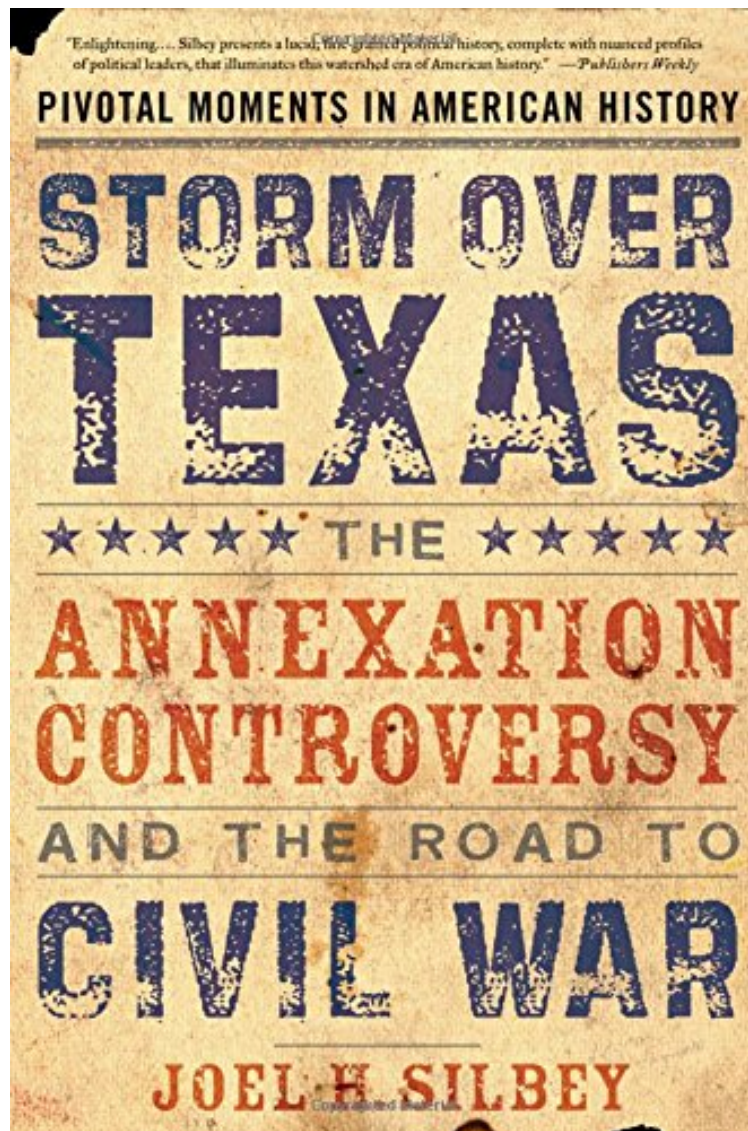


(Online library) Storm over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War (Pivotal Moments in American History)

Storm over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War (Pivotal Moments in American History)

Joel H. Silbey

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#118255 in Books Joel H Silbey 2007-01-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.60 x .80 x 8.70l, .82 #File Name: 0195315928256 pagesStorm Over Texas The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War | File size: 24.Mb

