Redeeming Indiana: Putnam County in the 1860 Election

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John Hanna, a Putnam county lawyer, called the Republican victory in Indiana’s 1860 state elections a “redemption” of Indiana, which now championed “free labor” and the interests "of the white laborer[.]" In beseeching Republicans to vote in the upcoming presidential election, Hanna asked, "How much longer will independent freemen support a party which cowers beneath the lash of sectional demands?" Although Hanna spoke for local Republicans, the idea that Indiana should be redeemed from its obeisance to the South was one with which some Democrats—namely, those supporting Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas--agreed. Both Putnam Republicans and Douglas Democrats hoped the election would affirm Indiana’s allegiance to northern rights. Ironically, when Putnam Republicans resolved to make a stand for northern rights, their motivations were the same as those of the county’s Douglas Democrats, who believed that their candidate also was the candidate of northern rights. Douglas’s supporters in Putnam county were thwarted, however, by a small faction of Breckinridge Democrats upholding southern rights. Many historians have noted the often pyrrhic insistence of southern Democrats on upholding the principle of southern rights, even at the cost of dividing the Democratic party and ensuring electoral defeat. That was, in fact, what happened in Putnam county where the Breckinridge Democrats split the local party and made possible Putnam’s “redemption” from Democracy.

Indiana was a Democratic state during the 1850s and Putnam County was a Democratic county. Both state and county had gone for James Buchanan in the 1856 election. Republican strategists in 1860 knew that in order for Abraham Lincoln to win,
he had to win not only the states Republican candidate John C. Frémont had claimed in 1856, but also other crucial northern states of which Indiana was one. To appeal to the lower North, including Indiana, the Republicans needed a moderate candidate, hence the selection of Lincoln. In fact, Indiana’s Republican gubernatorial candidate, Henry S. Lane, insisted to delegates at the national convention in Chicago that William Henry Seward could not win Indiana. Lincoln’s astute operatives in Chicago made overtures to the Hoosiers, and Indiana supported Lincoln on the first ballot.iii

Ironically, the candidate selected for his moderation seemed to many in the county—and to future historians—an extremist. Lincoln’s inflexible adherence to the Republican position of no slavery expansion, and his refusal to endorse slavery as a moral good, left him vulnerable to the label of “Black” Republican. At best, Lincoln seemed hostile to southern rights, at worst another John Brown, ready to lead a bloody slave insurrection despite his party platform’s explicit condemnation of Brown’s Harpers Ferry raid.iv

Putnam Republicans certainly did not consider themselves as extremists. Rather, they were motivated by the desire to “redeem” the state from Democratic corruption. Perhaps by this they referred to the scandals of the Buchanan administration, which were revealed by the congressional—and Republican-dominated—Covode committee.v But Putnam Republicans deplored how the Democratic party had ceased to stand up for northern rights.

John Hanna was one of many Putnam Republicans who had left the Democratic party because of its failure to uphold northern rights. A graduate of Indiana Asbury University--where he spoke at a senior class exhibition on “The Election System,” and at
the 1850 commencement on “Constitutional Progress”—he became a lawyer and
practiced in Greencastle. He had been a fierce defender of popular sovereignty, and had
condemned the emerging anti-Democratic movement of 1856 as abolitionist. Hanna
served as mayor of Greencastle in from 1851 to 1854, presumably as a Democrat, as he
had studied law under Delana Eckels, who was a leading Democratic lawyer in the
county. He became a partner in Eckels’s law firm. As mayor he presided over the
organization of Greencastle’s graded schools system, which involved working closely
with Eckels, the chairman of the school trustees. In the spring of 1858, Hanna migrated to
Kansas and served in the Kansas territorial legislature. But John Hanna had strayed from
the Democracy even before he left for Kansas. He was evidently uncomfortable with the
Democracy’s anti-temperance and pro-immigrant policies. In 1856, he attended a Know
Nothing political meeting. After he returned from Kansas, he supported the 1858 fusion
movement between Democrats such as John G. Davis, who opposed the proslavery
Lecompton constitution that the Buchanan administration sought to impose on Kansas,
and the Republicans. That alliance helped Davis gain re-election to his congressional seat
in the seventh district, which included Putnam county, despite the fierce opposition of the
Buchanan wing of the Democratic party. Although Hanna may have found it difficult to
break entirely with the Democrats, by 1860 he was clearly in the Republican camp,
standing for election as Republican elector from the seventh district.\textsuperscript{vi}

Hanna’s sojourn in Kansas may have been unique, but his political trajectory was
not. Richard M. Hazelett would later be remembered in a county history as an active
Republican.\textsuperscript{vii} But in his own memoirs, composed in the 1890s, Hazelett recalled being
“born and raised a democrat,” and casting his first vote for Martin Van Buren in 1840.
Until the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he was a self-avowed “radical Democrat.” But when he decided that Northern Democrats were helping the South to spread slavery, he abandoned that party for one which “acted on a principle and advocated a principle that was more consistant democracy and coinsided more fully with his views of democracy and justice,” becoming “a know nothing[.]” By the 1890s, Hazelett remembered the Know Nothings not as a party in itself, but as merely the precursor to the Republicans. He said nothing about the anti-immigrant agenda of the party, and instead called the Know Nothings “the start of the Republican party.” He voted for Frémont in 1856, and was an “unswerving Republican” until post-war developments checked his faith in that party as well.

