

The Missouri Compromise & America's Culture of Interaction

White Nation, Under God

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Historical scholarship is traditionally dictated by perceived structures in time. These structures are often signified, though not limited, by people, places, and beliefs. The significance of discussing particular structures is, however, usually limited to what is typically noticed as an event. In order for an event to have some degree of interest to historians, it must represent something new. Either this means a modern discovery in how scholars perceive the past, or the discovery yields an understanding of human interactions that cross cultures. Culture may include ideas regarding politics, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion. Scholarly interests in historical events are piqued when these ideas are in conflict, whether contemporaneously or simply when comparing beliefs between the past and the present. Because of the individualistic nature of human beings, conflict regularly threatens unions, regardless of their size. From marital vows to political alliances, unions between people and peoples have experienced various crises and compromises that have made up the events of our historical analyses. One such event in American study is commonly referred to as the Missouri Compromise. This episode of crisis and compromise is included in every major textbook of American history, and is meant to signify the growing divide between North and South that eventually led to the Civil War. In focusing upon the differences that yielded the crisis, particularly with regard to the extension of slavery, scholars too often neglect the elements that unified the states. Though the question of slavery and the rights of states are central in the discussion of the crisis and compromise over Missouri, these factors overlook the importance of religion, race, and even gender in maintaining a unified American culture. An analysis of events surrounding the Missouri Compromise reveals that the North and South were united despite sectional rhetoric, while notions of white male superiority and heavenly blessing dominated America's early nineteenth-century culture of interaction. Although tradition dictates that compromises were made whereby both sides sacrificed internal

interests, a closer investigation into union, rather than division, helps further to explain the ideas utilized that not only calmed the storm, but postponed a civil war for forty years.

The Missouri Compromise is important to study, not because it represented some astounding change in American history, but because American historical study has made it such a significant event in antebellum sectionalism. It has become a part of America's rhetorical and cultural history. Some historians have gone as far as illustrating this event as the "greatest political crisis between the Revolution and the Civil War."¹ Such an argument is presumptuous and dismissive of so many other important events in American political history. The formation of political parties and the successive Jeffersonian Revolution were extremely charged events that led many to believe the fabric of the nation was torn in two. The War of 1812 placed partisan politics on an entirely new level, as Republican War Hawks rhetorically battled with Federalists over the validity of the war. In some ways, the partisanship that divided the nation in the second decade of the nineteenth century was worse than that experienced during the first decade of the twenty-first century over the war in Iraq. Riots erupted in Baltimore over Federalist publications denouncing the war, where "several people, including an old Federalist Revolutionary War general, were beaten to death in the streets." Then, in 1814, the five New England states sent delegates to Hartford to discuss their possible secession from the Union. They had already threatened secession three years earlier and prior to the war. It was at this later Convention of Federalists and Northerners that state authority over unconstitutional federal usurpation was affirmed.² It is not the historian's duty to place people or events in any

¹ Robert Pierce Forbes, *The Missouri Compromise and Its Aftermath: Slavery & the Meaning of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33.

² Gary B. Nash, et al., *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society Volume I To 1877*, Brief Fourth Edition (New York: Longman, 2003), 267-270; see also John Franklin Jameson, *Dictionary of United States History, 1492-1894* (Boston: Puritan Publishing Co., 1894), s.v. "secession," 585.

hierarchical order of importance, but surely these events are just as important as those surrounding the Missouri Compromise.

When historians label any event as being the “greatest” or “worst” in a particular period, it is often because crisis is emphasized over unity. The American Revolution was not about the states uniting; that crisis would come in 1787. Rather, the Revolutionary War was a crisis of grievances against the principles of liberty. So it was with the crisis over admitting Missouri into the Union. Could a nation built on individual liberty allow the perpetuation of keeping a people in bondage? Likewise, could their principles of individual state sovereignty be trampled upon by a federal government bent on preventing states from selecting their own institutions of commerce? These were not easy questions to answer, and the Missouri Compromise could most definitely be seen as a crisis in American political history. It was an event that gradually intensified beginning in 1817 and incidents in the next three or four years help to demonstrate that the severity of the crisis may not have been as harsh as scholars often propose. To illustrate the progression of crisis and compromise regarding Missouri, scholars must first turn to the seemingly simple process of incorporating states into the American Union.

