

Vice Presidents of the United States John C. Breckinridge (1857-1861)

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Introduction by Mark O. Hatfield.



I trust that I have the courage to lead a forlorn hope.

—John C. Breckinridge, 1860

The only vice president ever to take up arms against the government of the United States, John Cabell Breckinridge completed four years as vice president under James Buchanan, ran for president as the Southern Democratic candidate in 1860, and then returned to the Senate to lead the remnants of the Democratic party for the first congressional session during the Civil War. Although his cousin Mary Todd Lincoln resided in the White House and his home state of Kentucky remained in the Union, Breckinridge chose to volunteer his services to the Confederate army. The United States Senate formally expelled him as a traitor. When the Confederates were defeated, Breckinridge's personal secession forced him into exile abroad, bringing his promising political career to a bitter end.

An Illustrious Political Family

Born at "Cabell's Dale," the Breckinridge family estate near Lexington, Kentucky, on January 16, 1821, John Cabell Breckinridge was named for his father and grandfather. The father, Joseph Cabell Breckinridge, a rising young politician, died at the state capital at the age of thirty-five. Left without resources, his wife took her children back to Cabell's Dale to live with their grandmother, known affectionately as "Grandma Black Cap." She often regaled the children with stories of their grandfather, the first John Breckinridge, who, in addition to introducing the Kentucky Resolutions that denounced the Alien and Sedition Acts, had helped secure the Louisiana Purchase and had served during the administration of Thomas Jefferson first as a Senate leader and then as attorney general. The grandfather might well have become president one day but, like his son, he died prematurely. The sense of family mission that his grandmother imparted shaped young John C. Breckinridge's self-image and directed him towards a life in public office. The family also believed strongly in education, since Breckinridge's maternal grandfather, Samuel Stanhope

Smith, had served as president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and his uncle Robert J. Breckinridge started Kentucky's public school system. The boy attended the Presbyterian Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, where he received his bachelor's degree at seventeen. He then attended Princeton before returning to Lexington to study law at Transylvania University.¹

A tall, strikingly handsome young man with a genial air and a powerful voice, considered by many "a perfect gentleman," Breckinridge set out to make his fortune on the frontier. In 1841 he and his law partner Thomas W. Bullock settled in the Mississippi River town of Burlingame, in the Iowa Territory. There he might have entered politics and pursued a career relatively free from the divisive issue of slavery, but Iowa's fierce winter gave him influenza and made him homesick for Kentucky. When he returned home on a visit in 1843, he met and soon married Mary Cyrene Burch of Georgetown. The newlyweds settled in Georgetown, and Breckinridge opened a law office in Lexington.²

A Rapid Political Rise

When the Mexican War began, Breckinridge volunteered to serve as an officer in a Kentucky infantry regiment. In Mexico, Major Breckinridge won the support of his troops for his acts of kindness, being known to give up his horse to sick and footsore soldiers. After six months in Mexico City, he returned to Kentucky and to an almost inevitable political career. In 1849, while still only twenty-eight years old, he won a seat in the state house of representatives. In that election, as in all his campaigns, he demonstrated both an exceptional ability as a stump speaker and a politician's memory for names and faces. Shortly after the election, he met for the first time the Illinois legislator who had married his cousin Mary Todd. Abraham Lincoln, while visiting his wife's family in Lexington, paid courtesy calls on the city's lawyers. Lincoln and Breckinridge became friends, despite their differences in party and ideology. Breckinridge was a Jacksonian Democrat in a state that Senator Henry Clay had made a Whig bastion. In 1851, Breckinridge shocked the Whig party by winning the congressional race in Clay's home district, a victory that also brought him to the attention of national Democratic leaders. He arrived in Congress shortly after the passage of Clay's Compromise of 1850, which had sought to settle the issue of slavery in the territories. Breckinridge became a spokesman for the proslavery Democrats, arguing that the federal government had no right to interfere with slavery anywhere, either in the District of Columbia or in any of the territories.³

