The Right to Vote
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Ratification in the older Middle West constituted the most formidable hurdle for the Amendment. From the beginning it was clear that ratification would prove difficult in Indiana, for Democrats threatened to stall proceedings. John R. Coffroth told fellow representatives that because Indiana Republicans had promised during the campaign of 1868 to let the people of Indiana decide whether the Negro should vote, Democrats should not allow Republicans to force a fraud on the people by ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment. An editorial in a major Democratic newspaper, the Indianapolis Daily State Sentinel, was even bolder: "It will be the duty of every Democrat and every member in the present General Assembly opposed to action upon it until it is submitted to the people, to use any and all means at his control—even to bolting or resignation—to defeat it."

On March 5, 1869, the Democratic legislators followed this advice. Thirty-eight Democratic representatives and seventeen Democratic senators resigned from the legislature, leaving three Democrats in the Senate and six in the House of Representatives. The legislature floundered for three more days without a quorum of two-thirds of the total membership. Parliamentary squabbling continued but no legislative business was conducted. The regular 

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4 Brevier Reports, 46th Sess., p. 489.
5 Ibid., pp. 591, 598; William C. Gerichs, "The Ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in Indiana," Indiana Magazine of History, IX (September, 1913), 139.
6 Brevier Reports, 46th Sess., pp. 594–600.
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session adjourned on March 8, but Republican Governor Conrad Baker ordered special elections for March 23 to fill the vacancies of the Democratic members who had resigned, and called a special session of the legislature for April 8.

Republican editorial reaction indicated general disgust with the Democratic bolt, because a general appropriation bill had not passed,7 and newspapers predicted that the bolt would not alter the balance of power in the legislature even if all the Democrats were re-elected.8

But Republicans themselves quarreled over whether the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment was desirable, or even necessary. The Evansville Journal, speaking for Republicans in southern Indiana, considered it "the wrong thing at the wrong time," because it was "keeping up a hubbub about the negro." In an area where southern ways were ingrained and anti-Negro feeling ran high, southern Indiana Republicans recognized that ratification would play into the hands of the Negro-baiting Democrats. It was no coincidence, then, that three of the four Republican senators who were opposed to the Amendment came from sharply competitive counties in southern Indiana.10 Republicans further contended that the Amendment lacked the support of the people and legislature,11 and that ratification would constitute repudiation of a party pledge.12 But party demands were insistent.13 The Republicans had at stake a potential Negro vote of 6,000 to 8,000 out of a Negro population of 24,560.14 Indiana Negroes let Republican politicians know that once they were given the ballot, they would become good Republicans. "We would vote the way we

7 The Evansville Journal, March 5, 1869; editorial of [Indianapolis] Journal, ibid., March 6, 1869; "Address of the Republican Members of the Legislature to the People of the State of Indiana," ibid., March 10, 1869.
9 Ibid., March 3, 4, 1869.
10 Ibid., March 9, 1869; Tribune Almanac for 1869, p. 70.
11 The Evansville Journal, March 3, 4, 5, 8, 1869. Even Republican legislators acknowledged division in the ranks of the party over ratification ("Address of the Republican Members," ibid., March 10, 1869).
12 Ibid., March 9, 1869.
13 Ibid., March 12, 1869.
shot," declared one Negro. Another predicted that Negroes would vote Republican "as naturally as water flows downward." Republican politicians needed these votes.

By 1868 Indiana was a closely divided state. Governor Baker had won the governor’s chair in 1868 by a majority of only 961 in a total vote of 342,189. President Grant carried Indiana in the same year by the slim margin of 9,572, and during the campaign politicians had worried about Indiana’s thirteen electoral votes. Since Republicans had never won a presidential election by more than 53 per cent of the vote during Reconstruction, and frequently their majority was less, Republican politicians were willing to risk some alienation of southern white Indianans for a solid Negro vote.