The American Union was based on certain constitutional rights and governed by three branches that were established to maintain and preserve those rights. It was a union of states, hence, the *United States*. The thirteen colonies that fought in the American Revolution made up the first thirteen states, and by 1818, twenty states were represented. The admittance of new states into the Union had become a regular procedure as Americans continued to move westward. In 1817, the citizens of Missouri began their request for statehood. The House received their petitions the following year on March 16. It is interesting to note that on the day Missouri was presented to the House for statehood consideration, the delegate from Missouri,

John Scott, also “presented a petition of sundry inhabitants of the southern part of the Territory of Missouri, praying for a division of the said Territory.”³ This southern portion would later be known as the Arkansas Territory, which would also request statehood in the future. The delineation of territories, particularly with the intent to incorporate future states, was common practice in Congress since President Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory and sent Lewis and Clark to examine the land for westward expansion. One must wonder, however, why the entire Missouri Territory needed to separate for two possible states rather than entering the union as one. Was the separation of the Missouri Territory from Arkansas a maneuver to ensure a greater number of slave states in the future? We may never know all of the reasons why certain actions were taken by political individuals or groups, even when some explanations are professed, but slavery and its expansion westward was a political issue strong enough to merit much discussion during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Laws intent on gradually diminishing the institution of slavery were proposed as early as the Constitutional Convention, so it comes as no surprise that such would be put forward again at the time of Missouri’s petition. On Saturday, April 4, 1818, Arthur Livermore of New Hampshire proposed an amendment to the Constitution which would prevent slavery from expanding into any future state admitted into the American Union. “The resolution was read, and, on the question of proceeding to its consideration, it was decided in the negative.”⁴ Why Livermore presented this resolution is entirely left to speculation. A particular textbook dealing with this period suggests that “Livermore and other New Englanders feared the future population growth of additional slaveholding states in the West and South would further weaken New

³ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Fifteenth Congress – First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1854), 1392.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1676.

England's already diminishing position in Congress.”⁵ This statement, however, assumes that a division of power was only had on the account of slavery, not to mention the assumption that plans for westward expansion were limited to space below the Mason-Dixon Line. Events surrounding the War of 1812 illustrate that plenty of other issues were divisive and that New England states were less concerned about balancing power than they were with perceived constitutional principles. This yields the question as to whether slavery or power was the dominating issue, rather than slavery as power. Not much is known about Livermore other than his being a judge like his father and brother before him.⁶ According the Congressional Records, he was involved in the process of state admittance. Livermore had been one of the seven members appointed to the committee considering the admittance of Missouri as a state. Had this committee already discussed the possibility of slavery or the restriction thereof in a newly admitted state? It stands to reason that this was a consideration, and it seems Livermore decided to propose a constitutional amendment rather than attach the question to state admittance.

If the issue of slavery really had been dominated by a power ratio in Congress, Livermore must have known that his proposal was unlikely to pass. In addition, slavery was not simply to be prohibited, but was no longer to “be tolerated in any State hereafter admitted into the Union.”⁷ The use of *tolerate* can not easily be dismissed, for toleration in contemporaneous political rhetoric was often linked to religious liberty. Nine days before Livermore's proposed amendment, when Congress was discussing the Spanish American Provinces, Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky spoke of how “the principles of religious toleration and political

⁵ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., et al, *Unto a Good Land: A History of the American People Volume 1: To 1900* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 286.

⁶ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer of Grafion County, N.H. 1709-1886* (Syracuse, NY: The Syracuse Journal Company, 1886), 90-91.

⁷ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Fifteenth Congress – First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1854), 1676.

emancipation must march on steadily till the will of Him who controls the destinies of the world shall have been executed.”⁸ Clearly in Livermore’s mind, religious liberty did not promote toleration of slavery. In this era of “political emancipation” it seems difficult to place Livermore’s motivation entirely against tolerating states that could counter New England.