Since Breckinridge defended both the Union and slavery, people viewed him as a moderate. The Pennsylvania newspaper publisher and political adventurer John W. Forney insisted that when Breckinridge came to Congress "he was in no sense an extremist." Forney recalled how the young Breckinridge spoke with great respect about Texas Senator Sam Houston, who denounced the dangers and evils of slavery. But Forney thought that Breckinridge "was too interesting a character to be neglected by the able ultras of the South. They saw in his winning manners, attractive appearance, and rare talent for public affairs, exactly the elements they needed in their concealed designs against the country." People noted that his uncle, Robert Breckinridge, was a prominent antislavery man, and that as a state legislator Breckinridge had aided the Kentucky Colonization Society (a branch of the American Colonization Society), dedicated to gradual emancipation and the resettlement of free blacks outside the United States. They suspected that he held private concerns about the morality of slavery and that he supported gradual emancipation. Yet, while Breckinridge was no planter or large slaveholder, he owned a few household slaves and idealized the southern way of life. He willingly defended slavery and white supremacy against all critics.⁴

The Kansas-Nebraska Controversy

In Congress, Breckinridge became an ally of Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas. When Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and left the issue of slavery in the territories to the settlers themselves—a policy known as "popular sovereignty"—Breckinridge worked hard to enact the legislation. Going to the White House, he served as a broker between Douglas and President Franklin Pierce, persuading the president to support the bill. He also spoke out in the House in favor of leaving the settlers "free to form their own institutions, and enter the Union with or without slavery, as their constitutions should prescribe."⁵ During those debates in March 1854, the normally even-tempered Breckinridge exchanged angry words on the House floor with Democratic Representative Francis B. Cutting of New York, almost provoking a duel. "They were a high-strung pair," commented Breckinridge's friend Forney. Cutting accused Breckinridge of ingratitude toward

the North, where he had raised campaign funds for his tough reelection campaign in 1853. Breckinridge, "his eyes flashing fire," interrupted Cutting's speech, denied his charges, denounced his language, and demanded an apology. When Cutting refused, Breckinridge interpreted this as a challenge to a duel. He proposed that they meet near Silver Spring, the nearby Maryland home of his friend Francis P. Blair, and that they duel with western rifles. The New Yorker objected that he had never handled a western rifle and that as the challenged party he should pick the weapons. Once it became clear that neither party considered himself the challenger, they gained a face-saving means of withdrawing from the "code of honor" without fighting the duel. When the two next encountered each other in the House, Breckinridge looked his adversary in the eye and said: "Cutting, give me a chew of tobacco!" The New Yorker drew a plug of tobacco from his pocket, cut off a wad for Breckinridge and another for himself, and both returned to their desks chewing and looking happier. Those who observed the exchange compared it to the American Indians' practice of smoking a peace pipe.⁶

Breckinridge supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act in the hope that it would take slavery in the territories out of national politics, but the act had entirely the opposite effect. Public outrage throughout the North caused the Whig party to collapse and new antislavery parties, the Republican and the American (Know-Nothing) parties, to rise in its wake. When the spread of Know-Nothing lodges in his district jeopardized his chances of reelection in 1855, Breckinridge declined to run for a third term. He also rejected President Pierce's nomination to serve as minister to Spain and negotiate American annexation of Cuba, despite the Senate's confirmation of his appointment. Citing his wife's poor health and his own precarious finances, Breckinridge returned to Kentucky. Land speculation in the West helped him accumulate a considerable amount of money during his absence from politics.⁷

The Youngest Vice President

As the Democratic convention approached in 1856, the three leading contenders—President Pierce, Senator Douglas, and former Minister to Great Britain James Buchanan—all courted Breckinridge. He attended the convention as a delegate, voting first for Pierce and then switching to Douglas. When Douglas withdrew as a gesture toward party unity, the nomination went to Buchanan. The Kentucky delegation nominated former House Speaker Linn Boyd for vice president. Then a Louisiana delegate nominated Breckinridge. Gaining the floor, Breckinridge declined to run against his delegation's nominee, but his speech deeply impressed the convention. One Arkansas delegate admired "his manner, his severely simple style of delivery with scarcely an ornament [or] gesture and deriving its force and eloquence solely from the remarkably choice ready flow of words, the rich voice and intonation." The delegate noted that "every member seemed riveted to his seat and each face seemed by magnetic influence to be directed to him." When Boyd ran poorly on the first ballot, the convention switched to Breckinridge and nominated him on the second ballot. Although Tennessee's Governor Andrew Johnson grumbled that Breckinridge's lack of national reputation would hurt the ticket, Buchanan's managers were pleased with the choice. They thought Breckinridge would appease Douglas, since the two men had been closely identified through their work on the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Being present at the convention, Breckinridge was prevailed upon to make a short acceptance speech, thanking the delegates for the nomination, endorsing Buchanan and the platform, and reaffirming his position as a "state's rights man." The nominee was thirty-six years old—just a year over the constitutional minimum age for holding the office—and his election would make him the youngest vice president in American history.⁸

