of which rivaled the best estates in Virginia and the lower South. Together, commerce, manufacturing, and agriculture drew large volumes of eastern capital and eastern immigrants.

Dominating all of this was the lure of opportunity. Kendall could sense it in any direction. *Niles' Register* called Lexington "the
greatest inland city in the western world." Opportunities for wealth, reputation, and advancement abounded in Lexington and people were in hot pursuit of them. It was a kind of Kentucky Mecca, each year attracting more ambitious young men like Amos Kendall. He arrived with less than twenty dollars in his pocket, his possessions crammed into one valise, and his eyes on the future and the main chance.  

Bledsoe had not yet returned from Washington, so Kendall took a room at Postlewaite's, the best hotel in Lexington. Then he set out to see the town, and met some of the other young men who had come to make their fortunes. Some of these were also from the northeast. Others had come from the Old South, where available land had become scarce. Kendall also met native Kentuckians, including the half-brother of Henry Clay. He learned that the Clay family also was seeking a tutor, and Kendall allowed some of his less admirable qualities to surface. A connection with a United States Congressman was nothing alongside a chance to win the friendship of the most powerful man in Kentucky. Kendall managed to impress Clay's brother enough to win an introduction to Mrs. Clay. Thus, when Bledsoe finally did arrive in Lexington, Kendall was not appreciative but surly. He complained that Bledsoe found too little time to introduce him around town. (He made the same complaint about William Barry.) He also complained about delays in concluding the tutorial arrangements, speaking bitterly of "intentional neglect and unnecessary mortification." Before long, the two men agreed to let Kendall free to seek the place in the Clay home. He impressed Lucretia Clay, who promptly hired him to teach her five children. He would not make the acquaintance of the great man until Clay returned from Ghent, where he was negotiating an end to the war with England.
Meanwhile he was being paid three times what Bledsoe had offered. Kendall happily moved into Ashland, the Clay mansion, and his new life.¹⁹

An experienced teacher, Kendall found tutoring easy enough, although he judged that the Clay children needed more discipline. The oldest son, for example, had a habit of cursing his tutor as a "damned Yankee," and spent much of his leisure time berating the slaves. But within a few months, all of the offspring were meeting their lesson schedules and Kendall judged them to be good learners. This pleased Lucretia Clay, who was devoted to her family. She grew fond of Kendall, it seems, and spent a part of her time tutoring him in the ways of Kentucky society. She chided him for his rigid manners, taught him some of the social graces and generally made him feel welcome. She included him in her numerous social events, and introduced him to many of the best Lexington elite, the leading doctors, merchants and lawyers, not to mention several charming and wealthy young ladies.²⁰

But this was not enough to satisfy him. His upbringing and tastes, already amply expressed at Dartmouth, ran too deeply for him to readily accept the glitter of the Bluegrass ways. Privately, he thought the parties were ostentatious, the merchants braggarts, and most of the women empty-headed flirts. He was even more repelled by Lexington's favorite sport, horseracing. He thought racing day was "a scene of iniquity," replete with gamblers and prostitutes. The way to succeed in Kentucky, he concluded, was to "drink whiskey and talk loud, with the fullest confidence."²¹

Part of Kendall's problem was impatience. He could not restrain his ambitions for very long. He had counted on Clay's quick return from
Europe. But the negotiations at Ghent dragged on longer than anyone had anticipated. In Clay's absence, Kendall courted for a time the merchants and lawyers, portraying himself as a man of talent and promise. At the parties he mingled with the men of power and laughed at their stories. He composed poems for their daughters and called at their homes. He briefly courted one of the young women but with no positive result. He was probably regarded by these people as a young man of some wit and ability, but lacking substance, reputation and "breeding." Soon, Kendall tired of toady ing to people he was loath to call his betters. Deciding that the role of tutor was "inconsistent with my ambition and inclination," he began to look elsewhere.

His search had all the grand vision and pathos of which any young romantic was capable:

This day I have been for one hour a literal-minded merchant calculating gains [he wrote], promoting science and literature, and extending my connections for trade and literature to every part of the country; the next, an eloquent lawyer, defending the cause of innocence, basking in the sunshine of popularity, getting rich, and then thundering with Ciceroian eloquence in the Congress of the United States... not that I shall ever realize all the enchanting prospects of fancy, but they keep my mind alive, and give a spring to every exertion.22

He tried to realize his dreams through speculative ventures. The most interesting of these was a scheme that he and five other Yankee immigrants proposed to the Federal Congress. They would take title of a large area of land in Indiana, entirely on credit of course, promote a settlement, then booster the place into the future state capital! Needless to say, the members of Congress were not impressed with the petition. Similar pipedreams came to the same result, for Kendall's friends were as long on dreams and as short on resources as he.
Finally, taking the advice of Barry and others, Kendall took the more sensible course of going to Frankfort, the Kentucky capital, and getting his license to practice law. 23

Kendall remained in Mrs. Clay's employ for another six months, for he had promised to stay on at least a year. He refused to stay a day more, however, although to the last he still hoped that Clay would return. Finally, after writing his mentor Richardson for advice, he decided to establish a small law office. He chose nearby Georgetown, in Scott County, for the site of his practice, because it was still within a day's travel of Lexington and because he understood that there were few lawyers in that area. He also found a replacement tutor for the Clay children, and left on good terms with their mother. Thus, as mid-summer 1815 drew near, fortune found the ambitious Amos in Georgetown, eager to become the eloquent lawyer of his daydreams. 24

The dreams were ashes within months. Kendall found clients hard to come by, as most of the farmers and merchants in the area did not need a lawyer to settle their problems. Even when they did, they preferred to hire an "established" man from Lexington rather than risk their cases with an untried Yankee. Kendall was left to deal with a few routine cases brought to him by poor men. The lack of business depressed him, and he became bitter about it:

The practice of law here is not so much respected nor respectable, as in New England [he wrote a friend]. They [lawyers] have not half the influence, half the learning or half the industry. They have not half the influence, because the planters with their flocks of slaves, are more independent, more rich, and therefore more honored. Not half the learning, because there is not one decent seminary [i.e. college] in the whole western country. 25

Kendall believed that most of his legal brethren were "mere blockheads,
whom nothing but impudence supports." But Kendall had no cases to support him. Soon, his meagre funds, saved from his tutoring salary, had dwindled to almost nothing, and in order to make ends meet he found it necessary to consider yet another change.

Once again, luck was with him. As before, he attracted the attention of prominent men. This time, the interest came from the friends of Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson. After Henry Clay, Johnson was the most prominent Kentuckian in national politics. A gregarious man with a talent for stump oratory, he was a hero of the recent war. He had fought with William Henry Harrison at the Battle of the Thames in 1814, where, severely wounded, he had killed an Indian chief fighting with the British. After the battle, survivors identified the chief Johnson had killed as the infamous Tecumseh. There were, and still are, many disputed versions of the death of Tecumseh, but Johnson ever after sincerely believed that he had done the deed. As the "slayer of Tecumseh," he was able to attain high office, beginning with election to Congress in 1814, and eventually reaching as high as the vice-presidency.26

Johnson's success was remarkable considering the haphazard, almost casual, manner in which he jeopardized his image through the years. It was known around Georgetown, for example, that Johnson had taken a slave for his common-law wife and had had two children by her. Even his military reputation could not entirely offset this breach of propriety. Johnson's friends and family were constantly blocking rumors that would have ruined his career.27

Kendall soon became a figure of interest to the Johnson faction in Georgetown. A newly arrived lawyer, recently associated with the
Clays, he was spotted as a potential ally or danger to Johnson. He met Johnson's brother soon after settling into his small office. Richard Johnson himself came to visit and thereafter showed marked attention to the young man. Kendall began to understand the reason for Johnson's attention after a few inquiries around town. It seemed that the local Georgetown newspaper, the *Minerva*, was in financial straits, and the two men who owned it were anxious to sell out. Johnson was equally anxious to make sure that the paper, or its successor, fell into friendly hands. He also saw an opportunity to bring Kendall into his orbit. He mentioned that perhaps the young lawyer should consider taking over the paper, adding that he was certain that Kendall could get it for reasonable terms. He did not mention the paper's pitiful finances. Kendall had almost no interest in the idea at first, but as the weeks went by and legal business remained dismal, he noticed that Johnson's friends would periodically stop by to renew the suggestion.  

Eventually, as his money ran out, Kendall began to consider the *Minerva* position. Here, seemingly, was yet another chance, an opportunity that might bring with it the friendship and patronage of Georgetown's leading citizen. Still, when he learned that the asking price of the newspaper was $3,000, Kendall hesitated. With no experience in editing, he feared the possible consequences of so large a debt. Johnson's enemies also warned him that the offer was "no doubt a trick of the Johnson family to lay me under some obligations, that I might hereafter be bound to support them." Because of his doubts, Kendall expressed a willingness to edit the paper for a salary, but not to own it. This proposal was unrealistic, of course, for the present owners were seeking a buyer, not an employee, and Johnson had no wish to
buy the paper. In the end, Kendall agreed to a compromise in which he would purchase half of the newspaper only and take on all of the editorial responsibility. The remainder of the paper would be owned by one of the former partners. Johnson's brother, who acted as an intermediary between Kendall and the owners, finalized the arrangements. With Richard Johnson's aid, he also arranged for Kendall to purchase the postmastership for Georgetown (an illegal, but common, practice for the time, when every Congressman had patronage privileges in such matters). Kendall gave three $500 promisory notes for his share of the Minerva and began his newspaper career in October, 1815.29

The profession of editor was unlike any other undertaking in antebellum America. More often than not, the editor of a newspaper was also the printer, business manager, and sole writer. He was considered to be a vital, but not altogether respectable, member of his community; vital because he was the means by which most information about the outside world was disseminated in the community, but suspected because of the traditional scurrility and viciousness that characterized newspaper debate and opinion. Most editors survived only because the Federal government had passed laws making the mailing of newspapers cheaper than ordinary letters. Even then, a newspaper was a risky financial venture, subject to the fickleness of the public and to the uncertainties of credit and economic conditions. The risks were especially great in newly settled areas. Small wonder that so many editors chose to become the loyal spokesmen of politicians, and their newspapers the organs of local factions.30

Only the greatest of luck prevented Kendall from being ruined in his maiden voyage as an editor. The source of his near-disaster lay in
his own overzealousness. He had allowed his ambition to take precedence over caution. He was hardly at the helm before he discovered that the Minerva was in far worse shape than he had been led to believe. It was in fact a debt-ridden hulk, incapable of salvage. The previous owners had carefully concealed in the books debts amounting to hundreds of dollars, and the impatient creditors were not shy about calling on the new editor to demand their money. Kendall also found that dozens of subscribers to the paper had never paid for a single issue. The final blow came when he learned that the Johnsons had purchased his $1,500 debt. Suspecting that he had been played false, Kendall sent an angry letter to Richard Johnson, accusing the man of having deceived him into buying a worthless newspaper, then buying his notes to insure his loyalty. He concluded the letter by saying that the Minerva could not be continued without fresh financial backing.

Johnson quickly replied to this outcry, and Kendall noticed that he was "a little displeased" with the charges of deceit. The Congressman heatedly denied that he had ever intended to trick Kendall and claimed that he had not known of the Minerva's irreparable condition until just before Kendall himself discovered it. Kendall's notes had been bought, Johnson contended, in order to salvage something of the wreck, and prevent the young editor from being ruined. Kendall was suspicious of Johnson's explanation and good intentions, but he agreed to discuss methods for saving the paper. It was obvious that Johnson wanted above all to keep the Georgetown press friendly to his own interests, and this gave Kendall a strong bargaining position.

Therefore, he pointed out the damage that could be done if he were sued for the Minerva's debts. He also hinted that he might have to sue
Johnson. The last thing that Johnson wanted was a series of bitter court cases in which his image would suffer, so he offered an amicable alternative. The details of the negotiations are not recorded in Kendall's narrative of this period, but it is evident that he was able to get the better of the situation. He flatly refused to continue owning the newspaper. Perhaps he also intimated that he would sell his share of it to Johnson's enemies. In any event, Johnson agreed to buy the Minerva himself, and returned Kendall his notes. Johnson also assumed the paper's debts. It was renamed the Georgetown Patriot and Johnson hired Kendall to edit the new operation. 32

Kendall should have counted himself a very lucky young man. He had, through bluster and good fortune, obtained what he wanted in the first place: a salaried editorship. He had escaped the consequences of his own folly, and kept the good will of the area's most important and powerful politician. The incident was not without its effect on his future, for his later business dealings and attitudes toward debt were stamped with a conservatism that probably stemmed from this incident. But Kendall's immediate reaction was one of profound relief. Johnson had been very generous toward him in the end, although not from entirely unselfish motives. Kendall had reasons to be grateful in the months ahead.

Once this initial fright was over, Kendall approached his new profession eagerly. He was determined to convince the reading public that the Patriot was more than simply a redecorated version of the Minerva shorn of its indebtedness. He threw himself into promoting the Patriot among subscribers (that is, paying subscribers) of the earlier paper. He introduced a cultural section to the paper, featuring his own
poetry. He also tried, but failed, to create a companion journal devoted to religious topics. As he was not, at this time, a regular church-goer, his motives were probably pecuniary. In political matters, Kendall strived to prevent too close an association with the Johnsons, lest he be tagged as their lackey. In practice, this meant that while he knew that Johnson expected faithful consideration, Kendall tried to take editorial positions designed to please as many readers as possible. He reported Johnson's activities in Congress, for example, but seldom elaborated on them. He often printed extracts of Johnson's House speeches, taken from eastern newspapers or other sources. Johnson sometimes sent Kendall a letter describing his activities on the behalf of war widows and veterans' pensions, and the editor would print these. But Kendall refrained from writing the kind of laudatory essays that commonly adorned the political organs of the day. In his own words, he was "perfectly inclined to be [Johnson's] friend, but not his tool."33

In other matters as well, Kendall attempted to avoid controversy and espouse only safe issues. He wrote in favor of internal improvements, something that nearly all Kentuckians wanted, but pointedly said nothing about the issue of funding these with Federal monies. Likewise, he advocated a moderate, "judicious" tariff, but declined to specify what items should be taxed and what should be admitted duty free. On most subjects he took similar ambiguous and inoffensive stands. Indeed, his only harsh words were reserved for Kentucky's Federalists, a distinct minority. He traded insults with the Western Monitor, which was the one Kentucky paper of any consequence with Federalist leanings.34
In this manner, Kendall crept through the early months of his journalistic career, striving in a rather bland way to please everyone until he was sure of himself. The Patriot had no real competition around Georgetown and the Johnsons tolerated his neutrality because Richard had as yet no real challengers for his seat in Congress. Being so fortunate, and conceiving of his job in romantic, naive terms, Kendall condemned partisanship and faction:

If an Editor can write a libel and laugh at it, if with cold blooded malice he can stamp with infamy the character of a respectable citizen, if for the good of a party, he can inculcate those principles which he knows will lead his country to ruin, he is more base than the minions of despots . . . . A newspaper should teach free men how to act with intelligence and dignity, and not be a sewer to vent the spleen of individuals, and sow the seeds of discord among the citizens of the same neighborhood.35

These were noble sentiments born of a young man's desire to keep his principles unsullied by political realities. One wonders if years later, an older and more experienced Kendall remembered these words and, if so, what he thought of them then.

Reality soon intruded on young Kendall's idyllic life. In May, 1816, the first serious campaigning began for the autumn elections. Substantial Federalist opposition was virtually nonexistent, so most local and state offices were fought over by rival Republican factions. This did nothing to prevent such contests from being as bitterly conducted as any inter-party battle. Throughout Kentucky editors prepared to struggle for their choices. But, in keeping with his established policy, Kendall at first refused to pick sides. He even refused to place any campaign literature in the Patriot itself. Instead, he printed handbills for all of the various candidates, including Johnson and his challengers, and inserted them inside copies
of the paper. In this manner, he hoped to "steer as clear as possible of censure on either side; for I wish not to give offence for another's benefit." 36

The young editor was unable to indulge his sense of fair play for very long. In the last weeks of the Congressional session, Johnson introduced a proposal that would threaten his re-election. This was the Compensation Bill, a proposal to alter a Congressman's pay from six dollars per diem, plus travel, to $1,500 a year. In proposing the bill, Johnson pointed out that the old pay scale, which had existed since 1789, was outmoded and hardly in line with the inflation that had taken place since the War of 1812. He noted that the prevailing system was particularly unfair to western representatives, whose travel costs alone used up much of their pay, since the travel allotment was inadequate. As the Federal business grew, and as Congressional sessions correspondingly lengthened, only wealthy men would be able to serve in Washington, Johnson predicted. He said the Compensation Bill would remedy a threat to proper representation. Moreover, he insisted, sessions of Congress would be shortened as members went about their business more speedily. Shorter sessions would mean smaller fuel and stationery costs, so that the government might actually save money. Johnson's colleagues agreed that he had a point — House clerks were then receiving a salary of $1,000, more than the pay of the men they served. John Randolph of Roanoke enthusiastically supported the bill, which was significant, for Randolph was one of the most serious advocates of Republican simplicity and frugality. The Compensation Bill passed with scarcely any debate or dissent. 37

However, the bill rapidly became a controversial issue once the
voters learned of it. No other action of the Fourteenth Congress created quite so large a stir, not even the bill that established a new Bank of the United States. Thousands of citizens saw in the Compensation Bill a bit of political sleight-of-hand through which Congressmen had contrived to line their own pockets. Others objected not so much to the pay raise as to the fact that the incumbents had applied it to themselves instead of letting it take effect at the next Congress. As the elections approached, the challenging candidates, sensing an issue that could be used with great effect, fanned the flames of anger into an uproar against their incumbent opponents. In many Congressional elections, the Compensation Bill became the major, if not the only, issue. 38

As the author of the plan, Johnson was viciously attacked during the summer campaign. He had to return to Kentucky earlier than he had intended and throw himself into a stump campaign to answer his critics. The governor of the state openly called for his defeat, and his principal opponent, who previously had been given little chance of unseating the "slayer of Tecumseh," received generous financial backing from Johnson's enemies in Scott County. In nearby Lexington and Frankfort, the state's largest newspapers predicted the Colonel's defeat. 39

Johnson responded by defending his Compensation Bill as a just and wise measure that would preserve, not destroy, good representative government. He also turned to the Patriot for help in his defense. But Kendall, who had been maintaining his usual neutrality, advised Johnson to backtrack instead. He reported that he had been tabulating the letters sent to the paper concerning the issue, and that the vast
majority of these condemned the pay raise. Kendall added that he personally thought the bill had been an unwise proposal and believed that Johnson would lose the election if he continued to defend it. He suggested that the Colonel promise instead to support a repeal of the bill. 40

But Johnson was unwilling to heed Kendall's warnings. He was convinced that the measure was a good one, and that he could in turn convince the voters of its rightness. Therefore, he continued to argue the bill's merits in speeches, while his supporters pressed Kendall to take a more partisan stand. Kendall bristled at this kind of interference with his newspaper, but he could not for long resist the demands of the man who was, after all, his employer. As the last weeks of the campaign commenced, the Patriot began to take on the appearance of a true political organ. Letters praising Johnson filled its columns. Remarks like the following were typical:

The people of this district are too intelligent to be cheated out of the services of a useful public servant, by the dexterity and cunning of a few individuals, principally from political hostility. 41

Kendall was of necessity learning the standard practice of the journalist's profession.

Kendall continued to press Johnson to repudiate the Compensation Bill, however. He earnestly told the Colonel that only a promise to support repeal would save him from defeat. Johnson stubbornly ignored the advice for a time, then relented when he began to learn of the election results in other states. Dozens of incumbents were being turned out for their support of the Compensation Bill. (Two thirds of the incumbent representatives and senators were defeated in these
elections, a proportion that has never been equaled.) Faced with the numbers, Johnson wisely compromised. He still claimed that the measure was a good one, but also announced that, in accordance with the people's obvious wishes, he would support a repeal of the bill at the next session. 42

Kendall, satisfied that he was no longer tied to a lost cause, composed an appeal in favor of Johnson:

We have a right, [he wrote] and it is our duty, coolly and dispassionately to examine the opinions of men who offer for public offices and see if they are consistent with the genius of our free institutions. We have a right to expose their errors in the mildness of charity and shew that with such sentiments they are unworthy of the confidence of the people. But we have no right to go further, to attack private character and stigmatisé a man as an enemy to his country, because he does not see things in the same light as ourselves. 43

One error should not deprive the people of a good man's services for all time, Kendall urged, and concluded his essay with a long review of the Colonel's past deeds and an announcement that he himself would vote for Johnson's re-election. Johnson won the election by a narrow margin, one of only two Kentucky incumbents to support the Compensation Bill and not be defeated. 44

Kendall was now blooded in the twisted course of Kentucky politics. Once again, he had been lucky, for a Johnson defeat could have ended his editorial career less than a year after it began. He had survived, though, and in the future would prove nothing if not a quick learner.
CHAPTER I

NOTES

1 William Stickney, ed., Autobiography of Amos Kendall (Boston, 1872), pp. 108-9. Kendall's "Autobiography" is not a true autobiography. Many parts were written by his son-in-law and are of suspect value, and should be used with care.


4 Ibid., p. 15; Amos Kendall to Caleb Butler, May 13, 1835, Kendall Papers, LC.

5 Frederick Chase, A History of Dartmouth College and the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire to 1815 (Brattleboro: Vermont Printing Co., 1928); Leon B. Richardson, History of Dartmouth College (Brattleboro: Stephen Daye Press, 1932).

6 Autobiography, pp. 31-37.

7 Ibid., pp. 53, 67.

8 Ibid., pp. 50-55.

9 Ibid., pp. 65-68; "Order of Exercises" and "Commencement Review," August 28, 1811, Frederick Chase Collection, Dartmouth College Library.


11 Ibid., p. 68.

13 Autobiography, pp. 78-79.


15 Autobiography, pp. 84-92.

16 Ibid., pp. 95-100.


19 Ibid., pp. 112-16.


22 Ibid., pp. 118-25.

23 Ibid., pp. 129-40, 154-56; Kany, pp. 81-83.


25 Ibid., pp. 145-52; Amos Kendall to George Abel Simmons, January 9, 1816, George Abel Simmons Papers, Chicago Historical Society.


28 Autobiography, pp. 147-51. A search of several repositories and secondary sources has revealed no extant copies of the Minerva.


33 Georgetown Patriot, April 20, May 11, 18, 26, 1816; Autobiography, p. 167.

34 Ibid., April 20, 1816.

35 Ibid., April 20, 1816.

36 Autobiography, pp. 177-78; Georgetown Patriot, June 1, 8, July 6, 1816.


39 Meyer, pp. 167-68.

40 Autobiography, pp. 175-78.

41 Ibid., pp. 177-79; Georgetown Patriot, July 27, 1816.

42 McMaster, v. 4, 365-71; Meyer, pp. 172-76; Autobiography, p. 178.

43 Ibid., August 3, 1816.

44 Ibid., August 10, 1816.
CHAPTER II

LEARNING THE ROPES

On May 29, 1816, Kendall made the following entry in his irregularly kept journal:

Rode to Lexington and visited Mr. H. Clay. I found him a very agreeable man, and was familiarly acquainted with him in half an hour.¹

Henry Clay was indeed a man with whom one could feel at ease. Witty and clever, if occasionally a bit too glib, Clay had an immense charm and style that soothed all but the bitterness of his enemies. Clay loved life, and often could not take seriously the political divisions of the day. Compromise and harmony were the guiding stars of his career. While others spoke of unbending principles, this Kentuckian spent his considerable energies searching for bridges over seemingly impassable chasms. Clay's penchant for conciliation was in marked contrast to the rigidity that Kendall habitually demonstrated.

There were numerous other differences between the stately, Virginia born master of Ashland and the Yankee editor. Kendall had just concluded his fifth year since Dartmouth, and had only just begun his career in journalism; he had nearly despaired of finding a happy calling. Clay, in contrast, was approaching the height of his career. He was the west country's leading statesman, an obvious presidential possibility. Kendall was only beginning to learn the complexities of Kentucky politics, let alone national affairs. Clay was an acknowledged
expert at both. Both were ambitious men, the difference being that the shy, acerbic Kendall had some obvious limitations, while the graceful, incisive Clay had yet to find any. It was not for nothing that this confident, proud man was being called the "cock of the walk."²

The 1816 election was one more example of Clay's familiarity with success. Like Colonel Johnson, he had readily supported the Compensation Bill, for he had never been able to "make both ends meet at the termination of Congress," despite the fact that as Speaker he received twice the normal per diem. In making his memoir of their first meeting, Kendall had noted that "a great ferment is raised in Fayette [Clay's home county]" against Clay's vote. Clay made light of the uproar at first. Like Johnson, he refused to believe that "for this paltry sum" the people would turn out "a faithful, if not an able servant." As the summer wore on, however, Clay realized that the people were indeed capable of turning out any servant who had supported the bill. He later said that he did not meet "one solitary individual" who approved his support of the pay raise.³

Clay's opponent in this election was a one-armed former lieutenant named John Pope. Pope had once rivalled Clay's popularity in Kentucky, holding a seat in the United States Senate. But in 1812, he had voted against the war with Great Britain, leading Clay and his friends to denounce him as a pro-British Federalist. Driven into temporary retirement as a result, Pope was in 1816 just beginning a long struggle to return to power and gain revenge on the Master of Ashland. In this election he used the Compensation issue in speeches throughout the district, likening a vote for the bill to outright theft from the treasury. His remarks had telling effect. A story circulated during
the campaign about a voter who vowed to vote for the "man who has but
one arm to thrust into the treasury." For a brief time it seemed that
the "cock of Kentucky" could be defeated. 4

Clay simply fell back upon his talent for accommodation.
Instead of fruitlessly defending the bill, as Johnson did, Clay quickly
promised to vote for a repeal at the next session. This finished Pope's
chances almost immediately. The climax of the campaign came in an open
debate near Lexington. Pope was an able speaker, who employed a
blistering rhetoric that could flail an opponent mercilessly. But he
had been deprived of his major issue, and Clay was one of the ablest
orators of his time. On this occasion, he bested Pope handily. When
the ballots were counted in August, Clay had won a clear victory, with a
700 vote margin and fifty-eight percent of the total. And this was the
closest contest he ever had in his district! Small wonder he had begun
to take success for granted. 5

The Patriot warmly announced Clay's victory. As a recent
resident of Ashland, it was only natural for Kendall to take an interest
in Clay's fortunes. Also, since he had hoped to profit from association
with the Clay family, a little editorial praise was not an unwise
policy. But past obligations and future expectations alone can not
fully explain why Kendall came to champion Henry Clay. Further
explanation must be sought. Kendall himself, at various times over
twenty-five years, credited Lucretia Clay for his subsequent support of
her husband. He cited her "many kindnesses" to him, especially one
occasion soon after he had left her employ to practice law in
Georgetown. He had contracted a fever while arguing one of his few
cases near Lexington. Lucretia, hearing of his illness, had had him
fetched in her own carriage to Ashland, where she personally nursed him back to health. It may be that Kendall was more than a little taken with her. Certainly such a possibility fits his romantic inclinations. In any event, long after he had bitterly broken with Clay, Kendall spoke fondly of this woman and the great debt he owed her. Kendall would also have been attracted to Clay's charm and self-confidence. He must have been captivated by Clay's ability to lead. In college, Kendall had mused over leadership:

the most stable kind of popularity [Kendall wrote] — which insures respect and lasting esteem — is founded upon decision of character ... The man of decision is alone independent. It is remarkable to observe the effect of this quality. A word with him is as an action; a promise as a performance. The mass revere him, and never press beyond a denial.

Kendall further thought that such a leader was "consistent and inflexible." Henry Clay's compromising nature was hardly likely to be found in such a leader. Even so, Kendall here perceived an important facet in the emerging American character (one he happily shared): a fondness for heroes. In 1816, a time of reorientation following an unsatisfactory war, Americans were in the market for new heroes. It was a time when the Revolutionary generation was passing from the scene, and replacements were needed. The last of the "Virginia dynasty," James Monroe had just been elected, and the curious anomaly known as the "Era of Good Feelings" (an era that was in reality anything but) had begun.

This era marked the death of the first party system, for 1816 was the last time that the Federalists contested national office and power with the Republicans. The resulting loss of competition was to prove a curse, rather than a blessing, for the Republicans. Party discipline faded into memory as Jeffersonian factions fought one another
for the spoils of success. The contests were embittered by Monroe's policy of conciliation toward all of the factions, as well as by the fact that he had no obvious successor.\(^8\)

The changing political atmosphere was matched by a confusion of ideology. During the Nation's infancy, statesmen had by and large concerned themselves with the proper way to establish a stable nation, to make the United States a going concern. The War of 1812 had closed the door on that period, while the issues it raised concerning national finances and communications helped open the door to the next era. The Fourteenth Congress, motivated by the poor performance of the states in raising, moving, and supplying troops against the British invaders, framed legislation in 1816 to strengthen finances and communications. Bills to build roads, encourage and protect manufactures, and create a national credit and currency were passed by Clay and his colleagues. And yet, as we have seen, the immediate reaction of many voters was to ignore these matters and instead raise objections to the Compensation Bill.\(^9\)

For other citizens, this era offered greater danger than that posed by the Compensation Bill. The end of the war meant the end of outside threats for years to come. The Nation's borders were flanked by either peaceful powers or weak nations that were themselves breaking away from a colonial past. In 1819, John Quincy Adams made the United States a trans-continental power by concluding a favorable treaty with Spain. A year later, he would frame the Monroe Doctrine and with it America's claim to be a hemispheric power. But such advances did not necessarily free the Nation from all dangers. The more that greatness beckoned, the more some men feared for the virtue of their society.
John Taylor of Caroline County, Virginia, who was after Jefferson the theorist for the Republican Party, warned of the increasing strength of a "monied aristocracy" that could subvert the people's freedoms. Taylor warned that a natural antipathy existed "between exclusive chartered interest and general social interest; between publick and corporate, or party influence over legislatures." He feared that the state of freedom in America, won by the blood of those who fought England and preserved by the Revolutionary leaders, was being replaced by a state of artificial privilege. A "paper aristocracy" was being built on the ground of inequitable laws that created banks and corporations. It was being maintained by unfair taxes, as well as by a judiciary that was not accountable to the people, and therefore dangerous. The continuance of such abuses, he concluded, would inevitably subvert "the free form of government of the United States." Many citizens heeded Taylor's words, convinced that an internal threat had arisen to replace the old external threats. 10

Kendall came to believe as Taylor did, as his future course would show. But for the immediate future, he had other concerns. After the election, Kendall met William Gerard, the editor of the Argus of Western America of Frankfort. The Argus was more attentive to state and national affairs than most Kentucky newspapers, partly because of its location in the Capital, and partly because Gerard was a director of the important Bank of Kentucky. What passed between the two men at their first meeting is unknown, but Gerard soon after offered Kendall a chance to own half of his paper. Kendall, taken by surprise, protested that he could not afford to buy half the paper. Gerard replied by assuring him that a suitable loan with the Bank of Kentucky could be arranged.
Furthermore, Kendall would be guaranteed editorial control of the paper, because Gerard wanted to devote his time to other interests. Kendall then asked for time to consider the proposal.\textsuperscript{11}

Kendall's reluctance was understandable, considering his recent experience with the doomed Minerva venture. He knew that an acceptance of this offer would be tantamount to a firm commitment to journalism as his career. But teaching had bored him, and although he had continued his law practice at Georgetown, he admitted that "experience thus far had not commended it to his favor." Journalism, then, seemed the least objectionable choice, if not the most likely road to wealth and fame. It would also allow him to indulge his propensity for writing. Most of his friends recommended that he take the opportunity. The Johnsons, however, spoke against it. They did not wish to start looking for yet another editor. The Argus had also come out against the Colonel in the recent election. Kendall ignored their advice and accepted Gerard's offer on the last day of September. He agreed to pay $1,000 immediately for his share of the paper, followed by a further $1,000 within a year. He would move to Frankfort and commence his new undertaking on the first day of November.\textsuperscript{12}

Kendall's journal is the only known source that details his beginnings with Gerard and the Argus proposal. While his memoir of this event contains a good deal of detail on his decision to accept the offer, it says nothing about Gerard's motives for proposing the partnership. It may be that Kendall himself never knew the reasons, although that seems unlikely. One would expect that he would have at least asked Gerard. The journal offers clues, however, suggesting that Gerard's connection with the Bank of Kentucky may have been the key.
factor. During the summer of 1816, Kendall had written articles for the *Patriot* concerning the post-war economic situation. In these articles he reviewed the currency problem and suggested that the only way in which inflation could be reduced was by the banks' resuming specie payments as soon as possible. Later, Kendall heard (from whom he did not say) that his articles and suggestions had been noted with approval by "officers of the Bank of Kentucky." This institution, unlike most western banks, kept a conservative ratio of specie to paper. As one of its officers, Gerard may have chosen Kendall because he liked his fiscal views. Indeed, the journal first notes the Gerard offer just after mentioning the currency articles.\(^\text{13}\)

Another possible motive exists for the Gerard offer, this one connected with the *Argus*'s hostility towards Richard Johnson. While discussing the Gerard offer with his Georgetown friends, Kendall learned that the Colonel was planning to attack Gerard in the columns of a rival Frankfort paper. It is possible that Gerard had gotten wind of the plan and struck first by stealing away Johnson's own editor.\(^\text{14}\)

There is no evidence to indicate that Henry Clay had anything to do with Kendall's move to Frankfort. However, as a director of the Bank of Kentucky, Clay certainly knew Gerard; he also agreed that the resumption of specie payments was vital to stimulate the sluggish western economy; he had been extremely pleased with Kendall's tutoring of his children. Perhaps, urged on by his wife, he did not hesitate to encourage Gerard to consider Kendall as his new partner.

Kendall's good fortune, whatever the cause of it, certainly benefitted Clay. For, had Gerard failed to find a suitable partner, the *Argus* might have fallen under the control of Clay's enemy John Pope.
Pope had not given up after being beaten in the autumn election. He simply shrugged off the loss and worked to unite several disaffected elements into an anti-Clay coalition. To his end, he had been seeking to buy interest in the Argus himself. When Kendall joined the paper instead, Pope had to establish a new organ in Frankfort. Meanwhile, the Lexington Reporter said that Kendall's connection with the Argus would "give pleasure to the Republicans throughout the state."  

Kendall prepared to move to Frankfort. He resigned his postmaster's position and closed out his tiny Georgetown law practice. It would be nearly twenty years before he was again associated with post offices, nearly thirty before he argued another case. Just before he left, Kendall also arranged a peace between Gerard and the Johnsons. This mediation kept the Colonel's good will but also suited the young editor's belief that "Republicans of the same principle [should] put an end to ... controversy."  

The move to the Argus was an opportunity fraught with challenge. Located as it was in the state capital, the newspaper had a wide circulation throughout Kentucky. To keep that circulation its editor needed several skills. He needed a talent for accommodation, particularly if he wished to compete for the lucrative printing contracts awarded by the legislative and executive branches of the government. Likewise, he had to be a keen observer and analyzer of events in order to grasp the complexities of Kentucky politics. Having advanced from tutor to editor of a major newspaper in a little more than a year, Kendall's ability to accommodate was not to be questioned. A thorough awareness of local and state politics was another matter. Kendall could rely on cues from Gerard, Johnson, and Clay, but he could
not become an expert overnight. Without the years of hard experience that were needed for a full appreciation of what was really going on, Kendall tended to seek a neutral ground.

Kentucky's system of government was basically decentralized, in keeping with the prevailing American concepts of republicanism. At the county level, broad legislative, executive, and judicial powers resided with the county court, composed mainly of prominent local figures, appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of the court itself. The justices thus had the opportunity to perpetuate their positions of power. Since these men also appointed the remaining county officers, including the sheriff, their freedom of action was often unchecked by anything but the limitations of their resources and ambitions. In some counties interlocking families could hold power for generations. The system of county government had been transplanted from Virginia, the state from which most early Kentuckians had emigrated. The system was sustained, by and large, by the habit of deference to one's "betters" that had also been transplanted from Virginia. Democracy was hard to find in such a system. 17

But above the county level, instruments for popular participation prevailed. Somewhat less order accompanied the system as a result. Kentuckians had imbued their second constitution, ratified in 1799, with a generous portion of the Revolutionary experience. Legislative representatives served one-year terms, so that they might be frequently accountable to the voters. Governors were allowed four years, but were prohibited from serving consecutive terms in office. Executive power was largely confined to administrative matters. Liberal (for the times) voting qualifications existed and near-universal white
male suffrage prevailed as a result. This combination of restrictions, coupled with frequent elections, helped to reduce the custom of deference above the local level. Deference was not entirely eradicated however. The State Senate, with four-year terms and no re-election restrictions, was a refuge for the prominent families, as well as for orthodox conservatism. In the main, though, the Kentucky constitution encouraged a democratic state government. 18

By 1816, experience had shown that a two-party system could be used to mitigate the diffusion of power inherent in so many of the state governments. But this had not, for the most part, happened in Kentucky. In keeping with their Revolutionary origins and Virginia heritage, Kentuckians had been overwhelmingly attached to Jefferson's Republican party. Federalism had found the Kentucky soil too hostile to take any substantial root. Without Federalism as a unifying enemy, the Kentucky Jeffersonians did not develop a disciplined party organization. As a result, local politicians kept their loyalty to the National organization, but squabbling factionalism characterized state level politics.

The most cohesive, and therefore the dominant, faction was comprised of the senators and representatives of the Bluegrass region. Located in north-central Kentucky, the Bluegrass was the longest-settled area of the state, had the richest land, the largest city, and the leading statesmen. Henry Clay had climbed from the Bluegrass ranks, as had numerous others. The central branch of the Bank of Kentucky, the financial heart of the State, was headquartered in Lexington. The Reporter was Kentucky's most prominent newspaper, its columns devoted equally to the region's business, the state's politics, and Henry Clay's
career. Kentucky's only college, Transylvania University, was a Bluegrass school, its board dominated by area planters and merchants, its classes filled with their sons. Small wonder that Bluegrass residents, particularly the allied planters and merchants about Lexington, tended to think that their area was Kentucky. 19

Outlying areas, which were growing both in population and needs of their own, had recently begun to challenge the Bluegrass on political and economic matters. There were many in the outlying counties who wanted more and better roads on which to move their goods and produce, and so become less dependent on Lexington markets. Towns too distant from the branches of the Bank of Kentucky had to rely on Ohio banks for their available currency. They understandably wanted branches or banks of their own. The rising city of Louisville, an entrepot serving the northwestern counties, promised to become a major competitor to Lexington once the Ohio River was fully tamed. As an inland city, Lexington could not in the long run stay ahead of a port city like Louisville, but Lexington's state representatives could delay their competitors by denying them transportation improvements and credit facilities. 20

The legislative session of 1815-16 had shown just how Bluegrass cohesiveness could be used to make such a strategy work. During the session, an anti-Bluegrass coalition formed around John Rowan, a lawyer from the northwestern city of Bardstown. Rowan wanted to break the Bluegrass hold on credit, and to this end he proposed a bill to create open banking. Any town that could raise a specified minimum amount of capital and select a board of directors would automatically receive a charter to establish a bank. The proposal was designed to attract as
many votes as possible, for as Rowan expected, the Bluegrass representatives solidly opposed the bill. The debate over open banking consumed much of the session, with Rowan and his allies accusing the Bluegrass of wishing to hold the outlying areas in economic thraldom, and the Bluegrass speakers retorting that Rowan's scheme would lead to uncontrollable inflation. Bluegrass area newspapers accused Rowan of being a Federalist. In the end, Rowan's bill was voted down by a small margin. His coalition was not yet extensive enough to overcome the Bluegrass, whose representatives had voted to a man against him.21

Rowan's challenge to the Bluegrass dominance was certain to continue once the next legislative session began in late 1816. Most observers expected that he would once again take a stand on the banks issue. But fate decreed otherwise: George Madison, the recently elected governor, and a reliable spokesman for Bluegrass interests, died in October just after taking office. This left the new lieutenant governor, Gabriel Slaughter, in charge of the Executive. Slaughter was a minor figure in Kentucky politics, from outside the Bluegrass area. He had no substantial powerbase or support, and, like many lieutenant governors before and after him, had been largely ignored by the men of influence. Since he would not be able to seek a second term, and since Madison had already made selections for many of the more important executive offices, many politicians dismissed him as an unimportant factor in the coming sessions. Slaughter surprised them, however. He decided to strike an independent course, as Kendall subsequently recalled:

About the middle of October [1816] I left Georgetown and came to Frankfort. Previous to this event, George Madison, who had been unanimously elected governor of this State, died, and the
administration had devolved on Gabriel Slaughter, the lieutenant-governor. As I was on my way [to Frankfort], I amused myself by imagining what a peaceful and happy time I should have . . . . There was little party spirit in the state; all was quiet and harmonious . . . . Indulging in these reveries, I met Ben Taylor on the top of the hill above Frankfort, who told me the acting governor had appointed John Pope as his secretary [of state].22

The appointment of Pope caught most everyone by surprise, especially because Madison had promised that office to Charles Todd of the prestigious Bluegrass Todd family. The Lexington Reporter immediately charged that Slaughter had entered into a conspiracy with Pope to subvert the State Government toward Federalism.23

Kendall admitted to being "thunderstruck" by Slaughter's boldness. In a memoir written well after the events that began with Pope's appointment, he also added that he "instantly foresaw a struggle" between "Pope the leader of the Federalists" and the Bluegrass Republicans, and resolved to "take a decided stand against this act of the acting governor." It would seem, though, that Kendall was indulging in hindsight, for in the actual events he was less assertive. His first issue of the Argus was in fact so non-committal that for a time Pope thought Kendall could be made an ally of the new administration.24

There was no chance of Kendall's allying himself with the Pope-Slaughter faction. Still, he was hesitant to attack them openly. Knowing that "much was expected from me by the Republicans" (i.e. the Bluegrass faction) who were calling on the State Senate to reject Pope's appointment, he preferred to support them with a series of anonymous letters written over the pseudonym "Cato." In these letters "Cato" exhorted the State Senators to deny Pope confirmation and thus "teach our governor to seek better associates." The Kentucky Reporter's editors, by contrast, while they reprinted and lauded the "Cato" series,
openly called for a renunciation of Pope.²⁵

There was not enough time, however, to mount a campaign to drive Pope out. When the legislature convened in early December, Slaughter's appointments were quickly brought forth and confirmed in the Senate. The votes, particularly in the case of Pope, suggested that while the Bluegrass senators were joined in opposing Slaughter, the now-stronger Rowan coalition overwhelmingly supported the new governor. Pope and Slaughter had joined Rowan in a combined attack on Bluegrass ascendancy. Since Slaughter would control the executive patronage until 1820, this new coalition posed a much graver threat to the Bluegrass than previously. A lengthy and bitter factional struggle seemed likely. In order to win it, the Bluegrass leaders found it necessary to consider radical countermeasures.²⁶

They developed a plan that was indeed extreme, based on the belief that the only way to defuse the challenge was to get rid of both Pope and Slaughter. Kendall attributed the origin of this plan to Charles Todd, whose outrage at being passed over spurred his search for revenge. It may have been Todd who provided the bones for the plan, but the flesh came from the mind of George Bibb. A former justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, Bibb was a typical Bluegrass leader. His old-fashioned fondness for wearing pantaloons obscured a razor sharp political cunning, and he was widely respected for his knowledge about the confusing Kentucky constitution. He found his line of attack against Slaughter in this same document. He noticed that the constitution specified that on the death of an incumbent governor, the lieutenant-governor was designated to serve as acting governor "until
another be duly qualified." Until 1816, people had simply assumed that this phrase meant that the lieutenant-governor was to serve until the next regular election, but Bibb now claimed that the vague phrase permitted the legislature to call a special election. Slaughter and Pope, of course, thought Bibb's interpretation downright absurd. Nevertheless, the ideas gained favor among the Bluegrass men, who saw in it a rallying point for continuing the battle with their opponents. Before long, the clamor for a special election became a staple of Bluegrass political rhetoric.27

As the New Election movement gathered momentum, Kendall began to feel pressure upon him to take sides. First Gerard, then Bibb, urged the young editor to come out in favor of a special election. But the most Kendall would do was publish a list of reasons both for and against the idea, "without giving to the public any opinion" on the proposal. Privately, he said he could not find any authority in the Kentucky constitution that would allow a new election.28

Kendall had an important reason for his caution. The new legislature was to elect a public printer soon, and he had every hope of winning this lucrative morsel. His major competitor for the contract would be the Frankfort Commentator, recently established by the governor's faction after Pope gave up hope of winning over the Argus to his designs. Kendall was assured of Bluegrass votes, and had no wish to alienate a substantial number of uncommitted representatives by embracing the controversial election scheme. Instead, he conceived a plan to win the public printing through flattery:

I asked leave to take a seat in the House and report the speeches and proceedings. Leave was readily granted, and I continued to do it throughout the session. With the exception of two or three
members, whose speeches, it was said, were much better reported by me than as spoken by themselves, all the members of the House were not only satisfied, but pleased. It was not only gratifying to the members themselves, because it flattered them, but was very acceptable to the people. It gave an importance to our paper which brought it many subscribers, and made the representatives in some measure dependent on me. We were elected public printers without opposition.29

After securing the printing contract, Kendall suddenly accepted the arguments of Bibb and Gerard. He restudied the Kentucky constitution and discovered that it did indeed permit the calling of a special election. The dramatic turnaround, publicly announced, raised more than one eyebrow. In an unguarded moment, Kendall himself admitted that he could not say "what influence dislike for Pope and Slaughter may have had on my [change of] mind." He quickly added, however, that he was "sure that if it had any it was unconsciously."30

The plot established and the cast in order, the New Election drama now began in earnest. Both sides assumed high moral grounds. Slaughter and his allies wrapped themselves in the constitution and cried "revolution!", while the Bluegrass faction thundered away with the charge of "Federalism!" In the end the contest became a sordid battle, doing no credit to most of the participants. But it had some unforeseen, fateful results.31

With both factions warming to the struggle, more and more of the State's prominent figures were induced to cast their lots with one side or the other. For the Bluegrass, both William T. Barry and Jesse Bledsoe left national offices to run for legislative seats in 1817. The Bluegrass also obtained the services of young John J. Crittenden, speaker of the Kentucky assembly. Crittenden represented the Pennyroyal district, an area of rich land located in the southwest part of the
State. He had been raised in the Bluegrass region, however, and found it easy to join his old friends. Although this Bluegrass-Pennyroyal alliance was not sufficient to push through a New Election bill in the current session, it mustered enough votes to reward Crittenden with a place in the United States Senate.  

The administration faction was directed mainly by Pope, rather than Slaughter, who had less experience in this type of warfare. Pope's principal legislative lieutenant was George Robertson, a lawyer whose legal talents and reputation rivalled those of Bibb. Robertson's secure position was evidenced by the fact that his home county was named in his honor. In addition to Robertson, Pope could rely on Martin Hardin, John Rowan, and Humphrey Marshall. Marshall, a distant relative of Chief Justice John Marshall, was one of the true Federalists in Kentucky. An old enemy of Clay, whom he had once shot in a duel, Humphrey Marshall contributed several essays against the New Election argument. He was an effective writer, utilizing a biting wit that could wither an oak. Kendall would remember him as "a masterly hand at misrepresentation and abuse."  

The 1817 elections became the pivot of the factional dispute. All legislative candidates who supported the Bluegrass position pledged themselves to vote for a New Election bill. All of Slaughter's supporters naturally pledged the opposite. The Bluegrass, however, had an edge in the campaign because it had the support of most of the State's large and important newspapers. In addition to the Argus and the Reporter, those agreeing with the need for a special election included the Kentucky Gazette, the oldest paper in the State. All of these journals made the "Federalist" charge the main club in their
arsenal of invective. The *Reporter* asserted that, while "many Republicans are found on both sides [of the controversy] . . . not a single federalist, we believe, can be found in favor of a new election."³⁴

The *Argus* added a twist to the argument. Kendall defended the Bluegrass position with republican theory. He reasoned that since the Kentucky constitution was unclear on the legitimacy of special elections, the final decision had to rest with the people. Only they, in their capacity as voters, could instruct the legislature in this matter, Kendall argued. If the voters returned a New Election majority, then the legislators must accept their mandate and pass a New Election bill. Further, Kendall implied that such a bill could not rightly be challenged in court. Since the voters were "the only true . . . foundation of power," their will had to be considered supreme. Anyone who held otherwise was, of course, a Federalist.³⁵

Kendall developed his theme further in a special pamphlet issued late in the New Election campaign. Writing as "Free Suffrage," he declared what was the essence of his political philosophy: "The will of the people is the supreme law." When the will of the people was known, through the majority of the voters, no power should be allowed to hinder it. Nothing, not a court nor a constitution, could legitimately check this will, for to do so was to commit the supreme crime against republicanism, "Free Suffrage" asserted. The foundation of republican power, he insisted, was "the omnipotent voice of the people to which every republican bows with silent reverence." Furthermore, this will, exercised with the vote, was the solution to society's ills. The decision of the virtuous majority, "Free Suffrage" insisted, was "the
renovating principle, the self restoring power, which will cure all evils, remedy all accidents, bring harmony out of discord [and] order out of confusion."

"Free Suffrage" admitted that a number of good republicans were committed to the Slaughter administration; he had to admit as much, or condemn thousands of citizens. But these "democratic republicans" were "honestly mistaken and will readily submit to the decision of the people" once they realized their error. And they would realize their error if they heeded the words of the Argus's editor. For educating the "people" was the essence of Kendall's political practice. (In effect, having grown bored with teaching children, he had exchanged his tutor's garb for a chance to lecture a larger and older audience.) As for the spokesmen of John Pope, they were misleading the voters, momentarily leading a part of the people astray with false promises. "Here," the writer concluded, "is Federalism of the rankest kind, and aristocracy of the blackest hue." "Free Suffrage" called on the voters to repudiate this cabal by supporting the New Election candidates.36

The New Election coalition was able to win a solid majority of the contested legislative seats in 1817. But when they gathered for the new session in Frankfort, they were unable to push through a New Election bill. In the Senate, only a quarter of the members stood for office in any given year. Thus, while the bill was easily passed in the newly reorganized House, it failed in the Senate by four votes. Bibb and his allies repeatedly tried to win a reconsideration for the bill, but their efforts failed to change a single senator's vote and the measure died.37

The New Election coalition seemed on the verge of breaking up
after this setback, with a number of legislators apparently ready to go over to the other side. It was saved by a change in tactics. Bluegrass spokesmen introduced a bill for chartering forty new banks in Kentucky. The differences between this bill and Rowan's earlier proposal were striking: Rowan had advocated open banking, while the Bluegrass bill specified carefully selected areas of Kentucky within the districts of certain members of the Slaughter faction. The bill was a cleverly designed bid to buy away supporters of Rowan, Pope, and Slaughter. The administration leaders were caught unprepared by the maneuver. In January, 1818, the bill swept though both House and Senate, as several of Slaughter's faction switched sides. Slaughter had no choice but to sign the widely popular act. Then, with the aid of the Bank of Kentucky, the Bluegrass held on to Slaughter's deserters by nurturing the development of the new banks. 38

Although talk continued throughout 1818 of another New Election campaign, no such course was taken. None was necessary, for with the desertion of so many allies, the administration's power was broken. Slaughter remained in office, but had no influence. The Bluegrass spokesmen and press continued calling him the "acting governor." Pope, equally without influence, resigned his office in 1819. A year later, he tried again to win a seat in the United States House of Representatives. He lost. 39

As an example of responsive and responsible government, the New Election movement had little to recommend it. Both factions had engaged in a duel of insults, each aiming solely at gaining the upper hand over the other. The Bluegrass leaders had not created the new banks out of any sense of public service. They simply wanted to regain their former
grip on the government machinery. They had, in fact, reversed previous stands against bank and credit expansion. Their bank bill was hastily drawn up, with little attention given to the proper need to supervise these new creations. And, once the political crisis was over, the Bank of Kentucky cut its support to the new banks. This careless attitude was to contribute to hard times just over the horizon.40

Kendall's support of the Bluegrass in the New Election battle was dictated by expediency. But his words in favor of popular sovereignty reflected his principles. Kendall hardly introduced a novel idea here. The Founding Fathers had, after all, established the Federal Constitution in the name of "the People of the United States." But that Constitution had also established a careful set of checks and balances for preventing too much popular rule, which was feared by the conservative leaders. Republicanism, as the Founding Fathers conceived of it, was a mechanism for maintaining a stable and orderly state while guaranteeing a certain amount of individual opportunity and freedom. Anything beyond this, democracy for example, was considered as a dangerous tendency toward license and tumult. But in 1818, Kendall was speaking for another point of view. His open questioning of checks and balances indicated his desire to grant to the people of Kentucky more active roles in determining their own futures. He had little respect for the county court as the basic unit of local government, for example, finding it to be elitist when compared with the town meetings of his native Massachusetts.41

In putting forth his argument, the young Argus editor was showing off his New England Jeffersonian heritage. For years an unheard minority, William Merchant Richardson and his Massachusetts friends had
come to think of themselves as suppressed champions for the people. No mechanical safeguards, in their view, had prevented the Federalists from taking control and riding roughshod over their rights. Thus, just as the Republicans of Massachusetts had eventually beaten their opponents, Kendall expected that through proper guidance and the right to vote, the people of Kentucky could rescue their own State from all semblances of Federalist tyranny. He gave expression to his belief by once printing a mock obituary of "Federalism," attributing the death to an onslaught of "vox populi." 42

But Kendall's arguments were too simple. He had exalted the concept of majority rule while forgetting minority rights. Naturally, he would have had no respect for Alexander Hamilton's warning that constitutional safeguards were needed "not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part." But had he also ignored the words of Jefferson, in praise of "this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression"? In future years, foreign observers would comment on this unfortunate aspect of American government, in which majority rule could become majority tyranny. The minority who suffered as a result was sometimes the propertied minority, those whom Kendall termed the "privileged class." In the next few years, Kentuckians would experience just such a situation. 43

But for the moment, Kendall's part in the New Election business had enhanced his reputation. The Argus was quickly becoming the State's
largest newspaper, and even gaining a certain status in other western states. Its young editor was also becoming more adjusted to Kentucky life and society. In 1818 he at last found himself in love. The woman was Mary Woolfolk and her father was a comfortable landowner in Jefferson County. Kendall probably met her while on business in nearby Louisville. He was quickly smitten by her quiet charm:

I feel so anxious not only to satisfy you, but to place you in a situation superior to your most ardent hopes, that I would at this moment do anything which was not mean, dishonorable, or wicked, to become rich. But as Heaven has doomed me to temporary and perhaps lasting poverty, I must try to make up, in affection and kindness, what is wanting in wealth and splendor. Your desires are not enlarged, and, possessing you, I shall wish for nothing but to see you placed beyond the reach of want. Let God but give us a competency of the good things of this life — all the rest of happiness depends on ourselves.

Mary Woolfolk soon succumbed to Amos's entreaties and the couple were wed in October, 1818. Kendall immediately plunged into "plans of houses, yards, groves, and all parts of a terrestrial paradise." But these luxuries required money, which he did not have. Instead, they took a small house in Frankfort, at the edge of the Capital where rents were cheaper. There, a little over a year later, their first child, Mary Ann, was born.

Life in Frankfort suited Kendall. He hated it when business took him to Cincinnati or elsewhere, preferring to remain at home in the company of his little family, or busy with the paper. Mary Kendall proved to be adept at making the most of Kendall's income. She managed their home on what he gave her, allowing him to save money for their future, as well as for enlarging his own business. Soon after the New Election controversy, Gerard left the Argus to pursue other interests. Kendall took a new partner, but retained control of the paper's
editorial policy. In fact, he would have several partners over the years (only a select few of whom stayed with the newspaper business for long), but always ran the operation himself. His printing firm was known simply as "Amos Kendall and Company." Kendall printed his own newspaper, the various documents and materials of the Kentucky Legislature and Executive, and any private work that he could get. In 1821, he enlarged his shop and added a bookstore. Two years later, he was able to purchase a new press and better type. Thus, the Argus flourished. 47

Kendall thrived as well. He joined the local Masonic lodge and wrote an address in praise of the organization's principles—and community service. He advocated a better system of public education in Kentucky, believing that the prevailing system, which was copied from Virginia, favored the children of the wealthy. He argued that "knowledge when confined to a few, creates an aristocracy as marked and as effectual as a distinction of ranks." As a result of his pleas, he was appointed to the Franklin County school board. 48 In 1822, he used the Argus to conduct a statewide survey of educational needs and opinions. The results were used by a special legislative commission to consider a public school system for the state. The commission was chaired by William T. Barry, but Kendall wrote its final report, presenting a model for public schools based essentially on what he had experienced in New England. The system was never adopted, as the state lacked the means to pay for it. But years later, it was cited by an educational authority as "one of the most valuable documents upon common-school education that had at that time appeared." It would seem that if Kendall had remained in teaching, he might have won an entirely
different estimate from posterity. 49

But he wanted a larger field for exercising his talent with words. The Argus contained opinions on every major question of the day, and there was no question that the opinions expressed were those of the editor. Kendall preached a grand vision of America, foreseeing a day when the frontiers would be replaced by farms and cities held together by roads and canals and better communications. He congratulated John Quincy Adams when the Secretary of State wrested the Transcontinental Treaty from Spain, but plaintively asked why Adams had not obtained even more concessions. On the other hand, he chastised James Monroe for holding back from diplomatic relations with South American republics, arguing that the United States had much to teach these new nations. He had little respect, in fact, for Monroe, believing him a poor leader who was not entitled to the worshipful awe he was accorded in some quarters. Kendall wanted strong leaders, decisive men in the nation's executive offices. 50

There was no question which man he wanted next to see in the White House. The Argus trumpeted the activities of Henry Clay at every opportunity. Kendall credited Clay with the major achievements of Congress, calling him the west's greatest advocate and the Nation's best statesman. Conversely, he ignored or criticized the activities of Clay's rivals, particularly his western rival Andrew Jackson. Clay, grateful for the support, rewarded Kendall by obtaining for him a contract to print the Federal laws. Because of this, the support of the State Government and Kendall's own vigorous journalism, the Argus had more subscribers than any other Kentucky paper by 1819. 51
This was significant, for it meant that as the editor of such a newspaper, Kendall could not avoid being caught up in the political maelstrom that loomed over the horizon.
CHAPTER II

NOTES

1 Autobiography, p. 172.


5 Van Deusen, p. 114; Blakely, pp. 247-49; Georgetown Patriot, August 10, 1816.

6 Autobiography, pp. 148-50; Argus of Western America, May 28, July 9, 1828; Kendall's Expositor, December 16, 1841.

7 Autobiography, p. 67; Georgetown Patriot, June 1, 1816.


10 The literature on republicanism and its influence upon antebellum America is extensive. I have especially benefitted from the following: Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 29 (1972), pp. 49-80; Fred Somkin, Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American
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24 Argus of Western America (hereafter Argus), November 1, 1816; Autobiography, pp. 182-83.

25 Ibid., pp. 184-85; Argus, November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 1816; Georgetown Patriot, November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 1816; Lexington Reporter, November 20, 1816.


28 Autobiography, p. 187; Argus, December 13, 1816.

29 Autobiography, p. 186.

30 Ibid., pp. 187-88; Argus, January 17, April 11, 18, 1817.

31 Dorman, pp. 342-48; Joseph Ficklin to William Worsley, January 26, 1817 and June 12, 1817, both in Lyman C. Draper Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.


33 Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky (two volumes, Covington, Kentucky, 1874), v. 2, pp. 277-78, 687-89; Autobiography, p. 189.

34 The Western Monitor, September 13, 1816; Connelly and Coulter, pp. 587-88; Lexington Reporter, June 11, 1817.

35 Argus, July 26, 1817, February 13, 1818.

36 The Constitution Shown to be Consistent with a New Election, by Free Suffrage (Frankfort, [1816]); Autobiography, p. 189.

37 George Robertson, Scrap Book on Law and Politics, Men and Times (Lexington, 1855), pp. 15-19; Connelly and Coulter, pp. 588-91; Baylor, pp. 142-45; Kirwan, p. 32; Autobiography, p. 198.

