

"THE GROSSEST AND MOST UNJUST SPECIES OF FAVORITISM" COMPETING VIEWS OF REPUBLICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY: THE TARIFF DEBATES OF 1841 AND 1842

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Historians have long examined the causes of the American Civil War. Frequently, they identify three explanatory factors: slavery, states' rights and tariffs. This paper assesses the Tariffs of 1841 and 1842, asserting that arguments attributing the tariff as a causal factor of the Civil War are exaggerated and deserve reconsideration. Upon close examination, these tariff debates represent a continuation of a long-standing discourse as to whether American foreign trade policy should embrace free trade or protectionist characteristics. Consequently, these debates, which occurred only nineteen years before Fort Sumter, are more closely aligned with late 18th century debates over political economy than they are as a prelude cause to Civil War.

The Tariff Debates – First Congress

A full view having now been taken of the inducements to the promotions of Manufactures in the United States ...It will be of use to advert to those [means] which have been employed with success in other countries ... Protecting duties – or duties on those foreign articles which are rivals of the domestic ones, intended [sic] to be encouraged.¹ — *Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton, "Report on Manufactures," 1790*

I own [sic] myself the friend to a very free system of commerce, and hold it as a truth that commercial shackles are generally unjust, oppressive, and impolitic; it is also a truth, that if industry and labor are generally left to take their own course, they will generally be directed to those objects which are the most productive.² — *Representative James Madison of Virginia, April 9, 1789*

The Black Tariff Debates – Twenty-Seventh Congress

It [the Constitution] authorizes you to regulate ... by the imposition of discriminating duties, or prohibitory duties

on imports of foreign manufactures ... for the purpose ... of encouraging domestic manufactures, and any and every other form of domestic industry.³ — *Senator Rufus Choate of Massachusetts, March 14, 1842*

Instead of asking for protection to increase the prices of their products, they should produce cheaper, and this is the only way to become prosperous. They cannot, by legislation, change the laws of trade, which were of Divine origin. ... the life of business is competition.⁴ — *Representative Dixon Lewis of Alabama, July 11, 1842*

In protesting the 1833 Tariff of Abominations, John Calhoun stated that “the interests of the two great sections is opposed. We want free trade, — they restrictions.”⁵ Calhoun characterized the tariff issue as pitting an industrializing North against an agricultural South. Jefferson Davis later reinforced the Calhoun thesis when he insisted that the North sought “an unjust system of legislation, to promote the industry of the New England states, at the expense of the people of the South.”⁶

The Tariff of 1842, sometimes referred to as the “Black Tariff,” provides a case study that suggests Calhoun and Davis’s interpretation ought to be reconsidered.⁷ This episode demonstrates that the tariff issue was not sectional in nature. Rather, legislators argued with one another over national trade policy through the competing economic ideologies of free trade and protectionism. Each side was supported by pragmatically motivated special interest groups. Between the summers of 1841 and 1842, the 27th Congress passed four different tariff bills in an attempt to respond to a short-term federal budgetary crisis as well as to shape American long-term foreign trade policy.

Table 1. The Tariff Debates of 1841 and 1842

<u>Bill</u>	<u>House Vote</u>	<u>Senate Vote</u>
Tariff of 1841	July 30, 1841	September 7, 1841
Little Tariff (1842)	June 15, 1842	June 24, 1842
Permanent Tariff (1842)	July 16, 1842	August 5, 1842
Revised Permanent Tariff (1842)	August 22, 1842	August 27, 1842

Historians have frequently taken Calhoun’s views at face value. James McPherson observed that when protectionists tried to raise tariff rates in response to the Panic of 1857, they were rebuffed by “an almost solid South combined with half or more of Northern Democrats.”⁸ Mark Thornton and Robert B. Ekelund, Jr. argued that “from the earliest days of the nation, the tariff issue was paramount to Southerners,” while “Northern interests had a different perspective ... [they] supported high protective tariffs ... using an ‘infant industry’ argument.”⁹ Douglas Irwin, describing the 1842 Tariff, noted that “The House passed the measure by a single vote, with overwhelming

support from the North, complete opposition from the South, and a majority against in the West.”¹⁰

From 1789, two ideological camps formed in the United States over the issue of trade policy. Economic nationalists favored protectionism to encourage domestic American industries. Their core beliefs were shaped by the writings of economic thinkers like Alexander Hamilton, Mathew Carey and Friedrich List. In contrast, laissez-faire free traders opposed catering to any special economic interests at all, arguing that discriminatory trade policy violated American ideals. Their standard bearers included John Taylor, William Leggett and William Gregg. By 1842, these two schools of thought were well entrenched within American political culture.