Hanna and Hazelett demonstrate that the creation of the Republican party in Putnam County was not an easy one. Men of many different political faiths were groping their way toward new stands on shifting political issues. Although the Know Nothings briefly captured adherents as the Democrats and Whigs lost them, a new political party, the Republicans, finally came to dominance with dramatic effects for the county and the country. Still, there was a threat that the new Republicans might be co-opted by the Douglas Democrats. Democratic Congressman John G. Davis had opposed the proslavery Lecompton constitution. For taking that stand, he lost the party nomination in 1858 but ran independently with Republican support. Abraham Lincoln, who was running for the U.S. Senate in Illinois that year, pointed out that the alliance between Republicans and Douglas Democrats was a potentially dangerous one for Republicans. Although Lincoln endorsed the fusion with Davis in Indiana, he warned that Republicans risked being swallowed up by the powerful Douglas. The alliance between Davis and the Republicans in Putnam county continued after the 1858 election. C.W. Brown, John A. Matson, and
D.C. Donohue—all Republicans—invited Davis to speak to an “Opposition party” meeting in Greencastle. What they opposed was the Buchanan administration. Others who solicited Davis did not hedge about their allegiances. Congressman Davis received requests for public documents from the newly organized “Union Republican Club” of Portland Mills.  

But it was not clear which faction—Democrats or old Whigs—would control such a fusion movement. Formerly a Whig, and then a Democrat, Clint. Walls sought Republican support by appealing to the Old Whigs among them. Pointing to the struggle for control of the Democratic party, he said that Democrats would have to give way to the Old Whigs.  

Clearly the Republicans relied on the old Whigs. When Henry S. Lane, the Republican candidate for governor in 1860, appeared at Greencastle, “He briefly alluded to some of the old pioneers in the Whig cause in the days when Whiggery flourished in 'old Putnam.' The lamented Edward W. McGaughey and Dr. Tarvin W. Cowgill, noble champions of his great party, were feelingly spoken of.” One such old Whig in Putnam County was Henry S. Lane’s brother, Higgins Lane. Unlike Hanna and Hazelett, who had sojourned among Democrats and Know Nothings en route to the Republican party, Higgins Lane was a Whig who had joined the Republican party upon its formation.  

While Lincoln in Illinois warned of Douglas Democrats swallowing Republicans, the Putnam Republicans dearly hoped to swallow John G. Davis. Davis, however, ultimately chose to stay with the Democrats, a cause of some bitterness to the Republicans.  

He failed to vote for the Ohio Republican John Sherman as speaker of the House of Representatives, affirmed his allegiance to the *Dred Scott* decision, and was welcomed back into the Democratic fold in 1859. Democrats even denied that
Republicans had played a significant role in re-electing Davis to his seat. For this, he earned Republican hostility. Puett maintained that local Republicans should not have expected Davis to vote for either “extreme.” Puett also believed the Republicans to be moving against Douglas: “they fear Douglass & they are believing that he will be the man, they have to run against & already they are commencing to say they would sooner see any other man & are now charging that he has in his late resolution sold out to the South.” Puett warned Davis, “you need look for no fair play with the leaders of the Rep. in this district[.]”xiv Davis could take some consolation from the fact that “The daily attacks the Republicans are making on you, are driving us democrats who voted against you at the election, to defend your course in Congress. I think Sir when we get to rallying under one common banner with Douglas at its head, all past differences will be forgotten. You may rest assured the Democrats, now believe you will not go off with the Republicans as they claimed you would, but that you will act with the democratic party.”xv

Perhaps the power of the old Whig element in Putnam’s Republican party explains their initial enthusiasm for Missourian Edward Bates as the party’s nominee for president in 1860. Hanna initially supported Bates, as did the Putnam Republican Banner, the local party newspaper. At the county convention, Bates received support from Miles J. Fletcher and Higgins Lane. The convention resolved to support Bates at the state convention. Bates was an old Whig whose mild antislavery views appealed to the more moderate wing of the Republican party, especially old Whigs. But after the national Republican convention nominated Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, a county Republican
convention promptly passed resolutions endorsing the Chicago convention’s nomination of Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Republicans hoped to use Lincoln’s railsplitter image in an appeal to the common man. Unsurprisingly, other Republican candidates sought the common man image for themselves. A Greencastle man held up Miles Fletcher as an exemplar of that image.