38 Coulter and Connelly, pp. 596-99; Stickles, pp. 10-11; Barton, pp. 228-35.

39 Dorman, pp. 350-56; Lexington Reporter, March 18, 1818; Argus, February 13, 1818; Baylor, pp. 155-56.

41 Autobiography, p. 126.


44 Diary of Richard Clough Anderson, p. 353.


46 Ibid., pp. 241-45; "United States Census, 1820, Kentucky" (U.S. Bureau of the Census Microfilm), reel 22, p. 66.

47 Argus, October 26, 1820, June 21, 1821; Amos Kendall to Foote and Wells, January 30, 1823, Mary Ludwig, Saydain papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Autobiography, p. 245.

48 Amos Kendall, An Address on the Principles of Masonry (Frankfort, 1823); Argus, October 8, 22, 1819, January 3, February 7, 1822. See also Tom K. Barton, "Henry Clay, Amos Kendall, and a Gentleman's Education: State-Supported Higher Education as a Political Issue in Kentucky, 1815-1825," Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal, 3 (1966), pp. 44-57.


50 Argus, December 4, 1818, December 3, 1819, April 27, 1820, January 10, 31, 1823; Western Monitor, July 13, 1817.

51 Argus, January 22, February 19, March 12, 19, 1819, February 17, April 20, 1820; Henry Clay to -- Meigs, January 11, 1819, Clay papers, Library of Contress.
CHAPTER III

PANIC AND RELIEF

During the 1816 elections, when Henry Clay was attacked for supporting the Compensation Bill, he commented that only a "nail-gathering, groat-hoarding, stiver-saving people" would be angry over so trifling a matter. Of course, he quickly discovered that the voters were angry about the Bill, especially in the western states. And they were angry in part because they indeed were a pinch-penny people who had to deal with a confusing array of currencies, the value of which changed constantly.

Nothing was quite so characteristic of the ante-bellum economy than its nearly unfathomable currency and credit system; it would be more appropriate to say currency and credit non-system. The proliferation of coins, paper, personal notes, and scrip was such as to tax the ability of any man to understand the current worth of what he was carrying. Consider coins, for example. Because of a chronic shortage of gold and silver, the United States Mint simply could not, during this period, coin enough money to meet the needs of a rapidly developing economy. The Congress, as a result, found it necessary to pass and periodically extend laws that provided for the circulation of British, French, Portuguese, and Spanish coins. Even with this government sponsorship, a person could not be certain of the value of any coin, for the practice of shaving bits of metal off the rims was prevalent in many areas. Kendall complained of receiving such coins on
his journey to Kentucky. ¹

In the absence of adequate, reliable specie, recourse was had to paper. Personal notes aside, most paper money was issued by state-chartered banks. In 1816, there were some 246 such banks, as opposed to only eighty-eight in 1811. Individual notes issued from these banks ranged anywhere in face value from six cents to several hundred dollars, and their total note issue of nearly ninety million dollars was inadequately secured by specie reserves. During the War of 1812, virtually all of the state banks suspended specie redemption entirely, contributing to financial dislocation and an already rampant inflation. The actual value of a given note varied from place to place and time to time. Generally, the farther a note traveled from its issuing bank, the more its worth was discounted or depreciated. The notes of western banks were discounted at especially high rates, as much as twenty-five percent during the War of 1812. The high flux in currency value, coupled with the resultant confusion in credit transactions, may have offered incredible opportunities to certain individuals, but it also crippled society's need for an orderly, stable economy. ²

Reducing economic chaos had been the chief task confronting the Fourteenth Congress. In his annual message, President Madison noted that the Federal Treasury was in a state of near bankruptcy, owing to the difficulties of transferring currency and the state banks' reluctance to resume specie payments. Madison was therefore prepared to suggest that a new "national bank will merit consideration." A slim majority of Republicans, including Speaker Clay and John C. Calhoun, agreed with Madison, and after considerable debate the Second Bank of
the United States was established on March 14, 1816. Like its predecessor this bank was a semi-private, semi-public institution. The President was empowered to name five of the Bank's twenty-five directors, while the Federal Government was to subscribe to one-fifth of the institution's thirty-five million dollar capital. The Bank would hold the Treasury funds, pay the Government a yearly fee of one and a half million dollars, and handle all of the Federal currency transactions. Its main branch was placed at Philadelphia, and branches were established throughout the states. One year after the Bank of the United States was created, the Congress adopted a bill requiring that all payments to the Federal Government be made in specie or paper currency redeemable in specie. This, together with the appearance of Bank of United States currency, forced state banks to resume specie payment for their own notes. A healthy contraction in paper circulation quickly followed.3

The new Bank of the United States was not favorably received in many areas, however, particularly in the western states. Ohioans, for example, attempted to prevent the B.U.S. branches from being established in their State. When these were established anyway, the Ohio legislators tried to drive them out by an excessive tax on all non-state chartered banks. When the branches resisted paying the tax, the governor ordered it collected by force. In Maryland, a similar tax was pressed upon the B.U.S. Baltimore branch. The Kentucky legislature, led by Bluegrass supporters of the state Bank of Kentucky, followed suit with a tax of $5,000 annually on each of the B.U.S. branches in Lexington and Louisville. The Bank of the United States promptly protested the validity of these various taxes, and sought to have the
Federal courts strike them down. 4

Despite the feuding with the new Bank, most of the states enjoyed the return of prosperity in 1817 and 1818. The reopening of European markets, the restored confidence in currency, and the cultivation of new lands all contributed to growth. In 1818, Europeans paid higher prices for American cotton and grain than at any other time in the century. Men rushed to cash in on the boom, clamoring for more land, better transportation, more capital, more opportunity. But the boom proved to be both artificial and tragically brief. As production became overextended and overseas markets grew glutted, the decline began. Cotton fell from thirty-two cents a pound to less than twenty cents in a few months; wheat and corn fared as poorly; land prices fell drastically. Farms that had been bought wholly on credit, and had been reckoned as assets, became liabilities. Nowhere, did it seem, was there sufficient money to meet promises to pay.

No state suffered more from the onrush of the panic than Kentucky. Heavily indebted to outside creditors, living in what one historian has called "no longer a frontier nor yet a mature state," Kentuckians had increased their fortunes largely through speculation. Settlers commonly purchased land entirely on credit; speculators went further. In Louisville, for example, speculations had pushed the price of some lots to as much as $30,000 per acre. Similar situations existed in Lexington and most other cities and towns. Merchants, manufacturers, and planters had also expanded through unwise borrowing. The rising panic soon put an end to their high hopes. Falling land values eliminated any possibility of profits. Manufacturers, unable to meet their payroles, watched as their skilled labor left for more favored
localities. In Lexington, manufacturing went into a tailspin from which it never fully recovered. In one case, a factory that had cost $150,000 to build had to be sold, along with other property, for a mere tenth of that sum. Immigration into the state declined at an alarming rate. Planters, for want of money, were forced to sell hundreds of slaves to buyers in the lower South; some owners themselves left for Alabama and Mississippi.  

Kentucky's newly established local banks only made matters worse. Theoretically backed by eight million dollars in capital, these hastily conceived banks really could not redeem more than a tiny fraction of the twenty-six million dollars in notes that their directors had issued. Consequently, when the panic began, their paper depreciated rapidly. By the beginning of 1819, the Bank of Kentucky refused to accept their notes for any transactions. Eventually, their paper became so worthless, that the press took to referring to the banks as "the Forty Thieves." The reputations of the men who had created and managed them suffered accordingly.  

When the Legislature met in December, 1819, its members divided over how to react to the panic. One group favored some type of "relief" legislation for the aid of those suffering from financial distress. Others argued that the panic would have to be allowed to run its course; the state could not interfere. Relief won the day, however, after a large group of citizens met in Frankfort and called on the legislature to do something to relieve their distress and help those who could not pay their debts. By close margins, the House and Senate enacted two measures. They repealed the charters of the "Forty Thieves," a step that virtually everyone applauded. The legislators also enacted a
replevin, or stay law. Debtors were excused from paying their obligations for twelve months. In an effort to bolster Bank of Kentucky paper, and also to garner Bluegrass support for relief, a second provision was added stipulating that any creditor who refused to take Bank of Kentucky notes for a debt would have to wait an additional twelve months for his money. This passed with the stay law, but most Bluegrass representatives voted against the measure. They and all others who opposed the replevin argued that it violated the sanctity of contracts.  

The legislators were more united in attacking the Bank of the United States. Indeed, most Kentuckians blamed it for their financial distress. The Louisville and Lexington branches of the B.U.S. had reacted to the panic by taking all of their surplus state notes and presenting these for immediate redemption in specie. Much of this coin was then sent east to alleviate the pressures on branches there. The resulting shortage of specie exacerbated the growing depression in Kentucky. The Bank of Kentucky was forced to suspend specie payments once again. Although this severe retrenchment policy enabled the young B.U.S. branches in Kentucky to build up strong specie reserves and thereby survive the panic, they did so by sacrificing almost all local support. The majority of the legislators agreed that the B.U.S. must be suppressed in their State.  

Kendall attempted to feel his way carefully through this thicket of issues brought forth by the panic. His first remarks reflected traditional fiscal conservatism, blaming people for foolishly indulging in overspeculation and debt. He condemned the buying of non-Kentucky goods and advised his readers to curtail their thirst for luxuries.
"Our extravagance in the importation and consumption of foreign luxuries must be checked or we are a ruined people," he wrote. He also approved the actions of creditors in seeking court actions against those who could not pay their debts, and had no sympathy for those defaulters who landed in debtors' jail as a result.

But Kendall reserved his greatest criticisms for the banks. He hated these institutions. Chartered as corporations, they epitomized the "artificial privilege" viewpoint that was a cornerstone of Jeffersonian principles and Kendall's own political views. Kendall wished that "the whole paper system" supported by banks could be destroyed, and that no more charters would ever be granted to create such repugnant corporations. But he recognized that banks were "too deeply rooted; prejudice in their favor has taken too deadly a hold to be unhanded even by the tremendous convulsions into which they have thrown the whole community." Thus, they had to be endured, but carefully regulated and watched by the people's elected representatives. The very worst banks of course, merited destruction by the loss of their charters.

Kendall especially hated the Bank of the United States. From its beginning in 1816, he had viewed it with suspicion. Despite all the services the Bank might perform, he wrote,

we tremble with apprehension, when we see such immense power thrown into the hands of a few individuals . . . . It may prove a monstrous engine in the hands of ambition to prostrate the liberties of the people [and] if it shall prove to have an undue effect on the measures of our government, if it should gain an improper influence over the wealth of our nation, we hope that by an effort of patriotism, it will be left to expire like its predecessor.

Two years later, Kendall felt that his fears had been realized, and
condemned the Bank as the chief cause of Kentucky's economic woes. 9

Kendall charged that the Bank was too much in the control of foreigners; that the branches were shipping wagon-loads of Kentucky specie to the east, and that the redemption policies of the Bank of the United States obliged "the best and most substantial banks among us . . . to curtail their business and withdraw their paper from circulation, leaving us inundated with the depreciated paper of less substantial institutions." The B.U.S. directors encouraged the contrivances of "brokers and shavers," who were "fattened on the evils which this institution has brought upon the community." When the Reporter attempted to defend the branches, Kendall dismissed its remarks as misleading and misguided.

He culminated his assault on the Bank with a long series of essays written under the pseudonym "Cato." "Cato" reiterated all the complaints against the Bank of the United States and concluded that it had failed to carry out the tasks for which it had been designed. The nation's various currencies had not been made more sound, nor had circulation of money become more stable and reliable. The Bank had abused its power by oppressing local banks and destroying the savings of the people, all for the benefit of a few, primarily eastern speculators and foreign investors. "Cato" was not willing to let this "hydra" breathe to prey on the good people until 1836, at least not in Kentucky. He called on the legislators to expel the branches from the states. 10

A majority of the lawmakers heeded "Cato's" call. The legislators passed a bill to increase the taxes on the branches to $60,000 a year. This time, provisions were added to forcibly collect
the money, if that should become necessary. No one expected that the
Bank of the United States would submit to such taxation but many hoped
that the legislature could force the branches to leave the State.

But this was a weapon destined never to be used, for what the
Legislature proposed, the courts quickly disposed. Since 1817, the Bank
branches had been contesting the original tax in Kentucky's court
system. Now, at the very moment that the tax was being increased, the
judge of the Franklin County Court rendered his decision in favor of the
Bank. The State's lawyers, Benjamin Hardin and young Francis Preston
Blair, immediately appealed the case. The Bank's lawyers, meanwhile
obtained a temporary injunction against the new taxes from the United
States District Court. As the Federal judge noted in granting the
injunction, the United States Supreme Court would soon be hearing the
case concerning Maryland's tax on the B.U.S. Since it was likely that
McCulloch vs. Maryland would decide the tax issue for all states, there
was little point in pursuing the matter further in Kentucky. 11

The Bank's opponents were not pleased with this turn of events.
They saw the District Court's injunction as an example of Federal
Government interference with the affairs of the states. They could not
accede to Henry Clay's recent opinion that "if Congress had the power to
make the Bank, the States cannot have the power to break it" through use
of a tax intended solely to expel the branches. Clay tried to mollify
his constituents by adding that perhaps the High Court would agree with
the right of states to tax the branches for revenue. But no one really
expected John Marshall and his colleagues to utter such contra-Federal
ideas.

Marshall behaved as they expected. His McCulloch vs. Maryland
decision fully protected the Bank of the United States from state harassment or taxation of any kind. It was a landmark action in the developing supremacy of the Federal over the state governments. Its portents were readily understood at the time, and that understanding, in turn, contributed to an increase in party competition and issue-oriented politics. Kendall, for example, called the decision a direct "strike at the roots of State rights and State sovereignty." He predicted that a new era of political polarizaton would stem from this and other actions related to the panic. 12

Two further Supreme Court decisions increased Kendall's apprehension. One of these was the Dartmouth College case, in which the Court overturned the opinion of the New Hampshire high court, an opinion written by Kendall's mentor, William Merchant Richardson, that a state could unilaterally alter a corporation charter. Marshall, speaking for the Supreme Court majority, ruled that such charters were inviolate unless both parties consented to amendments. Kendall quickly condemned this decision as another example of Federal power being used to shackle the states. He urged the Kentucky Legislature to grant no further charters "without reserving the right to alter, amend or repeal it as the public interest may require." (The Legislature subsequently added such a provision to the renewed charter of the Bank of Kentucky.) He was similarly displeased with the Court's opinion in Sturges vs. Crowninshield, which invalidated a New York debt replevin law as a violation of the sanctity of contracts. Although Kendall himself doubted the wisdom of the states in making such laws, he would not disagree with their power to do so. 13

Reflecting upon the spate of Court actions, Kendall was led to
prepare a lengthy review of the concept of states' rights. In an eleven part essay which appeared in the Argus from May to July, 1819, he denounced the Marshall Court's decisions, particularly the McCulloch decision, as incompatible with the Nation's harmony and the people's freedoms. The decision, he wrote, were grounded upon the Federalist doctrine of implied powers. Kendall insisted that the Court had twisted the so-called elastic clause of the Constitution, making the word "necessary" (in "necessary and proper") over into "convenient."

Similarly, the word "proper" was subject to restraint, and meant "that the laws which Congress may rightfully pass in carrying into effect their delegated powers must be such as do not violate the rights of any state or individual." The people's freedoms were being sacrificed to the convenience of the commercial classes. He used as one of his examples the Court's contention in the Bank case that the states had delegated power to the Federal government to create an institution like the Bank. Nothing could be more false, he contended, for "delegated means expressly delegated . . . all powers not expressly delegated or expressly prohibited [in the Constitution] are reserved for the states."

Should this pernicious doctrine of implied powers persist, he continued, the Federal Government could one day "assume a form and substance as terrible to the government of the states as they are now unexpected in the minds of the people."

Kendall did not believe that the Bank of the United States was either a necessary or proper instrument of government. Rather, it was "a business carried on by individuals for individual gain -- a means for the accomplishment of private ends, and not for the execution of national powers." As such, Federal support of it was a show of
favoritism, made at the expense of people's rights. Moreover, in ignoring the wishes of the people, demonstrated through their legislatures in taxing the branches, the Federal Government was denying the popular right to self-government, just as the Kentucky legislature had earlier ignored the people's demand for a New Election. Marshall had anticipated such a complaint by saying that, since the states had ratified the Constitution, they were bound by its provisions and the judicial interpretations of those provisions. Not so, Kendall retorted, for the Constitution had been adopted by the states at a time when "the people composing each state were a separate, independent, and sovereign body with equal rights and privileges." The Constitution had not, indeed could not, deprive the people of their ultimate sovereignty, and the idea "that all the powers which are beneficial to the people are delegated implyed if not expressly in the constitution" was patently false. In ignoring the wishes of the people, Kendall concluded, the Court had ignored their ultimate masters and so betrayed their trust. 14

Logically, Kendall could have called upon the people to resist the Court's decision. But despite the fire of his words, he was not prepared to advocate a defiance of Federal authority. Therefore, although he soon noted with obvious pleasure that in Ohio some of the taxes on the branches were forcibly collected after the Court's decision, he advised the more moderate route of amending the Constitution. This would be a slow process, he admitted, but felt it was the only sensible path to take. People were resilient creatures who could "submit for years to unjust and unconstitutional laws," so long as those mistakes were eventually erased. Kendall hoped that the
Congressmen who had created the Bank in 1816 would rapidly recognize their error, "and join with all their talents in procuring an amendment to the federal constitution" specifically prohibiting the chartering of such institutions. 15

Kendall's review of states' rights thus displayed once again his lack of faith in the standard mechanisms of government, and his readiness to grant the people a more active role in decision making. Kendall also continued to hold his romantic concept of the "people" as a virtuous unit. He could not admit that some supporters of banks were either sincere or honest in their advocacy of an institution designed to foster financial stability through sound currency. Instead, all such supporters were the "interests," motivated by avarice, deviously plundering the good citizenry via a corrupt alliance with dishonest politicians. They were, in sum, the antithesis of the "people."

How odd, then that Kendall was not prepared to follow the logic of his own arguments and accept the growing cries for relief as a valid expression of the popular will. He disapproved of replevin laws on principle and, despite his disagreement with the Supreme Court over the Dartmouth decision, considered the altering of contracts and charter to be unwise. He refused to sanction suggestions for any bankruptcy laws, terming any such legislation to be "for the benefit of knaves and swindlers." Responding to demands for the repeal of the state bank charters, he suggested that the legislature tighten control over them instead. Eliminating the banks without first providing for an adequate system of credit and currency would only increase the chaos, he believed. He advised the legislators to pass laws requiring the banks to post security bonds that would be forfeited if they could not redeem
their notes for specie. He also recommended that a limit be placed on the amount that any individual could borrow, thus hindering the activities of speculators. He accepted that a few of the banks, the most overextended and unsound ones, should be eliminated. But he believed that the state could not "abolish the whole system of banking on private capital," unless it was prepared to assume its own banking powers. And he was not certain that it would be wise for the government to undertake that responsibility.  

Meanwhile, the widespread demand for relief had become the main issue of the 1820 elections. Rare was the candidate who did not campaign as a pro-relief or anti-relief man. The relief issue was inaugurating a new era in Kentucky politics. Although it would take years, the result of this controversy over relief would greatly alter Kentuckian's political customs. Faction politics would be replaced by a party system, which would "mobilize the electorate on the basis of 'measures, not men.'"  

In 1820, four men offered themselves as candidates to replace Slaughter as governor. Three of these candidates promised to support some kind of relief program. John Adair, who had commanded the Kentucky militia at the Battle of New Orleans, was the best known of the candidates, but he was also the most controversial. He had been implicated in the Aaron Burr conspiracy in 1803 and had opposed the New Election in 1817. Many of his associates viewed him as an unprincipled opportunist because he had taken many different stands on issues while serving in the Kentucky House and, later, the United States Senate. But he had vigorously defended his men when Andrew Jackson had questioned their courage at New Orleans, and many voters regarded him favorably for
it. He was a clever speaker and he promised to support any relief legislation the House and Senate might create. He also had friends among the Bluegrass faction. 18

Adair was opposed by two other relief advocates, Joseph Desha and Anthony Butler. Desha also had a military record, having served with William Henry Harrison at the Battle of the Thames. He had served in Congress from 1815 to 1819, opposing the chartering of the new Bank of the United States and voting against the Compensation Bill. As a resident of Mason County, along the Ohio River, Desha was not associated with the Bluegrass men. Anthony Butler was less well known. He had support mainly from the eastern part of the State and from his fellow Masons. 19

William Logan was the last candidate for governor, and the only one who opposed relief measures. A former United States Senator, Logan argued that government could not rightly interfere in the "natural course" of the depression. Logan had the support of many Bluegrass leaders (but not Clay, who endorsed none of the candidates). Paradoxically, he also had the support of George Robertson, John Pope, and other enemies of Bluegrass dominance. 20

The 1820 gubernatorial campaign was, in fact, a confusing one, the relief issue mixing with other matters. The candidates and their supporters were not quite ready to give up the traditional ways of personality politics. They were, however, prepared to dispense with civility. Opponents of Adair repeated the rumors about him and Burr. Logan was attacked as a "tool of private interests," and as a friend of the B.U.S. All of the candidates were attacked for any contradictions in their records, any peculations in their personal background or
behavior. It was, in short, a typical Kentucky election.

Kendall, in keeping with his caution, opened his paper once again to letters endorsing or attacking each candidate. But as the campaign developed, his the Argus leaned increasingly toward Butler. Kendall termed Butler a man of the people and toward the end of the campaign urged the voters to unite behind him. Kendall's reasons for supporting Butler are unclear; he never endorsed or complimented a specific stand by the candidate. Like Butler, Kendall was a Mason, and Butler, unlike Adair, had supported the New Election in 1817. These may have been Kendall's reasons for endorsing him. 21

Adair won the election in any event, with a plurality of the votes. Logan, the second place finisher, had earned just 500 fewer votes than Adair. Desha was third and Butler ran dead last. The voters, meantime, had selected a good majority of relief advocates for the Legislature. Relief men, however, were quick to see that they had nearly lost the Executive branch to an anti-relief candidate, which would have hampered any relief program. They began to understand that their future depended on better organization.

As the new legislative session began, neither the relief nor the anti-relief forces were yet united into parties. But party structure for both groups was evolving, and the issues over which the two groups would disagree would come from this session. The Bank of Kentucky, as it turned out, played an important part in this process. The 1819 relief legislators had hoped that by shoring up the Bank's paper, they might encourage the directors to increase loans to debtors. During 1820, however, the Bank did little to alleviate distress. The directors contracted, rather than expanded, credit. 22
They may have been influenced by their stockholders to ignore cries for relief. In a stockholders meeting held two months after the 1820 elections, the majority of stockholders endorsed a decidedly anti-relief program prepared by their most famous member, Henry Clay. Clay offered his colleagues a set of resolutions that emphatically condemned increased state supervision over the economy in general and the Bank of Kentucky in particular (a stance strangely at odds with his emerging vision of an American System). The resolutions called for resumption of specie payments and the collection of debts as soon as the replevin law allowed this to be done. Both measures would encourage deflation and this would protect creditors. The resolutions served notice that the Lexington commercial class, who owned most of the stock in the Bank, intended to put their interests before those of the debtor class. Yet, the resolutions were not adopted by the stockholders. Instead, with Clay's approval they postponed action to await the developments of the next legislative session.  

When the legislators did convene, relief leaders attempted to placate the Bank of Kentucky and draw its Bluegrass supporters into a relief program based on controlled inflation. The House rejected a bill that would have ordered the Bank of Kentucky to issue more paper. Instead, a new, entirely state-owned bank was created. Designated the Bank of the Commonwealth, it was designed as a vehicle for inflating the economy. Its creators, including George Bibb and John Rowan, argued that a mild inflation would aid debtors by decreasing the value of currency, raise prices, and contribute toward the end of the depression. The charter of the new bank provided for twelve branches located throughout the state, with the headquarters branch sited in Frankfort.
The bank's directors were given power to issue up to three million dollars in notes. These notes were not backed by specie, for the government had none to give the institution. Although the charter did not expressly require that the currency be lent to debtors, the legislators understood that that would be the case. In any event, a provision of the charter did require borrowers to take an oath to use their loans to repay debts or to purchase domestic goods. Loans to ordinary individuals could not exceed $1,000, but bank officers would be permitted twice that amount. Realizing that the new bank's money would be only as good as the willingness of people to accept it, Rowan and his associates prepared a second bill amending the replevin law. Creditors who refused Bank of the Commonwealth paper would have to wait two years to get their money. 24

One scholar of Kentucky history has suggested that the Bank of the Commonwealth was a compromise solution to the problems posed by the panic. Relief partisans hoped that by adopting a state-owned bank they might achieve the relief (inflationary) measures they desired without coercing the Bank of Kentucky and sparking another divisive conflict with the Bluegrass faction. The new bank would provide relief while the older bank continued to look after the interests of the commercial class. This scheme would work only if the two banks could be induced to work together. The Legislature's selection of a president for the new bank lends support to this interpretation. The members of the House and Senate chose John Crittenden, a close friend of Henry Clay and other Bank of Kentucky stockholders. 25

But the choice of Crittenden did not appease supporters of the Bank of Kentucky. Most Bluegrass legislators joined anti-relief men in
denouncing the new bank as a dangerous innovation. They charged that it was a cheap scheme to allow debtors to get out of their obligations. They said that its existence would violate the United States Constitution, which prohibited a state from issuing bills of credit. The Bluegrass and anti-relief men therefore tried to kill the bill to create the Bank of the Commonwealth. William Gerard, Kendall's former partner, presented an amendment to the bill requiring the bank to have a ten percent specie reserve. Relief forces voted this down. Another Bluegrass representative offered a substitute bill granting the same powers to the Bank of Kentucky. Anti-relief men supported this, reasoning perhaps that the directors of the older bank would never choose to use the powers to inflate the currency. The relief movement would then be stymied. This substitute, however, was also rejected, but only by one vote. The original bill was then passed by both houses. A few days later, Governor Adair signed it into law.26

The creation of the Bank of the Commonwealth was a critical moment in Kentucky politics. By opposing it, the Bluegrass faction formally aligned itself with anti-relief advocates. In fact, Bluegrass spokesmen quickly assumed leadership of the anti-relief forces. On the other hand, representatives of areas that were less commercially developed, that had a high concentration of debtors — in other words, areas that had supported the Slaughter-Pope faction in 1817 and favored the independent banks in 1818 — voted heavily for the new Bank of the Commonwealth. This issue, then, was one around which new coalitions polarized. The Relief and Anti-relief parties were born with the creation of the Bank of the Commonwealth.27

Late in the session, the legislators selected the new bank's
eleven remaining directors. The group included several men who were not openly associated with the relief measures, and one of these was Amos Kendall. Kendall, in his capacity as recorder of debates, was present at his own selection, but the *Argus* of that day merely listed the choices without comment. As a man who had questioned the wisdom of every early relief measure, Kendall seems an unlikely choice as a director of the new bank. But his knowledge of finance, exhibited in many editorials, may have ingratiated him with several members of the Relief party. Also, as the editor of the largest newspaper in the State, an associate of such important men as Clay and Richard Johnson, Kendall may have been included in an attempt to broaden support for the controversial new bank. Certainly, Bibb and Adair were hoping to draw more support to their fledgling party, and the *Argus* would provide them with a statewide forum for airing their views.

But would Kendall accept the post? For the next two months the *Argus* was almost silent on the subject, while its editor weighed his options. Finally, well into February, 1821, Kendall broke his silence. He announced that while he may have preferred "to leave the usefulness of the institution to be tested by experience," the needs of "public interest" had induced him to speak his mind. Then, in a series of essays, he proceeded to defend the new bank as a legal corporation. He compared the origin of the bank to that of the earlier independent banks and listed similarities in their charters. He asserted that if the government could own part of the Bank of Kentucky it could certainly own all of the Bank of the Commonwealth. He also claimed that, properly managed, the new bank could alleviate financial distress and eventually become a specie-backed institution. Finally, he admitted the necessity
for some relief measures:

It might have been better had it [the Bank of the Commonwealth] never existed, but its destruction may be worse policy than its establishment. It is time that annual change should cease [for] a bad system is better than none.29

This was hardly a vigorous endorsement of the Relief party, but Kendall had cast his lot with them all the same. As to why he did it, there was always his respect for the will of the people, who had returned a pro-relief majority in the elections. There is also the fact that to oppose the dominant Relief party, Kendall would have had to risk his state printing contracts. And there are two other possible reasons. In announcing his support for the bank, the editor also announced that he would accept its notes for Argus subscriptions. Finally, in July, Kendall purchased new type for his paper and expanded it in size. He probably paid for these improvements with $2,000 that he soon after borrowed from the Bank of the Commonwealth.30

As the Bank of the Commonwealth opened for business early in 1821, the directors met to consider their policies. Kendall argued that the institution's long-term future depended on careful management and planning aimed at the goal of becoming a specie-paying bank. Several of his new colleagues agreed, but none of them could offer any sound plan for accomplishing this. Neither could Kendall, although he said that the soundest idea was to establish a good working relationship with the Bank of Kentucky. He believed that the new bank might then rely on the strong fiscal reputation of the older bank, until it was able to thrive on its own. Certainly, he concluded, such a relationship would contribute to economic recovery within the State. The board agreed that much depended on the attitude of the older bank, discussed matters for
achieving a cooperative relationship with it, and then turned to loan policy. Here, the board established very liberal loan procedures. They agreed to lend the bank's paper as quickly as possible, giving priority to borrowers who needed cash to pay debts or prevent foreclosures. Loans could be repaid at the minimum rate of one percent a month, plus a low interest charge, in quarterly or semi-annual installments.\textsuperscript{31}

In effect, debtors could borrow money from the Bank of the Commonwealth, settle their pressing obligations, then take more than eight years to repay the bank. It was quite a deal, and not surprisingly hundreds of Kentuckians lined up at the branches to take advantage of it. Even opponents of relief, including Henry Clay, took advantage of this easy money. In mid-1821, the board reported that business was being limited by the fact that the branch presidents and cashiers could sign only 2,000 notes each day. This brisk pace continued, and by the beginning of 1822 nearly the entire three million dollars authorized by the charter had been lent.\textsuperscript{32}

In the meantime, the much-hoped-for cooperation of the Bank of Kentucky had foundered on the rock of conservative intransigence. Meeting in January, 1821, as planned, the Bank of Kentucky stockholders replaced some of the wavering directors with men more likely to accept their own views. Then they passed Clay's earlier resolution, ordering the directors to resume specie payments as soon as possible. The new board quickly voted to accept only a "limited" amount of Bank of Commonwealth paper, $150,000 for the year, on the grounds that taking more would inevitably retard the resumption of specie.\textsuperscript{33} This was probably true. But it was also true that a resumption of specie by the older bank would raise the value of its paper. And this result, coming
at a time when the Bank of the Commonwealth had no specie, would ruin
the new bank's paper. The new bank would be ruined in turn, and with it
the program of the Relief party.

Crittenden immediately appealed to the Bank of Kentucky
directors to reconsider their decisions. The directors refused. When
Crittenden explained the situation to his directors, most of them were
shocked. Kendall was also furious, and protested that the Bank of the
Commonwealth "ought to form no arrangement with the Bank of Kentucky
which is not entirely reciprocal." His colleagues agreed, and authorized
Kendall to draft a complaint to the older bank's directors. He complied
by producing a stern indictment of the Bank of Kentucky's entire recent
history, accusing the directors of callously ignoring the needs of the
people of the state. In the face of an economic emergency, he wrote, it
was the duty of all responsible men and institutions to rally in support
of the public demand for relief. But the Bank of Kentucky had turned
its back on the people, by refusing to cooperate with the new bank. Its
directors had approved a plan to resume specie, a step that would lead
to two currencies of unequal value in Kentucky, and block effective aid
for the people. Should the older bank persist in its intent, Kendall
hinted, the Commonwealth board might ask the next legislature to repeal
the Bank of Kentucky's charter. The remaining Commonwealth directors
studied Kendall's letter, approved it, and sent it to the president of
the Bank of Kentucky. They also sent a copy to Governor Adair.34

Unwilling to wait quietly for a reply from the Bank of Kentucky,
Kendall continued his criticisms in the Argus's columns. He wrote that
the supporters of relief would gladly welcome the repeal of the Bank of
Kentucky's charter. The editors of other Relief party organs agreed.
The Commentator offered the opinion that any commerce between the old and the new bank would "disgrace" the Bank of the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Gazette went further, charging the directors of the older bank of being in league with Anti-relief men to subvert the people's demands for help. The Bank of Kentucky directors favored only Bluegrass merchants and other conservatives with loans, the editor charged, and concluded that the Legislature should remove this obstacle to relief. 35

Adair, Bibb, and Rowan, however, did nothing until the Bank of Kentucky president replied to Kendall's letter. Perhaps they hoped that, faced with the threat of destruction, the older bank's directors might relent. If so, they were disappointed. For the president sent the new bank's directors a spirited and forceful defense of fiscal conservatism. The Bank of Kentucky, he wrote, had an obligation to its stockholders to preserve the value of its currency. That value would not be maintained by supporting the new bank. The Bank of the Commonwealth had no specie to back its notes. It was not the duty of the Bank of Kentucky to provide for what the new bank lacked, not when the value of its own paper would decline as a result. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the older bank's directors and advisors that economic recovery would be slowed by this dangerous experiment with paper money, replevin laws, and inflation. The Bank of Kentucky would therefore accept only enough Commonwealth paper to satisfy mutual business between banks. To go any further would be financially unsound and "unacceptable." 36

The Bank of Commonwealth directors now took their case to the Legislature, suggesting that, in light of the older bank's unwillingness
to cooperate in relief measures, the State's deposits be transferred to
them. Kendall also stepped up his call for the repeal of the older
bank's charter. Adair sent out word that he would accept such a step, so
late in the session, the Relief leaders introduced a bill to effect the
repeal. After some boisterous debate, the bill failed in the House by
four votes. Instead, the legislators adopted a resolution calling on
the Bank of Kentucky to accept Commonwealth paper without restriction
and to increase loans to debtors. The older bank's directors grudgingly
complied by directing their branches to take Commonwealth paper and loan
it out again, but to hold onto incoming Kentucky paper. This had an
effect similar to resumption: Kentucky paper rose and Commonwealth
paper fell in value. 37

Before long, the conflict between the two banks affected the
economic situation in Kentucky. Commonwealth paper fell in value
precipitantly. Merchants refused to take the notes for more than
seventy percent of their face amount during 1821. During the next year,
the value dropped even more, until by mid-year the notes were not worth
fifty cents on the dollar. Bank of Kentucky notes fared better, but
still dropped and could not compete with paper from other states.
Indeed, Miles' Register reported an occasion in which a Kentuckian paid
a five dollar debt with a ten dollar Virginia note and received three
five dollar Commonwealth notes in change. The city of Louisville, in
fact, began issuing its own paper, rather than use the bank notes.
Because of its rising trade and exports, Louisville was rapidly
overtaking Lexington as the major commercial center. Lexington's
merchants could not pay for eastern imports with the depreciated paper.
Overall, Kentucky was losing ground to western states that were
recovering from the depression more rapidly.38

Anti-relief men naturally blamed the Relief program for the damage. The Bank of the Commonwealth had issued too much "rag paper" and destroyed the State's place in the American market. Kendall denied this, blaming instead "the arts of money dealers, aided by the implacable enemies of the new bank." Still, he was uncomfortable with the situation. In March, 1822, he joined with several other Commonwealth directors to propose that loans be curtailed and the paper be gradually retrenched. Crittenden, increasingly uneasy about his own role in this experiment, agreed. The board adopted the following resolution: "That this Bank and its branches do forthwith cease loaning their calls and discounts." That is, the paper coming back in was not going to be reloaned. The board further resolved to take steps to draw an additional two percent of paper out of circulation each month.39

The decision was received with mixed feelings among the people. Creditors were pleased, but debtors wanted more, not less, paper issued. The Legislators sided with the directors, however. The Relief majority had been increased in the annual elections, and at Adair's suggestion the party repealed the charter of the Bank of Kentucky. Then, joined by a large segment of the Anti-relief men, Rowan pushed through a resolution ordering the Bank of the Commonwealth to accelerate retrenchment and destroy $750,000 in paper by the end of 1823. The legislators then proceeded to reaffirm their faith in the bank's officers, albeit by smaller margins. Crittenden was re-elected president and the current board was returned. Kendall's stature had risen. He had barely made the board in 1821. Now he was the fifth director re-elected, with 113 votes.40
In January, 1823, Crittenden, Kendall, Blair, and the rest of
the board gathered to watch $71,000 of Commonwealth paper consigned to
the furnace. This was the first batch of many, for by the end of the
year, over half of the Bank's paper had been drawn in and burned. The
Bank of Kentucky's notes were also being destroyed, as that institution
closed. The value of Commonwealth notes began increasing thereafter.
By 1825, the bank's paper was being accepted within the state at ninety
percent of its face value. Its value remained low out of state,
however. 41

How well the Bank of the Commonwealth performed its function —
providing relief to debtors — is debatable. Earlier historians
condemned the Bank, the entire Relief program for that matter, as a rash
and reckless venture. William Graham Sumner pointed out that the
Legislature appropriated only $7,000 for the Bank, and that for books,
paper and printing: "This was all the real capital the bank ever had.
It was therefore, just one of the grand swindling concerns common at
that period." Another historian agreed, terming the Relief measures the
actions of a "mad-cap element." 42 More recently, some historians
have challenged the earlier view, pointing out that the Bank provided
loans to people who could get credit nowhere else, allowing them to save
their property from the auction block. The Legislators were responding
to the demands of the majority, these historians argue. Had they not
done so, the frustrated, desperate debtors might have ignited an
upheaval far worse. 43

Some Relief measures were unquestionably enlightened. In 1821,
the Legislature abolished imprisonment for debt, the first western state
to do so. Additional Relief party laws established a mental hospital,
an improved prison system, and a training facility for the deaf and
dumb. Kendall had little to do with these, although he was keenly
interested in the deaf and dumb school. He was much more involved in
the plans for a public school system, which were never enacted. Few
modern scholars would dismiss these actions as reckless, but the
Anti-relief men did. One of their ranks sarcastically termed the entire
Relief program "a miracle whereby something was made out of
nothing."

The final verdict on this period of Kentucky
experience waits on more extensive study.

Kendall himself was never quite certain how he regarded relief.
He had opposed the early relief actions, but had admitted the right of
the people to demand them, and the duty of the legislators to heed those
demands. He seems to have been ill at ease with his place on the
Commonwealth board. In arguing for a specie base and for retrenchment,
he took a more conservative position than most of his colleagues. He
defended the destruction of the Commonwealth paper, saying: "The people
must pay their debts at last." He approved actions of the board in
suing those who would not repay their debts, and he questioned
legislative proposals for a minimum valuation in execution sales. The
whole Bank of the Commonwealth experience probably reinforced his
distrust of all banks, and he declined to serve on the board after his
second term. Yet he still supported the Relief party and its program,
because it was the wish of the people, he said.

But in the next year, Kendall would be less ambivalent about the
course of public events. His smoldering distrust of the judiciary would
flame anew as Kentucky's political upheaval contest entered a new phase.
CHAPTER III

NOTES


10 Ibid., November 13-January 29, 1819; Lexington Reporter, February 3, March 31, 1819.

11 Royalty, pp. 221-22; Coulter and Connelly, p. 605; Sumner, p. 123; Argus, January 8, 1819; Kentucky House Journal (1819-20), pp. 41-52.

12 Royalty, pp. 230-32; Stickles, pp. 18-19; Dangerfield, pp. 89-96; McMulloch vs. Maryland, 4 Wheaton, 316ff. (1819).

13 Trustees of Dartmouth College vs. Woodward, 1 New Hampshire, 111ff (1817); Dartmouth vs. Woodward, 4 Wheaton, 694ff(1819); Sturges vs. Crownishield, 4 Wheaton, 122ff (1819); Argus, February 26, 1819.


15 Argus, May 14, July 23, October 1, 1819.

16 Ibid., September 10, 17, December 10, 1819; Autobiography, pp. 225-29.


19 James A. Padgett, ed., "Correspondence Between Governor Joseph Desha and Amos Kendall, 1831-1835," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 38 (1940), pp. 5-6; Lucius P. Little, Ben Hardin: His Life, Times and Contemporaries (Louisville, Ky., 1887), p. 50; Frank F. Mathias, "The Turbulent Years of Kentucky Politics" (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 1966), pp. 67-69; Argus, June 1, 1820.

20 Mathias, p. 30; Connelly and Coulter, p. 622.

21 Ibid., pp. 622-24; Leger, pp. 188-94; Argus, July 27, August 3, 17, 1820.

22 Ibid., September 7, 1820; Stickles, p. 23; Connelly and Coulter, p. 629; Mathias, p. 30.

24 Acts Passed at the First Session of the 29th General Assembly for the Commonwealth of Kentucky (Frankfort, 1821), pp. 55-65; Kentucky House Journal (1820), pp. 133-87; 335-36; Argus, November 9, 16, 23, 30, December 7, 1820.


26 Albert D. Kirwan, John J. Crittenden (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962), pp. 53-54; Royalty, pp. 265-67; Barton, pp. 303-4; Argus, November 23, 30, 1820.


29 Ibid., February 15 (quoted), March 8, 15, 29, 1821.


31 Bank of the Commonwealth, Record Book A, pp. 1-43, Kentucky State Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky; Argus, March 4, April 19, 30, 1821.


35 Argus, June 14, 21, 1821, November 28, 1822; Frankfort Commentator, May 3, 1821; Mathias, pp. 37-38.

36 Royalty, pp. 284-88.

37 Kentucky House Journal (1821), pp. 61-72, 251-90.

39 Argus, July 26, 1821, March 28, April 4, 1822; Kentucky Senate Journal (1822), pp. 56-60; Royalty, pp. 306-16.


41 Argus, January 9, 1823; Stickles, p. 28; Royalty, pp. 324-25; Connelly and Coulter, pp. 617-18; Niles' Register, July 23, 1825.


43 Barton, pp. 285-96; Mathias, "The Relief and Court Struggle: Half-Way House to Populism," pp. 174-76. Since this chapter was written, the author has learned of Dale Royalty's "Banking and the Commonwealth Ideal in Kentucky, 1806-1822," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 77 (1979), pp. 91-107. Royalty concludes that the Bank of the Commonwealth saved debtors from ruin in 1822, but harmed Kentucky's place in the national economy as a result.


45 Royalty, p. 329; Autobiography, pp. 223-25; Argus, July 5, 1821.
CHAPTER IV

THE COURT STRUGGLE

By 1822, there were signs of improvement in the American economy. American exports were rising and domestic prices had begun to approach pre-panic levels. The western States actually recovered more quickly than the coastal areas, particularly the Old South where cotton prices remained depressed and per capita income probably declined. The taming of the Ohio River provided the west with a larger market for its crops. Thus, the economic situation was better. But the recovery was not altogether universal. Lexington's merchants and manufacturers were still in difficult straits, for the improvement of the Ohio River trade benefitted Louisville at their expense.1

Looking at the general improvement of the economy, Relief party leaders began to consider a gradual retrenchment of their program. Addressing the Legislature in October, Governor Adair claimed that the Relief program had effectively contributed toward recovery and had accomplished its main purpose of saving the property of debtors. Now, he said the time was approaching when the government should allow the market forces to take over. "The constancy and patience of virtuous economy, the victorious energies of well directed industry," he wrote, "[can] regulate the wants and acquisitions of every people." He concluded that "the hour is near at hand, when we may change, without the fear of injury our precautionary attitude." Kendall agreed, and the Argus predicted that the Relief program could safely be phased out to
allow the forces of the marketplace to take precedence again. He later suggested that the replevin acts be repealed.²

Had the Relief party followed Adair's and Kendall's suggestions, and had the members of the Anti-relief party allowed the matter to rest there, the history of Kentucky in this period might be completely different. Scholars might have summarized it thus: An economic emergency was met by an imaginative solution, which was supported by the majority of the voters and politicians; the emergency over, the status quo was resumed. But that is not the whole story. An emergency existed, true, but in meeting it, the Relief leaders had evolved a theory of majority supremacy without accounting for minority rights. Contracts, laws, constitutions — these existed in the United States as safeguards against majority tyranny. They existed, in James Madison's words, to prevent an "overbearing majority" from riding roughshod over everything. "When a majority is included in a faction," Madison warned, "the form of popular government . . . enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens." Madison also foretold that the majority's "ruling passion" would often threaten property rights. "A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property" were the dangers against which safeguards were created. These safeguards included the inviolability of contracts and other fundamental guarantees of constitutions. To preserve these safeguards, there existed an independent judiciary. And it was in the courts that the Anti-relief minority found their last refuge.³

Outnumbered in the Legislature, with no allies in the Executive, the Anti-relief forces turned to the courts of Kentucky. On May 13,
1822, a creditor named Williams sued a debtor in the Clark County Court for the sum of $219.67. Refusing to accept the paper of the Bank of the Commonwealth for the debt, he challenged the legality of the two year replevin law. An Anti-relief lawyer argued his case for him, pointing out that the replevin law violated the United States Supreme Court decision of Sturges v. Crowninshield in 1819: A contract had been altered unilaterally. Judge James Clark agreed, and handing down his decision in favor of Williams, declared that the replevin law was incompatible with Article One, Section Ten of the United States Constitution and Article Ten, Section Eighteen of the Kentucky Constitution. Both articles forbade the impairing of contracts without the consent of both parties. Since the replevin law had done just that, Clark declared that it was obviously unconstitutional.

Soon after, in Fayette County, Judge Blair of the court rendered essentially the same decision in the Lapsley vs. Brashear case. The outcomes of the two lawsuits served notice that the relief partisans had not won the judiciary over to their way of thinking. With the replevin law, a cornerstone of the relief program, thus overturned, Relief advocates faced a grave threat to their whole system and to their control of the State. Who could say what the courts might do next? The Bank of the Commonwealth itself might be struck down on similar grounds. The destruction of the relief program could return to the Bluegrass the control of the State Government. 4

The decisions did bring about the resuscitation of the Bluegrass forces. Ably led by George Robertson and Robert Wickliffe, the Anti-relief press and spokesmen praised the courts as the last shelter of sanity in the State. Destroying what was obviously an ex post facto
law, the judges had served notice that they would not stand by and allow
the Constitution to be twisted by a group of self interested
office-seekers.

The Relief party saw matters differently. The courts, in their
view, were allowing dry and formal legalisms to block the Legislature's
attempts to alleviate statewide financial distress. George Bibb and
John Rowan, each of whom had once served on the State's highest court,
gave it as their opinion that the stay law had been perfectly
constitutional. The Relief party immediately appealed the decisions to
the Court of Appeals, hoping to reverse the damage there. 5

But the more agitated Relief men were not content to wait on the
higher court. They tried to coerce the judiciary from within the
Legislature. Judge Clark was summoned to appear before the Kentucky
House and answer to charges of having conspired "to shake public
confidence in the institutions and measures of the Government." The
judge replied by letter, asserting his independence and the fundamental
right of his decision. He refused to come to the Legislature and take
part in a political drama. The Relief advocates then decided to perform
without him. After vigorous debate they attempted to unseat the judge,
a process called "removal by address" which the Constitution provided
for, but which required a two-thirds vote for success. The vote fell
short, fifty-nine to thirty-five. The Relief forces thus suffered their
first major setback. And it was a costly defeat as well. When many
border-line Relief men recanted in horror at the attempt to interfere
with courts, Anti-relief ranks were boosted. By moving too quickly and
too intemperately, the Relief party had committed a serious blunder.
They had initiated a struggle for the control of Kentucky's court, and
their political survival would rest on the outcome of this battle.⁶

The Critical Court Struggle, as it came to be termed, elevated Kendall to heights that he might otherwise have never reached. He had a mixed record on support of the relief measures, and had recently written Clay that several Relief men were upset with him "because I have not gone the whole" on relief. It may seem surprising then that he unhesitatingly joined in condemning the judiciary. But Kendall understood how easily the judges, if left unrestrained, could systematically dismantle every Relief measure, destroying in the process the party's political majority. The end of the Relief party, of course, would also mean the end of the Argus's state printing contracts. But Kendall also had ideological reasons for opposing the courts' interference with relief. He remembered how in Jefferson's time the Federalists had used the judiciary to check 'popular excesses,' and in general stymied the will of the people. He also retained his bitterness against the Marshall Court for its 1819 decisions enlarging Federal authority. "The national government, particularly the judiciary," he complained, "are making encroachments [on the states] which are lightly censured or passed over in silence." Now the state courts were suppressing the popular will, represented in the Relief party's legislative majority.⁷

For a change, then, his road and his line of attack were clear, and in 1822 he vented his spleen with a savage attack on the state judiciary. He criticized the Court of Appeals for adjourning its session without reviewing the decisions of Judges Clark and Blair. This inaction merely allowed emotions to reach fever pitch. It also, he suspected, allowed the Anti-relief forces time to organize their
election campaign, in support of judicial superintendence over the Constitution. Nothing could be further from the truth, he wrote, than this contention that the judiciary was the legitimate custodian of constitutional consistency. Kendall believed that the people were the proper custodians, and in support of his belief he cited Jefferson, quoting the Sage's famous words: "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves." The people were the supreme authority and, Kendall believed, the final interpreters of any constitution, speaking their will, as voters. 8

In many ways Kendall's new political battle resembled the New Election period. Then also, he had raised the claim that the will of the people superceded judicial and constitutional restraints. Other Relief advocates agreed with him and Anti-relief men understood the danger of their beliefs. As the new struggle developed, Anti-relief leader Robert Wickliffe attacked the judiciary's critics: "They produced the doctrine of vox populi, vox Dei ... that the people could do everything." Kendall would not have argued. He fervently believed in the ascendency of the people, and urged his readers to "continue to protest and to reason against the late decision of our Judges." 9

The Relief party's hasty attempt to remove Judge Clark had distressing consequences. Emboldened by the setback, Anti-relief men intensified their efforts to reverse the relief tide. They attacked Relief advocates as "opportunists," men whose lust for power endangered social order. They pleaded that the laws of society should not be subjected to the whims of a temporary majority. Above all, they used the name of Henry Clay to organize the Bluegrass behind the courts.

Like Robertson and Wickliffe, Clay truly felt that the doctrines
preached by Kendall and others concerning popular will were grave threats to established order. As 1823 progressed, during which time Kendall devoted his fullest energies to the Bank of the Commonwealth, the differences between him and the Master of Ashland widened. "The Relief party are very jealous of you," he warned Clay.

Clay had had financial trouble since the Panic began. For a time he had retired from the House of Representatives to concentrate on his business. He even borrowed from the Bank of the Commonwealth. But, debtor or not, he never deserted the interests of the Lexington elite he had joined many years before. His political philosophy did not include disrespect for constitutions, established corporations, and courts. In fact, he reserved his greatest respect for constitutions that preserved the order of society. These, he said, were the foundation of civilized life and must be retained. Kentucky's hope, he believed, depended on "the restoration of our ancient laws," and he was determined to contribute to that end. This was one issue on which Clay was not prepared to compromise. But he preferred for political reasons to avoid a public stand against relief. Thus he relied on a quiet campaign, influencing key individuals in the Kentucky government and judiciary. In private letters to a few select friends he expressed in concrete terms his desire to see the Relief majority broken. 10

It is not known whether or not Kendall considered how his alliance with the Relief party would affect his relationship with Clay. He had already attacked the Bank of the United States, an institution that Clay championed. Now he was supporting a political movement that the Master of Ashland viewed with alarm. But Clay's feelings toward the Relief party were not well-known. He never voiced them in any
correspondence with Kendall; although the latter knew Clay's thoughts on the subject, the two men avoided the subject in their communications. Kendall continued to receive payments for printing Federal laws, and the Argus continued to praise Clay's policies in favor of internal improvements and tariffs. In sum, the two men pursued a mutually beneficial course. Kendall supported Clay's presidential ambitions and Clay helped to sustain Kendall's newspaper. But Kendall needed more financial support than the Federal contracts gave him, and found it while supporting the Relief party, and contributing to its program.

Late in 1823, the Court of Appeals reviewed the decisions of Judges Clark and Blair. Fully aware that the Relief party lacked the necessary votes to remove them by address, the judges placed themselves on the side of order. Despite George Bibb's eloquent efforts to secure a reversal of the lower courts, the high court unanimously upheld the earlier verdicts. Bibb petitioned for a rehearing on technical points, but it was useless. The replevin laws were struck down. Robertson, Wickliffe, and their allies (including the reticent Clay) were jubilant.\(^1\)

But Kendall and other Relief men were appalled by the decision. Kendall argued that it would do more damage to "the constitutional sovereignty of the state [i.e. the people] than all the assumptions of the federal judiciary put together." The state courts, he charged, had joined the Anti-relief party. The judges had now joined forces with the "bankers, lawyers, merchants and speculators," to wax rich off the sufferings of ordinary, indebted citizens. Judges, he had once warned, were almost always in league with the bankers, "the source whence they derive power and receive support." The Argus's editor pledged to act as
the people's champion in protecting "the right of the people" to create laws suitable to their needs and preserve their rights from the ravages of the privileged class. ¹²

There was further bad news for Adair's administration. While beset by this new challenge within Kentucky, his leadership was dealt another series of crippling blows by the United States Supreme Court. In *Green vs. Biddle*, a decision involving pre-statehood agreements between Kentucky and Virginia, the Justices found several Kentucky laws dealing with land titles to be unconstitutioanal. These laws ignored an agreement between Virginia and Kentucky that had been made in 1792 when the latter became a separate state. They were therefore invalid, the High Court held. A contract made between two states, like a contract between two persons, could not be altered unilaterally. Later statements that this decision nullified thousands of land titles and ruined untold numbers of farmers were grossly exaggerated. The resulting uncertainty of many land titles was real, however, and this decision dealt another blow to the Relief majority.

Nor was it the last blow. Chief Justice Marshall had stated in *Sturges vs. Crowninshield* that replevin laws could exist only for a specified term. In 1825, he issued two decisions for the Court that permitted Federal courts to ignore Kentucky replevin and execution laws when issuing writs of execution in Federal cases. These latter decisions were especially gratifying to the Bank of the United States, which was a Federal corporation and had many debts to collect in Kentucky. It did not help Clay's image with the Relief party when it became known that he had acted as counsel for the B.U.S. in suits involving these debts. ¹³
By early 1824, the Relief majority was fed up with all courts, everywhere. Not only were the judges blocking the relief program, and threatening the Relief party's control of the Kentucky government, they were also issuing a flat denial of the party's ideology. The law is not malleable according to the momentary whims of a majority, they were saying. Rowan and Bibb, and certainly Kendall, disagreed. Kendall believed that contracts could not be left sacred when their terms closed off opportunity to most people. Legal obligations, he soon wrote, were determined by the state, and thus amendable by those who governed the state. Only "moral contracts" and the law of the Bible were sacred. When legal agreements blocked the moral obligations that government had to its citizens, to prevent their ruination in times of hardship for example, the legal agreement must be set aside. If courts tried to stand in the way of this, then perhaps they too must be set aside.

In light of the battle that was about to commence, it is interesting to note how quickly this battle became almost entirely a struggle of principle. For while they were trying to unseat the judges of the highest court in Kentucky, the Relief majority also repealed the reprieve laws. They did so, they said, because the intended relief to debtors had "in considerable degree, been realized." Yet, in the same session, John Rowan condemned the courts for forgetting that the law must live and grow to remain vital. People must eat, he said. Contracts would be no comfort to them, nor any benefit to order, if they prevented people from holding land and making a living. The courts must therefore give way to the supremacy of the people. The great court struggle, then, was a battle over an abstract issue, but one with very real consequences.
But in what manner could the Relief men check the judiciary? The Federal courts were invulnerable. Colonel Johnson, who had entered the United States Senate in 1819, and who sympathized with the Relief party, tried to amend the Federal Constitution. He proposed to give the Senate an appellate jurisdiction over the Supreme Court in any case involving a state as a party. He found almost no support for the proposal and gave up on it. Kendall, meanwhile, continued to protest. He pointed out that the Green vs. Biddle decision had been a three to one vote. Two of the seven justices had been ill, while John Marshall had himself declined to take part, due to business interests in Virginia. This meant, Kendall pointed out, that a minority of three judges had "prostrated a system of laws which has been thought essential to their prosperity by almost half a million people constituting an independent state." Kendall thus added one more to his list of grievances against the Marshall court.¹⁵

Kendall, Adair and their allies did more than simply protest against the Kentucky high court. John Rowan drew up ten resolutions condemning the justices for "arrogating supremacy over the people." This passed the House of Representatives and the Relief party now returned to the offensive. First they attempted to call a Constitutional convention and alter the fundamental law in order to "remedy" the Court's independence. Kendall was confident that the people would elect a reliable group of delegates to secure suitable changes in the State Constitution. The Anti-relief party feared that Kendall was right. The House adopted the call for a convention by a vote fifty-six to thirty-three. But trouble developed in the Senate chamber. Anti-relief senators spread it about that such a convention
could lead to anything, including suggestions to abolish slavery in Kentucky. They also reminded wavering colleagues that a constitutional convention could be used for other purposes, perhaps even to threaten vested property. The proposal was barely defeated.

Failing in their convention attempt, Bibb and Rowan now tried to remove the three Court of Appeals justices by address. Relief spokesmen, including Rowan and Solomon Sharp, delivered stirring speeches against the court, hoping to sway enough representatives to push through the removals. But the legislators had already declined to remove the lower judges, Blair and Clark. They would not now reverse themselves in this much bolder endeavor. A removal vote failed in the House, fifty-six to forty. 16

The Relief party was stymied until George Bibb suggested a new tack. This clever lawyer was a real fountain of strength for the Relief forces. An advocate of popular government since before the New Election, Bibb was imaginative, combative, and industrious. His fertile mind had contributed to many of the Relief laws and he had argued their efficacy before both the state and Federal courts. It is a pity that more is not known about his relationship with Kendall, for the latter was much influenced by his constitutional opinions.

Regarding the court problem, Bibb reasoned that, whereas a two-thirds vote was needed to remove individual judges, only a simple majority was needed to replace a whole court. Nothing in the Constitution, Bibb contended, forbade the Legislature from reorganizing the Court of Appeals. The Legislature had created it and therefore should be able to alter it. Bibb pointed to an abundance of precedents by which the Legislature had altered the structure of lower courts. He
further stated that the Constitution implied that judges would serve during good behavior and also during "the continuance of their respective courts." This gave the Legislature ample room to reorganize the high court, Bibb concluded. Rowan and Sharp considered Bibb’s proposal, as the legislative session ended and the annual election campaigns began.  

The Argus and other Relief newspapers supported the plan to remove the offending judges by reorganizing the court. The Kentucky Gazette commented that the present justices were obviously making a political, as opposed to a legal, decision. Two of the three judges, the writer pointed out, had been in the Legislature when earlier replevin laws were considered, and had then voted for the bills. Now, free from the voters, they had altered course. This demonstrated "the danger of permitting appointment in government for life," the Gazette concluded. Kendall was even more vehement. He really could not believe, he wrote, that the Court "would adopt principles so repugnant to the opinions" of nine-tenths of the lawyers and virtually all of the voters. Those who wished to "deny relief and protection for 'the unfortunate debtor'" constituted a class of overrich lawyers, bankers, merchants and speculators, he charged, men who either confiscated property for debts or who collected fees for execution suits.

It was on this question that the Kentucky elections of 1824 turned. Kendall chose to believe that a victory for the Relief party would mean a mandate to break the Court of Appeals. This victory, he proclaimed, would break the "men who would deny relief and protection for the unfortunate debtor."  