Importantly, some common ground existed between the opposing factions; both free traders and protectionists acknowledged the need for a tariff. It was the primary revenue source for the federal government throughout the nineteenth century. Free traders argued, however, that tariff rates should be as low as possible and at a standard rate for all imported goods. Protectionists, on the other hand, used the “infant industry” argument to advocate higher duties on certain goods that directly competed with fledgling American industries considered vital to national interests.

When the “Tariff of Abominations” was passed in 1828, the average tariff charged on imported goods increased to 47 percent, the highest in American history to date.¹¹ Five years later, following the Nullification Crisis, Henry Clay and John Calhoun brokered the Compromise Tariff of 1833. This new legislation scheduled a reduction to a maximum 20 percent tariff level on all imported goods by 1842. However, the rate lowering process was back loaded. Duty rates would be gradually reduced only 9 percent during the eight years between 1833 and 1841 and would then be followed by large and rapid reductions of 9 percent in 1841 and another 9 percent in 1842.¹²

The Harrison/Tyler administration took office in March 1841, shortly before that year’s scheduled June tariff reduction. Unfortunately, the timing coincided with the federal government facing a deep financial crisis, in large part a consequence of the Panic of 1837. The economic contraction that followed translated into fewer imported goods and sales of federal lands, which negatively impacted the federal government’s primary sources of funds. Annual federal revenues, which had averaged \$35 million during Andrew Jackson’s second term and \$26 million during Martin Van Buren’s term, precipitously dropped to only \$17 million in 1841. The desperate economic situation required reconsideration of the terms of the Compromise Tariff of 1833, mainly due to the fact that the tariff supplied 69 percent of total federal revenues in 1840.¹³

The 1841 and 1842 tariff debates contain rhetoric which validates the presence of contrasting protectionist and free trade schools of thought. Further, significant blocs of both protectionists and free traders existed in both the North and South. Protectionists argued that the United States could only prosper through economic strength, and that required protection of key industries. They advocated for a new tariff to raise additional revenues and protect domestic industries. Free traders disagreed, and demanded equality for all

Americans in terms of economic opportunity. They equated protectionism with economic favoritism and privilege, which would erode American republicanism because vast economic power would accrue to a few, which inevitably would lead to corruption. The free traders acknowledged a need to raise additional tariff revenues, but they asserted that any increase should be for the minimal amount necessary to maintain the government and without any discriminatory characteristics.

Economic nationalists offered three primary arguments to support their position. The first was that encouraging particular domestic industries made the nation economically strong, an important goal in an often hostile global political setting. Secondly, protectionism benefited American workers by keeping wages high. Finally, they argued that free trade theory would not achieve its promised goals when put into practice. These three arguments closely paralleled those presented by Hamilton in his *Report on Manufactures* (1790) and Friedrich List in *Outlines of American Political Economy* (1827).

The nationalists argued that national economic strength was paramount, and that all regions and commercial sectors benefitted. For instance, Massachusetts Congressman Leverett Saltonstall stated that “commercial and manufacturing interests are not alone in calling for action on the subject; the agricultural interests are alike involved in it.”¹⁴ Pennsylvania Democratic Senator James Buchanan stressed a need for national security, noting that he would “discriminate – and especially ... in favor of such manufactures as are essentially necessary ... in time of war.”¹⁵ Congressman Charles Ingersoll of Pennsylvania preached that “national protection is nothing more nor less than national existence.”¹⁶ Kentuckian Thomas Marshall remarked that “This bill is not inattentive to Southern interests ... sugar is protected by a duty of 50 per cent Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and more extensive regions still, are fitted to the production of hemp.”¹⁷