A few weeks since, passing by a vacant lot, I saw some one attired in a very rustic garb, covered with dust, plowing for potatoes. On nearer approach, I found it was Prof. M.J. Fletcher, Republican candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction. Had I not known Prof. F, I should have been greatly surprised to find a Professor Belles-Lettre [sic] thus engaged, and looking so seedy. But all who are acquainted with him know that he believes all labor honorable. . . . He is preeminently a practical man, well acquainted with the educational wants of the people, and whatever can be done to promote the welfare of our common schools, he will do.\textsuperscript{xvii}

It may have been doubly necessary to portray Fletcher as delving the soil, for he was well known as the son of the wealthy Indianapolis banker Calvin Fletcher. The senior Fletcher actually disliked his son’s running for public office.\textsuperscript{xviii} The Republicans were also demonstrating their care for the common man by backing a homestead bill; pushing for the admission of Kansas under a new, free-state constitution; and advancing the spread of freedom. Republican candidates were “men of known integrity and ability,” a slap at Democratic corruption.\textsuperscript{xix}

Among the prominent campaigners for the Republicans in Putnam was Kentuckian Cassius M. Clay. Although he was an abolitionist, local Republicans expected Clay to draw a big crowd in the Kentucky-settled county. To add to the attraction, there would be a large escort, accompanied by a brass band, from the train station into Greencastle.\textsuperscript{xx} Unfortunately, Clay did not arrive on the early train as expected, so the disappointed escort had to return home and reappear several hours later. Nonetheless, they returned with music, badges and flags. The crowd was estimated at five
thousand. Despite his credentials, Clay made a “conservative” speech, calling for Lincoln’s election but distinguishing between the Republican party and the abolitionists. "He showed the degrading influence the institution of slavery has upon the poor white laboring men of the South, the tyranny exercised over this class by slave holders and capitalists, as well as the manner in which he is made the willing and pliant tool to fight the battles of his landlord and to actually go against his own interest."xxi The association with Clay, however, opened Republicans to charges of abolitionism. Democratic congressional candidate Daniel Voorhees, seeking John G. Davis’s old seat, told a Bainbridge audience that Clay "'sat in a nigger convention at Cincinnati with Fred. Douglas on one side and an other buck nigger on the other side.'" Republicans denied this. "C.M. Clay has a character as high as any man in the United States, and would no sooner equalize himself with a negro, than he would with Dan. Voorhees; which money could not hire him to do."xxii

Since the Harpers Ferry raid, Putnam Republicans had been on the defensive in regard to the issue of race. Putnam Republicans denied any connection to John Brown. The Banner’s editor pointed out that one of the raiders was John Cook, whose brother-in-law was Indiana’s governor Ashbel P. Willard, a Democrat. Thus Willard was just as much to blame for the raid as any Republican. Secondly, Republicans reiterated their doctrine of neither interfering with slavery in the states, nor extending it into the territories. “They desire to have the territories for free homes, for free men.”xxiii Finally, Republicans categorically denied any interest in black rights. "The Republicans want nothing to do with the negro,” the Banner declared after Harpers Ferry.xxiv In fact, the pro-southern Democratic party “array themselves under the sectional black banner of
slavery and wage an unnatural and cruel war upon the rights of free labor[.]”

John Hanna, in a speech to a Republican county convention in early 1860, “contrasted the course of the Democrats with that of the Republicans, declaring that they (Republicans) are willing to respect *all* the rights of the South, so far as they are guaranteed them by the constitution; but in doing so could not believe that the North had no rights which should be respected.” A Republican county convention condemned “inciting slaves to insurrection” and “all violators of law and order,” specifically mentioning Harpers Ferry but also southern attacks on individuals.

John Hanna’s campaign for Lincoln emphasized these themes of Democratic corruption, Republican closeness to the people, and opposition to slavery—to the last of which he added a dose of racism, condemning the Democrats for caring more about blacks than did Republicans. In a speech at Terre Haute, Hanna concluded,

> Men of Indiana, the contest before us is one pregnant with vital consequences, not only to you but to the whole American people. Succeed[sic] is a duty we owe to ourselves[,] to our sister States and to posterity. If by idleness or indifference we fail to redeem our beloved Indiana from the thraldom [sic] of corrupt Democratic leaders, we shall not only deserve the censure of the men who make up the glorious galaxy of Republican States which well nigh surround us, but our children in after days will rise up to reprove us for a want of fidelity to the Heaven blest cause of free labor. Let heartless and corrupt party leaders scheme as they may to defeat the election of Abraham Lincoln by the popular vote, yet thank God this is a contest in which the people themselves understand that all such trickery is but to subserve the interest of a power which is everything for the 'nigger' and nothing for the white man.

