



HENRY CLAY'S TRAVELS

1830 - 1852

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*References used are primarily from Robert Remini's writings of Henry Clay. Page numbers documented are from Remini's book, "Henry Clay - Statesman for the Union".

Henry Clay's Travels, 1830 – 1852

By Charlie Muntz

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1827

- "Went campaigning"...
- Swung over to Baltimore to attend an affair in his honor after which he went to Virginia to speak at several dinners. (Page 328)

1828

- Goes to Philadelphia to consult with celebrated Dr. Phillip S. Physick and a Dr. Chapman who advised him to relax and escape for a while from public cares and duties.

1829

- Stopped at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. At 52 he is ready to hang it up. (Page 335)
- Back to Ashland, he found the "house and grounds out of repair but less so than he had anticipated. He thought he could put it all back in shape in a relatively short period of time".
- Clay told friends, "Travelling is conducive to my health". (Page 348)
- He did a 3-week tour of Kentucky and spent much of September 1829 on the "hustings". In Russellville and Hopkinsville, he spoke for 3 hours to no less than 3,000 each place (barbeques, dinners, balls, etc.) (Page 353)

1830

Tour of the South (a section of the country NOT particularly happy with his American System)

(1830 continued)

- He left in mid-January and returned in mid- March. Clay thought a short stay in Mississippi and Louisiana would give him a better feel for the political climate in the lower South and the extent of its opposition to the tariff and internal improvements. He could also visit with Anne Brown Clay Erwin, and his sons-in-law James Irwin and Martin Duralde. Lucretia didn't go. (Page 358)
- Clay thoroughly enjoyed his short holiday. He spoke to the Louisiana Legislature and had a public dinner in Natchez. He also purchased a 5-acre plot along the Mississippi river across from Baton Rouge.
- "During his southern tour he went partying almost every night, gambled at whist, danced with the ladies, gossiped about politics, drank more than he should, and generally had a "smoking good time". Several of the ladies he met during this visit became lifelong friends.
- The 2nd week of March he moves on to Natchez, where he delivered a widely reported speech at the Mississippi Hotel to a huge crowd almost equaling that for General Lafayette 5 years before. One merchant bolted the gate to Mt. Repose and swore he would never open it until Clay was elected President. (This trip enormously encouraged Clay to pursue his ambitions for the Presidency).
- Back home on March 26th.
- So, from January through March 26th, 1830, Clay goes to New Orleans and Natchez and decides on no trip to the North in the summer. Daniel Webster agrees: "I advise you, as you will be much watched, to stay at home". (Page 360)
- Peter Porter begged him to come to New York to address the issue of Masonry. He wrote him a letter: "In regard to Masonry, I have heretofore freely expressed my feeling to you. I never was a bright Mason."

(1830 continued)

- He planned to spend the winter in New Orleans with Lucretia: "My purpose is to live there in great retirement whilst we stay." He truly loved the Crescent City and sometimes recommended it as one of the best places to live in the United States, except, of course, during the summer."
- Clay had a 137-acre farm, Clay's Prairie, on Illinois side of the Wabash River near Terre Haute, Indiana.
- He had business regarding the estate of Lucretia's sister, Nancy Brown, following her death. He had been designated as one of her executors. (Page 368)

Winter of 1830-31

- Clay left Lexington on Dec 20th with Lucretia, and grandson Henry C Duralde. Their daughter Anne had preceded them by a few weeks. They traveled by boat down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and took up residence with Martin Duralde at his home two miles from the city. "They stayed in the area for a little more than two months, and Clay reported that his wife's health benefitted enormously by passing the winter in the Deep South and that he, too, felt tolerably well." They returned to Lexington in late March, 1831.

1832

- After leaving Washington in July Clay visited Madison and vacationed at White Sulphur Springs. He is home on August 25th.
- Lucretia's mother dies in 1832.
- Nov 28, 1832 Clay leaves Ashland for Washington without Lucretia and got there December 9th. He is taking James, who is now 15, to Boston to attend school.

(1832 continued)

- On December 13th, he goes to Philadelphia where he ran into Webster. He stayed there 3 weeks, while residing with brother-in-law, James Brown. He "consulted with a number of men about what should be done regarding the tariff question". He ran his ideas of eventual abandonment of tariff by these Philadelphia industrialists. The Compromise of 1833 was pretty much developed in Philadelphia.

1833

- Clay planned a Tour of the North and East for the summer of 1833, but a cholera outbreak in Lexington prevented that.
- He left Ashland on Sept 26th, with Lucretia, John, grandson, Henry C. Duralde, and two servants. By early October, he was in Baltimore, then on to Philadelphia, New York, Providence, Boston, Charleston, Worcester, Hartford, Springfield, Northampton, Pittsfield, Albany, New York and back to Baltimore.
- Everywhere he went: "I am taken possession of, wherever I go, in spite of my remonstrances." "Lodgings and every luxury are provided us at public expense."
- In New York City he was mobbed and escorted by 100 gentlemen on horseback to the American Hotel and showered by so many gifts that it became an embarrassment. He declined all public dinners. He was given honors at Brown University. He was paraded around the streets of Boston in the rain and visited John Quincy Adams in Quincy. He played to the crowds. Adams said, "Mr. Clay has mounted that hobby horse often, and rides him very hard."
- Clay loved it! "It was a long, tiring, exhilarating, and profitable tour." During his tour he purchased:
 - 5 jackasses (one cost \$1000)
 - 22 sheep

(1833 continued)

- Durham short-horned bull and Heifer
- 4 English cattle given to him and 3 that he purchased
- He got to Washington in late November.

1834

- Lucretia is very sick. Clay was in a stagecoach accident in Virginia while returning home. "...horses pulled off the front wheels and dashed away with the driver in pursuit". The coach fell on a young man and killed him. "Clay returned to Ashland to spend a relatively quiet summer, tending his wife and the operation of his farm."

1839

- Clay decided to tour the Great Lakes Area, view Niagara Falls, and traverse the Empire State, as well as visit Montreal and Quebec. "Early in the spring, he notified his New York supporters of his intentions that he planned an extensive trip through their State and a brief visit to Canada."
- Not politically motivated? Yeah, right! He really wanted to see this territory... "So Clay decided to take the trip and appear in public, protesting all the while that it was a personal and private excursion. "At least it would allow him to gauge popular reaction to his appearances."
- He started in early July with James (Lucretia and Henry Jr. didn't go with him).
- In Ohio, William Henry Harrison said in a letter, "Knowing your great admiration of female beauty, you must have been highly gratified by your reception."