Tariff advocates also argued that their legislative proposals benefitted American workers. New York Whig Congressman Hiram Hunt stated that “Not only do I believe that Congress had the constitutional power, but ... it is their duty, to protect American labor from hostile enactments of foreign Governments.”¹⁸ Pennsylvania Representative William Irwin was convinced that there was “strong ground in favor of protecting American industry against the labor of the half-starved paupers of Europe.”¹⁹ Maine Senator George Evans defined national prosperity as “the high price of wages.” He asked “What is to keep up the price of wages but high prices?”²⁰

Protectionists also attacked the practicality of free trade. Virginia Congressman Alexander Stuart explained that “free trade never has been the policy of any country, and never would be; and therefore it is unprofitable to contend with an abstraction.”²¹ Illinois Congressman John Reynolds declared that “the protective policy of Europe renders protection here necessary.” He further stated that if his “Locofoco friends were in power; why, they would be obliged to give protection to domestic manufactures.”²² Clay philosophized that “he and his friends are in favor of the universal practice of nations, and

the wholesome and necessary protection of manufactures.” He scoffed at his opponents, complaining that they favored “book theory and abstractions.”²³

Free traders primarily based their arguments on a single premise: free-trade policy was essential to safeguard the American republic from excessive concentrations of economic power. John Taylor of Caroline had posited these same objections when he authored *Tyranny Unmasked* (1821) two decades before. Pennsylvania Representative Joseph Farnace attacked the favoritism created by protection, arguing that “If [the tariff] meant a bounty given to a particular occupation – a tax to aid one man or set of men who could not live without it, and who required the protection of Government to enable their business to succeed – I am opposed to it, and would deem such a system oppressive and unjust.”²⁴ Virginia’s William Smith alleged that protection was “a system of plunder ... What was the reason the manufacturers could not thrive without this insidious distinction in their favor? Plainly because labor and capital employed in other avocations are more profitable and attended with richer rewards.”²⁵

Anti-tariff arguments were not necessarily anti-manufacturing in nature. Rather, the crux of the argument was to establish a fair economic playing field. Aaron Brown stated that he was “not an enemy to useful manufactures,” reasoning that, “in a country like the United States, where raw materials were so cheap, water-power so abundant, and taxes on real property so low, it was exceedingly singular if the manufacturers could not sustain themselves by the aid of a duty of twenty or twenty-five percent.”²⁶ Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire explained that “though I am deliberately and decidedly opposed to the tariff system, it was not because I am hostile to the manufacturing interests. All I desire is equal privileges.”²⁷

Representative Dixon Lewis of Alabama best summarized the reasons that made a protective tariff so objectionable to free traders. Harkening back to core 18th century republican principles, he explained that “According to all ... conceptions of free governments, they were instituted solely for the protection of life, liberty, and property ... the system of protective tariffs ... is the grossest and most unjust species of favoritism.” Lewis chastised the protectionists, suggesting that “they begin at the wrong end. Instead of asking for protection to increase the prices of their products, they should produce cheaper ... the life of business is competition.”²⁸

The 1841 bill proposed to remedy the immediate financial crisis by retaining the scheduled 9 percent rate reduction called for in the Compromise Tariff of 1833, but sought to offset the resulting loss of revenues by increasing duties on all other imported goods that had previously been allowed to enter the United States either free of charge or at low duty rates. The new bill proposed that these previously free or low duty goods would now be charged at a new *ad valorem* rate of 20 percent.²⁹ It was intended only as a short-term solution to an immediate problem. The Whig party, which favored protective tariffs, intended for a more comprehensive overhaul of the tariff system when Congress adjourned again in 1842. The final version of the Tariff Bill of 1841 passed the House by a vote of 116 to 101 and the Senate by a vote of 33 to 11.³⁰

Table 2. Roll Call Vote - The Tariff of 1841 (July 1841), by Region

Region	House Ayes	House Nays	Senate Ayes	Senate Nays
Northeast	53	51	12	2
Northwest	<u>18</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	71 (55%)	59 (45%)	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
Southeast	27	25	9	2
Southwest	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>
	45 (52%)	42 (48%)	17 (71%)	7 (29%)
Totals	116 (53%)	101 (47%)	33 (75%)	11 (25%)

Source: Data from *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 1, 274, 438.