Our adversaries admit that if there be an election by the people the plume of victory will waive [sic] in triumph over the head of 'Honest Old Abe.' . . . His election will settle this damnable 'nigger' question now and forever. When our brethren of the South once understand that it is no part of the policy of the Republican party to interfere with slavery in the States, and that we will live up faithfully to the compromises of the Constitution on our part, and require the same of them, they will then utter their bitterest curses against the leaders of the Democracy for sowing the seeds of distrust, discord and sectional hate for partisan and selfish purposes.
Republicans hoped that even Putnam County residents of southern birth would understand grievances against the South. Henry S. Lane, when he spoke in Greencastle, “appealed to the large number of Kentukians [sic] around him to know why they were here in the free State of Indiana. It was not because the soil was any better than Kentucky, but because they loved a free State better than a Slave States.”

But despite the Democrats’ hope that stigmatizing Republicans as pro-black would lead to victory, county Democrats were keenly aware that divisions within their party aided the Republicans. Local Democrats greeted Harpers Ferry “as a great Godsend to their party,” according to the Banner. John Cowgill, however, was less sanguine, contemplating “the republican party as it now is, concentrating, and accumulating in its strength.” “The preachers, the clergy will be against us, evry where,” he warned John G. Davis. The Republicans “are confident of success, because they can’t see how we are to be united. The chuckle, is upon their faces.”

Cowgill was particularly concerned about the election of 1860. Indiana would be “doubtful,” he feared, “unless we have at our masthead ‘popular sovereignty’” with Douglas as “captain of the ship” and “its principal defender.” But Cowgill doubted that Indiana’s leading Democrats, including Governor Willard and Senator Jesse D. Bright, would support Douglas. “If any one South of Mason’s & Dixon’s line is nominated, I care not who, Indiana is as certainly gone from the Democracy as any event that has already come to pass.” Cowgill was not the only one inclined to despair should Douglas not be the candidate. A.M. Puett also felt the ingratitude of the South. “I know that the larger portion of Democrats who have stood by the south and defended them and took def[?] are for Douglass and when this time comes that they refuse him because he
stands firm on the only principal that is true to this country."xxxiii “[S]o help me god if the South is by fools enough to folow old Buchanan in his dodge & will persist & refuse to support Douglass I & thousands more will stand off & let the Hell hounds in the shape Osawattomie Brown pitch into them,” Puett thundered.xxxiv A Nicholsonville man, who supported Douglas, disliked the location of the upcoming presidential convention. "I do not regard South Carolina as a suitable state to hold a national Democratic Convention in.”xxxv

Putnam Democrats were as divided as national Democrats. A Democratic party convention in Greencastle endorsed Douglas for president, although the resolution “met with serious opposition in committee, but that on a vote, the committee stood 7 for and 6 against the Douglas resolution.” Patrick Heaney, an anti-Douglas man, maneuvered to vote by township, presumably to overrule the endorsement, but Capt. George Priest argued that this would “throw firebrands” into the procedures. Consequently, Heaney was overruled. The resolution to instruct for Douglas passed 268 to 127. The Democrats attempted to conceal their disarray by making "'Harmony' " "the Syrene cry." No one was fooled and Puett confessed "there were some funny things done & said.”xxxvi Douglas Democrats punished Patrick Heaney at the May convention by withdrawing his name from nomination. Republicans played this up as a slap at immigrants. "The leaders of the democratic party like well enough to get the votes of their Irish fellow citizens, but when it comes to parceling out 'the loaves and fishes' with them 'they are not in.' “xxxvii But the refusal to support Heaney really reflected the Douglas-Buchanan split in the party. Heaney was not the only victim at the May convention. Henry Secrest objected to Capt. W.H. Thornburgh chairing, and complained "that two years ago the Captain presided
over a similar meeting and when the nominations were made opposed their election.”

Thornburgh responded to the insult by explaining that Secrest still resented Thornburgh’s failure to support the regular Democratic nominee for Congress in 1858—Henry Secrest-against John G. Davis. In this attack upon a leading member of the local party, Secrest blundered. “He struck a cord which did not vibrate to the music he wished to play. The Captain was by no means the only Democrat present who did not support Mr. Secrest. . . .” But Secrest prevailed. Thornburgh refused to take the chair and was replaced by Benjamin Walden.xxxviii Perhaps because of his own disillusionment with the Democratic party, John Hanna felt that “Those Northern Democrats who expect to adopt the Cincinnati platform, with the interpretation put upon it by Douglas, would be woefully deceived when they get to Charleston.”xxxix

When a Russellville Democrat learned of the Republicans’ nomination of Lincoln and Hamlin, he believed that with Douglas at the head of their ticket, “we can beat the world the flesh & the Devil.”xl A Greencastle man at least believed that Douglas “is the only Democrat that can beat Lincoln in Indiana.”xli One of Lincoln’s weaknesses was his opposition to the U.S.-Mexican war. From Putnamville, Douglas Democrat Thomas J. Bridges wrote Davis, “I want to no wether or no Mr lincole of Illinois did or did not vot a gance the suplies of the Meckison ware and if so Pleas send me some of his speeches and let me no what his vots war. . . . we ar all for Douglas. . . . I should like to have a fool history of lincole and hamlon as we have some men hear that says that their cannot be any thing said a gance them men I have under stood that Mr lincole did vote a gance the Suplis of our army and if he did he will one of the worst beet men in this Part of the Country that ever Runn for office[.]”xlii