(1839 continued)

- He gets to New York and starts making speeches. July 13th at Niagara Falls he stayed almost a week. In Buffalo, he was given a tremendous reception and dinner and delivered a number of speeches. He spoke of compromise, concession, and the Union.
- He visited Lockport, Rochester, Canandaigua, Oswego, and stopped at Auburn to see Gov. William H. Seward. He stayed all night with him where he met some local politicians. Seward had conveniently absented himself.
- He toured Saltworks, and the Erie Canal, and met with politicians. Everywhere he appeared, he encountered enthusiastic demonstrations from the masses of people who came out to see him.
- He finally escaped into Canada, "where he found the respite and freedom that had been denied him in his own country". He visited Montreal, Quebec, and Burlington.
- He left New England by boat and carriage and lodged at Lake George.
- He moved on to Saratoga Springs on Aug. 9th. It was the meridian of the "Saratoga Season". Extremely wealthy Whigs planned this for the elite. A musical band led a 1½ mile parade where they marched to the United States Hotel. Ladies were everywhere in front of the hotel. Clay spoke for more than an hour (too long for such an occasion). "That evening the most splendid ball was given that was ever witnessed here." 800 people came to a great banquet to pay respects to Prince Hal. A larger collection of distinguished men and women had probably never been assembled in the Country before. Van Buren, Scott, and Clay not only stayed at the United States Hotel, but occupied rooms on the same floor and relatively close to one another".
- Then he was on to Troy, Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, Newburg, and New York City. He used a back-and-forth with the crowd that he would also do in the 1842 barbeque in Dayton (back-

(1839 continued)

and-forth, question and answer routine). He also used a snuffbox (as a prop) in his speeches.

- He ends this trip in New York City. He went to the Astor House where "all Broadway was jammed with spectators". He spoke at the Astor House while attending the Bowery Theater that night. "Except for the reception for Lafayette in 1824, it was the grandest reception yet given to a visiting dignitary".
- Then he was on to Brooklyn. There was a huge banner across Fulton Street which said "Henry Clay, Welcome to Brooklyn". In New York, "he put on display the full range of his charm, wit, affability, social graciousness, and personal charms". During this New York visit, Clay attended a reception of several hundred women at the American Institute. He rather enjoyed these special treats. His reputation with ladies was well known, and they greeted him on his arrival with "shouts of joy and congratulations". One "beautiful young girl" then presented him with a bouquet of flowers and a snuffbox made from the timbers of "Old Ironsides".
- He made several stops in New Jersey on the way to Philadelphia.
- Sept. 1839, amid crowds, Clay was taken to Independence Square. He was so tired he wondered if they would let him go on to the hotel. He came out on his balcony to say a few words and managed to get through all the Philadelphia activities without incident.
- Then he was on to Baltimore. Yet again, there was a large crowd. He was paraded through the streets and welcomed at City Hall by the mayor. He gave a 30-minute speech.
- The "Campaign Tour", supposedly a personal and private vacation, was a total success. He stayed at White Sulphur Springs on the way home. (Page 544)

1840

- On February 13, just as Clay was about to set out on his 10-day trip to Richmond, he received word that daughter-in-law, Julia had died just two weeks after the birth of Thomas Julian Clay. He realized that Lucretia's responsibilities would increase with 3 additional grandchildren to look after. Despite this tragedy and his overwhelming sense of grief, Clay decided to go to Richmond after all in the hopes that the journey and new scenes would help him "forget my sorrows." Besides, extensive arrangements had been made for his reception, and he felt that he could not disappoint his friends. But it was a mistake. Julia intruded on his thoughts, "and if our severe bereavement had not have forced its consideration upon me continually, I should have enjoyed the trip very much."
- During this trip he returned to Hanover County, the site of his birth. He hadn't been there in 48 years. There were no markers for his father's or grandfather's graves. The house was standing but was altered. He did recognize the room where he was born, and he saw the church where he went to school for 2 years.
- Nashville, August 1840 Clay had been invited to the Harrison Rally. Clay may have accepted the invitation as a "wicked desire" to torment Andrew Jackson. He had received an invite from 350 ladies of Nashville. "That, of course, could not be withstood."
- "After a month-long rest at Ashland, Clay and Senator John Crittenden took the relatively short 200-mile trip from Lexington to Nashville in August, where they stopped off regularly to speak to crowds that immediately gathered when they learned of Clay's presence." He still suffered from hoarseness, which worsened each time he spoke outdoors. About 20 miles outside Nashville, a committee met and greeted him. "...and when he got to within 2 miles of the city a prodigious escort, both military and civil, on horseback, in carriages, and on foot, with music bands met them. It was one of the largest and longest processions he had ever witnessed, he told Lucretia." They rode through the streets and was received "with the greatest enthusiasm, amidst the roar of cannon, the ringing of bells, and martial music."

(1840 continued)

- He spoke to the Nashville Convention on August 17th. The event was much anticipated in view of the fact that Gen. Andrew Jackson sat grumbling in his home at the Hermitage only a few miles away. This seemed to rouse and excite the Old Coon. His hoarseness "all but disappeared". With wit, sarcasm, and spirit he attacked Jackson. Jackson was livid when he heard the remarks and sent a reply to the Nashville Union. "The Kentuckian returned home after his Nashville appearance much renewed in strength and spirit." During the last 9 months he had been with his family only about 4 weeks. (Page 566)