An analysis of the roll call vote is best understood by dissecting the country into four regional quadrants, divided north/south by the status of slavery and east/west by the Appalachian Mountains. The Northeast was the most industrialized, with more manufacturing capital than the other three regions combined. However, the final roll call votes indicate that all of the regions were internally divided over this legislation. The House votes were very narrowly in favor of the bill in the Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest regions. In the Senate, all four regions voted heavily in favor of the measure. The overall voting characteristics in the heavily industrialized Northeast were generally similar to other regions.

Table 3. Regional Breakdown of the 27th Congress

Region	States	House Seats	Senate Seats
Northeast	(CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)	112	18
Northwest	(IL, IN, MI, OH)	<u>30</u>	<u>8</u>
		142	26
Southeast	(DE, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA)	61	12
Southwest	(AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, MO, TN)	<u>39</u>	<u>14</u>
		100	26
Totals		242	52

Source: Data from Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, Part 1, 1085.

The next step in the Whig agenda was to create a long-term protectionist trade policy. Consequently, they introduced the "Little Tariff" in early 1842 to supersede the 1841 bill and delay implementation of the final 9 percent reduction in tariffs while Congress deliberated a separate "Permanent Tariff" bill, whose intent was to create a highly protective national trade policy. The Little Tariff, after a very brief debating period, passed the House by a vote of 116 to 103 and the Senate by a vote of 24 to 19.³¹ Protectionists favored the legislation while free traders opposed. The Northeast House members, home to most of the national manufacturing, voted 61 to 41 in favor. Overall, two of every five Northerners voted anti-tariff and two of every five Southerners voted pro-tariff in the House votes, undermining a simple regional interpretation of the tariff issue. In addition, 11 of 20 Southern senators favored the bill, a percentage similar to the Northern vote of 13 to 10. President Tyler vetoed the bill because it contained a "distribution" feature, which diverted all federal land sales funds to the states for internal improvements rather than using land sales proceeds to address the treasury shortfall.³²

Table 4. Roll Call Vote - The "Little Tariff" of 1842 (June 1842), by Region

Region	House Ayes	House Nays	Senate Ayes	Senate Nays
Northeast	61	41	9	6
Northwest	<u>20</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
	81 (62%)	50 (38%)	13 (57%)	10 (43%)
Southeast	18	33	6	4
Southwest	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
	34 (40%)	51 (60%)	11 (55%)	9 (45%)
Totals	115 (53%)	101 (47%)	24 (56%)	19 (44%)

Source: Data from *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 637, 679. Note that the *Congressional Globe* states the House vote as 116 to 103, but the actual roll call presented lists 115 aye and 101 nay votes.

In the following month the "Permanent Tariff" was considered, which proposed resetting the tariff schedules back to 1832 levels and fully negating the Compromise Tariff. The bill passed the House by a vote of 116 to 112 and the Senate by a vote of 25 to 23.³³ Again, almost two in five congressmen from both the North and South voted in a manner that differed from the traditional regional assumption. The Senate also produced divided intraregional views of the tariff issue. The Southern senators voted 10 aye and 12 nay, while Northern senators 15 aye and 11 nay. This bill again retained a distribution feature allocating funds from land sales to the states. President Tyler, as he had done

with the Little Tariff, vetoed the legislation because it retained the distribution provision.

Table 5. Roll Call Vote – The “Permanent Tariff” of 1842 (July 1842), by Region

Region	House Ayes	House Nays	Senate Ayes	Senate Nays
Northeast	63	42	11	7
Northwest	<u>19</u> 82 (62%)	<u>9</u> 51 (38%)	<u>4</u> 15 (58%)	<u>4</u> 11 (42%)
Southeast	18	39	6	5
Southwest	<u>16</u> 34 (36%)	<u>22</u> 61 (64%)	<u>4</u> 10 (45%)	<u>7</u> 12 (55%)
Totals	116 (51%)	112 (49%)	25 (52%)	23 (48%)

Source: Data from *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 762, 852.