Putnam Democrats held a massive public meeting. Huge posters, ten feet square, appeared in Greencastle to announce the gathering. An estimated ten thousand people came for the convention to ratify Douglas’s nomination. As this was more than had attended the state Democratic convention in Indianapolis, the Republicans suspected that the eager crowds were imported from elsewhere. Nonetheless, even the Republicans conceded, "The procession, was a grand affair, reaching from the South to the North Depot, and doubling three times round the Square! It was headed by a brilliant band of music consisting of the Bass and Kettle Drums and fife, and was brilliantly adorned with banners, bearing various inscriptions, one of which, rent in twain, bore the inscription, 'Buck and Breck.' " After the parade, the crowd assembled in front of the courthouse to hear a speech by Judge Cowgill. Cowgill contrasted Douglas’s greatness with Lincoln’s relative obscurity. He also emphasized Douglas’s fight against “the Slave holders, hand to hand.” This had earned Douglas the slaveowners’ opposition “because his principles were better for the North than those of the Republicans.” In fact, Cowgill claimed that Douglas had been called “a ‘cheap edition of Seward!’” The Democratic ceremonies included the firing of a cannon taken from the jail. Republicans pointed out that it was common to shoot a cannon over water to bring up dead bodies, and suggested that that was what the Democrats were trying to do—resurrect Douglas.

Despite the early enthusiasm for Douglas, he appeared a less than prepossessing candidate. Douglas passed through Greencastle "in the rounds of his electioneering tour and in the second hunt after his mother" a taunt by his critics referring to a campaign tour Douglas had once undergone on the supposition of traveling north to visit his mother. When the train halted at the depot and Douglas was called on for a speech, "his throat
was sore and he was sleepy and a great deal more inclined to take a cup of coffee . . . than to satisfy the wishes of his auditors." The candidate thanked the people for their interest and noted that, given how early it was, it was they who were the real Wide Awakes, a reference to the Republican club which had a chapter in Greencastle. (Miles Fletcher’s brother Stephen was secretary.)

The Republican editor was unimpressed with Douglas. "In appearance, Mr. D. is anything but prepossessing. He is about four feet high, quite corpulent and his face indicates a love of good brandy."

The Douglas men erected “two very nice, lengthy poles” in southern Greencastle. Pole raising demonstrated one’s candidate had enough support to put up such a pole, although the Republicans quibbled that if it fell it might kill someone. When a Douglas meeting in late September failed to draw a large crowd, Republicans derided it as a “fizzle.”

It was rumored among the Republicans that when the Douglas Democrats had fired the cannon at their rally, some Putnam Democrats were unsure whether the sound signified support for Douglas or John C. Breckinridge. When Patrick Heaney and Henry Secrest failed to prevail at the county Democratic convention, they broke with the Douglas Democrats and supported Breckinridge, the nominee of the Southern Democrats. Delana Eckels, Secrest’s ally, was still one of the most powerful Democrats in the county. A Greencastle Democrat warned John G. Davis, “The Eckels & Secrest influence is operating against you[.]” Eckels opposed not only Davis but also Douglas, throwing his support to Breckinridge. Although the January 1860 Indiana Democratic convention endorsed Douglas, Senator Jesse Bright was unhappy and tried to block the endorsement. Rumors abounded that Bright and other Buchanan men not only held out patronage as an inducement to oppose Douglas, but even offered money. Still, any efforts at bribery
failed. When the Charleston convention split, with southern delegates walking out rather than accepting Douglas, the Indiana delegation stayed true to Douglas. However, Bright used the party split to back the southern Democratic candidate, John Breckinridge of Kentucky. In Indiana, Bright and Graham N. Fitch organized a Breckinridge movement and published an anti-Douglas newspaper. Bright had no real expectation that Breckinridge would carry Indiana, but by defeating Douglas, he hoped to restore his position in the state’s Democratic party. A few days after the large Douglas meeting in Putnam county, Breckinridge’s supporters met. Judge Eckels spoke for two hours, condemning Douglas as false to the Democracy and attempting to “rule or ruin.” Republicans found it an unusually harsh speech for Eckels, perhaps testifying to the bitterness in the national as well as local Democratic party. Eckels predicted that Breckinridge would win the united South, and probably Oregon and California. Breckinridge’s “friends would fight hard” to carry other states.\textsuperscript{xlviii} The Breckinridge Democrats nominated Dr. Hiram R. Pitchlynn and Patrick Heaney for the legislature. Douglas Democrats were angry at Heaney’s actions, calling him a tool of the Republicans, but the Republicans saw Heaney as perfectly consistent. The Irishman sought to “still bear aloft the banner of what he considers the only remaining portion of the democratic party[].”\textsuperscript{xlvi} Although the Breckinridge meeting was much smaller than the Douglas one, Republicans purported to sense great support in the townships for Breckinridge. The Bainbridge \textit{Argus} called Douglas’s nomination “a wet blanket upon the Democracy of this section; for they regard it as a tremendous stride in the direction of abolitionism.”\textsuperscript{l}
Not only bitterness, but apparently confusion also divided the Democrats. Speaking in Greencastle, “Judge Eckles read to a Douglas Democrat the Douglas platform as the Breckinridge platform; the Douglasite condemned and denounced it with severity. At length the Judge presented him the paper, showing him it was the Douglas platform. That Douglasite decamped in haste, and has been mum since.” Eckles’s speeches apparently overtly defended slavery. He "built his whole slavery argument upon what are called our 'treaty obligations'” in acquiring the Louisiana Purchase. Having acquired territory in which slavery was established, the United States by treaty “pledged itself to protect the property of the inhabitants of the territory; therefore, slavery could not be abolished or prohibited in any part of this vast domain except in violating of treaty obligations.” Nationally, the Breckinridge movement was both a proslavery one and a continuation of President Buchanan’s feud with the senator from Illinois. Sean Wilentz argues that Breckinridge’s campaign could not decide whether to win or just to destroy Douglas. Eckels may have been motivated as much by loyalty to the Buchanan wing of the party as by proslavery zeal.