On the day of Livermore’s proposition to amend the constitution, the House decided it was time to consider the admission of a new state into the Union. Instead of Missouri, however, it was Illinois that was given attention. Also, instead of discussing slavery in the proposed state, roads and canals were the topic for consideration. On April 14, the Senate informed the House of their passing of the bill enabling “the people of the Illinois Territory to form a constitution and State government, and for the admission of such State into the Union on an equal footing with the original States.”⁹ The Senate attached some amendments to the bill and it was sent back into committee in the House. This was no great impediment, however, and on April 18 it was approved. There was no mention of slavery in the bill, though race and gender were factored into the equation. In Section 3 of the bill, the legal qualifications of voting were granted to “all white male citizens.”¹⁰ The incorporation of “white” and “male,” though not found in the U.S. Constitution, were regularly found in the proceedings of Congress as well as the individual state constitutions. These were points of union that required no compromise between North and South, and by the end of the year Illinois became the twenty-first state in the Union.

Missouri was all but forgotten, but now that Illinois was admitted (and as a free state for that matter), the admission of Missouri as a slave state would not change the free-to-slave state power ratio. In fact, during the entire time in which Illinois was being allowed to organize itself into a free state, one must wonder why Missouri was not given further consideration, given its

⁸ Ibid., 1559.

⁹ Ibid., 1724.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2544.

petitions at the same moment. Unfortunately, for those hoping to see Missouri added as the twenty-second state, the next admission to the Union discussed before Congress was an entirely different state. On January 12, 1819, the Senate passed “the bill to enable the people of the Alabama Territory to form a constitution and State government.”¹¹ The bill passed in the House on March 2, and by the end of the year, Alabama became the twenty-second state to enter the Union. What of Missouri during all of this? The fact that Missouri had been placed behind other petitioning states helped to bring the issues at hand into the limelight. The first item on the agenda would surely regard slavery. Of course, if slavery were such an evil, why not try and restrict it in the consideration of Alabama as a new state? Not only was Alabama admitted before Missouri, it was brought in as a slave state.

The strongest argument regarding the admittance of Alabama as a slave state came from one of the most unlikely of places. On February 13, 1819, a month after the Senate passed the bill allowing Alabama’s entrance into the Union James Tallmadge of New York presented an amendment to a bill that would grant Missouri statehood. The Tallmadge Amendment sparked the debate over Congress’ power in limiting Missouri’s legislature from drafting laws respecting the institution of slavery. Three days later, on February 16, Tallmadge addressed his reasoning behind allowing Alabama’s entrance as a slave state. “While we deprecate and mourn over the evil of slavery,” Tallmadge argued, “humanity and good morals require us to wish its abolition, under circumstances consistent with the safety of the white population.”¹² Both religion and race played an important role in decisions regarding slavery and statehood. Slavery was seen as an evil, not only against God but also against humanity. Did humanity include all races? Only to a degree; for actions were only to be taken if the circumstances provided “safety” for the “white”

¹¹ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Fifteenth Congress – Second Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1855), 121.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1203.

race. Tallmadge understood that the proximity of Alabama being surrounded by slave states would endanger whites when free blacks and slaves could live so close together, and possibly interact. America's culture of interaction was mindful of God's laws, particularly those dealing with "good" morality, but it was also a culture limited and in preference to white men.

A union between whites in the North and South was difficult to separate, though that does not mean a separation was not considered. William H. Crawford of Georgia balanced the argument of union with that of slavery, saying, "If the Union is of more importance to the South than slavery the South should immediately take measures for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, fixing a period for its final extinction."¹³ Crawford did not believe that this was possible, and as such, suggested the secession of the states if the South wished to maintain the institution of slavery. He also believed that the time was appropriate when such could happen without provoking a civil war. Statements like Crawford's help to illustrate the concern Southern leaders had over Northern aggression against their perceived rights, but it is likewise significant that union was chosen over what was believed to be a possible peaceful secession. Also, unlike the New England delegates in 1814, Southern leaders never held a convention to discuss secession. Their feelings of concern were addressed alongside their fellow white men in the North.