Breckinridge spent most of the campaign in Kentucky, but he gave speeches in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, defending the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The election was a three-way race among the Democrats under Buchanan, the Republicans under John Charles Frémont, and the Know-Nothings under former President Millard Fillmore. Denouncing the antislavery policies of the Republicans and Know-Nothings, Breckinridge described himself not as proslavery but as a defender of the people's constitutional right to make their own territorial laws, a position that caused some Deep South extremists to accuse him of harboring abolitionist views. In November, Democrats carried all the slaveholding states except Maryland (which went Know-Nothing) and enough northern states to win the election. Breckinridge was proud that Kentucky voted for a Democratic presidential ticket for the first time since 1828.⁹

Strained Relations with Buchanan

Buchanan won the nomination and election primarily because nobody knew where he stood on the issues, since he had been out of the country for the past three years as minister to England. Although his supporters promoted him as "the man for the crisis," Buchanan was in fact the worst man for the crisis. Narrow, secretive, petty, vindictive, and blind to corruption within his administration, he proved unable to bind together either the factions of his party or the regions of his nation. A poor winner, Buchanan distrusted his rivals for the nomination and refused to invite Stephen Douglas to join his cabinet or to take seriously Douglas' patronage requests. Similarly snubbed, Breckinridge quickly discovered that he held less influence with Buchanan as vice president than he had as a member of the House with Pierce.¹⁰

Viewing Breckinridge as part of the Pierce-Douglas faction, Buchanan almost never consulted him, and rarely invited him to the White House for either political or social gatherings. Early in the new administration, when the vice president asked for a private interview with the president, he was told instead to call at the White House some evening and ask to see Buchanan's niece and hostess, Harriet Lane. Taking this as a rebuff, the proud Kentuckian left town without calling on either Miss Lane or the president. His friends reported his resentment to Buchanan, and in short order three of the president's confidants wrote to tell Breckinridge that it had been a mistake. A request to see Miss Lane was really a password to admit a caller to see her uncle. How Breckinridge could have known this, they did not explain. In fact, the vice president had no private meetings with the president for over three years.¹¹ The new vice president bought property in the District of Columbia and planned to construct, along with his good friends Senator Douglas and Senator Henry Rice of Minnesota, three large, expensive, connected houses at New Jersey Avenue and I Street that would become known as "Minnesota Row." Before the construction was completed, however, the friendship had become deeply strained when Douglas fell out with President Buchanan over slavery in Kansas. A proslavery minority there had sent to Washington a new territorial constitution—known as the Lecompton Constitution. Buchanan threw his weight behind the Lecompton Constitution as a device for admitting Kansas as a state and defusing the explosive issue of slavery in the territory. But Douglas objected that the Lecompton Constitution made a mockery out of popular sovereignty and warned that he would fight it as a fraud. Recalling the way Andrew Jackson had dealt with his opponents, Buchanan said, "Mr. Douglas, I desire you to remember that no Democrat ever yet differed from an Administration of his choice without being crushed." To which Douglas replied, "Mr. President, I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead." Between these two poles, the vice president vainly sought to steer a neutral course. He sided with Buchanan on the Lecompton Constitution but endorsed Douglas for reelection to the Senate.¹²

An Impartial Presiding Officer

As vice president in such a turbulent era, Breckinridge won respect for presiding gracefully and impartially over the Senate. On January 4, 1859, when the Senate met for the last time in its old chamber, he used the occasion to deliver an eloquent appeal for national unity. During its half century in the chamber, the Senate had grown from thirty-two to sixty-four members. The expansion of the nation forced them to move to a new, more spacious chamber. During those years, he observed, the Constitution had "survived peace and war, prosperity and adversity" to protect "the larger personal freedom compatible with public order." He recalled the legislative labors of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun, whose performance in that chamber challenged their successors "to give the Union a destiny not unworthy of the past." He trusted that in the future "another Senate, in another age, shall bear to a new and larger Chamber, this Constitution vigorous and inviolate, and that the last generation of posterity shall witness the deliberations of the Representatives of American States, still united, prosperous, and free." The vice president then led a procession to the new chamber. Walking two-by-two behind him were the political and military leaders of what would soon become the Union and the Confederacy.¹³