1841

- Harrison visits Clay at Ashland. In late March, 1841, stung by criticism of Harrison, (to further communicate with him, not in person, but in writing), Clay storms home, but "the two men never saw each other again". Clay, so pissed, that his distress and anger and frustration crashed down on top of him. He suffered a physical collapse. He remained in Baltimore a week, or more, regaining his energies, enough to drag himself to Ashland, where he knew he could get the rest and quiet he so desperately needed. He got better, but he did not think his strength would be fully restored until the onset of warm weather.
- **NOTE:** Clay is 64 in 1841, and not well. He has lost 2 elections and failed to get the nomination in a for-sure-year, 1840. He seriously thought of retirement. He returns to Washington on Dec. 5th, 1841 and then suffers another physical breakdown, starting with a very bad cold. This was followed with a mysterious swelling of his upper lip and nose. Colleagues said he suddenly looked old. With his energies drained, he absented himself frequently from the Senate and took exceedingly diminished roles in the proceedings. He accepted no committee assignments and several times postponed major speeches. Quite ill throughout this mild winter, on March 24, 1842, after giving a 3-hour speech the day before, may have suffered a heart attack. (Page 601)

1842

- Clay retires from the Senate on March 31, 1842. He invites Martin Van Buren to Ashland "and make it your headquarters". He spends a month after his retirement in Washington.
- There was a great reception at Maysville and a committee accompanied him all the way to Lexington. He took a short vacation at Blue Licks.
- In May, Van Buren spends 4 or 5 days at Ashland.
- On June 9th, 1842 there was a Big Barbeque in Lexington with about 15,000 in attendance and 300-400 carriages. Clay didn't want the 1844 nomination to slip away as he had in 1840. "Since he no longer held public office, he needed a forum to advance his policies and ideas, and so he carefully selected several places in which....." Some thought Clay should "be caged", and not speak out. "He swore he would keep cool and stay at home". Judge Porter hoped his Lexington Barbeque speech would be his last, but Clay knew how good he was at speaking. "If only the entire electorate could hear him, he could sweep the next election (1844)". So, he broke his promise and agreed to a series of public meetings at Dayton, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis (of course, again, he denied any politics, he had just previously promised to visit there).
- Senator Crittenden (still his bud), went with him. His route attracted large crowds. He stopped in Maysville to speak. "Unfortunately, he could sometimes be carried away and end up speaking for several hours."
- "Big Whig Dig" Sept 29, 1842. 100,000 to 200,000 people attended. Clay was nominated for President. "In this speech, he orchestrated responses from the audience, getting them to respond "yes" or "no" or "the people" to appropriate questions. Otherwise, he repeated many of the themes of his Lexington Barbeque speech."

(1842 continued)

- Then on October 1, at Richmond, Indiana, Quaker, Hiram Mendenhall presented a petition to free his slaves. Clay was adroit and quick-witted in his response.
- He noted that inequality existed everywhere.
- The races are different and can never be joined together.
- Gradual emancipation is the answer.
- "Ask Charles, my personal servant, how I treat my slaves?"
- Are you willing to cough up \$15,000 for their benefit?
- "Go home and mind your own business, Mr. Mendenhall, and leave other people to take care of theirs."
- October 5th, four days later he spoke at an Indianapolis Bar-B-Que in front of 80,000 people. He got some boos for a put-down of Jackson.
- At Columbus, Indiana, he gets incensed by a man who introduced him and said, "Hurray for Jackson". "But despite the harassment he encountered in Indiana, the exposure and opportunity to express his ideas and principles strengthened his position as Presidential front-runner of the Whig Party" for 1844.
- Webster told his supporters in Massachusetts, that Clay "has no degree of reasonable prospect of being elected."
- To New Orleans. Clay left Lexington in early December and stopped off at Natchez after a fatiguing journey down the Mississippi River. "Aboard the steamboat, he resorted to books, to music, to the company of ladies, and sometimes to cards..." (Page 622)

(1842 continued)

- Clay has money problems. Thomas Hart Clay had failed in a bagging and rope manufacturing venture. He had advanced him \$30,000 by mortgaging Ashland. During this trip he tried to collect debts due him, secure contracts for bagging and rope remaining in the company's inventory. He attended to legal matters and tried to raise additional funds from political supporters and business associates. But times were hard in New Orleans.
- "On his arrival in the Crescent City, he was greeted with a salute of 100 guns from the Place d'Armes. Then a great procession escorted him to the home of Dr. William N. Mercer, where he was to reside during his visit (834 Canal). In the evening he was given a dinner at the St. Charles Exchange."
- During his time there, he thought about traveling to Cuba after leaving New Orleans but wanted to get back to Lexington for Thomas' auction. A man fired a shot into the room in court where Clay argued a case. He saw all the power brokers in the region, and visited Baton Rouge, Mobile, Vicksburg, Jackson, and Memphis where he attended numerous parties and receptions.
- Probably, this visit set into motion the gifts that secured Ashland.
- "The receptions truly delighted him and raised his spirits." "If pomp and parade, and displays of extravagant enthusiasm by Democrats as well as Whigs, by women as well as men and boys, could afford me gratification, I had enough of it. God knows I was gratified, although often much wearied."
- By the time he headed home, "he had developed "strong hopes, and a pretty confident belief" that he could win Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi in the Presidential election of 1844".
- "Although several of his advisors urged him to keep his mouth shut and stay home and tend to his cattle and hemp, Clay decided to take another campaign swing during the winter months (but avoiding the

(1842 continued)

- appearance of electioneering tours)". This trip would take him through the Southeast of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. It would benefit his health by getting him into warmer climates and escaping the severity of a Kentucky winter. He could always justify it by claiming prior acceptances of invitations to visit these states, which was true.
- He planned to go to New Orleans on business in winter, and from there to Mobile. From there he would take the southern route through Georgia and South Carolina to the northern states. He wanted to restrict his appearances to just a couple of rallies in each state. He did not want to be forced to make public speeches. "I never had any taste for them, intellectually, and they are physically very prostrating."
- "To lock up the South and add it to the West and New England, Pennsylvania and some of the other Middle Atlantic States, where Clay felt relatively secure would produce a landslide in the electoral college."
- Clay said, "...the victory next year will dim the splendor of that of 1840. That is my cool judgment. You know I am never warm", he facetiously added.
- He also wanted this route because he had never been to visit these Southeast states before, and he claimed that there were two places in the United States he earnestly wished to see. "One is the Eastern shore of Virginia", and the other the Island of Nantucket.