Kendall was aided in his assaults against the courts by another
Clay partisan with strong Relief leanings, Francis P. Blair. Blair was a talented young lawyer, a graduate of Transylvania University, son of one of Kentucky’s first Attorneys-General, and a brother-in-law of Jesse Bledsoe. A friend of the Relief movement on principle, Blair was also indebted to creditors for nearly forty thousand dollars. These creditors included the Bank of the United States, an institution that he despised. Blair had a blunt writing style and used it well. (Historian Claude Bowers commented that although Blair was "capable of a skillful use of the rapier, he preferred the meat-axe.") Many of his early articles were printed in the Argus as Kendall liked his young associate, and began employing his pen more often. Years later, the two men worked so closely together that historians are still uncertain about who wrote what in their Washington newspaper. 20

The Relief party's plan to reorganize the Court of Appeals awaited the outcome of the 1824 elections. In 1824, the Relief men were better organized than they had been in 1820. Now their organization reached into the lower ranks of the county officers, men who had direct contact with the voters. These were the people whom state leaders depended on to sell their programs to the voters, men that political scientists would a century later call "opinion leaders." Those who supported relief were won over by a variety of inducements: personal loyalty, hope for advancement, direct benefits, or some form of ideological commitment. Each man had his own reasons, and it was the job of the Relief leaders to pull together enough local notables to form a dominant coalition. 21

The party (that is the county and district leaders in agreement with Rowan, Bibb and Sharp) united behind Joseph Desha as their
gubernatorial candidate. Desha had patiently waited for another chance at the State House, strengthening his following and supporting the relief program. Now his opportunity had arrived. The Anti-relief party chose Christopher Tompkins, a county court judge, to oppose Desha. Robert Wickliffe had at first hoped to persuade George Robertson to run, but Robertson declined. Robertson probably foresaw the outcome: Anti-relief voters were a distinct minority in 1824 and the party's decision to field a judge probably did not help their chances. 22

During the summer, Desha vigorously campaigned about the countryside. His platform, simply stated, was a promise that as governor he would not permit anything to stop the Relief crusade. Anti-relief newspapers accused Desha of playing on both sides of the fence, preaching relief in heavily debtor districts and attacking relief in creditor areas. Desha hotly denied this, and the evidence is too sketchy to permit a judgement. Tompkins, by contrast, was a much more subdued candidate. Before long, it was obvious Desha would win. 23

Kendall predicted a Relief party victory six weeks before the voting. Even so, his confidence did not prevent him from blasting the Court of Appeals and its adherents at every opportunity. Beginning in February a series of eighteen weekly essays was printed, blaming the Anti-relief party for virtually every problem in Kentucky. Signed by "Patrick Henry," the essays compared the Anti-relief party to a European aristocracy. An Anti-relief "Holy Alliance of America" existed, he charged. It was composed of the Anti-relief party, the Bank of the United States, and the Courts of the Nation. Kendall styled this alliance the "American Court party" and termed it the embodiment of privilege. By contrast, the Relief party was also a part of a larger
group, which he termed the "American Country party," the defenders of the people. Whereas the Court party considered "the Judges the Supreme power of the land, above the Legislatures and Congress, above Governors and President, above the people and above the constitutions," the Country party recognized that the people were the final law.\(^{24}\)

The "Patrick Henry" series proved extremely popular, so much so that Kendall reprinted them as a pamphlet. These articles were clearly Kendall's creation, the arguments and style identical to earlier works of his. When the Anti-relief press accused Kendall of being "the rebel 'Patrick Henry'" he denied it, but admitted that "Patrick Henry" and all Relief men were indeed rebels. Just as Jefferson and Madison had been rebels in the 1790s when they had opposed a more open kind of Federalism, so Relief men were now dedicated to stopping the hidden subversion of undercover Federalists -- the bankers and lawyers. Jeffersonian imagery, in fact, appeared frequently in Kendall's editorials. He claimed that the Sage of Monticello privately agreed with the Relief policies, but Kendall offered no evidence to support the statement. He did, however, expect all "Jeffersonian republicans" to vote for Desha.\(^{25}\)

Kendall continued to refer to the Anti-relief forces as the Court party. As the campaign entered its final weeks, he increased the intensity of his attack. He predicted that an Anti-relief victory would lead to laws punishing any newspaper that dared to ridicule the "rich and well born." Violators of the law would no doubt have their ears cut off, he sarcastically commented. Nor did he neglect individuals. When old Humphrey Marshall attacked Desha in the Anti-relief press, Kendall acidly shot back: "Trembling on the brink of the grave, with an
enfeebled body and impaired mind, [Marshall] appears zealous to shoot back the fires of the other world with which he seems already to be tormented." A much younger Humphrey Marshall might have demanded a duel for such an insult. Kendall was so cordially hated for these kinds of remarks, one Anti-relief man went to the Argus office and tried to beat him with a cane.26

A more conventional assault on Kendall was the one perpetrated by the author of The Spirit of '76 pamphlets. This anonymous writer termed the Relief partisans as "subversives," men intent on destroying "the uniform construction of the constitution of the state." Bibb, Adair, Sharp, all were petty men who sought to grasp power during troubled times and use it to bedevil the good citizens, the honest people who honored their obligations and respected the laws of society. The Relief leaders were, in short, opportunist. But the author of the Spirit reserved his best barbs for Kendall:

This grinning spectre, Amos is now the soul of the faction who would trample your constitution underfoot . . . Rowan is indebted to Kendall for every single idea. This same Kendall became the writer of Patrick Henry . . . he, in the same manner, produces the pamphlet usually styled Jefferson. Never was the name of the Sage of Monticello more abused, or forgery more barefaced.27

But the Spirit of '76 could not turn the Relief tide with words. Desha won easily, beating Tompkins by nearly sixteen thousand votes. The Relief party also won the legislative elections, which one historian called "typical, exciting pioneer [campaigns] with plenty of fighting and riots." The victories in the Legislature were lop-sided, but because of the fact that only a small number of the state Senate seats were chosen each year, the Relief majority in that House was slim. Bibb and Rowan were not certain that they could remove the Court of
Appeals judges by Address. They therefore began developing Bibb's plan for reorganizing the Court. 28

The Court campaign brought forth all of Kendall's considerable energies. George Bibb may have charted the legal course of the Relief party's program but Kendall was the man who aroused the voters, who explained the party's ideology to the rank and file. A trained lawyer, with little love for the dryness of the law, Kendall was also a Jeffersonian Republican who was attracted to political intrigue and the radical elements of republican theory. Trained by the Massachusetts politician, William Richardson, he now lived among men who fondly remembered the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798. Building on such a legacy, he had carried his message of popular will in the Argus to a receptive audience. He had a habit of structuring his editorials like legal briefs. He would cite a precedent here, point to a logical consistency there, appeal to this and that source. Then he would draw on his rich imagery, blatantly trying to sweep along his readers with emotion. It was not a stable mixture, but it served his purposes. Harrying the Anti-relief party with his words and helping the Relief party win its greatest victory, Kendall was emerging as a major force in Kentucky politics. 29

Kendall's performance in the campaign was remarkable considering his many other concerns in 1824. The presidential campaign of that year was an intense contest. James Monroe, unlike Jefferson and Madison, had not designated a successor to follow him. Consequently, several Republicans were battling each other for the prize. Henry Clay was of course a contender, as were John Quincy Adams, William Crawford, and Andrew Jackson. Kendall naturally supported Clay; so did Blair, but not
all Relief men followed their example. George Bibb preferred Jackson, as did Richard Johnson. This difference of opinion among the Relief leaders was awkward, although not fatal to the party's control of the State Government. Still this made Kendall uneasy (of which more will be said in the next chapter). 30

In addition to politics, Kendall had personal concerns. His finances were strained. Early in 1823, he had ventured into manufacturing. Using capital bequeathed to him at his father-in-law's death, Kendall purchased fifty acres of land outside Frankfort along Elkhorn Stream. There he and seven slaves he had inherited built a paper mill and grist mill, and laid out a small farm. He had had enough cash only to make an initial payment on the land and erect one paper run.

The mill, if successful, would have granted him a strong measure of independence as a newspaperman. The Lexington Reporter's editor, William Worsley, supplied Kendall with paper and ink. Kendall occasionally traded for these supplies. More commonly, he bought them with a down payment and Worsley kept a running account for the balance. This was a common enough arrangement for the time, when many newspapers just barely made a profit. But this was also an embarrassing and even dangerous arrangement for Kendall, the editor of the state's largest newspaper. Worsley was a committed Anti-relief man, and especially opposed the Bank of the Commonwealth. Should he at some time choose to ignore their common support of Henry Clay and squeeze Kendall for the money, the Argus's editor would be hard pressed to pay it.

Kendall probably had this very thought in mind when he constructed the mill. He was confident that here he could eventually supply all of his own paper needs and sell paper to others as well. He
was so confident that he named the property "Mount Pleasant." He thought of it as a kind of pastoral retreat and spoke of retiring some day and farming the land. "There is no malignity in the earth we till; there is no ingratitude in the plant, flower or tree we nurse and cultivate; there is no envy in the brute animals with which we are surrounded," he once wrote.31

But the dream of Mount Pleasant was shattered on October 13, 1823, by the death of Kendall's wife. The cause of Mary Kendall's death was given as simply a "prevailing fever." Her husband was nearly broken by the tragedy. He used two columns of the Argus for her obituary, most of it distraught and disjointed. The master of words admitted that "he cannot even find language to express ... the feelings of grief ... which agitate his bosom." Nearly two months later, perhaps because he felt that this "best of wives" deserved more, he published a long poem to her memory.32

Kendall later told Henry Clay that Mary's death deeply hurt the development of the paper mill at Mount Pleasant. "Her death," he claimed, "deprived me of a large portion of the means on which I depended" to complete the venture. What he meant by that is unclear, but by 1824 the land and mills were draining his resources. He never completed the planned second paper run. The weather turned against him in 1825 and hampered the profitable use of the first run. A lack of rain frequently lowered the stream and caused the production of paper to stop entirely.33

Mary's death reduced his household to a shambles. A prudent woman, she had carefully managed a small budget, stretching the funds as completely as possible. After her death, Kendall had to take over her
duties, looking after his business, farm, three children, and seven
slaves all at once. His money difficulties were compounded when the
Relief party decided after 1823 to divide the State printing between the
Argus and the Frankfort Commentator which also supported relief
measures. This reduction in income, coming on top of Kendall's new debt
to the Bank of the Commonwealth, made his a fairly desperate situation.
If the Relief party fell from power he would probably be ruined. 34

When the new Legislature gathered for the opening of the fall
session, the Relief party's men controlled more than two-thirds of the
seats in both the House and the Senate. It seemed, then, that all Rowan
and Bibb had to do was introduce resolutions to remove the old judges
and call for the votes. But it was not to be that simple. The Relief
leaders could not carry the whole rank and file of their party in
support of so extreme a step. Many Relief men who had had no difficulty
supporting a wholly State-owned Bank or enacting replevin laws now
balked when it came to removing judges for clearly political reasons.
Thus, when the vote was taken on December 20, 1824, on Governor Desha's
recommendation that the judges be removed, the votes in both Houses fell
short of the necessary two-thirds: sixty-one to thirty-nine in the House
of Representatives, and twenty-three to twelve in the Senate. 35

Rowan and Bibb attempted to tighten their control for another
vote, but the recusant Relief men could not be coerced into changing
their minds. The Relief party leaders would not accept defeat, however.
Bibb's plan for reorganizing the Court of Appeals had been introduced to
the legislators as early as November. On December 9, almost two weeks
before the removal attempt, this bill had passed in the Senate by six
votes. This move was probably designed to pressure wavering Relief
members into accepting removal as a less controversial step. When that failed to work, Desha made it known that he would sign a reorganization bill.

The Argus endorsed the reorganization scheme and urged the legislators to adopt it. The reorganization bill provided for replacing Judges Mills, Boyle, and Owsley with four new men, thus increasing the Court's size by one. It also raised the Judges' salaries from $1,500 to $2,000. Most importantly the bill stipulated that a legislative act could be declared unconstitutional only by a unanimous vote of all four judges. 36

Rowan defended the bill as necessary to the protection of the Relief program, which had been sanctioned by the voters in every election since 1820. He also claimed that the Relief victory in 1824 constituted a mandate for removing the old judges, by any means necessary. Still, the bill led to bitter debates, with Rowan and his lieutenants on one side, and Robertson, Wickliffe, and their followers on the other. Anti-relief men attacked the bill as unconstitutional, while a brief effort was also made to attack the "extravagance" of the higher salaries. But try as they might, the reorganization bill's critics could not break the simple majority that Rowan needed to pass it in the House. When the final vote came, well past midnight on December 24, the House vote stood fifty-four in favor and forty-three against the bill. Desha, who had attended many of the debates, was present again, and signed it immediately. The new Court of Appeals was born. 37

Kendall was jubilant and published essays defending the new Court as perfectly sound and legal. When Old Court partisans (as they now called themselves) referred to the Legislature's bill as the result
of a "midnight caucus" Kendall retorted that it was really the result of a "caucus of the people at the polls last August." He was just as happy when the Commentator's editors broke with the Relief party to denounce the New Court Act. The legislative majority reacted by once again consolidating the public printing and giving all of it to Kendall.38

The New Court of Appeals was quickly organized. William T. Barry, who had been Governor Desha's Secretary of State for only a few weeks, was named Chief Justice. Three other Relief-New Court men were selected to the other seats on the Court. Francis Blair was named the clerk for the new Court. Blair immediately demanded that the clerk of the old Court of Appeals turn over all his records. When the man refused, Blair broke into his office and took everything he could find. Both the New Court leaders and the Argus vigorously applauded his initiative.39

Still, the old Court judges refused to be cowed. Judges Owsley, Mills, and Boyle ignored demands that they disband and made plans to hold their own sessions at the old Bank of Kentucky building. Kendall sneeringly termed this the "the Bank Court." Several lawyers, including Robert Wickliffe, announced that they would never argue cases before the New Court of Appeals. George Robertson went further, in an attempt to rally the defeated Anti-relief party. Soon after the New Court bill passed, Robertson wrote a masterful Protest against the act. He called the New Court's creation a move placing "the constitution ... under the feet of a triumphant majority." The Protest was signed by forty-eight members of the Legislature, all of whom vowed to undo the New Court at the next elections.40

Robertson's Protest provided a rallying point for those who
opposed the reorganization of the court. Disaffected Relief men, whose loyalties had been broken by the Reorganization Act, had nowhere else to turn but to the Old Court party. In addition, with the gradual ending of the depression, many voters were losing interest in relief politics and, to borrow a term from a later era, beginning to yearn for a return to 'normalcy.' Thus, the 1825 elections, as everyone quickly realized, were going to be the most intense struggle yet. Rather than ending the struggle, the New Court Act had only pushed matters to another electoral show-down. 41
CHAPTER IV

NOTES


2 Kentucky House Journal (1822), pp. 12-14; Argus, October 24, 1822, October 1, 1823.


5 Frank F. Mathias, "The Turbulent Years of Kentucky Politics" (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 1966), p. 48; Lucius P. Little, Ben Hardin: His Life, Times and Contemporaries (Louisville, Ky., 1887) p. 102; Argus, January 28, 1824.


8 Argus, June 27, July 4, 1822.

University of California, Berkeley, 1962) p. 302; Argus, October 17, 1822.


11 Argus, June 18, 1823; Blair vs. Williams, 14 Kentucky Reports, 34-116; Connelly and Coulter, p. 626.

12 Argus, October 11, 1821, October 15, 1823, January 21, February 4, 1824.

13 Frances Richards, "John Rowan" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1930) pp. 63-67; Green vs. Biddle, 8 Wheaton, lff; Wayman vs. Southard, 10 Wheaton, lff.; Stickles, p. 33.

14 Argus, March 10, 1824; Kentucky House Journal (1823), pp. 100-12; John Rowan, Report of John Rowan, Esq. in Relation to the Late Decision of the Court of Appeals on the Replevin and Endorsements Laws (Frankfort, 1823).


16 Niles' Register, January 3, 1824; Richards, pp. 62-63; Connelly and Coulter, p. 628; Stickles, pp. 38-40; Frankfort Commentator, November 15, 1823; Kentucky Senate Journal (1823-24), pp.


18 Kentucky Gazette, November 13, 1823; Argus, October 15, 1823, January 21, February 4, 1824.

19 Ibid., February 4, 1824.


22 Argus, March 17, 1824.

23 Mathias, p. 73; Stickles, p. 43; Argus, June 9, 16, 23. 1924.

24 Ibid., February 11-June 9, 1824.


26 Argus, May 19, June 16, 1824.

27 The Spirit of '76 to the People of Kentucky. Or, a History of the Bankrupt Court [n.p., 1824] (pamphlet in Rare Book Collection, LC), pp. 1-3, 12-13.

28 Stickles, pp. 41-42; Mathias, p. 74; Lexington Reporter, August 16, 1824; Argus, 18, 25, 1824.

29 Cf. Argus, February 4, 18, March 17, 1824. Kendall had little changed his style since the time of the New Election. See his articles from that time, summarized in another pamphlet, The Constitution Shown to be Consistent with a New Election, by Free Suffrage (Frankfort, [1816]). He would use the same approach in Andrew Jackson's state papers.


31 Marshall, pp. 303-6; Kendall to William Worsley, October 11, April 13, 1825, both in Personal Miscellaneous Letters, New York Public Library; Kendall to Henry Clay, February 19, 1825, Clay papers, LC; Kendall's Expositor, February 17, 1842.

32 Autobiography, pp. 265-67; Argus, October 22, December 10, 1823.

33 Kendall to Henry Clay, February 19, 20, March 23, 1825, Clay papers, LC; Argus, January 11, 25, 1826.


35 Stickles, pp. 45-47; Fackler, pp. 19-20; George Robertson, Scrap Book on Law and Politics, Men and Times (Lexington, 1855), p. 75; Kendall to Henry Clay, December 22, 1824, Clay papers, LC.

36 Stickles, pp. 49-50; Argus, November 10, 17, 24, December 1, 8, 15, 1824.

37 Stickles, pp. 51-58; Fackler, p. 20; Robertson, p. 127; Kentucky House Journal (1824-25), pp. 440-54.

38 Argus, January 5, 1825.
39 Stickles, pp. 60-61; Smith, pp. 19-21; Argus, January 26, 1825.

40 Response of the Judges of the Court of Appeals, December 9, 1824 (Lexington, 1824); Argus, March 16, 1825; Robertson, pp. 91-94.

41 Steven A. Channing, Kentucky (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1977), pp. 84-85; Fackler, pp. 22-23.
CHAPTER V

KENDALL AND HENRY CLAY

At this point, it is worth pausing to reflect on Kendall's progress since 1815. He had, in ten year's time, established himself in Kentucky as the editor of the state's largest newspaper. He had become an important member of the dominant Relief party, a major spokesman for its ideology, and a major recipient of its patronage, in the form of printing contracts and a sizeable loan from the Bank of the Commonwealth. He had, in essence, achieved a large measure of the success he had hungered for ten years earlier. He had done this, moreover, while retaining the friendship and patronage of Henry Clay, a strong, but not a public, critic of the Relief party and its program. Could Kendall continue this balancing act?

If there were any stage of Kendall's life that could be called a watershed, that stage came between 1824 and 1826. Seeds sown by the Relief and Court controversies were nurtured during these months by Kendall's personal difficulties and harvested in a whirlwind of political change. Kendall, as a result, emerged as a nationally prominent editor and politician. But his new reputation was to be an unsavory one, to say the least. He was to be haunted for the rest of his life by the story of his betrayal of Henry Clay, a story succinctly summarized by the English visitor Harriet Martineau, in 1837:

Neither Mr. Clay nor any of his family ever spoke a word to me of Kendall, except in his public capacity: but I heard elsewhere and repeatedly the well-known story of the connexion of the two men,
early in Kendall's life. Tidings reached Mr. and Mrs. Clay, one evening, many years ago, at their house in the neighbourhood of Lexington, Kentucky, that a young man, solitary and poor, lay ill of a fever in the noisy hotel in the town. Mrs. Clay went down in the carriage without delay, and brought the sufferer home to her house, where she nursed him with her own hands till he recovered. Mr. Clay was struck with the talents and knowledge of the young man (Kendall), and retained him as tutor to his sons, heaping benefits upon him with characteristic bounty. Thus far is notorious fact. As to the causes of their separation and enmity, I have not heard Kendall's side of the question; and I therefore say nothing; but go on to the other notorious facts, that Amos Kendall quitted Mr. Clay's political party some time after Adams had been, by Mr. Clay's influence, seated in the Presidential chair, and went over to Jackson; since which time, he has never ceased his persecutions of Mr. Clay through the newspapers.

Obvious errors aside, it is evident that the source of Mrs. Martineau's tale was no friend of Kendall. But that did not mean that the source was necessarily a friend of Clay. Most Whigs and Democrats alike believed and repeated this story in 1837.

The real relationship between Henry Clay and Amos Kendall was more intricate in 1824 than the rumors of 1837 indicated. Kendall always attributed his early support of Henry Clay to the obligations he felt he owed Lucretia Clay. But, as stated before, he also exploited his relationship with Clay, serving Clay's presidential ambitions while collecting Federal printing contracts in return. He obliquely admitted as much in 1828, when he wrote Clay that he had become tutor to the Clay children "because your return from Europe was expected in a few months and I thought no man better qualified to advise me in my future course than yourself."  

Between 1819, when he received his first Federal contract, and 1825, Kendall served Clay well. He used his newspaper to tout Clay's achievements in Congress and castigate Clay's enemies. Clay was lauded as the guardian of western interests and the national broker who framed
the Missouri Compromise. The Argus promoted Clay as presidential timber as early as January, 1822. Where he had once bristled at the suggestion that he was Richard Johnson's "tool," now he offered to Clay: "command my pen or my paper... If I can assist you now, it will be some compensation to your estimable lady for the kindness she exhibited towards me when I was moneyless, friendless and powerless."³

The Master of Ashland gladly accepted Kendall's service. "For your kind offer of your pen and your paper," he replied, "I am infinitely obliged; and no doubt I shall have occasion for the friendly employment of both." Indeed, faced with as many as five other contenders for the presidency, Clay needed all the newspaper support he could find. In Kendall, he found one of the best western polemicists.⁴

He pointed Kendall's pen toward the man he thought his most dangerous rival, John Quincy Adams. The Argus began to attack the Washington National Intelligencer as an anti-western newspaper. As this was the principal organ for Adams, it naturally followed that Adams, a former Federalist, was anti-western as well. He was also Secretary of State and Kendall condemned the growing custom of having that official regularly succeed to the Nation's highest office. It created an artificial monarchy, with anointed heirs and party coronations in the form of caucuses, he charged.⁵

Clay had worked closely with Adams during the peace negotiations at Ghent. Consequently, he knew many things that could be used to embarrass the dour New Englander. Now he shared much of this information with Kendall, in particular matters regarding Adams's interest in gaining rights for New England fishermen in Canadian waters.
Kendall recognized the potential of this issue and composed a short series of letters, signed by "Wayne," accusing Adams of trying to sell out western interests. Adams had been willing, "Wayne" claimed, to give the British navigation rights on the Mississippi in return for concessions in the Newfoundland fishing waters. Only Clay's intercession had saved the west, and only Clay would continue to speak for the west, "Wayne" concluded. 6

The "Wayne" letters appeared in the Argus and also in Ohio papers, Ohio being a state that Clay needed to win. Late in 1822, Kendall expanded the "Wayne" letters into a series of nine essays that ran in the Argus and excoriated Adams as a pro-British Federalist. This series was eventually combined into a pamphlet for distribution by Clay's supporters. Clay, in fact, paid Kendall $100 for the series and also underwrote the printing of the pamphlets. But this was a secret. Sending copies of the Argus series to friends, Clay simply said: "They are I believe entirely from the pen of Mr. Kendall the editor of that paper." Adams recognized the truth, however, and told his wife that the attack was inspired by Clay, if not actually "from the first hand." 7

The Clay-Kendall assault on Adams typified the Clay-Kendall relationship. Kendall provided Clay with a ready press and useful prose; Clay supported Kendall with personal contributions and Federal largesse. The two men benefitted mutually by their acquaintance with each other, and the relationship continued only so long as that was the case. There was little in the way of personal friendship between them. A thorough reading of their extant correspondence supports this conclusion. They seldom communicated on any level beyond business and politics. They had no more than a few personal meetings, in which their
conversations again were on professional matters.\textsuperscript{8}

Clay knew almost nothing of Kendall's background or his family. (He mistakenly believed that Kendall was a graduate of Harvard, not Dartmouth.) He later said that his early interest in the man stemmed from his desire to please Mrs. Clay, but that his "personal acquaintance with him was never great." He did admit, however, that he frequently read the \textit{Argus} "which I thought exhibited some talent and much diligence." As we have seen, he invested some time and money in cultivating that talent for his own ends.\textsuperscript{9}

As for Kendall, his was an editor's life. In those days, few newspapers survived without the patronage of some politician or other, and by 1824 Kendall had long since learned that fact. He readily took Clay's financial aid and repaid it with publicity. Kendall also found in Clay an access to the higher levels of power. As a young man, Kendall had doubted his potential to succeed, and had developed the habit of reinforcing his stature through association with prominent men. He successively curried favor with William Richardson, Richard Johnson, Clay and Andrew Jackson. That these men were greatly different from one another did not seem to matter. They were on the heights that Kendall hungered to reach. In 1824, he could ignore Clay's opposition to relief, could even deny it, for his support of the man stemmed from personal, not ideological, loyalty.

On the surface, such an attitude seems at variance with Kendall's penchant for rigid adherence to ideology. But Kendall's rigid mind bent more readily in the presence of strong leaders. He was, by nature, lacking in original ideas and new approaches to problems. He was introverted in groups, too shy to be anything but a second-rank man
in the American political system. In essence, he was a natural follower, born to carry the banner for the "men of decision" he so admired. In the period of doubt that followed the War of 1812, Kendall was not alone in rallying to someone who, like Clay, was confident of his ability and talented enough to communicate his confidence to the masses. Where Kendall had theory, Clay had experience, his abilities tested and accepted by the majority of voters who Kendall considered the final judges of all questions. As a successful leader in a republican nation, Clay was by Kendall's definition a man to be followed.

Moreover, the course of his career suggests that Kendall was most effective when he spoke for the interests of a man he personally knew. Of the presidential possibilities for 1824, he knew only Clay. He knew little, however, of the dynamics of national politics. He had no experience in the methods by which representatives of the various states traded their votes for mutual benefits and combined to form sectional blocs. Kendall was too young to appreciate how difficult it was for any leader to form a national consensus, however temporarily. It might have shocked him to discover that in the making of national policy, Clay and others like him relied more on compromise than on unwavering decisions, that national leaders often had to give away much to gain a little. Convinced as he was that the rich and well born were pretty much united to protect their high status from the common people, Kendall failed to appreciate that the rich of the deep South had many a grievance to settle with the well born of the northeastern states.

With such inexperience — he later appreciated sectional differences only too well, although he always clung to his suspicion of all wealthy men, north or south — Kendall gave his loyalty to the man
he knew. Clay had charm, an affable way even in the midst of confusion and crisis. He was perpetually at ease, a calmness that the hypersensitive Kendall must have envied and admired. Clay was considerate, giving time and respectful attention to the young editor and the highest executives alike. Kendall, like so many Americans, chose to shine in the reflected glow of this man, the most successful politician he knew.

Kendall was perhaps typical in this respect. The 1824 presidential contest was a trial of persons, not issues. Candidates were supported for who they were, or in some cases what section they represented, rather than for the policies they advocated. Clay had opposed the relief measures, but, in the words of one historian, he had "remained officially aloof from the struggle in his state between the Old Court-New Court factions." Kendall helped to promote Clay's seeming neutrality by saying: "Mr. Clay believes the relief measures were founded on bad policy; but that the corrective is in the people and not in the courts." That was not true, but Clay did nothing to contradict this and similar statements. In this way, he kept the two factions loosely united in favor of his candidacy.

He was not entirely successful in this endeavor, however. During 1824 some of the New Court men quietly switched their support to his sectional rival, Andrew Jackson. A relief dinner held in Clay's honor came to an embarrassing end when one diner offered the toast: "Andrew Jackson—his deeds will live as long as the Mississippi pours." At first, Jackson's rivals had not taken his candidacy seriously. Clay, for instance, scoffed that the killing of numerous Indians and British soldiers did not make a man presidential quality. Thousands of voters
disagreed. They saw Jackson as the answer to their uneasiness about the future of the Nation. They did not mind his comparative lack of political experience. He did not need it, for in the words of one editor, he was "gifted with genius ... for great designs he is fashioned by nature, and therefore would he advance the general interest and glory of this republic, beyond any other man." Jackson's election managers knew how to cultivate his image and use it to get votes. By 1824, it was evident that Jackson was a threat to defeat Adams, Clay and the other candidates.12

As a westerner, Jackson was especially threatening to Clay's candidacy. Clay's supporters had counted on the unqualified support of the west for their man. But Jackson would obviously win Tennessee, and showed much strength in Indiana, Illinois, and Louisiana. In Kentucky, George Bibb began to build a small organization for Jackson with disgruntled Relief supporters and New Court men. Jackson's candidacy was well received in the outlying counties of the state, where demands for relief had been most vociferous.13

Soon, the Argus had turned its fire from Adams to rain it down on Old Hickory. Kendall had already criticized Jackson's conduct in Florida in 1819, deploring his invasion of Spanish territory as an act of war and his execution of two Englishmen there as "murder." Jackson had "disobeyed positive orders, transcended his powers and violated the constitution and the laws." Now, in 1824, Kendall revived this charge and added others. Jackson, he wrote, was a would-be Caesar, a danger to the Republic: "His genius is peculiarly martial ... his means are always fraught with violence." Kendall also repeated a rumor he had heard of a deal between Jackson and John C. Calhoun. Calhoun would
support Jackson's bid for president and in return Jackson, if elected, would make Calhoun Secretary of State. Anyone who was even rumored to be part of such a scheme should not be president, Kendall declared.\textsuperscript{14}

Clay won Kentucky easily when the election votes were counted. He carried sixty-three of seventy-four counties, with almost seventy-three percent of the votes. Those parts of the State he did lose were strongly pro-Relief, however, and the total turnout of the vote was poor. Only a quarter of the eligible voters participated in the election, as compared to the two-thirds who had cast ballots in the important New Court victory a few months before.\textsuperscript{15}

But Kentucky was only a small, bright part of a rather dismal picture. Clay had counted on solid victories in the western states. With so many presidential candidates, observers predicted that the contest would have to be settled in the House of Representatives as no one person would be able to win a majority of electoral votes. The Federal Constitution provided that in such an event, only the top three candidates would be finalists in a House election, where each state's delegation would have one vote. Clay could have easily met this qualification had he won the electoral votes of the western states. But he had failed to do this. Jackson's candidacy had wrecked his strategy. Clay had counted on winning Louisiana, where his tariff policies found support with the sugar planters. He had almost complete legislative support in Illinois and Indiana. But he lost all three states to Jackson. Besides Kentucky, only Missouri and Ohio voters gave Clay their majorities.\textsuperscript{16}

Before the voting began, Kendall had taken it for granted that
Clay would take the largest share of electoral votes into the House, where "no man can come in competition with him." Kendall normally made sound political estimates, but on this occasion he was sadly mistaken. By late November he admitted that Jackson had won a plurality of electoral votes and that Clay's chances were slim, depending on results in the eastern states. But as the returns came in from the east, it quickly became obvious that Clay had won only four electoral votes in New York to add to his western count. He had thirty-seven electoral votes in all, compared with ninety-nine for Jackson, eighty-four for Adams and forty-one for William H. Crawford of Georgia, Monroe's Secretary of the Treasury. Kendall, deeply disappointed, predicted that Jackson would best Adams and Crawford in the House election. The people wanted Jackson and would not allow the politicians to go against their wishes, he decided.\textsuperscript{17}

Again, Kendall was wrong. Whatever the people might have wanted, the politicians could not resist this opportunity to become kingmakers and influence-peddlers. With or without the knowledge of their candidates, the supporters of Adams, Crawford, and Jackson launched themselves into an orgy of shameful maneuver and intrigue, designed to throw the House votes toward this or that candidate.\textsuperscript{18}

As Speaker of the House, Clay could not avoid some involvement in this activity. His influence, with the House in general and in particular with the delegations of the three states that he had carried, could be critical. He knew it, and before leaving for Washington in December he decided to support John Quincy Adams. Crawford was quite ill, and Clay had little respect for Crawford's campaign manager, Martin Van Buren. He could not support Jackson, whom he called a
dangerous "military chieftain." That left only Adams, with whom Clay had differed many times, but whom he respected.19

The story of Clay's alleged "corrupt bargain" with Adams has many different versions, none of which need be repeated here. But three things about Clay's decision to support Adams are important to his relationship with Kendall. First: Clay ignored a resolution by the New Court majority in the Kentucky Senate, asking the State's Congressional delegation to cast its ballot in the House for Jackson. Second: Clay did nothing to prevent several of his friends from engaging in quiet negotiations with Jackson's people. Third: he waited until late in January, 1825, to make public his support of Adams, and this was after he had had a private conference with the Secretary of State. To a casual observer, Clay had conducted himself in a foolish manner. He looked as though he was bargaining.20

On January 8, 1825, Clay wrote to Frank Blair, informing him of the decision to support Adams. Clay admitted that it was a difficult choice, as Adams had many obvious failings. However, he would cast his lot for Adams to save the Nation from Jackson. He admitted to no personal interest in the choice, but acknowledged that "friends entertain the belief that their kind wishes for me are more likely to be accomplished by so bestowing their votes" on Adams. He asked Blair to keep his letter confidential and to help press Kentucky's Representatives to stand with him for Adams.21

Kendall later said that Blair informed him of Clay's decision on January 20, and asked him to write his Congressman, David White, and request White to support Adams. This seems unlikely, however. On January 21, Kendall wrote to Clay, to inform him that the Kentucky
Legislature had passed resolutions in support of Jackson. Then he went on:

Jackson is my second choice, all circumstances being equal between him and Adams. But if our interest in the west can be promoted by any other arrangement, I shall be content . . . . Do what you think best — the Argus will not complain, because it has faith that you will do nothing to compromit the interests of the western country, or the nation.²²

He made no mention of any conversation with Blair, or gave any indication that he knew that Clay had already decided to support Adams. But there were other, political messages here. Phrases like "all circumstances being equal," "any other arrangement," "do nothing to compromit," were more than rhetorical flourishes. The first two phrases show that Kendall thought that dealing for advantage was to be expected from Clay, and did not disapprove of it. The last phrase, however, was a warning that there were dangers involved, particularly from the New Court party. If Clay dealt with Adams, Kendall was saying, he must be discreet.

What Kendall expected, then, was for Clay to establish influence with the new president, whoever he might be. Clay could do that voluntarily, by throwing his support to Jackson, before the resolutions from the Kentucky Legislature became public knowledge. Alternatively, he could make "any other arrangement" with Adams. Either way Clay could gain patronage for his adherents, in the form of Federal appointments and printing contracts. Kendall understood this, and according to his later recollections, he accepted Blair's suggestion and wrote to David White around the end of January, urging him to support Adams's candidacy in the House.²³

On February 9, Adams was elected president by winning a majority
of thirteen state delegation votes. New York turned out to be the key to victory, but Adams would not even have come close had not Missouri, Kentucky, and Ohio given their votes to him. Eight of the twelve Kentucky representatives voted for Adams. Clay delivered these votes and Adams knew it. Five days later, he asked Clay to become his Secretary of State. Clay accepted after a week's thought. Adams's offer and Clay's acceptance were terrible blunders by both men, and they would carry the stigma of "bargain" with them through the remainder of their careers. 24

Kendall, meanwhile, was growing uneasy about the emerging New Court support of Jackson. He sent Clay two brief notes, warning him that many in the Legislature were disappointed, even angry, over the actions of the Kentucky Congressional delegation in ignoring their wishes. He also warned Clay to consider his future carefully. Is it not likely, he asked, that "Jackson may be elected by the people at the end of four years?" By the time Clay received these notes, he had already accepted Adams's offer of the State Department. 25

As the ire of Jackson and his supporters mounted over the election result, Kendall became even more nervous. Charges that Clay had subverted the wishes of the people were appearing in the press. The Argus reported these charges without comment; Kendall merely wrote that often there was more to a situation than appearances might indicate. Soon after, he advised the editor of Clay's principal organ the Reporter that "silence, or at least no forward discussion, is the best policy of Mr. Clay's friends." He continued:

I fear what has already been said in the Reporter will bring out the Kentucky delegation who were for Jackson, and you may rest assured, Mr. Clay has nothing to gain by a public and general discussion in
this state at this time. There is a feeling of dissatisfaction which will wear away if not irritated.26

But the feeling was destined to be irritated by a sudden turning of the New Court party's fortunes.

The New Court leaders had become too overconfident. Blair had flouted the laws and common decency when he literally stole the Old Court's records. Desha was becoming complacent and giving too little attention to the party's rank and file. The New Court majority in the Legislature selected John Rowan to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate. They were apparently unconcerned that by so doing, they gave up one of their best tacticians and ablest debaters in the Legislature. Even Kendall was affected by the benumbing sense of self-satisfaction. He snidely suggested that allowing the old Court of Appeals to hold sessions was an embarrassment to the State. Perhaps the militia should be used to scatter those old men.27

The party had gone too far in its actions and become too arrogant. It was losing some of its popular support. Kentucky's voters had for the most part been content with the Relief laws providing them with debtor relief and cheap money. But the reorganization of the Court of Appeals — while consistent with the theories that the New Court party preached — was too radical for many of them. Some of them now agreed with the complaints of George Robertson, that the court reorganization was an "unparalleled act, as an attempt, by the majority of the legislature, to consolidate their power, and perpetuate their supremacy, over the rights of the minority and the impartiality of the judiciary." If this were upheld, Robertson asked, who could say that their rights were secure? Was it to become the habit "that the freedom
of speech and of conscience, and the rights of life, liberty, and property, will depend on the caprices of a fluctuating majority?"  

The Old Court party organized with an energy comparable to their rhetoric. Two of Kentucky's Congressmen resigned to stand for key legislative seats. Money was raised to print pamphlets and subsidize Old Court newspapers. Old Court partisans also made good use of outside comments on the Court struggle, distributing literature from other states that condemned the New Court policies as "political quakery." In this way, Robertson and his allies played on Kentuckians' pride. Can we live with this image of radicalism, of fiscal and political insanity, they asked?  

In response, the New Court men seemed unconcerned. This was most unfortunate for them, for when it became clear that they were losing ground to the opposition, they were unable to shake off their torpor. Success had bred arrogance. The creation of the New Court of Appeals had been a rash act by men who were too sure of their strength. In their haste to destroy their opponents, Bibb, Desha, and Kendall had forgotten the mercurial ways of Kentucky politics. Their party unity depended on harmony between the county and district leaders, and any depletions of their ranks could rapidly dissolve their majority. The return of prosperity brought some desertions from the ranks. Then, a few more had voted with the Anti-Relief (now Old Court) men against the Reorganization Act. Many lawyers, confused by the situation, unable to practice law as usual, declared their support for Judges Boyle, Owsley, and Mills. The defections then spread into the New Court rank and file. Judges quickly began choosing sides, most recognizing the authority of the Old Court of Appeals. Inevitably, lawyers and judges overwhelmingly
chose the refuge of established custom, and the leading party lost more
ground to their opponents. 29

Two other events shook the New Court strength. One of these
neutralized Governor Desha as an active force. In November, 1824,
before the defections in the party had fully developed, Isaac Desha, the
Governor's son, had been arrested for the murder of a man named Francis
Baker. There seems to have been little doubt of young Desha's guilt,
although the motive was never fully ascertained. In any event, the case
grew through two trials, with John Rowan conducting Desha's defense and
appeals. Each time the defendant was found guilty and condemned to
hang. Isaac Desha's crime was used by the Old Court to smear his
father. Old Court newspapers intimated that, once again, Desha would
ignore the judicial process and pardon his son before seeing him hang.
Through 1825, Joseph Desha was more of a liability than an asset to the
New Court party. 30

The other event was more directly injurious to Kendall, as Henry
Clay ended his official silence on the Court situation. Just before the
inauguration of Adams, Clay had penned a note to friends in Virginia.
In that note, Clay defended his decision to ignore the instructions of
the Kentucky Legislature and support Adams. He gave as one of his
reasons the statement that he could not be bound to obey "a party who
have profaned the temple of their liberty, by putting down their
constitution." Clay, flush from his triumph in the House of
Representatives, now came out against the New Court. Since Clay was to
be Secretary of State, the prospect of Federal patronage for the Old
Court party stimulated further defections from the New Court.

New Court men were stunned by the publications of Clay's remark.
Blair immediately wrote Clay and offered him a chance to deny that he had really written the letter. Kendall followed his old habit of holding off while the shock waves settled. He devoted his time to taking stock of the situation in Kentucky and the Nation. All about him, he saw dark clouds gathering. Andrew Jackson passed through Frankfort, on his way home to the Hermitage. Here, as at almost every other stop along the way home, Old Hickory muttered a few choice remarks about his defeat in the House. Intrigues at Washington had "defeated the will of the people," he said. Not a few New Court men were to be seen murmuring agreement. All around the West men were beginning to utter the words "corrupt bargain." Kendall noted the bitterness in their tone.31

So many new developments were taking place. Kendall noted that John Crittenden had resigned his place as head of the Bank of the Commonwealth. Clay's friend was in seclusion now, maintaining an ominous silence on the Court struggle. Richard Johnson, meanwhile, was offering words of encouragement to the New Court, and eagerly lining up its members to support Jackson in 1828. The four Kentucky representatives who had supported Jackson in defiance of Clay were now actively politicking for Old Hickory. The National situation was merging with that of the State to bring out in Kentucky a growing movement against Clay and Adams.32

Kendall's situation was further complicated at this time by personal money troubles. In June, 1825, he mortgaged a third of his interest in the Argus to a friend for a $2,000 loan, in an effort to revitalize the development of his mill and farm. Even with this, he needed more money, for delinquent subscriptions to the Argus mounted
into the thousands of dollars. Kendall's debts, the merging national and local political
situation, all of these matters were much on his mind when he next wrote
to Clay. His letter was an extraordinary mixture of bravado, brashness,
and bootlicking. He began by acknowledging Clay's appointment as
Secretary of State, but offered no congratulations. "In some parts of
this state there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction at the vote of
the Kentucky delegation," he warned. There was also a growing feeling,
he stated, that Clay was acting "in concert with the old Judges and
their friends in Kentucky." If this were true, then it was unwise on
Clay's part. The New Court had the upper hand, Kendall assured him, and
would keep it: "There will be little or no change of parties in favor
of the old judges in the next Legislature." The people would stand by
their representatives in the New Court. He advised Clay not to try and
interfere with this situation. "You might do yourself and some of your
friends much harm by an active interference and you can do neither any
good." In fact, Kendall concluded, he would not be able to defend Clay
"if it were shewn that you are using your influence to crush the [New
Court] party." This was a bare-faced threat to one of the highest
officers in the Federal government.

Then, Kendall had the audacity to ask for a loan of money! He
needed $3,000 to complete his mill, he explained. Once it was finished,
he might be able to "abandon all local party politics to those who love
quarrels better than I do." Could Clay arrange a suitable loan? If
not, Kendall must "from necessity . . . stick to my printing office and
my political discussions." He must stand with the New Court. Kendall
offering his services for money? Clay probably
thought so, and offered Kendall a Federal job in the State Department. But he ignored Kendall's advice on the Old Court-New Court struggle. Far from keeping silent, he continued his criticism of the New Court party. He issued an address to his Congressional District defending his decision to support John Quincy Adams. He did not recognize the right of the Kentucky Legislature to instruct United States Representatives, he wrote. The Legislature was in this and other ways assuming powers it had no right to claim. New Court and Old Court alike took Clay's remarks to imply another condemnation of the reorganization of the Court of Appeals. Soon after the appearance of this address, John Crittenden came out openly against the New Court, attacking the Reorganization Act as unconstitutional. A few more New Court men joined him in deserting to the other party.  

While this was going on, Kendall mulled over Clay's job offer. He knew that a place in Washington would be valuable in time, and would solve his growing money and political troubles in Kentucky. But he did not want to give up the dream of his mill. Nor could he bring himself to appear as a supporter of Adams, whose father had been the great enemy of William Merchant Richardson and the Massachusetts Jeffersonians. Thus, when he replied to Clay, he set some terms to his accepting a job. "If it would be expected," he wrote, "that I should write steadily and systematically in support of the administration . . . I should certainly decline it." He took pains to say that he would not write anything against Adams, but he was tired of political essaying. He wanted a simple "place not too laborious and supported by sufficient pay." If Clay had no such place to offer, then Kendall was still interested in a loan. He concluded his letter by insisting, once again, that "public
opinion is setting almost furiously against the old Judges" and that the New Court would win the annual elections. It seems clear, then, that at best all Kendall was prepared to offer Clay was his neutrality in national matters. He would not reverse his stand on the Court controversy. 36

Clay returned to Kentucky in the summer, attending dinners in his honor while conferring with prominent Old Court leaders. He also visited Kendall and renewed the offer of a job. Kendall definitely declined this time, although the reason for his decision is unclear. Clay later claimed that the problem was compensation. He offered a clerkship paying $1,000, but Kendall wanted $1,500. Kendall admitted in 1828 that he and Clay had disagreed over salary, but insisted that he declined the job primarily because he could not agree to support Adams or abandon the New Court. Whatever the real reason, Kendall definitely let pass a second chance to move closer into Clay's orbit and avoid the turmoil in Kentucky. The two men parted cordially enough. Clay arranged to lend Kendall $1,500 on the security of his mill and four slaves. 37

Kendall possibly hoped that a New Court victory in the elections might salvage his finances, by continuing the flow of State printing, and simplify his awkward situation. If so, he was to be disappointed. The wheel had turned again in Kentucky, where the annual elections had kept the political atmosphere perpetually stormy since 1816. The Old Court had the upper hand, now. Robertson and Wickliffe had bought the loyalty of the Commentator and other newspapers. The Argus and the Kentucky Gazette were now the only New Court papers of any prominence. John Crittenden entered the Old Court lists for a seat in the
Legislature, and pledged to push a repeal of the Reorganization Act. Old Isaac Shelby came out of retirement long enough to vigorously denounce the New Court party. Kendall, finally alarmed, warned the voters that an Old Court victory would mean the end of all relief measures. With the return of prosperity, this was a rather empty issue. 38

The Old Court won the elections convincingly, overturning the New Court majority in the Kentucky House and winning most of the Senate vacancies. The most humiliating defeat for the New Court was the election of Old Court Judge Clark to fill Clay’s vacated seat in the United States House of Representatives. The other Old Court leaders, heady with the wine of victory, announced that a bill to repeal the Reorganization Act would be their first order of business in the coming Legislature. Myles’ Register commented: "As the people have brought this about, there cannot be, with the "new court" party, any dispute as to the right of the matter." 39

The New Court men did not give in gracefully. Kendall charged that the elections had been stolen by the use of multiple votes and stuffed ballot boxes. He also claimed to have evidence that the Bank of the United States had bought voters in Franklin County, paying them to defeat the New Court. This may or may not have been true. But Kendall was right in believing that corruption had occurred in the balloting. Sixteen hundred of the fourteen hundred eligible voters cast ballots in Franklin County. Which party was more guilty of such practices is impossible to determine. 40

Despite its victory, the Old Court could not repeal the Reorganization Act. A bill to that effect passed the House in the new
session, but failed in the Senate. Meanwhile, Governor Desha promised to veto the bill if it should pass. For a brief time, both sides considered a compromise solution, in which the two Courts of Appeal would be combined and enlarged with a balance provided for both parties. John Pope, an effective ally of the Old Court despite its ties to Henry Clay, vigorously endorsed the compromise and offered a plan for making the idea a reality. Clay privately informed Crittenden that this would be a good way for ending "vindictive feelings" in the State. George Robertson, however, rejected the compromise as a "surrender in the face of victory." Most of the Old Court leaders agreed and decided to wait on the 1826 elections. Thus, the bitterness continued. 41

The Argus meanwhile was stripped of the Legislative printing contracts. Kendall tried to prevent this by announcing that he was not to be a candidate for the printing. His partners would be candidates, however, and Kendall piously hoped that they would not be rejected because of his own ties to the New Court! No one fell for this weak tactic; the Commentator was awarded the contracts by Old Court legislators. 42

The New Court defeat pushed even more of its supporters into the Jackson camp. The Kentucky Gazette declared for Old Hickory and revived the bargain charge against Clay and Adams. John Rowan joined Bibb and Johnson in organizing a Jackson party for 1828. William Barry and others also began aligning their followers for the Tennessee hero. Kendall was still silent on the national situation. The Argus reprinted the Gazette attacks on Adams and Clay without any comment. 43

But privately Kendall was working himself into a fury. Word had gotten out of his negotiations with Clay over a Federal job. One
Kentucky politician had written another: "It is in rumor that Kendall is bought up by Clay and going to Washington." A friend of Kendall's picked up the remark and passed it on to the editor. Kendall had discussed this matter with no one but Clay, and therefore naturally concluded that Clay must have leaked the story. He sent off an angry inquiry to the Secretary of State, saying that he was burning Clay's letters to prevent further embarrassment to them both, but that he was not able to quell this rumor, so "injurious to you and myself." He continued:

The impression is general among the friends of the New Court, that you have interfered in the question [the 1825 state elections] and thrown your influence against us . . . . Hence, I apprehend, the New Court Party here will, almost universally, take up Jackson for the next president to be run against Adams at the end of his first four years. For myself, I feel indifferent towards these two men, and, circumstances aside, would about as soon support the one as the other. But . . . I cannot join my political friends in the support of Jackson. My situation will, therefore, be a difficult one. Your friends will be my enemies, and mine will be yours. I see no course left me but perfect neutrality.4

Kendall concluded by saying that his honor now required him to stay with the Argus "long enough to shew friends and foes, that I was not purchased off from this controversy and that you were not the purchaser." That is, he would be neutral toward the Adams administration, but fight on for the New Court in Kentucky.

Clay replied quickly, telling Kendall that the New Court was beaten. Its members "should hasten to forget the past" and reconcile with their opponents, he counselled. He showed no concern that they might unite behind Jackson. "Mr. Adams will prevail by a majority of two-thirds of the Union" in 1828, he assured Kendall. He made no comment on the rumor of Kendall's being "bought up," but reiterated his
offer of a clerkship. The "recent change [in Kentucky] would have no
effect on my wishes to engage you in the public service."\textsuperscript{45}

Here was Kendall's second chance to sell himself into Clay's
service. Having lost the Legislative printing, and continuing to have
money trouble, he must have been sorely tempted. But to his credit, he
rejected the renewed offer. He formally wrote Clay that "no
consideration would induce me to leave Kentucky. I feel that I have a
duty to myself and my principles, which it would be criminal to
abandon." Soon after, he demonstrated again his intention to remain
neutral on national politics. Replying to a rival paper's call on him
to announce for or against Jackson, he testily said: "We are too busy
just now to march off in search of new adversaries and new
adventures."\textsuperscript{46} But for how long could he keep his balance on the
political tightrope?
CHAPTER V

NOTES

1 Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (three volumes, London, 1838), v. 1, pp. 259-60.

2 Argus, May 17, 1828.

3 Ibid., February 19, 1819, February 17, April 20, 1820, January 31, 1822; Amos Kendall to Henry Clay, June 20, 1822, Clay papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC).


5 Argus, January 24, 31, February 14, 1822.

6 Ibid., October 31, November 7, 14, 21, 1822.

7 Ibid., March 19-May 14, 1823; Amos Kendall, Letters to John Quincy Adams, Relative to the Fisheries and the Mississippi (Lexington, 1823); Kendall to Henry Clay, July 9, 1828, printed in Argus, July 9, 1828; Clay to Jonathan Russell, April 19, 1823, photocopy in Miscellaneous papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, August 18, 1822, in Worthington C. Ford, The Writings of John Quincy Adams (seven volumes, New York: 1913-1917), v. 7, p. 287. See also Adams, Duplicate Letters: The Fisheries and the Mississippi (Washington, 1823), pp. 242-43.


10 Paul Nagel has offered the view that sectionalism was a key issue of the 1824 election. See his "The Election of 1824: A reconsideration Based on Newspaper Opinion," Journal of Southern History 26
(1960), pp. 315-29. But is supporting a person for his section any more of an issue-based choice than supporting a person for his religion or race? Hopkins points out that each candidate accepted sectional support "without presenting the voters with a statement on the questions of the day or outlining a program for the future." See "Election of 1824," p. 350.

11 Ibid., p. 375 (italics mine); Argus, April 28, 1824; Francis Richards, "John Rowan" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1930), p. 68.


14 Argus, March 12, 19, 1819, February 18, March 10, 1824.


17 Thomas Smith to William Worsley, November 11, 1824, Lyman C. Draper Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Argus, September 1, November 24, December 22, 1824.


19 Ibid., pp. 377-80; Thomas Hart Benton, Thirty Years' View (two volumes, New York: Appleton and Co., 1856), v. 1, pp. 48-49.


21 Henry Clay to Francis Blair, January 8, 1824 [i.e. 1825], Hopkins, ed., The Papers of Henry Clay, v. 4, pp. 9-10.

22 Argus, September 26, 1827; Kendall to Henry Clay, January 21, 1825, Clay papers, LC.
23 Argus, September 26, 1827. Clay induced White in 1828 to deny that he believed in a corrupt bargain between Clay and Adams. White did not comment, however, on having received any letter from Kendall in 1825. He supported Jackson in 1828. See Hopkins, ed. The Papers of Henry Clay, v. 6, p. 1207n.


25 Kendall to Henry Clay, February 19 and February 20, 1825, both in Clay papers, LC.

26 Argus, February 23, March 2, 1825; Kendall to the Editor of the Kentucky Reporter, April 13, 1825, Personal Miscellaneous papers, New York Public Library.


28 George Robertson, Scrap Book on Law and Politics, Men and Times (Lexington, 1855), p. 93.

29 Arndt M. Stickles, The Critical Court Struggle in Kentucky (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1929), pp. 78-80; Richards, pp. 77-79; Fackler, pp. 22-24.

30 L. F. Johnson, Famous Kentucky Tragedies and Trials (Cleveland: Baldwin Publishing Co., 1922), pp. 34-43; Richards; pp. 79-80; Argus, October 12, 1825; Kendall to Henry Clay, February 19, 1825, Clay Papers, LC.


33 Franklin County Deed Book L, p. 433, Franklin County Court-house, Frankfort, Kentucky.

34 Kendall to Henry Clay, March 23, 1825, Clay papers, LC.

36 Kendall to Henry Clay, April 28, 1825, Clay papers, LC. Clay's letters to Kendall during this time, including his letter offering a job, are not extant. Kendall destroyed them in the fall of 1825, for reasons mentioned further in this chapter.

37 Argus, May 28, 1828; Lexington Reporter, July 2, 1828; Franklin County Deed Book I; p. 433; Franklin County Courthouse, Frankfort, Kentucky.

38 Stickles, pp. 71-76; Kirwan, pp. 57-59; Fackler, pp. 21-22; Argus, June 22, 29, July 6, 1825; Niles' Register, July 2, 1825.

39 Stickles, pp. 81-82; Argus, August 10, 1825; Niles' Register, August 27, 1825.

40 Stickles, p. 80; Argus, August 10, 1825.

41 Stickles, pp. 91-94; Argus, August 17, 1825; Henry Clay to John Crittenden, August 22, 1825, Hopkins, ed., The Papers of Henry Clay, v. 4, pp. 585-86.


43 Marshall, p. 274; Barton, pp. 311-18; Argus, September 23, 1825.

44 Barnabas Hughes to Joseph Holt, August 19, 1825, Holt papers, LC; Kendall to Henry Clay, October 4, 1825, Clay papers, LC.

45 Henry Clay to Kendall, October 18, 1825, reprinted in Argus, July 9, 1828.

46 Kendall to Henry Clay, December 25, 1825, Clay papers, LC; Argus, March 23, 1826.
CHAPTER VI

FROM NEW COURT TO OLD HICKORY

What might have happened to Kendall if he had kept his resolve to remain neutral in the 1828 national election? He would have retained his Federal printing contracts, probably, until the Jacksonians transferred their patronage to a loyal Kentucky newspaper. Could Clay then have convinced the Old Court men to provide for him? Perhaps. Clay was a persuasive man, but it is impossible to be conclusive about such speculation. Certainly Kendall would not now be of any great interest to posterity. He might receive a mention or two in studies of Kentucky politics or biographies of Clay. The notorious reputation he now enjoys would not exist, because it was born with his betrayal of the Master of Ashland.

Kendall grimly tried to keep his word during 1826. Governor Desha urged him to come out in favor of Jackson. The New Court could be "revived in the approaching Presidential election," Desha declared, and Kendall's "superior editorial talents" would be a great asset if he would declare for Old Hickory. But Kendall refused. His obligations to Clay, and especially to Mrs. Clay, left him no other choice but to be "strictly neutral," he replied. Desha quickly pointed out that Clay would not be a candidate in 1828. That was true, Kendall admitted, but countered with the observation that "Clay and Adams were so completely identified, that a cut at one would be a thrust at the other." Besides, he thought little of Jackson, a man of violent temper, "overbearing and
tyrannical." The Argus would stay neutral, he insisted. Desha pressed Kendall a second time, as the 1826 state elections commenced, but Kendall again refused to take a side.1

He had good reason to keep his neutrality. His $1,500 note to Clay was coming due, and Kendall did not have the money to pay it. He asked Clay for his "indulgence of at least another year." He was under pressure, he explained, from other creditors. To pay Clay, he would have to sell his slaves, "and that would be almost like selling my children." He would be able to pay next year, he said, once he had cleared away other business. He planned to sell his part of the Argus after the elections. In this way, he explained, he would "get out of the contest for next year in relation to general politics." That is, he could stay out of the presidential question. He took pains to assure Clay that he remained "your friend." Clay agreed to extend the loan for another year.2

In the meantime, the Argus was silent on national matters. Desha used his annual message to condemn "Federal interference" in the Kentucky Court struggle, a pointed thrust at Clay. The Argus reported the remarks without comment. John Quincy Adams delivered a rousing endorsement of Federally sponsored internal improvements, a national university and other forms of Federal power. States' rights men received the message glumly and soon began moving into the Jackson camp. But the Argus simply contained a brief summary of the message, again without comment. Not even the revival of the corrupt bargain charges in Jacksonian newspapers evoked a remark from the suddenly reticent editor.3

Kendall reserved his energy for the coming state elections. All
was not lost if the New Court could regain the upper hand in Kentucky. He would win back his state printing contracts in that event. This plan would certainly increase the value of the Argus and its printing establishment, if he did indeed wish to sell it. If he chose not to sell, he would still have the paper and both state and Federal printing contracts. He might successfully negotiate a very thin tightrope. But the New Court had to win.

Kendall knew that a New Court victory was going to be difficult to attain. The return of prosperity had meant the loss of many supporters of relief. The concrete issues wrought by the depression had slipped away; only the abstract issue of judicial power remained as a bone of contention. Would the New Court, Kendall wondered, be "too poor" financially to stop the Old Court from establishing a lawyer's aristocracy? He had already suggested that the Bank of the United States must be supporting the Old Court, that this dangerous corporation was "inextricably united" with the aristocratic judges in a plot to subvert the rights of the people.  