Breckinridge counseled against secession. A famous incident, recounted in many memoirs of the era, took place at a dinner party that the vice president attended. South Carolina Representative Laurence Keitt repeatedly denigrated Kentucky's compromising tendencies. Breckinridge responded by recalling a trip he had made through South Carolina, where he met a militia officer in full military regalia. "I tell you, sah, we can not stand it any longer; we intend to fight," said the officer. "And from what are you suffering?" asked Breckinridge. "Why, sah, we are suffering from the oppression of the Federal Government. We have suffered under it for thirty years, and will stand

it no more." Turning to Keitt, Breckinridge advised him "to invite some of his constituents, before undertaking the war, upon a tour through the North, if only for the purpose of teaching them what an almighty big country they will have to whip before they get through!"¹⁴

A Four-Way Race for President

Early in 1859 a *New York Times* correspondent in Washington wrote that "Vice President Breckinridge stands deservedly high in public estimation, and has the character of a man slow to form resolves, but unceasing and inexorable in their fulfillment." At a time when the Buchanan administration was falling "in prestige and political consequence, the star of the Vice President rises higher above the clouds." Later that year, Linn Boyd died while campaigning for the Senate, and Kentucky Democrats nominated Breckinridge for the seat, which would become vacant at the time Breckinridge's term as vice president ended. Breckinridge may also have been harboring even greater ambitions. Although he remained silent about the upcoming presidential campaign, many Democrats considered him a strong contender. In 1860, the Democratic convention met in Charleston, South Carolina. Stephen Douglas was the frontrunner, but when his supporters defeated efforts to write into the platform a plank protecting the right of slavery anywhere in the territories, the southern delegates walked out. They held their own convention in Baltimore and nominated Breckinridge as their presidential candidate.¹⁵

For national balance, the breakaway Democrats selected Senator Joseph Lane, a Democrat from Oregon, for vice president. Lane had spent his youth in Kentucky and Indiana and served in the Mexican War. President James K. Polk had appointed him territorial governor of Oregon, an office he held from 1849 to 1850 before becoming Oregon's territorial delegate to Congress in 1851. When Oregon entered the Union in 1859, he was chosen one of its first senators. Lane's embrace of the secessionist spirit attracted him to the Southern Democrats. Had the four-way election of 1860 not been decided by the electoral college but been thrown into Congress, the Democratic majority in the outgoing Senate might well have elected him vice president. Instead, the race ended Lane's political career entirely, and Oregon became a Republican state.¹⁶

Breckinridge faced a campaign against three old friends: Stephen Douglas, the Democratic candidate; Abraham Lincoln, the Republican; and John Bell of Tennessee, the Constitutional Union party candidate. He was not optimistic about his chances. Privately, he told Mrs. Jefferson Davis, "I trust that I have the courage to lead a forlorn hope." At a dinner just before the nomination, Breckinridge talked of not accepting it, but Jefferson Davis persuaded him to run. Worried that a split in the anti-Republican vote would ensure Lincoln's victory, Davis proposed a scheme by which Breckinridge, Douglas, and Bell would agree to withdraw their candidacies in favor of a compromise candidate. Breckinridge and Bell agreed, but Douglas refused, arguing that northern Democrats would take Lincoln before they voted for any candidate that the southern firebrands had endorsed. The Illinois senator pointed out that, while not all of Breckinridge's followers were secessionists, every secessionist was supporting him. But Breckinridge also counted on the support of the last three Democratic presidential candidates, Lewis Cass, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan, as well as most of the northern Democratic senators and representatives. Despite these endorsements and the financial levies that the Buchanan administration made on all Democratic officeholders for him, Breckinridge failed to carry any northern states. In the four-way race, he placed third in the popular vote and second in electoral votes. Most disappointingly, he lost Kentucky to Bell.¹⁷

A Personal Secession

Following the election, Breckinridge returned to Washington to preside over the Senate, hoping to persuade southerners to abandon secession. But in December, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida left the Union. In January, Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis and other southerners bid a formal farewell to the Senate. In February, Vice President Breckinridge led a procession of senators to the House chamber to count the electoral votes, and to announce the election of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. On March 4, Breckinridge administered the oath of office to his successor, Hannibal Hamlin, who in turn swore him into the Senate. When President Lincoln called Congress into special session on July 4, 1861, to raise the arms and men necessary to fight the Civil War, Breckinridge returned to Washington as the leader of what was left of the Senate Democrats. Many in Washington doubted that he planned to offer much support to the Union or the war effort. Breckinridge seemed out of place in the wartime capital, after so many of his southern friends had left. On several occasions, however, he visited his