Joel H. Silbey : Storm over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War (Pivotal Moments in American History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Storm over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War (Pivotal Moments in American History):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Should Have Been Titled "A Short History Of The AnteBellum Era"By Larry CosgroveThe research behind this book is fine, and Sibley puts together a highly readable review of the people and processes that took America into a bloody conflict. That said, the chapters soon turn away from the original premise of this history lesson: that Texas (in effect) was the catalyst which started the Civil War. Only cursory attention is given to the various players, and not enough (in my opinion) to the likes of John C. Calhoun, Sam Houston, and Zachary Taylor. On the plus side, the author seems to realize the importance of John Tyler (the "Accidental President") in the process of turning the Union into a "House Divided".Just OK, and not for Civil War or American history buffs who will want to know more.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great research, impossible premiseBy Shawn S. SullivanJoel H. Silbey's Storm over Texas and the Road to Civil War is part of a marvelous series by the Oxford University Press, Pivotal Moments in American History. While Silbey clearly has the credentials to write and opine on such topics, and indeed backs it up with extensive research, his premise, that the annexation of Texas led to the Civil War is indeed a difficult one to prove and, sadly, one even he was not up to. Clearly any expansion of the peculiar institution westward was going to tilt the balance of federal power - so whether it was Texas, Nebraska, Kansas or even the Oregon Territories is a matter for debate. Silbey does indeed show the early stages of radical sectionalism as a result of the Texas debate and the schism that had been long in developing. He also does a very commendable job in showing how the Whigs and Democrats both were effected by and affected the growing debate over a slave economy in one part of the country and a free market in another. He doesn't shy away from racist comments frequently made and nearly implicit in the minds of even abolitionist northerners. I found the book to be very educational, if certainly misnamed. The pivotal "moment" wasn't really the Annexation of Texas but rather the period of westward expansion and the questions inherent therein regarding the spread, or containment, of slavery. If Professor Silbey had allowed himself this latitude the book would have been more compelling than him trying to prove something highly difficult or impossible. With that said, this still is a valuable addition to the series.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Texas and the Civil WarBy Omer BelskyWhen James K. Polk took the oath of office on becoming President of the United States of America in 1845, surely few people imagined that the man who would take the same oath fifteen years later would lead only one section of the United States, and would take that section into war against a seceding South.Having won its independence from Mexico in 1837, the young republic of Texas sought admission to the United States. The "Texas Question" became a controversial political agenda, and potentially a sectarian issue: Texans were slaveholders, and an annexed Texas would be another slave state.I have long been convinced that the Annexation of Texas, fervently promoted by President Polk, was the crucial first step on "The Road to Civil War". Once Texas had been annexed, war with Mexico became near inevitable. Following the war, the controversy of slavery's place in the newly acquired territories had seriously undermined the antebellum two party system, which had marginalized sectionalism and slavery in American political life. With slavery at the fore of American politics, and with the political parties realigned along sectional lines, the Union's days were numbered.Historian Joel Silbey I think essentially accepts this line of reasoning. But in "Storm over Texas" he focuses on a tangent line of effects and causes which I think were peripheral to the main development of the Sectional Crisis - the effects of the Texas annexation, and particularly of the Polk presidency, on the Democratic Party. I think in this Silbey errs; The locus of the sectional controversy was not the democratic party, which has survived as a national party up to the late 1850s, but in one of the landmark processes leading to the war: The disintegration of the Whig party.The Texas question was fundamental in the rise of James Polk to the presidency of the United States. Before the election of 1844, most observers would have thought that former president Martin van Buren (1836-1840), the leader of the Democratic Party, was the inevitable candidate of his party for the election. But van Buren was lukewarm about Annexing Texas. Along with doubts regarding his electibility - he had lost the 1840 race to William Harrison - van Buren's position on the Texas question sealed his faith. As a "Dark horse" compromise, Tennessee's James Polk was designated as the Democracy's candidate for Presidency.After winning the election, Polk went on to annex Texas. After annexation came war with Mexico, and with victory, a huge enlargement of the United States, and the problem of slavery in the newly acquired territories.Along the way, Silbey tells us, Polk managed to undermine the Democratic Party, and to alienate van Buren and his followers (later known as "barnburners"). The Barnburners felt snubbed and neglected by Polk's lack of sufficient patronage to their members, by his excessive support for anti van Buren Northern Democrats, and by his relative timidity in the settlement of the Oregon boundary question, so conspicuous given his belligerency towards Mexico.Consequentially, it was a Northern Democrat, David Wilmot, who proposed to bar slavery from the territories, thus starting a sectional crisis that would haunt the Union until Appomattox, and van Buren himself - the architect of Andrew Jackson's Democratic Party - who headed that Free Soil party in the 1848 election.But did it matter? True, Wilmot had proposed his famous proviso, but it was most enthusiastically supported by Northern Whigs, not Democrats. Northern Democrats remained the most conciliatory elements of the Union. The Compromise of 1850 was designed and formatted by the leading Northern Democrat of the next era - Stephen Douglas.The main victims of the partisan warfare waged by Polk and his fellow southerners were Whigs, not Democrats. The Democratic Party has managed to remain united through the election of 1856. But by 1852, the Whig party was in ruin.Along with the Whigs, the partisan forces that kept sectionalism at bay collapsed also. As long as

both political parties were national, both strived to suppress the sectional interests. Once the opponents of the Democrats were free of the cross sectional baggage, they had an interest in feeding the flames. The Democratic Party withstood the increased pressure for a while, but finally, over the fraud that was the Lecompton constitution, it broke. By 1860, there were no national political parties in the United States. With the victory of the radical Republican Party, a Northern anti-Slavery elite came to power for the first time in America. Unwilling to submit, the South seceded. This is a well known story, and it is better told elsewhere: For example, in James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford History of the United States) and in Don Fehrenbacher's *Sectional Crisis and Southern Constitutionalism*. What Silbey offers is essentially a competent but inelegant history of the Democratic Party in the 1840s. It's not uninteresting, but the really significant action took place elsewhere.