Ultimately, protectionist proponents, anxious to enact higher tariff duties, conceded the distribution issue to President Tyler and eliminated the distribution provisions. On August 22 the House narrowly passed a modified measure by a vote of 105 to 103 and the Senate did the same by a vote of 24 to 23.³⁴ The new tariff restored *ad valorem* rates to their 1832 levels, establishing an overall average tariff rate of 33 percent, far greater than the originally scheduled 20 percent rate. The new legislation also contained discriminatory rates to the benefit of selected interests in place of a uniform rate.³⁵ (Table 6)

Most congressmen established consistent voting patterns on the first three tariff bills. Senators and representatives voted consistently pro-tariff or anti-tariff 96 percent and 94 percent of the time, respectively. That pattern broke down in the final vote for a variety of reasons. Many used it as a referendum on the issues of distribution and/or President Tyler’s use of the veto. For example, Senator Silas Wright, a Van Buren protégé and consistent free trader on all previous roll calls, voted for the bill because of the Treasury’s immediate needs.³⁶ John Quincy Adams, an ardent protectionist, voted against it as a protest against Tyler. Senators Willie Mangum of North Carolina and William Merrick of Maryland informed Clay that they supported protection, but switched their votes to “nay” because distribution had been dropped.³⁷ (Table 6)

**Table 6. Roll Call Vote — The Revised “Permanent Tariff” of 1842
(August 1842), by Region**

Region	House Ayes	House Nays	Senate Ayes	Senate Nays
Northeast	78	17	15	2
Northwest	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	92 (70%)	39 (30%)	19 (79%)	5 (21%)
Southeast	7	44	1	10
Southwest	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
	13 (15%)	74 (85%)	5 (22%)	18 (78%)
Totals	105 (51%)	103 (49%)	24 (51%)	23 (49%)

Source: Data from *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 926, 960.

**Table 7. Roll Call Vote – Analysis of the Four “Black Tariff”
Roll Call Voting Patterns**

Position	Prior to Final Bill	Final Bill	House	Senate
Consistent Voting Pattern Throughout:				
Pro-Tariff	aye	aye	83	20
Anti-Tariff	nay	nay	<u>75</u>	<u>15</u>
			158 (66%)	35 (68%)
Consistent Voting Pattern until Final Roll Call:				
Pro-Tariff	aye	nay	21	5
Anti-Tariff	nay	aye	<u>19</u>	<u>4</u>
			40 (17%)	9 (18%)
Consistent Voting Pattern – Non-Voter on Final Roll Call				
Pro-Tariff	aye	n/a	13	1
Anti-Tariff	nay	n/a	<u>19</u>	<u>3</u>
			32 (13%)	4 (8%)
Mixed voting pattern throughout roll calls			<u>10</u> (4%)	<u>3</u> (6%)
Totals			240	51

Source: Data from *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 1, p. 274, 438; Vol. 2, 637, 679, 762, 852, 926, 960. Note: There were actually 241 House seats and 52 Senate seats in the 27th Congress (1841-1843). However, one representative from Kentucky and one senator from Tennessee never voted in any of the four tariff roll call votes.

In contrast to the very high level of voting consistency that characterized the first three bills, 30 percent of House members who displayed a consistent voting pattern on the earlier bills either voted differently on the final bill or abstained. In the Senate, 26 percent did the same. Based upon the examples of Adams, Mangum, Merrick and Wight, legislators likely did not change their votes because of any change of heart regarding what they believed to be appropriate trade policy. Instead, their changed ballots were a result of politics. An analysis of the roll calls suggest that there was a much higher correlation between voting patterns and party affiliation than with geographical region.³⁸ The two great political parties were clearly in opposition to one another over trade policy. The Whigs, led by Clay, held protectionist sentiments, and were at the forefront of proposing the tariff bills in 1841 and 1842, which were designed to promote economic nationalism through a higher tariff. Their goal was to re-establish the Tariff of 1832. In contrast, the Democrats were generally free traders, and sought to protect the terms of the Compromise Tariff of 1833. The allegiance to party during the roll calls was clearly stronger than geography.