The Breckinridge campaign climaxed with late-September speeches at the courthouse. The speakers were Jesse D. Bright and Breckinridge’s vice-presidential candidate, Joseph Lane. Bright attacked both popular sovereignty and the irregularity of Douglas’s nomination, and predicted that Douglas would not get a single electoral vote. Like Eckels before him, Bright predicted that Breckinridge would get the South, Oregon, California, and perhaps Pennsylvania. According to rumor, Daniel Voorhees had met with Putnam county Breckinridge men at Carpentersville in a futile effort to heal the breach in the party.
Voorhees himself faced the opposition of the Breckinridge faction. The seventh district congressional convention met in July at Terre Haute. Judge Eckels presided. The convention chose D.W. Voorhees as candidate for Congress. Voorhees was a graduate of Indiana Asbury, where he had spoken at his 1849 commencement on “The Federal Constitution,” an expertise he would perhaps need during the decade of crisis to come. He married a Greencastle girl and practiced law in Terre Haute. Voorhees received Putnam’s support at the convention, but there was speculation that Eckels would challenge Voorhees by running on a separate, Breckinridge ticket. Eckels himself did not run, but the Breckinridge men ran another candidate, J.A. Scott, against Voorhees and the Republican candidate, Thomas H. Nelson.\textsuperscript{lv} Republicans sought to condemn Voorhees as lacking in principle. He had been “‘Buchanan's collar dog’ in 1856, but now the loud mouthed prater for Douglas[.]” Republicans dismissed Voorhees as "the great aristocratic, self-inflated bag of gass, Dan. Voorhees, who struts around over the earth as if it is a little too good to occupy a hemisphere composed of laboring men--men who, by the sweat of their brow, procure an honest living, without the aid of the fat offices from the Government."\textsuperscript{lvi}

In contrast to the Republicans and the two factions of the Democrats, little mention occurred in Putnam County of the Constitutional Union party and its nominee John Bell. The Constitutional Unionists formed in the aftermath of the Democratic party’s national split. They hoped to provide a moderate alternative to the Breckinridge Democrats and Republicans, possibly throwing the election into the House of Representatives. The \textit{Putnam Republican Banner} reprinted an item from the Cincinnati \textit{Gazette} accusing Bell supporters of trying to elect Douglas, a fusion movement that was
tried in some parts of the country, but this was a rare acknowledgement of the fourth party in the field. lvii John Hanna made veiled reference to the Constitutional Unionists, warning against a “corrupt scheme” whereby Lincoln’s opponents would “cheat the people, throw the election into the House and there gamble for the prize.” lviii The Constitutional Unionists held a state convention in Indiana, but did not nominate candidates. There were no candidates running on the Constitutional Union ticket in the county. While the Douglas Democrats in southern Indiana made some effort to woo the Bell men, the Constitutional Unionists in Indiana, most of whom were former Know Nothings, inclined more towards the Republicans. In fact, the Constitutional Unionists’ proposal that they were the alternative to the extremists was undercut when the Republicans did not nominate Seward and chose the more moderate Lincoln. Probably recognizing that Bell had no chance, Richard W. Thompson of Terre Haute, who was one of the leaders in the state, endorsed Lincoln on the eve of the election. Thompson viewed Lincoln as acceptably “conservative.” lix