1843 - into 1844

- Clay arrived in New Orleans on Dec. 23rd for his 5th visit there (1819, 1829-30, 1830-31, 1842-43, 1843-44). He stayed again with Dr. William Mercer (spent 2 months there) near St. Charles Hotel, "taking

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

care of his business, gossiping with politicians, and delighting the New Orleans' belles, (but met and talked to traders re: protective tariff). (Page 632)

- "...he shuttled up and down the river to Natchez and stayed with William St. John Elliot (spreading the idea that he was a "compromise man". He also favored a judicious tariff". On this trip, New Orleans economy was doing better. He talked of the 1842 tariff bringing the nation out of Depression, also of business. These were old and shopworn issues, but people were tired of hearing about them (economic issues of bank, tariff, and internal improvements had lost their ability to excite and agitate the electorate). Increasingly, they are turning to expansion, in particular the annexation of Texas. Manifest Destiny was the newest slogan to excite the electorate.
- Clay put aside the annexation of Texas, "So, as he began his extended tour through the Southeast, he spoke about nothing but his American System. Several times he had to apologize to his audiences for repeating ideas and arguments they had heard from him a thousand times before. He persisted in haranguing them about something they did not especially want to hear. Only his great oratorical and histrionic powers kept them from yawning in his face."
- Just before leaving New Orleans, he gets word that 42 Senators had advised Tyler they would confirm a Treaty of Annexation. (Page 634-635)
- Secretary of State, Upshaw is killed in an explosion aboard the USS Princeton. John C. Calhoun is made Secretary of State. He helps with the annexation and with it the expansion of territory open to slavery. Tyler had out-manuevered Clay. Annexation was no longer academic but real and "most alarmingly political". About the time he leaves New Orleans for Mobile (Feb. 24th), Clay begins to consider whether he should write a public statement of his views on the subject. Friends said, "No, hold your tongue".

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

- "When Clay arrived in Mobile the day after his departure from New Orleans, he stayed at the home of Dr. Henry LeVert and his charming wife, Octavia, who gave him a "splendid ball". He stayed a week with them while recovering from a bad cold he had contracted in New Orleans.
- He then moves onto Montgomery and Columbus. "My greatest difficulty is to restrain the enthusiasm of my friends and to avoid the entertainments which they are pressing me to accept." Son, John had joined him in New Orleans. Charles Dupuy was with them. They stayed at the home of Mrs. Thomas F. Foster in Columbus where he made speeches. At Milledgeville while suffering from a fresh cold, he was introduced by Gov. George Walker Crawford. He told the crowd that Crawford had been his first choice in the 1824 election until his stroke made his candidacy impossible. Being forced to convey his gratitude led to comments of his positions on various national issues. He speaks to Georgians regarding Cherokee issues. (Page 636) He writes that he's drawn out to make speeches of over an hour "in the open air, and I find unless I stop I shall get the Bronchitis. I am now as hoarse as a circuit rider."
- Clay arrives in Savannah on March 21st. He gave a two-hour speech at Pulaski House (mostly regarding business). He talked of Democrats who sought to poison public minds against him. He said he wouldn't "bear away any of the fair daughters of Georgia, whom he saw in front of him" even if he could. After all, he had as estimable wife at home, with whom he was sufficiently blest already.
- He writes to Crittenden that he has gotten two letters in response to his queries about Texas and is thinking of going public. He thought he could make a statement saying, "I think I can treat the question". Again, his arrogance and presumption came into full play and that his views would bring harmony and peace.
- Then on to Augusta. By this time, he is strained from all the receptions, dinners, BBQ's and balls he had attended, to say nothing

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

of the many speeches he had made. He cancelled visits to Madison and Greensboro.

- In Columbia, South Carolina he had begged his friends to dispense with parades, meetings, and receptions - and NO public speeches. "I find I must restrain the excitement to which I am constantly exposed. Quiet, quiet, quiet, is my greatest want." He rested several days at the home of William C Preston, President of the College of South Carolina. Then, accompanied by Preston and Wade Hampton, he moved on to Charleston.
- In Charleston, South Carolina "...he was welcomed and received the city's highest demonstrations of respect and homage". There was a firing of guns, a line of marchers, and a schooner rigged boat. He was escorted to a theater to meet the "Ladies" of the city and gave a two-hour speech, which induced "enthraling attention". A dinner and ball at the Charleston Hotel followed.
- On to Wilmington and then Raleigh, the City of Oaks. He arrived in Raleigh on his 67th birthday (April 12th) at 6:00PM. There were bands and 10,000 to 15,000 who greeted him. "Never, while we live, do we expect to see again as proud a day...as Saturday last. Ten thousand Whigs, some say fifteen, forsaking their homes and businesses...were here in Raleigh...with banners and badges and other insignia of the Whig Party, to welcome their great leader and the country's benefactor - Henry Clay." Then they escorted him to the home of Governor John Moreland.
- The next morning, he gave a major speech on Whig principles from the platform at the Capitol, after which he attended a Bar-B-Q where he was actually mobbed. In desperation, he made for a tree and braced his back against it. He turned to the crowd, "Ah, you have tree'd the Old Coon at last". The crowd, happy and inebriated, then responded

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

with repeated cheers for the "Old Coon", the "Bright Star of the West".

- "Again and again, along the route through Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, Clay was received with tumultuous enthusiasm, but the climax came when he arrived at Raleigh on the evening of April 12, 1844. ...It was an imposing welcome, and the hearts of his followers beat high with joy, but the perspective of history tinges the event with melancholy. The sacrificial victim was being crowned with flowers. The following morning, Clay conducted to the Capitol, where he received an ovation and spoke to the great crowd. Then came a monster Bar-B-Que, where 7,000 pounds of meat were turning on the spirits. When Clay appeared at the Bar-B-Q, the crowd rushed toward him. The 67-year-old Statesman was in danger of being overwhelmed, but he made for a tree and braced his back against it." (Van Deusen) (Page 364-365). Then he turned to the mob, his wit at the ready. "Ah! You have tree'd the old Coon at last." (Remini, Pg 638)
- The day before Clay left Raleigh, he sat down and according to tradition, he wrote the "Raleigh letter" on April 17, while seated under two great white oaks on East North Street. Annexation, he said, had not been called for by any general expression of public opinion; it was dangerous to the integrity of the Union; it was financially inexpedient because it would mean assumption of Texas debt - at least 13 million dollars' and it involved certain war with Mexico and possibly war with European powers. For these reasons, he stood opposed "at the present time" to the acquisition of Texas.
- In this letter he reviewed the history of the U.S. relations with Texas. Annexation and war with Mexico are identical. It would vastly benefit the slaveholding South and disturb the balance of political power. Also, the U.S. would have to assume \$13 million in debt. (Page 639)
- Petersburg, Norfolk, and Portsmouth.