To Democrats the prospect of Negro voters was a nightmare. Democratic journalists and politicians therefore defended the bolt of the legislature, proclaiming that duty demanded their resignation. Good Democrats should prevent Republicans from breaking their own campaign pledges by ratifying the Amendment and prevent the inferior Negro from degrading the ballot box. The Republican Cincinnati Commercial, for example, commented that "the phantom of the Fifteenth Amendment was sufficient to drive them in terror out of the State House and into retirement," in order to forestall Negro voting, which could threaten a Democratic incumbent in Marion County (Indianapolis) and present obstacles in other counties. But because of its location, the Negro vote constituted a danger not to Democratic legislators but rather to the Democratic state and national tickets. Democrats would have to devise some method to neutralize Negro voting yet retain party strength, and it would be difficult for them to reduce the number of eligible Negro voters by imposing educational and

17 Tribune Almanac for 1869, p. 70.
18 Ibid.
19 Burnham, Presidential Ballots, pp. 161, 391.
20 Gerichs, Indiana Magazine, IX, 141-44.
22 There were 7 counties in Indiana where the Negro population was over 1,000 in 1870. In 5 of these counties Republicans had normal majorities. (Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census, 1, 26-27; Tribune Almanac for 1869, p. 70.)
property qualifications that would not eliminate Democratic supporters as well. Perhaps the solution was Democratic conversion: Democrats would become the Negro’s best friend. This maneuver was suggested in the press and even joked about. The fictional character “Petroleum V. Nasby” tested Democratic opinion in Indiana concerning the Fifteenth Amendment by masquerading as a Negro. His reception at the hands of Democratic candidates was privately warm, publicly cool, and occasionally ambiguous. Covering his face with burnt cork, Nasby transformed himself into a Negro minister. Purportedly on a mission to collect church contributions for his Negro parish, he arrived in a closely balanced county where neither party had 50 votes to spare but in which there were 100 Negroes who held the balance of power. Nasby first visited the Democratic candidate for sheriff, reporting: “I WUZ NOT KICKT! On the contrary quite the reverse. The gushin candidate kindly, blandly and winningly begged me to be seated; he askt me, with tears uv interest gushin from his eye, ez to the prosplex uv our Zion; ez to how many we numbered, male and female, adult and youthful, and whether or not we coodent indulge a reasonable hope that many more uv our color mightn’t be indoost to leave the South and settle in the county.” Although this Democratic candidate for sheriff had previously denounced “nigger emigration,” Uncle Nasby observed that the man now had changed his tune: “Sed he, 'The admirishen I feel for the Afrikins—the respec I hev for thermany qualities uv head and heart make me say in the language uv the inspired writer, 'The more the merrier.'” The Democrat then handed Nasby some money for the Negro church and said: “‘ And next fall, after the Amendment is ratified, and your people git the rites which wuz allus theiren, I trust yoo will remember at the polls them wich hev stood yoor friends, uv whom I am wich.’” Nasby was dumfounded and accosted another Democratic candidate for Treasurer, who took him by the arm and accompanied him on his fund raising campaign. Turning a sharp corner, they came upon some convicts. Nasby described the scene:

The minit his [the Treasurer’s] eyes struck em he loosed his holt of me and shot ahead, keepin in advance till he hed turned the next corner.

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24 The Evansville Journal, May 20, 21, 1869.
"Why this maneuver?" asked I, thankful that he had even that much of original Democratic feeling in him. "Dear sir!" replied he, "You will excuse me, but the fact is, I'm in a precarious situation. I'm a candidate, it's close. Them gentlemen with the ball and chain have votes, and they have a most crooked prejudice against those of your color. We must humor their idiosyncrasies, till we kin correct 'em. The time is comin', and I'm laborin' for it nite and day, when it will all be removed. My dear sir, at the polls this fall will you and your flock remember the sacrifices I have made and am makin'?"