Table 8. Roll Call Votes and Party Affiliation

Whig House Ayes	Democrat House Nays	Whig Senate Ayes	Democrat Senate Nays
Tariff of 1841 116/132 (88%)	85/85 (100%)	25/25 (100%)	11/19 (58%)
Little Tariff 113/125 (90%)	89/91 (98%)	24/26 (92%)	17/17 (100%)
Permanent Tariff 115/133 (86%)	94/95 (99%)	25/27 (93%)	21/21 (100%)
Revived Perm. Tariff 85/124 (69%)	64/84 (76%)	20/28 (71%)	15/19 (79%)

Source: Data from Congressional Globe. 27th Congress, Vol. 1, 274, 438; Vol. 2, p. 637, 679, 762, 852, 926, 960.

68 The data in Table 8 also illustrates the voting breakdown on the final tariff bill in comparison to the patterns established during the first three votes. In general, these correlations are much higher than those in Tables 2, 4, 5 and 6, which illustrate the votes on a geographic basis. The difference between the two parties on the issue of foreign trade policy was clear. Whigs and Democrats both maintained a strong political presence in the North as well as the South during the early 1840s. The fact that the Southern Whigs were strongly pro-protection

and Northern Democrats were strongly pro-free trade demonstrates that congressmen approached the trade policy issue from an ideological perspective.

Additional reasons help explain why the tariff bills introduced during the Twenty-Seventh Congress did not devolve into a sectional quarrel. The patterns of first three tariff votes validate that substantial free trade and protectionist blocs existed within each region, despite the fact that New England dominated American textile manufacturing in 1840, possessing 70 percent of the nation's 2.3 million spindles.³⁹ One explanation is that the Southeast experienced significant manufacturing growth during the 1830s and 1840s and that voting patterns demonstrate that Southerners were quite receptive to the possibility of industrial growth in the early 1840s. A rough analysis (there is no census data available prior to 1840) suggests that the Southeast was about two to three decades behind the Northeast in developing its industrial base. As a benchmark, in 1815 the average size of a cotton mill in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts approximated 723 spindles.⁴⁰ The South only reached the same scale of operations in 1840, when the average Southern mill reached 729 spindles.⁴¹

The regional industrial growth rates, again using a quadrant based geographic approach, indicates that all four regions were rapidly industrializing between 1840 and 1850. The significant population shifts occurring in the United States during this decade suggest that an analysis on a per capita basis might be more revealing. Importantly, the center of industrialized expansion remained east of the Appalachian Mountains and the per capita growth rate of the Southeast was almost identical to the Northeast:⁴²

Table 9. Growth in Manufacturing Capital – 1840 to 1850, by Region

Region	Total Investment	Per Capita Investment
Northeast	102%	58%
Northwest	94%	22%
Southeast	84%	54%
Southwest	72%	18%

Source: Data derived from United States Census, University of Virginia, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu> (accessed April 1-30, 2010).

The manufacturing growth in the South created many protection proponents. Edwin Michael Holt, who established a substantial textile factory in Alamance County, North Carolina, was one example.⁴³ Southerners also participated at the pro-tariff Home League convention in New York City in 1842 and prominent Southern protectionists included Robert Toombs, John Berrien and T. Butler King.⁴⁴

Southern congressional districts that hosted a significant manufacturing presence tended to have representatives whose voting patterns showed protectionist sympathies. In Virginia, industrialization involved iron forging, featuring the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond and smaller operations in the

Shenandoah Valley. The representatives for both areas consistently voted for higher tariffs during the 1841 and 1842 debates.⁴⁵ Maryland's manufacturing was concentrated in Baltimore and that district's two representatives voted pro-tariff throughout the debates.⁴⁶ In North Carolina, the state's manufacturing base centered on the cotton mills located near Rocky Mount and Fayetteville and their congressmen, Edward Stanly and Edmund Debarry, consistently supported protectionist tariff initiatives.⁴⁷

The protectionists did not limit their views solely to the manufacturing sphere. Whigs also advocated protection for selected agricultural products as well. For example, Kentucky was a significant producer of hemp. Both senators and eleven of thirteen congressmen from the state supported the protectionist initiatives throughout 1841 and 1842. Louisiana's delegation also supported higher tariffs to benefit their state's sugar producers.