During the first few months of 1820, the entire country became involved in the issue concerning Missouri and slavery following two requests in December the prior year. On December 15, 1819, the Senate heard "the memorial and remonstrance of the American Convention for promoting the abolition of slavery, & [...] against the admission into the Union of any new States, which may hereafter be formed, unless on the condition that the further

¹³ Crawford quoted in W.H. Sparks, *The Memories of Fifty Years*, Fourth Edition (Philadelphia: E. Claxton & Company, 1882), 228.

introduction of slavery therein be prohibited.”¹⁴ Two weeks later, the Senate heard another memorial, only this one did not mention slavery. In a renewed petition to the Senate, Missouri’s Legislative Council placed its request in spiritual terms, “praying to be admitted into the Union as a separate and independent State.”¹⁵ It was not going to be easy to have their “prayer” answered, for religionists were not entirely in their favor. States throughout the nation, particularly in the north, sent their own memorials to be read in the Senate. Pennsylvania’s legislature sent a resolution, arguing that “the several States are invoked by the duty which they owe to the Deity, by the veneration which they entertain for the memory of the founders of the Republic, [...] to refuse to covenant with crime, and to limit the range of an evil that already hangs in awful boding over so large a portion of the Union.” Of course, to the legislators in Pennsylvania the religious consequences of allowing Missouri into the Union as a slave state were attached to racial considerations. The resolution included a three-point explanation of its consequences, saying, “they are persuaded that, to open the fertile regions of the West to a servile race, would tend to increase their numbers beyond all past example, would open a new and steady market for the lawless vendors of human flesh, and would render all schemes for obliterating this most foul blot upon the American character, useless and unavailing.” The American character, or the white race, was threatened by an increase in numbers of the black race.¹⁶

The fear of the black race living amongst God’s chosen white inheritors of America was nothing new to Congress. In between the two petitions from the American Convention and Missouri’s delegates, a message from President James Monroe was read before the Senate

¹⁴ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Sixteenth Congress – First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1855), 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

concerning the slave trade. The importation of slaves into the United States had been prohibited almost twelve years earlier, but was this because of the evil of slavery? If it had, slavery would also have been abolished. With additional acts passed regarding the prohibition of the slave trade, President Monroe took it upon himself to ensure Congress that he was fulfilling the requirement “on the Executive to cause all negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, who may be taken under the act, to be removed to Africa.” Why would the United States commit itself to such expenditures in shipping slaves back to Africa rather than simply selling them to the highest bidder in other slave-owning countries in the Americas, like Brazil? Monroe understood “the obvious import of the law, that none of the persons thus taken should remain within the United States; and no place, other than the coast of Africa.” America’s move to abolish the slave trade seems much less noble if we are to believe that the act was stimulated by fears of too many blacks. Nevertheless, this fear seems to have been a factor when considering the extension of slavery to the west.¹⁷ America’s leaders in 1820 felt just as Thomas Jefferson did in 1787 when he wrote of the inferiority of the black race. Not only were blacks inferior to whites in Jefferson’s mind, their inferiority threatened whites if the races were ever to mix. “When freed,” Jefferson argued, “he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”¹⁸

The battle over Missouri reached a climax when Maine came up for statehood consideration and a measure was proposed to link the two. On January 14, 1820, the Senate resumed its consideration of attaching Missouri to the Maine bill, whereupon Senator Barbour of Virginia spoke in favor of allowing Missouri its right to “self-government – the choicest blessing of Heaven to human kind.” Barbour maintained this kind of religious rhetoric throughout his speech. To him, it was not a political matter. “We are pledged by the most solemn sanctions of

¹⁷ Ibid., 30.