Nasby was invited to dinner with the Democratic candidate for Treasurer, but forgot he was still disguised as a Negro. When he washed his hands the cork on his skin came off. Seeing that Nasby was a white, the Democrat kicked him out of his house. Nasby concluded his yarn with this moral:

Ez a nigger I wuz welcomed; when it wuz known that I wuz a white man I wuz ignominiously kickt! Is this the beginin' uv a new order uv things? Is the niggers to receive all the smiles hereafter uv Dimocrats who want office? I fear me. No sooner is ther a probability uv this race gittin' a vote than the Democratic leaders, forgottin' ther proud Caucasian blood, forgotten the difference in the anatomical structure uv the two races, and forgotten that the minit they give the nigger a vote, their daughters must marry niggers; they forgit all this, and cuddle with 'em the same ez they alluz hev with other inferior classes.25

Democrats would have to be as careful in recruiting Negro voters as the Democratic candidates had been in talking to Uncle Nasby. Recruitment of Negroes in private was one thing, but Democrats in public would have to act prudently to suit the tastes of old-fashioned Democratic constituents. The Democrats could never, for example, elect Negroes to hold office. Whatever the solution, Negro suffrage gave Democrats headaches and Republicans laughs.

Stakes, then, were high in the fight over the Amendment. The special election called by the Governor was not, however, a general referendum on Negro suffrage. Instead, the special ballot secured the one-sided re-election of all the resigning Democrats, most of whom came from safe Democratic districts, particularly the southern Indiana stronghold.26 In many counties and senatorial

25 Ibid., May 13, 1869.
26 The bulk of Democratic strength was in southern Indiana. There were 22 Democratic counties south of Indianapolis, but only 12 north of Indianapolis. (Tribune Almanac for 1869, p. 70.) Of the Democratic senators who resigned, 6 came from northern Indiana, 11 from downstate (Brevier Reports, 46th Sess., p. 591).
districts the Republicans did not offer opposition candidates and the vote was light.

Democrats did not report for duty at the special session until four days after it convened. Apparently they had decided to take their seats in the legislature only after they had reached an understanding with the Republicans to delay consideration of the Amendment until late in the session. Republicans recognized that delay was the best tactic, because the Democrats could block Senate action with their twenty-three out of fifty votes. This awkward situation was duplicated in the House.

But delay was not going to solve the problem, for Democrats planned to repeat their walkout. Senator Thomas Gifford contended that he would "resign at every full change of the moon, if necessary, to defeat this measure." Republican supporters of ratification tried to counter Democratic obstruction and bypass a bolt by calling a joint meeting of both houses of the legislature to act on it, but such tactics failed for want of Republican support.

The parties headed for a showdown as each met in caucus at noon on May 13. Republicans had a formidable reinforcement from Washington. The former Governor and wartime dictator of Indiana, United States Senator Morton, attended the Republican caucus, trying to bolster timid legislators and bring pressure upon Republican opponents. He argued that the Fifteenth Amendment could be ratified without the presence of Democratic legislators because a quorum could be achieved by two-thirds of the legislators present. Members who resigned were no longer members, he claimed, and could not be counted as such. This maneuver had been suggested earlier, but the words and advice of Senator Morton commanded greater assent. Party pressure must have been great, since the caucus decided to ratify the Amendment

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29 The Evansville Journal, April 29, 1869.
30 Brevier Reports, Spec. Sess. (1869), p. 43. This position was taken by other Democrats (Ibid., p. 202).
31 Ibid., pp. 41-43.
32 Ibid., pp. 42, 44, 222.
34 Indicative of southern Indiana Republican opinion, the Evansville Journal, which had energetically fought the Amendment, capitulated in its issue of April
with or without the Democrats. Emboldened Republicans returned to the chambers to do battle with their opponents, who had decided in caucus to resign as a group so that there would be no legislative quorum.

In the Senate the doors were ordered locked and the roll was called. It was learned subsequently that though sixteen Democratic senators had resigned, some remained in the chamber and were counted as present by the Republican presiding officer, who declared a quorum. When Democrats protested this procedure, Republicans pointed out that nothing in writing had been submitted to the presiding officer. The statement was true; written resignations had been submitted only to the Governor. Frustrated Democrats condemned the ruling, but they were shouted down by Republicans. The Fifteenth Amendment was quickly put to a vote and passed, twenty-seven to one. Eleven Senators were declared present but not voting, while eleven were absent. The session was speedily adjourned.