Many historians have concluded that Southerners were logically anti-protection because industrialization would threaten the institution of slavery.⁴⁸ The evidence actually suggests just the opposite. James Hammond of South Carolina, who once exclaimed that "Cotton is King" declared in 1841 that "our slaves can be made as expert as any other class in all, or nearly all, the operations of a cotton factory."⁴⁹ In 1851, a visitor to the Saluda factory in South Carolina commented that "A weaver from Lowell has charge ... and she reports that ... there is full as much work done by the blacks, [and] they are much more attentive to the condition of their looms."⁵⁰

The Tariff of 1842 instituted an average rate of 33 percent in place of the scheduled Compromise Tariff reduction to a 20 percent rate.⁵¹ The Whig triumph of 1842, however, would be short lived. In relatively short order, free traders succeeded in reducing the overall rate to 20 percent by passing the Walker Tariff in 1846 and Tariff of 1857.⁵² If the tariff issue had been strictly sectional, northern numbers in Congress would have prevented this development.

The evidence provided from the Black Tariff debates suggests that the true nuances of this historical episode have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Importantly, the final vote was the least representative of the true nature of the debates. A review of the other roll call votes demonstrates that Southerners were widely divided on the issue of protection, as were Northerners. These voting patterns suggest that in the early 1840s many Southerners believed that the region had a stake in the industrialization process that was dramatically altering the American economic landscape and many Northerners remained unconvinced that protection was a necessary element in American trade policy.

While slavery and states' rights contributed towards sectional tensions, tariffs did not. The tariff issue actually pitted brother against brother during the 1842 debates, where Joseph and Charles Ingersoll were both Pennsylvania representatives. Joseph consistently voted in favor of the tariff while Charles voted against, agreeing with Dixon Lewis that the whole idea of protection was contrary to good republican principles, and therefore "gross and unjust." Their disagreements centered upon rival views of what sort of trade policy was in the best interests of the nation and its citizenry.

If the Ingersoll brothers could be brought back to observe their nation

in the 21st century, they would find that the American debate over trade policy remains unresolved. Competing republican views of political economy, articulated between protectionist-centered nationalists and free trade liberals, remain vibrant in modern times. Contemporary trade policy debates over regional trade agreements and globalization bear a strong resemblance to the arguments presented in 1842. The Tariff of 1842 serves as a reminder that American trade policy, both past and present, is inexorably linked both to how Americans view the principles of political economy and to the political lobbying efforts of prominent national economic interest groups.

NOTES

1. Cynthia Clark Northrup and Elaine C. Prange Turney, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Tariffs and Trade in U. S. History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2003), Vol. 2, 98.
2. *Annals of Congress*. 1st Congress, Vol. 1, 107, 116. (April 9, 1789).
3. Thomas E. Woods, Jr., ed., *The Political Writings of Rufus Choate* (Washington, D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2002), 60.
4. *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 741-742. (July 11, 1842).
5. H. Lee Cheek, Jr., ed., *John C. Calhoun: Selected Writings and Speeches* (Washington, D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 285, 288.
6. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1936), Vol II, 6.
7. The term "Black Tariff" was never actually used during the 1841 and 1842 debates. Rather, the term was derisively used by Democrats during the 1846 Walker Tariff debates to describe the 1842 bill, which they believed to have been a tragic mistake.
8. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 192.
9. Mark Thornton and Robert B. Ekelund, Jr., *Tariff, Blockades, and Inflation: The Economics of the Civil War* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2004), 16.
10. Douglas A. Irwin, *Antebellum Tariff Politics: Coalition Formation and Shifting Regional Interests* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006), 23.
11. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Old Saybrook, Connecticut: Konecky & Konecky, 1971), 509.
12. Cynthia Clark Northrup and Elaine C. Prange Turney, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Tariffs and Trade in U. S. History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2003), Vol. 3, 40-41.
13. U. S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D. C., 1975), 1106. Tariff revenues totaled 86% of all federal revenues in 1841. Tariff and land sale revenues combined accounted for 86% and 94% of all federal revenues in 1840 and 1841, respectively.