Kendall again based his arguments on the popular rule ideology he had preached since 1815. In 1826, he asked how the Old Court men could be so inconsistent? They were unwilling to allow a New Court of Appeals or replevin laws to stand, because they were "unconstitutional." But "earlier Federalists" had stood for constitutional flexibility. Why should these "new Federalists" reverse their beliefs? Because all Federalists were hypocrites, Kendall answered. They would use any argument to protect their monopoly on power and property. Kendall presumably could not recognize the specious quality of his own reasoning.
He employed similar inconsistencies in his major election editorials, a series entitled "Appeal to the People." In 1825, he had estimated that ninety percent of Kentucky's attorneys accepted the New Court of Appeals. Now he condemned his erstwhile profession by calling the Old Court party the "Lawyer faction." These "legal aristocrats" must be stopped, he cried, before they subdued the government completely. He pleaded with the voters, calling on them to throw out the Old Court legislators before it was too late, before both the constitution and the people were enslaved by a legal tyranny. 6

Kendall's arguments were becoming stale and redundant, and it was well that he was thinking of giving up an editor's life. During the 1826 campaign, the New Court party relied more on the emerging pen of Francis Blair. As clerk of the New Court of Appeals, Blair had achieved instant notoriety for stealing the Old Court records. Since the 1825 elections, he had refused to return these and had armed friends to guard his office. Kendall praised him for his cleverness and challenged Old Court "Cuirassers" [sic] and "Cossacks" to try and retake the records. Meanwhile, Blair had also rejected an overture from Clay for a Federal appointment and was writing several pamphlets in defense of the New Court. 7

Blair was preparing to edit the Frankfort Patriot, a special campaign newspaper. Kendall had hoped to publish a campaign Extra Argus of his own, but since the New Court did not need two such papers, he and Blair agreed to combine their efforts. The Extra Argus idea was discarded. Blair would use Kendall's printing establishment for the Patriot and Kendall would write some pieces for it. But he warned Blair not to expect too much of his time: "I cannot profit from it,
[therefore], I cannot bestow labor on the paper itself." Nor did he want the Argus to have a rival. "I will promote the [new] paper with all my power," he promised, "but it must not be made a permanent paper in Frankfort." Blair accepted these terms and the Patriot commenced in February, 1826.8

Blair's paper was like a fresh breeze for the New Court's arguments. In marked contrast to Kendall's lengthy series, Blair was at his best with short pieces, filling them with heavy sarcasm and pointed barbs against Old Court leaders. He took up Kendall's theme of the "Lawyer faction" and argued that lawyers, as a class, were the bane of American freedom. They dominated the government, supported the banks and propertied interests, and used legal "magic" to deny the working people their just dues. But Blair was not worried; he was certain that "no man's wealth can bribe a whole people." The Patriot also reprinted Kendall's "Appeal to the People" series, and items from other New Court writers.9

The Old Court party countered with rhetoric of their own. The Spirit of '76 was revived to attack Blair. The "Pat Riot," the Spirit claimed, was "the illegitimate child of illegitimate parents who avariciously sought offices." It was rumored that Humphrey Marshall was the Spirit's secret editor. Certainly Marshall's old enemy Kendall was a special target of the paper. The Spirit attacked Kendall as a "desperate debtor," who had fathered Blair's "Mud Machine" in order to attack the Old Court while appearing more moderate in the Argus columns. Another Old Court newspaper asserted that Kendall would be important only so long as he could keep Kentucky in an uproar. He would be nothing in peaceful times. The Danville Advertiser published a poem
entitled "Poor Amos, the Yankee," which ended in the verse: "And poor Amos, having no printing of laws, Must live as the bears do, by sucking his paws."^{10}

Part of the reason for these attacks was Kendall's close association with Governor Desha. Kendall had been contributing to Desha's speeches and public papers since his election, so that even the executive branch rhetoric had come to be influenced by his philosophy. It may have been Kendall's words that Desha used to attack the county courts for levying poll taxes. In calling these taxes the acts of aristocratic, "self sustaining" bodies which "tax the rich and poor precisely alike," Desha was echoing much of what Kendall had written in the Argus since 1819. The remark also suggests, incidentally, how much the local support for the New Court had declined with the return of prosperity. Neither Kendall nor Desha could do much to remedy this problem.^{11}

Desha, in any event, was a liability to the New Court in 1826. Early in the campaign, he finally pardoned his son rather than see the boy hang for murder. Kendall thought the boy was guilty, but defended the pardon and pointed out that Robert Wickliffe, the Old Court leader, had played a part in convicting young Desha. Was Wickliffe pursuing a personal grudge, he asked? He also complained that this trial and pardon had been made a political matter, which was an "injustice done to the Governor." But the voters were somewhat outraged by the pardon and Governor Desha was of little use to the New Court as a result. Still, Kendall stood by him. "Is there a father in the universe who ... can blame Governor Desha for believing his son innocent," he later inquired, "and granting him a pardon?"^{12}
The return of prosperity was probably the key factor in the decline of the New Court. The Bank of the Commonwealth was no longer a relief bank. Its paper was being accepted at face value and its directors reported a sizeable profit for the fiscal year. The people, who Kendall championed, were tired of endless swings of policy. They yearned for a period of order and calm. George Robertson sensed this and published a "Manifesto of the Old Court," which urged the people to "stand to your integrity ... on you hangs the fate of the constitution." The voters heeded his call. In August, 1826, they elected strong Old Court majorities in both the Kentucky House and Senate chambers. The New Court party accepted the defeat quietly. The Kentucky Gazette suggested that Desha call a special session of the Legislature to speed up the repeal of the New Court of Appeals. Kendall went further. He advised Barry and the other New Court judges simply to resign. 13

But Desha and many other New Court men were not ready to admit defeat. Desha refused to call a special session of the Legislature. When the regular session met, he vetoed the bill to dismantle the New Court of Appeals. This was a futile gesture, as the Old Court simply overrode the veto. Blair, more sensible this year, surrendered the court records quietly. He thought briefly of leaving Kentucky and trying his luck in Florida, just as William Barry flirted with plans to open a law practice in New Orleans. But in the end, both men joined Desha, Bibb, and other New Court partisans to hoist a new banner: "Andrew Jackson for 1828." 14

The frustrations of the past two years, combined with the awareness that Clay had aided the Old Court with Federal patronage, had
produced in New Court minds a drive for revenge. The move toward Jackson was almost wholly dictated by opportunism. Old Hickory had had no sympathy for the Relief party, and had condemned the Court struggle as "most alarming." He feared that "should the Demagogues of Kentucky succeed in destroying that independence [of the Judiciary] ... the Judiciary will become mere tools of oppression of the people." But Jackson was no fool, for he also asked: "Which side of this question does Mr. Clay take?" The Jacksonians were happy to welcome the New Court men into their fold in 1826.15

The New Court-Jackson coalition was strengthened when John Pope, who had been a stern critic of the Relief and New Court movements, deserted the Old Court. Pope's action was ostensibly due to the Old Court's refusal to back his plan for a compromise Court of Appeals. But the timing was such to suggest that Pope was seizing the moment to strike once again at his old enemy, Clay. He led six Old Court men into the growing Jackson camp, and was suddenly able to rub elbows with George Bibb and other old adversaries. In 1832, a Clay paper credited Pope with greatly boosting the Jackson cause. His defection "enabled Kendall to transfer the new court party to General Jackson, [and] gave the General a hold in Kentucky that patronage has enabled him to keep."

But at the time of Pope's action, Kendall was not a Jackson man. The New Court defeat in the election drained him, and the Argus reported that he would not be in Frankfort for several weeks. He was ill, and at his mills in Elkhorn. And he was confronted with the most momentous decision of his professional life. Should he betray Clay?

The final decision on this matter was dictated by the state of
his finances. The mills remained unfinished and his debts were still pressing upon him. However, some of his personal troubles had been alleviated by a new marriage. His new wife was barely sixteen years old. Her name was Jane Kyle and her father was an Irish immigrant who had helped to construct Kendall's paper mills. She must have been a mere girl when Kendall first met her. But his family needed a mother, so whatever courtship there was was probably brief. Kendall married her on the fifth day of 1826. It could have been an arrangement of mutual convenience, a chance for Jane Kyle to do better than her laboring origins and a chance for Amos to give his children a mother again. Kendall's early letters to her contained little of the romantic sweetness he had written to Mary Woolfolk. But Kendall was a dedicated family man, as kind to his wife and children as he was merciless to his enemies, and the affections between he and Jane grew over the years. Right now the important thing was that the marriage strengthened the household. Jane was able to manage the household while Kendall gave his attention to politics. In later years, he was able to leave his home for months at a time, secure in the knowledge that his wife had things well in hand. 17

But in the fall of 1826, Kendall's household was under a sort of siege. Joseph Desha was determined to bring the Argus over to the Jacksonians. He visited Kendall at his mills on four different occasions, to change Kendall's mind about his neutrality. No one, he flattered Kendall, "knew more of Mr. Clay and his movements," or was "better qualified to expose" Clay's activities in the 1825 House election.

At first, Kendall rebuffed Desha angrily. He would "appear a
vile and ungrateful man" if he betrayed a trust with Clay. Finally, Desha's patience was exhausted. He warned Kendall that "the Jackson men [in Kentucky] would decline taking "the Argus if it remained neutral. Furthermore, Desha would himself arrange to establish a new organ in Frankfort, and transfer to it his Executive patronage. As the Argus was Kendall's "only dependence for a support to your family," what would happen to them, Desha asked? In effect, Desha threatened Kendall to choose between himself and Clay. "Your must determine to aid in putting them [Clay and Adams] down, or go down yourself," he concluded. 18

Kendall had resisted Desha's entreaties for some six months. He had also been pressured by Richard Johnson, Blair, and even Duff Green, the editor of Jackson's principal organ, the United States Telegraph of Washington, D. C. But if he refused now, he faced ruin. It was possible, of course, that he could have finally chosen to enter Clay's service in Washington, or gone over to the Old Court in Kentucky. (Given the habits of such men as Bibb, Pope, and Crittenden, it is possible he would have been welcomed and well paid.) But he seems never to have considered these possibilities. 19

Kendall decided to follow Desha and Blair into the Jackson camp. It is not possible to be precise about the timing of his decision, but it was probably around mid-October. He outlined to Desha the contents of an essay in which he would announce his decision to support Jackson. He also sent Henry Clay a cryptic note, saying: "Whatever course I may feel constrained to take in relation to the [Adams] administration generally, I trust I shall not be the means or the occasion of casting any imputation upon your integrity and honor." Soon after, Richard Johnson informed Jackson: "You will discover that the Argus has taken
up your cause." Ironically, he added: "Kendall deserves great credit for his independence." \(^{20}\)

On November 1, the *Argus* endorsed Jackson's candidacy for 1828. "Let us take up Old Hickory," Kendall wrote, and "drive Adams out of the President's House." Kendall justified his decision on the grounds that Adams had appointed Old Court men to Federal offices, although he knew well enough that Clay had been behind the selections. However, he was careful to make no attack on Clay. Indeed, he publicly agreed with Old Court statements that Clay had played no part in the "bargain" intrigues of 1825. He supported Jackson, he insisted, because: "However zealous we may be to see Mr. Clay President, we cannot support other undeserving men [i.e. Adams and the Old Court] as a means of procuring his elevation." This was hardly a strong argument for Jackson, but the Kentucky Jacksonians were not worried. Desha was confident that once Kendall "became warm in the cause," his customary talents would "do the subject Justice." \(^{21}\)

It was Clay who provided the fire to warm Kendall to the cause. William Worsley of the *Reporter* quickly attacked Kendall and warned Clay of his activities. Kendall was "a political swiss," Worsley reported. "Money is his object, and he will write for that man, or that party, which pays him best." John Crittenden informed Clay that new rumors were circulating about how Clay had tried to purchase "the virtue of Mr. Kendall." He feared that this would be used to put Clay at a disadvantage in his own state, so that he could not influence the contest there between Jackson and Adams. \(^{22}\)

Clay studied the signs, considered the situation, and took action. In December, 1826, he transferred the Federal printing
contracts from the Argus to its old rival, the Frankfort Commentator. Kendall's seems to have been actually surprised by Clay's action. He announced the loss of the printing by saying he must now look "only to the people for support." He reiterated his support of Jackson by asserting that "Mr. Adams is no more fit to be President [now] than when Mr. Clay and ourselves were uniting in opposing him." "If Mr. Clay has changed his opinion, we have not changed ours." Having lost "the laws of Congress to print, we shall have more room to expose an administration which is grasping at unbounded power and marching forward to consolidation," he decided.23

But Kendall could not simply expose Clay and Adams alone. During 1827 he also built up Jackson's image in Kentucky. He compared Old Hickory with George Washington. He praised Jackson as a wise statesman who would support the tariff and internal improvements that benefitted Kentucky. He pointedly avoided certain topics, including Jackson's behavior in Florida in 1819. Kendall had strongly criticized Jackson's actions at that time and now he preferred to say nothing.24

Kendall went beyond words in boosting Jackson's candidacy. He helped to organize the New Court into a strong Jackson party by advocating a state convention. Delegates of every county should gather in Frankfort in January, 1828, he suggested, and there select a state-wide slate of electors committed to Jackson. They might also select the party's candidate for governor, he suggested. Desha and Blair went to work to give substance to the proposal.

But Kendall was still on a leash of sorts. He owed Clay $1,500, and the note would be due at the end of 1827. Other Old Court partisans
had commenced lawsuits against him for other debts. The loss of the Federal printing had struck the Argus a wound that Kendall's nonchalant words could not disguise. He found it necessary to mortgage more of his property to one of his partners in March, 1827, and soon after he pressed Governor Desha for more money. The Argus would collapse if he did not obtain $500 to pay his bills, he pleaded. Desha found the money, and Kendall used it to stave off bankruptcy for the time being.

His respite was only temporary. He had debts exceeding $10,000 and only $7,000 in real property. Moreover he did not have the money to repay Clay. Richard Johnson came to his rescue this time. Johnson gave Kendall a letter of introduction to Martin Van Buren. T. P. Moore, a Jacksonian Congressman, contributed a second letter, praising Kendall as "a gentleman who has done and is qualified to do more to sustain the [Democratic] Republican party than any other man in the western country." Kendall set off for the east in a frenzied effort to save his newspaper. 25

Kendall reached Albany, New York, just as the first autumn snows began. He missed seeing Van Buren, who was traveling about the state, organizing it for Jackson. He left the letter of recommendation at Van Buren's home, plus a note of his own, explaining that he needed $2,000 or $3,000 to save his property from the auction block. If Van Buren could help him, he would "confer on me a favor which will never be forgotten." Johnson's letter probably impressed Van Buren more when he read it, for Johnson agreed to stand as security for a loan to Kendall. 26

Uncertain as to when Van Buren would return to Albany, Kendall went on to Dunstable and his parents' home. He had not seen it for
nearly thirteen years, and his reunion with his parents was bittersweet. Zebedee Kendall was now seventy-three and nearly crippled by the accumulated hardships of years on the farm. His eyesight had grown so poor he could not recognize his son. Amos was overjoyed to see him and his mother all the same. After spending a few weeks in Dunstable, Kendall was on his way to Washington, where he consulted with Duff Green. Then he returned to Frankfort. The Kendall who returned home was a changed man. Van Buren and Green arranged suitable loans for him. This, plus all the attention he had received, did much to restore his spirits. The journey had been a success, and Kendall was free to concentrate on the election of Andrew Jackson.²⁷

Kendall could have continued to support the Jacksonians by criticizing Adams and extolling the virtues of Old Hickory. He could have defended his stand by simply saying that he could not in good conscience stand neutral in this critical contest. Blair took such a stand when he declared for Jackson. But Kendall had never been slow to see an opportunity. If Jackson won, and his friends took control of the Federal and State (Kentucky) Governments, the Argus could get the printing contracts again. But for how long? Kendall truly was too tired of editing to continue that sort of existence. Thus, when he returned to Kentucky late in 1827, Kendall had a higher goal in mind: a place in Washington.

He thought he knew how to get it, and had laid the groundwork in a letter to the candidate himself. Kendall knew that Jackson very much wanted to tar Adams and Clay with the brush of the "corrupt bargain." So he wrote to the Old General:

I have never had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you,
[but] I was one of those who were told by one of [Clay's] friends, as I think about the 20th day of January, 1825, that if Mr. Adams should be elected he would make Mr. Clay his Secretary of State. 28

Kendall added that he believed that Clay had himself arranged the bargain with Adams, probably by the 10th of January, 1825. Jackson replied cordially and carefully, pointing out that the bargain was "a subject of much delicacy." Anyone who took it up had better know what he was doing.

Kendall understood what he must do next. On September 26, a few days before he left for the east, he published the first of a series of public letters "To Henry Clay, Esq." repeating the story he had given Jackson. A "confidential friend and correspondent" of Clay had told him that Clay would be Secretary of State if Adams were elected, he confessed. Two weeks later, a second letter was published, elaborating on the charge and challenging Clay to permit a full Congressional investigation of the bargain question. 29

In 1826, Kendall had joined the Jacksonians with some reluctance, submitting to Desha's threats and pressure from the New Court men. But a year later, he sold himself to Jackson, shamefully reneging on his pledge to Clay. Historians have since used this unscrupulousness to condemn his whole life. 30

Clay quickly sent a letter to Francis P. Blair, warning him not to publish his letter of January 8, 1825. Clay knew that Blair was the "confidential friend" Kendall alluded to in his accusation. He also knew that the letter to Blair contained no evidence of bargain with Adams, but it did contain several criticisms of Adams. It would be very embarrassing to the Adams Administration if these remarks were made public. Blair hastened to assure Clay that he would not betray his
private correspondence, nor would he corroborate Kendall's statement that Clay would become Adams's Secretary of State if Kentucky supported Adams. But, significantly, Blair did not publicly deny Kendall's statement either.31

Clay's friends in Kentucky, meanwhile, tried to discredit Kendall's charge by smearing its author. They attacked Kendall as a man who went over to Jackson because he got a better price than the clerkship Clay offered him. The National Republican (mostly Old Court) newspapers detailed Kendall's debts and the new loans he had received to cover them. The following is a typical attack:

The people of Kentucky know Amos, as the mercenary: who desperately lays on, and plunders and marauds, as the commander who best pays, directs. He was willing to write for Mr. Clay and sustain him [until] ... Clay would not buy him — oh Amos.32

These assaults, however, could not undo the damage that Kendall had wrought.

In December, the Kentucky Legislature convened. The Jacksonians in the State Senate, largely former New Court men, demanded that Kendall's charges be made the subject of an investigation. Clay's friends could not suppress the demand for fear that it would appear that there was indeed something to hide. They agreed to let the investigation proceed, and Kendall was summoned to testify.

He had been given a stage now, and his performance was a memorable one. He used the opportunity to condemn Clay for attempting to bribe him with a job in Washington, because, he said, the Old Court wanted him out of the State. Kendall named Blair as the "confidential friend" who told him in 1825 that Clay would be Adams's Secretary of State if Kentucky voted for Adams in the House of Representatives.
Blair had a letter from Clay that would prove this, he revealed.
Kendall also freely discussed how Clay had paid him in 1823 to write the Fishery letters criticizing Adams. It was almost as if Kendall were using Clay to vent the frustrations of his defeats in 1825 and 1826, to alleviate the bitterness produced by his financial problems. One of Clay's friends who witnessed Kendall's testimony concluded that the little editor looked like a "famished wolf."33

Blair was also called to testify, but refused to appear, because he said he could never violate "a private correspondence." The majority of the Senators, including the New Court-Jackson men, simply decided to excuse him. By now, it should have been obvious to Clay that Blair was part of a deep game against him. The January 8, 1825, letter would not prove a bargain between Adams and Clay. Blair could have published a statement affirming this and repudiating Kendall. He did not do it. He also advised Clay not to publish the letter, but to remain silent. This course would only play into Kendall's hands.34

John Crittenden had begun to wonder about Blair's motives and advised Clay to publish the letter, stand the embarrassment of this criticism of Adams, and end the controversy. Another of Clay's associates was more direct, advising Clay to recognize "the perfidy of Kendall and Blair":

The latter of whom particularly holds out the idea that he was in your confidence, retails the slander to Kendall who publishes it and then refuses to speak before the Senate, because forsooth, what he pretends to know has been derived confidentially. We should suppose he had been studying the part of Iago In Othello.35

Kendall was meanwhile reaping the benefits of Blair's reticence, charging that his actions proved that Clay must have concluded the
bargain with Adams himself. Publish the letter, he called out to Clay, publish it if you dare. "Let us see the letters, why should not Mr. Clay call on Mr. Blair to tell us all about it?" 36

The Kentucky Senate concluded its investigation with a resolution that denied any concrete evidence of a bargain. The Old Court–Clay press attacked Kendall for pursuing a personal grudge. He denied this, claiming that his personal break with Clay was due to Clay's decision to support the Old Court in 1825 and 1826. "In [Clay] I had entire confidence," he wrote. "For no man, at one time, would I have done so much." He regretted the break, he concluded, particularly because of his fond memories of Mrs. Clay. But he could not resurrect his friendship with them. 37

Clay tried to discredit Kendall by publishing Kendall's letters to show that he had been interested in a job in Washington. Kendall simply retaliated by publishing Clay's letters, including those concerning the attack on Adams in 1823 over the New England Fisheries and the Mississippi. Clay, extremely embarrassed, went to Adams to explain that he would have to circulate his January 8, 1825, letter to Blair, to defuse the controversy.

Mr. Clay declines publishing the letter to Blair [Adams recorded in his diary], but authorizes the committee [i.e. the Adams election committee in Kentucky] to exhibit a copy of it to any person who wishes to see it . . . Kendall is one of those authors to be let, whose profligacy is the child of his poverty. 38

This expedient did alleviate the situation somewhat, although Kendall kept pressing the bargain charge by twisting the letter and other materials to suit his interpretation. If Kendall convinced no one else by this, he convinced Jackson, who wrote to a friend that the Argus had
printed evidence "conclusive of the Bargain." 39

By now, Kendall was doing all he could to curry favor with Jackson. He wrote a serialized life of the Hero, comparing him to a modern Cincinnatus. He lauded Jackson as the spearhead for change in the Federal Government, the leader in "a continual struggle to procure the necessary reform." Unlike the old "aristocrat" Adams, Jackson was a man of the people and an enemy of such vested interests as the Bank of the United States, he wrote. 40

Kendall tried to induce Jackson's nephew, Andrew Jackson Donelson, into running for Governor of Kentucky in 1828. "I do not believe there is a Jackson man in this country who would not vote for you," he urged Donelson. This was a harebrained scheme, as Donelson was not a Kentucky resident! But it demonstrates the lengths to which Kendall would go to get Jackson's attention. 41

The Kentucky Jacksonians met in convention in January, 1828, and chose William T. Barry as their candidate for governor. They were well organized by this time, and were very strong in the counties that had regularly supported the Relief and New Court movements. They had the help of Kentucky's two Federal Senators, Rowan and Johnson, as well as several of the Congressmen, who used the franking privilege to mail hundreds of bundles of election literature to Party men throughout the state. Rallies, speeches by prominent Jackson supporters, and thousands of pamphlets and handbills, all of these contributed to the Old Hero's rising strength in Kentucky.

By contrast, the National Republicans, as Adams's supporters now termed themselves, were hampered by their candidate. Adams did not like the western style of "stump-electioneering" and refused to help Clay
improve the Administration's image. He was seemingly indifferent to his chances in 1828. He knew that his own Postmaster General, John McLean, was pro-Jackson, but he refused to remove McLean from this critical office. Eventually his friends in Kentucky lost heart and concentrated on the State offices involved in the elections.42

In August, 1828, the State elections produced a mixed result. Barry lost the governor's race to the National Republican candidate. This disappointed Kendall, who wanted a victory as "conclusive proof that the friends of Jackson constitute a decisive majority" in the State. The Jacksonians, however, won a majority of seats in the Legislature. Kendall called on his allies to redouble their efforts. He toasted Jackson at a public dinner: "Andrew Jackson. He would not ask the presidency of Henry Clay; the people will give it to him." He roused the voters to turn out Adams, "an enemy of the west," and finished his public letters to Clay with one more rendition of his bargain charge. He said he believed that "the fate of this Republic is to be decided" by the election of Jackson. The choice was between "Liberty or Monarchy."43

Jackson won an 8,000 vote majority in Kentucky. The victory was won by good organization, and by the fact that more Kentuckians preferred the westerner, Jackson, to the easterner, Adams. Many of Clay's friends did not vote, and the Reporter complained that while they stayed at home, "the Jacksonians moved en masse." Kendall managed to be a dignified winner. He predicted that Clay and Adams would now "learn . . . respect for the will of the people, on which depends the purity and permanence of our free institutions." He also sent special congratulations to Old Hickory:
I look forward to a new era under your administration distinguished not only by reform . . . but by such changes . . . as will cut off all inducements to men high in office to use of the patronage of their stations for the purpose of purchasing popularity. 44

Kendall counted on Jackson's gratitude. He had won an increased reputation because his bargain charges had been reprinted nationwide. Even so, he rejected job offers from Duff Green and Thomas Hart Benton, because he coveted a higher place in Washington. 45

He received it. Soon after the election, Jackson sent a messenger to Kendall "to inform me that it was his purpose to offer me an appointment in Washington." Kendall quickly persuaded his friends to appoint him the bearer of Kentucky's electoral votes to Washington, arranged to have a friend manage his mill property, and prepared to sell the Argus to a reliable Jacksonian. One wonders if he also thanked Joseph Desha, who three years later asked: "Would you have obtained the office of 4th Auditor, if you had adhered to your determined neutral position [in 1826]?" 46
CHAPTER VI

NOTES

1 Joseph Desha to Amos Kendall, (draft) [May 6, 1831], and Desha to Kendall, June 19, 1831, both in James A. Padgett, ed., "Correspondence between Governor Joseph Desha and Amos Kendall, 1831-1835," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 38 (1940), pp. 9-20.

2 Amos Kendall to [Henry Clay], July 8, 1826, Special Collections, University of Kentucky Library.


5 Argus, February 6, 1826.

6 Ibid., June 21-July 5, 1826.


8 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, February 1, 1826, Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University Library; Argus, December 28, 1825, January 18, February 1, 1826.

9 Frankfort Patriot, February 27, July 17, 1826.

10 Spirit of '76, April 14, July 7, August 4, 1826; Baxter F. Melton, Jr., "Amos Kendall in Kentucky, 1814-29" (PhD. diss., Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 1978), pp. 114-135; Julius F. Kany, "The Career of William T. Barry" (M.A. thesis, Western Kentucky State Teachers College, 1934), p. 48. Note that Melton, a journalism scholar, devoted his dissertation to Kendall's style and the influence of the Argus in Kentucky. Thus, it is useful for these purposes, but has little biographical assessment.

12 Padgett, ed., p. 6; *Argus*, July 19, 1826; *Kendall's Expositor*, November 29, 1842.


14 *Argus*, January 3, 1827; Smith, pp. 24-25; Kany, p. 55.


17 Kendall to Henry Clay, December 25, 1825, Clay papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC); *Argus*, September 6, 1826; *Autobiography*, pp. 269-70.

18 Joseph Desha to Kendall, (draft), [May 6, 1831], Padgett, ed., pp. 13-14.


23 *Argus*, January 10, 18, 24, February 21, 1827.

24 *Argus*, November 29, 1826, May 16, August 1, 1827.
25 Melton, pp. 203-4; Franklin County Deed Book M, p. 223, Franklin County Courthouse, Frankfort, Kentucky; Joseph Desha to Kendall, (draft), [May 6, 1831], Padgett, ed., p. 15; T. P. Moore to "Gentlemen," n.d., Martin Van Buren papers, LC.

26 Kendall to Martin Van Buren, November 10, 1827, and Richard M. Johnson to Van Buren, September 22, 1827, both in Van Buren papers, LC.


28 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 22, 1827, Jackson papers, Tennessee State Library; Jackson to Kendall, September 4, 1827, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 3, p. 381.

29 Argus, September 26, October 10, 1827.

30 Lynn L. Marshall, "The Early Career of Amos Kendall: The Making of a Jacksonian" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1962), pp. 381ff., makes the case that Kendall intended to go over to Jackson in 1826, but feigned reluctance in order to get the best price for his services. In fact, Marshall's complete portrait of Kendall centers about the conviction that he espoused no principles but his own advancement; that he was the classic "man of the make." I cannot accept this interpretation wholeheartedly. Kendall was genuinely reluctant in 1826, as the evidence suggests. His actions in 1827 and 1828 cannot erase that fact, nor his strong commitment against vested privilege throughout his years in Kentucky. The ironic thing, of course, is that had Kendall behaved differently in 1827, he might have been more honorable, but too obscure for scholars to notice.

31 Henry Clay to Francis P. Blair, [October 11, 1827], and Blair to Clay, November 14, 1827, both in Hopkins, ed., The Papers of Henry Clay, v. 6, pp. 1136, 1260-61. See also John J. Crittenden to Clay, October 30, 1827, Ibid., pp. 1206-7.

32 Argus, September 27, 1827; Lexington Reporter, April 8, 1828; Kentuckian, April 17, 1828.


34 Kentucky Senate Journal (1827-1828), p. 308, Smith Blair, pp. 32-33. Smith argues that Blair acted honorably, but the evidence indicates that that was not the case.

35 John J. Crittenden to Henry Clay, February 14, 1828, and Charles S. Todd to Clay, February 18, 1828, both in Clay papers, LC.

36 Argus, February 6, 20, March 12, 26, 1828.
37 Mathias, pp. 130-31; Argus, May 28, 1828.


40 Argus, September 26, 1827, April 30, August 13, September 20, 1828.


43 Mathias, pp. 131-32; Argus, June 30, August 6, 20, 27, September 3, October 29, 1828.

44 McCormick, p. 220; Lexington Reporter, November 26, 1828; Argus, November 12, 1828; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, November 19, 1828, Gunther Collection, Chicago Historical Society.

45 Duff Green to Kendall, September 17, 1828, Green papers, LC; Autobiography, p. 278; Thomas Hart Benton to Kendall, August 24, 1828, Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings 13 (1873-1875), pp. 306-7.

46 Autobiography, p. 303; Argus, December 10, 1828; Joseph Desha to Kendall (draft), [May 6, 1831], Padgett, ed., p. 15.
CHAPTER VII

LAUNCHING THE JACKSONIAN SHIP OF STATE

Inauguration day, March 4, 1829, began tranquilly, the cool crisp air occasionally pierced by the booming of cannon. It ended with a mob scene at the Executive Mansion. In between, Andrew Jackson, Indian fighter and Hero of New Orleans, was sworn in as the seventh President of the United States.

Since the close of the War of 1812, the Nation had seemed to be adrift and directionless, its citizens unable to fathom the challenges that a new age had brought forth. Divisiveness had permeated the land. The Missouri crisis had given notice of widening gaps among the Nation's sections, while the Panic of 1819 had exacerbated a growing debate over America's economic future. Would the acquisition of new territory threaten the rights of the people or the foundations of the Republic? Would individual opportunity be increased or lessened by the power of the new age? What should be government's role in the Nation's development? The people did not know, and many of them were frightened by the possible answers. The politicians had failed to find satisfactory answers to these questions. Monroe, the last of the Revolutionary generation, had tried to create a partyless government, only to have it fall victim to factional discord. Adams had joined with Clay to advocate the American System, in the hope that economic nationalism would more tightly bind together the squabbling sections. This too had failed. The want of effective leadership still plagued the
Government, and many bewildered citizens insisted that the Republic was being subverted by internal enemies.¹

Now a majority of the voters had turned to Jackson. Could this aged chieftain, who in eleven days would be sixty-two and was in such poor health and so grief-stricken at his wife's death that his friends feared he would not long survive her; who had pledged in any event to serve only one term — could he rekindle some of the lost purpose of the American experiment? The crowds who had invaded Washington for his inauguration seemed to think so. They had swept into the Capital like floodwater, sweeping the more sedate residents off the streets and behaving with such raucousness that Daniel Webster thought they acted as if they had been rescued from an affliction.²

Since his own arrival in Washington, Jackson had been surrounded by crowds. Not all of them had come merely to wish the new President well. Some had come to offer their services in the hope that he might adopt a stand or policy that was dear to their hearts. Others simply wanted a chance to immerse themselves into the fat comfort of the Executive patronage. "It is the most disgusting scene that I have ever witnessed," wrote Kentucky's T.P. Moore about a crowd of office-seekers. He failed to mention that one of these men was his own friend Kendall.³

Before leaving Frankfort the editor had received a message from Jackson. Jackson hinted that he might have a place in the Administration for Kendall. The prospect of a position high in the Executive stirred Kendall's ambition, and increased his desire to dispose of his newspaper. He fairly sped to Washington so as to be there when Jackson arrived. He had already made up his mind to accept
any position that the victorious general might offer, but he took care that his intention, indeed Jackson's message, was kept a secret. His motive for doing so was based upon the fear that an early knowledge of the offer would lead to "aspersions cast upon [his] character by Mr. Clay and his adherents." He also wished to see the public printing of the Kentucky Legislature safely with the Argus before selling it.  

Kendall arrived in Washington on January 2, 1829, fully two months before the inauguration would take place. He obviously wished to guard against losing his as yet unspecified place. He was not alone in this mission, for, as he reported to his wife over the next several weeks, the Capital was full of men intriguing for places with the Administration. There were those, also, who hunted for bigger game, for no less than control of the whole character and nature of Jackson's Presidency.

One of the first persons of this stripe that Kendall met was Senator John Eaton. A personal friend of Jackson's and a key contributor to his strategy in the late election, this self-confident Tennessean was anxious to prevent Jackson's Administration from breaking into squabbling factions before it began. At the time he met Kendall, Eaton was most concerned about John C. Calhoun and his followers, particularly Duff Green. The gruff editor of the United States Telegraph was no friend of Eaton's. Eaton wanted him replaced as the Administration's editor and sounded out Kendall about beginning another paper in Washington. He assured Kendall that he could arrange for a new paper to receive the Senate's printing contracts. When Kendall pointed out that Green had every right to the Senate printing, Eaton replied that he was convinced that Green would prove to be "unreliable and
unpopular" with much of the Party. He therefore urged Kendall to consider his proposal.

Kendall doubted the merit of the idea. True, an editor given any substantial share of the Federal printing could anticipate a much higher income than what he could earn through the best appointive position. But Kentucky experience had taught him the folly of counting on any printing contract for long. Then too, he had no wish to get into a dispute so soon after his arrival. As related earlier, he had declined an offer to work for Green, both because he had considered the salary offered to be too low for his talents and because he did not wish to tie himself to Calhoun's fortunes. Now, uncertain as to where Eaton stood in the new Party, he followed the same course. He told Eaton that he would begin a new paper only if Green approved the action. It was a shrewd response, for as Kendall must have expected, Green very quickly vetoed the idea. Eaton was disappointed, but not discouraged from approaching Kendall again, should circumstances change. 5

After a few more days of observation, Kendall had pieced together enough to be able to explain the factional situation to Blair. Many of the politicians, he wrote, were looking not toward the coming Administration, but beyond it to the next one. Jackson's announced intention to serve but one term had encouraged several "aspirants to the Presidency" for 1832. Of these Kendall identified Calhoun, Martin Van Buren, and John McLean of Ohio, but he suspected that there were others. Kendall could not predict which of these men stood the best chance of succeeding Old Hickory, and for the moment he did not care. If the contenders broke into open warfare, he feared Clay would be the one who gained. For now, he told Blair, all the factions should concentrate on
getting the Jackson Administration under way. Later, they should support the man "who could best unite the party" in 1832. Still, he predicted that intrigues would continue and that Green would not long "maintain the position he occupies."6

Kendall was right. As the days progressed, he saw growing evidence of a silent struggle for the presidential succession. He noticed that John McLean was uneasy about the prospect of remaining on as Postmaster General. Ambitious and careful, McLean feared that Party plans to remove many of the postmasters would damage his own future aspirations. Attending a dinner at McLean's, Kendall mentioned the rumor that McLean was to be nominated to the Supreme Court and asked the Postmaster General if he looked forward to thus retiring from political life. McLean replied that even if he went to the High Court, he was always prepared "to hold himself at the disposition of his friends."

This prospect of a disputed succession, and the constant meeting of persons who, like himself, had come clamoring for office, depressed Kendall. "On the whole," he wrote his wife, "if there is more extravagance, folly and corruption anywhere in the world than in this city I do not wish to see that place." Soon after, the editor met a Kentucky acquaintance who, again like himself, had come seeking a job with the incoming Administration. After discussing their mutual prospects for a few moments, the acquaintance said: "Mr. Kendall, I am ashamed of myself, for I feel as if every man knew what I came for."

"Don't distress yourself," Kendall dryly replied, "for every man you meet is on the same business."7

Unlike most of the anxious officeseekers in Washington, Kendall was assured of a place in the new president's family. He met with Old
Hickory at least three times before the inauguration. The first occasion was February 12, and Kendall was with several other editors who supported the General. Jackson had just arrived in the city and was very weary, so the delegation simply paid their respects and quickly left.

Kendall had a brief private meeting with the President-elect a few days later and another soon after, during which they talked for nearly an hour. "During that time he [Jackson] rose much in my esteem," Kendall later confessed to Blair. Jackson spoke of his plans for the coming Administration. Most of what he said was confined to generalities, but it impressed Kendall all the same. Jackson stressed the need for reform. The revenue was to be reduced by abolishing unnecessary offices and patronage; Federal expenditures would be trimmed by eliminating wasteful projects, especially those that might impinge upon "the jurisdiction of the states." Jackson also spoke briefly of his determination to run his own house. "He said all his cabinet must concur in measures of reform, and if they did not they must leave." He would tolerate no cabinet member to be a candidate for president.

As for Kendall, Jackson was almost embarrassing in his flattery of the young editor. "I told a friend the other day that you are qualified for the Head of a Department and I shall put you as near it as I can," he promised. Kendall had heard rumors that he would get a Treasury auditorship. Now Jackson's remark seemed to confirm it. Jackson also promised offices for several other of his Kentucky supporters. By the time Kendall left, the General had enchanted him. "I only hope that his opinion of me improved as much during the interview as mine did of him," he gushed. But after his head had
cleared he began to calculate how he could use an auditor's $3,000 salary to reduce his debts. 8

The $10,000 Kendall owed others was never far from his mind, and since arriving in the Capital he had bent himself toward paying off some of it. He had been earning up to fifty dollars a week, writing circulars for members of Congress and doing errands for McLean and other Jacksonians within the outgoing Adams Administration. In order to use most of this for his obligations, he was careful to keep his living expenses to a minimum. He had, for instance, saved on lodging by staying with Richard Johnson at the boarding house of Obadiah Brown, a Baptist minister with a penchant for politics.

At Brown's Kendall met several other editors in the Jackson camp. Like Kendall, many of these had come to wrangle Federal jobs if possible. The crowd of editors offended many in the Capital's closed society. One old Jeffersonian huffily asked how so many men "of inferior note" could dream of obtaining offices? Kendall, however, was pleased to meet his fellow journalists, especially the New Englanders Gideon Welles and Isaac Hill. They, in turn, were interested in this Massachusetts native who had the year before revived the corrupt bargain charge against Henry Clay. Welles in particular was impressed with Kendall's quiet demeanor and active intelligence. He credited Kendall with the idea of having all the editors call on Jackson and congratulate him as a group. The President-elect could not but have been impressed with this forcible reminder of the importance of the press in his victory. 9

Two weeks after the inauguration, Kendall received his measure of Jackson's gratitude. He learned that the President had decided to
appoint him to an auditorship in the treasury. Two places were open and
Jackson wanted his old friend William B. Lewis and Kendall to have them.
He left it to Kendall and Lewis to decide which job went to which man,
so the editor went straightaway to call on the amiable Tennessee Major.
"Which place do you wish?" he asked Lewis. "That in which there is the
least work," the Major replied. (Lewis intended to devote his efforts
to advising Jackson, and was in fact living at the Executive Mansion.)
Characteristically, Kendall retorted that he preferred the position with
the most work, the grueling Fourth Auditor's task of overseeing the
American Navy accounts.

Having agreed on the division with Lewis, Kendall went next to
see Jackson. He found the General in a expansive mood. After
expressing his thanks for the appointment, the editor carefully asked:
"I suppose you will hold me responsible for the faithful performance of
the duties of the office?" "Certainly," the President replied. Then,
Kendall countered, "I ought to have the selection of my own clerks."
"You shall have it," came the answer. Jackson must have been pleased
with Kendall's readiness to handle his duties, for he always respected
men who were willing to take responsibility. 10

Armed with the right to name his own personnel, Kendall
proceeded to remake the Fourth Auditor's office in his own image. He
announced that he would fill the Fourth Auditor's office with "men of
business, and not with babbling politicians. Partisan feelings shall
not enter here, if I can keep them out." This disclaimer against
patronage was untrue, for Kendall had already assured Blair that he
would "find places for some of our poor kin (politically I mean) in
Kentucky." He soon gave many of his fifteen clerkships to old Kentucky
friends, a few former editors like himself, and his own father-in-law.

In order to make room for these men, Kendall found it necessary to discharge incumbent clerks. The unpleasant task of removals made him uneasy:

I turned out six clerks on Saturday [he wrote his wife]. Several of them have families, and are poor. It was the most painful thing I ever did; but I could not well get along without it. Among them is a poor old man with a young wife and several children. I shall help raise a contribution to get him back to Ohio, where he came from, and intend to give him $50 myself. 11

Kendall must have felt guilty indeed to let fifty dollars through his usually tight fists! But he made the removals all the same.

Kendall was not the only new division head to make room for his friends. Throughout the Executive branch, room was being made for partisans of men trying to build their own following. Clerks who had held offices since the days of Jefferson were turned out and replaced with adherents to the newcomers. Friends of those who were removed were quick to charge that Old Hickory planned to subvert republican government by packing Federal offices with his own cronies. In vain, Jackson's friends claimed that the new Administration made far fewer removals than it was accused of making (which was true), and that for the most part, the replacements were better men (which was not as true). Jackson himself formulated a defense by reversing his critics' attacks and claiming that "rotation in office" actually preserved republicanism. Men left in office too long, he reasoned, began to consider their positions as personal properties rather than as public trusts. He also claimed that the removals supported retrenchment and elimination of waste. He directed all department heads to find "what offices [could be] dispensed with, and what improvements made in the economy and
dispatch of public business."\(^{12}\)

Jackson also sent specific instructions to department and office heads. He ordered Kendall to review the Navy's accounts and find the "irregular and illicit practices" he knew must be hidden in them. Find these and eliminate them, he commanded; devise a "remedy or reorganization" to prevent future abuses and so save the Treasury and the people as much money as possible.\(^{13}\)

Kendall executed Jackson's orders with enthusiasm. His first action upon taking office was to require all clerks to meet with him and explain their respective duties. In this way, Kendall was able to discover that some clerks were settling accounts that they had no authority to handle. He dismissed one man for mismanaging a pension fund, and proceeded to reorganize the whole office. He issued a memorandum in which he set down his new system of regulations. No man, he ordered, was to attend to tasks other than those for which he was responsible. Each clerk had to work at least six hours in the office each day, and absences were to be fully explained. The reading of newspapers, or any other material not connected to the job, was strictly forbidden in the office. Additionally, no clerk was permitted to engage in any other employment or business; if he did so he was to be summarily dismissed. Anyone who appeared to be slow in going about his duties must reform, he warned. Otherwise, he would "reform them out of office!" Kendall even included a prohibition against using "public stationery or other property" for private purposes. It is not recorded that he ever fired anyone for taking home a pencil, but Kendall enforced his rules with zeal. Several clerks must have developed an early dislike of their new taskmaster.\(^{14}\)
Kendall appeared to be as stingy with his own privileges. His predecessor had used office funds to subscribe to about twenty newspapers. Kendall cancelled the subscriptions. He also publicly refused to use the franking privilege for his private correspondence. This had been an old custom for executive and legislative officers, a minor abuse that everyone winked at; but Kendall would have none of it.

Or so it would seem to the casual observer. But in reality Kendall constantly used the frank in political correspondence with Blair and other members of the Party. He had difficulty in being consistent about promise and performance.

The problem extended to his new duties. He publicly announced that the Fourth Auditor's Office would be purely a place of business; political activity would be forbidden. He offered for sale his share of the Argus because it was "improper in principle" for him to be associated with it. Not being an ambitious man — "I do not think I am ambitious, or that I even inordinately coveted office or distinction" — he was content to concentrate on his official duties, he announced. He was through with politics. Yet his name remained on the Argus's masthead until he sold his share of the paper to a reliable Democrat in 1830. As for his other promises, he was meddling in politics within days of his pious statements, and he would never be content with the Fourth Auditor's Office. He meant to impress Jackson with his devotion to duty, but with his political acumen as well. He needed to be one of the decision-makers.

The new Auditor was true to his promise to keep a close eye on the public monies. As supervisor of navy expenditures, he devoted long hours to the claims of agents and paymasters. And, during the early
months at least, hardly a day went by when he did not question half a
dozens vouchers. He discovered Marine officers supplementing their pay
by overcharging the Government for costs of cordwood. He found vouchers
for laborers who had never existed for work that had never been done.
He disallowed all of these. Kendall trimmed the expenditure claims even
when it meant antagonizing supporters of the Party. Virginia Senator
Littleton Tazewell, for example, was upset when Kendall disallowed a
claim made by one of Tazewell's constituents. Tazewell went so far as
to complain to the President. But Kendall stuck to his guns and Jackson
sustained him. In another instance, Kendall caught John Randolph of
Roanoke, who was to be Jackson's minister to Russia, owing a small sum
to the Navy. He badgered the old statesman for payment to the point
where Randolph too complained to Jackson. 16

If some of the Party's adherents were angry, Old Hickory was
delighted. Each time Kendall saved the Treasury a nickel, he bought an
ounce of Jackson's favor. The President commended Kendall on his
efforts to trim the bloated budget. Kendall himself later claimed that
in his first year as Auditor he had saved the Government thousands of
dollars. He was not entirely penurious, however. If he found that the
Government properly owed a debt, he ordered it paid. If the Treasury
had inadvertently done someone an injustice, as in the case of a Navy
pensioner who had not received anything for two years, Kendall corrected
the problem. In every case, he tried to be fair. 17

About a month after taking office, Kendall discovered a case of
embezzlement. Tobias Watkins had been Kendall's predecessor, and also a
major pamphleteer for the National Republicans. Many were the times
that Jackson had been the target of Watkins's jibes in the Adams press.
When Jackson won the election, and his followers converged on Washington to assume control of the Executive, Watkins had understandably left town before the inauguration. In April, 1829, Kendall found another reason for his haste. He compared Watkins's books with the accounts of the New York navy agent and found a discrepancy of some $7,000. Further investigation revealed that Watkins had taken funds from several accounts, involving transactions that had occurred in Boston and Washington as well as in New York. Kendall also found that Watkins had doctored several ledgers and destroyed a number of vouchers in an effort to cover his trail. But by painstakingly comparing entries and receipts, Kendall was able to reconstruct Watkins's defalcation and uncover the identity of an accomplice who had aided him. Kendall turned this evidence over to his superiors, who ordered the arrest of the two men.

Watkins was in Boston, trying to establish an anti-administration newspaper, when he learned of Kendall's discovery. Although protesting his innocence, he ruined his case when he attempted to flee to Europe. He was quickly apprehended, tried, found guilty, and jailed. Kendall, of course, used the incident to ingratiate himself further with Jackson.¹⁸

As the Jacksonian broom thus swept some of the dross from the executive hearth, the President turned his attention to matters of state. Jackson has been accused by historians of entering the presidency with no clear conception of what policies he wished to pursue. This charge is not altogether true. Jackson's inaugural address indicates that he had some specific plans and policies to implement during his tenure in office. He spoke then of the need to
reform the government, particularly its wasteful spending habits. Retrenchment would be his panacea. The "observance of a strict and faithful economy," he promised, would enrich the "public virtue left by my illustrious predecessors" (among whom he did not count John Quincy Adams). Jackson was determined to extinguish the public debt, which he considered "incompatible with real independence." Old Hickory wanted the United States to be indebted to no man or group, especially foreigners.

Beyond economy, Jackson stressed his respect for states' rights, which he believed had of late been ignored. He also expressed a wish for a "gradual increase of our navy," and an increased attention to the Nation's defenses. In another passage of his message, he advocated "humane and considerate attention" to the plight of the Indian tribes. He added a proviso, however, that any legislation concerning the Indians would have to be "consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people." Jackson spoke more obscurely about internal improvements and tariff issues, which he realized divided the party. He said nothing at all about the Bank of the United States. 19

Jackson's plans were based on his fears for the future of the Nation. During the decade of the 1820s, as the Republic grew and changed, he became increasingly concerned with the problem of national unity. Sectionalism became the dominant force in national politics. In the older seaboard states, Americans were divided into the two main cultures of the "cavalier" and the "yankee." The most evident difference between the two sections was slavery in the southern states. Southerners feared for the existence of their peculiar institution, and also complained about the inequality of the tariff laws. Meanwhile, the
western states clamored as one for internal improvements and expanded bank credit, neither of which was totally acceptable to the older sections. The task of harmonizing the three sections was enough to frustrate the best statesmen; to do so and also strengthen the ties that bound the growing Nation appeared simply impossible.

But Jackson determined to accomplish the impossible. To hold the states together, Jackson discarded the American System of Clay and Adams and the "amalgamation" of Monroe. Instead, Jackson chose the cement of states-rights republicanism, the legacy of Jefferson and John Taylor of Caroline. "The sovereignty [sic] of the states and the general govt properly and harmoniously poised" was to be the new President's "pivot on which much rest the freedom and happiness of this Country." To Jackson, a strict construction of the Constitution would provide the balance between states-rights and national unity.

Old Hickory was not prepared to say that the founding fathers had been perfect, however. On more than one occasion he was willing to deviate from republican precepts. He particularly liked to ignore republican fears of a strong executive. Ingrained with the habit of command, he was ready to assert himself as the strongest president the Nation had yet experienced. 20

To implement his policies, the new President promised to dismiss all "unfaithful and incompetent" officeholders, and replace them with "men whose diligence and talents" would suit his goals. Ironically, so many Jacksonians were so busy trying to figure out who would manipulate Old Hickory, they were blind to the implications of these words. His will was too strong to be trifled with, as perceptive men like Kendall and Van Buren quickly discovered, while others learned the lesson more
painfully. Nathaniel Hawthorne put it well when he observed that Jackson "compelled every man to be his tool that came within his reach." 21 Ironically the slowest men to recognize Jackson's forcefulness were the members of his first cabinet.

The cabinet was a mixed and not altogether harmonious group. Martin Van Buren, commander of the Albany Regency and now Secretary of State, was the cleverest and most talented of the group. Samuel Ingham of Pennsylvania was Secretary of the Treasury and an ardent follower of Calhoun. John Berrien of Georgia, the new Attorney General, had a capable legal mind but an unexceptional political record. North Carolina had been given its first cabinet rank in the person of John Branch as Navy Secretary. John Eaton was Secretary of War and for the moment Jackson's most trusted friend in the City. When McLean withdrew to the Supreme Court, as Kendall had predicted, William T. Barry became Postmaster General. Barry was, as always, an attractive ornament for any setting. One observer termed him "sprightly, animated" while another said he was "the most eloquent man . . . of any member of the Cabinet." But as Kendall had long known, there was little substance behind Barry's courtly facade. Many in the Congress and the Party warned Jackson that Barry was not capable of efficiently managing the Post Office. McLean predicted that he would ruin its good reputation and embarrass the Administration. Events would prove McLean right, much to Jackson's chagrin. 22

With the possible exception of Van Buren, the cabinet selections were not what most Party members had expected. Richard Johnson and a few others told Jackson that he had fashioned a "strong, high minded, amiable & honorable cabinet," but they were the exceptions. Faction
leaders, including Calhoun and even Van Buren, murmured disappointment about the choices. Van Buren briefly considered resigning his post as Secretary of State. The Party as a whole thought the selections were weak, and many of its members said so openly.23

Duff Green, Calhoun’s paladin, was quite loud in his criticisms. He was particularly vexed by the prominence of Eaton. He believed that the Secretary of War meant to replace Calhoun as Vice President in the next term. Green began a rash attack on Eaton in the Telegraph and pressed other Administration editors to do the same. He also attempted to purchase the Argus and bring it out for Calhoun. Pushing his luck further, Green asked Gideon Welles of Connecticut to join him in a plan to bring forward Calhoun as Jackson’s successor in 1832. Welles protested that it was too early to start worrying about the next election, but Green persisted. Calhoun’s "claims could not be postponed another four years," he said, although he hastily added that if Jackson decided to run for re-election Calhoun "would not probably" oppose him. These were incredibly foolish remarks, for Green barely knew Welles.

Some months later, Green made things worse by telling Welles that he was "no longer a supporter of this Administration." Welles, disturbed, shared these statements with his new friends Isaac Hill and Amos Kendall. Kendall simply stored the information away in his mind, knowing that he would find some use for it and Welles in the future.24

Meanwhile, the rumblings of disappointed office-seekers, combined with the deeper intrigues of those who wanted to be Jackson’s successor, exposed the most difficult problems facing the rejuvenated Democratic Party. It lacked cohesion, and many of its members had
little confidence in the General's leadership. The widespread fear that
Jackson would not be capable of controlling his Administration only
intensified the internal struggles. Small wonder, then, that the
National Republicans believed that "the Jackson party" would "fall
asunder ... from the cumbersome character of its materials, and the
weakness of the cement which binds them together."²⁵

This divisiveness vexed Jackson, the more so because it was
based on the belief that he was weak. Old Hickory was anything but
weak. He had tremendous self-confidence and incredible force of will.
What he wanted, he obtained more often than not. In 1829, he wanted to
be in command of his Administration. Thus, in answer to his critics, he
snarled: "I was not making a cabinet for [others] ... I was making a
cabinet for myself."²⁶ Loyalty was to become the main theme of his
first term. Anyone who did not acknowledge that Jackson was captain of
the ship would be tossed overboard.

Jackson's crusade for loyalty within the Executive began at the
inaugural ball. Several of the attending ladies pointedly avoided
speaking to the pretty, new wife of John Eaton, and the President was
annoyed by the incident. Out of his discomfort arose the Eaton Affair.
Whatever the origins of the Eaton controversy, and historians are still
arguing the case, it was Jackson who made Peggy Eaton's virtue a cabinet
matter. Trying to force the woman on Washington society, Old Hickory
showed that above all things he expected personal loyalty from his
advisors. Loyalty was as important to the President as Peggy's
reputation. Jackson constantly commented in his correspondence about
how the controversy was "injurious to the harmony of my cabinet as well
as prejudicial to my administration."²⁷
After several months of privately pressing his subordinates about this matter, all to no avail, Jackson decided upon bolder tactics. He proceeded to call what was surely the most unusual cabinet meeting in history. Present were the entire cabinet (save Eaton), as well as Lewis, Jackson's nephew and private secretary Donelson, and a few of those persons who were spreading rumors about Peggy Eaton's virtue. Jackson virtually ordered everyone present to shut up about Peggy's past and to socialize with the Eatons. Historians have recounted this meeting many times, stressing the dramatic moment when Jackson bellowed that the twice-wed Mrs. Eaton was "chaste as a virgin!" Perhaps more important, however, were the comments of the attending Secretary of State. Jackson, remembered Van Buren, stressed that "his object in sending for us was to repel the insinuation that he wished to give the subject a political consequence."²⁸ Of course, Jackson's actions produced precisely the opposite result, especially once he began to believe that Calhoun was behind the Eaton's troubles.

Jackson's final failure to keep the Eaton Affair out of politics affected the subsequent development of the Democratic Party. Once Old Hickory did put the controversy on political ground, he was able to put an end to it, although at great cost to his Administration. He failed to really help the Eatons, but he destroyed the glowing future of Calhoun. If Calhoun was not behind the affair as Jackson came to suspect, he certainly did nothing to discourage it. Mrs. Calhoun refused to have the Eatons at her gatherings and her husband sustained her decision. This was a critical error, because there were many men in the Administration who were only too happy to fuel Jackson's suspicions about Calhoun and use this for specific goals. Although their goals
differed, Van Buren and Kendall were two such men. 29

At first, Kendall ignored the clamor over the Eatons, other than to relate the details of it to Blair. He attributed the tale of Mrs. Eaton's easy virtue to "discontents" who had "set themselves to work to drive Eaton from the cabinet." Kendall may have been repeating what he had heard from Jackson more than giving his own opinion. He added that he thought the charges against Peggy Eaton to be false, although he admitted that the woman was "too forward in her manners." In any event, Kendall suspected that the Eaton Affair would long continue. This was due, he concluded, to the power of gossip among the Washington ladies, "many of whom, I suspect, are [themselves] no better than they should be." 30

Busy with the reorganization of the Fourth Auditor's office, Kendall ignored the Eaton Affair for several months. Alone in Washington, it was easy for him to avoid the problem of those with wives present. In the fall, however, after Kendall had brought his family to the City, the matter of the Eatons engaged his attentions more forcefully. Peggy Eaton, combative and pushy, called on Jane Kendall. Whatever Jane knew of the woman's reputation, she apparently found the intrepid Peggy to her liking and a friendship of sorts was formed. Whether Kendall himself had any influence on this decision is unknown. But Jane herself was from a common background much like Peggy's own, and she may have found it difficult to follow the snobbish ways of Mmes. Calhoun, Branch, and Ingham. Soon the Eatons were being received at the Kendall residence. 31

While his wife was being enlisted in Peggy's ranks, Kendall tried to arrange a rapprochement between the Secretary of War and his
wife's most active tormentor — not Calhoun, but Secretary of the Navy John Branch. All but forgotten today, Branch was in 1829 a charming young man on the rise. He was also a schemer who, one scholar has said, "excessively flattered politicians he wished to use." He had worked his way into the cabinet by a careful campaign of such flattery, being one of the first to congratulate Eaton on his marriage. Having obtained his office, however, he had immediately tried to prevent the appointment of Eaton, even to the point of telling Jackson that the choice would be unpopular with the Party. While Branch failed to keep Eaton out of the cabinet, he convinced the Donelsons and others to socially snub John and Peggy. 32

By late 1829, Branch's relationship with Eaton threatened "a rupture in the cabinet." Kendall told Blair that unless the situation could be remedied, Jackson was almost certain to dismiss Branch. "Heaven and earth may come together," he quoted Old Hickory as saying, "but no base conspiracy shall separate me from Eaton." Kendall, therefore, as a friend of both men, tried to arrange a truce between Branch and Eaton. There is no evidence that he acted at Jackson's behest on this mission, or that the President was even aware of the attempt. Kendall admitted that his task was unlikely to produce much, because "Branch, though as honest a man as ever lived, is a very proud man." He made the effort, though, because he was aware of how determined Jackson was to "harmonize" his Administration. Branch protested that he had great respect for the Eatons and denied that he was part of the campaign to snub them. Kendall dropped the matter. 33

A few months later, Kendall was again drawn into the Eaton
Affair, through his official capacity as Fourth Auditor. Peggy Eaton's first husband, Navy Purser John Timberlake, had died by his own hand while in service aboard the frigate Constitution. Timberlake's record books and other property had been turned over to the Fourth Auditor's office as soon as the ship arrived in an American port. All of this had taken place prior to Jackson's inauguration, and in the press of reorganization Timberlake's accounts were not checked until late in the summer of 1829. Kendall was in Kentucky at the time, and in his absence a clerk audited the accounts. He found a shortfall of nearly $15,000.

This discovery initiated one of the most puzzling mysteries of the Eaton Affair. The mystery is scattered with anonymous notes, altered figures, and Congressional investigations, and did nothing to alleviate the cabinet crisis; but Kendall benefitted a good deal. Indeed, his campaign to win Jackson's favor was greatly advanced by the conclusion of this incident.

Kendall reviewed the discrepancies in the Timberlake accounts when he returned from Kentucky in October. He realized that if the Government's claims against Timberlake's estate were valid, then Eaton was in for a rude shock. By marrying Timberlake's widow, Eaton had taken possession not only of Timberlake's property, but also his debts. Someone else must have realized this as well, for as the investigation continued Kendall received a note that was, to say the least, unusual. "You are very vigilant in discovering abuses among public officers," it said, and invited the auditor to expose an alleged conspiracy between Eaton and the late Timberlake to defraud the government. The note was signed "Paul Pry" and Kendall never learned the true identity of its
author. For a time he suspected a former clerk who could have had access to Timberlake's accounts. Whoever it was, the mystery writer surely had a grudge against Eaton. The Major too received a note, from the same hand, proclaiming "revenge is sweet."

In any event, Kendall was moved to look into the matter personally. He rechecked the balances and found they were correct. But he was suspicious of the final tally because one ledger had had some twenty pages removed. So he went to the Constitution's captain to make further inquiries. From this officer, he learned that Timberlake's possessions had been gathered after his death by Lieutenant Robert Randolph, the Virginia officer who took over Timberlake's duties. The captain also mentioned that he had seen among Timberlake's belongings a large amount of cash, yet when Kendall checked on this he found that no significant amount of money had been turned over to Peggy. Kendall then visited Randolph, but the Lieutenant was vague in his replies to the Auditor's questions. He admitted using some of Timberlake's cash to pay debts the purser had left, but he could not recall the amounts involved or any other specifics.

Kendall found Randolph's conspicuous lack of detail strange and took his thoughts not to his superior Ingham, but to the President. Jackson ordered the Fourth Auditor to chair a full investigation of the Timberlake accounts. By now, word of the financial threat to Eaton had gotten about the city. Both Houses of Congress were showing interest in the investigation, and Randolph, fearing for his skin, was complaining about Kendall to Virginia Senators Tyler and Tazewell. Once again, Eaton was a seam along which the Jacksonians threatened to split.

