

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: What is the relationship between the Caroline affair and the difficulties in resolving disputes over the Oregon Territory?

Analyze: Why would the British seek to establish a presence in the northwestern part of the United States?

Evaluate: Using this document, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (Doc. 9.3), and the Monroe Doctrine (Doc. 9.4), determine how the Louisiana Purchase furthered the United States' march toward isolationism or international engagement.

DOCUMENT 9.8 | Democratic Party Platform

1844

On May 27, 1844, the Democratic Party announced its nominee for the presidency of the United States, James K. Polk (1795–1849). The party's platform paid particular attention to national expansion, states' rights, and slavery. During the campaign that followed, the centerpiece of Polk's campaign was the annexation of Texas from Mexico and the acquisition of the Oregon Territory from Great Britain.

7. *Resolved*, That Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States; and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything pertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution; that all efforts by Abolitionists or others, made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences, and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people, and endanger the stability and permanence of the Union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend to our political institutions. . . .

9. *Resolved*, That the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the Constitution, which makes ours the land of liberty and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the Democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens, and the owners of soil among us, ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the alien and sedition laws from our statute book. . . .

12. *Resolved*, That our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power, and that the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas

at the earliest practicable period, are great American measures, which this Convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union.

Source: Chandos Fulton, *The History of the Democratic Party from Thomas Jefferson to Grover Cleveland* (New York: Collier, 1892), 158–160.

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: Summarize the Democratic Party's logic in wanting to annex Texas and the Oregon Territory.

Analyze: To what extent does the party contradict itself by pursuing annexation while at the same advocating states' rights?

Evaluate: Accept, revise, or refute this claim: Territorial expansion allowed the federal government to expand its powers in ways that threaten to violate individual states' rights.

DOCUMENT 9.9 Parody of the Democratic Party

1848

In this parody of Democratic politics, the artist ridicules the rivalry between conservative proslavery Democrats (riding the pig) and Free Soil Democrats (holding back the pig) who supported restrictions on the spread of slavery. Also portrayed in this cartoon are two former presidents—Millard Fillmore (1800–1874) (left) and Martin Van Buren (1782–1862) (right). Fillmore seeks to stop proslavery Democrats from expanding into the West, and Van Buren chases after the party in support of restrictions on slavery (represented by the “Wilmot Proviso” flag in the background).



THE MODERN GILPINS. LOVES LABOR LOST.

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LC-USZ62-17296.