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1788), 154.

our religion,” he argued, “to reject the mediated restrictions on Missouri; the Constitution, which we have sworn to support, forbids it.” To what was Senator Barbour bound; the Constitution or religion? To him and others like him, these were most likely inseparable in their configurations of America’s civil religion.¹⁹

Although the attachment of Missouri to the Maine Bill sparked controversy, it was secondary to the issue of slavery, which, through race, was also attached to this national religion. On February 17, 1820, the House debated for hours concerning the validity of placing restrictions, like those against slavery, on an admittance bill. After listening to an hour on each side presented by Representatives Simkins of South Carolina and Dennison of Pennsylvania, Mr. Tyler from Virginia stood to speak, having been absent in previous debates due to ill health. Tyler was astounded that division in Congress was no longer centered along party lines, but was now geographical in nature. “The republican of the North has now turned his back on the republican of the South,” he said. This statement lends greater criticism to the power-ratio argument. In politics, parties typically vie against each other for power, but in a North-South debate, this was now a moral issue that, to Northerners, required an immediate solution. It was an issue of morality to Tyler and his associates in the South as well. Tyler called for justice based on constitutional principles and liberty based on the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration had been used with argument against slavery, and Tyler accepted the principle “that all men are, by nature, equally free, sovereign, and independent.” Nevertheless, “distinctions will exist,” he argued, including “virtue and vice, wealth and poverty, industry and idleness.” What did any of this have to do with the issue of slavery versus liberty? According to Tyler, Congress had not the power to “obliterate those distinctions in society which society itself

¹⁹ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Sixteenth Congress – First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1855), 106.

engenders and gives birth to.” Congress was in danger of interpreting liberty as license, wherein the rule of law would collapse and the states in danger of reliving the guillotine of the French Revolution. If this were to happen, America would not only fight against itself but God, just as France “fought even with the Creator, and mocked at the immutable truth of religion.” As far as Tyler was concerned, the separation between the races was a natural consequence both of society and the way God created the world. Abolishing slavery could not remove the vice, poverty, or idleness of the black race. “If we cannot raise the black man up to the level with the white – and that we have not the constitutional power to do so none here have denied – let us raise, at least, the white man up to this level. Extend an equality of rights to the people of Missouri.” Of course, by people he meant white males.²⁰

The rhetoric surrounding the Missouri Crisis was not limited to Congress, either. James Madison was in regular contact with President Monroe concerning the issue. In fact, before Tyler had mentioned the geographical nature of the politics, Madison and Monroe had already discussed “dividing the Republicans of the North from those of the South.” In addition, Madison wrote in this letter on February 10, 1820, concerning the issues regarding “migration or importation” of slaves and whether or not Congress had the authority to prohibit slavery in future states. According to Madison, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 showed “there was no mode in which Congress could check the evil, but the indirect one of narrowing the space open for the reception of slaves. Had a federal authority then existed to prohibit directly & totally the importation from abroad,” Madison asked, “can it be doubted that it would have been exerted?”²¹ Madison believed that slavery was an evil, but his rhetoric concerning abolition was not always limited to religion or morality. In a response to Frances Wright’s *A Plan for the gradual*

²⁰ Ibid., 1382-1384.

²¹ Gaillard Hunt (editor), *The Writings of James Madison*, Volume IX: 1819-1836 (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1910), 21-23.

abolition of Slavery in the United States without danger or loss to the Citizens of the South, Madison wrote on September 1, 1825 addressing “the magnitude of this evil” and “a satisfactory remedy for it.” Turning from religion to race, Madison wrote that the difficulty of abolition was “vastly augmented by the physical peculiarities of those held in bondage, which preclude their incorporation with the white population.” Madison applauded Wright’s suggestions, particularly in “that it contemplates the removal of those emancipated, either to a foreign or distant region.”²² Just as abolition of the slave trade required the removal of the black race, so did abolition of slavery itself.

This study has purposefully avoided sectional rhetoric found in the Congressional debates concerning Missouri. Politicians regularly utilized this threat of disunion for the first generation of the United States, and the crisis over Missouri was not immune to this language. Senator Barbour recognized “some who are ready to make the sacrifice” of secession, though he admitted that when it came to voting to secede, he was “not ready to perform.”²³ Threats of secession are found in the debates of Congress as early as 1811 by Federalists opposing war, and continued thereafter. The Tariff Bill of 1824 sparked considerable debate as Mr. Randolph of Virginia spoke out against it as a threat to the Union. “There is no magic in this word *union*,” he said, following up by comparing union to marriage. “Marriage itself is a good thing, but the marriages of Mezentius were not so esteemed. The marriage of Sinbad, the sailor, with the curse of his deceased wife, was a union; and just such a union will this be, if, by a bare majority in both Houses, this bill shall become a law.” In an 1826 judicial bill, the marriage between the “Old Thirteen” and “New States” was once again threatened in a debate that Representative Burgess

²² Ibid., 224-225.