In the House of Representatives, during the same afternoon, the Speaker ruled that business could not be conducted because the withdrawal of the Democrats prevented a quorum. Twenty-four hours later, however, the Speaker was not so sure of his ruling. Despite the fact that twenty-seven Democratic representatives had quit the chamber, leaving eleven fewer than the quorum of two-thirds of the total membership of the chamber required by the Indiana constitution, the Speaker remarked that "on the question of ratifying an amendment to the Constitution of the United States—in absence of any precedent in the legislation, or in the Constitution of our State, in the absence of any law of Congress as to what shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of ratifying a Constitutional Amendment—the question never can be decided and settled unless it is decided in this way." He then ruled that the Amendment could be taken up.
Debate was largely confined to parliamentary procedure. After the standard arguments were repeated,\textsuperscript{41} the Fifteenth Amendment was passed by fifty-four Republicans who voted "yes"; no one voted "no," but three representatives, including one Republican, were declared present but not voting.\textsuperscript{42} In other words, the Amendment was passed by a quorum of fifty-seven members, although Indiana law required, in effect, a quorum of sixty-seven.\textsuperscript{43}

The extraordinary tactics that Indiana politicians used in the fight over ratification indicated that the party stakes were high. Humanitarian considerations appeared to have played no decisive role in the outcome: it was the future Negro voter who mattered to most Republican legislators. Professional politicians dominated the stage and party advantage dictated their actions. The customary sectional alignment of northern against downstate Indiana played an important role by dictating tactics and determining tone.\textsuperscript{44} But it was significant that when the showdown came, the Republicans from downstate, with two exceptions, voted to ratify the Amendment. Democrats, however, fought a resourceful guerilla battle. Perhaps a majority of Indianans opposed Negro

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., pp. 241, 243.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 240; Indiana, Journal of the House of Representatives, Spec. Sess. (1869), pp. 604-5; E. McPherson, p. 491. The lone Republican was James V. Mithell of Morgan County, which is southwest of Indianapolis. The other two men were the remaining Democrats in the chamber.
\textsuperscript{43} Gerichs maintains that ratification by the House was invalid (Indiana Magazine, IX, 165-66). This position assumes that Indiana law was in force when the House acted on the Amendment; that the legislative action in each chamber must be judged separately; and that a quorum is an absolute entity determined by the total membership of each chamber, rather than a relative number based on the number of members present. Ample precedent would reject this view (Foulke, Morton, II, 113-17; the Evansville Journal, May 18, 1869). The ratification was valid, if irregular, because the substance of state authority was expressed and, most important, the ruling of the chair was not overruled. The federal Secretary of State held that the Indiana ratification was binding. The U.S. Supreme Court, moreover, ruled that passage and ratification of the Amendment was valid in Neal v. Delaware, 103, U.S., 370 (1880), and further ruled at a later time that quorum can be based on members present. Nevertheless, Indiana ratification did cause concern in Washington and even worried Morton (Diary, November 22, 1869, Fish MSS). Morton wrote Charles Sumner that "the adoption of the Amendment may yet turn on the vote of Indiana" (Morton to Sumner, May 28, 1869, Sumner MSS).

suffrage, but the politicians voted otherwise. Although the burden of racial prejudice was very strong, to party men the necessity of party success proved stronger.

Close elections generated partisan heat and worsened race relations in the short run. Republican enfranchisement of the Negro backfired, and Democrats seized control of the legislature in 1871 for the first time since before the Civil War. In the long run, however, Republican investment in the Negro voter seemed to yield rich dividends. The word "nigger" disappeared from stump speeches, as Hoosiers accepted Negro voters. Negroes remained Republican and their number mounted. Negro voting must have been fairly substantial—substantial enough for Republican Negro politicians to be elected to the General Assembly only eleven years after Negroes had started voting. Although they may have resented their exploitation by the Republicans, they did receive patronage and recognition, while Republican politicians in a politically unsafe state were delighted with the election returns from Negro districts in the 1870's and 1880's.