cousin Mary Todd Lincoln at the White House.¹⁸

During the special session, which lasted until August 6, 1861, Breckinridge remained firm in his belief that the Constitution strictly limited the powers of the federal government, regardless of secession and war. Although he wanted the Union restored, he preferred a peaceful separation rather than "endless, aimless, devastating war, at the end of which I see the grave of public liberty and of personal freedom." The most dramatic moment of the session occurred on August 1, when Senator Breckinridge took the floor to oppose the Lincoln administration's expansion of martial law. As he spoke, Oregon Republican Senator Edward D. Baker entered the chamber, dressed in the blue coat of a Union army colonel. Baker had raised and was training a militia unit known as the California Regiment. When Breckinridge finished, Baker challenged him: "These speeches of his, sown broadcast over the land, what meaning have they? Are they not intended for disorganization in our very midst?" Baker demanded. "Sir, are they not words of brilliant, polished treason, even in the very Capitol?" Within months of this exchange, Senator Baker was killed while leading his militia at the Battle of Ball's Bluff along the Potomac River, and Senator Breckinridge was wearing the gray uniform of a Confederate officer.¹⁹

After the special session, Breckinridge returned to Kentucky to try to keep his state neutral. He spoke at a number of peace rallies, proclaiming that, if Kentucky took up arms against the Confederacy, then someone else must represent the state in the Senate. Despite his efforts, pro-Union forces won the state legislative elections. When another large peace rally was scheduled for September 21, the legislature sent a regiment to break up the meeting and arrest Breckinridge. Forewarned, he packed his bag and fled to Virginia. He could no longer find any neutral ground to stand upon, no way to endorse both the Union and the southern way of life. Forced to choose sides, Breckinridge joined his friends in the Confederacy. In Richmond he volunteered for military service, exchanging, as he said, his "term of six years in the Senate of the United States for the musket of a soldier." On December 4, 1861, the Senate by a 36 to 0 vote expelled the Kentucky senator, declaring that Breckinridge, "the traitor," had "joined the enemies of his country."²⁰

General Breckinridge

Commissioned a brigadier general, and later a major general, Breckinridge went west to fight at Shiloh, Stone's River, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. He returned east to the battle of Cold Harbor, and in July 1864 he and General Jubal T. Early led a dramatic raid on Washington, D.C. Breckinridge's troops advanced as far as Silver Spring, Maryland, where they sacked Francis Blair's home but did not destroy it, supposedly at the urging of Breckinridge, who had often been a guest there. Breckinridge got so close to Washington that he could see the newly completed Capitol dome, and General Early joked that he would allow him to lead the advance into the city so that he could sit in the vice-presidential chair again. But federal troops halted the Confederates, who retreated back to the Shenandoah Valley. There, at Winchester, Virginia, they confronted Union troops commanded by Philip H. Sheridan. The Confederate general John B. Gordon later recalled that Breckinridge was "desperately reckless" during that campaign, and "literally seemed to court death." When Gordon urged him to be careful, Breckinridge replied, "Well, general, there is little left for me if our cause is to fail." As they rode from their defeat on the battlefield, Jubal T. Early turned to ask, "General Breckinridge, what do you think of the `rights of the South in the territories' now?" He received no answer.²¹

During the closing months of the war in 1865, Jefferson Davis made Breckinridge his secretary of war. He performed well in this final government position, firing the Confederacy's bumbling commissary general and trying to bring order out of the chaos, but these efforts came too late. When General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army, President Davis was determined to keep on fighting, but Breckinridge opposed continuing the war as a guerilla campaign. "This has been a magnificent epic," he said; "in God's name let it not terminate in farce." Fleeing Richmond, Breckinridge commanded the troops that accompanied Davis and his cabinet. Davis was captured, but Breckinridge evaded arrest and imprisonment by fleeing through Florida to Cuba. From there he sailed for England. Subsequently, the Breckinridge family settled in Toronto, Canada. His daughter Mary later remarked that, while exile was a quiet relief for her mother, it was hard on her father, "separated from the activities of life, and unable to do anything towards making a support for his family." In Canada he met other Confederate exiles, including the freed Jefferson Davis. Once, Breckinridge and Davis rode to Niagara. Across the river they could see the red stripes

of the American flag, which Breckinridge viewed nostalgically but the more embittered Davis described as "the gridiron we have been fried on."²²