²³ Joseph Gales (editor), *Annals of The Congress of the United States: Sixteenth Congress – First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1855), 108.

argued “will bring us a profound discourse on the probable disunion of these States.”²⁴ In the year prior to the Nullification Crisis, “disunion and nullification were instantly made the watchword, and every yelper of a particular cast immediately joined in the cry.”²⁵ With all these instances of sectional rhetoric, it comes as no surprise that such political jargon was used concerning the crisis over Missouri.

As movement among Americans increased in the nineteenth century, the forces of nationalism and sectionalism naturally grew. As William R. Steckel explains, “In a nation as large as the United States, the geography was a matter of different and distinctive regions. As those regions became more densely settled and their cultures more highly developed, regions evolved into ‘sections.’” Steckel points to Stuart Chase’s *Rich Land, Poor Land* to show how regions and sections differ, the first providing the geographic basis for economic planning and the latter yielding politics based on economy and culture. Steckel concludes, “Sectionalism, thus, is a centrifugal force in a nation” while nationalism plays the “centripetal force.”²⁶ In other words, the concerns during the Constitutional debates regarding the possibility of a republic surviving over a vast geographic area were only logically revisited as the nation continued to grow over regions, thus creating additional sections or states. Sectionalism, therefore, will always threaten unions, but in order for political unions to survive, a centripetal force is required. To Steckel that force was nationalism, at least until the Civil War, but given the unity of religious, racial, and gendered rhetoric, this theory is either challenged or changed. Perhaps religion, race, and gender were all factors within nineteenth century American nationalism. The

²⁴ Thomas Hart Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress, from 1789 to 1856*, Vol. VIII (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1860), 15 & 629.

²⁵ Joseph Gales & William Winston Seaton (editors), *Register of Debates in Congress*, Volume VII (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1831), 655, 658, & 660.

²⁶ Alexander De Conde, et al, *Patterns in American History*, Vol. I (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), 220.

root wherein nationalism is derived is *nat*, meaning nature, and religion, race, and gender were naturally constructed according to nineteenth century rhetoric. Even other words associated with nationalism illustrate these connections. For instance, patriotism and patriarchy are both derived from the same root, thus suggesting national loyalty to be male-centered. While sectionalism may have threatened the American Union, feelings of patriotism and nationalism were fostered by religious, racial, and gendered rhetoric.

Sectionalism may have created the Missouri Compromise as an “event,” but the harmony that was shared in a religious, racial, and gendered union places this event in an entirely new light. A crisis of division existed and a compromise was made, but religion, race, and gender constructs required no compromise at all. Despite this union of interests, and their role in maintaining America’s union in 1820, scholars still emphasize division and compromise. This single event, to some, indicated the first moment when southerners felt a national consciousness outside of the American Union as a whole. Others would argue that a southern distinctiveness existed as early as 1789, or even earlier. The motivation in seeking the beginnings of a separate southern identity is clearly in tracing America’s path to the Civil War. Often the intent is to understand what factors held greater importance in dividing the states. Was it social, economic, or political differences that divided the South from the North? Arguably all of the above varied, not only from North to South, but even from state to state. Differences in cultures exist on every level and between every individual and state, yet the states remained united for four more decades after Missouri’s admittance. Culture is about interaction between these differences and within a culture similarities emerge. Ideas about an American civil religion, white racial favoritism, or patriarchy are not new to historical scholarship, but by approaching crises in the context of union rather than division, we are able to view additional constructs within the society

and culture. In the case of Missouri, we find that religion, race, and gender were intrinsically linked within political rhetoric. By understanding this “spiritual” union, scholars can better understand why other instances of America’s culture of interaction include notions of gender, race, and class within a framework that recognizes a “natural” Creator of the American Union.

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