Ratification in Ohio posed problems and revealed patterns similar to those in Indiana, and their injured tone and hot tempers had more in common with border state than with middle Atlantic Democrats. Southern Ohio remained for the most part strongly southern in outlook, stanchly Democratic in politics, and violently anti-Negro in feeling. Ohioans had rejected Negro suffrage in 1867, and the cause continued unpopular in the state in 1869. A Democratic legislature in April, 1869, rejected ratification along strict party lines. Like Indiana, the potential Negro vote was important in Ohio. Republican state majorities were usually less than 7,000 votes, and an additional 10,600 Negro votes would help.

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45 Thornbrough, _Negro in Indiana_, p. 245.
47 Thornbrough, _Negro in Indiana_, p. 249.
51 Ibid., pp. 288, 291.
There were however significant differences between Indiana and Ohio. Ratification in Ohio was important to more than state politics, for Ohio might decide the fate of the Fifteenth Amendment in the most critical months of the ratification struggle. Moreover, the timing and effect of Ohio ratification were far more crucial than in any other state. Yet the outcome was more precarious in the Ohio legislature of 1870 than in any other state because the balance of power in the legislature was held by the Reform party, a coalition elected from Hamilton county, Cincinnati. Democrats had lost control of the legislature in the 1869 elections, but Republicans did not regain it. In the Senate, Republicans held eighteen seats, Democrats seventeen, and Reformers two. In the House of Representatives, Republicans controlled fifty-three legislators, Democrats forty-nine, and Reformers ten.54

The uncertainty of ratification and the critical importance of Ohio’s action brought requests for aid. Republican Governor Rutherford B. Hayes had earlier pressed President-elect Grant to endorse ratification in order to ensure its success and to remove some of the pressure on state candidates, like himself, who would run for re-election on a pledge of support for the Amendment.55 After his re-election Hayes exerted pressure on the Grant administration when he wrote Vice-President Schuyler Colfax of Indiana that Ohio would ratify “but it is not a certainty. . . . We may need help in Ohio.” 56

Washington, in turn, harassed Columbus. Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, whose home was in Cincinnati, wrote letters to members of the Reform delegation, sounding them out on ratification. Chase tried hard to get Ohio ratification without publicizing his efforts or expressing firm views on the provisions of the Amendment. This influence upon and friendship among the Cincinnati Reformers proved an important but delicate operation for a Chief Justice. Chase walked a tightrope, first bowing to restrained sympathizers of Negro suffrage on one side, and then nodding furiously to supporters of reconciliation with the South on the other, and all the time virtually double talking on the Amendment’s enforcement powers, depending on who was listening.57

54 The Cincinnati Gazette, October 16, 1869; Tribune Almanac for 1870, p. 60.
55 Rowland E. Trowbridge to Rutherford B. Hayes, February 15, 1869, Rutherford B. Hayes MSS.
56 Hayes to Schuyler Colfax, October 22, 1869, ibid.
57 Chase to Thomas H. Yeatman, October 19, 1869, Chase MSS, Historical and
United States Senator John Sherman also exhibited interest and exerted influence in securing Ohio’s ratification.\(^6\) Senator Morton wrote Hayes that “vast interests depend on the vote of Ohio,”\(^5\) whereas another Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Noah H. Swayne, also from Ohio, wrote to Hayes expressing deep interest in ratification.\(^6\) In no other state did so many prominent men actively intervene.\(^6\)

More important than Chase’s work in securing ratification was that of Governor Hayes and such Republican politicians as state Senator Benjamin F. Potts\(^6\) and Representative Robert B. Dennis,\(^6\) who kept Republican legislators in line. Hayes wrote one legislator not to resign from the legislature until ratification had been secured.\(^4\) Hayes stayed at his post\(^5\) and apparently made deals to secure it, rewarding loyal supporters by emphatic endorsements for state and federal patronage.\(^6\) He came to regard Ohio ratification as a personal triumph.\(^6\)

Four skirmishes and one major battle were involved in the war over ratification in the legislature. The first skirmish broke out over the organization of the legislature, assignment of committees, and distribution of patronage. The victors were the Reform men and the Democrats, who seized control of both chambers and elected Reform presiding officers. An effort of the Reformers to build up their bargaining position appeared to be the motive behind this maneuver. Probably Democrats were given favorable

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\(^6\) Potts to Sherman, January 6, 1870, Sherman MSS.