Nonetheless, Kendall pressed on, aided now by an investigative
team that included Third Auditor Isaac Hill and the Constitution's
captain. After examining several witnesses and making yet another
meticulous check of the account books, Kendall submitted the findings of
the group. The weight of evidence, he indicated, pointed to Randolph as
having taken a large amount of cash from the purser's accounts while
altering Timberlake's books to cover the theft. The fact that Randolph
had deposited several thousand dollars in Boston at the end of the
voyage, and could not adequately explain how he had gotten it, lent
weight to the accusation. Aware that he himself would be suspected of
covering a friend, Kendall concluded his report with a disclaimer that
he would never "shield Maj. Eaton from any just responsibility to this
government." He and the other investigators had found no such
responsibility in this case. 34

In 1832, Randolph was court martialed for embezzling government
funds. Kendall was the prosecution's star witness and the lieutenant
was convicted and dismissed from the Navy. Randolph's friends swore
that he had been made the scapegoat by "a Yankee of notoriously false
and knavish character." Kendall feared that Randolph might one day try
to "wreak his vengeance upon me." But in 1833, Randolph walked up to
Jackson on a river boat and tweaked his nose. Thus, this aspect of the
Eaton Affair ended on a bizarre note. 35

Kendall's handling of the Timberlake accounts advanced his
standing with the President still another notch. It also increased his
stature in the Party. It was already rumored that he was authoring
Richard Johnson's Congressional reports and other state papers, although
he subsequently denied the truth of these claims. Certainly Kendall was
easily recognised on the rare occasions he appeared in public. It would
have been impossible for it to be otherwise, considering his unusual appearance. Even on the warmest days he went about in a heavy cloth greatcoat, buttoned to the throat. He still suffered from 'sick' headaches and frequently tied a kerchief about his whitened hair. His face was always "pale and cadaverous" to onlookers. One Party man, upon meeting him, confessed that he recoiled in "antipathy and disgust" from even allowing Kendall to breathe on him. The Fourth Auditor was gaining a reputation that went well beyond his official duties. 36

But Kendall was not yet in Jackson's inner circle. Jackson, despairing of the divisions in his cabinet, was increasingly relying on unofficial advisors. In 1829, these included Lewis, James A. Hamilton of New York, his nephew Andrew Jackson Donelson, and a few others. Of the cabinet, only Eaton and, increasingly, Van Buren, received his confidence. Kendall was not yet a contributor to policy, although the perceptive Van Buren predicted to an associate that he would eventually be "an influential man" in the Administration. Already he was able to influence the reception of important policies with his writing. 37

Jackson had told Kendall at the time of their first meeting that he would have occasion to employ the former editor's pen. At the time, Kendall took Old Hickory's remark to mean that he might soon be editing another newspaper. As it happened, Jackson wanted to employ Kendall in writing state papers more than editorials. Jackson understood how much the success of his Administration depended on the enthusiastic support of the people. Each of his state papers reached out to the people instead of merely to the Congressmen who heard them first. He selected many draftsmen to aid him in their preparation, some for only one paper or one policy, others for the general principles he wished to reiterate.
regularly. In choosing for the latter, he could not have done better than when he picked Kendall.

Kendall's first major occasion to show his worth as a writer came with the preparation of Jackson's First Annual Message. A thorough check of the various drafts of this document shows Kendall's important contributions to its style. But he had no discernible influence over the policies expressed.

For example, in his first year Jackson was more concerned with settling the question of the southeastern Indian tribes, than with any other issue. His decision to resettle the tribes in a specially designated territory farther west, was made up of a blend of philanthropy, patriotism, and acquiescence to land hunger. It was an unstable compound, to be sure, and one upon which Kendall had no influence. Yet, the final version of this section of the First Annual Message was virtually all in his words. Jackson had Kendall rework this section, which had been constructed by himself and his nephew Donelson, because Kendall had a talent for soothing rhetoric. In proposing Indian removal, it was vital for the President to balance hard politics with good intentions, lest hard politics — the coercing of thousands of human beings, even if "only" Indians, from their homes — cause too many guilt feelings in Congress. This balancing act was capably performed, as anyone who reads the Indian policy passage can discern:

I suggest for your consideration [Kendall wrote for Jackson] the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi [for the Indian tribes]. There they may be secured in the enjoyment of governments of their own choice . . . . There the benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization.39

There also, the Indians could not bother land hungry settlers, but
Jackson did not want to give this as his reason for Indian removal. Kendall's other contributions to the First Annual Message were similarly cosmetic. The drafts show that he composed the section on Treasury frauds, no doubt because he had uncovered the chief instances. With these, Jackson justified his retrenchments. Kendall also wrote Jackson's proposal to eliminate the Electoral College and provide for direct election of the presidents. The one passage Kendall originated, that concerning the Bank of the United States, may have been the most important part of the message, but it was deleted. This is a further indication of Kendall's limited role in the Administration at this time.40

Significantly, Kendall's value as a writer became the basis of his near-rejection in the Senate. In December 1829, Congress convened to hear Jackson's message and to react for the first time to Old Hickory's policies and decisions. The members were lukewarm at best. The Jacksonians had enough strength to win the speakership of the House and with it control of the committees. This assured the Administration of a sympathetic hearing for most of its measures, particularly the important Indian policy. The Senate, however, was closely divided. In the absence of Clay, who was in "retirement" at Ashland, Daniel Webster was organizing the National Republicans into a solid bloc of votes. He intended to deal the Jacksonians some setbacks.41

Even among the Jacksonians themselves, several were disgruntled over cabinet selections and removals from office. When Jackson's appointments came before the Senate, some of these joined forces with Webster. They did not oppose the cabinet selections, however; no one could be this defiant to Old Hickory and remain in the Party. It was
the lesser officers who suffered, especially the editors. The editors were opposed because, in the words of Virginia's John Tyler, "the press, the great instrument of enlightenment of the people, should not be subjected . . . to rewards and punishments; [particularly] a system of rewards to be doled out from the public Treasury by means of the public offices." Another Jacksonian put it more succinctly: "The Senate can't swallow the printers." Jackson had appointed too many editors (some fifty-six of them according to one source) to suit many of his own Party. 42

Kendall was one of those that the opposition most wanted to reject. Webster believed he would be "sent home" to Kentucky. Henry Clay was of course anxious that his enemy be punished for his part in the 1828 election. From Ashland he pressed wavering National Republicans to support Webster. By the time voting began, no one could predict the outcome, as Kendall's chances seemed about evenly balanced. 43

Kendall affected unconcern over his future, telling Blair that he would have Jackson's support in establishing his own press if the Senate should reject him. He did not wish to appear a supplicant for confirmation and so stayed away from all, save the Kentucky Senators Bibb and Rowan. These two, however, must have kept him well informed, for he was able to say three weeks before the final vote on his fate that success would likely rest with Calhoun. Notably, about this time he told Duff Green that he would stay in Washington if rejected. He would start his own newspaper, he said, and rely on Jackson's promise to "take care" of him. 44

Several other editors, including Henry Lee, Isaac Hill, and
Mordcai Noah, were rejected. Kendall may actually have benefitted from the rejection of Hill in a close vote taken a fortnight before his own consideration. Hill's rejection galled Old Hickory and word of his reaction sped through Party ranks. Knowledge of Jackson's displeasure would seem to have had an effect. When the vote on Kendall came, on May 10, 1830, a handful of Senators reversed their previous position, enough to produce a 24-24 tie in the tally. Calhoun, put on the spot, voted to confirm Kendall. There were those among the Vice-President's supporters who doubted the wisdom of this action, and it certainly did nothing to save Calhoun later. It would seem that his decision was indeed dictated primarily by a desire to placate Jackson. The President was pleased with the result, and invited Kendall to the White House to congratulate him. Clay, by contrast, was furious.45

Kendall barely reacted to the confirmation. Such reticence was characteristic. The quiet little auditor wasted no time on self-congratulations. His place in the Jackson Administration secure, he immediately sought ways in which to influence the President's policies.
CHAPTER VII

NOTES


4 Autobiography, p. 303.


6 Amos Kendall to Francis P. Blair, January 9, February 3, 1829, both in Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library (hereafter PUL).


8 Ibid., pp. 285-89; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, March 7, 1829, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Miles, p. 297.


11 Kendall to A. G. Meriwether, March 22, 1829, Niles' Register, June 6, 1829; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, March 7, June 21, 1829, both in Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky (two volumes, Covington, Kentucky, 1878), v. 2, p. 569; Autobiography, p. 292.


13 Andrew Jackson to Kendall, November 10, 1829, Jackson papers, Tennessee Historical Society.


15 Niles' Register, April 18, June 6, 1829; Autobiography, pp. 319-20. For Kendall's use of the frank, and his advice to Blair, examine the Blair-Lee papers for early 1829. Kendall used the franking privilege for political correspondence throughout his career as a Jacksonian.


17 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, April 25, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Kendall to President of the Bank of the United States, New York Branch, June 7, 1830, Gunther Collection, Chicago Historical Society.

18 Remini, pp. 186-87; James K. Paulding to Samuel Southard, April 18, 1829, Ralph M. Aderman, ed., The Letters of James Kirke Paulding (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), pp. 100-102; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, April 21, May 24, 1829, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Niles' Register, June 20, 1829.


24 Duff Green to John McLean, June 27, 1830, Green papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Library; Niven, pp. 74–77; Kendall to Gideon Welles, January 24, 1831, Welles papers, LC.

25 National Journal, January 5, 1829.


30 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, March 7, 1829, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.


33 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, November 22, 1829, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.


35 "Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry in the Case of Lieutenant Robert B. Randolph of the Navy," February 27, 1833, 22nd Congress, 2nd session, American State Papers (Naval Affairs), v. 4, pp. 301-49; Phillips, p. 106; "Diary of John Floyd," (entry for May 7, 1833), Branch Historical Papers 5 (1918), p. 214; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, May 9, 1833, Jackson papers, LC.


37 Remini, p. 324; Hamilton, p. 130.


40 Draft of First Annual Message, Jackson papers, LC; Richardson, v. 2, pp. 442-62.


44 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, April 25, 30, 1830, both in Blair-Lee papers, PUL.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTERING THE INNER CIRCLE

Nearly all great presidents have been accompanied by odious hatchetmen. James Monroe handled unpleasant chores for both Jefferson and Madison. Woodrow Wilson relied much on Joe Tumulty, and Franklin Roosevelt had his faithful Louis Howe. But the comradeship of Jackson and Kendall seems odd, even by these standards. On the surface, there was almost nothing in common between the tall, brash, temperamental general and the small, quiet, sickly editor. The editor had been at one time a bitter critic of the supposedly unforgiving general. Yet a comradeship did grow between these two, a tie so strong that it can safely be said that the course of Jackson's Presidency would have been quite different had Kendall not been present. Kendall, too, would have traveled a far different path had he never known Jackson.

This collaboration of editor and President was unplanned. Kendall, as has been related, came to Washington in 1829 with personal finances, not public policies, on his mind. His impressions of those early months at the Capital, seen in his letters to Blair, show him to have been alert to the rumors, the altercations and the other outward manifestations of struggles within the Democratic Party. But in 1829 he was not privy to the inner workings, the policy decisions, and important patronage decisions.

Andrew Jackson used advisors the same way other men used their clothes. He would decorate a particular policy decision by associating
it with a particular expert on the subject. Thus, he used the legal
expertise of the Georgian Berrien to better implement his decision to
remove the Cherokee Indians to the west. Similarly, he drew on the
skill of Van Buren in matters concerning tariffs and internal
improvements. He also reached outside his cabinet whenever it suited
him. William B. Lewis became his first reliable errand boy. James A.
Hamilton advised him on financial matters, particularly in the early
months of his first term. He sought out Isaac Hill for information
concerning New England. He so freely drew on individuals for momentary
help, while at the same time holding few cabinet meetings, that
Jackson's enemies began to charge him with being the tool of certain
backstairs manipulators. The identity of these intriguers varied from
year to year, but came to include, among others, Lewis, Eaton, Van
Buren, and later Blair and Kendall. Early in 1832, a Calhoun partisan
came up with a generic label for this shadowy group. They were
Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet."

The Kitchen Cabinet label has stuck, but the idea of Jackson as
the tool of its members is false. He was, first and foremost, his own
man. He used advisors when it suited him, ignored them when it did not.
Until 1830, Kendall was important to him only as a skilled writer and a
source of information about Kentucky.

During his first year in Washington, Kendall worked to
strengthen the Party's grip on his adopted state. He paid careful
attention to patronage distribution, persuaded the Navy to increase its
use of Kentucky hemp, and carefully perused the contents of Kentucky
newspapers. Part of the reason for the delay in selling his share of
the Argus was his determination that it remain the major organ of the
Kentucky Jacksonians. He wanted Blair to continue for the time being as its editor. He knew Blair would be able to adjust his rhetoric in proper pace with national policies.  

Blair was put to the test when, in May, 1830, Jackson dealt a hard blow to his western supporters, especially those in Kentucky. He vetoed a bill that would have provided Federal aid for the construction of a good road between Maysville and Lexington. The road would have followed the same rutted path that Kendall himself had traveled more than fifteen years earlier, and Lexington merchants had counted on it to reverse their declining commercial fortunes. But Jackson believed that Federal support of road projects was extravagant. Using national money for regional or local internal improvements was of doubtful constitutionality, a hindrance to the retirement of the national debt, and an enlargement of Federal power at the expense of the states. So Old Hickory claimed in his veto message. He warned that, in the future, advocates of internal improvements should not depend on the largesse of the Federal Treasury. Jackson's veto message was almost certainly written by Van Buren. The Little Magician's Jeffersonian beliefs were complemented in this case by his desire to protect the Erie Canal from competition.  

The veto of the Maysville Road bill strained Party loyalties throughout the western states. Some Party men tried to defend it as a rarity, an unusual case. Others lamely said that Jackson had fallen victim to poor advice. But the Argus approved Jackson's call to limit Federal involvement in internal improvements. Kendall, realizing that Old Hickory was not to be swayed on this matter, encouraged Blair to take this approach. He helped his Kentucky ally compose resolutions of
support for the policy. Blair pushed these resolutions through to adoption at the State's Party convention that summer. While they probably did not prevent defections among Kentucky's Democrats, Kendall's and Blair's efforts did not go unnoticed by the President. 3

Kendall enjoyed playing the role of self-appointed spokesman for Kentucky's Jacksonians. This would have been presumptuous, were it not for the fact that better known Kentucky politicians had abdicated the responsibility. Both Postmaster General Barry and Senator John Rowan showed little interest in matters beyond their own positions, while Senator George Bibb was quickly becoming disillusioned with the Jackson Administration. Kendall feared that Bibb might resign and doubted if the Kentucky Legislature would return a Party man in his place. 4

By allowing Kendall to speak for them, these men were risking a great deal. The Fourth Auditor wanted to tamper with political traditions that had sustained many of his colleagues. He suggested to Blair that Kentucky Democrats abandon the county courthouse for nominating candidates, and rely instead on county conventions. The nominations could be initiated by the militia units, he explained. The subsequent conventions would be less removed from the voters and, he hoped, would result in "diminishing the power of the lawyers." Nothing came of the scheme, but its proposal demonstrated that the author's suspicion of lawyers remained undiminished. 5

In the end, the Kentucky Democrats failed to retain control of the State. Their grip had not been strong to begin with. The local support was tenuous, the governor and lieutenant governor were of opposing factions, and the political divisions stemmed from dated
issues. The Maysville veto harmed Jackson's image in Kentucky, despite Blair's efforts to defend it. Even Old Hickory could not long defeat Henry Clay on his own ground. Clay and his supporters regained the State during 1832, making it a bastion of National Republicanism, and later Whiggery. 6

By then, Kendall was safely entrenched on a higher plane. His position was not due to normal political influence. He controlled no major faction and certainly could deliver no critical bloc of votes. He was not yet recognized as an important man by the Party rank and file. He had nearly failed of confirmation before the Senate, having been saved only by the vote of Calhoun. What position Kendall had in 1830, and what he was to become by 1832, he owed entirely to Jackson's favor and his own formidable perceptions. He made himself into Jackson's most notorious aide.

Winning Jackson's confidence took the qualities that Kendall had used before to win over Richardson, Johnson and Clay. Old Hickory was clearly impressed by his energy, devotion to work, and demonstrated loyalty. In addition, the two men had had some similar experiences. Both had lost wives that they were devoted to; both had struggled to become successful and earn recognition; both have been plagued by poor, even debilitating, health. Above all, both had great faith in their ability to understand "the people" and to speak to the voters persuasively and effectively. They each had a deep suspicion of vested interests, particularly the Bank of the United States (which will be dealt with at length in the next chapter). They distrusted paper money, expensive government ventures, and most other politicians. They believed in their own judgments and in the absolute rightness of any
stand they took.

Moreover, Jackson enjoyed using the power of his office. During his two terms, he enlarged the power of the presidency tremendously, primarily through the veto and executive actions in which he neglected to consult with Congress. Kendall became fascinated by this display of purpose. Jackson became the "man of decision" he had once dreamed of being himself. The strong executive energy that he had found lacking in Madison and Monroe, that he once saw in Henry Clay, was present in abundance in Andrew Jackson. He had recently told another Democrat that he feared and abhorred the twisting of the constitution by "construction . . . especially . . . those constructions which tend to vest legislative powers in the executive head." But as Jackson's prerogative grew, he forgot his reservations.7

For his own part, Jackson found in Kendall the most faithful expeditor of his wishes, and employed him accordingly. Kendall's influence rose as a result. This was despite the fact that he had been a stern critic of Jackson in 1819 and 1820, and Jackson was reputed to be unforgiving on such matters. Jackson's willingness to forgive Kendall was in marked contrast to his treatment of another member of his camp, one who was in 1830 much more important in the Party: John C. Calhoun. Jackson's treatment of Calhoun was the very catalyst of Kendall's rise to importance.

John Caldwell Calhoun was in an unenviable spot by 1830. A brilliant lawyer and excellent administrator, Calhoun was also a ruthless logician who could rationalize new positions whenever it suited his ambitions. In 1828, his aspirations coincided with a Jackson presidency and so he supported the General's successful bid for that
office. But within two years Calhoun's circumstances had changed. Hotheads in the South were crying for a lower tariff and threatening dire consequences if it were not forthcoming. Floride Calhoun was adamant in her determination to shun Peggy Eaton. Calhoun was watching his own presidential dreams fade with the rise of Van Buren. Indeed, by 1830 Jackson thought of Van Buren as a true and loyal friend, but:

I wish I could say the same about Mr. Calhoun and some of his friends. You know the confidence I once had in that gentleman. However, of him I desire not now to speak; but I have a right to believe that most of the troubles, vexations and difficulties I have had to encounter, since my arrival in the City, have been occasioned by his friends.  

Jackson was referring in part to his growing suspicion that Calhoun had initiated the Eaton affair, a charge that historians are still debating. But the President was also concerned with a far more serious challenge to his authority. Southern extremists, particularly in South Carolina, had begun advocating a theory to neutralize, or nullify, selected Federal laws within state boundaries. Called nullification, the concept was a radical extension of states' rights theory and it was designed to break the Federal tariff laws. Its originator was none other than Calhoun himself, although the theory had been published anonymously. Calhoun's nationalist visions of 1816 had been soured by the economic decline of his home state. Nullification was his cry in the face of adverse winds, a desperate attempt to reverse changes that were in the process of turning a traditional, commercial-agricultural economy into a capital-industrial economy, and in so doing harming his chances for the presidency.  

Jackson was himself an agrarian, one of the things that had made him so attractive to Southern voters. But his sympathies held no place
for nullification, which he believed must lead inevitably to disunion. As was his habit, he confined his displeasure to private remarks and private correspondence until he saw the right moment for a dramatic act. He had followed the pattern in handling the cabinet division over Peggy Eaton, and in using the Maysville Road veto to attack Federal aid of internal improvements. Now, for nullification, Jackson used the Jefferson birthday dinner of April 30, 1830.

The dinner was held each year to honor the Sage of Monticello, the founder and patron spirit of the Jacksonians, who claimed to be the true descendants of the Democratic-Republican Party. But supporters of nullification planned to use the evening as a platform for their own anti-tariff and pro-states' rights ideology. The guests from pro-tariff Pennsylvania were so offended by the anti-Federal mood that they withdrew before the toasts began. They should have stayed, because as it turned out Jackson stole the show with his simple, challenging toast: "Our Federal union; it must be preserved." Calhoun and other Southerners tried to use their own toasts to remove the sting from the President's indirect attack on nullification. But Old Hickory had made his point. As Kendall, who was not present, explained to Blair, Jackson meant his words as a warning to Southerners in general and to Calhoun in particular, that he would oppose any attempt to nullify the tariff.

A month later, Jackson went further in notifying Calhoun of his displeasure. The timing was significant. Old Hickory had at one time believed that Calhoun had been the firmest defender of his invasion of Florida in 1819. But prior to the 1828 election, the cunning William B. Lewis, with the aid of Van Buren's lieutenant James Hamilton, had
uncovered evidence that the South Carolinian had in fact severely condemned the General. This disclosure, in the form of statements from Calhoun's bitter enemy William H. Crawford, was in Jackson's hands by November, 1829. 11

But the General, obviously irritated to discover this seeming duplicity, said nothing until May, 1830. Then, he suddenly demanded an explanation from Calhoun, who hurriedly replied with a long and slippery justification for his conduct in 1819. Jackson simply acknowledged the letter, and let the matter rest. 12

Jackson's delay in broaching this matter until after the Jefferson dinner; his sudden arbitrariness in challenging Calhoun's actions in 1819 (but not Kendall's, who had done much the same thing); his willingness to quickly drop the issue; all this suggests a political, rather than a personal, motivation. The South was a major wing of the Party, and Calhoun's ally Duff Green controlled the principal Party organ. Was Jackson, therefore, so rash as to disrupt the Party over an old grudge? His actions suggest, rather, that he wished to avoid trouble, but clearly wanted the nullifiers to know that he would tolerate no threats to his authority. As he had said earlier, this was to be his administration. He would remove any man, attack any policy, that would divide his coalition. If that policy were nullification, and that man the Vice-President of the United States, so be it. 13

Months after the Jefferson dinner, when his fall from grace was complete, Calhoun ascribed his troubles to nothing less than a conspiracy, a persecution organized by his rival, Martin Van Buren. 14 This was too simple an explanation. It made Jackson into a pliant tool
of the Little Magician, which he certainly was not. It also made a Van Buren man of every politician who contributed to the Vice-President's fall.

Amos Kendall was no Van Buren man. True, the New Yorker had helped Kendall pay off his debt to Henry Clay, and so enabled him to remain with the Argus and win Jackson's favor. Van Buren certainly attempted to recruit Kendall. He told James Hamilton that "Kendall is to be an influential man" and Hamilton noticed that, before long, "Van Buren was very attentive to him." But Kendall preferred to steer his own course. He watched the lines being drawn between Van Buren and Calhoun, but had no wish to join a battle for the presidential succession. He told Blair that the wiser course was to "depend on Old Hickory only" for advancement. In this perception, Kendall was employing once again his skill in finding "the man of decision." For all the problems with his cabinet, and despite his delicate health, Jackson was still master of his own ship.15

In 1830, while his future was being debated in the Senate, Kendall pondered the experiences of his first year in Washington. He summarized these "lessons" in a thoughtful letter to David Henshaw, a Democratic leader in Massachusetts. The letter is worth quoting extensively:

In our country as well as others, government has been made an art and mystery. The people are taught that few are qualified to govern, and that a long apprenticeship must be served before men are competent to fill the higher stations. To understand the art of mystifying and cheating the people and keeping them in ignorance of the true condition of public affairs, does indeed require some study and skill. But what is, or rather what ought to be, the business of government other than that of private life on a more enlarged scale? Why cannot the government make its bargains and pay its officers in definite and fixed sums as well as private citizens? Why cannot the public accounts be kept in as plain and intelligible a manner as
those of a merchant? In all the affairs of government, integrity, common sense and some knowledge of the world, are really the most essential qualifications. Endowed with these, a man of common industry may fill the highest offices in the republic with more benefit to the people than profound scholars or eloquent orators.16

Kendall admitted that the ways of Washington were still new to him, but that even so he was shocked by the "mass of fraud" he had found. Politicians regularly combined with commercial and business interests to steal from the people. They "hoodwinked and plundered" the people. But the people had a champion, Andrew Jackson. And, Jackson, "the man whom they have delighted to honor," would succeed in subduing these "knaves." Kendall would naturally do his part to help, particularly by helping the people "see all the machinery of their government."

With minor changes, these words could have been an Argus editorial written during the Panic of 1819. Kendall's opinions had obviously changed little in ten years, but one thing had been altered. He had great confidence in his leader. Not since William Merchant Richardson had Kendall felt such trust as he felt for Jackson. Jackson had unparalleled popularity with the "people," whom Kendall revered. He would serve him almost without question, and Jackson would show his gratitude by making Kendall a trusted member of his inner circle.

Meanwhile, Calhoun's troubles gave Kendall an opportunity to bring forward another Kentuckian to serve Old Hickory. For months he had been promising Blair to find some position for him in the Administration. For all of his influence in Kentucky, as clerk of the Circuit Court, Argus editor, and president of the Bank of the Commonwealth, Blair was clearly eager for a change of scene. He was deeply in debt and needed a better source of income to prevent bankruptcy. Kendall was interested in having in Washington an old
friend of proven ability. When, in March, 1830, he learned that the new owners of the Argus could no longer pay Blair, he knew that "the Argus will go to pot" and that it was time to bring Blair east. 17

Duff Green was by this time in hot water with the President. His friendship with Calhoun, his poor judgment, and erratic ways were annoying Jackson. Jackson complained that the Telegraph was slow to support him in his battles with Congress and to defend his Administration from opposition attacks. He was especially angry when Green played down his remarks at the Jefferson dinner. The Telegraph editor made him appear ambivalent toward nullification, he charged.

Green's enemies were quick to join in the attack. Eaton and Lewis had earlier tried to leaven Green with Kendall; now they eagerly pushed for his removal altogether. Lewis went to Jackson and suggested that another Administration paper be established, this time edited by a more reliable man like Thomas Ritchie or E. W. Gooch of Virginia. Jackson hesitated, probably because he wanted to be certain of all the details before deciding. 18

Kendall threw Blair's name into the bidding for the new editorship. He and William Barry began to solicit support for Blair from among Jackson's other advisors. A little judicious circulation of the Argus helped, but as always the final decision rested with Jackson. What convinced Old Hickory in the end is a matter for debate. Long after the event, Thomas Hart Benton asserted that Blair's editorials on the Bank of the United States led Jackson to select him. However, the President was just as impressed with Blair's defense of his Maysville stand, believing that because of Blair, the veto "in Kentucky has done no harm." Still, while he agreed that "another organ to . . . defend
the administration," was needed, he put off giving the order.\footnote{19}

Kendall spent the entire summer of 1830 pushing Blair's candidacy. Jackson vacationed in Tennessee during much of this period, and nothing happened until the fall. Then, he apparently ruled that there would be two administration organs. Green would stay on, for now, and Kendall could offer the new place to Blair. Thus, Blair came to town not as a replacement for Green but as a rival.\footnote{20}

Kendall tried to assure Green that another paper would pose no threat to him. He asked Green to believe that:

Should Mr. Blair come, you will have a friend, personal and political, who, instead of occupying you in individual and intestine broils, will unite in support of the great principles which General Jackson is attempting to introduce in our Government, or rather to revive in its administration. For one thing I can vouch — he will come wholly unpledged to any man or men. He will support Gen. Jackson as the means of giving effect to great principles; but beyond him he has neither pledges nor purposes, so far as regards men.\footnote{21}

Blair likewise wrote assurances to Green, but the \textit{Telegraph’s} editor was not deceived. An open break between Calhoun and Jackson was coming, he predicted to a friend. When it came, Blair and Kendall would make a grab for the Congressional printing.\footnote{22}

Meanwhile, Kendall sent Blair detailed information about the proposal. He told his friend that both Barry and Van Buren would give executive patronage to the new paper, and that Jackson would certainly urge his friends to subscribe to it. Kendall himself would find a press and hire a printer. Lest Blair worry about the initial investment, Kendall agreed to share in that (and, of course in the profits) as well. Finally, Kendall reminded his friend that the new paper must be for Jackson only, with no concern as to the succession. It must support
those policies that Jackson advocated: reduction of the debt, opposition to nullification and to Federal largesse for internal improvements. 23

Follow this prescription, Kendall advised, and the venture would flourish. Within a year or so, he assured Blair, the Administration would be able to provide at least $15,000 in printing patronage. At the same time, Blair would be smart to avoid Congressional printing. "We want an establishment here which shall be independent of that body," he confided. Still, Kendall refused to assure Green that his Congressional largesse was safe, "because we know not what may be rendered proper by circumstances. I would sooner have you [i.e. Blair] take the [Congressional] printing than that it should go to the enemy." All would be well, he concluded, if Blair put his trust in Jackson alone. 24

Blair found the offer a most attractive one, and was only too happy to accept it. But he still squeezed from Kendall promises for personal assistance in the undertaking. Kendall agreed to contribute to the newspaper, but stipulated that he must therefore realize a part of its profits. He conceded to Blair the first $1,500 each year and offered to divide the rest equally between them. Blair did not agree to this before leaving Kentucky and their negotiations would continue into the next year.

Blair left Kentucky with scarcely a second thought. He set out for the Capital in early November and arrived just before Thanksgiving. His entry into Washington was hardly encouraging. Just outside the city, the coach lost the road and turned over. Blair suffered a deep cut on his ill-proportioned, oversized head. When he arrived at the
White House, Lewis took one glance at his bandaged pate and drily observed: "Mr. Blair, we want stout hearts and sound heads here." Jackson was kinder, charming the newcomer with his attentiveness, inviting him to supper, and even placing him at the head of the table. 25

Calling next on Kendall, Blair learned that he had found both a press and a temporary printer. With the President's considerable help, he had already secured subscribers as well as printing contracts from the State and Post Office Departments. Kendall estimated that Blair had already as much as $4,000 for his first year's support. With such a promising start, the two men had only to settle the details. Which of them chose the Globe as the paper's name, and the rallying cry "The World is Governed Too Much," is now beyond determination. Both men subsequently took credit for it. It was Kendall, though, who suggested that the Globe must begin publication in the first week of December, in hope that Congress might toss some further patronage their way. Blair readily agreed. 26

There remained only the need for the two men to come to terms themselves. Having done this much, Kendall had every intention of sharing in the Globe's future profits. But he had no intention of leaving the Treasury. Therefore he eventually suggested that a contract be made between him and Blair. If at any time in the next six years (i.e. to the end of 1836) Kendall decided to leave office, he was to have half interest in the paper. If Kendall died during the same period, his family would receive half ownership in the paper. In the meantime, Kendall was to be paid $800 per year to start as a contributor, more as circulation increased. If, by 1837 Kendall was not
a partner, the Globe would belong solely to Blair.

Blair, however, did not like these terms and made Kendall a counter offer. He would pay Kendall for his contributions, $800 per year, and increase the sum $100 per 1,000 new subscribers. Later, if Kendall decided to resign his post as Fourth Auditor, Blair would make him a partner in the Globe for "fair and liberal terms." Kendall agreed, but stipulated that this be kept quiet, "because the proposed arrangement might embarrass the President, and not because A. K. thinks there is any impropriety in his writing for the Globe or being paid for it."

But this deal could not be kept secret. Green learned of it and published the details. When Jackson read of it, he was dismayed. He did not approve of his appointees having connections with firms that had government contracts. He demanded that Kendall explain himself. Kendall hurriedly replied with an appeal for understanding and sympathy. "With a wife and five children," he wrote, "I am very poor. If I were to die this moment, it would take all I have on earth ... to pay my debts." Blair added a postscript to Kendall's pathetic letter, assuring Jackson that he was in great need of Kendall's help. Jackson, deeply touched, relented and Kendall continued to earn a good deal of money from his deal with Blair.27

Meanwhile, the new Globe commenced. It was, Blair wrote, dedicated to "harmony" within the Party and reform of the Government. The first issues were uniformly kind to the Telegraph and Blair made no open attempt to challenge Green for the Congressional printing contracts. The Globe did take a different stand on several issues, however. Blair condemned nullification and the Bank of the United
States, both of which Green supported.

Jackson had been furious by Green's sympathy for nullification and his anger was not mollified, when Green defended the Bank of the United States. He doubted the usefulness of this institution and disliked Green's attempts to commit his Administration to its support. Green harmed himself in numerous small ways as well, picking arguments over minor appointments and making rude remarks about Van Buren, Eaton, and others close to the President. Green simply reaffirmed Kendall's judgment of him as too rash to prevent his own ruination.²⁸

Green's downfall came soon after Jackson's final reckoning with Calhoun. The Vice-President brought this confrontation about by publicly quarreling with Jackson over the Florida matter of 1819. Just why Calhoun chose to reopen this issue in early 1831, particularly as Jackson had taken pains to keep their differences private, is a puzzle. Many scholars have concluded that by bringing his disagreement with the President before the public, Calhoun stupidly overplayed his hand.²⁹ Perhaps he was not so foolish however. He knew by late 1830 that Jackson planned to make Van Buren his chosen successor. It was also clear that Jackson would probably run for re-election, contrary to his previous promise to serve only one term. Van Buren, it was already rumored, would be Old Hickory's running mate in 1832. Calhoun was going to be denied the succession he had aimed for since 1826. Should it therefore be surprising that he decided not to acquiesce meekly to being pushed aside?

Calhoun's choice of a counterstroke was a surprise, however. He decided to publish his recent exchange of letters with Jackson, those concerning his criticism of the Florida invasion in 1819. He added to
these some documents supporting his stand on that issue and a long introduction in which he all but named Van Buren as the guiding hand of "secret movements against me." The entire piece, entitled "Correspondence between Gen. Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun, on the Subject of the Course of the Latter in the Cabinet of Mr. Monroe, on the Occurences in the Seminole War," appeared in the Telegraph on February 17, 1831.

Calhoun's publication was a gamble to rally the Democratic Party about him and against Van Buren. This was a throw of the dice more characteristic of Henry Clay than the cold, rational Calhoun. But then, what did he have to lose, having already realized that he was to be pushed aside in 1832? He might even succeed in driving Van Buren from the Party, if he was right in believing the old General "has been made the dupe" by Van Buren. The fact that he failed in this attempt indicates that he was not fully aware of Jackson's success in pulling the Party together under his control. He would learn his error soon enough.

The publication of the Jackson-Calhoun letters embarrassed the Administration. This personal matter, stemming from an incident over ten years old, was now being publicly aired. Van Buren, the accused manipulator, quickly issued a denial of the implied charge of having supplied Jackson with Crawford's statements or of any design to discredit Calhoun. Jackson was moved to white-hot rage by Calhoun's attempt to disgrace Van Buren. Calhoun had attempted to cushion the blow by warning the President ahead of time of his intentions, but it made no difference. Old Hickory became entirely convinced that Calhoun had orchestrated the Eaton affair all along, had in fact been the cause.
of all of his Administration's troubles. He decreed that Calhoun must pay for his perfidious plotting. The Vice-President and his followers must be driven from the Party and cast into the wilderness. The Globe quickly denounced Calhoun as a base intriguer and the author of the doctrine of nullification. 30

Calhoun's proscription meant Green's ruin as well. The editor had dared to print these letters and that increased the ire of an already touchy Jackson. "They have cut their own throats," the President said of Calhoun and Green. Still, he could not move too precipitately. Both men were well thought of in the anti-tariff South, as well as in parts of the Middle Atlantic and western states. Important members of the Party, including Richard M. Johnson, were sympathetic with Calhoun's situation. And many others suspected the truth of his claim that Van Buren had master-minded his downfall. Not everyone accepted as easily as Jackson that it was Calhoun and Green, not Van Buren and his lieutenants, who made up the cancer within the Administration. 31

Green particularly was more secure than he might have seemed. He had made no overt attack on Jackson, had written no words critical of the President. Calhoun, wishing to improve the odds of his gamble as much as possible, had ordered his followers to level their criticisms at "the contriver of this profligate intrigue," and leave the President alone. Green agreed with this strategy and attacked only Van Buren. Then, when the Globe began its inevitable assault on him, Green claimed that in printing the Calhoun letters he had been serving the Party, trying to remove a pernicious influence within the Administration. Green knew he could not convince Old Hickory of his innocence, but he
hoped that certain segments of the Party would be satisfied of Van Buren's guilt. In early March, understanding that the whole Party was not yet ready to accept Jackson's version of the controversy, Blair eased up his attacks on Green. Jackson and Calhoun were through with each other, that was certain. But Party considerations and the President's image dictated that the Vice-President and his followers could not be driven summarily into exile. The Administration's next move required a softer touch.  

Kendall and Blair wanted Green driven out of the Party quickly, knowing that the *Telegraph* would lose patronage and influence, and the *Globe* would gain these. They needed to discredit Green with the Democratic rank and file. To do this, they needed evidence that he had been openly disloyal to the Administration (that is, to the President). Kendall turned to Gideon Welles for just such evidence.

Kendall had been cultivating Welles for months for this very moment. Earlier in the year, before Calhoun had published his fatal statements, Kendall told Welles that the *Telegraph* would eventually "assume a hostile tone" toward the *Globe* and the Administration. Kendall expected Green to wait until after Congress awarded the printing contracts, then strike at Blair immediately. Therefore, Welles would soon have to come forward with the account of his meeting with Green in December, 1829, the fateful meeting in which Green had foolishly said that Calhoun's claim to the presidency "could not be postponed another four years." Kendall knew this remark, revealed by a postmaster in far off Connecticut, could finish Green with the Party.  

But Welles hesitated to get himself involved in a clash between titans. Calhoun and Green had allies in Connecticut, and the Hartford
editor was not so secure that he could simply ignore them. He also could not have guessed that in just a few weeks Calhoun would openly quarrel with Jackson and in so doing seriously undermine his standing in the Party. Welles, then, was understandably cautious. He dutifully supplied the necessary statement, and gave Kendall permission to publish an earlier letter to Isaac Hill, containing Welles' original account of Green's remarks. But he also asked Kendall to withhold his identity, "unless it be of great importance." 34

Kendall now had his weapon against Green but he held it back while the smoke settled over Calhoun's publication, waiting to see how the Party reacted. Jackson was anxious that the Vice-President not be made into a martyr in the South. The General also knew that a good warrior did not always rush headlong into battle; sometimes it was better to wait and count the enemy's strength. Meanwhile, Postmaster General Barry was sent to warn Green. Barry began by warning Green that as a result of the Telegraph's attacks on Van Buren, Jackson now counted him a part of "the opposition." Green countered by asking if "support or opposition to Mr. Van Buren was to be considered the test of friendship to the administration?" Barry then shifted to the matter of Calhoun's publication. Printing this, he said, had been a foolish thing. The President knew that Green was undeniably Calhoun's man. The Telegraph editor replied by saying that he "had counted the cost and was prepared for the contest." He also said that before long he would "show that the Globe was established with the preconcerted purpose of hunting Mr. Calhoun down" as a nullifier. Barry no doubt reported this to Kendall and Blair. 35

Kendall, meanwhile, studied the reaction to Calhoun's gamble,
and concluded that the reports did not favor the Vice-President. Even "Calhoun's friends," Kendall wrote Welles, "begin to think his publication a bad business." He warned Welles to be ready while the Globe hinted that it had evidence of duplicity on the part of Green. Green denied that charge of course, but not knowing what Blair was up to, he could only wait on events. In April Kendall decided that "it is time to put him down."

On April 6, six weeks after Calhoun had opened his Pandora's box, Blair printed Welles' statements and identified the author. Naturally, in keeping with the best traditions of Kentucky journalism, he edited the material to enhance the impact. He took out Green's statement that Calhoun "probably" would not oppose Jackson in 1832, if Jackson chose to run again. Green quickly pointed out the deletion, but by then the damage had been done. In vain, the Telegraph editor attacked first Blair, then Welles, and finally Van Buren again. It did no good. Welles replied with an able statement in his Hartford newspaper and Blair redoubled the attack. Caught between Blair's hammer and Welles' anvil, the Telegraph was crushed as a Party organ. 36

Where was Kendall during all this? He was in the background, a place that this once fiery editor was coming to favor. Kendall was content to let Blair complete the work of destruction, and so concentrated on covering his own tracks. He contacted Welles, not directly, but by way of Welles' friend John Niles. He wrote to encourage Welles in his ongoing exchanges with Green. He also cautioned Niles that Welles "must not use my name," adding that "I will correspond hereafter through you." This was an interesting concern, especially considering that Kendall had failed to protect Welles in the same way.
The Fourth Auditor was clearly anxious to stay out of the direct battle. 37

But there is no question that Kendall had aimed for Green's destruction from the moment he conceived the Globe and brought Blair to town to edit it. He had nurtured Welles, honing that man's memory into a knife and then plunging the blade into Green. And he had done it all while concealing his own role. It was a performance that even Van Buren should have admired.

With Green already involved in one fight, the President suddenly became aggressive. He had been passive and patient for too long, enduring the continuation of the Eaton affair and letting matters rest with Calhoun. Now, with everyone agitated by Calhoun's publication, Jackson could no longer stay off the battlefield. It says something of his political acumen that he had waited until Calhoun and Green had committed themselves.

Adversity always seemed to bring out the energy in Jackson. This time he entered the contest with a gleam in his eye — at last there was an enemy he could strike at, one without petticoats! First the President transmitted, through Lewis, his appreciation to Welles. Then he set about removing Calhoun loyalists within the Administration. Kendall had already begun the process of eliminating Calhoun men from the Fourth Auditor's office. On February 19, one of his clerks had appealed to Calhoun for help in getting a new place. He would be dismissed soon, he told Calhoun, because Kendall no longer needed his services. 38

The set piece of these adjustments, of course, was the purge of the cabinet. Jackson was by now convinced that Ingham, Branch, and
Berrien were pliant tools of the Vice-President. In actuality, Ingham
was indeed loyal to Calhoun, and Branch possibly so, but Berrien was not
Calhoun's man. The real state of affairs mattered little, however;
Jackson knew what he believed and that was that. Ingham, Branch, and
Berrien must go. But how? Even Old Hickory could not lightly insult
his followers in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and North Carolina, which would
happen if he simply dismissed the three men. That way would benefit
Clay, or revitalize Calhoun, who was still Vice-President.\textsuperscript{39}

It was Van Buren who provided the solution. He submitted his
own resignation, so that Jackson could "reorganize" the entire cabinet.
Van Buren's move was wise, not only because it gave Jackson the opening
he needed but also because it protected the Little Magician from the
party upheavals that would follow. As the vigilant John Tyler observed:
"[Van Buren's] resignation relieves him from all embarrassment
proceeding from the President's course in the future." Even Clay
expressed grudging admiration: "Foreseeing the gathering storm, [Van
Buren] wished early to secure a safe refuge."\textsuperscript{40}

Jackson was duly appreciative, if also genuinely sorry to see
the talented New Yorker leave. He appointed Van Buren to be minister to
Great Britain, and then set about rebuilding the cabinet. Eaton was
persuaded to leave (so much for Old Hickory's promise to stand by him
for all time) and Ingham, Branch, and Berrien were forced to resign.
Only Barry was kept on, and in his case it was incompetence that
provided salvation. The Post Office was being criticized for poor
service, and Barry was being attacked for mismanagement. Jackson
decided to keep Barry until the charges were cleared up. Thus, of the
whole chain, the President kept only the weakest link.\textsuperscript{41}
The Cabinet purge shocked both Party and Nation. Nothing like it had ever occurred before. Even Kendall was surprised by it. He quickly guessed that the purge "unquestionably originated with Mr. Van Buren." Moreover he doubted the wisdom the the purge, as he feared that once they went home, Ingham, Branch, and Berrien would create disruptions in the Party. Events would subsequently prove him right, but Kendall was discovering the extent of Jackson's determination. He had decided to purge the cabinet. Once that was done, there was no turning him back.\(^{42}\)

All that was left now was the anti-climax, the comic relief that was needed to reduce tension. This was provided by Ingham, the high strung Secretary, and Eaton, the harried husband. Ingham was the least cooperative of the retiring secretaries, resigning only after a protracted series of evasions and delays. Thus he was on hand in May, 1831, when Duff Green published all the details of the Eaton affair. Among this pile of dirty laundry was the fact that Branch, Berrien, and Ingham had excluded the Eatons from their social functions. These Telegraph exposes were the last straw for Peggy Eaton, who was already furious at her husband for tamely resigning. This smear on her reputation was too much and she demanded that her husband defend her honor. In June, Eaton called on Ingham to demand that he repudiate Green's remarks. Ingham refused. Instead, he said Eaton was "a little deranged" and that all of Washington knew of the rumors concerning Peggy's reputation. Eaton instantly issued a challenge, which Ingham ignored. The former Secretary of War thereafter began stalking Ingham, hoping for some kind of confrontation. The former Treasury Secretary responded by fleeing to Baltimore, and sent Jackson a note accusing
Eaton, Lewis and several others of attempted "assassination." In a subsequent public letter on the matter, Ingham added Kendall's name to his list of "conspirators."[43]

Jackson ignored the accusations, and termed Ingham's conduct "infamous and cowardly." Meanwhile, Blair published denials from the "conspirators" and questioned Ingham's sanity. Kendall's denial made much of the absurdity of the situation. He explained that at the time the would-be assassins were supposedly tracking down Ingham, he had been on a walk with Jane. He assured Jackson that he had had no designs on Ingham's safety. Then with malicious glee added the words "nor do I believe my wife had."[44]

On this note the dreary and embarrassing tale of Jackson's first cabinet came to an end. "The long agony is finally over" — these had been Ingham's words to Berrien at the time of the resignations, and the phrase was an apt one. Never before had a president dispensed with so many members of his official family. The purge was bound to embarrass the President, disrupt the Party, and encourage the opposition. But for all its ill effects, the purge also reaffirmed the central themes of the Jackson Presidency: executive ascendancy and personal loyalty. Nothing should have been more clear than the fact that in dismissing his cabinet and condemning his Vice-President, Jackson was announcing his determination to rule over both the Federal Government and the Democratic Party. As the President explained it to his nephew, he had taken the action in order to destroy "the combination against Van Buren and myself, and those other heads strongly attached to me."[45]

One of those "heads" was Kendall's. The cabinet purge and the fall of Calhoun made it inevitable that Jackson would rely even more on
his informal advisors. The fall of Green meant that the Globe was going to be the Party's major organ. Kendall had Jackson's increasing favor and Blair's ready pen to assist him in bringing about the reforms he had listed in his letter to David Henshaw. Just as Welles had been his weapon against Green, so now Blair and Jackson would be his weapons against the greatest enemy of "the people," the Bank of the United States.
CHAPTER VIII

NOTES


2 Amos Kendall to Francis P. Blair, January 9, February 3, March 7, April 30, July 20, November 22, 1829, March 1, 1830, all in the Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library (hereafter PUL); Kendall to John Rowan, May 10, 1829, Rowan papers, Kentucky Historical Society; Elbert B. Smith, Francis Preston Blair (New York: Free Press, 1980), pp. 36-39.


4 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, April 25, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.

5 Ibid., January 28, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.


11 Wiltse, pp. 76-82.

12 Remini, pp. 305-9; Marquis James, Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1937), pp. 266-73.


16 Kendall to David Henshaw, December 18, 1829, Boston Public Library Bulletin, June, 1902, pp. 265-66.

17 Elbert Smith, Blair, pp. 40-42; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, January 9, 1829, March 1, 1830, and in Blair to Kendall, February 11, 1830, all in Blair-Lee papers, PUL.


20 Remini, pp. 292-93; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, July 19, August 13, 22, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.


22 Duff Green to William Green, November 17, 1830, Duff Green papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Library.
23 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, October 2, 29, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Autobiography, pp. 370-74; Remini, pp. 293-94; Elbert Smith, Blair, pp. 40-41.

24 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, October 2, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Kendall to [Isaac Hill] November 26, 1830, Kendall Miscellaneous papers, New York Historical Society; Kendall to Blair, November 20, 1830, Blair papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC).

25 Elbert Smith, Blair, pp. 41-42; William Smith, Blair, p. 63; Parton, p. 169 (italics are mine); Kendall to Francis P. Blair, November 1, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL.

26 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, October 2, 1830, Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Autobiography, p. 372; Andrew Jackson to Kendall, December 6, 1830, Jackson papers, LC; Jackson to John Coffee, December 6, 1830, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 4, pp. 211-12; Kendall to A. Kyle, February 19, 1831, Kendall Miscellaneous Collection, Dartmouth College Library.

27 Elbert Smith, Blair, p. 48; Francis P. Blair to Kendall, September 10, 1831 and Kendall to Andrew Jackson, December 3, 1831, both in Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Michael W. Singletary, "The New Editorial Voice for Andrew Jackson: Happenstance or Plan?" Journalism Quarterly 53 (1976), pp. 672-78.


29 Remini, p. 306; James, pp. 269-70; Wiltse, pp. 93-97.


Gideon Welles to Kendall, February 3, 1831, Welles papers, LC.

Remini, pp. 310-11; Duff Green to John Floyd, March 10, 1831, Meriwether, ed., Calhoun Papers, v. 11, pp. 359-60.

Kendall to Gideon Welles, March 8, 10, 1831, both in Welles papers, LC; Niven, pp. 81-87; Elbert Smith, Blair, p. 60; Telegraph, April 14, 1831.

Kendall to John Niles, April 10, 1831, Welles papers, LC.


Remini, pp. 316-17; Kendall to Gideon Welles, April 23, 1831, Welles papers, LC.

Remini, p. 320; Samuel D. Ingham to Andrew Jackson, June 21, 1831, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 4, p. 300; Telegraph, July 4, 1831.

CHAPTER IX

BEGINNING THE WAR WITH CHESTNUT STREET

The remainder of 1831 was a testing time for Andrew Jackson and his coterie of advisors. The Democratic Party was nearly in shambles. Calhoun had been excommunicated by Jackson, although he held on to the Vice-Presidency and was still dangerous. The dismissal of the cabinet led to some peace in the Executive, but elsewhere the situation was different. The followers of Ingham, Branch, and Berrien were no longer reliable, and Calhoun men were now enemies of the Administration. Calhoun's ally, Virginia's Governor John Floyd, judged that "Van Buren is utterly annihilated in Virginia and Jackson himself so hurt that he may now be said literally to live politically but by the sufferance of those he has most neglected or has permitted his printers to abuse."

Both of Virginia's Senators, Tazewell and Tyler, were by this time alienated from the President. South Carolina quickly became an anti-Jackson bastion, and the threat of nullification increased. Those few in the State who remained loyal to Jackson hesitated to declare their allegiance in public. Of course, the purge of Ingham, Branch, and Berrien seriously disrupted the Party in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia.¹

Even Tennessee could no longer be counted as safely in the Jackson camp. His influence seemed to be waning in his home State. One of Old Hickory's firmest early supporters, Hugh Lawson White began showing an almost glacial coolness toward the Administration. As a

²⁴⁷
Senator, White had given more support to Jackson's Indian removal policy than any other member of Congress. After the purge the President contrived a scheme that would both secure the continuance of Indian removal and mollify the Eatons at the same time. Jackson proposed that White resign his Senate seat and join the cabinet as Secretary of War. Eaton could then be elected to the Senate vacancy created by White. It was a clever idea and failed only because White refused to go along with it. He declined the cabinet position, without clearly explaining his reason for doing so. Jackson was deeply disappointed, as were the Eatons. Rumor had it that White was jealous of Van Buren's standing with the President, that he disliked Jackson's informal advisors, and that he had plans for succeeding Jackson. Whatever the reasons, Jackson's friendship with White began to dissolve.¹

Meanwhile, Jackson had troubles of a more public nature. Kendall said Duff Green was destroyed, but his demise was the hottest thing seen in Washington since the British burned the Capital. After exposing the Eaton Affair to the nation, Green persuaded Branch and Berrien to publish their versions of the cabinet break-up. These two men denied that the purge stemmed from simple disharmony. Their unwillingness to let Jackson dictate their social lives led him to dismiss them, they charged. The Globe denied this, and the resulting exchange of further letters simply increased John and Peggy Eaton's social embarrassments. It also embarrassed the Administration, deepening the gloom within the already disillusionsed Party. As a member of the Tennessee legislature told Polk: "I greatly [sic] fear this matter is to end in no good; it will, it must make a division either more or less in our ranks thereby the better preparing the way of Prince
Hal [Clay]."  

The National Republicans were naturally delighted with the Democrats' disarray. Clay publicly deplored the "mortification" of the President. Privately, he thought the situation was highly amusing and confidently predicted Jackson's total defeat. Webster was in equally good spirits. He believed that if the National Republicans now mounted a well conducted campaign they could force Jackson to "retire from the contest" in 1832. Resting in South Carolina, Calhoun hardly seemed discouraged by his recent defeat. To his loyal friend James H. Hammond, he seemed exuberant, confident. Even the cautious John McLean sensed an opportunity. As he traveled his Court circuit in Ohio, he spoke of the prostrate state of the Democratic Party, all but offering himself as its savior.  

In the meantime, Green saw to it that Kendall was not lost amidst the turmoil. He wrote Party men in the South to complain that the Globe was established by Kendall to "hunt down Calhoun." Kendall was, moreover, a part owner of the Globe and frequently was seen writing for it while in his Fourth Auditor's office. Kendall was corrupt, as everyone in Washington well knew. His father-in-law and brother-in-law worked in his office, after all (a charge that was true, but all too common at the time). The Telegraph began carrying extracts of Kendall's 1828 articles on Henry Clay, and Green reopened the whole discussion of Kendall's treason against the Clays for a five hundred dollar difference in salary.  

Kendall was unperturbed. He solicited Isaac Hill for reactions to the purge in New England and for suggestions concerning Jackson's new cabinet. He also assured Hill that "poor Duff" was "fast losing the
power to make mischief." Anticipating the gains of Congressional printing, Blair soon expanded the Globe into a daily.  

Kendall judged the situation safe enough to go on a vacation. He packed up his growing family and escaped the heat of Washington for the pleasant quiet of Dunstable. This was a working vacation, for Kendall stopped in Boston to consult with Henshaw and other Jacksonian leaders. Then he went on to Dunstable. This was Jane's and the children's first visit to the small farm where Amos was born, and where his father still lived. Kendall had not seen his old home since 1827, when he had been dangerously in debt and committed to Jackson for plainly mercenary reasons. Now, four years later, he was still in debt but it seemed to many that he was actually the power behind the throne. Indeed, as the Kendalls set their sights northward, the head of the family left behind a growing reputation for manipulation and cunning.  

That "wretch of a printer," John Floyd of Virginia termed him, who "has more influence with the President than any other man." Branch ascribed his fall to the machinations of Kendall and Lewis, termed Jackson a "poor degenerate man" under their spell and predicted that they would control the Executive. Ingham suspected much the same reasons for his own dismissal and further believed that Kendall would become Jackson's new Secretary of the Navy. Ingham's friends denounced Kendall as the cause of their champion's fall, and he was the subject of much abuse during the Pennsylvania state elections. A Tennessee associate of Jackson disapproved of Kendall's rising influence. He warned Jackson that the opposition would use the "power behind the throne" claims to full advantage. Therefore, he suggested to the
President that steps be taken to counter such rumors. Lewis should move out of the White House and "Mr. Kendall should attend only to the duties of his office [that is, 4th Auditor] and let you wholly alone." Up in New England, Kendall's friend Isaac Hill replied to Duff Green's allegation that Kendall was the author of Administration policy with these words:

If Amos Kendall was the writer [of Jackson's official messages], instead of Fourth Auditor, he ought to be made head of a Department; for such a production could emanate from none other than a clear head, a belligerent heart, and from talents which would do honor to any nation.

Manipulator, counsellor, ghost-writer — Amos Kendall, the shadowy figure of the Jackson White House. It was from these beginnings that a minor legend in American politics would grow. The "Kitchen Cabinet" appellation had not yet been coined, but the image of it already existed. And Kendall's place in it was secure. Even Jackson's nephew Donelson worried that his uncle was too dependent on "Amos Kendall and Co." Generally, Donelson trusted Kendall, but disliked Lewis and wanted him out of the White House. Blair was not yet so much in Jackson's confidence as to be included in the rumors about the "back-stairs advisors." But his turn would come, for many men, in both parties, would never believe that Jackson controlled his own policies and decisions. To them, he would always be the feeble, ill-tempered old man, manipulated by others. But, as his most recent biographer clearly demonstrates, Jackson kept tight control over his official family. He may at times have preferred his Kitchen Cabinet's advice to that of the official cabinet, but "the final decision was always his."

Actually, Kendall and Lewis were engaged in a little wire-pulling during the spring of 1831. Lewis believed that the easiest
way to calm the Democratic Party's jitters was to make it clear that
Jackson would indeed accept a second term. Since late 1830, he had been
using his gregarious, easy-going charm and network of contacts toward
securing another Jackson movement for 1832. He had assured a
Pennsylvania editor, for example, that Old Hickory would not refuse a
call by the Party to run again. Soon after this, the State Party Caucus
adopted a resolution calling for Jackson's renomination. Party groups
in other states followed suit, and on January 26, 1831 Blair assured the
Democrats that "the conquering Hero is again in the field." "Under our
chief, who has never been defeated in an open fight, we shall again
march to victory," Blair told the Party faithful.

Kendall was still uneasy, however. He knew that Calhoun might
decide to challenge Jackson openly for the nomination. In the resulting
Party schism, a third figure like McLean might become a compromise
choice. He actually warned McLean not to consider such a strategy. To
oppose Jackson would be true folly, he wrote, and "you know too well the
brightness of your prospects to succeed him" to jeopardize it all.
Kendall assured McLean that he, Kendall, was not a Van Buren man as
Green and Calhoun were charging. Kendall favored no man but Jackson in
1832. Thereafter, he would see who could best unite the Party and carry
its banner of reform. 10

Kendall also sent a worried letter to Lewis. Calhoun
sympathizers in New England, including Nathaniel Green and David Henshaw
of Boston, believed that Calhoun could hold onto the second place in
1832, Kendall warned Lewis. Southern legislatures would probably
endorse Calhoun and leave him on the ballot within their states. Could
not the Jackson men devise some mechanism to prevent this, Kendall
asked?

Lewis thought the matter over, and told Kendall that it was "premature to nominate a candidate" for Vice-President. Instead, he suggested, "it would be best for the Republican members of the respective [state] Legislatures to propose to the people to elect delegates to a national convention," which could choose a Vice-Presidential candidate. Lewis thought that this would be the path best calculated to lead to harmony in the Party and success at the polls. He continued: "If the Legislature of New Hampshire will propose this, I think it will be followed up by others." He asked Kendall to suggest as much to Hill — if, of course, Kendall found merit in the idea.11

Kendall and Hill obviously did like the idea, for the Patriot of Concord, New Hampshire, soon after printed a letter from a "Gentleman in Concord, N.H." reporting that in a caucus meeting of New Hampshire Democrats, resolutions were approved praising the President's course and calling for a national convention "to be held at Baltimore on the third Monday of May, 1832, to nominate a candidate for Vice-President, and take such other measures in support of the re-election of Andrew Jackson as may be deemed expedient." Blair then picked up the call, reprinting parts of the Patriot report and saying that the idea was "probably the best plan which can be adopted to produce entire unanimity in the Republican [i.e. Democratic] Party, and secure its lasting ascendancy."12

In this manner the Democratic Party Convention was born. It was not, as has been claimed, a device designed to nominate Van Buren in 1832. Indeed, Kendall clearly was not in favor of Van Buren as the man
to replace Calhoun on the ticket. Nor, would it seem, did Hill or Lewis want The Magician in that place. The convention could have been used to keep Van Buren off the ticket, although the primary intent was quite obviously to use a carefully managed convention to block a Calhoun nomination. As will be seen, the convention method was readily adopted by the Party rank and file, but the results of the Democratic convention would not conform to Kendall's hopes.13

As his working vacation came to an end, Kendall prepared to return to the intrigues of the National Capital. But the Kendalls' sojourn at Dunstable had not been a pleasant one. Jane and Amos left behind an infant daughter, who died of a sudden fever around early June. Kendall was shaken by the tragic event, but took it much better than the death of his first wife.14

Kendall was back in Washington by late June. There, his rising status within the Administration was reaffirmed in a number of ways. In his first day back, he met Lewis who promptly turned over to him a number of letters and documents "bearing upon the Calhoun affair." These had been left for Kendall by Jackson, who was himself resting in Virginia. The President wanted Kendall to study the material and apparently formulate some strategies toward further neutralizing the Vice-President and his supporters. Lewis told Jackson that Kendall took the materials and immediately began "giving them his particular attention." 15

On July 4, Kendall and numerous other members of the Party faithful took time out from their labors to gather at the Capitol rotunda and listen to Francis Scott Key's address commemorating the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Key gave one of his
best orations on this day. Scarcely had his eloquence ceased echoing through the Capitol's corridors when the assembled Democrats adjourned to a nearby tavern for a banquet. Lewis and Kendall acted as toastmasters, but unfortunately the toasts were not preserved for posterity. Across town, at the National Republican banquet, an unnamed opposition man took the occasion to toast: "The Kendall Coat of Arms: Two posts rampant, a beam couchant, a rope pendant, with an 'ungrateful hypocrite' at the end of it."