In the spring of 1844, a fiery political conflict erupted over the admission of Texas into the Union. This hard-fought and bitter controversy profoundly changed the course of American history. Indeed, as Joel Silbey argues in *Storm Over Texas*, it marked the crucial moment when partisan differences were transformed into a North-vs-South antagonism, and the momentum towards Civil War leaped into high gear. Silbey, one of America's most renowned political historians, offers a swiftly paced and compelling narrative of the Texas imbroglio, which included an exceptional cast of characters, from John C. Calhoun and John Quincy Adams, to James K. Polk and Martin Van Buren. We see how a series of unexpected moves, some planned, some inadvertent, sparked a crisis that intensified and crystallized the North-South divide. Sectionalism, Silbey shows, had often been intense, but rarely widespread and generally well contained by other forces. After Texas statehood, it became a driving force in national affairs, ultimately leading to Southern secession and Civil War. With subtlety, great care, and much imagination, Joel Silbey shows that this brief political struggle became, in the words of an Alabama congressman, "the greatest question of the age"--and a pivotal moment in American history.

From Publishers Weekly
The convulsive rearrangement of antebellum American politics around an increasingly bitter sectional divide is probed in this enlightening historical monograph, part of Oxford's Pivotal Moments in American History series. Historian Silbey situates the debate over the 1845 annexation of the Republic of Texas in the framework of the Jacksonian party politics that dominated the United States. Both the Democrats and the Whigs, he argues, were national parties with strong support in all sections, and they cooperated to downplay sectional politics, especially the issue of slavery, in favor of a national consensus over economic policy and territorial expansion. That all changed when Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, a pro-slavery firebrand, advanced the argument that Texas must be annexed to prevent it from falling into the orbit of abolitionist Great Britain, which would, he claimed, use it as a platform to undermine slavery in the United States. The policies of the incoming Democratic Polk administration, especially the maximalist claims about Texas's boundaries that led to war with Mexico, further exacerbated the sectional polarization by making suspicious Northern Democrats lend credence to Northern Whigs' claims of a conspiratorial slave power controlling national government. These developments, Silbey contends, set the stage for the 1850s breakdown of nationwide political alliances in favor of an increasingly vitriolic antagonism between North and South. Silbey presents a lucid, fine-grained political history, complete with nuanced profiles of political leaders, that illuminates this watershed era of American history. Photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Enlightening...Silbey presents a lucid, fine-grained political history, complete with nuanced profiles of political leaders, that illuminates this watershed era of American history."--Publishers Weekly
"A superb account of the political road to disunion and Civil War. We should be grateful to Silbey for showing so clearly the role Texas played in bringing about the war that did eventually take place."--Stephen E. Maizlish, *Civil War Book*
"As a watershed episode in the collapse into ominous sectionalism, the politics of Texas's admission into the American Union have long demanded special attention. Fusing pacy narrative with shrewd analysis, this splendid book confirms Joel Silbey's reputation as one of the most discerning of American political historians."--Richard Carwardine, Rhodes Professor of American History, University of Oxford, author of *Lincoln*
"One of America's best political historians here demonstrates that Texas Annexation was one of the nation's prime turning points. Silbey's clear writing, impressive learning, and balanced judgments make this book a valuable addition to the excellent Pivotal Moments series."--William W. Freehling, author of *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*
"Few, if any, living historians know as much about nineteenth-century American politics and public policy as Joel Silbey. Here he lavishes that mastery on what is arguably the most pivotal turning point on the road to Civil War--the annexation of Texas and the sectional controversy that annexation ignited. This conjunction of masterful historian with an all-important subject yields a book of unquestionable significance to anyone interested in what caused the American Civil War."--Michael F. Holt, author of *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*
"Thomas Jefferson may have heard a 'firebell in the night' when Missouri applied for statehood, but veteran political historian Silbey's cogent analysis suggests that Texas created an even greater crisis two decades later, one that fundamentally altered American party politics, spreading sectional passions more deeply and pervasively than ever before. His work clarifies and sharpens our understanding of how sectional forces played out in politics to bring about

a civil war."--Phyllis F. Field, Associate Professor of History, Ohio University"What if the political leadership of the day had guessed at the violence and intensity of the storm that Joel Silbey sees as springing from passions loosed by the quest to annex Texas? Might the politicians have approached the annexation enterprise with greater care and unction? Would they have approached it at all? Silbey is a good explainer, let's be grateful [to him] for deftly reminding us that political dysfunction didn't originate during the Clinton and Bush administrations."--William Murchison, The Weekly Standard"A measured and accessible take on the most tangled political crisis this young nation had faced up to that point. Twenty years after, its effects would be felt in a far greater one."--Austin Chronicle"What sets Silby's work apart is its absolute command of so many aspects of the Texas controversy and its ability to draw out the long-term implications. Silbey's analysis of the Democratic Party's schism is particularly insightful and interesting. Storm over Texas will well reward anyone interested in this important event on the path to the Civil War."--Nicole Etcheson, Civil War History

About the Author Joel H. Silbey is President White Professor of History at Cornell University. He is the author of *Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era*, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War*, and *Martin Van Buren and the Emergence of American Popular Politics*.