\(^7\) Potts to Sherman, January 12, 1870, Sherman MSS.

\(^8\) Hayes to Columbus Delano, July 8, 1870, Hayes MSS.

\(^9\) Hayes to Potts, December 21, 1869, ibid.

\(^10\) Hayes to Birchard, January 14, 1870, ibid.; Diary, December 2, 1869, ibid.

\(^11\) Hayes to Delano, July 8, 1870, ibid.; the Cincinnati Commercial, January 22, 1870.

\(^12\) Diary, April 19, 1870, Hayes MSS; Hayes to J. Irving Brooks, March 1, 1870, ibid.
assignments by the Reformers in return for some hint by Democrats of support for the Amendment. Some Democrats did favor ratification, but their strength was negligible. When party leaders decided to make opposition a test of party loyalty, Democrats who favored the Amendment or would dodge a vote had no choice but to oppose it or commit political suicide. It would appear, however, that the Democratic decision to oppose was taken earlier in October or November. Ohio opposition was to be in concert with opposition elsewhere.

The second and third skirmishes occurred on the critical battleground of the House of Representatives. Democrats tried to change the rules governing joint resolutions from a simple majority to an absolute majority of all members elected. They also tried unsuccessfully to unseat two Republican members from contested districts. Both maneuvers were regarded as devices to reduce Republican strength in order to defeat ratification. The final skirmish was an attempt by the Democrats to submit the Fifteenth Amendment to the voters or to postpone consideration. All these tactics were defeated by Republicans in a desperate holding action against the assaults of Democrats who were ready to do anything to defeat ratification. Democrats were becoming panicky; they were staking everything on defeat of the Amendment.

During the strategic battle, debate started. Consuming six days, it was uninspired and uninspiring. The main questions were whether the Fifteenth Amendment was an issue in the recent campaign and whether the election returns constituted a mandate.

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68 The Cincinnati Commercial, January 20, 21, 22, 1870; the Cincinnati Daily Gazette, January 3, 4, 1870.
69 The Cincinnati Daily Gazette, January 3, 15, 18, 1870; Hayes to Morton, January 6, 13, 1870, Hayes MSS.
70 Llewellyn Baber to Andrew Johnson, October 26, 1869, Johnson MSS, Library of Congress; Baber to Johnson, November 10, 1869, ibid. Baber, a member of the Democratic State Executive Committee and the man who later publicly accused Chase of intervening in the ratification fight, wrote former President Johnson of Democratic plans to strangle the Fifteenth Amendment by co-operation between the Democratic legislatures of New York, New Jersey, Kentucky, and Tennessee, to defeat the Amendment and stamp out "radicalism." There were vague reports in the press of co-operation among Ohio and New York Democrats to defeat the Amendment.
71 The Cincinnati Commercial, January 14, 15, 20, 1870; Toledo Daily Blade, January 14, 15, 1870.
72 The Cincinnati Daily Gazette, January 14, 15, 20, 21, 1870.
for ratification. Politicians drew conclusions according to partisan interest.\textsuperscript{73} One perceptive reporter, J. P. Loomis, observed that although some Democrats denounced the qualifications of Negro voters, most did not. Recognizing the future use of the Negro vote, Democrats launched tirades against Congress, predicting despotism, but avoided discussing the qualifications of the Negroes.\textsuperscript{74} After an extensive debate, on January 14, 1870, Senators voted to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment by a strict party vote of nineteen to eighteen.\textsuperscript{75} Both Reform senators voted for ratification.