(1843 – into 1844 continued)

- "I swear, that I was born in the Shashes of Old Hanover! I am (he said proudly), a native of Virginia, and I will continue to be a native-born citizen of the proud Commonwealth...". (Page 642)
- On May 7, 1844, the Frankfort Commonwealth said, "Mr. Clay, undoubtedly, is infinitely the most popular man in America and he certainly is the greatest of American orators and Statesmen".
- He got to Washington on the "steamboat", Osceola, on April 26, just prior to the publication of his Raleigh Letter. "He was convinced victory would be his. He claimed Whigs would win in Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia. In fact, the Democratic candidate for President, Polk, took every one of them. Of the 6 states he visited on this tour, only one, North Carolina, voted Whig".
- Due to a "sense of delicacy and propriety", Clay declined coming to the convention in Baltimore to accept their nomination. Clay said of Polk, "His only regret, with a touch of arrogance, is that persons more worthy of a contest with us had not been selected".
- Clay wanted to go on the offensive, "But he understood the role he must play. He must return to Ashland and act like the senior statesman everyone knew him to be and keep absolutely quiet, allowing the managers of the Whig party to direct the campaign". The mudslinging began at once.
- Clay was accused of being a:
 - Sabbath breaker
 - Profane swearer
 - Gambler
 - Common Drunkard
 - Perjurer
 - Duelist
 - Thief
 - Robber

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

- Adulterer
 - Man Stealer
 - Slave Holder
 - Murderer
-
- Along with the Corrupt Bargain charge, it charged that he advocated "free trade" and that Polk supported protective tariff which was totally opposite of the truth. He was also denounced as a man without religious affiliation. "Reports circulated that Clay regularly attended horse races on Sabbath in D.C. and that he had bet and won \$1,000 on one such race". Further, it was stated that Clay had taken his Senate seat at 29, in violation of the Constitution. There were also tales that Clay had gambled onboard the steamboat from Wheeling to Maysville every time he returned from Washington - without exception. (Page 649-650)
 - One revolting pamphlet, "Henry Clay's Moral Fitness for the Presidency", stated: "The history of Mr. Clay's debaucheries and midnight revelries in Washington is too shocking, too disgusting to appear in public print". It criticized Clay's shift on business "a man without principle" who would shift position on any question to turn a vote.
 - In Amos Kendall's attacks he alleged that Clay manipulated laws to reshape society to make government an "Aristocracy of Wealth". "Clay's excessive habits of drinking, swearing, and card playing testify to his immorality". "A hundred years hence...Andrew Jackson will as far outshine Henry Clay...as the bright sun...outshines the pale moon".
 - Abolitionists attacked his 1842 response to Mendenhall and took particular offense over Clay's statements and rebuke to Hiram Mendenhall.
 - It was circulated that he had won several hundred dollars at gaming tables at Blue Licks (when he went for a few days rest in August), instead of taking the waters as he claimed.

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

- Clay returned to Ashland in late May 1844. Throughout the remainder of the campaign, he put in many exhausting hours of mental labor answering countless letters, etc.
- (See page 657 - crazy rhymes) Election 1844
- "The gloss is worn off of Clay" (?) If nothing else, Clay had the women's vote, but they couldn't vote. "Our ladies are all Clay men" in prepared banners and badges. "What a pity for the Old Coon that it took another 70 and more years before passage of the 19th amendment gave women the right to vote".
- "Personally, I could have no objection to the 1st Alabama Letter dated July 1, 1844 regarding the annexation of Texas." "Mr. Clay's letter has caused much depression and some consternation, among his friends." (Page 659)
- In the 2nd Alabama Letter, of July 27, 1844, he waffles. (This time he inflicted a mortal wound). "Ugly letter, that to Alabama" he said, "slavery was destined to become extinct, at some distant day". (Page 660).
- One congressman replied, "Clay is as rotten as a stagnant fishpond on the subject of slavery and always has been".
- "Clay spent the next several weeks trying to assure everyone that his Alabama letters in no way conflicted with the Raleigh Letter."
- Cassius M. Clay got into a controversy with Henry Clay over slavery. On August 13th, he predicted that Clay would lose 3 or 4 slave states because of his opposition to annexation. The real issue of the campaign he said was Polk was for slavery and Texas, Clay was for the Union, and liberty.

(1843 – into 1844 continued)

- Henry renounces Cassius. He wrote Cassius M. and said in the South he was described as an abolitionist in the North as an “ultra-supporter of the institution of slavery”. (Page 662)
- Polk won by 1.4% with 38,181 votes separating the two. There were 170 Electoral votes for Polk, 105 for Clay. Two weeks prior to the election, Clay still believed he would win. Clay won 11 States. Only North Carolina of the Southern States supported Clay. The other supporting States were Tennessee, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky and (3) New England States. Pennsylvania and New York were critical losses. New York would have won it for Clay. Polk only got 5,000 more votes than him there. Birney of the Liberty Party received 15,812 votes. “If there had been no Liberty Party (or abolitionists had voted true to belief), ... no anti-foreign sentiment, ... if recent immigrants hadn't been against, or recent Catholics, if there had been no frauds...”. (Page 664)
- In Louisiana, the state was clearly lost to Clay because of fraudulent voting. In New York, 5500 immigrants (mostly Catholics) had been naturalized prior to election and 99% of them voted against Clay. Eppes Sargent stated “We have been robbed of our lawful President by the 7000 fraudulent votes cast for Mr. Polk in this city.” In Pennsylvania (fraud), portrayed Polk as a tariff man (better than Clay).
- Frelinghuysen tells Clay to repair to his Savior. “He will never fail us in our hour of peril and trial”.
- Leslie Combs said of Clay, “...and yet a high consciousness of unrewarded public services and unappreciated merit...I never saw him bear so lofty a presence...He utters no complaint, although he considers himself forever off the public stage”.
- Weeks and months following 1844 were very difficult for Clay. “I am endeavoring to separate myself as much as I can from this work, but in spite of all my wishes for seclusion, great numbers call to see me at