The state elections were a disaster for the Democrats in Putnam county. They had been "overpowered by the combined forces of abolitionism and disunionism. We speak knowingly when we say that such was the case in this locality. The defeat of the Democratic party in Putnam county is to be ascribed, not to the superior numbers of its Republican opponents, but the unconcealed opposition of men professing to be its friends.” lx

Those professed friends were the five percent of Putnam voters who cast ballots for Breckinridge candidates. Although totaling only a couple of hundred voters in any race, the margin between Republicans and Democrats was so thin that the Breckinridge
men made the difference. In state races for governor and lieutenant governor, Republicans Henry Smith Lane and Oliver P. Morton won the county with 51% of its vote. Miles Fletcher was elected superintendent of public schools, also with 51% of the county’s vote. But for other offices, the role of the Breckinridge Democrats clearly contributed to Democratic defeat. Although Voorhees won the congressional seat, at the county polls, he had been hurt by the Breckinridge men. Nelson got 48% of Putnam’s vote, and Voorhees 47%. J.A. Scott, the Breckinridge candidate for Congress, got 205 votes--5% of the total, a margin that could have given Voorhees the county. A similar result came out of the race for state senator for the district of Putnam and Clay counties. The Republican James McMurry got 49% of Putnam’s vote, while the Douglas Democrat Arch Johnson got 46%, with 5% going to Breckinridge Democrat J.G. Martin. Fortunately for Johnson, he won enough votes in Clay to win the state senatorship. Samuel Colliver and John Adams, the Democratic candidates for state representatives, were not so lucky. Again the Breckinridge candidates, Patrick Heaney and H.R. Pitchlynn, got only 141 and 200 votes respectively. That was enough to give the election to Republicans Reuben S. Ragan and Higgins Lane, brother of the newly elected governor.\textsuperscript{131}

Grafton F. Cookerly, editor of the \textit{Terre Haute Journal}, condemned the maneuverings of Eckels and the results produced by the disorganization in the Putnam county Democracy:

The loss we sustained was in Putnam county, where the Breckinridge men, under the leadership of Buchanan's Mormon Judge, D.R. Eckels, voted, almost to a man, the Republican State ticket. This is a fact which can be sustained by the most incontrovertable [sic] proof. . . . But for the willful desertion of the Breckinridge men from the Democratic party, and its nominees, our majority in the District would have been several hundred more than it is.
In consequence of their disorganization, the Republicans in that county elected their two candidates for Representative, by very small majorities. Thus it will be seen, that the Breckinridge men, of Putnam county, not only voted against Voorhees and the State ticket, but, also contributed to the election of two representatives to the Legislature, who will cast their votes for Henry S. Lane or any other good Republican, for United States Senator. This was all done, we understand, through the advice and influence of Judge Eckels, and in pursuance, doubtless, of instructions from the Administration, at Washington.

But notwithstanding all this we achieved in this District, a glorious triumph. By this, Cookerly referred to the fact that although Nelson had won Putnam county, Voorhees had still carried the seventh district and been elected to Congress. Despite the Republicans’ general sweep of the county, the congressional election results caused John Hanna to re-double his pleas that, although Republicans had failed to elect Nelson, they could still elect Lincoln.

The presidential election went quietly in Greencastle except for a "little rumpus" when two men tried to put a Douglas banner over the Banner’s office. Perhaps reflecting the unusual bitterness of this election, the editor hoped kindly feelings would return once the election was over. Lincoln won a small plurality in the county, but the combined vote of his opponents was larger. In Indiana, Lincoln got fifty percent of the popular vote, not as well as he did in other northern states. Nonetheless, Lincoln won Indiana’s electoral votes--the first time since 1840 that the Democrats had lost the state.

Despite the Republican victory in Putnam county, the results showed that the Democrats, although divided, had a core of strength. At the top of the state ticket, Lane and Morton won by a larger margin in the rest of the state than they did in Putnam.

The Lane and Morton ticket reflected a compromise in the state Republican party. Lane favored the Old Whigs while Morton, an ex-Democrat, appealed to a different wing of the party. The party nominated Lane for governor and Morton for lieutenant governor,
but it was understood that if the Republicans won the legislature—which they did–Lane
would be elected to a U.S. Senate seat and Morton would become governor. That was in
fact what happened, with Lane serving the shortest term as governor in Indiana history:
two days.\textsuperscript{lxvi}

Many trends in Putnam county during the 1860 election reflected those in the
nation. Putnam Republicans minimized black rights. And Putnam Democrats were hurt
by festering wounds in the national Democratic party, such as the continuing feud
between the Douglas and Buchanan wings, and the split between northern supporters of
Douglas and southern supporters of Breckinridge. The Douglas-Breckinridge split was
made stronger in Indiana by the role of Jesse Bright on the state level and Delana Eckels
in the county. Although David M. Potter dismissed the Breckinridge threat, noting that
Breckinridge and Bell got only 7% of the vote in Indiana, making it a race between
Lincoln and Douglas,\textsuperscript{lxvii} in Putnam county the 5% of voters who backed Breckinridge
ensured a Republican victory in the county. Although Breckinridge supporters such as
Eckels advocated southern rights, despite their fierce partisan and ideological
disagreements, Putnam Republicans and Douglas Democrats agreed on the necessity of
standing up for northern rights.