The target of this jibe was too busy to notice. The Kendalls were leaving Georgetown for a new home on Twelfth Street in the City. This move placed Kendall in the midst of the social whirl he disliked, but much closer to the White House. He was also within minutes of the State Department, his own office in the Treasury, and the Globe establishment.16

Meanwhile, Blair was denying Kendall's influence in the Administration. Responding to Green's charge that Kendall was the true editor of the paper, Blair retorted that "Mr. Kendall had no more to do with [the Globe] than the editor of the Telegraph." Green also charged that Kendall was engineering a convention movement in order to ensure Van Buren's nomination as Vice-President. Blair scoffed at this too, asking how "the course of New Hampshire was subject to the dictation of Mr. Kendall?" Ingham also at this time made his assassination charge and Blair had to defend his friend once again.17

Kendall, meantime, sent a few words to Hill. He thanked his New Hampshire ally for "the proceedings of our democratic friends in your Legislature," and predicted that the convention scheme would be adopted.
It would increase Party harmony, he concluded. As for the election of 1832, he told Hill: "I doubt whether Gen. Jackson will ultimately have any opposition. Who can touch him?" He also assured Hill that the Globe was now accepted as the Party organ. Green was finished, Jackson was ascendant, and Blair could soon concentrate his attention on another matter. Kendall predicted that the Globe would give "the U.S. Bank no rest. I am now more sanguine than ever, that we shall prostrate that strong hold of aristocratic power." 18

The Bank of the United States was never far from Kendall's mind. His hatred of it, based on fifteen years of suspicion of corporations and "artificial privileges," was by now total and unqualified. Destroying the B.U.S. was his obsession. His hatred of the Bank spurred his desire to see Jackson reelected in 1832, because only Jackson had the popular support and the force of will to fight it. Jackson was not necessarily committed against the Bank, despite Kendall's remark to Blair in 1829 that "The President is decidedly opposed to the Bank of the U.S." But Jackson was suspicious of it, indeed of all banks, and as a close advisor Kendall could try to fan his suspicion into a raging antagonism. 19

Kendall pursued his campaign against the Bank at every opportunity. In the fall of 1829 he and Isaac Hill attempted to convince Jackson that the Bank had interfered in local politics. Hill initiated this by complaining that the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, branch of the Bank favored National Republicans with special loans. As Hill was at this time 2nd Comptroller of the Treasury, he made his complaint through Ingham, who queried the President of the B.U.S., Nicholas Biddle, on the matter. Ingham later admitted that he had no wish to be
part of an attack on the Bank, and at the time his attitude was reflected in the fact that his letters to Biddle were hesitant and apologetic. It was hardly surprising, then, that Biddle saw fit to dismiss the charges and ignore the complaints.

But while Hill's charges were fresh, Kendall seized the chance to add some of his own. He sent Ingham a note repeating a charge he had made in the Argus years before, that the Louisville branch of the Bank had given money to the Old Court party in 1825. This claim could not be substantiated, but as Kendall had intended, the incident reached Jackson's ears. Soon after, when Biddle tried to ascertain what Jackson might say about the B.U.S. in his message to Congress, the President replied: "I do not think that Congress has a right to create a corporation out of the ten mile square." 20

When Jackson began to prepare his First Annual Message, Kendall wrote the first draft concerning the Bank. Exactly what Kendall wrote is not known, for the draft is not now in Jackson's papers. But Van Buren, who feared a battle between the Bank and the President, was shocked when he saw the text. He sent for his friend James A. Hamilton and asked him to persuade Jackson to alter the passage. Hamilton visited Jackson and offered to help polish the message. Old Hickory accepted. When Hamilton saw the message as drafted, he found that the "Bank of the United States was attacked at great length in a loose, newspaper, slashing style." He tried to convince Jackson "to say nothing at present about the bank," but Jackson permitted him only to tone down the passage. "Both the constitutionality and the expediency of the law creating the bank are well questioned by a large portion of our fellow citizens," Hamilton rewrote, "and it must be admitted by all
that it has failed in the great end of establishing a uniform and sound currency." These are the words that Jackson used when the Message went to Congress, and even these shocked Biddle when he read them.

Kendall was not ruffled by the deletion of his more vicious attack. He simply redrafted it as a series of questions and sent them to the New York Courier and Enquirer's editor, Mordecai Noah. Noah had met Kendall at the time of the inauguration, and when he received the letter he understood immediately what he was expected to do with it. Noah's associate James Gordon Bennett later remembered that the questions were "sent over to the Courier office, and published as an editorial next morning." These questions are important for understanding the formal strategy and argument Kendall was developing against the Bank:

Can the government manage its concerns, now that there are no loans and very little debt left to pay, without the aid of this bank?

Will the different states, through their representatives, be of opinion that the protecting due to the local banks, forbid the re-chartering of the United States' bank?

Will sundry banks, throughout the union, take measures to satisfy the general government of their safety in receiving deposits of the revenue, and transacting the banking concerns of the United States?

Will the legislatures of the several states adopt resolutions on the subject, and instruct their senators how to vote?

Will a proposition be made to authorize the government to issue exchequer bills, to the amount of the annual revenue, redeemable at pleasure, to constitute a circulating medium equivalent to the notes issued by the United States' bank?21

Jackson, meanwhile, considered other plans to replace the B.U.S. with some other form of Treasury agent. Felix Grundy of Tennessee had sent him a plan for a new national bank, one in which all of the directors would be chosen by Congress. Grundy stipulated that branches
would be established in each state and the directors for these could, he suggested, be chosen by the respective state delegations in Congress. When the President presented the plan to his advisers for comment, he found little enthusiasm for the idea. Both Ingham and Berrien urged Jackson not to present the scheme to Congress. Like Van Buren, neither of these men wanted Jackson to do battle with the Bank.\textsuperscript{22}

Jackson then asked Kendall for his opinion of Grundy's proposal. Even the 4th Auditor balked at the idea that it be presented to Congress. He told Jackson that the Bank issue should "not as yet be thrown before the public." Kendall's concurring with the opinions of Ingham and Berrien was coincidence, for he had very different motives. He was afraid that an early discussion of alternatives to the Bank, before it had been eliminated, would only divide opponents of that institution. He recognized that there were a variety of reasons for opposition to the Bank — preference for hard money, speculative ventures, support for local banks — and that these reasons did not necessarily harmonize with one another. A premature consideration of a replacement for the Bank could break up the anti-Bank movement before it accomplished its first order of business: destruction of the B.U.S. This consideration formed another part of Kendall's strategy against the Bank.\textsuperscript{23}

During 1830, Jackson was too preoccupied with cabinet troubles to give much consideration to the B.U.S. He did take notice of its shortcomings in his Second Annual Message. He suggested that a different bank, "so modified in its principles and structure as to obviate constitutional and other objections," should be considered.

Kendall continued his campaign, repeating to Jackson his charges
that the Bank had interfered in Kentucky politics. Kendall also complained to Blair that the Telegraph was too soft when it came to the B.U.S. Kendall himself had had to write most of the anti-Bank material that appeared in the Telegraph in 1829 and 1830. The desire to have a true anti-Bank organ in Washington was one of his prime motivations for establishing the Globe in 1830. He had therefore devoted the year to bringing Blair to the Capital, in the meantime sniping at the Bank from his 4th Auditor's office. After reviewing B.U.S. accounts concerning the Navy, for example, he hounded Biddle about a discrepancy of $11.81! "The cause of the difference you will have the goodness to explain," he coldly demanded.24

With Blair's arrival, Kendall finally had a firm ally against the Bank. The Globe attacked the Bank as a danger to the Nation's freedom, a tool of "property interests" and an example of aristocratic arrogance. Kendall added some essays of his own to the Globe's columns. Much of what he wrote simply repeated the remarks he had written in Kentucky. The Bank was an unconstitutional expansion of Federal power and a threat to "the people." "The United States is governed too much," Kendall concluded. "The destruction of the Bank will be an important check to overmuch government."25

As the Administration was able to resume normal activities in the fall of 1831, Kendall sought ways to intensify his attacks on the Bank. The prospects for doing so seemed bright. Van Buren's imminent departure for Great Britain would remove a restraining influence on the President, and Kendall hoped to make some progress with Jackson in Van Buren's absence. On the other hand, the new cabinet did not promise any allies against the B.U.S. If anything, it had a decidedly pro-Bank
Van Buren had been more effective than other advisers in influencing the selection of the second cabinet. He had successfully urged Jackson to choose Edward Livingston of New York as the new Secretary of State. Jackson liked and trusted Livingston. The two men had served together against the British at New Orleans and Jackson knew that Livingston's strong nationalism and Southern ties could be useful in dealing with the nullifiers. But Livingston had no enmity toward the B.U.S. He considered the institution to be a useful arm of the American economy and did not desire to see it destroyed.

The new Secretary of War, Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory, was also friendly toward the Bank. Cass, whom Kendall had met in 1815 on his journey to Kentucky, was chosen primarily to continue the Indian removals. His influence on the Bank question would be negligible. Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire was a different matter. Woodbury was selected as Secretary of the Navy because Jackson wanted a New Englander in the cabinet, and because Woodbury had obligingly resigned his Senate seat in 1829 to allow Isaac Hill the place. A cool, hard-bargaining Yankee, Woodbury had been a classmate of Kendall's at Dartmouth. Kendall had not liked Woodbury then and his memory was soon reinforced by an incident that did not augur well for an harmonious future; early in 1832 Woodbury reprimanded Kendall for being late with a report. The 4th Auditor excused his tardiness on the grounds of illness, and then added a sharp rejoinder:

You may be assured, sir, that no man is more anxious than I am to expedite the public business; and a little reflection will satisfy you, that official admonitions like those to which I am replying passing as they do upon the records of your Department, create there a presumptive evidence of official neglect on my part, neither just
to me nor the most agreeable to my feelings.26

But personal relations aside, Woodbury was too cautious to commit himself for or against the Bank, and so it appeared that he would be of no help to Kendall's plans.

Nor did Kendall expect to find an ally in Roger Taney, the new Attorney General. Taney was a Maryland ex-Federalist who had joined the Jacksonians in 1827. His energy had secured for Old Hickory five of Maryland's eleven electoral votes in 1828, and Jackson was ever ready to reward such men. Taney had excellent legal talent and was thus a credit to any cabinet. But he accepted the post only after receiving assurances that he could continue his lucrative law practice in Baltimore. His attitude toward the B.U.S. was unknown, but Kendall probably worried about his Federalist past.

The last new cabinet member, Louis McLane of Delaware, was another former Federalist who had cast his lot with the Democrats. Like Livingston, he owed his advancement to Van Buren's influence. Vain, capable and ambitious (he had wanted an appointment in the first cabinet), McLane supported the Bank of the United States and thus was actually a threat to Kendall. Moreover, McLane had high hopes of becoming Jackson's new confidant. He was much interested in obtaining a seat on the United States Supreme Court and saw the cabinet as a step toward his goal. But coming into the Treasury in mid-term he could not readily fill its offices with his own men. Kendall and Lewis, for example, held two key auditorships, and McLane could never dismiss them. This lack of personal patronage was frustrating and fueled an antagonism between Kendall and the new Secretary.27

Their first clash came over the composition of Jackson's Third
Annual Message. Kendall, hopeful that with the settlement of the Eaton affair he could renew his attack on the Bank, drafted another stinging criticism of the institution. But it was not to be used. McLane communicated with Biddle, who wanted Old Hickory to say nothing about the Bank in his Message, or at most that it was a matter for Congress to decide. McLane replied that he could convince Jackson to do this, if Biddle in turn could promise to pay off the national debt by the end of Jackson's first term. Retirement of the debt was a goal dear to the President's heart and McLane thought that with this as leverage he could persuade Jackson to be silent regarding the Bank. McLane promised to support rechartering the Bank, albeit with modifications to make it more palatable, in his Treasury Report to Congress. But, he insisted to Biddle, his support was not to be taken as an invitation for the Bank to request a new charter in 1832. Recharter must come "at the proper time," McLane stressed, and by this he meant after the next Presidential election. If Biddle tried to press Jackson now, McLane feared the consequences. "I think," he concluded to Biddle, "he [Jackson] would be more disposed to yield when he is strong than when he is in danger." 28

Biddle agreed to the plan, and McLane delivered as he had promised. He convinced Jackson to refrain from criticizing the Bank in the Third Annual Message. Kendall's blunt attack was relegated to the pile of unused drafts in the Jackson papers; where it may be found and studied today. In its place went McLane's innocuous statement that, having already presented his objections to the present Bank, the President deemed it "proper on this occasion, without a more particular reference to the views of the subject then expressed, to leave it for
the present to the investigation of an enlightened people and their representatives."

Jackson never explained his decision to soft-pedal the Bank issue at this time. But his reasons are self-evident. He was presiding in 1831 over a Party in turmoil, particularly in the South. During the summer, Calhoun had gone home and come out openly in favor of his nullification theory as the best way to preserve states' rights in a federal union. Behind Calhoun, the nullifiers of South Carolina were rapidly preparing for a confrontation over the tariff. Foreseeing the danger, Jackson devoted much of his message to a call for reducing tariff rates. An attempt at nullifying a Federal law would do more than jeopardize Jackson's reelection; it could conceivably lead to civil war. Under the circumstances, the President did not wish to stir up further trouble over the Bank.²⁹

Then too, Jackson had no desire to immediately divide his new cabinet. To have ignored McLane's suggestions concerning the B.U.S. would have been to suggest doubts about his Treasury Secretary's judgment. Livingston also counselled Jackson to make no further attacks on the Bank, and the President had great respect for his opinions. The President simply would not risk disrupting his advisors so soon after the first cabinet imbroglio. Significantly, Jackson was now holding weekly cabinet sessions, quite an increase over his previous practice.

Jackson read the draft of the Third Annual Message to his cabinet early in December. Everyone listened carefully, but only Taney raised any questions about the section on the Bank. Did not Jackson appear to be reversing his stand, Taney asked? Taney had long ago represented a client in a case against the Bank, but other than this one
incident he was not known for his opposition to the institution. Suddenly he now revealed his doubts, arguing that as they stood, the remarks on the Bank could be interpreted as surrender. As Taney explained later:

I thought it might be implied from the language now used, that having brought the subject to the attention of the people of the U. States, he [Jackson] was prepared to acquiesce in their decision, and would regard the action of the new Congress, whatever it should be, as an expression of their will.

Was this the case, he asked Jackson? Jackson replied that he would certainly not sign any recharter bill, but that he would reserve judgment until the actual event. McLane said Taney's worries were groundless and the rest of the cabinet said very little. Jackson mollified Taney with a minor revision of the passage, noting his "opinions heretofore expressed" about the Bank. Then the message went forward to the Congress. But Taney's objections meant that Kendall had one ally in the cabinet. 30

Was Taney's attitude crucial to Kendall's plans? Not really. McLane might conspire with Biddle, confer with Livingston, and enlist others in his attempt to make peace between the President and the Bank. Kendall might plot with Hill, attack the B.U.S. in the Globe and look for allies within the cabinet. But, in the end, the final fate of the Bank rested in Jackson's hands. What stands out about Jackson's Presidency was his capacity to personalize every issue. The Bank War was the epitome of this tendency.

There are many amazing things about Jackson's amazing life, but a study of his political career reveals three outstanding features: Contemporaries consistently underestimated his political savvy; Jackson
seldom let others take the initiative or the responsibility; he never backed away from a challenge. These were the traits that characterized his leadership. These were the traits that won the people's devotion. They were the attributes of a decisive and effective leader.

Kendall, who had mocked Madison, criticized Monroe and despised Adams, recognized this quality in Jackson very early in their relationship. Jackson was Kendall's "man of decision," and the Nation's also. In this era of rapid change, of economic tension, sectional friction, and political transition, Jackson was a beacon of stability. Uneasy thinkers saw him as the man who could preserve the Republic against unseen, internal enemies. His steady faith in the wisdom of the people, his absolute confidence in himself to recognize the popular will, transcended the dissensions of his Presidency. The American people, or at least the majority, trusted the Hero of New Orleans. Regardless of Clay's worries about a potential Caesar in the White House, despite the National Republicans' charges of executive tyranny, the people trusted Jackson. He, in turn, knew that the people would sustain him; not because he was an especially able politician, but because he was so often right in discerning what they wanted. 31

It can be argued that Jackson simply told the people what they wanted to hear. It has been argued that he created the popular will. The opposition believed this, and charged that Kendall and Blair would write essays, send them to Party papers in the hinterland, then reprint them in the Globe as examples of "popular will." But to condemn such manipulation, if it really occurred, is to enter a vague and uncertain area. Effective leaders throughout history have taken unspecific impulses and translated them into popular movements. In American
politics, a leader's continued successes frequently depends on this ability. To argue that Jackson directed public opinion is to argue that he was a successful, dynamic leader. 32

The Bank War was to be the supreme test of Jackson's leadership qualities. If he could successfully weather the challenge of the Bank in an election year, he could rightfully continue to claim that he knew the popular will. As Kendall had asked, "who can touch him" if he could win this fight?

The fight commenced on the day after the Annual Message was read in Congress. McLane delivered his Treasury Report. McLane praised the performance of the Bank and recommended that it be granted a new charter, amended with "such judicious checks and limitations as experience may have shown to be necessary." The report was received with mixed feelings by the Democratic rank and file, but Jackson himself was not displeased. He admitted to Van Buren that he and McLane had "an honest difference of opinion" over the Bank, but felt no grudge over the matter because McLane had acted fairly, "leaving me free and uncommitted." The President was still anxious to prevent a disruption in his second cabinet. 33

Frank Blair was not quite so understanding. He reprinted numerous articles that disagreed with the report, and subtly began discrediting the Secretary of the Treasury. McLane countered by bringing Taney, Barry and several Van Buren men to his home to discuss the possibility of replacing the Globe editor. McLane opined to these men that Blair was too extreme in his criticisms, too hard-hitting, for a party just recovering from an upheaval. He hinted, moreover, that Blair was not friendly to Van Buren. Perhaps Kendall should replace
Blair, he suggested. This was a clever ploy, for if Kendall accepted
the idea, McLane would be rid of his presence in the Treasury
Department. Jackson might accept the change too, as he had great faith
in Kendall and wanted to please Van Buren's friends. But the others at
McLane's that evening hesitated to endorse the plan, which was just as
well, because Jackson resolutely vetoed the idea when he heard of it.
Blair was rising in his estimation and he would not dispense with his
services. 34

Despite this setback, McLane was not immediately worried.
Secure in the knowledge that Jackson had remained passive to his
actions, the Secretary of the Treasury could ignore Kendall, Blair, and
the other critics who labelled him "ultra Federal . . . ultra Bank."
McLane also counted on his friendship with the heir apparent, Martin Van
Buren. Therefore, as 1832 commenced, he looked forward to the prospect
of influencing, perhaps even directing, Administration policy for some
time to come. 35

But McLane had unknowingly passed his zenith. He thought he
held all the cards, but the game was already out of his control. He had
failed to reckon with a joker in the pack: Henry Clay.

Since 1829, Clay had been playing the role of a retired
statesman. Actually, it was the presidency, not retirement, that was on
the mind of Harry of the West. From his study in Ashland, amid the very
books once used by Kendall to teach his children, Clay sent forth
directives to his lieutenants and allies, all intended to discredit
Jackson for the next election. When the Jackson-Calhoun break was
followed by the cabinet purge, the Master of Ashland was convinced that
Old Hickory was finished. "I think we are authorized," he told an old
friend, "to anticipate confidently General Jackson's defeat."

But Clay's glittering expectations were tarnished when he failed to regain control of his own State. He had hoped that Jackson's veto of the Maysville Road bill would alienate large numbers of Kentuckians and other westerners. But the Hero's reputation and image, coupled with the fine political machinery developed by Kendall, Blair and others, enabled the Democrats to win a split decision in Kentucky. In the 1831 state elections, the National Republicans won a slim margin in the Kentucky Legislature, but lost eight of the twelve Congressional seats to Jacksonians. When he learned of the results in Kentucky, Daniel Webster believed "that there is very little chance of electing Mr. Clay" in 1832. Such sentiments compelled Clay to give up his "retirement" and accept a seat in the United States Senate. Once there, he tried to check the damage that the poor showing in Kentucky had given to his prospects.  

In 1830, Clay had advised Nicholas Biddle not to attempt recharter of the Bank before the 1832 election. But some time during 1831, he changed his mind. He wrote Biddle that a recharter before the election had a better chance of winning Jackson's approval than one after the election, if Jackson were still President. "The friends of the Bank, expect the application to be made," before the election, he insisted. "The course of the President, in the event of the passage of the bill, seems to be a matter of doubt and speculation," Clay admitted, but added that he personally thought Jackson "would not negative the bill." Clay expounded his thoughts in another letter, to a friend:

The executive is playing a deep game to avoid, at this session, the responsibility of any decision on the Bank question. It is not yet ascertained whether the bank, by forbearing to apply for a renewal

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of their Charter, will or will not conform to the wishes of the President. I think they will act very unwisely if they do not apply.37

The question will ever remain as to what Clay wanted in urging Biddle to apply for recharter. Did he want to increase the Bank's chances, or did he want an election issue? Historians have divided over the question and will undoubtedly continue to do so. But either way, whichever motive was uppermost in Clay's mind, one thing holds true. He was once again following his penchant for gambling, and this time the stakes included not just the presidency but also the Nation's economy.38

Biddle did not automatically take Clay's advice, for he too wondered about Clay's motives. Instead, he dispatched his agents to Washington to survey the situation. But from these he received mixed reports. Both Lewis and McLane counselled against any pre-election attempt at recharter. McLane flatly said that such an attempt "assuredly will fail." But Daniel Webster and other Congressional leaders advised Biddle to proceed. One agent sounded out the cabinet members and reported to Biddle that Barry, Taney, and possibly Woodbury would follow the lead of Kendall and Blair, "who still rule our Chief Magistrate." But another agent said that McLane would be able to carry the entire cabinet, save Taney, in support of recharter. He also advised that once Congress showed its support in favor of recharter, the cabinet could "overcome Amos Kendall" and convince Jackson to accept the situation.

Biddle reviewed the evidence and decided to try for recharter immediately. He believed that the combined pressures of Congress and cabinet could push Jackson into signing a recharter bill. He was encouraged in this belief when he learned that Van Buren and his friends
would not fight recharter. He also hoped that public opinion could be
harnessed behind the Bank. If so, and Jackson still vetoed the bill,
then in the words of Biddle's agent Thomas Cadwalader, "a vote of
two-thirds [overriding the veto] being then our only chance, the general
alarm ringing through the nation will probably secure it." 39

Biddle erred in not being able to perceive that Jackson was as
capable of defying his own Party as defying his enemies. He was not
alone in this misperception, but few suffered as much as he did for it.
Like so many others, he did not understand that the Democratic Party was
not yet a functioning coalition so much as it was the personal machine
of Andrew Jackson. Biddle confessed that he could not understand why
"the friends of the present incumbent who are also friends of the Bank"
did not "come forward and settle the Bank question before the election
comes on." By this, he meant a Democratic-sponsored recharter. He
believed that Jackson would have to accept a bill pushed through by his
own people or risk losing control over the Party. He was wrong and
could have benefitted from the estimate of one of Van Buren's
lieutenants concerning the Bank question:

The President stands alone [this observer wrote Van Buren]. McLane
has Livingston, Cass, Lewis [in favor of recharter] ... Woodbury
keeps snug and plays out of all the corners of his eyes. Taney,
strange as it seems, is the best democrat among them. He is with
Kendall, Hill, Blair, etc. 40

Few people are comfortable at standing alone. Jackson actually enjoyed
it. And Biddle would pay for his inability to understand that.

In January, Biddle sent to Washington his petition for a new
charter. For actually presenting the petition, he chose not Clay nor
any other National Republican, but the Democrat Senator George M. Dallas
of Pennsylvania. Dallas, a freshman Senator, was not happy with the honor. He had advised against a recharter attempt before the next presidential election. Now he was afraid that his own career would be endangered by his association with Biddle's petition. He was also concerned about the shaky state of the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania. Still, he could not deny the right of petition and submitted the document to the Senate on January 9, 1832.41

Biddle developed his strategy by writing friends of the Bank in the various states, calling for a paper campaign in favor of recharter. He asked that memorials be drawn up, endorsed by legislatures and citizens' meetings, and sent to Congress. In this way, he hoped, Jackson could be led to accept recharter by the public opinion that he had so often venerated. Surely Old Hickory would bow to the people's will again!42

Thus recharter was brought forward. It was a foolish move, for Jackson interpreted it as a challenge. The recharter petition played right into Kendall's hands, because, despite his efforts, Jackson was not wholly committed against the Bank in early 1832. He had never expressed any fondness for the institution, it is true, but aside from his statements in the annual messages, he had not made any moves against it. He had never given it the kind of pointed attention that he lavished on retrenchment, Indian removal, or the acquisition of Texas. If anything, his interest in the Bank had centered on its role in retiring the national debt. He had studied many proposals for alternatives to the B.U.S., and had expressed interest in modifications of its charter, but he had made no final decisions on any of these matters.43
Kendall had tried to spur Jackson to an active hostility to the Bank. He had not really succeeded, and whether or not he would eventually have convinced Jackson to take the initiative in striking down the Bank is conjectural. But now, it was no longer necessary. Biddle's seizure of the initiative would do more to enrage the President than Kendall's previous arguments against the B.U.S. The drama that began when Dallas presented the petition was destined to become a major event in American political history. This would be a drama replete with fascinating characters, desperate motives, and the all-important element of luck. Nicholas Biddle, suave, capable, yet arrogant; and Henry Clay, confident, a gambler, at times even reckless, had in different ways misread the situation. They had mistakenly decided to try and press Andrew Jackson, a man who, for all his fiery, impulsive and vengeful nature, knew how to win battles.

To win this one, he had the perfect field commander. Kendall had been on the fringes of power since 1829. He had been basically an errand boy, polishing Jackson's speeches, keeping contact with party members in New England and the western states. His most important responsibility had been to establish with Blair the Globe newspaper, and even here he was acting with Jackson's blessing. Without the Bank War, Kendall would probably be viewed by historians in the same way William B. Lewis has been: "interesting, but not an essential part of the Jacksonian era. But in 1832, Biddle made the Bank an election issue, and Kendall's time had arrived."
CHAPTER IX

NOTES


5 Duff Green to John J. Barbour, April 9, 1831 and Green to John Floyd, April 2, 1831, both in Green papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Library; Telegraph, June 28, 1831.


7 Kendall to Joseph Desha, June 2, 1831, James A. Paddock, ed., "Correspondence Between Governor Joseph Desha and Amos Kendall, 1831-1835," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 38 (1940),


10 Kendall to John McLean, August 18, 1831, Personal Miscellaneous papers, New York Public Library.


14 Kendall to Levi Woodbury, June 2, 1831, Woodbury papers, LC.

15 William B. Lewis to Andrew Jackson, July 1, 1831, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 4, pp. 308-9.


17 Globe, July 13, 19, 1831.

18 Kendall to Isaac Hill, July 15, 1831, Hill papers, NHHS.

19 Andrew Jackson to James K. Polk, December 23, 1833, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 235-36; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, November 22-23, 1829, Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library (hereafter PUL).


25 *Globe*, December 29, 1830, January 8, June 4, 1831.


28 Undated draft, in Kendall's hand, Jackson papers, LC; Munroe, pp. 305-8; Remini, pp. 337-38.


32 Harriet Martineau, A Retrospect of Western Travel (three volumes, London, 1838), v. 1, p. 155.

33 Munroe, p. 311ff.

34 Latner, pp. 115-16; Munroe, pp. 315-16, 328-364; C. C. Cambreleng to Martin Van Buren, February 4, 1832, Van Buren papers, LC; Remini, p. 341.

35 Munroe, p. 314; John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, December 19, 1831, Bassett, ed. Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 4, pp. 386-87.


39 Govan, pp. 171-72; Munroe, pp. 336-37; Remini, p. 343; Robert Gibbes to Nicholas Biddle, December 11, 1831 and Charles Ingersoll to Biddle, February 21, 1832, both in McGrane, ed., pp. 139-40, 183-84.


CHAPTER X

THE BANK WAR: KENDALL'S VIEW OF AMERICA

The Bank War presented General Andrew Jackson at his best. In wartime, a field general has but one primary goal: destruction of the enemy. In 1832 and 1833, General Jackson destroyed the B.U.S. more utterly than most soldiers ever defeat their adversaries. His veto message dealt the Bank a mortal blow to its charter and deprived it of popular support, while the removal of the government deposits drained its life blood. The Hero of New Orleans never killed Indians or British so effectively as he killed the Bank of the United States.

But what of the responsibilities of President Andrew Jackson? What constructive policy did he advance by destroying the Bank? In what way did he promote the welfare of the American people and otherwise discharge his oath to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution?"

This is admittedly a rather conjectural matter, but still, in this area, Jackson's accomplishment is less precise, his legacy less certain. Historians have pointed to the destruction of the Bank as an episode in the growth of presidential power, but there is no evidence that Jackson intended this as the result. What Jackson intended the Bank War to contribute to the nation's economic or social development is even hazier. Jackson's critics, of course, contend that he had no plan beyond the destruction of the Bank, and that the Bank War best shows his severe limitations as a statesman. ¹

Perhaps the uncertain meaning of the Bank War lies in the varied

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motives of the coalition that helped Jackson destroy it: the Democratic Senators and Representatives who sustained Jackson's veto of the new charter; the local banks which accepted the government deposits; the voters who re-elected Jackson; above all, the advisors who helped Jackson devise the tactics he used to destroy the Bank. Each of these elements, singly and collectively, contributed to the death of the Bank, acting as Jackson's troops as it were, but for different motives. Some acted out of loyalty, some out of greed, some out of idealism and some for unknown reasons.2

It is not the purpose of this study to consider the motives of all of the groups, only the motives of one man. Amos Kendall was Jackson's primary aide in the Bank War, his principal tactician, his field lieutenant and his press secretary. Kendall helped destroy the Bank out of idealism. He desired to strike a symbolic blow for American freedom, for the rights of the people against the privileges of the vested interests. His actions in the Bank War were greatly influenced by a number of matters that were largely out of his control. These included the unstable party situation and the emergence of Martin Van Buren as the chosen successor to Old Hickory.

As the Bank War began, the members of both houses of Congress were dividing into three distinct groups. First, there were the National Republicans, men completely opposed to Jackson's policies. Reinforced now by Clay in the Senate and former President John Quincy Adams in the House, they promised to be more formidable than in previous sessions. Then there were the President's men, who, however much some of them might groan at Jackson's highhandedness, would stand by the Administration. The third group was a mixture of Calhoun men, Old
Republicans of the South, and disaffected Democrats like John Tyler. For one reason or another, these men had largely deserted Jackson, but were still nominal members of the Democrat Party and faithful to its traditional tenets of states' rights and legislative preeminence. By 1832, there were practically no old-style, "non-party" men left to be found. This being the situation, the tactics that were to dominate this Congressional session were obvious to all: the National Republicans and the President's Democrats would vie for the support of the third group.

Just as this contest was beginning, the National Republicans stole a march on their adversaries and won the first round. The occasion for the victory was the series of confirmation hearings for Jackson's many interim appointments of the previous year. These included his new cabinet and Martin Van Buren as Minister to England. The Senators allowed McLane, Woodbury, Cass, Livingston, and Taney to pass scrutiny with hardly a murmur. But Van Buren they struck down. The tale of Van Buren's rejection is too well known to require yet another recitation here. However, two aspects of the rejection are relevant to this study. The first of these is the political alliance between Clay and Calhoun that began with this rejection. These two men and their followers joined hands to strike at a common enemy, and would continue to cooperate as future events dictated. Calhoun's and Clay's motives were seldom compatible beyond individual self interest and a mutual desire to annoy the General in the White House. The alliance would force Jackson to pay more attention to his relationship with the legislative branch, as the two men came to annoy him greatly.

The rejection of Van Buren should also be seen in the context of the belief that Jackson was really not his own man. Indeed, the charges
against Van Buren centered about the belief that he was the true
director of the Administration. He, not Jackson, had driven Calhoun
from the Party, had destroyed the first cabinet, and masterminded the
spoils system. Thus, his rejection was conceived as a serious blow to
the Jacksonians. Calhoun confidently predicted that Van Buren's
rejection would "kill him dead!" Other Administration enemies were
confident that Van Buren's rejection would kill Jackson as well. Blair
acknowledged the belief, but predicted that once the people knew that
"the blow which has struck Mr. Van Buren was aimed at the President,"
Jackson would be sustained.  

When Jackson heard of Clay's and Calhoun's action, he simply
declared, "I'll smash them!" The President seized upon the coming
Democratic Convention for implementing his own idea of a just
vindication. Van Buren was to be nominated as the Party's candidate for
Vice President, he ordered, and placed "in the chair of the very man
whose casting vote rejected you." Van Buren agreed to stand for the
nomination at the Convention.  

Jackson's insistence on having Van Buren as his running mate
collided with Kendall's own election strategy. When he, Lewis, and Hill
had settled on a convention as the best way to select a vice
presidential candidate, Kendall had outlined the qualities he wished to
see in the man chosen. He wanted a candidate who would contribute to
"the immediate strength of the party." By this he meant a candidate who
would appeal to all the Nation's sections. Above all, he wanted a
candidate who would not reopen the battle for the succession.

In Philip Pendleton Barbour of Virginia, an old Republican of
the Richmond Junto, Kendall found his man. He believed that Barbour's
states' rights credentials would attract votes from all of the sections. He also believed that with Barbour, the Party could avoid another debilitating struggle:

Barbour, I presume, would not aspire to the Presidency. He would have served but four years when Gen. Jackson's eight shall expire, and can be run for the next four with a new candidate for the Presidency.

Presumably, Martin Van Buren did not meet Kendall's criteria, for of him the 4th Auditor had said: "I take it for granted he does not wish to be run for Vice-President — I am sure he ought not to."\(^7\)

Van Buren's supporters feared that Kendall would not countenance their man as the eventual successor to Jackson. James Watson Webb wrote Van Buren that Kendall, Blair, and other Kitchen Cabinet advisers would probably prefer another western candidate in 1836, perhaps Richard M. Johnson. Only the fear of another Party rupture, he concluded, would force Kendall and Blair to support Van Buren: "You have nothing to hope from their friendship, but everything to hope from their interest."\(^8\)

Kendall did not dream of defying Jackson once he insisted on Van Buren as his running mate. Making the best of things, Kendall admitted that it was only fair that Van Buren be vindicated with the Convention's blessing. A few days later, the *Globe* endorsed Van Buren as the Administration's Vice-Presidential candidate. This official announcement of the President's wishes led all but the most intrepid supporters of other candidates to yield.\(^9\)

The Democratic Convention was held in Baltimore in May, 1832, and there the delegates duly nominated Van Buren. As for Jackson, the delegates simply adopted a resolution endorsing the nominations he had already received from state legislatures. However, the delegates were
unable to agree on any kind of platform and instead decided that each
state delegation should "make such explanations by address, report, or
otherwise, to their respective constituents of the object, proceedings
and result of the meeting as they may deem expedient." No other action
could more effectively demonstrate that Andrew Jackson was the sole
cement that held this Party together.

The National Intelligencer reviewed the convention and asked if
the President were to be given the power to designate his successor.
Blair, by contrast, assured his readers that "the true friends of the
President and of the democracy will not refuse to support [the
nomination] from any personal objections to Mr. Van Buren, or from
personal preferences indulged for another." This was a pointed warning
to those who entertained their own ideas for the Party's future.¹⁰

Certainly Kendall refrained from challenging Jackson's will.
But the ascendency of Van Buren troubled him. He had suggested that Van
Buren was a poor choice as Jackson's running mate, had made no estimate
of his value as Jackson's successor. In fact, it is significant that
Kendall, who had opinions on nearly everything, never gave an assessment
of Van Buren, aside from the rote he prepared for campaign purposes.
During 1832 and 1833, Kendall and Van Buren would clash over the
Administration's battle with the B.U.S. Van Buren, a careful
politician, feared Kendall's fanaticism against the Bank. Kendall, in
turn, worried that Van Buren might moderate Jackson's stand on this
issue. Although it is impossible to be precise, it seems likely that
Van Buren's candidacy intensified Kendall's determination to destroy the
Bank, and quickly, before a new Vice-President altered matters.

The National Republicans inadvertently helped Kendall's war
against the Bank. Nominating Clay in their own convention, they also adopted a platform that endorsed Clay's "American System," including the B.U.S. The System's complementary components of Bank, internal improvements, and tariff would encourage "the prosperity of the great cause of domestic industry," and national wealth, the platform concluded. Clay and Daniel Webster intended to give substance to this philosophy by pushing favorable legislation through Congress. The first item on their list was the new charter for the B.U.S.\textsuperscript{11}

The new charter would extend the Bank's life another fifteen years. Its operations would remain essentially the same. Try as they might, Jackson's men could not block the measure, only delay its passage. Both Thomas Hart Benton and John Forsyth denounced the B.U.S. with scathing speeches in the Senate. In the House, the Jacksonians condemned the Bank as "one of the most stupendous engines of political power that was ever erected." But the Bank had counted its votes carefully. The new charter passed both chambers just before adjournment in early July. Biddle and Clay decided that Jackson would probably veto the bill, but Clay did not want to give Jackson the chance to use a pocket veto. He wanted the President's objections on record. Therefore, he arranged to delay adjournment in order to force Jackson's hand.\textsuperscript{12}

Jackson was only too happy to oblige Clay. The President had had no wish to confront the B.U.S. this year. His Party was divided and he was experiencing another period of poor health. None of this, however, would deter him from answering Clay's challenge. As he said to his new running mate: "The bank, Mr. Van Buren is trying to kill me, but I will kill it!" With these words, Old Hickory pronounced
sentence.\textsuperscript{13}

Jackson called a cabinet meeting a few days after the recharter bill passed. Everyone was present except Taney, who was on private business in Maryland. Jackson told the others that he would veto the recharter, on the same grounds that he had vetoed the Maysville Road bill; that is, the B.U.S. was not a wise or safe Federal institution and its existence was not consistent with his reading of the Constitution. As Jackson later explained to Taney, the cabinet members were not pleased with the decision:

They all, he said, concurred in opinion that he ought not to sign the bill, but wished him to place the veto upon grounds that would leave it open to him to sign a bill for a recharter at a future session, and were much opposed to his taking grounds which should shut the door against a renewal, as far as depended on him; and they offered to assist him in the preparation of the veto if he would consent to put it upon grounds which they suggested and approved. This he positively refused to do, saying that he would not sign a veto placing it upon any other grounds than those upon which he acted; and that they had thereupon declined taking any part or to render him any assistance whatever in preparing it.\textsuperscript{14}

This greatly disappointed Jackson, for he had very much wanted some cabinet support and help in composing a good veto message. Jackson sent for Taney to return immediately.

Meanwhile, Jackson had to select someone to begin work on the veto. He wanted the veto to be an Executive paper and so could not use anyone in Congress. If it ever came out that Blair wrote it, Jackson's "policy" of separating government and press would be publicly compromised. That left Kendall as the one Executive officer who was completely committed against the Bank. He was also perfectly suited to the task, having composed countless anti-Bank essays over a period of fifteen years. His give-no-quarter attitude also suited Jackson's
current mood and fighting spirit. The President summoned Kendall to write the first draft of the veto.\textsuperscript{15}

As it was, Kendall was lucky to be in Washington in time for this task. He had just barely returned from Massachusetts, where he testified at a court martial. The absence during the Bank debates was annoying and he asked Lewis for news "of the fate of the Bank Bill." He returned in time to see the closing debates in Congress. Then he was called to Jackson's side. The President gave Kendall a brief outline of his own objections to the bill, expressed his confidence in Kendall, whose "opinions coincided with his own," and put him to work.\textsuperscript{16}

Kendall wrote his draft of the veto on July 6. Jackson read it and thought it "very well" done, but might be shortened somewhat. Between July 7 and 9, the draft was shortened, polished and slightly revised by Woodbury and Donelson. Taney who at last arrived from Baltimore, made some substantial changes in the Constitutional argument. Jackson supervised every stage of the message's creation and it is safe to say that there was nothing in the final version of which he did not approve. However, the gist of the message was Kendall's, altered in form but untouched in meaning despite the other hands that worked on the text. The Bank veto was thus Kendall's single greatest contribution to Jacksonian rhetoric and ideology.\textsuperscript{17}

Historians have largely considered the Bank veto message in two ways. In the first interpretation it has been labeled a piece of propaganda meant purely for political purposes. Kendall simply "probed for the popular mind" in preparing the polemic, which had neither logical consistency nor a recognizable ideology. Kendall's financial arguments, far from being realistic, were designed for mass appeal
without consideration for the actual state of affairs. Historians who take this view, often also assert that Jackson, Kendall, and other opponents of the B.U.S. used the veto message to mask non-political motives, such as boosting state banking or land speculation. Jackson is often pictured as a dupe of Kendall and his fellow "men on the make." 18

The second interpretation gives the anti-Bank men more credit for their motives, but doubts their grasp of reality. Here the Jacksonians are presented as the last defenders of an America that no longer existed. This is the America of Jefferson's vision, an arcadia of simple freeholders and virtuous citizens. The veto message of this interpretation is termed an anachronism, an attempt to reverse time and deny the dynamics of the new era. Unable to face the changing world, the Jacksonians were well-meaning but simple-minded. 19

Kendall's veto message does contain elements of both political calculation and nostalgia. It would be naive to expect Jackson and Kendall to ignore popular effect in framing such an important document. The arguments expressed in the veto did owe a great deal to republican thought. 20 But the fact that these elements exist does not warrant an interpretation based solely on their presence. Rather, the document must be viewed in the context of the author's other writings on the subject of the Bank and its relationship to society and government. Only in this way can the full character of Kendall's attack on the B.U.S. be made clear.

From Kendall's first comments on the subject of the Bank in the Georgetown Patriot in 1816 to his remarks in the Argus and in private correspondence, and finally to his veto statement, one message is always
clearly discernible: a fear of the Bank's centralized authority. This was the fear of the individual against the institution. Kendall saw the Bank as an instrument of special privilege. His complaints about it contain numerous examples of how, to him, it operated to benefit the few. But beyond this, Kendall saw special privilege in general as an engine that the select few used to impose order on society, by denying opportunity to the many. To Kendall, this was a calculated plot on the part of the rich:

It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes [he wrote in the veto]. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth cannot be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society — the farmers, mechanics, and laborers — who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing.

But this world of equality was unlikely, so long as governments made "grants of monopolies and special privileges" that benefitted "the few at the expense of the many."

Kendall suggested two ways in which the Bank had been so favored by privileges. First, it had been given a monopoly to control the domestic exchanges and the value of stocks. Its own stock was not available on the open market; only the favored few could obtain it, and too many of these people were foreigners. As recharter would increase the value of the B.U.S. stock, Kendall argued, these foreigners would
make "millions of dollars" at the expense of Americans. Second, the Bank had been granted special powers to circulate its notes, at par, anywhere in the country. Ordinary citizens could not do this, he claimed. Their private notes would be discounted, as would the notes of state banks. Kendall employed rather inverted logic here. He was arguing, in effect, that the Bank was being unfair in trying to impose a uniform circulating currency. 23

Similar convolutions permeated his veto discussion of the constitutionality of the Bank. In effect, he, and Taney, argued that the Supreme Court had twisted the Constitution in declaring the Bank a legal corporation. The B.U.S. might be convenient, but it certainly was not necessary in Kendall's view. The court had improperly redefined the "necessary and proper" clause, and it was the President's duty to correct this. The Bank's privileged power made it "unnecessary and improper and therefore unconstitutional," Kendall concluded. Thus, by practically copying editorials from the Argus of 1819 and 1820, he specifically rebuked John Marshall's McCulloch vs. Maryland decision. 24

One cannot help agreeing with historian Bray Hammond that Kendall's economic reasoning was "beneath contempt." Hammond correctly noted the "bias of the message that the alleged enrichment of the rich was ascribed wholly to the value of the charter and not to the Banks operations." Kendall's constitutional argument, weighing the term "convenient" against "necessary and proper" was similarly abstract. And that is how he wanted it. He was condemning the B.U.S. for the power it might use as much as for what it had done. The Bank, Kendall warned, was independent of government control. Congress had unwisely delegated
to it the power to regulate the currency. By doing this, "Congress have parted with their power for a term of years [the length of the charter], during which the Constitution is a dead letter." Moreover, the President had had no say in the creation of this powerful institution:

Neither upon the propriety of present action nor upon the provisions of this act was the Executive consulted. It has had no opportunity to say that it neither needs nor wants an agent clothed with such powers and favored by such exemptions. There is nothing in its legitimate functions which makes it necessary or proper. Whatever interest or influence, whether public or private, has given birth to this act, it can not be found either in the wishes or necessities of the executive department, by which present action is deemed premature, and the powers conferred upon its agent not only unnecessary, but dangerous to the Government and country.

If the President had no say in the establishment of the Bank (which was false, as James Madison signed the Bank bill in 1816), if the Supreme Court had wrongly accorded it constitutional existence, and if Congress had wrongly delegated powers to it, then logically the Bank was a dangerous threat to the Republic. Who could control it? Kendall did not explicitly ask the question in the veto, but the Globe would.

Kendall did imply the point by concluding the message with a plea "to review our principles," revive the virtue of the Revolutionary Generation, and put an end "to interests vested under improvident legislation."

By attacking the Bank in this way Kendall was playing upon what Richard Hofstadter called the "paranoid style in American politics." He had painted a picture of possible danger, then assumed it to exist as a justification for destroying the Bank. The Bank might use government privilege (i.e. political power) to deny people economic opportunity. To prevent this, the veto message advocated that the Government disassociate itself from economic
development:

[Government's] true strength consists in leaving individuals and states as much as possible to themselves — in making itself felt, not in its power, but in its beneficence; not in its control; but in its protection; not in binding the States more closely to the center, but leaving each to move unobstructed in its proper orbit. 29

Less central control, in essence, was Kendall's formula for a successful democracy. The Globe had succinctly summarized this feeling earlier by declaring that the state governments and the people "should feel neither the influence nor the power of the general government." Now Blair praised the suggestions to decline the "power to regulate the currency." 30

But the Bank's supporters were appalled when the veto was read in Congress on July 10, 1832. Biddle called the message a "manifesto of anarchy." One of his associates termed it "a most wretched production, going far to weaken every principle of the government." Another denounced it as "a piece of wickedness and imbecility." Biddle ordered thirty thousand copies of the veto distributed for the coming election campaign. He apparently believed that this would harm Jackson. 31

Jackson, however, was happy to embrace Kendall's veto arguments and extend them beyond the Bank War. As the summer wore on, for instance, his concern for checking government-sponsored internal improvements was revitalized. He told Kendall that he would use his veto power to "put an end to this waste of public money" and "stop this corrupt, log-rolling system of legislation." Kendall was accordingly directed to prepare arguments for vetoing certain harbor improvement bills. In this manner Jackson planned to encourage opportunity by discouraging government aid to select projects and groups. 32
The Democratic press expounded freely on the veto's theme. Blair defended the veto as a blow against privilege and aristocracy, both of which had been bolstered by the Bank. Blair went so far as to characterize the veto as a major blow for "the great mass of mankind [who] have been struggling to preserve their conventional rights against the usurpations of a few." Other party newspapers picked up this argument, while the opposition press countered by charging that the Jacksonians threatened the very foundations of American society. The fundamental question of privilege vs. equal opportunity became the central issue of the presidential election of 1832.33

In this election the Democrats had a superb organization and used it for the express purpose of selling their candidate's popular image. During the election, the issues raised by the veto message were enmeshed into the Jackson legend until the man and the ideology became virtually synonymous.

The organization and the image were to a large extent resurrections of the 1828 campaign. Preparations for the campaign began in 1831 with the re-establishment of central committees in each state. These committees were staffed by men of unquestioned devotion and loyalty; "Jackson men good and true," Kendall called them. These leaders coordinated electioneering in their state, distributed campaign literature and arranged for rallies and resolutions in support of Old Hickory. Hickory poles were often set in front of the buildings that housed campaign headquarters. Once again the Hero was presented as the savior of the nation and the living embodiment of the popular will. The Globe mused upon "the sublimity of the moral spectacle now presented to the American people in the person of Andrew Jackson."34
The Globe was not used as the official re-election organ, however. Instead, Blair and Kendall created the Extra-Globe which was devoted exclusively to election rhetoric. This paper existed only for the length of the campaign, was sold at the rate of one dollar for the entire run of thirty issues, and was regularly distributed by Congressmen under their franking privilege. Kendall was a steady contributor and probably wrote the first issue's opening statement:

The principal object of this paper . . . is to furnish the people, at a cheap rate, with correct information, that they may appreciate the merits of this administration, and support the re-election of Gen. Jackson.35

Kendall sent a prospectus for the Extra-Globe to Hill and other reliable Party men. "Every Farmer, Mechanic and Working man should have one," he wrote, "and if they cannot well spare a dollar each, two or more should unite together to take one."36

Kendall distributed other material as well. Robert McAfee of Kentucky wrote him to request army pension forms, explaining that with a few pensions he could make some important converts in his state. Kendall quickly complied by sending all the forms he could get from the War Department and promised to send more as soon as they were printed. Presumably he saw no connection between this and the opposition's charge that the Jacksonians were subverting the Government through "favoritism."37

Kendall's most signal contribution to the campaign was the organization of the Central Hickory Club in Washington. This body was designed to act as an unofficial national steering committee. The Club coordinated the distribution of literature and kept tabs on the electioneering activities throughout the nation. Kendall also wrote an
"Address of the Central Hickory Club to the Republican Citizens of the United States," which became the de facto party platform. Widely reprinted, this document was, in Claude Bower's words, a "solemn and dignified appeal to the more intellectual element" of society. 38

In the Address Kendall reviewed all the activities of Jackson's first term and reiterated the Administration's basic theme: "The only use of government is to keep off evil for we do not want its assistance in seeking after good." Thus a government must be limited, for otherwise it would inevitably tend to promote privileges for the few, simply by trying "to promote human happiness." It was the individual, not the institution, that constituted the proper foundation for progress. Free, unfettered individuals embodied the maxim that "the perfection of civil liberty is the power to do as we please, without infringing the rights of others." Institutions required charters and government sanctions, while an individual needed only the opportunity to utilize his best talents without being hindered by artificial restraints. Such a view, of course, had to be based on the assumption that men were on the whole decent and good. Kendall had always believed as much, and of course Jackson had made his faith in the people the cornerstone of his entire political philosophy. The Hickory Club Address extolled popular government and condemned special privileges everywhere. 39

In 1832 the people did not disappoint Jackson or Kendall. The Old Hero beat Clay, winning a larger electoral victory than he had garnered in 1828. Blair said the victory was greater than even Jackson's most enthusiastic supporters had anticipated. The Jacksonians therefore took the results to be a vindication of their anti-privilege
policies and their commitment to strong, popular, executive leadership. Whether this was true or not, Kendall took the results as a mandate to continue the war on the B.U.S. He was not satisfied to leave the institution stunned, lingering until 1836. He began to prepare a more immediate death blow.  

The nullification crisis interrupted the Bank War, however. This crisis caught Jackson somewhat off guard and required his full attention until the time of his second inauguration. As Kendall played no role in the crisis, it is unnecessary to dwell on it here. But it is important to note that Jackson relied on other advisors to help him with this matter. Kendall had not become Jackson's premier confidant as a result of the Bank veto. He no doubt noted this as well.  

One other aspect of this incident affected Kendall. Van Buren attempted to tone down Jackson's strong stand against the nullifiers, now led openly by Calhoun, who in November, 1832, resigned the Vice-Presidency and accepted a Senate seat. He argued that Jackson's strong words about "obedience to Federal authority" would threaten the unity of the Party, particularly in the South. Kendall disagreed. He said that the Party should unite about Jackson to "arrest the mad project [of nullification]." He pointedly advised Van Buren to give his opinions only when they were "convenient and agreeable" with Jackson's leadership. Otherwise, Kendall warned, the Party's "favor and support shall be bestowed upon another" in 1836.  

This clash with the man who would soon be Vice-President indicates that Kendall did not always trust Van Buren. Kendall was probably as a result even more determined to finish off the Bank before Van Buren's influence with Jackson grew.
Duff Green predicted the next move against the Bank. Writing to a friend in Philadelphia, the *Telegraph* editor recounted some early Administration conversations about the B.U.S. In particular, he remembered Kendall's zealous desire to see the Bank completely destroyed. Someone, Green concluded, had better ask the Secretary of the Treasury to reveal his future intentions regarding the government deposits. 43

The friends of the Bank should have heeded Green's suggestion. In December, while the nullification crisis raged, Amos Kendall addressed the Central Hickory Club a second time. In this speech, Kendall congratulated the club on its successful efforts for Jackson's re-election, but cautioned his listeners not to become complacent. A "Nobility System" still existed in America, he announced. "Its head is the Bank of the United States; its right arm, a protecting Tariff and Manufacturing Monopolies; its left, growing State debts and State corporations." The Jacksonians must not rest until this system was destroyed. Kendall's speech probably had official sanction, and his remarks indicated that Jackson did not intend a cease-fire in the Bank War. 44

Biddle noticed Kendall's speech and warned McLane that if "your auditor and kitchen cabinet and Hickory Club insist on quarreling about deposits — be it so." Biddle probably believed that there was little point now in trying to appease Jackson. He may also have hoped that he could pressure the Administration into reconsidering its stand on the charter. Whatever his motives, he announced that due to a temporary limitation in cash flow, the B.U.S. would not be able to meet its deadline for retiring the national debt. This meant that the debt would
not be paid off by the time of Jackson's second inauguration. 45

Nothing could have disappointed Old Hickory more than to have
this cherished goal delayed. In his Fourth Annual Message, which was
delivered to the Congress soon after Kendall's Hickory Club address, the
President bitterly criticised the "failure of the Bank to perform its
duties." He then expressed doubts as to whether the Bank was "a safe
depository of the money of the people." A few days later, Blair was
even more direct. If the Bank could not discharge the debt as promised,
the Globe warned, then "the public deposits ought to be removed, and the
people will say AMEN!" The House of Representatives, however, saw
matters differently, and adopted a resolution declaring the deposits
safe with the Bank. 46

Kendall believed that the House's action demonstrated "the power
of the bank over the country." He asked Reuben M. Whitney, a former
director of the B.U.S., and John T. Sullivan, one of the government
directors on the board, to check the Bank's books to see if the delay in
retiring the debt was justified. He asked another director, Henry
Gilpin, about rumors concerning improper financial practices at the
Bank. Jackson appointees, both Sullivan and Gilpin provided what
information they could, and Kendall passed it on to the President. 47
Kendall engaged in these clandestine activities because he doubted the
reliability of Jackson's cabinet members, particularly Louis McLane.
McLane had lost all chance of directing Administration policies, but as
Secretary of the Treasury only he could issue an order to remove the
deposits. This, McLane was reluctant to do. He had already dismissed a
suggestion from Whitney to send Kendall to personally investigate the
Bank. If Kendall could show that the B.U.S. executives had mismanaged
the Federal deposits, then McLane could be sidestepped. Jackson could order Taney to initiate a scire facias proceeding, a legal move to revoke the Bank's charter.  

The scire facias approach looked promising at first. Blair and Kendall gathered evidence of technical violations of the charter, and looked into rumors that Biddle used loans to secure supporters among the press. But these matters could not produce a winning court case. It was impossible to prove that the Bank bought influence. Since Blair and Kendall each owed large amounts to the institution, how could such charges be pressed?

The scire facias was dropped. Removal was Kendall's only remaining weapon. Could he convince Jackson to use it? In March, 1832, he tried to convince McLane that removal was both financially sound and politically wise. But after an hour's discussion, McLane was still against the move, although he indicated that he might order the removal if Jackson insisted. McLane's answer to Kendall was clever and pointed. It evaded a final decision and avoided the appearance of disloyalty that had doomed previous cabinet members; it also served to remind Kendall that McLane answered to the President, not to one of his own Treasury subordinates.

Unabashed, Kendall tried a different tack. He sent McLane a long memorandum of his arguments in favor of removal. Once again, he stressed "political effects" as much as financial reasons. He pointed out to McLane that just two weeks previously, the House of Representatives had adopted their resolution declaring that the deposits were secure at the B.U.S. and should be left there. To Kendall this resolution was evidence not only of the Bank's continued "corrupt
influence" over Congress, but evidence also of decay within the Democratic Party. Only a vigorous stroke on the part of the Executive could, he urged McLane, "reunite and inspire" the Party's sagging ranks. Otherwise, all could be lost by 1836. The Bank, sustained by the Congress, could join Clay and his cronies to seize control of the Government. A new reign of chartered, artificial privilege would commence and the B.U.S. would receive a new charter. Only by withdrawing the deposits immediately, Kendall concluded, could the Administration finally destroy this "illformed dragon" and preserve republican society. Whether or not Kendall hoped to finally sway McLane with this diatribe is immaterial. He kept a copy of the letter to use in persuading the President. 51

Kendall had real doubts that he could convince Jackson to take this final step against the Bank. Jackson would have to openly disagree with Congress and refuse to heed the advice of most of his cabinet and his new Vice-President. Would Jackson order the removal in the face of so much opposition? Kendall was not sure. When he sent the copy of his McLane letter to Jackson, he sent an accompanying note, which contained his own vision of the future should the B.U.S. survive. Once again he argued that the Bank, "that great enemy of republicanism," meant to destroy "the purity of our institutions." Biddle would use the deposits to influence the next election. If he succeeded, "a new scheme to govern the American people by fraud and corruption" would result. Only Jackson could prevent it, only he had the strength, the support and the determination to deal the death blow. "I look upon this as a critical moment," Kendall concluded. "Upon the determination at which you and your Cabinet shall now arrive, depend, in my opinion, the character of
this government for years to come.\footnote{52}

Was Kendall right in doubting Jackson's resolve? It is a difficult question, for there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that the President had yet made up his mind. He was only just quelling the nullification crisis and may have wanted a breathing space for the nation. He may simply have been waiting for the adjournment of Congress in order to have a freer hand. He also wanted to have his own Cabinet into line before starting another assault. For all McLane's obstinacy over the B.U.S., Jackson respected his ability and character, and would not peremptorily order him to remove the deposits.\footnote{53}

As to this, Jackson knew something that the frenzied Kendall did not: McLane would soon be leaving his Treasury post. He was to trade it for the Department of State, replacing Livingston who, at sixty-eight, wanted less strenuous duty as Minister to France. To replace McLane at Treasury, Jackson selected William Duane, a Pennsylvania journalist with strong anti-Bank credentials. Duane accepted but could not begin his duties until the summer of 1833. Perhaps Jackson was simply waiting for Duane's arrival to renew the Bank War.\footnote{54}

Kendall seems to have been completely unaware of the plans for McLane's transfer and the selection of Duane. He knew little about Duane at all and thought of him simply as "a writer of more industry than talent." Months later, after Duane had proved such a disappointment in relation to the Bank, Kendall came to believe that his appointment had been foisted on the President by McLane in order that the latter could "control two departments." At the time of the inauguration, Kendall certainly believed that McLane constituted the
major obstacle to the destruction of the Bank of the United States.

Agitated, worried, perhaps even a little in despair, Kendall clashed again with Van Buren. The new Vice-President was frightened by the prospect of the Bank War continuing, and told Blair that it was "injudicious and impolitic" to contemplate removing the deposits. He considered that to persist in attacking the Bank after the House of Representatives had declared the deposits safe, could divide and destroy the Party. Van Buren was undoubtedly worried about his own political future, but the Bank veto and the nullification crisis led him to wonder about Jackson's methods of getting things done.