(1843 - into 1844 continued)

this place, and as I know that their purpose is friendly and respectful, I have not the heart to receive or treat them unkindly." "I am occasionally tempted to wish that I could find some obscure and inaccessible hole, in which I could put myself, and enjoy quiet and solitude during the remnant of my days". He spent a good deal of time during the winter of 1844-45 reading and studying interesting theological works and said he had benefitted immensely from those readings and my reflections on them. (Page 670)

- Fortunately, Clay had farm and cattle to occupy his mind during this dreadful period of his life. He considered going to New Orleans and then taking the steamboat from New Orleans to Havana, but he eventually decided against a southern tour for both financial and personal reasons. Debt on Ashland cancelled out (\$25,250).
- Three (3) great racehorses were given to Clay.
- John suffers derangement. This terrible tragedy for the second of his sons left Clay nearly a broken man. "I find it extremely hard to bear this last sad affliction. It has put in requisition the utmost fortitude I can command." John has a one month stay in the Lexington Lunatic Asylum.
- He builds Mansfield for Thomas and helps James with Clay Villa. "Everyone who knew Clay and knew what his family life was like, pitied him." "The great Statesman's house is very desolate" stated H. Mantineau (Page 675). To be so honored, so admired around the country, yet to live in such a dreadful home! Horrible!
- He goes to Blue Sulphur Spa in Virginia. This caused a rift with cousin, Cassius Clay, who accused Henry of "leaving town and refusing to help save his life" when his newspaper office was destroyed.

1845

- At the age of 68 Clay goes to New Orleans, his 6th trip to escape "our more rigorous winters" and to get away from a dreadful home environment. He goes to take care of some legal business, sell his hemp, bagging, and some mules, as well as a supply of Lucretia's celebrated hams. To preserve, at this stage of his life, what little remained of his energy and strength, "I have appointed my winters to the South" and (is) planning to spend as many more of them in New Orleans environs as possible.
- An early and bitterly cold winter kept Clay in Lexington until December 18th, when he left for New Orleans. It took 4 weeks to get to Natchez because the boat stopped due to floating ice on the Ohio and getting stuck on bars in the Mississippi. He stayed several days in Natchez. "A week later he arrived in New Orleans and again took up residence with his friend, Dr. William N. Mercer in his new home (834 Canal St). The steamboat from New Orleans to Cuba had been discontinued.
- He came down with the flu in New Orleans. "For 10 days I have been quite ill with it, in so much that Dr. Luzenburg daily attended me for 4 or 5 days. Nearly all last week I was confined to my room".
- He cancelled plans to visit Octavia in Mobile. He did get better and boards the steamboat Harry of the West, with the intention of stopping off in St. Louis to sell the land he owned jointly with James. He got back to Ashland in late April (after an absence of 4 months).
- Henry Clay, Jr. goes off to the Mexican War. "The pain of watching the departure of his son to Mexico to face the hazards of armed conflict was intensified by another mental breakdown of his son, John". John's condition "was not severe enough to require hospitalization, but it distressed Clay enough to send him hurrying to the Blue Licks Spa to find some relief from his severe domestic affliction". (Page 681)
- After returning to Ashland he suffered another blow. A favorite grandson, Martin Duralde III, died in Philadelphia. Clay had to pay for

(1845 continued)

the funeral. "Death, ruthless death, has deprived me of 6 affectionate daughters, all that I ever had, and has now commenced his work of destruction, with my descendants, in the second generation".

- He realized the tradeoff. He said, "he accepted the will of an all-wise and merciful Providence", who had spared him so many years in order to "witness and to feel these great domestic misfortunes".
- Clay wrote to Octavia on the Mexican war. "What a waste of precious human life...and what a waste of treasure too".

1846-47 Winter

- Back to New Orleans. "I have thought that I might yet be able to capture or to slay a Mexican", (at a New England Society Dinner). From there he visits Baton Rouge before going to Mobile to see Octavia.
- Then, home to Ashland (after a 4-month absence). "A bright sun shone beaming all around". Clay was informed by James of his son's death. "The persons and things upon which I had most placed my heart, have one after another been taken in succession from me."

1847

- Clay joins the Church. (Page 686) He reflects on his life. There was:
 - Henry Clay, Jr.'s death
 - Accumulation of family deaths
 - Deaths of his 6 daughters
 - Mental breakdowns of 2 of his sons
 - Possibly a sense of guilt over the many tragedies that had befallen his children
 - Repeated electoral defeats
 - His poor health
 - Advancing age

(1847 continued)

- "All his life, Clay was a savagely ambitious man. There can be no doubt about that. His ambition colored everything he did. It even took precedence over his family and all other personal relationships. Not until his final years, after he had become desperately ill, did his fierce drive for the nation's highest office finally come to rest." But even as late as 1847, at the advanced age of 70, his hunger for this office had not abated.
- His criteria for running again was, (1) good physical and mental health, and (2) a conviction that his services were demanded by an unquestionable majority of the country. To test the waters, "in a quiet way", and get a sense of public reaction to his possible candidacy, he would visit the East Coast.
- On July 24, 1847, Clay began his "quiet" tour of the East Coast. He naturally headed first for White Sulphur Springs where he stayed a week. Then on to Baltimore and Philadelphia. He wanted to go to Cape May in New Jersey and "enjoy a sea bath, which I never in my life before had an opportunity of doing".
- There was a great reception for him at Philadelphia where he was staying with Henry White. He goes to the balcony of his home to speak to a large crowd of Whigs. "...of course he insisted that his visit was private and that he did not want to create a public disturbance." He wrote to Lucretia that he was almost crushed by their kindness.
- On August 17th, he arrived at Cape May by special boat. He took a sea bath. "The air, the water, and the whole scene greatly interested me." "He quickly adjusted to sea bathing, swimming on top of the breakers, dunking the ladies, (who dunked him in turn), and grabbing hands with them and frolicking like a man half is age."
- He gave an emotionally charged address at Cape May. "...how everything at Ashland is associated with Henry Clay, Jr.". "The very

(1847 continued)

trees which his hands assisted me to plant serve to remind me of my loss". "...of 6 lovely daughters, not one is left".