The showdown in the House of Representatives was an incredible affair. It was not enough that friends of the Amendment had to wade through the flood of words; they had to conquer a literal flood as well. On their return to Columbus from Cincinnati, several Reform members who favored the Amendment encountered heavy rains that forced them to cross treacherous streams and dragoon a freight train to arrive in Columbus in time for the vote.\textsuperscript{76} One legislator was even tricked into returning to Cincinnati, but discovering that he had been deceived by the Democrats, he returned to the state capitol in time to vote.\textsuperscript{77}

When every other maneuver and trick had failed, Democrats resorted to a filibuster and threatened to prevent a vote. They were noisy, disorderly, and defiant, and their tactics, temper, and threats enraged the Republicans. The galleries, packed with white and Negro spectators, started shouting, but the Reform Speaker demanded order and ruled that the Amendment must be voted upon.\textsuperscript{78} And, as predicted, the Fifteenth Amendment, on January 21, 1870, was ratified by a vote of fifty-seven to fifty-five. All Republicans voted in favor and all Democrats voted against. The Reformers split, four "yes" and six "no." As in the Senate, there were no absences.\textsuperscript{79} When the tally was announced there

\textsuperscript{73} Newspapers also sided along party lines. The Republican Cincinnati \textit{Daily Gazette} (January 8, 13, 21, 1870), which had opposed the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869, endorsed it in 1870, and regarded the gubernatorial election as a mandate, while the Democratic Cincinnati \textit{Enquirer} which opposed the Amendment, found no mandate for ratification.

\textsuperscript{74} The Cincinnati \textit{Commercial}, January 22, 1870.

\textsuperscript{75} Ohio, \textit{Journal of the Senate}, 59th Gen. Assembly, 1870 Sess., pp. 43–44.

\textsuperscript{76} The Cincinnati \textit{Commercial}, January 19, 1870.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, January 21, 1870.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Ibid.}, and January 22, 1870; Cincinnati \textit{Evening Chronicle}, January 21, 1870.

\textsuperscript{79} Ohio, \textit{Journal of the House of Representatives}, 59th Gen. Assembly, 1870
were screams of joy and outbursts of applause from the representatives and the crowd in the galleries, followed by hisses and catcalls from the Democrats. The war was over. Patience and persistence had brought victory.

The following day President Grant wrote a friend that with the ratification by Ohio, the future of the Fifteenth Amendment was assured. Members of Congress were so elated that they signed a letter congratulating the Ohio legislature upon its ratification of the "Crowning Measure of reconstruction." There could be little doubt now that the proposed Fifteenth Amendment would shortly be an article in the United States Constitution.

The Proclamation of Ratification of the Amendment by Secretary of State Fish met with an intensely partisan response. Republican newspapers praised the Amendment, but the bitter tone of the Democratic press was striking. The Cleveland Plain Dealer considered the Fifteenth Amendment a clear example of "might makes right," because it had been adopted by fraud and intimidation in the South and by political trickery in the North. The Cincinnati Enquirer characterized the proclamation of its adoption as an "official lie indorsing a bastard as legitimate," since it had been adopted by force and fraud.

Within a week of the proclamation, Negroes voted in elections in Cincinnati. There was no opposition to them, and they voted almost solidly Republican. Their support was so overwhelming that the German voters became alarmed that Republicans might ignore German interests to curry favor with the Negro vote. In both the short and the long run, Republicans and Negroes benefited from their partnership: Negroes were elected to the

Sess., p. 189; E. McPherson, p. 562. The Reform delegation from Cincinnati was composed of 5 former Republicans and 5 former Democrats. James H. Hambleton, a former Republican, voted with the Democrats to reject the Amendment.