Confronting Kendall did nothing to ease his mind. When he repeated his fears, Kendall shot back that the 1836 election would be lost if the Bank survived. The discussion became heated, and continued until Kendall brought the issue to a close by saying that if the deposits remained with the Bank, he would resign. "I can live under a corrupt despotism, as well as any other man," he said, "by keeping out of its way, which I shall certainly do."55

Kendall would not have to carry out his threat, however. Somewhere about this time, possibly after the adjournment of Congress, Jackson told Blair that he had made up his mind to proceed with removal. Blair would certainly have reported this to Kendall. Then, in a private conversation, Jackson told Kendall that his only concern, should he have the deposits removed, was that Congress might order them restored. To have such a thing occur a year after his re-election would be humiliating. Kendall hastened to assure him that with his popularity, he could disregard any such act of Congress. "Congress will not undertake to overrule you," he explained:
[Let] the measure be well-timed and prudently managed. Let the removal take place so early as to give us several months to defend the measure in the "Globe," and we will bring up the people to sustain you with a power which Congress dare not resist.\(^{56}\)

Jackson's great popularity was the one weapon that Kendall never lost faith in.

In a palpable demonstration of that popularity, Jackson traveled to New England during the summer of 1833 with Van Buren and many of his cabinet. Thousands of citizens turned out to cheer him. His tremendous popularity could be used to sustain his Administration in almost anything, it seemed. The sight of the cheering crowds in Boston and Concord had its effect on his subordinate, Levi Woodbury, who judged his public stance according to his constituents' moods. Woodbury became more amenable to the removal scheme. Cass and McLane, the latter just beginning his duties as Secretary of State, did not reverse their field, but their opposition was less marked thereafter.\(^{57}\)

But the most significant impact of the tour was that on Van Buren. The ever-cautious Dutchman studied Jackson's tour and became convinced that the President's immense popularity could sustain the Party against the Bank. Van Buren soon informed Lewis and McLane that, as Old Hickory was determined on the removal, he would no longer oppose it.\(^{58}\)

Van Buren's new attitude suited Kendall's purposes perfectly. On June 9, while Jackson was still in New England, he sent the Vice-President a blueprint for effecting the removal of the deposits. Telling Van Buren that he took the removal "for granted" now, Kendall presented Van Buren with a four-point plan. First, the B.U.S. would be replaced by selected state-chartered banks in Baltimore, New York, and
Boston; further depositories would be selected as later circumstances dictated. Second, the new depositories would act as a kind of consortium by mutually guaranteeing the entire sum of government deposits. They would also be obligated to effect transfers of funds to pay Federal debts and to redeem Federal notes in specie. Third, the deposits in the B.U.S. would not be removed in actual fact. Rather, all newly collected funds would be placed with the state depositories, and all government expenses would be paid from B.U.S. deposits. In this way, Kendall expected the B.U.S. funds would be gradually drained without straining the economy. Finally, and very important, the whole system would be fully operative before the convening of the next session of Congress.59

Kendall's proposal to use state banks as new depositories was hardly innovative. State banks had been used between the demise of the First Bank of the United States in 1811 and the birth of its successor in 1816. Jackson had been advised as early as 1829 to replace the Bank with state depositories and had himself spoken in favor of such a system in a cabinet meeting. Choosing state banks to act as the Administration's new fiscal agent was the only logical course. Who else could take on the B.U.S. functions purely by executive fiat? Any other plan for a new banking system would inevitably require legislative approval, and Kendall, like Jackson, did not want Congress involved in such an undertaking. Most importantly, Kendall's decision in this matter was a political decision. Because, although he still feared and distrusted all banks, he saw that the state banks could be useful allies in an all-out conflict between the President and Biddle.60

Van Buren presented this four-part plan to Jackson while the
entourage was resting in New Hampshire. Jackson liked the plan and, after consulting with his Vice-President and perhaps Isaac Hill as well, adopted it as the Administration's strategy in the next stage of the Bank War. He decided to begin the change in depositories before the end of the summer. 61

All of these decisions — removal, state depositories and unilateral executive action — had been made in May and June, 1833, without so much as a single query being raised as to the attitude of William Duane. The President seems to have taken it for granted that Duane would do as he was told without question or objection. This was a critical oversight, and therein lay the seeds of what was to become Jackson's most embarrassing moment in the White House.

Duane's difficulties began the instant he took office as Secretary of the Treasury. As Duane remembered it later, he scarcely had time to warm his seat in the Treasury before Kendall paid him a visit. Kendall told him in plain terms that the deposits would be removed, that the responsibility would be the President's and that Duane's role would, in Duane's words, be that of "a mere cypher." Kendall's Autobiography records his first meeting with Duane differently, stating that the 4th Auditor called on his new superior only "to ascertain what were Mr. Duane's views touching the removal of the deposits." Further, he undertook this chore only at Jackson's request. Thus, each man remembered the encounter in a way that most protected himself from censure. However, their respective accounts agreed on two important points: Duane did not show any sympathy for the contemplated removal and he and Kendall took an instant disliking for each other. The animosity may have been due, in part, to Kendall's zeal
against the Bank and his impatience at having to encounter yet another obstacle in his crusade. No doubt, Duane found Kendall's heavy-handed, school-master tendencies uncomfortable. It may also be that, as Kendall later suggested, Duane had no desire to "regard suggestions from any one of inferior station."^62

In the best of circumstances, it would have been difficult for Duane and his nominal subordinate to avoid each other, regardless of their personal friction. The Bank War was moving to a climax, however, and this ensured that the two men would violently clash. On June 26, while on his way back to Washington, Jackson sent Duane a sketch of his "views" on removing the B.U.S. deposits. This letter was virtually a copy of the plan Kendall had communicated to Van Buren on June 9. Jackson also requested Duane "to appoint a discreet agent" who would visit the major eastern cities and learn which state banks would accept the government's funds and terms. "Amos Kendall, Esq., would, in my opinion, be a proper person to be employed in the proposed negotiation," Jackson suggested. ^63

But for more than three weeks, Duane avoided carrying out Jackson's request. He made one objection after another to the proposal. Pride played a large part in his demurring, but there was more to it than that. A lifelong enemy of all banks, Duane could not bring himself to forge an alliance with the state banks just to destroy the B.U.S. Would it be honestly safe, he asked Jackson, "to take the public money from a bank, over which there is a control, and distribute it amongst institutions, over which no control exists?" Would republicanism really be served by such expedience? And should the President strike a blow for freedom by an act of executive high-handedness? Would it not be
better, he argued, to wait until "the representatives of the people assembled," and let them offer advice on the proposal?

Jackson refused to be diverted by Duane's arguments. Yet he was also prepared to be patient. So it was not until the 20th of July, after exchanging with Duane a voluminous number of reasons, explanations, and arguments, that Jackson finally persuaded him to write Kendall's instructions. Duane duly drafted the document, drawing most of its contents from the points in Jackson's June 26 letter (that is to say, from the scheme outlined by Kendall in his June 9 letter to Van Buren). However, Duane also attempted to add provisions that would restrict Kendall's negotiations with the state banks. In particular, he outlined a procedure for securing the deposits to interconnected credits among the selected banks. He also inserted a suggestion that "it would be proper to inquire, what would be the probable effects of any collision or contest," between the B.U.S. and the state banks, "not only upon the banks themselves, but upon the community at large." Finally, he concluded his charge to Kendall by directing that the instructions were "not to be understood as an indication of any intention" to actually order the move of the deposits.

Had Duane known Jackson better, he would have realized that these provisions would never be approved. The President simply deleted the offending portions of the document. Also, probably in consultation with Kendall himself, a new paragraph was added to the charge, giving the 4th Auditor great flexibility:

You are not to consider yourself precluded, by these instructions, from making any other propositions to the said banks, for the purpose of ascertaining on what terms they will undertake the service referred to; and you are at liberty to receive any propositions from them that they may think proper to make.64
Kendall, in effect, had the freedom to make any arrangements he thought Jackson would accept.

Kendall set off on his mission at the end of July, 1833. Traveling to Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, he went about his negotiations with his usual energy. He sent out printed circulars to the major banks explaining the proposal for a new deposit system and requesting the bankers to contact him for further information. Such further information, containing the Government's outline of the system and provisions under which it would operate, was made available in a second circular. But the real bases for negotiation were not the circulars, but the private talks that Kendall had with bank officials in his hotel suites. These talks were kept secret, but Biddle was still able to keep close tabs on Kendall's movements. The Bank's board of directors discussed his activities at their next meeting.65

Kendall's mission was well-publicized by the press as well. He complained that in each city he was met by pro-Bank newspapers that "abuse the project of removal, abuse me, abuse every body and every thing which has any thing to do with it."66 He also discovered that the state banks could not meet his provision for mutual security. In most cases, the bank officials would explain, their charters would not allow them to be obligated for any but their own deposits. Obviously disappointed by this, Kendall still did not ever consider abandoning his mission. Instead, as he later reported, he used his discretionary power to draft "another set of propositions, contemplating an arrangement between the Government and each bank separately." Duane had tried to suggest that without mutual security the deposit banks could not be
safely relied on, but Kendall did not share his fear. In fact, he
defended his choice by arguing that the deposit banks would lack the"concentrated power" that made the B.U.S. so dangerous.67

By altering his blueprint, Kendall attained his goal. Sixteen
banks — four in Baltimore, three in Philadelphia, seven in New York and
two in Boston — agreed to his revised terms for accepting the deposits.
The final total pleased him; he wrote his wife that he had done "rather
better than I expected," particularly in Philadelphia. He reported to
Jackson that the mission was successful. The deposits would be secure,
he assured the President, and the nation's credit and currency systems
would not suffer. The change would be favorable to "the whole mass of
our political friends." If Jackson acted quickly, "the proud and
haughty Bank will be at the feet of the state banks in less than 90
days."68

Kendall naturally found it easier to select depositories among
banks whose sympathies lay with the Administration. Although publicly
circumspect about such matters, he privately admitted that "those
[banks] which are in hands politically friendly will be preferred" as
depositories.69 Such an inclination was only natural, and, given
Kendall's partisan tendencies, perhaps inevitable. But it was
regrettable nonetheless. It implied that the Administration had less
than pure motives in removing the deposits. Thanks to Kendall, future
historians have used this charge to diminish Jackson's stature with
posterity.70

Meanwhile, the opponents of the transfer were making one last
effort to divert Kendall's mission. Going to Philadelphia while Kendall
was in Baltimore, Duane met with Biddle to learn more about the Bank's
condition. Whether or not they discussed politics is unknown, but Biddle decided that Duane would resist removal. Duane told several directors that he opposed removal. Kendall "was not his agent," he said. Kendall learned of Duane's comments when he arrived in Philadelphia and quickly passed the story on to Jackson. He also told the President of another rumor he had heard, indicating that McLane had engineered Duane's appointment and that the two men were "determined to prevent [removal] and will prevent it." Soon after, Kendall told an associate that Duane, and perhaps McLane, should be dismissed from the cabinet. 71

While in New York, Kendall met McLane, together with Van Buren. These men had contrived to run into him and after a few amenities quickly inquired about his mission. They seemed dismayed at the success he was able to report. McLane recovered, however, and suggested that the removal should proceed. But let the commencement date be set for January 1st, 1834, he urged. Jackson could then give his reasons to Congress in December, 1833, and avoid the charge of ignoring the legislative branch. Van Buren agreed with McLane and asked Kendall if he would support this course of action. For a moment Kendall hesitated. He could not very well defy the Vice-President and the Secretary of State. He asked if Jackson had yet been apprised of this idea and was told he had not. Would Kendall write him to suggest it? He would, was the reply, provided McLane and Duane would agree to give their support to it and act to demonstrate to Congress that the cabinet was wholly in agreement with removal on these terms. McLane evidently said he would see what he could do about Duane, and, momentarily satisfied, Kendall wrote to Jackson. But he added to the letter his own doubts about the
wisdom of this course. "The only certain course, it seems to me, is to make up an issue at once," he wrote. A delay could only be advisable if the support of McLane and Duane were guaranteed. After some more reflection, Kendall decided that any delay was ill-advised. He sent Jackson a second letter insisting that "an immediate removal or no removal" were the only feasible choices.\textsuperscript{72}

Kendall wrapped up his inquiries soon after this encounter and, after a brief visit to his father, set off for Washington. He arrived at the capital on August 31st and presented his written report to Duane. Not surprisingly, the report cast his findings in the most favorable light. He suggested that a change of deposits would actually strengthen bank currency by allowing specie to be concentrated in the east. It would then improve the Nation's balance of payments with Europe. He placed greater stress, however, on the political benefit of removal. A loose group of state banks could hardly subvert the Republic as the Bank had tried to do, he insisted. The report was designed to impress the President. Kendall had no real interest in trying to persuade Duane. He simply wanted to give the President's friends more material to defend the removal scheme. The \textit{Globe} predicted that "the last blow is about to be struck" against the Bank.\textsuperscript{73}

Jackson had already made up his mind to order the removal. Resting in Virginia, he had told Blair that he would effect the removal as soon as Kendall had replacement depositories on hand. Neither Duane nor McLane nor anyone else would alter his determination.\textsuperscript{74}

Consequently, when he received a letter from Van Buren outlining the delay that had been discussed with Kendall, he rejected the suggestion. "The Bank could not be better served than [by] the course, you say,
recommended by Mr. McLane [sic]," he replied to the Vice-President. He regretted the divisions within his cabinet, but could not let that alter his determination. The removal would begin by October 1st, Jackson concluded, sadly adding that he had "counted on your support" in the undertaking. Thus confronted, Van Buren hastily retreated. "I think it an honor to share any portion of your responsibility in this affair," he lamely replied. He promised to return to Washington and stand by the President. However, he predicted that McLane might resign rather than acquiesce to the removal taking place.75

Van Buren was right. McLane and Cass told Lewis that they could not support the removal, and would resign if it were not clear that this was the President's decision alone. Lewis urged Cass to speak directly with Jackson, to see if something could not be arranged to allow him and McLane to stay. Cass did see Jackson, and Van Buren also urged the President not to allow another cabinet upheaval. Jackson agreed and told Blair to announce in the Globe that the removals were ordered by him. He also stressed the same point in an Executive document explaining his reasons for the removal. This document, published in newspapers, reiterated the veto message and concluded by asking readers "to consider the proposed measure as his own."76

Cass and McLane accepted this and remained in the cabinet. McLane's salvation disappointed Kendall, as well as Taney. But they were mollified somewhat by the dismissal of Duane. Poor Duane was in a situation in which he could not win. He had heard in Philadelphia that Webster would see to it that the Senate rejected the man who ordered removal, and Duane was not yet confirmed. Besides, he had had enough of the way Jackson determined major policies. When the President announced
his decision to remove the deposits, Duane refused to comply by giving the necessary order. Jackson then curtly informed him that his "services" were "no longer required." The President appointed Taney as interim Secretary of the Treasury to do the job.  

No removals took place in actual fact. Instead, Taney and Kendall drafted instructions directing fiscal agents to begin sending their collections to the new depositories as of October 1st. All expenditures, meantime, were paid from the B.U.S. accounts until the Government funds were exhausted. In order to prevent the Bank from exerting pressure on the new depositories, Taney also gave special drafts to five of the latter. These were drafts on the Bank for some $2,300,000, and were intended to be used only in defense. One of the Maryland depositories, however, cashed two of the drafts immediately, which drained the B.U.S. accounts faster than planned. This show of independence only underscored the drawbacks of the pet banks. For, without a mutual responsibility system, the individual directors could not readily be controlled.

With the removal of the deposits, Kendall's victory over the Bank was complete. It was a personal victory and he enjoyed it so much that his enemies subsequently charged that he must have benefitted from removal financially, by stock speculation or some other way. No evidence has ever surfaced to substantiate this, and venality does not explain Kendall's fifteen years of attacking the Bank. Another observer was closer to the truth when he observed that Kendall's mind was "too doctrinaire" to find the Bank of any value. Kendall was too stubborn to be "a statesman," he observed. Indeed, a statesman recognizes power and knows its potential abuse, but harnesses it for society's benefit.
Long ago, Kendall had foreseen attempts to harness the Bank’s power to provide a sound currency. He preferred to destroy it. 79

Nor was he alone in preferring negative over positive policies. Jackson made his Presidency a negative one, saying no to the entire American System and calling it "reform." He intuitively understood that the majority of the people would support him in this, because he was saying no to vested interest. It was of no difference to him that an orderly program of interlocking manufactures and improvements could benefit all society. He was more concerned that it would benefit the few a great deal more than it would the many, and he decided to try and prohibit this. In this way Jackson, Kendall, and the other true Jacksonians rejected the new, emerging, industrial world and looked back to a presumably simpler age.

But, in spite of themselves, they looked forward as well, for the Jacksonians were tantalized by the potential of this era just as much as they feared it. They too desired economic progress, but wanted the majority to share in it. They wanted progress to be as equally beneficial as possible. The republican simplicity and virtue of the past might then be preserved by being alloyed with the abundance of the new age. One scholar has summarized this tendency by suggesting that the "appropriate symbol for the political thought of the early nineteenth century would be Janus, the god who faces both ways, looking backward and forward." 80

This confusion of orientation extended to the political parties. The National Republicans had disintegrated with the defeat of Clay in 1832. Now, from their remains, together with Pro-Bank Democrats and other defectors from the Jacksonians, would arise the Whigs. This Party
was dedicated first and foremost to opposing Andrew Jackson, now "King Andrew." Jackson's Party altered too. He had come to Washington five years earlier, the elected President of the Nation and the figurehead of a coalition of loosely allied factions that were hungry for office and power. That coalition had nearly crumbled during his first term. But with banking as his cementing issue, he pruned the Party and refined it. With carefully coordinated organization, built around key leaders and a chain of newspaper and letter communications, the Democratic Republicans had become "the Democracy." This was the party of the people, as Blair and his fellows were ever telling their readers. Jackson was now more than the President, chosen by electors to preside over the executive branch of government. He was now the "people's representative" and through his leadership and boldness the Executive became the dominant force in the Government.  

The very mission of government had been defined as never before. In Kendall's words, through the Bank veto message and the Central Hickory Address, government existed in America to see that everyone had an equal chance to succeed according to his natural talents, that no artificial privileges upset the natural order, that everyone was permitted to play by the same rules. It was to be a government of minimal involvement, providing only enough order to promote fairness while, in the words of one observer, "leaving the greatest possible personal freedom of action, that comports with the general good." 

If the ideology herein expressed, an ideology of individual opportunity, had a weakness, it was in the fact that no one "people" existed. Encouraging the pursuit of individual interests could, as Jackson's critics charged, set the various interests against each other. In such
a situation, party politics could become, as they did in the next
decade, cynical vote-hungry machines, basing their appeals on the lowest
common denominators: greed, chauvinism, and spectacle, and party
leaders could become a new elite that did not suit the republican
legacy. 83

Kendall had not foreseen all the consequences of his crusade
against the B.J.S., of course. He had not known that his personal
struggle against the Bank, transformed by Jackson's leadership and
Blair's publicity into a symbol for an era, would be used by scholars to
embody the spirit of his times. If he believed in the people and their
virtue, as he did, he still could not know that a century later
Democrats would be honoring Jackson as a "people's president" and their
Party as the people's party. If he predicted, as he did to Blair, that
the Bank War would lead to a "firm, zealous party," he could not have
forecast that the Bank War would make banking the central political
issue of the next decade. He would live to see this happen, and be
proud of his part in it. But in 1833, Kendall only knew that he had set
out to destroy the Bank, that the removals did that, and that the people
would be better off as a result. He also knew that in Jackson's view he
was now "as pure and talented a man as any." His victory over the Bank
had earned him Jackson's highest trust and esteem. Before long, he was
to become more influential than ever. 84
CHAPTER X

NOTES


7 Amos Kendall to William B. Lewis, May 17, 1831, Morristown National Historical Park Manuscript Collection, Morristown, New Jersey. After Barbour chaired an anti-tariff convention late in 1831, he quickly lost popularity among the Jacksonians. Richard Latner claims that Kendall then took up Richard Johnson as the best successor to Jackson, but the evidence is inconclusive. See Latner, pp. 130-31.


26 Richardson, ed., v. 2, pp. 586, 589-90.


29 Richardson, ed., v. 2, p. 590 (italics mine). See also Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29 (1972), pp. 77-78.

30 *Globe*, June 27, 1831, July 4, 1832.

31 Nicholas Biddle to Henry Clay, August 1, 1832, J. G. Watmough to Biddle, July 10, 1832, Joseph Hopkinson to Biddle, August 13, 1832, all in Biddle papers, LC; *Remini, Bank War*, p. 98.

32 Andrew Jackson to Kendall, July 23, 1832 and Jackson to William B. Lewis, July 23, 1832, both in Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, v. 4, pp. 465-67; *Remini, Jackson*, pp. 370-71.


36 Kendall to Isaac Hill, May 28, 1832.


38 Duff Green to John C. Calhoun, October 23, 1832, Green Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; E. D. Krafft to Martin Van Buren, December 5, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC; Claude Bowers, *Party Battles of the Jackson Period* (Boston: Houghton
Mifflin Co., 1922), pp. 228-29 (Bowers mistakenly cites pp. 296-303 of Kendall's Autobiography for excerpts of the Address; the excerpts are actually reproduced on pp. 428-33).


40 Remini, "Election of 1832," pp. 515-16; Globe, November 12, 1832.


42 Kendall to Littleton Dennis Teackle, December 1, 1832, Kendall Miscellaneous papers, New York Historical Society; Kendall to Martin Van Buren, November 2, 10, 1832, Van Buren papers, LC; Van Buren, Autobiography, pp. 678-79.

43 Duff Green to Dr. James Hogan, October 20, 1832, Green papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

44 Globe, December 13, 1832.

45 Nicholas Biddle to John Rathbone, Jr., November 21, 1832 and Biddle to Asbury Dickens, October 28, 1832, both in Biddle papers, LC; Remini, Bank War, pp. 120-21; Thomas P. Govan, Nicholas Biddle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 206-12.

46 Andrew-Jackson to James K. Polk, December 16, 1832, Weaver, ed., Correspondence of James K. Polk, v. 1, p. 575; Richardson, ed., v. 2, pp. 591-606; Globe, January 5, 1833.


49 Remini, Bank War, pp. 120-21; Govan, pp. 211-13; James L. Crowtheram, "Did the Second Bank of the United States Bribe the Press?" Journalism Quarterly 36 (1959), pp. 35-44; Smith, Blair, pp. 68-70.
Munroe, p. 384; Autobiography, p. 376.

Kendall to Louis McLane, March 16, 1833, Andrew Jackson papers, LC.

Kendall to Andrew Jackson, March 20, 1833, Jackson papers, LC.

Andrew Jackson to his Cabinet, March 19, 1833, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 32-33; Robert W. Gibbes to Nicholas Biddle, April 13, 1833, Biddle papers, LC.

Latner, pp. 169-70; Remini, Bank War, p. 115.

Latner, pp. 166-67; Munroe, pp. 358-59; Autobiography, 376-377.


Kendall to Martin Van Buren, June 6, 1833, Van Buren papers, LC.

Andrew Jackson to his Cabinet, March 19, 1833, Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 32-33; Kendall to Louis McLane, March 16, 1833, Andrew Jackson papers, LC.

Andrew Jackson to Andrew Jackson, Jr., June 17, 1833 and Jackson to William J. Duane, June 26, 1833, both in Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 110-28.

William J. Duane, Narrative and Correspondence Concerning the Removal of the Deposits (Philadelphia, 1838), pp. 5-7; Remini, Bank War, p. 128; Autobiography, pp. 377-78.


Duane, pp. 45-46, 84-92; Updated draft of Duane's instructions to Kendall, with Jackson's editorial changes, Duane Family papers, American Philosophical Society; Autobiography, pp. 379-80.
65 *Niles' Register*, August 3, 17, 1833; Kendall to Albert Gallatin, August 7, 1833, Kendall Miscellaneous papers, New York Historical Society; Henry Gilpin Manuscript Diary, entry for August 13, 1833, Gilpin papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP); Nicholas Biddle to Thomas Cooper, July 31, 1833, Biddle papers, LC.

66 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 2, 1833, Jackson papers, LC; Kendall to John C. Rives, August 6, 1833, Dreer Collection, HSP; *Autobiography*, p. 328.

67 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 2, 11, 1833, both in Jackson papers, LC; "Report of Special Agent in Deposit Banks," December 30, 1833, *Senate Document* 17, 23rd Congress, 1st session, p. 10.


69 Kendall to John M. Niles, October 2, 1833, Niles papers, Connecticut Historical Society; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, August 11, 1833, Blair–Lee papers, PUL.

70 Frank O. Gattell, "Spoils of the Bank War: Political Bias in the Selection of the Pet Banks," *American Historical Review* 70 (1964), pp. 35–38; *Niles' Register*, August 8, 1833. Richard Hildreth was the first historian to comment on the political bias of Kendall's choices. See his *Banks, Banking and Paper Currency* (New York, 1840), p. 43: "Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, the removal of the deposits was clearly a legal act; and when we recollect that the charter of the bank was to expire in three years, and that it was necessary to arrange some other system for keeping and disbursing the public moneys, it might easily have passed as an act of prudence, had it not borne upon its face too evident marks both of punishment and reward." (italics mine.)

71 Govan, pp. 238–39; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 11, 1833, Jackson papers, LC; Jackson to Martin Van Buren, August 16, 1833, Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, v. 5, pp. 158–59; Nicholas Biddle to Robert Lennox, July 30, 1833, Biddle papers, LC; Henry Gilpin Ms. Diary, entries for August 2, 11, 1833, Gilpin papers, HSP.

72 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 14, 25, 1833, Jackson papers, LC; *Autobiography*, p. 383.

73 Ibid., p. 387; "Report of Special Agent on Deposit Banks," pp. 9–18; *Globe*, August 9, 1833.
74 Smith, Blair, p. 82.

75 Martin Van Buren to Andrew Jackson, September 4, 11, and 14, 1833, Jackson to Van Buren, September 9, 1833, all in Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 179-86.


77 "Levi Woodbury's 'Intimate Memoranda,'" p. 511; "Kendall about a Divided Cabinet," n.d., Blair-Lee papers, PUL; Henry Gilpin Ms. Diary, entry for July 26, 1833, Gilpin papers, HSP; Duane, pp. 105-12; Andrew Jackson to William J. Duane, September 23, 1833 and Jackson to Roger B. Taney, September 23, 1833, both in Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, p. 206.

78 Remini, Bank War, p. 125; Hammond, pp. 419-22; Swisher, pp. 238-39.

79 James Gordon Bennett to Andrew Jackson, September 10, 1833, Jackson papers, LC; Henry Gilpin Ms. Diary, September 7, 1833, Gilpin papers, HSP; Pennsylvanian, September 2, 1833; Political Register, September 11, 1833; Nathaniel Niles to William C. Rives, July 23, 1833, Rives papers, LC (I owe a special debt to Richard Sheldon of the NHPRC for helping me obtain a copy of this letter).

80 Ward, p. 61. See also Meyers, pp. 10-32.


CHAPTER XI

KING ANDREW'S LOYAL POSTMASTER GENERAL

In the weeks that followed removal, Kendall watched the situation anxiously. He had promised Jackson that Congress would not order the deposits restored to the monster, and that Biddle would not be able to save the Bank from this blow. Had he been right, or had he foolishly staked his own and the President's reputations on a miscalculation? The convening of Congress provided him with little comfort. Clay quickly introduced resolutions condemning Jackson for removing both Duane and the deposits and for assuming powers "dangerous to the liberties of the people." Webster proposed a new bill to recharter the B.U.S. With Calhoun still cooperating with the Whigs, the prospects for the outnumbered Administration senators appeared bleak.¹

Nor was Biddle going to let his Bank die without a struggle. With millions of dollars lent to individuals and businesses, with the notes of nearly every other American bank still accumulating in his vaults, with his ability to discount, to loan and above all to contract credit, Biddle had plenty with which to fight. On October 8, 1833, one week after the Treasury collectors began sending their revenues to the new "pet" banks, Biddle ordered his branches to reduce their obligations by nearly six million dollars. The following January, he ordered another three million dollar reduction.²

Such an enormous contraction sent waves of panic through the
financial markets. Land sales declined while bankruptcies and unemployment rose, but the greatest damage wrought was psychological. The discount rate for commercial paper more than doubled as investors lost their nerve. The newspapers related details of the panic, and readers could not have avoided the grim reminders of 1819. Memorials and petitions were sent to the Congress, pleading for relief and for the restoration of the deposits to the B.U.S. Some of these were genuine, some undoubtedly inspired by Bank agents. Congressmen, in any event, prepared for a hurricane session. Friends of the Administration lamented that, far from killing the B.U.S., the removals had awakened its terrible strength. Now it would break the Party "all into atoms," and discredit the President, they cried. Jackson met the storm calmly, however, telling the people to destroy the panic at its source — "go to Nicholas Biddle."³

But Biddle had no intention of relenting. Publicly, he justified the reductions on the grounds that the removals had forced him to trim the Bank's obligations. The opposition press also charged that the Administration had attempted to break the B.U.S. by organizing runs on its branches. Biddle was therefore simply acting in self-defense. There was some truth to these assertions, but it is clear that Biddle was also trying to pressure the Administration. Privately, he urged Daniel Webster to lead the Senate in rejecting Jackson's newest bloc of appointments, particularly Taney as Secretary of the Treasury. With the President neutralized, Biddle believed, "suffering abroad" would stampede Congress into returning the deposits. "You may rely on it," he wrote an associate, "the Bank has taken its final course and that it will be neither frightened nor cajoled from its duty by any small
drifting about relief to the country." The Bank could ride out the
storm. Let the people take care of themselves. As for the smaller
banks, Biddle sardonically suggested that "they must rely on Providence
or Amos Kendall." 4

Kendall's was the most recent in a long list of names subscribed
to by those who simply would not believe that Jackson was master of his
own Administration. That "wretch of a printer," John Floyd of Virginia
insisted, had more influence over Jackson than any other man. Henry
Wise, another Virginia Whig, termed Kendall "the President's thinking
machine, and his writing machine — aye, and his lying machine!" John
C. Calhoun charged Kendall with "daily and hourly meddling in politics,"
and concluded that he was "one of the principal political managers of
the Administration." Duff Green foresaw depredations upon the public
monies, now that the deposits had been seized by "the Government —
which according to Amos Kendall means the President and himself." The
*National Intelligencer* swore that the Kendall was the real "ruler of the
people." Such vilification became so common that a young Democrat saw
fit to joke to a friend: "If I were a 'whig' I should begin this letter
by a philippic against Amos Kendall." 5

As the insults grew so did his legend. He became Harriet
Martineau's shadowy plotter:

He is supposed to be the moving spring of the whole administration
[she wrote]; the thinker, the planner, the doer, but it is all in
the dark ... work is done, of goblin extent and with goblin speed,
which makes men look about them with a superstitious wonder; and the
invisible Amos Kendall has the credit of it all. 6

Kendall's actual presence was no longer required; his name alone was
sufficient to evoke images of power and produce winces of misgiving.
When he did appear in the halls of Congress, he was accused of spying for the President or lobbying for the Administration, even though he usually sat in the galleries alone and spoke to no one. 7

The object of all this enmity had returned to his tasks as Fourth Auditor for navy accounts. Kendall who had so recently been engaged with Henry Gilpin to destroy the B.U.S., was now writing Gilpin over the disposition of a fifty-three dollar prize claim, while bothering Biddle for the delivery of the Navy's retirement accounts. Whereas he had recently acted to strip the BUS Norfolk (Virginia) Branch of its store of Government monies, now he wrote its president to haggle over an eighteen dollar discrepancy. If he secretly reveled in his triumph against the Bank — and he surely did — his official communications to its officers betrayed no hint of gloating. He was the sober clerk once more. 8

But in other ways, he was indeed one of the main figures in the Administration at this time. When Clay's resolutions of censure passed the Senate, he helped to compose Jackson's protest against them. He also showed keen interest in the pet banks. As in his Kentucky days, he worried over their slender ratios of specie to paper. For this reason, he asked the pet banks in the President's name to accept Reuben Whitney as a quasi-agent for dealing with the Treasury. Some of the pets as a result did use Whitney, but Kendall's own influence over the pet system soon came to an end. The Senate rejected Taney's appointment and Jackson chose Levi Woodbury to replace him in the Treasury. Woodbury had never much liked his Dartmouth classmate and certainly did not trust him. Kendall quickly discovered that his new boss intended to supervise the pet depositories without his advice. He accepted this turn of
events affably, for he was by now convinced that the B.U.S. was beaten. The victory, the culmination of his political labor, left him free to pursue private matters. 9

"Generally, the husband who carries a smile home will find smiles to meet him," wrote Kendall. 10 If his theory worked he must have been overwhelmed with smiles, for by now his was a large household. It included, besides Amos and Jane Kendall, five children, Jane's parents and youngest brother, and three or more slaves. Kendall had brought his brood from Kentucky in the summer of 1829, settling with them in a rented house in Georgetown, where the rents were cheaper. Two years later, they had purchased a home near the State Department in order that Amos might be closer to his duties. The home became his haven away from political intrigue and duplicity.

Jane Kendall's complacency was the foundation on which that home rested. She accepted his lengthy hours and many trips contentedly, although she occasionally chided him for not writing often enough. In the early months of their marriage, she was naturally anxious about their debts; she once complained that Jackson's election had done nothing to make them any better off than before. But generally she placed her faith in Amos's judgment and made the best of their circumstances. Kendall marvelled at her equanimity, and relied on it. He had become very dependent on her, and his affection for her had steadily increased through the years. Considered by many a cold and distant man, Kendall always wrote to his wife with charm and affection, exercising the poetic side of his talents. He told her he longed for "the evening of our lives, after toiling through the day," when they could devote their hours to each other "serenely and happily." He
praised her for presiding over his home and looking after the children so well in his many absences. He became cloying on occasions, declaring "universefuls" of love for her, "more than all the heathen gods ever knew." To Jane, Amos revealed a tenderness that few others ever saw.

But he reserved his greatest affection for his children. These numbered five by 1834, William, Mary Ann, and Adela, by his first wife, Jane and young John by his second wife. There would be two more: Fanny, born in 1837 and Marion, born in 1843. Kendall frequently expressed guilt when business kept him away from these, his "little buds." He would invariably find time during his travels to pick up some toy or trinket for this or that child, to be sent along with "a bushel of love." He repeatedly asked that they write to him, even if only a word or two, to ease his loneliness on the road. "I was promised a letter a day from one of the little girls, and have but one in a week!" he would complain.

His errands completed, he would scurry to his "home, sweet, sweet home!" There, he would discard the problems of adulthood and join his children in a loud game of blind man's buff. Or, he would play on the floor with them until, his asthma mounting and joints stiff, it took Jane's intervention to save him. He doted on his daughters. There was always a special kiss sent in his letters for Mary Ann, Jane, or Adela. He loved his sons too, but he expected much more from them, as his father had expected much from him. He supervised their learning until they were old enough to be given to a tutor. Thereafter, he kept a careful check on their progress and admonished them when they fell short of his expectations. To his daughters he might mail kisses, but for his
sons there were echoes of old Zebedee Kendall. He ordered Jane to "tell William I shall inquire how he has behaved when I get home."^13

Kendall had always been an intensely private man when it came to family and home. He rarely mentioned his family in political correspondence, except to say routinely that "all was well." Unlike Blair, a renowned host and gracious socializer, Kendall seldom mixed in Washington circles. He devoted his quiet hours, which were few enough, to his wife and children.^14

Kendall served Jackson and the democratic spirit that the latter symbolized, but the welfare of his children was never far from his mind. He had come to Washington $10,000 in debt. He had told the President more than once of his fear that he would die before settling these debts, abandoning his family "to the charities of a world in which I have not found justice." He managed to survive, however, and by 1834 he had, through frugal management, repaid most of his obligations. No doubt the sale of his mill property in Kentucky, in the spring of 1833, helped to speed the discharge of his debts. Soon after this sale he rejoiced to his wife that their days of adversity were nearly ended. Prosperity beckoned and Kendall looked forward to the day when he might be "independent of the world."^15 His bruised memories required such independence. For his privations and failures while a young tutor and lawyer, editor and manufacturer, had cut too deeply to be salved by anything less. In the year after the removal of the B.U.S. deposits, Kendall devoted much zeal to personal business.

Kendall received a salary of $3,000 for his place as Fourth Auditor. Half of this sum was devoted to debt payments until well into 1834. Although he owned no part of the Globe (an assertion that Blair
repeatedly denied), he was well paid for his contributions to it and particularly to the *Extra Globe* in 1832 and other election years. From that special publication he also received a share of the subscription totals. Late in 1834 Blair took John C. Rives as his full partner in all the *Globe*’s business. Rives, a former clerk in Kendall’s office, was a huge, burly man, unskilled as a writer but an excellent businessman. Rives kept the books for Blair and later calculated that Kendall made over $28,000 writing for the newspaper.¹⁶

Clearly, Kendall had the means to provide for more than his family’s simple needs. With the excess he plunged into land speculation. Millions of acres in the west lured thousands of people into the land market, and speculation became a mania for many. Of course, with his position in government, Kendall could make his selections more shrewdly, and with less risk, than the common man. He had access to information not available to the general public, particularly concerning the lands being opened through Indian removal. Like many other government officers of his day, he took advantage of his privileged position. During the Jackson years, he bought tracts in Illinois, Arkansas, Mississippi, and other states and territories. He also purchased well situated lots at the edges of growing cities such as Louisville, Kentucky and Madison, Wisconsin. The destruction of Kendall’s private papers following his death masks the full extent of his land investments, but extant fragments suggest that he accumulated considerable holdings.¹⁷

In the last months of 1834, a momentary lull descended over the struggles in the Capital. Congress had adjourned, the rival parties having battled to a draw. In the Senate, Taney and the Government
directors of the Bank had been thrown out of their positions and Jackson censured. But in the House, Jackson's lieutenant James K. Polk had pulled the President's followers into line to pass four resolutions attacking the B.U.S.'s contraction of credit, opposing recharter, and approving the pet bank system. Biddle, pressed hard by bankers and merchants, had reluctantly called a halt to the contractions. By summer, the financial panic was ending and the state banks were able to begin expanding their credit. The Whigs had lost heavily in the fall elections in New York and Pennsylvania. A silent struggle had begun within their ranks to give order to the party and find an acceptable candidate against Van Buren in 1836. Watching the signs of uncertainty among his foes, the old General began to relax. He confidently predicted that "all things will end well."

But if Jackson hoped to spend his last years in office in peace and harmony, he was to be disappointed. His decision to support Van Buren as his successor produced a revolt against his leadership in Tennessee. Hugh Lawson White, his old friend, was angling for the presidential nomination in 1836. Old Hickory insisted that the Party's candidate must be Van Buren. He demanded that White withdraw or face political ruination. White's friends responded by proclaiming his candidacy and making silent overtures to the Whigs. Then, on January 30, 1834, a Dr. Richard Lawrence walked up to Jackson as he was leaving the Capitol, drew and fired two pistols. Both weapons misfired and the President was unharmed. A subsequent investigation and trial ended in the judgment that Lawrence was insane. But for weeks, Blair hinted that the attempt on Old Hickory had been inspired by his enemies.

It was Jackson's friends who could hurt him most, however. In
recent months, Barry had become an embarrassment to the President. Amiable Barry, who had stood by Jackson during the Bank War even when all the implications of it went beyond his understanding; he had been the only one of Jackson's original cabinet to survive into the second term. But Barry had horribly mismanaged the Post Office Department. Mail service had declined, with delays in delivery becoming an alarming problem. *Niles' Register* complained about "the long enduring irregularity of the mails, and the excessive carelessness or gross ignorance" in the post offices and among the mail carriers. The paper called on Jackson to correct the slipshod performance that permeated the "wretchedly managed" postal service. Other critics echoed the call. "We have no hope for a remedy, "the Ohio Republican wailed, "until there is a thorough reform in the present wretched management" of the Post Office. Whigs blamed the spoils system for the problems. The Jacksonians had paid off political debts by appointing incompetents to the local post offices, charged the opposition press. Davy Crockett went further. "Before General Jackson's last election," he wrote in 1835, "you could see the four-horse post-coaches flying in every direction in my district; and they would send one of them to carry a mail that would not fill a pocket handkerchief."20

Excessive expenditures and wastage, in fact, were what finally moved Jackson to replace Barry. The Post Office had had a surplus of three million dollars on hand when Barry took over in 1829. By 1834 this surplus had long since disappeared. The Post Office was in debt for between $250,000 and $500,000. Corruption accounted for much of this reversal. Kendall's early Washington acquaintance, Obadiah Brown, who was Barry's chief clerk, had connived with private contractors to

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steal from the Department. Since the Post Office used private coach lines to carry the mail, and since Brown negotiated the contracts with those lines, it was relatively easy to dip into Department funds. Brown would routinely authorize "extra allowances" to contractors, who applied for these additional compensations to cover "unexpected expenses." The contractors, in turn, regularly gave Brown "gifts" to enhance his lifestyle. Barry, who paid little attention to office detail, never questioned Brown's recommendations or activities.

When these activities came out in a Congressional investigation, the friends of the Administration tried to protect Barry. Felix Grundy pleaded that Barry could never be guilty of deliberate corruption. Most members of Congress knew Barry well, and believed in his honesty. His competence was another matter. For even Grundy could not explain away the fact that Barry had tried to cover up the Post Office deficit by illegally borrowing money on the nonexistent credit of the Department. Such a foolish venture could never have happened if the Post Office books had been under the eye of a Treasury auditor. But of all the executive departments, the Post Office alone was permitted to handle its own finances without supervision. Years before, Barry's predecessor, John McLean, had suggested that this practice be ended. His suggestion had been ignored and Barry's plight was the result.²¹

Kendall was himself shocked by the revelations of Barry's mismanagement. Whether he was disappointed or not is another matter, and he certainly moved quickly to take advantage of the situation. Offering some apparently unsolicited advice to Jackson, he said that the Post Office funds must be placed under the supervision of Treasury auditors. He assured the President that were he Postmaster General, he...
would immediately ask Congress for legislation to do this. Kendall may have been speaking hypothetically, of course, but his name had already been suggested as a replacement for Barry and it is doubtful that he was unaware of rumors to this effect. Significantly, Kendall was already considering his future: Van Buren’s close friend Benjamin Butler was becoming a frequent guest at the Fourth Auditor’s home.  

Early in 1835, Barry launched a last ditch effort to save his job. He compelled Obadiah Brown to resign, announced plans for a vigorous reform of the system of handling funds, and published a defense of his own conduct. Privately, he complained that he was being victimized by Kendall, Blair, and others because he would not declare himself as wholly in favor of the succession of Van Buren. He admitted no shortcomings in his performance and relied on Old Hickory to do him justice.  

But the President was reluctantly forced to agree that Barry must go. The financial losses of the Post Office were too embarrassing to permit him to stand by the likable Kentuckian this time. But who would replace him? Felix Grundy of Tennessee clearly wanted the position, but Jackson disliked his independent habits. Nor could he afford to lose Polk, another candidate, in the House. He selected Kendall instead, knowing that Kendall’s administrative skills and parsimony might snatch the Post Office from impending bankruptcy.  

When he asked the Fourth Auditor to take the post, Kendall hesitated. Kendall protested that the appointment would never be ratified by the Senate, even if Jackson made one of his interim appointments. He said that "the prospect before me would be ... a year's hard work in the Department, and being at its close turned adrift
by the Senate without property or income." Jackson would not
countenance a refusal, however. "There are many men who would be glad
to accept the Department, and I suppose would put everything right
there," he told his subordinate, "but I know you will." Kendall could
not deny this type of appeal. Perhaps he never intended to refuse the
place. In any event, he agreed to become Postmaster General if Jackson
would hold off the appointment until after Congress adjourned and then
waited until late in the next session to place his name before the
Senate. Jackson accepted the terms. 24

The replacement of Barry was supposed to be a secret until the
adjournment of Congress, but inevitably rumors drifted through the
Capital. "Is it true that Amos Kendall is to be Postmaster General?"
Duff Green asked. If so, would he promise not to use the mails to
repress opposition newspapers? The French minister heard the rumor and
could not believe it. Kendall was too unpopular in his own Party to be
considered, he assured his superiors in Paris. Still, he admitted that
Kendall was talented enough to clean up the Post Office Department and
so enhance Van Buren's chances for election in 1836. Perhaps Kendall
would be an acting Postmaster General long enough to ensure the loyalty
of 20,000 postmasters to Van Buren as the Party's candidate, he
concluded. Another source speculated that Kendall would be chosen as
acting Postmaster General in order that he might go back to his old job
when the Senate rejected him. 25

At length, Barry stepped down, emmittered, but assuring Jackson
of his loyalty. The President tried to soothe him with the post of
minister to Spain, but the broken man died before arriving in Madrid.
Kendall paid a brief tribute to his old associate by praising Barry's
"integrity and honor," and suggesting that "he was too good a man" to efficiently control the Post Office.

The Globe was the first newspaper to announce Kendall's appointment. Blair predicted a fast improvement of the Post Office Department and sought to reassure the Party by quoting Kendall's parting admonition to the clerks of the Fourth Auditor's office: "It is not to govern the People, but to serve them, that offices are created."

Niles' Register was not so certain of Kendall's reliability as a public servant. No one doubted his "ability to manage the affairs of this great department much better than they have been," Niles wrote, but concluded only with the "hope that he will do it." Kendall's enemies simply termed the appointment one more example of Jackson's perfidy and his determination to harness the Federal patronage to his corrupt regime. Others could not guess how Kendall would behave.26

Kendall himself had already made plans for his first days in office. When he took over on the first of May, 1835, he presented Washington with the image of a decisive, clear-thinking administrator. He appointed a new chief clerk for the office to replace Brown and ordered postmasters to suspend their financial activities until he could reorganize the accounting system. Following some experimentation, he divided that system into three functions: the making of contracts, the auditing of accounts, and the actual disbursing of funds. He directed that no person, not even the Postmaster General, was to handle all three of these functions for any mail carrier. In this way, he created a check and balance arrangement that would prevent officers like Brown from collaborating with a carrier to raid the public monies.27

Next, Kendall issued a fifty-six point document, the
"Organization of the Post Office Department," defining the duties of all Department personnel and outlining the procedures to be followed by them. He promised in this to balance and close the Department's old accounts and open a new set of books by the end of June. He made it clear that he expected his subordinates to attend to their work efficiently and punctually. Anyone who accepted a gift or favor from a contractor, he promised, would be dismissed. Concerned with rumors of drunkenness in the office, as well as with the constant abuse of franking privileges, Kendall demanded that employees "report all breaches" of good conduct to him. He promised "to advance . . . all such as by their industry, fidelity, and correct deportment, may give character to the Department." Finally, he rescinded all office regulations that conflicted with his document. Clearly, Kendall intended to continue the tough pattern he had set as Fourth Auditor. He told one newly hired clerk that "constant attendance" to duty was expected, "with the exception only of such absences as the calls of nature render indispensable."  

At the same time, the new director tried to reassure postmasters that wholesale replacement would not take place. "So long as the duties of the office are performed with fidelity and its revenues promptly paid over, you need have no fear," he informed one nervous incumbent. This did not preclude the possibility that he would reward the Party faithful when vacancies occurred normally. Kendall found openings for men who supported the Administration's policies.  

But in the early weeks, Kendall was not disposed to be free with his patronage. He knew that in order to keep his place, he would have to reduce, perhaps even erase, the Department's deficit before the
Senate considered his appointment. The reduction of expenses, accordingly, became his principal concern. He habitually refused extra allowances applied for by contractors, regardless of their political leanings. One after another disgruntled Democratic contractor protested that "friends of the administration" should not be denied "simple justice." Their protests were ignored, as were applications for different routes, new offices, anything that would not definitely pay its own way. On one occasion Kendall denied the application for a new post office, made by no less a person than James Buchanan. The new office would increase the road distance (and expense) by three miles, he explained. 30

Kendall would have been ruined had he continued his niggardly policy for too long. He did not have to, however, for the Post Office deficit dropped. By the end of September, 1835, the new Postmaster General was able to claim a $100,000 surplus for the Department. This astonishing achievement, documented in his report to Congress, stilled many of his critics. He reversed his field now, promising to use the surplus to establish new mail routes and improve service. Looking to the inevitable moment of truth with the Senate, he began granting the wishes of select Whig Senators in the choice of new postmasters. Democrats, naturally, were soon granted most of their demands. 31

Not everyone was satisfied, however. The Stockton and Stokes Coach Line had been a particularly favored recipient of Obadiah Brown's generous extra allowances. Stockton and Stokes were also personally popular with Congressmen because they provided free transportation to those public servants. (They had offered the same to Jackson and been coldly refused.) They were therefore powerful men to tangle with, but
this did not deter Kendall from investigating their contracts with the Post Office. First, he suspended a large sum of "extra allowances" that had been granted by Barry before his resignation. Then, he made a careful inspection of their accounts, finding some spectacular examples of featherbedding. Over a period of two years, for example, Brown had authorized a twelve-fold increase in the payments to Stockton and Stokes for carrying mail between Baltimore and the Capital. And service had actually declined! By now convinced that this firm was a principal element in the decline of the Post Office, Kendall cancelled the extra allowances that they claimed. 32

Richard Stockton and his partner were incredulous that Kendall would cut off the flow of their Federal bounty. The company petitioned Kendall for a reconsideration of their needs, hinting that they could not carry any mail until this matter was settled in their favor. They would otherwise be "pressed to the wall, by the force and effect of your decisions." Kendall granted a small part of the sum in question, but felt justified in replying that no more would be forthcoming unless the coach line could produce better evidence of their claim. He said that his decision was supported by the Attorney General and the President, and would thus stand. Stockton and Stokes tried another tactic, offering Jane Kendall a new carriage and pair of horses if she might convince Kendall to change his mind. Mrs. Kendall ignored the suggestion. 33

Richard Stockton decided at this point to appeal to Congress. He prepared a petition to the House asking that Kendall be directed to authorize payment of $120,000 in extra allowances to the coach line. 34 Kendall knew nothing of the petition, and probably would
not have given much notice to it in any event. He was much too busy with another matter.

One of the many mysteries about Kendall was his attitude toward slavery. Raised in New England by Congregationalist parents, he hardly seemed a likely candidate as a slaveholder. But he had owned slaves since inheriting a few from his first wife; apparently, he purchased more slaves over the years. He does not seem to have been an insensitive master. He treated his property well, inquired of their health and needs while on his trips, and treated them generally as a part of his family. 35

However, it is likely that he also treated them as a distinctly inferior part of his family. Like most Americans of his time Kendall did not think of the black man as his equal. Never once did he question the institution of slavery in Kentucky or in Washington. Indeed, late in his life he advocated the time-worn defense that slavery was "sanctioned by God himself." The study of the Bible had convinced him, Kendall wrote, that "there is nothing in the institution [of slavery] itself which makes it the duty of a Christian to seek its abolition." All that was required of masters was that they be "kind and indulgent to their slaves." Slaves of course must be "obedient and faithful to their masters." He then cited the Bible, chapter and verse, to prove his point. 36

With this outlook Kendall naturally had little love for abolitionists. He termed them men "whose doctrines would marry your daughters to negroes, make your sons their equals, and people the South with mulattoes." 37 The Postmaster Generalship provided him with an unexpected opportunity to demonstrate his contempt for abolitionism.
In 1835, abolitionists were a small, but vocal and growing, segment of the population. Abolitionism was not yet a unified cause, but worried slaveholders knew that some day its many divided trickles could combine and inundate them, destroying their way of life. Arthur Tappan, president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, found his hope in these fears of his enemies. Together with his brother, Lewis, he devised a plan to hasten the day of reckoning by flooding the South with anti-slavery journals. The Tappans raised $30,000 from among their members and created a mailing list of 20,000 Southern recipients for their tracts. It made no difference that most of these recipients had little sympathy for the cause. The Tappans wanted publicity for their organization; conversions to anti-slavery would be a welcome extra benefit, but it was not their main goal. In July, they began mailing their tracts to thousands of unsuspecting recipients in the South, confident that the Society would be sparking "a conflict which will outdo — far — all the [anti-slavery] skirmishes of the past."38

The influx of abolitionist literature did indeed spark a conflict. Many of the tracts, sent from New York, first touched Southern soil in Charleston, South Carolina, the ember of nullification. On July 29, 1835, the Charleston Southern Patriot alerted its readers to the arrival of the subversive journals. "The mail brought by the Steam Packet Columbia," the editor announced, "has come not merely laden, but overburthened with abolitionist tracts." This "moral poison" was now resting in the Post Office and the editor wondered how long "good citizens" were going to permit it to stay there? A mob of "good citizens" answered him that night, by breaking into the post office, seizing the mailbag of tracts and burning them on the street. The mob
also included an effigy of Arthur Tappan in the bonfire.

The Postmaster, Alfred Huger, was threatened and ordered by the mob leaders to refuse any further deliveries of "incendiary publications." Huger, fearful for own life and afraid to "see a torch put to my own house, or my family subjected to brutality and butchery," appealed to the postmaster of New York from where the tracts were mailed. "The fate of the slave cannot be mitigated by these means [i.e. the tracts]," he wrote Samuel Gouverneur: "on the contrary the cord which binds the servant to his Master must be and will be, drawn closer and closer by this cruel and fatal interference." Gouverneur temporarily halted the mailing of the tracts and sent Huger's letter to the Postmaster General. 39

Kendall considered the matter and responded quickly. He wrote Huger, apologizing that he could not authorize any action that blocked the passage of materials through the mails. However, he continued, "no act, or direction of mine, official or private, could [be used] ... to aid, knowingly, in giving circulation to papers of this description." Having thus given Huger an opening to flout Federal law, Kendall went on:

We owe an obligation to the laws, but a higher one to the communities in which we live, and if the former be perverted to destroy the latter, it is patriotism to disregard them. Entertaining these views, I cannot sanction, and will not condemn [seizure of the tracts].

Kendall obviously wanted Huger to let the tracts be destroyed. He made certain that the abolitionist postal campaign would be stopped by sending a similar letter to the New York postmaster. Again he pleaded that he could not sanction seizure, but also assured Gouverneuer that he
"and the other postmasters who have assumed the responsibility of stopping those inflammatory papers, will I have no doubt, stand justified in that step before your country and all mankind." Informing Jackson of his actions, Kendall assured him that he had blocked further mailing of the tracts "with as little noise and difficulty as possible."\textsuperscript{40}

By and large, Kendall was commended for his stand. One of the New York papers attacked his view as an example of "practical nullification," and the stifled abolitionists complained, but the major northern papers generally agreed that materials that promoted sedition should not be allowed in the mails. Southern newspapers, naturally, praised the Postmaster General. Even old Hezekiah Niles, who seldom liked anything about Kendall, admitted that he had selected a clever solution to the problem.\textsuperscript{41}

Kendall's action on the incendiary publications was of great benefit to him when the day finally arrived for the Senate to consider his nomination. Jackson held the nomination as long as he was able, then sent it to the Senate in early January, 1836. It was tabled for later consideration, along with a number of other nominations, including that of Roger Taney for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Members of the Party lobbied energetically for Kendall and Taney while waiting for the best moment to bring them up for confirmation. The moment came late on March 15, 1836. The Senators had been debating the bill to distribute the surplus revenue for most of the day and everyone was tired. A number of Whig members were absent from the chamber.

Buchanan, acting as the Democratic floor leader, saw the opening, and, after a hurried conference with other Democrats, moved that the Senate go into executive session. Webster and other Whigs
tried to block the session with motions for adjournment, but they were outnumbered. The Senate went into executive session and quickly confirmed Taney and several others. Then Kendall's name was taken off the table for consideration. John Crittenden, Kendall's old Kentucky acquaintance, tried another motion to adjourn. It was turned down, twenty-five to fifteen. Suddenly, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, and a number of lesser Whigs who had voted against Taney, rose as a body and walked out of the chamber. Evidently, they meant the action as a demonstration of their disgust with the proceedings in general and Kendall in particular. Kendall was then confirmed, twenty-five to seven.

Hugh Lawson White, who was by now a member of the opposition, asked for a roll call to record the votes. Thomas Hart Benton, always ready to answer a challenge, agreed and asked that the standard injunction on secrecy be lifted in order that the votes could be recorded and publicized. An examination of the roll call reveals that Kendall was confirmed on a strict Party division, with fifteen Senators from free states and ten Senators from slave states voting for his confirmation. Kendall's action concerning the abolitionist tracts had alienated no Administration men.

Kendall was characteristically silent about his confirmation, but Taney commented upon it in a letter to Jackson. Taney thought it "a little pleasant" that Kendall had also been vindicated before his enemies. "He is no longer in the power of those who have sought and still desire to make him one of the victims of their vengeance," Taney concluded. Poor Taney: How could he have guessed that within another year, Kendall's enemies would have achieved the rich irony of making the new Chief Justice sit in judgment on his friend?
The Congress considered several more matters concerning the Post Office after Kendall's confirmation. The most important of these was his own draft of a reorganization bill. Both the House and the Senate studied that bill warily, but in the end it was passed with only minor changes. The heart of the bill was a new system of auditing accounts. Kendall had replaced the old system, in which the Department handled its own accounting, with a new set of safeguards. The books would be audited from then on by a new Treasury auditor, and the Post Office would cease to handle its own money. The Post Office budget was added to the regular list of Congressional appropriations.

The bill also incorporated several of Kendall's new office procedures. It formalized the inspection system he had created, by which contractors and postmasters submitted accounts of their expenses and collections. The Postmaster General could compare these accounts and check on those persons or firms he suspected of misusing funds. The bidding system for contracts was also tightened up under more careful supervision, and the duties of all postal employees were spelled out more clearly. Significantly, all postal employees were now forbidden to engage in any business arrangements with contractors. The bill, enacted as the Post Office Act of 1836, was a well-conceived document that erased a number of unwieldy and troublesome elements in the old postal structure. Kendall deserves the praise he has received from scholars for creating this reorganization and the much more efficient postal service that resulted from it.44

A second proposal by the Postmaster General fared less well. Kendall asked for authority to negotiate with the new railroads for carrying mail. Congress gave him permission — although Calhoun
protested that Kendall would derive "too great an addition to his power" with a rail line alliance — and Kendall began negotiations. These collapsed quickly, however, as the rail entrepreneurs wanted development capital for their cooperation and the Democrats would not sponsor internal improvement bills for this purpose.  

Kendall tried to substitute an express mail service with fast coaches. He believed that an express service, costing extra, could deliver mail from New York to New Orleans in six days, less than half the average thirteen days it took for regular service. He enthusiastically prepared to inaugurate the service, but certain people opposed the scheme, including Blair: "It seems to me that this [plan] will make it a rich man's mail exclusively," he complained to Van Buren. Consequently, the Globe did not endorse the scheme.  

While Kendall was preparing his express mail blueprint, Congress passed one final piece of legislation concerning the Post Office. Two days before adjournment, while many senators and representatives were distracted with travel plans and other business, Richard Stockton's friends pushed through his petition as a private act. This "Act for the Relief of William B. Stokes, et al," authorized the Solicitor of the Treasury to review the claims of Stockton and Stokes. The Solicitor was empowered to settle the claims on his own judgment. Kendall was "directed to credit such mail contractors with whatever sum or sums of money, if any, the said Solicitor shall so decide to be due them."

Kendall had expected no further trouble from Stockton and Stokes, having told Jackson: "I think it will be smooth in that quarter hereafter." But now Congress had decreed otherwise. Kendall was about to begin the last great battle of his political career.
CHAPTER XI.

NOTES


3 Globe, September 12, 1834; Niles' Weekly Register, May 24, 1834; Thomas Govan, Nicholas Biddle (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 243ff.; John Campbell to David Campbell, March 21, 1834, Campbell papers, Duke University Library.

4 William Jones to Willie P. Mangum, February 17, 1834, Henry T. Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie Persons Mangum (5 vols., Raleigh, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1950-56), v. 2, pp. 84-85; Nicholas Biddle to Daniel Webster, January 6, 1834, Biddle papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC); Biddle to Joseph Hopkinson; February 21, 1834, Biddle papers, LC; Govan, Biddle, p. 221.