- He then renounced that theatre of sadness and "admitted he had come to the ocean shore to seek relief from all the tragedy that had surrounded him".
- September 19th, he returned to Ashland, via New Castle, Delaware, Baltimore and White Sulphur Springs. He contracted a "very bad cold" along the way and was involved in a carriage accident. He gets back to find out that John Crittenden was supporting Taylor (the Judas).
- November 13, 1847 was the Marketplace Speech. Clay gives a major address on the war and its probable effects on the nation.
- December 26, 1847, Clay leaves Ashland the day after Christmas for Virginia, Baltimore, and Washington. Christmas of 1847 would be his last Christmas at Ashland, and it was a "white one". He received a print (lithograph) of his 1842 Farewell Address, and Buena Vista as gifts.
- He took the railroad from Baltimore, whenever possible, and he had been using this newest form of transportation for the past several years.
- He spoke to the ACS (American Colonization Society) and "repeated his belief that the white and black races could never live together on terms of equality". The solution to the slavery problem would be to return the Black people to Africa.

1848

- Clay argues "Houston vs City Bank of New Orleans" before the Supreme Court. Roger Taney, Chief Justice (Clay had called him a

(1848 continued)

scoundrel). Dolley Madison sat beside "Prince Hal", and he fussed over her and complimented her on her appearance. Mobs crowded their way into the tiny chamber to hear Prince Hal, many of them women who knew nothing of the law, but wished to claim the honor of witnessing what might be his last public performance. Clay, pleased with his efforts, "...I was well satisfied". The Justices ruled in his favor, and he received a \$6,000 fee for his efforts. Clay told Justice Peter Daniel that he had argued his last case before the High Court.

- On Feb. 23, 1848 Clay next went to Philadelphia. He took the 5:00 train. On Feb 25, 1848 as it arrived, he was greeted at the railroad station and rode to the Mayor's residence. "The following day he gave a speech at Independence Hall and delivered a eulogy for his late friend", John Quincy Adams. He stayed in Philadelphia for more than a week and then heads to New York City via Perth Amboy, New Jersey. (Page 700)
- There was a large rally at Castle Garden. In the next 6 days that followed, he visits the Institution for the Blind, another for Deaf and Dumb, and spoke to a Young Ladies Institute. He visited Albert Gallatin and Martin Van Buren and John Jacob Astor.
- His New York trip boosted his sense of coming victory. On one occasion, tens of thousands of females in New York presented to Prince Hal. "They all pressed his hands, and many kissed him. Upon leaving New York, Clay begged a friend in Baltimore to forego all demonstrations and receptions. "My greatest want is rest and peace. Do keep the crowd off me; and if you cannot, I shall hasten away from you."
- But still he played the game. Clay was to speak at the Hibernian Society in Baltimore (and arrangements had already been made). He needed to court the favor of the Irish. He had been given honorary membership into the Hibernian Society and said, as he always did when given such honors, "On no occasion have I regarded the voluntary

(1848 continued)

extension of such an honor to me with more gratification than I now feel."

- He headed to Ashland on March 18th in which he wrote to Dr. Mercer, "I am returning after receiving the most enthusiastic demonstrations of affectionate attachment of which I was ever in my life before the object".
- In Pittsburg, "...a wild and enthusiastic greeting awaited him. As he approached on steamboat, the riverbanks were full, and the beautiful wire bridge over the river was crowded with people, or "chock full of people". There was a wildly celebratory crowd. And from Pittsburg to Maysville, there was a "display of numerous flags, the roar of cannon, a ringing of bells, the sound of music, and enthusiastic cheers of the countless multitude".
- Clay actually wept. He was hailed as the "Sage of Ashland", and the "Star of the West". "These wildly emotional demonstrations were repeated from Pittsburg to Maysville as he descended the river".
- Clay was called upon to declare his candidacy and renounce slavery. Finally, April 10, 1848, he goes public. His friends have persuaded him. (Page 703)
- Thus, a namby-pamby kind of announcement, hardly the sort of thing his friends expected from a great man. He said nothing about slavery.
- In 1848, Ohio abandoned Clay. (Page 707) Clay fears the Whig Party is dissolved. Also at this time, Clay's grandson, James Erwin, Jr. shot himself to death. Then a niece Lucretia deeply loved died, and in September, his son-in-law, Martin Duralde, Jr. died. He told a friend, Christopher Hughes, "...ah, my dear Hughes, we must all soon follow them. We ought to be prepared for it, and I hope you think seriously on that momentous matter". (Page 711)

1848-1849 Winter Trip

- Clay did not vote for Zachery Taylor "because he was confined to his bed for most of November for an unspecified illness".
- Clay planned to winter in New Orleans. (Page 714) What about returning to the Senate? "Perhaps he could not overcome the unquenchable need for the exhilaration and excitement of national politics".
- He left Ashland for New Orleans on December 20th. He went to Louisville, where he picked up the steamship "Alexander Scott" to sail down the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers.

1849

- He arrived in Natchez on January 5, 1849 and because of the cholera outbreak in New Orleans, he decided to pause awhile before going on.
- Cholera was a big deal! It killed 105 of the population in the largest cities and would kill Robert Todd Lincoln and 216 others in Lexington. (Page 715)
- Then on to New Orleans on January 13th. He accidentally encounters Zachery Taylor at the Baton Rouge landing. To add to his physical discomfort, he took a violent fall coming down a flight of stairs at the home of Dr. William Mercer and was "confined to his room for 5-6 weeks.
- "Clay returned to Ashland in time to celebrate with Lucretia their golden wedding anniversary on April 11, 1849. Clay seemed in relatively good health after his vacation of 3 months and immediately resumed his legal responsibilities with his son, James, by unsuccessfully arguing a case in Clark County.
- Susan appeals to Clay of her concern regarding James' "roving spirit", and Clay gets Taylor to appoint him to Lisbon, Portugal.