14. *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 650. (June 17, 1842). The quotes presented are taken from the *Globe*, whose correspondent often presented discourse from the congressmen in the third person, as well as in past tense. In order to improve readability, the quotes presented here have been slightly modified from what appears in the *Globe* to convert third person to first person, and from past tense to present tense.
15. *Ibid.*, 702. (July 1, 1842).
16. *Ibid.*, 743. (July 11, 1842).
17. *Ibid.*, 750. (July 13, 1842).
18. *Ibid.*, 658. (June 20, 1842).
19. *Ibid.*, 732. (July 7, 1842).
20. *Ibid.*, 851. (August 5, 1842).
21. *Ibid.*, 735. (July 8, 1842).
22. *Ibid.*, 738. (July 9, 1842). Locofocos represented a New York faction of the Democrat Party that was fiercely supportive of free trade principles. Journalist William Leggett was a locofoco.
23. *Ibid.*, 399. (August 28, 1841).
24. *Ibid.*, 663. (June 21, 1842).
25. *Ibid.*, 737. (July 9, 1842).
26. *Ibid.*, 653-654. (June 18, 1842).
27. *Ibid.*, 798. (July 27, 1842).
28. *Ibid.*, 741-742. (July 11, 1842).
29. An *ad valorem* rate was simply an import duty charged at a percentage rate of the fair market value of the imported good.
30. *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 1, 274. (July 30, 1841); 438. (September 7, 1841).
31. *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 637. (June 15, 1842); 679. (June 24, 1842).
32. Oliver Perry Chitwood, *John Tyler, Champion of the Old South* (Newtown, Connecticut: American Political Biography Press, 2003), 297.
33. *Congressional Globe*. 27th Congress, Vol. 2, 762. (July 16, 1842); 852. (August 5, 1842).
34. *Ibid.*, p. 926. (August 22, 1842); p. 960. (August 27, 1842).
35. Cynthia Clark Northrup and Elaine C. Prange Turney, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Tariffs and Trade in U. S. History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2003), Vol. 3, 45-61.
36. John Niven, *Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 503.
37. William R. Brock, *Parties and Political Conscience: American Dilemmas, 1840-1850* (Millwood, New York: KTO Press, 1979), 104.
38. This fact has been substantiated in Thomas B. Alexander's *Sectional Stress and Party Strength: A Computer Analysis of Roll Call Patterns in the United States House of Representatives, 1836-1860* (Nashville Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969) and Joel H. Silbey's *The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967).

39. John S. Hekman, "The Product Cycle and New England Textiles," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 94, No. 4 (Jun, 1980), 705.
40. Samuel Batchelder, *Introduction and Early Progress of the Cotton Manufacture in the United States*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Company, 1863), 53, 59.
41. Hekman, "The Product Cycle and New England Textiles," 705.
42. United States Census, University of Virginia, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>, (accessed April 1-30, 2010).
43. Bess Beatty, *Alamance: The Holt Family and Industrialization in a North Carolina County, 1837-1900* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 25-26.
44. Robert J. Rayback, *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President* (Norwalk Connecticut: Easton Press, 1959), 127-128.
45. Stanley B. Parsons, William W. Beach, and Dan Hermann, *United States Congressional Districts, 1788-1841* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 371-372.
46. *Ibid.*, 319-320
47. *Ibid.*, 342-344.
48. This position has traditionally been asserted by Marxist writers such as John Ashworth (see *Slavery, Capitalism and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, Volume I*, 319-323) and Eugene Genovese (see *The Political Economy of Slavery*, 157, 180-185). More recently, Fred Bateman and Thomas Weiss (see *A Deplorable Scarcity*, 157-163) concluded that slaves were profitably utilized in manufacturing in the antebellum South, but planter class reluctance to more fully embrace the risks of industrialization stalled any long-term growth.
49. Thomas P. Martin, "The Advent of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 11, No. 3 (Aug, 1945), 395.
50. Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 13-14.
51. Jonathon Pincus, *Pressure Groups and Politics in Antebellum Tariffs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 9.
52. Susan B. Carter and Richard Sutch, ed., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5:510-5:511.