\textsuperscript{1} Putnam Republican Banner, Nov. 1, 1860.
\textsuperscript{2} Ollinger Crenshaw, The Slave States in the Presidential Election of 1860 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
Press, 1945), 59-73; Emerson David Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860 (Port Washington, NY:
\textsuperscript{3} Emma Lou Thombrough, Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical
Society, 1995), 76; Indianapolis Daily State Sentinel, Nov. 8, 1856; David M. Potter, The Impending
\textsuperscript{4} Sean Wilentz, The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln (New York: Norton, 2005), 758-
66; Fite, Presidential Campaign of 1860, 132.
\textsuperscript{5} Fite, Presidential Campaign of 1860, 132.
Office, 1971), 1063; A Biographical History of Eminent and Self-made Men of the State of Indiana (2 vols.,

vii Weik, History of Putnam County, 599-601.
x Putnam Republican Banner, Aug. 24, 1859.
xii A.M. Puett to J.G. Davis, Greencastle, Jan. 15, 1860, box 4, folder 1, Davis Papers, IHS.
xiii Weekly Indiana State Sentinel, Jan. 18, 1860; A.M. Puett to J.G. Davis, Greencastle, Jan. 29, 1860, box 4, folder 1, Davis Papers, IHS.
xiv Andy Grimes to John G. Davis, Portland Mills, Jan. 30, 1860, microfilm, Davis Papers, IHS.
xv Putnam Republican Banner, Nov. 16, Dec. 7, 1859, Jan. 25, May 31, 1860; Potter, Impending Crisis, 417; Thornbrough, Indiana in the Civil War Era, 87.
xvi Indiana State Journal, June 25, 1860.
xviii Indiana State Journal, June 25, 1860.
xix Indiana State Journal, July 14, 1860. Abraham Lincoln also spoke during the 1860 campaign at the train station and Horace Greeley spoke in Greencastle at Thornburgh’s Hall. Putnam County Sesquicentennial Committee, A Journey through Putnam County History (no. pub., 1966), 219. [check for newspaper articles on this]
xix Putnam Republican Banner, July 19, 1860.
xvii Putnam Republican Banner, Oct. 4, 1860.
xviii Putnam Republican Banner, Nov. 2, 1859.
xix Putnam Republican Banner, Oct. 26, 1859.
xx Putnam Republican Banner, Dec. 21, 1859.
xx Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1860.
xxi Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1860.
xxiii Putnam Republican Banner, Feb. 29, 1860.
xxiv John Cowgill to Davis, Nov. 7, 1859, box 3, folder 16, Davis Papers, IHS.
xxv John Cowgill to Davis, Nov. 7, 1859, box 3, folder 16, Davis Papers, IHS.
xxvi A.M. Puett to J.G. Davis, Dec. 22, 1859, microfilm, Davis Papers, IHS.
xxvii A.M. Puett to J.G. Davis, Greencastle, Jan. 3, 1860, box 4, folder 1, Davis Papers, IHS.
xxviii Josias H. Robinson, Nicholsonville, Putnam Co., Jan. 9, 1860, box 4, folder 1, Davis Papers, IHS.
xxix Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 4, 1860; A.M. Puett to J.G. Davis, Greencastle, Jan. 15, 1860, box 4, folder 1, Davis Papers, IHS; Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 4, 1860.
xxx Lewis H. Sands to Davis, May 8, 1860, box 4, folder 5, Davis Papers, IHS; Putnam Republican Banner, May 17, 1860.
xxxi Putnam Republican Banner, May 17, 1860.
xxi Putnam Republican Banner, May 17, 1860.
xxxiii Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1860.
xxiv Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1860.
xxv Putnam Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1860.
xxvi Wilton A. Osborn to John G. Davis, Green Castle, May 21, 1860, box 4, folder 5, Davis Papers, IHS.
Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 88-89. Bright failed. After the election, Indiana Democrats moved to take away Bright’s Senate seat on the grounds that he was living in Kentucky now. The initial move failed but was re-ignited when a letter Bright had written to Jefferson Davis, addressing him a president of the Confederacy, became public. The U.S. Senate expelled him and Governor Morton replaced him with Bright’s long-time foe, former Governor Joseph A. Wright, a Democrat who pledged to support the war effort. Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 115-16; *Putnam Republican Banner*, July 5, 1860.


*Potter, Impending Crisis*, 437.