(1849 continued)

- Due to health problems of which his cough never seemed to leave, "and because of the real and fancied benefits he received at various spas and in bathing at the seashore, Clay decided to spend the summer of 1849 in the East, particularly Saratoga and Newport". James and Susan, on their 1st leg of their trip to Portugal, joined them. "I have been breathing a Cholera atmosphere, living upon Cholera diet... The effect is, that I am somewhat reduced in flesh, and debilitated in strength. ...I trust that the mineral water, followed by the Sea Bath will restore me." (Page 721)
- So, he set out by carriage, boat, and rail on July 24th. He swung by Cincinnati, Sandusky, and Cleveland and arrived in Sarasota on August 4th. For 2 weeks he luxuriated in the mineral waters of that renowned spa, although he did not derive the benefit he expected. On August 10th, he had a "bilious cholick attack".
- After that week, Clay pushed on to Newport convinced that the "Sea Bath" would work wonders. Indeed, the "bracing sea air" provided some benefit although he was "as yet afraid to enter "the water. "This island is a most healthy place... where I have enjoyed more repose than I have done since I left home".
- Charles Dupuy's replacement, Levi (his personal servant), ran away. Abolitionists gave him \$300 to do so, but on reaching Boston, he changed his mind and gave back the \$300 and returned to Clay. The abolitionist's plan backfired. "Levi's decision to return to his master said a great deal about Henry Clay as a master."
- A few days later, Clay tries to swim in the ocean. "My health began to improve immediately after I went into sea "he wrote to Lucretia. "I am now better than I have been since I left home; but for a cough which still hangs on me, I should be quite well". He wished he could stay longer.
- On his return home, he swung through New York City, Syracuse, and Utica. "Clay had received an invitation to visit his old rival, Martin Van

(1849 continued)

Buren, and since his route would take him within 4 miles of Lindenwald, the Van Buren home, just outside Albany, he decided to accept the invitation". They spent 3 days together. "They even discussed the election of 1825. At the conclusion of the visit, Van Buren went with him to the railroad station in Albany, "where we parted never to see each other again."

- He attended the State Fair at Syracuse, and spent a day or two at Utica, and arrived at Ashland on September 18th. His health was much improved except for his cough.
- Crowds throughout the tour continually demonstrated their affection. But, "by this time the glow and excitement of popular approval no longer worked its magic on him. He now tried his best to avoid situations that would produce these demonstrations. He was too old, too tired, and too weak from his many bouts of illness to experience any real joy from them or think that they made any difference in his life."
- He spent much of the Fall resting and preparing for a return to Washington for the opening of Congress in early December. He decided to leave Ashland on November 1st, not to go to Washington, but to visit friends in Pennsylvania and New York. "Along the way, his stagecoach had an accident near Uniontown, PA but fortunately, he suffered no injury." He stayed at the home of Richard Henry Bayard in Philadelphia and attended his daughter's wedding (Nov. 8-19).
- In New York City, he stayed at the home of Egbert Benson on Nov 19-24th. He then returned to Philadelphia where he remained until the 29th. And then on to D.C., where he got there on Dec. 1st.
- At the Barnum City Hotel in Baltimore, a crowd gathered. "This enormous crowd followed his carriage from the railroad station to his hotel, cheering and waving to him. And the people would not give up, even after he had entered the hotel." He appeared at the 2nd floor

(1849 continued)

window and told them, "We are too far apart." It was impossible to speak. He promised to meet them the next day and shake each one by hand. And he did!

- He settled into the National Hotel. He found James Marshall to be "an excellent valet, freeman, who Clay had hired as a personal servant after Levi ran away".
- Clay "generally kissed the prettiest girls wherever he went. He played cards in his room, and enjoyed a large glass of bourbon whenever he relaxed." (Page 726)

1850

- In late February, Clay decided to take a short "furlough" to Philadelphia "to breathe a little more pure air" and get away for a short while from the grating and doleful sounds of dissolution of the Union, treason, and war." He may have also wanted to get a better feel for public reaction to his proposals.
- In Philadelphia a committee received him and arranged a ball in his honor. He appeared at the head of the staircase to make his entrance at the ball, "having a lady on each arm, when a tremendous cheer of welcome broke forth. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs... and clustered around him at once. He kissed them, of course, and they gushed their congratulations and good wishes. The displays so delighted him that he did not retire until 11 o'clock."
- On April 25, 1850, "Clay retreated to the Riverdale home of his friend, Charles Benedict Calvert, near Bladensburg, Maryland, where he prepared a committee's report (re: Omnibus Bill) and hoped to recover from a debilitating cold that had plagued him for weeks."
- "The tuberculosis had begun to kill him. He had 'gone north' reported the "National Intelligencer", in order to recruit by a few days rest, his exhausted strength." He left Washington on August 5, for Newport,

(1850 continued)

- Rhode Island, accompanied by Charles Calvert and his wife by way of Philadelphia and New York on the way to the beach. (Page 757)
- "On reaching Newport, feeling "very much worn down", he proceeded directly to the Bellevue House, where a large (???) was held in his honor. Almost immediately, he went "seabathing" and kept at it each day." (Page 758)
- Then it was back to Washington.
- He "left Washington on Saturday, September 28th, and arrived back in Lexington on October 2nd. This was a journey of incredible speed thanks to the railroad." From 3 weeks in the early 1800's to 5 days in 1850 from Washington to Ashland.
- He went back to Washington on December 13, 1850, again suffering from a bad cold, which turned into "one of the worst colds I ever had". Due to his health, "I am never free from colds", and the condition of the roads, but also because a trip to Cuba had been on his mind for years, Clay's route back to Ashland was the circuitous one through Cuba. He took James Marshall with him. He left Washington on March 10th to New York to catch the steamship, Georgia for Havana. At New York he "kissed and greeted 800 ladies and gentlemen. (Page 767)

1851

- By March 17, 1851, he was in Cuba where Dr. William N. Mercer and family were also. He stayed 3 weeks, "it was different from anything I had ever seen before". "He headed for home via New Orleans with the Mercers in early April." (Page 771)
- He headed back to Ashland for the final time on April 20, 1851. "He spent the rest of the spring, summer, and fall 'rusticating' and struggling to improve his health."

(1851 continued)

- November 15, 1851 was his last day at Ashland. "My political life is ended, but I wish once more, and for the last time, to visit Washington; and yet, I hesitate, for I do not like to go there and to be brought back." (Page 774)
- He took a boat from Maysville to Pittsburg, arriving by the 19th and then on to Washington on November 23rd.

1852

- Then on July 1, 1852, he begins the last of his travels. A 1000-mile circuitous route from Washington from the Capitol Rotunda to Ashland's dining room.