On Christmas Day, 1868, departing President Andrew Johnson issued a blanket pardon for all Confederates. John C. Breckinridge returned to the United States in February 1869. Stopping in many cities to visit old friends, he reached Lexington, Kentucky, a month later. He had not been back in Kentucky since he fled eight years before. In welcome, a band played "Home Sweet Home," "Dixie," and "Hail to the Chief." Breckinridge declared himself through with politics: "I no more feel the political excitements that marked the scenes of my former years than if I were an extinct volcano." Other than publicly denouncing the lawless violence of the Ku Klux Klan, he devoted himself entirely to private matters. The former vice president practiced law and became active in building railroads. Although he was only fifty-four, his health declined severely and he died on May 17, 1875. Despite his weakened condition at the end, Breckinridge surprised his doctor with his clear and strong voice. "Why, Doctor," the famous stump speaker smiled from his deathbed, "I can throw my voice a mile."²³

Notes:

1. Frank H. Heck, *Proud Kentuckian: John C. Breckinridge, 1821-1875* (Lexington, KY, 1976), pp. 1-11; James C. Klotter, *The Breckinridges of Kentucky, 1760-1981* (Lexington, KY, 1986), pp. 95-98.
2. Heck, pp. 11-18; Klotter, p. 101.
3. Heck, pp. 22, 30-31; William C. Davis, *Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1974), p. 45.
4. John W. Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men* (New York, 1873), 2:41-42; Heck, pp. 30-31, 163-64; Klotter, p. 113.
5. Heck, pp. 41-43.
6. Forney, 2:301; Heck, pp. 44-46; Benjamin Perley Poore, *Perley's Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1886), 1:439-42; L.A. Gobright, *Recollections of Men and Things at Washington During The Third of a Century* (Philadelphia, 1869), p. 138.
7. Heck, pp. 47, 53-54; Mark W. Summers, *The Plundering Generation: Corruption and the Crisis of the Union, 1849-1861* (New York, 1987), p. 203.
8. Davis, *Breckinridge*, p. 172.
9. Klotter, pp. 111, 113; Heck, pp. 55-66.
10. Frederick Moore Binder, *James Buchanan and the American Empire* (Cranbury, NJ, 1994), pp. 219-22.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 223; Heck, pp. 67-68; Davis, *Breckinridge*, p. 172.
12. Heck, pp. 69-74; Davis, *Breckinridge*, pp. 171-72; Elbert B. Smith, *The Presidency of James Buchanan* (Lawrence, KS, 1975), p. 41; Forney, 1:41-42; Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York, 1973), p. 652.
13. U.S., Congress, Senate, *The Old Senate Chamber: Proceedings in the Senate of the United States upon Vacating their old Chamber on January 4, 1859*, S. Doc. 67, 74th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 4-15; Heck, pp. 75-76; Davis, *Breckinridge*, p. 194.
14. Forney, 1:283-84; Poore, 2:47; Davis, *Breckinridge*, p. 175.
15. Davis, *Breckinridge*, p. 197; Smith, p. 113.
16. David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York, 1976), p. 438; see also Margaret Jean Kelly, *The Career of Joseph Lane* (Washington, 1942).
17. William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (New York, 1991), pp. 282-83; Heck, p. 85; Smith, pp. 124-26; Summers, p. 274; Lowell H. Harrison, "John C. Breckinridge: Nationalist, Confederate, Kentuckian," *The Filson Club History Quarterly* 47 (April 1973): 128.
18. Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865* (New York, 1941), pp. 32, 87. As a sign of the public confusion over Breckinridge's loyalties, Mathew Brady's studio produced a photograph of Breckinridge retouched to make him appear to be wearing a Union army uniform. See Susan Kismaric, *American Politicians: Photographs from 1843 to 1993* (New York, 1994), p. 66.
19. Heck, pp. 101-2; U.S., Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, S. Doc. 100-20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., vol. 1, 1989, p. 250.
20. Heck, pp. 101-2; 106; U.S., Congress, Senate,
21. Klotter, p. 127; Leech, p. 345; Heck, pp. 111, 127-28; Harrison, p. 136.
22. Heck, pp. 133-34; Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, pp. 600-601, 616-33, 658; Lucille Stilwell Williams, "John Cabell Breckinridge," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 33 (January 1935): 29.
23. Heck, pp. 149, 157; Davis, *Breckinridge*, pp. 593, 623.