80 The Cincinnati Commercial, January 21, 22, 1870.
82 Schuyler Colfax, John Sherman, and other Republican members of Congress to Hayes, January 21, 1870, Hayes MSS.
83 The Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer, March 31, 1870.
84 The Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, April 1, 1870.
85 Diary, April 4, 19, 1870, Hayes MSS; Hayes to Charles Nordhoff, April 5, 1870, ibid.; Hayes to William K. Rogers, April 6, 1870, ibid.; the Cincinnati Daily Gazette, March 31, 1870.
86 Cincinnati Volksblatt, quoted in Mobile Daily Register, April 29, 1870.
legislature and Republican politicians got much-needed Negro votes.

The violent tone and reckless tactics of Ohio and Indiana Democrats contrasted sharply with the more moderate style of the middle Atlantic Democrats. On the other hand, the middle western states were similar but not identical in their partisan responses to ratification. In Illinois, for example, although the Negro suffrage issue divided the state along traditional north-versus-south lines, and caused dissension within Republican ranks as well, the Fifteenth Amendment did not provoke a legislative brawl, as it did in Indiana and Ohio. With overwhelming strength in the state legislature, adroit Republican leaders handled ratification expertly. First, surprise and speed shocked Democratic legislators and restricted debate; then firm parliamentary control demoralized opposition. The endorsement of ratification by President Grant and approaching adjournment paved the way for ratification. Despite downstate grumbling, Republican legislators supported it, with only one deserter.  

Different again was the reaction in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Michigan, and Kansas, where the Fifteenth Amendment did not create much of a storm. The first four states already allowed the few Negroes living in their states to vote. Although radical Republicans in Wisconsin were restive over what they termed a half-way Amendment, and Democrats were in an obstructive mood, the ratification resolution was pushed through the Wisconsin legislature with telegraphic speed during early March, 1869. In Minnesota ratification was an anticlimax, since Minnesotans had voted three times on Negro suffrage and only in the last election did it win. Republican support of the Fifteenth Amendment in January, 1870, made Minnesota Negroes loyal to the Republican party, which in turn rewarded its new supporters. In Iowa ratification was a Republican formality during January, 1870.  

The problem with Nebraska was not whether she would ratify but when. The Nebraska legislature was scheduled to convene in January, 1871, yet by the fall of 1869 the chances of ratification by twenty-eight states seemed poor. Republican Governor David Butler was reluctant to call a special session and presidential pressure was required. On November 23, 1869, President Grant firmly suggested that Butler "consider the propriety of convening the legislature in extra session for this purpose, and if the proposition should meet with your views, I request that a proclamation be issued to that effect at as early a period as you may deem expedient."91 Governor Butler followed orders from the General and a special session met on February 17, 1870. Within fifteen minutes ratification was secured.92

Both in Michigan and in Kansas, as elsewhere in the country, prejudice against Negroes remained strong. In Michigan, Negro suffrage had been postponed indefinitely or defeated repeatedly by conservative Republicans and Democrats. But the party call had been sounded, and Republican legislators fell into line, ratifying the Amendment in March, 1869.93 Kansans also were unfriendly to Negroes, but on the question of ratification, party came first.94 This avowal of party loyalty came at a high price for some Republicans whose political future in a state with a high proportion of Negroes was adversely affected. As in other states motivation appeared to be largely political, not humanitarian, in origin. Ratification was not popular but it was a party measure; its adoption was interpreted as a party victory.

In any event, the Middle West approved the Fifteenth Amendment. The Republican strongholds were stanch for ratification. New England had made her mark in the Western Reserve in Ohio, in northern Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, and in Minnesota and Iowa. Adroit parliamentary and political maneuvers,

91 Grant to Butler, November 23, 1869, Letterbook, Grant MSS, Library of Congress; John M. Mayer to Charles Sumner, October 13, 1869, Sumner MSS; David Butler to Sumner, October 30, 1869, ibid.
particularly in Illinois and Wisconsin, yielded rich dividends. Generally, the states with the smallest number of Negroes were those most disposed to be broad in sympathy and liberal in outlook.

To sum up, where the Democrats were strong and where their kin were Southern, ratification temporarily hung fire. In close states where the Negro vote mattered, the fight was sustained and vicious. But it was a lost cause for caste was crumbling.