6 Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (London, 1838), v. 1, pp. 257-58.

Amos Kendall to William Appleton, October 25, 1832, Miscellaneous papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Kendall to Henry Gilpin, August 27, 1834, Society Misc. Collection, HSP; Kendall to Nicholas Biddle, September 29, 1834, Seymore Adelman Collection HSP; Kendall to President of the BUS, Norfolk Branch, December 24, 1833, Gratz Collection, HSP.

Andrew Jackson to Amos Kendall, [April, 1834], Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library; Kendall to Thomas Ellicott, April 15, 1834, Taney papers, LC; John M. McFaul and Frank O. Gattell, "The Outcast Insider: Reuben M. Whitney and the Bank War," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 91 (1967), pp. 115-44.

Kendall to his wife, August 13, 1833, Autobiography, p. 330.

Ibid., pp. 288, 330, 530.

Ibid., pp. 283, 325, 328-30. Late in life, Kendall mentioned he had had fourteen children by his two wives. I have learned the fate of only nine—the seven named and two unnamed daughters who died within a few months of birth. See Ibid., 680 and Kendall to H. Simpson, October 14, 1834, Miscellaneous Collection, HSP.


Autobiography, p. 335.


Globe, August 18, 1834, November 16, 1835; Jonathan Elliot, Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square (Washington, D.C., 1830), p. 547; John C. Rives to Kendall, December 21, 1842, and Kendall to Francis Blair, September 7, 1834, both in Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library.

Kendall to Richard Smith, August 12, 1832, Dreer Collection, HSP; Kendall to William D. Lewis, June 30, 1834, Lewis-Nielson Papers, HSP; Kendall to James D. Doty, May 9, 1850, Kendall Miscellaneous papers, Dartmouth College Library; Henry Cohen, Business and Politics in America from the Age of Jefferson to the Civil War; The Career of W. W. Corcoran (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 246 n.


22 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, November 25, 1834, Jackson papers, LC; F. O. J. Smith to "Brother Can," May 14, 1834, Smith papers, Duke University Library; Kendall to Benjamin Butler, January 5, 1835, Gratz Collection, HSP.

23 Crenson, pp. 104-5; Globe, March 16, 1835; William Barry to his Daughter, February 22, 1834, and January 4, 1835, both in William and Mary Quarterly 13 (1904-5), pp. 237-41.

24 Autobiography, pp. 335-36. Kendall erred in remembering that he began his duties on June 1st, not May 1st, 1835.

25 Globe, March 25, 1835; Diplomatic Despatches to the Compte de Vigny, March 28, 1835, Dawson papers, Duke University Library; Niles' Weekly Register, April 11, 1835.


27 Kendall to Preston Loughborough, May 2, 1835, Postmaster Generals Letterbook A, National Archives; Globe, May 6, 1835; Kendall to Benjamin Butler, July 6, 1835, Postmaster Generals Letterbook A, National Archives.

28 Amos Kendall, Organization of the Post Office Department (Washington, D.C., 1835), (published in Niles' Weekly Register, July 7, 1835); Andrew Jackson to Kendall, May 21, 1835, in Jackson papers, LC; Kendall to Henry Johnson, July 5, 1836, Kendall papers, LC.
29 Kendall to Caleb Butler, May 13, 1835, Kendall papers, LC; Arthur Campbell to David Campbell, June 13, 1836 and George Hopkins to David Campbell, June 22, 1836, both in Campbell Family papers, Duke University Library.


31 *Senate Document 1*, (December 1, 1835), 24th Congress, 1st session, 391-92; Kendall to Daniel Webster, January 5, 1837, George F. Hoar papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Robert Beale to Kendall, June 28, 1836, Jackson papers, LC; Kendall to Nathaniel Hyer, May 27, 1837, Miscellaneous papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

32 *Autobiography*, pp. 350-51; Kendall to Benjamin Butler, June 30, 1835, Postmaster Generals Letterbook A, National Archives; [Amos Kendall], *An Exposition of the Reasons for the Postmaster General for Refusing to Execute a part of the Award of the Solicitor in favor of Messrs. Stockton, Stokes and others* (Washington, D.C., 1837), copy in Van Buren papers, LC.


34 "Amos Kendall v. The United States, on the Relation of William B. Stokes, et al.," *United States Supreme Court Reports* (12 Peters, 1838), p. 522ff.; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 7, 1835, Jackson papers, LC.


36 Amos Kendall, "A Letter on Slavery—It is Vindicated by the Bible—A Remarkable Document." (1862 clipping, reprinted from the National Intelligencer and part of the Fahnestock Pamphlets, volume 8, number 10, University of Illinois—Urbana, Library).


39 Ibid., p. 203; Charleston Southern Patriot, July 29, 1835; Alfred Huger to Samuel Gouverneur, August 1, 6, 8, 1835, in Frank O. Gattell, ed., "Postmaster Huger and the Incendiary Publications," South Carolina Historical Magazine 64 (1963), 183-201; Samuel Gouverneur to Amos Kendall, August 7, 1835, Gouverneur papers, New York Public Library (hereafter NYPL).

40 Kendall to Alfred Huger, August 4, 1835, quoted in the Charleston Courier, August 14, 1835; Kendall to Samuel Gouverneur, August 22, 1835, Gouverneur papers, NYPL; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 7, 1835, Jackson papers, LC.


43 Roger B. Taney to Andrew Jackson, March 17, 1836, Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, p. 390.


46 Crenson, pp. 147-49; Kendall to Preston Loughborough, January 2, 1837, Postmaster Generals Letterbook C, National Archives; Globe, July 25, 1836; Francis P. Blair to Martin Van Buren July 14, 1836, Van Buren papers, LC.

47 United States, 5 Statutes at Large, 284; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 7, 1835, Jackson papers, LC.
CHAPTER XII

FINAL STRUGGLES

Kendall was probably bored and uncomfortable during cabinet meetings. He had almost no respect for the opinions of some of his colleagues, including Woodbury, who after 1834 was in charge of the Treasury. He did not think too highly either of Mahlon Dickerson, who had replaced Woodbury in the Navy Department. Dickerson, a New Jersey Democrat, seldom spoke during cabinet meetings. He was too busy taking notes on what everyone else was saying. But Dickerson was an absolute ball of fire compared with Secretary of War Lewis Cass. Cass was an effective administrator, but a non-participant when it came to policy discussions. In October, 1836, he persuaded Jackson to accept his resignation. The President left the post of Secretary of War vacant, for Van Buren to fill.

Kendall had more respect for the other members of the cabinet. Benjamin Butler had been Attorney General since Taney relinquished the post in 1833. Once Van Buren's law partner, Butler was an equally skilled jurist and politician. But he placed the Dutchman's ambitions ahead of his own, avoided conflict when he could and was agreeable with almost everyone. Kendall liked him (which was well, for the two men would be working together before long to defend the Postmaster General's decision against Stockton and Stokes). Finally, there was John Forsyth as the Secretary of State. This talented Georgian had taken over when McLane had resigned in the summer of 1834. Kendall also liked Forsyth,
and credited his appointment to his consistent service in defending the removal of the deposits and the President.\(^1\)

The President: Andrew Jackson had enlarged the scope of the presidency by vigorously wielding the inherent powers of his office. He had ignored Congress by striking down the B.U.S. and transferring the deposits to the pet banks. He had ignored the Supreme Court while removing the Indians beyond the Mississippi. He had repeatedly ignored the warnings of his own cabinet and the entreaties of his own Party. Finally, in the last months of his second term he thrust upon the Democracy his choice for a successor, Martin Van Buren, despite the fact that a large part of the Party did not favor the Magician.

Jackson's will was like a forge. He used it to fashion the world according to his own ideas and prejudices. He had molded this placid cabinet, in which Kendall now resided, by driving out anyone who would not agree with him in all things. He had driven out informal advisors as well: White, Eaton, Lewis, each man discarded after he had served his purpose. Only a handful of men had held onto his favor during most of his Presidency: Van Buren, Blair, and Kendall. And only Kendall held it without faltering from beginning to end. Blair had not come to Washington until 1831 and Van Buren had been under a temporary pall during the Bank War.\(^2\)

Kendall served Jackson well throughout Old Hickory's two terms in office, and he was well rewarded. No one would have predicted in 1829 that he would attain cabinet rank. Kendall himself would not have guessed that by 1836 he could freely offer Jackson advice on any issue, could even come perilously close to telling Old Hickory that he was wrong on an issue. Moreover, the two men liked each other. Jackson was
one of the few men to whom Kendall would write details about his family. In return, Jackson would ask his friend to "take a family dinner at 4 o'clock with my little family." Kendall, reflecting on these tokens of Jackson's esteem years later, asked: "Can such traits of character belong to a tyrant or a bad man? All that is good in human nature answers no."  

But in the last year of Jackson's tenure, Kendall was too busy with the Post Office to continue writing Jackson's public papers. When Jackson became convinced in 1836 that land speculation in the west was getting out of hand, he decided to order the Treasury to accept only specie for land purchases. It was Thomas Hart Benton, not Kendall, who drafted the Specie Circular for this purpose. Taney wrote Jackson's draft veto of the Congress-spawned Deposit Act that same year and wrote his Farewell Address in 1837.  

Then in 1837, there was a new President presiding over the cabinet. Van Buren was an enigma to almost everyone (and has remained so with most historians). Few could equal his skill in accurately predicting the political results of a given measure or event. Fewer still could say with certainty what his political principles were. Like Kendall, he advocated adherence to the states rights philosophy of the old Jeffersonians, but accepted Jackson's augmentations of Executive authority during the Bank War. There are those who have defended Van Buren as the supreme practitioner of American politics. To these, he was the pragmatist who understood that parties, held together by vague ideologies, were the keys to republican government. Others, conversely, have dismissed him as nothing more than an ambitious opportunist.  

In 1836, Van Buren won the office of President by a combination
of Whig disunity, strong Democratic organization, and Jackson's invaluable support. Kendall, preoccupied with the Post Office, played little part in the victory. He contributed some material to the Extra Globe's columns, and postmasters received plenty of these to distribute to the voters. That was about all he had time for; the recent departure of an assistant from the Post Office forced Kendall to handle extra duties until a replacement could be hired. There is no evidence to even suggest that Kendall helped to arrange the vice-presidential nomination for his old friend Richard Johnson. Blair deserves the credit for that, and for coordinating the Party press in the election contest.⁶

Once the victory was won, there was some question as to whether or not Kendall would remain in the cabinet. Insiders remembered his differences with the Magician during the Bank War. Harriet Martineau heard that Van Buren wanted to dismiss Kendall but dared not for fear of Jackson's ire. Even so, she reported that Kendall was going to lose the influence and power he enjoyed during Old Hickory's regime. There were those in the Party who received this rumor eagerly. Van Buren could not do better, commented one Jacksonian, than to

get clear of a portion of his counsellors, Woodbury & Kendall & such like, and take decent, respectable & honorable men in their stead that the nation has confidence in.⁷

Van Buren did not dismiss Kendall. He retained all of Jackson's cabinet, adding the South Carolina Unionist, Joel Poinsett, as the new Secretary of War. Ever cautious, the new President did not want to give the impression that there were problems with his command of the Party or the Administration. He wanted a peaceful transition from the Jackson days, time to take over safe control of the ship before setting off on
his own course.  

Fate did not grant him that time. Early in 1837, the speculation mania reached its apex. Men buying western lands were so hungry for specie (required for land purchases by Jackson's Specie Circular) that they drove the interest rate on short term loans to a new high: two percent a month. At this point, people's confidence in paper began to waver. They pressed the banks to redeem their notes with specie as a hedge against further inflation. But there was not enough specie available. When a few commercial enterprises failed in May, New York's bankers panicked and suspended specie payments. Banks in other cities, including several pet banks, quickly followed suit. The depression that had been averted during Biddle's contraction three years earlier was underway.  

The panic put Van Buren in a difficult position. He could easily have ignored the depression, as Monroe had in 1819. No one at that time advocated as one of the Federal government's duties the task of alleviating economic suffering. But the suspension of specie redemption by pet banks forced him to take some action. By law, a deposit bank could not suspend specie and remain a Federal depository. Woodbury briefly tried to bolster the depositories by moving specie from one pet to another. But he failed and, complying with the provisions of the law, ceased to deposit funds with any of the suspending pets. Van Buren now had to choose a new course for the government's own finances while responding to public appeals for economic relief.  

For once, the cautious Magician acted quickly and vigorously. He called for a special session of Congress to convene in September. When the members arrived, he asked for authority to pay the Government's
bills with an issue of Treasury notes. He also proposed that the deposit bank system — already destroyed by the panic — be discarded. In its place, he offered a blueprint for an independent treasury system, by which the Government would handle its own finances and be divorced completely from banks. Van Buren's independent treasury proposal was a bold one; too bold, for he lacked the votes to carry it through both the House and the Senate. Too many congressmen, of both parties, were now committed to Kendall's deposit system, or at least to the influence of bankers in their states. Van Buren tried, but could not persuade enough of these men to support his plan. Not being Andrew Jackson, he could not compel them to support it either. The Independent Treasury bill passed the Senate but failed in the House.11

Van Buren was more successful in obtaining the issue of treasury notes, (which Congress quickly authorized), and in responding to calls for relief. He supported the repeal of Jackson's Specie Circular as a quick method of inflating the value of paper. And, in a move that surprised Kendall and many others, he coaxed John C. Calhoun away from the Whigs and back into the Democratic Party proper. This enlarged the Party's ranks in Congress, as Calhoun's followers came back with him. Van Buren hoped that with these extra votes, the Independent Treasury bill might pass at the next regular session.12

How Kendall reacted to Calhoun's restoration to the Party is unknown. Kendall by that time had no real influence with Van Buren and was not privy to the new President's plans. He had opposed the President's plan to repeal the Specie Circular, arguing that a temporary suspension of it was the most that was necessary. Van Buren ignored the advice.13 Kendall supported the Independent Treasury system, having
lost faith in his deposit banks during 1836, but he played no part in
designing it. Van Buren preferred to rely on other counsellors in
framing his proposal, even though Kendall had outlined a similar system
for Jackson in 1836 and had already ordered his postmasters to stop
dealing with the pet banks and handle their own finances. Obviously,
Kendall did not have Van Buren's ear, nor was he likely ever to get
it. 14

In any event, Kendall had enough work to keep himself busy. The
Post Office building had burned in an accidental fire the previous
December and Kendall was busy supervising construction of a new
headquarters. He was also engaged in perfecting the express mail. And,
he was considering using the Post Office as a national clearing house
for newspaper subscriptions. Local post offices could accept orders for
a major newspaper and transmit the subscription fee with special drafts
to the distant editors, he reasoned. Admitting that the "duties of the
postmaster general are already sufficiently laborious," he nevertheless
offered "to digest a plan for accomplishing so great a public
benefit." 15 All he needed was the permission of Congress to explore
the idea. But permission was not forthcoming.

Conservative Democrats and Whigs alike were wary about giving
Kendall more power. They viewed him as the perfect symbol of radical,
anti-corporation, anti-paper money movements, known by this time as
locofocoism. Kendall only increased their apprehensions when he made
statements in favor of workingmen's movements, or when he compared the
American Revolution to the current panic:

A paltry tax on tea broke the political band [he wrote to
commemorate Independence Day, 1837]; but now, every man, woman and
child in this vast republic, is taxed in his lands, his bread, and
his labor, to pay off debts of banks, brokers and merchants. 16

Fearful conservative Democrats begged Van Buren to dismiss his Postmaster General. "Mr. Kendall, I assure you," wrote one man, "is execrated by friend and foe — except the Radicals who look to him and Mr. Benton as their polar stars ... Part with him from your counsels and send him ambassador to the Moon — the further from you the better." 17

Kendall stayed on in the cabinet, but the days when he could be a behind-the-scenes manipulator were over. Van Buren relied on less controversial aides. With Kendall's fall from grace evident, he was the object of increasing criticism. In 1837, a disgruntled Jacksonian outcast published two pamphlets attacking the Postmaster General as "the well known charlatan, projector and chief conspirator" in the Democratic Party plot to "overthrow the freedom of elections." Dr. Robert Mayo had been a minor errand runner for the Democrats, before he had been expelled from the Hickory Club for misuse of its funds. John Quincy Adams tagged him as a busybody in search of revenge. Mayo chose Kendall as his target. Kendall, Mayo charged, was the "father of loco focoism."

He was the architect of the Hickory Club, an electioneering machine established "as a means of promoting his own ambitious views," namely the overthrow of ordered society and the elevation of the propertyless debtors. Mayo's attacks were personal and vicious, but heeded. 18

Kendall found his new notoriety troublesome, particularly when it led to official inquiries and unpleasant questions. Congressional Whigs used Mayo's diatribes to haul Kendall before a House committee that was investigating Executive patronage. What did he know about the Hickory Club, he was asked? Did its members ever try to influence the
outcome of elections? Kendall did not have to answer because the Democratic members of the committee, a majority, ruled that the questions were "inappropriate." He was embarrassed by the proceedings, however, especially as Whig editors gave his appearance full attention in the press. 19

Meanwhile, the firm of Stockton and Stokes was closing in on him. The Solicitor of the Treasury, an old friend of John C. Calhoun, reviewed the contractors' claims as Congress had directed. He found that Stockton and Stokes were not entitled to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, as they had claimed, but one hundred and sixty thousand. Kendall was dumbfounded and furious. He did not believe that "one cent of it is justly due," and acting on his own initiative refused to comply with the Solicitor's decision. He released the original sum in question but would not authorize payment of the additional forty thousand dollars. Richard Stockton and his partners tried to get Congress to order the extra money turned over to them, but the House of Representatives tabled their petition. The firm then decided to seek a court order forcing Kendall to pay the money. 20

Why Kendall was suddenly so bold as to defy Congress and the Solicitor of the Treasury is a mystery. He had used others to take great risks in the past — Gideon Welles against Duff Green in 1831, Jackson and Taney against the Bank, local postmasters against the abolitionists in 1835. Perhaps by 1837 he became too sure of himself, too certain of his righteousness. In his defense, it must be said that in defying the avaricious Stockton, Kendall was taking one of the most principled stands of his career. He paid heavily for it.

Justice William Cranch, presiding over the United States Circuit
Court in the District of Columbia, accepted Stockton's complaint and ordered Kendall to show cause why a writ of mandamus should not be issued. Kendall replied that in ignoring the Solicitor's judgment he was using his discretionary power as an Executive officer. The Executive branch of the Government was independent of Congress and the Judiciary; therefore the court had no jurisdiction over him in this matter. Cranch disagreed, pointing out that Marbury vs. Madison had settled the question of the Judiciary's power to compel Executive officers, and issued a writ of mandamus ordering Kendall to pay the coach line. Ominously, Cranch had added to his decision a remark saying that Executive officers were personally liable for damages if their decisions were in error. That is, Executive officers could be sued for personal damages, although the Federal Government would pay for official claims. Kendall, his blood up, conferred with Van Buren and Butler and decided to appeal Cranch's decision to the United States Supreme Court.21

The case was argued before the Taney Court in 1838. High constitutional issues were by now involved: the freedom and independence of the Executive branch, the legitimate bounds of official ministerial discretion (i.e. could Kendall ignore the Solicitor on his own discretion?) and certain precedents set by John Marshall were at stake. Interestingly, the legal differences could be summarized by a statement Kendall had written in Jackson's veto of the B.U.S. recharter bill:

Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution swears that he will support it, as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others.22

This maxim of Jacksonian philosophy was going to be tested, with Kendall
as the issue.

The personal dynamics of the situation should be noted as well. Kendall, an inveterate enemy of the Judiciary, was about to challenge legal precedent established by Marshall in the days of Kendall's philosopher, Thomas Jefferson. For his defense, he relied on arguments made by Jackson and himself in the Bank veto, denying the Judiciary's right to interpret an Executive decision. Ironically, presiding over the Supreme Court in this case was Kendall's aide in the Bank War, Roger B. Taney.23

Kendall was represented by Butler and by Francis Scott Key as District Attorney for the District of Columbia. Richard S. Coxe and Reverdy Johnson, two of the finest constitutional lawyers available, argued the case for the other side. Key led off for Kendall, arguing that the action of Cranch in issuing the writ of mandamus constituted a usurpation of Executive authority by the Judiciary. The President was responsible for the actions of his subordinates and only he could compel them in a ministerial decision. No court, Key concluded, could rightly decree otherwise. Butler agreed, stressing that in ignoring the order of the Solicitor, Kendall was using his discretionary judgment as an Executive officer to disagree with another Executive officer. He also questioned whether or not the Circuit Court had the power to issue a writ of mandamus to a Federal official.

Johnson and Coxe, both Whigs, replied variably. Johnson pointed out that Butler and Key had skirted an important matter: Congress had ordered Kendall to accept the Solicitor's judgment of what was due the coach line. Kendall had ignored it, and thus ignored Congress. The justices called on Butler to respond to this point and,
when pressed, he admitted that no Executive officer, including the President, could rightly refuse to execute an act of Congress. Kendall's case was doomed from that moment.

Coxe simply attacked the Postmaster General. "This functionary," he bellowed, "has arrayed himself in an attitude of hostility against all the authorities of the government with which he has been in contact." Kendall wanted to destroy the Judiciary, he averred, and place the Nation under the thumbs of a corrupt Executive. His decision against Stockton and Stokes was an act of personal malevolence, malice being a normal part of his character. Coxe seemed ready to deliver an oral biography of Kendall's contentious life, but Butler protested that he was making a political, not legal, speech. Coxe thereupon drew back, but the Whig press made good use of his remarks during subsequent weeks.24

The Supreme Court voted unanimously against Kendall. Smith Thompson, delivering the opinion of the Court, denied that Kendall could be protected by the separation of powers. He was obligated to obey an act of Congress. Such obedience was simply a ministerial duty, in which no discretion was required or allowed. As for the writ of mandamus, Thompson announced that it was perfectly proper for the Circuit Court to issue it against Executive officers. Taney offered his own opinion, taking issue with Thompson on minor points but accepting the major thrust of the decision. Taney's biographer has commented that his decision on this matter did much to ease fears that he would unfailingly support the Democratic Party in legal questions. Thus, Taney bought some respectability at Kendall's expense.25

The Kendall decision was an important landmark in American
jurisprudence. A legal scholar summarizes its significance like this:

A century later, the political controversy over the Kendall case has lost its importance, but the decision remains of significance as a judicial buttress of the constitutional position of Congress vis-à-vis the administration. Executive officers are responsible for the performance of their functions not only to the chief executive, who is the hierarchical head of their department, but also to the legislature, from whence their very being is derived. The authority of such officers finds its source in congressional delegation, and, like all agents, they are subject to the scrutiny and supervision of their principal.26

Kendall, however, was less concerned with the case's legal impact than with its effect on his reputation. The mystique about Kendall was broken; he was vulnerable after all. Whigs and Conservative Democrats redoubled their attacks on him. Kendall became depressed and his health suddenly troubled him. He complained of pains in his right arm and back and told Van Buren he might have to resign if it grew worse. He was worried about his finances, claiming that he had "amassed little of this world's gear" during public service.27

To restore himself, Kendall took a pilgrimage to the Hermitage, in the summer of 1838, to begin his biography of Jackson. He found Jackson to be more feeble than he had ever seen him — inactivity was weighing on the Old General — and Kendall feared he might die at any time. Jackson's papers were likewise in a sorry state and the Postmaster General accomplished little beyond reorganizing them and preparing an outline for the biography. Still, the trip refreshed him. He took the occasion to do some leisurely reading, although he also carefully studied the Party's prospects in the west. Better local leadership was needed out there, he informed Van Buren, but added that the outlook was good for a Democratic victory in the fall elections. He decided that if the Independent Treasury bill passed at the next session
of Congress, Van Buren would easily be reelected in 1840.28

Van Buren was equally optimistic about his political future. He believed that the Democrats would win handily in the New York elections, and the victory would help carry his sub-Treasury plan in Congress. Reassured, Kendall resumed his duties at the Post Office. He was as careful with government funds as ever. One contractor complained that "Amos has an iron fist when you petition [him] for anything that costs money." The loss to Stockton and Stokes was a memory now, and for the moment an unimportant one.29

Surprisingly, the parsimonious Postmaster General was succumbing to the personal comforts of Washington life. He and Jane were seen at social events more often now, and even hosted elegant parties of their own. Describing one of Kendall's parties, a Maine Congressman concluded that it

was gotten up in very good style. There were four rooms below, all pretty well filled, and two of them with cotillion dancers. There were two chambers with tables, cards, chess boards, &c. I beat Dr. Taylor of New York, two games of chess, besides spending a considerable time in seeing the ladies dance, eating and drinking the good things provided for us.30

In 1839, Kendall gave his daughter Adela in marriage to Dr. Frederic Culver of Kentucky. The wedding and reception was the social event of the season. Kendall was a happy man once again. Observing him at a dinner party about this time, a Democrat noted: "I never saw Mr. Kendall in so gladsome and communicative a mood."31

But clouds were again gathering on the horizon. Van Buren was stunned when the Democrats lost the New York elections in 1839. He was further frustrated when, soon after, the Independent Treasury bill again was blocked in Congress. The schism in the Party continued, as
Conservative Democrats, supporting state banks, joined the Whigs in an alliance of convenience to thwart the Administration program. The depression continued, particularly in commercial centers. Workingmen's movements flourished as laborers' earnings remained inadequate to pay for their family's needs. No one could say how these agitations would affect the coming Presidential contest.32

A new challenge by Stockton and Stokes confronted Kendall. Relying on the remarks of Cranch and Coxe, the coach line filed suit against the Postmaster General for personal damages incurred in withholding the extra allowances from them. Asking a settlement of one hundred thousand dollars, they charged that Kendall had cheated them out of malice. Kendall had, perforce, to hire lawyers to defend him at the coming trial.33

Predictably, his depressions and health problems returned. He brooded over the divisions of the Party. Could not the conservatives understand, he asked, that their stubborn opposition to the sub-Treasury would lead the Party to "ruin — black ruin" in 1840? Were they so foolish as to destroy the Democracy over personal desires and private grudges? If only "democracy understood itself and would be true to itself!," he had once moaned. But no one was listening to him any more.34

Again he decided to resign, and this time he could not be dissuaded. His health demanded that he find a less strenuous living, he explained to Van Buren. Besides, he needed more money to keep his western lands from foreclosure and the auction block. He agreed to stay on until Van Buren could arrange for a replacement and promised to work for the President's reelection. To this end, and to improve his
finances, he concluded a deal with Blair to edit the Extra Globe during
the coming campaign. He would receive a salary, plus bonuses for the
number of new subscriptions he obtained. 35

Leaving office on May 9, 1840, Kendall threw himself into the
Extra Globe task with an energy that belied his supposedly frail health.
He announced plans to review the whole of Van Buren's administration and
reveal the "deceitful" course of the Whigs. He also mentioned that he
was looking for new readers. 36 He sent out franked copies of a
pointed letter to the postmasters, asking them to recruit subscribers
for the paper. "Every Farmer, Mechanic and Workingman should have one," he noted and called on his former subordinates to help him:

Stimulated by an enthusiastic devotion to the pure principles of
Democracy and by the daring efforts now making to conquer them . . .
I shall endeavor to take care, that the true-hearted men who may
help me in reaching the minds of an honest people shall have no
cause to repent their exertions. 37

The postmasters understood the message and many responded. To
supplement their efforts, Blair obtained from cabinet members and
department heads lists of men who could be counted on to pledge
contributions for printing and distributing the paper. Van Buren bought
two hundred subscriptions to send to key parts of New York, while others
contributed smaller amounts. 38

Perceptive men, of course, knew that Kendall was benefitting
himself as much as he was serving the Party. A Whig cartoonist captured
it best, portraying Blair and Kendall, arm-in-arm, before a large globe.
"Amos: you are an Atlas! and can support the Globe!," Blair is saying.
Kendall, smiling and holding a "List of subscribers: 100,000 office
holders," replies: "Yes, Frank, and can make the Globe support
But neither Kendall nor the _Globe_ could help Van Buren this year. He could not heal the division within the Party, even though he finally managed to get the Independent Treasury bill passed into law. The economy remained locked in the grip of the depression, for which he was blamed. And the Whigs had finally managed to improve upon the Democratic organization and style, beating Kendall and Van Buren at their own game. Whig pamphlets and broadsides poured forth from their presses, making fun of Van Buren's stylish dress and careful tastes in food and wine. They played him up as a rich, uncaring aristocrat. By contrast, they portrayed their presidential candidate, William Henry Harrison, as a simple farmer, a war hero and a virtuous old Cincinnatus who was answering his country's call. In reality, Harrison was a war hero of sorts, but also a member of Indiana's landed gentry and an experienced politician. Perceiving that he had the advantage, he kept his mouth shut and let the newspapers campaign for him. Whig papers portrayed him as strongly pro-slavery and anti-tariff in the South. In the northern states, they pictured him as pro-tariff and neutral on the subject of slavery. In short, they had learned how to sell their candidate to the voters.

Kendall and Blair did what they could to turn the tide. They pointed out the inconsistencies in the Whig rhetoric, blithely ignoring the fact that Democratic newspapers were almost as guilty of misrepresentation. Kendall sent his eldest son William to Kentucky to help organize literature distribution. He proposed that "Democratic Minute Men" be established in the east for drumming up voters. He helped organize a similar group, the Democratic Workingmen of the
District of Columbia, and served on its correspondence committee. One of the committee's letters urged the local leaders to "guard against frauds at the polls," while bringing out the loyal voters. 41

Kendall's major contribution to the campaign was his "Address to the People of the United States." Widely distributed, it was a disappointing document, with nothing like the quality of his Hickory Club Address of 1832. He asked his readers to consider why Harrison "refuses to answer questions" and criticized the Whigs for nominating him simply because he was a war hero. A Harrison victory, he warned, would mean the return of the Bank of the United States and an end to "the cause of morality, freedom and law." Short, hurried and lifeless, Kendall's Address was aimed entirely at attacking the Whigs; he made almost no remarks in defense or praise of Van Buren.

The Whig rhetoric was far superior. A novel by John P. Kennedy, entitled *Quodlibet*, savaged the Democratic Party and its policies. Kennedy's portrait of Kendall is particularly memorable. Kennedy quotes a fictitious letter of Kendall's to a local editor:

"Pound it into the mind," said the writer, "that the Whigs are the authors of the present evils; continual pounding will inevitably, at last, do the business. Many a time have I riveted, by diligent hammering, a politic and necessary fabrication upon the credulity of the people - so fast that no art of my adversary could tear it away to make room for the truth: therefore, I say to you and our democratic friends - hammer without ceasing." 42

Harrison won by an electoral landslide, two hundred and thirty-four electoral votes to just sixty for Van Buren. The Magician had run out of tricks. The Democratic Party lost both houses of Congress as well, and the newly created sub-Treasury was doomed to a short life. A woodcut was published in a Whig paper, announcing the
departure of "The Steamboat Van Buren, only four years old, commander Amos Kendall, will leave 4th of March next for Salt River, via Kinderhook." Come March 4, 1841, the twelve-year reign of the Jacksonians would be over. 43

But Kendall's difficulties were just beginning. The end of the election left him jobless, and the suit with Stockton and Stokes was reaching its climax. Kendall had apparently refused a compromise settlement out of court and the suit went to trial in December, 1840. The coach line was represented by Richard S. Coxe, who once more poured his invective onto Kendall's head. Kendall's lawyers denied any malice on his part, presenting as evidence a statement from Van Buren who asserted: "I did not see or hear anything in the language of the defendant, confidential or otherwise, showing or tending to show, that in withholding the money he was activated by a malicious design to injure or destroy." 44 The jury, consisting according to Kendall of "eleven Whigs and one Democrat," found for the plaintiffs. Kendall's lawyers obtained a retrial on technicalities, but the verdict went against him again. He was ordered to pay damages amounting to eleven thousand dollars. 45

Kendall had planned to move to New York after the election. But the judgement, which he was unable to pay, prevented this. The western land market was still poor, and rather than sell his property to pay the award he vowed to go to debtor's prison. That humiliation, however, was spared him. His friend Richard Johnson had secured the abolition of imprisonment for debt in Washington back in 1831 (the law was renewed in 1843) and thus Kendall was merely confined to the boundaries of the District. Therefore, he and his family settled on some of his property
west of the city, naming it Kendall Green.\textsuperscript{46}

Kendall planned to appeal his conviction before the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, he had to find a living within the District of Columbia. Not surprisingly, he chose journalism and established a biweekly political journal, entitled \textit{Kendall's Expositor}. Kendall had to borrow two thousand dollars to establish this publication, of which he was owner, editor and sole writer. He had to hire a press to print each issue. In his inaugural issue, Kendall promised to examine "the doings of Congress" and the political, economic and social issues pending before the Nation. He affirmed once more his faith in the "farmers and mechanics of our country, on whose restraining intelligence and virtue especially depend the purity of our government and the existence of rational liberty."\textsuperscript{47}

Kendall's son-in-law later claimed that the \textit{Expositor's} contents "were noted for their simplicity, perspicuity and vigor." But historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., came closer to the mark when he observed that "most of the time [Kendall] repeated without enthusiasm the staple arguments of the thirties."\textsuperscript{48} At that, Schlesinger was being kind. Kendall frequently called up material from the \textit{Argus} of twenty years earlier and repeated it verbatim.\textsuperscript{49} Clearly, he did not enjoy the work, but until the Supreme Court heard his case there was little else he could do. So he continued to turn out his paper, one tired issue after another, for nearly four years, preaching his old homilies on wealth and value, education and hard work, leadership and democracy. He seemed almost unaware that much had changed in twenty years.\textsuperscript{50}

Sadly, the trials and adversities that now afflicted the defeated Democrats produced a break between Kendall and Blair. Blair
had helped Kendall in the past by acting as a guarantor for his debts and by employing his pen. But now the *Expositor* was competing with the Globe and Blair did not like it. What, he wondered aloud, had Kendall done with all of his money, to be in such dire straits now? He also wrote Jackson, telling him that Kendall probably would not live to finish the General's biography. Perhaps the old gentleman should turn his papers over to him, Blair suggested. Jackson promised to make provisions in his will for Blair to be his literary executor. When Kendall heard of this he was shocked and suspicious of Blair's motives. 51

Kendall's problems were aggravated by politics. All of Van Buren's supporters were desperate to see him and the Party return to power (and patronage) in 1844. But they disagreed on how this could be brought about. The sudden death of President Harrison had made John Tyler the first "accidental" Chief Executive. Tyler was an unreconstructed states righter who had been placed on the Whig ticket to attract Conservative Democrat votes. Now that he was President, he rejected the Whig economic program, vetoing bills to charter a new B.U.S. and to raise the tariff. Henry Clay and his followers promptly divorced Tyler, leaving him a President without a party. 52

The isolation of Tyler was only temporary, however, as large numbers of Conservative Democrats and assorted opportunists rallied to his side. Conservative Democrat papers touted Tyler as the logical candidate for 1844. He would support state banking and prove more popular than Van Buren, they insisted, particularly in the western and southern states. Blair condemned the scheme vehemently, declaring the Tyler would never be accepted back into the Party. 53
Kendall disagreed. He thought that Tyler might be coaxed into an alliance with Van Buren, then used to secure the Magician's nomination. Consequently, the *Expositor* ran kind, even generous, remarks about Tyler. Kendall called his stand on Tyler good politics and defended it as a design to help Van Buren. But Blair suspected that he was after a share of the Executive printing from the incumbent President. ⁵⁴

Inevitably, the two men clashed. Kendall asked Blair to explain some remarks Blair had made to mutual friends, ridiculing the *Expositor* and Kendall's writing ability. Blair replied by accusing Kendall of seeking a fight as an excuse to challenge the *Globe* for printing contracts. You "look to a controversy with me as likely to render you a new career more profitable than the past," he wrote bitterly. Kendall replied with a sarcastic letter and Blair sent another of his own. Rives got into the controversy, sending Kendall an account of all that he had earned writing for the *Globe* and the *Extra Globe* and asking what he had done with the money. Kendall now struck out at him as well. ⁵⁵

Friends tried to intervene, to no avail. Van Buren sent Senator Silas Wright to patch up the argument. It did no good. The two men had fallen to hating each other as only two friends can when their friendship ends. Blair hinted to Van Buren that Kendall would not support him in 1844, and advised "to be done with him." "He is too cute a Yankee for me," Blair concluded. Kendall brought the controversy into the open in his paper. By the time the exchange of letters ended, the two men were no longer speaking to each other. ⁵⁶

By severing his ties with Blair, Kendall ended his political
career. He refused a printing contract from Tyler when it was offered. But he did nothing to discourage some Conservative Democrats who nominated him against Blair for the House printing. Blair won the contracts, of course, and Kendall was ruined in the eyes of most of the Party rank and file. He supported Van Buren in 1844, but his editorials lacked spark. When Van Buren lost the Democratic nomination to James K. Polk of Tennessee, Kendall told the Magician that he intended to leave politics. The Party's dissensions tore at his heart, he wrote; he could "fight its battles no longer." He later told another disgruntled Democrat that he could no longer stomach "the harness of Government, where every pseudo patriot and ignorant upstart assumed to be your teacher and driver."

Late in 1844, he sold the *Expositor* and set himself up as an agent for persons or groups who had claims against the Government. As such, he was part lawyer, part lobbyist. He represented the Cherokee Indians in obtaining certain treaty payments from Congress. He also acted as a spokesman for the Mormons, offering to President Polk their services as militia in return for a land grant in California (Polk was not interested).

At the same time, he returned to his biography of Jackson, but his heart was no longer in it. He completed seven chapters of the work, published in installments, but got no further than 1814 in his story. The work was never completed; the seventh installment actually breaks off in mid-sentence! Years later, Kendall blamed his failure to finish the book on his inability to travel while awaiting the appeal of his lawsuit, on his poverty, and the noncooperation of Van Buren, Taney and others in supplying him with information. But the biography was
entirely laudatory in any event, and posterity lost nothing when Kendall gave it up. In the words of an early reviewer: "Very few persons are so poorly off for reading matter now-a-days as to be willing to waste time on such a miserable biographic abortion."\(^{60}\)

In 1845, Kendall settled his lawsuit at last. The Supreme Court, reviewing his case on a writ of error, reversed the lower court, ruling that Kendall could not be sued for personal damages incurred while performing an official act. Stockton and Stokes had received their payment through a writ of mandamus and were not entitled to further compensation by way of a lawsuit. Kendall was exonerated. The following year, he received through a private act of Congress repayment of all his legal fees.\(^{61}\)

Kendall was through with politics (although he would play the role of political adviser for the remainder of his life). He was beginning to discover that businessmen, whom he had excoriated for so long, were more likely to keep their word than politicians; not because businessmen were inherently better people, but because they used written contracts to enforce their promises. In 1845, Kendall concluded a contract that made him, at long last, wealthy.

The contract was with Samuel F.B. Morse, an artist and inventor of the telegraph. Morse had developed his electrical instrument during the 1830s. He had demonstrated that it could successfully be used to send coded messages over wires almost instantaneously. He thus held in his hands the key, literally, to a revolution in communications. But Morse was a terrible businessman, and had no idea how to make a profit from his invention. He had wheedled Congress into paying for an experimental telegraph line running from Washington to Baltimore.
Kendall's successors in the Post Office played with the result, but found it unprofitable for their operations. The Federal Government, as a result, refused to subsidize Morse further. 62

Kendall heard of Morse's invention, which he may have seen demonstrated in 1838, and quickly recognized its potential. In February, 1845, he contacted the inventor, offering to act as an agent for promoting the telegraph with Congress. Morse was willing to negotiate and by March the two men had concluded a contract which made Kendall Morse's business agent and the chief promoter of the telegraph. Kendall was to receive ten percent of any profits he made for Morse up to one hundred thousand dollars, and fifty percent of everything over that amount. 63

In retrospect, it seems impossible that Kendall could have found a surer way to get rich. But in 1845 the telegraph was still considered a suspicious machine. Few people were ready to invest their money in it or bet on its success. The equipment had yet to be tested over a significant distance; patents at this time were uncertainly granted and enforced only with great difficulty; the economy was only slowly recovering from the depression; and, credit was difficult to obtain. Kendall would have to earn his money.

But Kendall was well skilled for the task of building a telegraph system. As Postmaster General, he had studied the nation's commercial routes and so knew where a telegraph line could be most profitably sited. As a newspaperman he understood the communications system of the Nation, its strengths and failings. As a politician of thirty years experience, he knew whom to contact for almost any particular need. And, as always, he was a shrewd bargainer. An early
developer of the telegraph later characterized Kendall as a man completely lacking in "personal magnetism." But he was capable and fair: "The telegraph could not have been entrusted to more honest and able hands." According to Robert Thompson, whose Wiring a Continent relates Kendall's telegraph career in fine detail, Kendall never once failed to keep his word during twenty years of contracts, negotiations and court actions. 64

Kendall elected to forego further attempts at getting government aid for the telegraph. He would rely on "private enterprise" to build a line from Baltimore to New York. His plan was simple. As Morse's agent he would sell patent rights to the route to any individuals who wished to buy them. Morse and the other patentees would receive a small cash payment for the rights, plus fifty percent of the stock issued to build and operate the line. In this way Kendall hoped to control the telegraph services through a parent company which he organized, the Magnetic Telegraph Company. He wrote a set of provisions and regulations governing construction and use of the line, including a provision that guaranteed that access to the telegraph was "open alike to all men," provided they paid for the service. He even drafted a model set of office rules that defined the duties of key operators and clerks, prescribed hours of operation and made suggestions regarding good customer relations. These documents, together with his blueprint for marketing the patent, became the pattern on which the telegraph system was built. 65

The Morse telegraph succeeded not only because it was a superb instrument, but also because Kendall understood how to sell it. Public opinion must be considered, he warned the investors. Service must be
maintained at a high level and disputes must be minimized.

Interestingly, Kendall was an advocate of compromise throughout his telegraph career. He regularly attempted to placate disgruntled investors and customers, rewriting contracts when necessary to appease this or that group. "Whatever we do we must concert our plans and go on together," he admonished the stockholders. "It is only by harmony in action that we can do anything, and to preserve it we must make concessions where we cannot agree in opinion." 66 The days of the Bank War were far behind him.

Not that Kendall was no longer capable of a fight. He fiercely protected Morse's patents from infringement. He himself appeared in court several times on behalf of Morse, recommencing the practice of law after a thirty-year lapse. Later, when profits were coming in, Kendall and Morse could afford to hire the best lawyers available. Years of litigation plagued them, but in the end Kendall and Morse prevailed in protecting the invention. 67

By 1850, Kendall directed the operations of several dozen companies which erected telegraph lines over the whole of the eastern United States. The Magnetic Telegraph Company theoretically controlled services of these lines, but it was an unwieldy structure and uniform service was rare. During the next decade an "era of consolidation" occurred, with Kendall negotiating a number of agreements between and among individual lines. This consolidation culminated in 1859 with the formation of the American Telegraph Company. Kendall retired from active management at this point, but left his nephew, John Kendall, in charge as general superintendent of the lines. Early in his association with Morse, Kendall had said he hoped to make a million dollars from the
telegraph. Actually, both men made considerably more. In 1860, he owned land worth two hundred thousand dollars alone. At his death, his estate was so large it required two years to settle it in probate. 68

Kendall left the telegraph industry with more than wealth to his credit. He had won a reputation for fairness and friendliness, an image completely at odds with his Jacksonian days. "Mr. Kendall," one observer commented, "had a gentleness not always apparent, but which, as his life advanced, shone out with the mellow lustre of his day's decline." "It seemed impossible," wrote another, "to believe that this gentle, quiet, and soft-spoken man was the same whose nervous editorials aroused the resentment of the Whigs and the enthusiasm of the Democrats." 69

Personal losses may have burned away some of his abrasive spirit. Early, in 1845, his son William was tragically shot to death during an argument with a friend. Six years later, his daughter Adela died of an undisclosed illness. And in 1861 he buried his last son, John, a victim of the typhoid epidemic in Washington. The loss of his sons made him feel like "an old tree ... with no young growth to occupy my place when I too shall be prostrated by the storms of heaven." 70

To fill his loneliness he turned increasingly to religion and philanthropy. He joined the Calvary Baptist Church in Washington and over the years contributed some $60,000 toward its growth and missions. In 1857 he helped to found and staff the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, since renamed Gallaudet College, and lavishly endowed it with funds, including an annual scholarship in his own name. Thus, by the time of his death he had earned a new reputation for kindness,
charity and piety. 71

But the old fighting spirit was not entirely spent. During the Civil War he wrote essays and letters attacking the Lincoln administration for failing to vigorously prosecute the war. He also criticized emancipation of the slaves and disliked the course of Reconstruction. But his arguments were dated, his prose tired. 72

The death of Jane Kendall in 1864 drove him even further into living in the past. He brooded over the Jackson biography that he had never finished and like to relate tales of his political days to his grandchildren. He was uncomfortable, however, at having outlived so many of his friends and family. Early in 1869 he declared:

There is little ground of hopefulness left for me in this life; and, though naturally cheerful, I cannot sometimes look back without sadness. How many relatives and associates have gone before me, and how few are left! My father and mother had twelve children. Parents and nine of the children are dead. My first marriage was into a family consisting of a father, mother, four sons, and three daughters. They are all dead. My second marriage was into a family consisting of a father, mother, two sons, and two daughters. They are all dead. I have had two wives, five sons, and nine daughters. The wives and the sons are all gone, and only four daughters are left. Of upwards of twenty men who held cabinet appointments under General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren, I am the only one left. I seem like the one standing alone among the dead on the battle field of life, while generation after generation come marching before me. I too must soon lie among the dead around me, and the world will still march thoughtlessly onward. 73

In August 1869, he celebrated his eightieth birthday, but soon after was bedridden by a common cold. Too frail to fight off even this, he declined for three months, waiting for the inevitable. On the morning of November 12 his time came. He asked to see the sunrise so his daughter opened the drapes in his room. "How beautiful," he murmured, "how beautiful." Two hours later he was gone. 74

His daughters buried him next to Jane, in Glenwood Cemetery,
under a marble spire. They chose as his epitaph the verse from Proverbs, 4:11: "The Path of the Just is as the shining light." Amos Kendall's struggle was over. 75
CHAPTEER XII

NOTES


4 Drafts of Jackson's Specie Circular, Deposit Act Veto and Farewell Address are in the Jackson papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC). See also Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, v. 5, pp. 405-9; Latner, p. 188; Remini, Andrew Jackson, p. 183.


11 Ibid., pp. 74-81, 88-110; McGraw, pp. 209-23; *Niles' Weekly Register*, October 21, 1837.


13 Mahlon Dickerson, *Manuscript Diary* (entry for April 5, 1837), New Jersey Historical Society; Curtis, *The Fox at Bay*, p. 70.

14 Kendall to the Postmaster, Lagrange, Tennessee, March 21, 1837, Postmaster Generals Letterbook A, National Archives; Andrew Jackson to Kendall, November 24, 1836, Bassett, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, v. 3, pp. 438-39; Jackson to Kendall, May 28, 1837, and Kendall to Jackson, June 6, 1837, both in Jackson papers, LC.


16 Kendall to John Thompson, July 1, 1837, Ibid., July 15, 1837.

17 Kearny to Martin Van Buren, November 12, 1837, Van Buren papers, LC.

Portions of his Diary from 1795 to 1848 (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-1877), v. 9, pp. 429-30.


20 Autobiography, 352, Kendall to Andrew Jackson, December 27, 1836, Andrew Jackson papers, Duke University Library; Kendall vs. the United States, 12 Peters, 524ff. (1838).

21 Kendall vs. Stokes, Federal Cases: Circuit and District Courts of the United States (St. Paul, Minn.: Western Publishing Co., 1896), v. 26, pp. 702-55; Kendall to Andrew Jackson, August 11, 1837, Jackson papers, LC.


23 Taney should probably have excused himself from participating in the case. He had acted as legal counsel for Stockton and Stokes before becoming chief justice in 1836. He had even reviewed the firm's extra allowance claims and told Barry that in his opinion the claims were valid. See Swisher, p. 159n.


28 Kendall to Joseph E. Worcester, August 20, 1838, Worcester papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Kendall to Francis P. Blair, November 7, 1838, Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library; Kendall to Martin Van Buren, October 20 and November 6, 1838, both in Van Buren papers, LC.
29 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, November 28, 1838, Jackson papers, LC; Curtis, The Fox at Bay, pp. 134-37; Kendall to Richard M. Johnson, March 19, 1838, C. E. French papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; I. Fletcher to E. B. Chase, June 5, 1838 and March 22, 1839, both in Kendall Miscellaneous Collection, Dartmouth College Library.


34 Kendall to Martin Van Buren, July 26, 1839, Van Buren papers, LC; Kendall to Claiborne Gooch, September 10, 1839, Gooch papers, University of Virginia Library; Kendall to Henry Gilpin, October 26, 1839, John Kintzing Kane papers, American Philosophical Society Library; Kendall to Benjamin Bonsal, August 22, 1834, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP).

35 Kendall to Andrew Jackson, March 4, 1840, Jackson papers, LC; S. Lawrence to A. Lawrence, May 26, 1840, Lawrence papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; John Tyler to James Iredell, June 5, 1840, Iredell papers, Duke University Library; John C. Rives to Kendall, December 21, 1842, Van Buren papers, LC.


37 Kendall to the Postmaster, Iberia, Missouri, May 20, 1840, Missouri Historical Society. See also Charles Congdon, Reminiscences of a Journalist (Boston, 1880), p. 66; Kendall to George Bancroft, May 20, 1840, Bancroft papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.


41 Adela Culver to Jane Kendall, October 17, 1840, and William Kendall to Amos Kendall, November 5, 1840, both in Kendall Miscellaneous College, Dartmouth College Library; Kendall to George Bancroft, June 30, 1840, Bancroft papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Committee of Correspondence and Vigilance to Philemon Dickerson, September 14, 1840, Miscellaneous papers, New Jersey Historical Society.

42 Kendall to Joel Poinsett, August 19, 1840, Poinsett papers, HSP; "Mr. Kendall's Address to the People of the United States" (Washington, D.C., 1840); John P. Kennedy, Quodlibet: Containing Some Annals thereof (Philadelphia, 1840), pp. 40-41.


44 Adela Culver to Jane Kendall, October 17, 1840, Kendall Miscellaneous College, Dartmouth College Library; Kendall to Martin Van Buren, November 11, 1841, and Van Buren, "Answer of Martin Van Buren, relating to Kendall vs. Stokes," [1841], both in Van Buren papers, LC.


46 Kendall to Martin Van Buren, October 23, 1841, Van Buren papers, LC; Autobiography, pp. 355-56; 5 Statutes at Large, 597; Kendall's Expositor, March 31, 1842.

47 Kendall's Expositor, February 3, 1841.

48 Autobiography, p. 441; Schlesinger, p. 393.

49 Compare Argus, July 17, 1821 to Expositor, February 17, 1842.

50 Kendall's Expositor, February 3, March 3, December 16, 1841, February 17, 1842.
51 Schlesinger, p. 393; Francis P. Blair to Andrew Jackson, July 25, 1842, and Jackson to Blair, August 7, 1842, both in Blair papers LC; Kendall to Martin Van Buren, December 7, 1842, Van Buren papers, LC.


54 Kendall to John Tyler, August 21, 1841, Tyler papers, LC; Kendall's Expositor, April 12, 1841, July 12, August 23, James K. Paulding to Martin Van Buren, April 27, 1843, Aderman, ed., 334-35; Kendall to Henry Simpson, July 18, 1843, Simpson papers, HSP; Francis P. Blair to Martin Van Buren, February 6, and March 26, 1843, Van Buren papers, LC.

55 Kendall to Francis P. Blair, November 30, 1842; Blair to Kendall, December 12, 1842, Kendall to Blair, December 16, 1842, John C. Rives to Kendall, December 21, 1842, all in Van Buren papers, LC.

56 Kendall's Expositor, August 14, 1843; Francis P. Blair to Andrew Jackson, January 29, 1843, Jackson papers, LC; Blair to Martin Van Buren, December 16, 1842, Silas Wright to Van Buren, December 23, 1842, Kendall to Van Buren, January 3, 1842, Blair to Van Buren, January 17, 1843, William L. Marcy to Van Buren, December 1, 1843, all in Van Buren papers, LC; Kendall to Blair and Rives, March 24, 1843, Blair-Lee papers, Princeton University Library.

57 Kendall to John Tyler, October 20, 1843, Tyler papers, LC; Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, November 10 and December 9, 1843, both in Polk papers, LC; Kendall's Expositor, August 22, 1843, March 19, 1844.


60 James McLaughlin to Kendall, n.d. [1843?], Kendall papers, LC; Kendall, Life of Andrew Jackson: Private, Military and Civil (New York, 1843-44); Autobiography, p. 686; Louisville Journal, May 29, 1845.
61 Kendall vs. Stokes, 3 Howard, p. 87ff.; "Memorial of Amos Kendall," (December 15, 1845), House Documents, 29th Congress, 1st session, v. 3, p. 482; 9 Statutes at Large, 657.


63 Kendall to S. F. B. Morse, February 25, 1845, Morse papers, LC; Copy of Kendall-Morse Agreement, March 10, 1845 (updated, in November 7, 1846), Alfred Vail papers, Smithsonian Institution; Autobiography, pp. 527-28.

64 James D. Reid, The Telegraph in America (New York, 1879), pp. 112-13, 703; Thompson, pp. 37-39, 440-41. See also Kendall to George Bancroft, March 6, 1846, in which Kendall asks: "To repudiate a contract in private life because it is not one's interest to fulfill it is dishonest, why is it not so with government?" Bancroft papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

65 Kendall to Morse, April 7, 19, May 13, June 27, July 23, 1845, Morse papers, LC; Kendall to George Bancroft, March 28, 1845, Bancroft papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Kendall to F. O. J. Smith, June 24, July 13, 1845, Smith papers, Maine Historical Society; Thompson, pp. 42-43, 447-51; Reid, p. 124.

66 Kendall to F. O. J. Smith, August 12 (quoted), September 12, 1845, July 26, 1846, Smith papers, Maine Historical Society; Kendall to S. F. B. Morse, April 7, 1845, Morse papers, LC.


68 Kendall to Smith, September 1, 1845, Smith papers, Maine Historical Society; Thompson, pp. 97-255, 299-333 (Thompson's excellent book, detailing all the phases and major events of the growth of the telegraph, is also an excellent narration of this phase of Kendall's active life); "Probate of Amos Kendall," District of Columbia Administration Case 6120, Chancery Case 252, in Record Group 21 for the National Archives.

69 Reid, p. 113; John W. Forney, Anecdotes of Public Men (New York, 1881), v. 2, p. 151.


Autobiography, pp. 588-619; Kendall, Letters on Our Country's Crisis (Washington, 1864), and Letters Exposing the Mismanagement of Public Affairs by Abraham Lincoln (Washington, 1864); Kendall to Charles Mason, February 21, 1868, Kendall papers, LC.


Ibid., pp. 685-90.

In Memoriam [Amos Kendall] (Washington, 1869), a pamphlet in the Toner Collection, Library of Congress Rare Books; personal observations by the writer at Glenwood Cemetery, Washington, D.C.
EPILOGUE

"Progress is the motto of the age," Kendall once wrote. \(^1\) Indeed it was, and like so many thousands of others, Kendall spent his lifetime trying to advance himself along with it. In the end, he succeeded in obtaining the wealth he so ardently wanted. And he left a legacy in the form of the telegraph system he helped to devise and manage.

But Kendall's fame does not rest on his service as Samuel Morse's business agent. He will be remembered mainly for his association with the Jacksonians, and rightly so. Any number of men could have joined with Morse to build telegraph lines. But Kendall's contributions to the legacy of the Jacksonians were unique and indelible. They were his words, expressed in the startling and stirring phrases of Jackson's Bank Veto and his Annual Messages; expressed also in Kendall's own Hickory Club Address and other documents that gave the period much of its character and controversy.

Kendall's words illuminate the love-hate relationship that the Jacksonians had with progress. Like Jackson and so many others, Kendall was drawn to the wealth and comfort progress offered. But he embraced it tentatively, fearing like King Midas that the cost of such gain would be a loss of freedom. With his Jacksonian colleagues, he rejected the comprehensive economic planning that Clay advocated, certain that this would be the quickest road to perdition. Instead he advocated individualism, in order that the most naturally talented, the most
deserving, would profit instead of the artificially privileged.

Kendall defended his choice with rhetoric that was uncommonly patriotic and influential. He understood that nations and their peoples needed ideas to unite them as much as they needed bridges and roads. He was not an original thinker and so relied on the ideas of others. But he was a talented writer and could cast those ideas in a most persuasive way, causing thousands of Americans to understand and cherish them. He had a way of reaching the people, as a foreign visitor observed:

No man knows like Mr. Kendall how to address the people: his language is always popular, and yet concise; he never destroys the effect of a strong thought by spinning it out into a long sentence; and above all, he avoids declamation. His style is forceful; because it convinces people in their own way.²

Andrew Jackson's instincts and Kendall's rhetoric made a formidable combination, as Henry Clay, Nicholas Biddle, and the Bank of the United States finally learned.

There is another side to the coin, of course. Bridges and roads, as well as words, are needed to hold a nation together. How successfully the Jacksonians provided bridges and roads, either in a literal or figurative sense, is debatable. And their words did not hold the Nation together in the end. (Perhaps the American System would have failed as well, but that is speculation.) Part of Kendall's tragedy late in life was that he lived to see the Nation torn apart over ideas, some of which, such as states rights, he had done much to promote. He died before it was completely rebuilt with better roads and new bridges.

The Nation was rebuilt, by and large, under the direction of the political descendants of the Whigs. These same descendants also created Kendall's legend in their histories and memoirs. It was an exaggerated
legend, for it portrayed Kendall as either Jackson's master or his servile minion. In either view he was sinister, conniving and manipulative. His poor reputation has some basis in fact, but there was more to him than his enemies chose to record. Regrettably, too many modern historians have continued the tradition.

Perhaps now Kendall can be viewed differently. He was ambitious, but not venal. He was sly, but not unprincipled. True, he indulged in many a clever trick to thwart his enemies. He was a politician and that was part of his profession. As another journalist who turned to politics once confessed, "honesty is not enough" when one is in public service. Political success requires some ruthlessness, and as a politician Kendall was largely successful. He believed, very deeply, that the things he did were for the best interests of those he championed — the people. He joined with their great leader, Andrew Jackson, to further their cause. If the party battles he helped to foster divided the people and made politics a contest of showmen, that was not his intent. Right or wrong, praised or condemned, forgiven or not, he deserves more understanding than history has yet accorded him. If he is to be remembered, than let him be remembered as he would want to be, as the writer who believed that the people, properly informed, were the best guardians of their own destinies.
EPILOGUE

NOTES


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note on abbreviations: In the interest of expediency, I have used several abbreviations to denote various libraries and repositories. These have been explicated in the footnotes, with a complete list appended here.

**Repository Abbreviations**

- **HSP** Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- **LC** Library of Congress
- **MHS** Massachusetts Historical Society
- **NHHS** New Hampshire Historical Society
- **NYHS** New York Historical Society
- **NYPL** New York Public Library
- **PUL** Princeton University Library
- **SHSW** State Historical Society of Wisconsin

I. Unpublished Sources

A. Manuscript Collections

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- Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University Library
- Buchanan, James A., Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Campbell Family Papers, Duke University Library
- Chase, Frederick, Collection, Dartmouth College Library
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Draper, Lyman, C., Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin
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Green, Duff, Papers, Library of Congress
Gunther Collection, Chicago Historical Society
Hill, Isaac, Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society
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Simpson, Henry, Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Smith, F. O. J., Papers, Duke University Library

__, Maine Historical Society

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__, Missouri Historical Society

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Tazewell, Littleton, Papers, University of Virginia Library

Tyler, John, Papers, Library of Congress

Vail, Alfred, Papers, Smithsonian Institution

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Welles, Gideon, Papers, Library of Congress


Worcester, Joseph E., Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society

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Tobias, Clifford I., "'A Rare Sharp Fellow': Henry D. Gilpin and the Bank War: A Study in Reform Politics." PhD. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1975.


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A. Government Documents

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American State Papers

Census of the United States (United States Bureau of the Census, Microfilms of Census Schedules, 1820, 1830, 1840)

Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, taken in the Year 1790: Massachusetts (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1908)


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