

**The Wealth of Politicians and Rents
to Political Office in the U.S., 1840-1870¹**

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Abstract

The second half of the 19th century was known as a corrupt era in U.S. politics. Using the censuses of 1850, 1860 and 1870, we find the wealth of all candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives during the period 1840-1870. We use this data to estimate several quantities of interest, including: How wealthy were these candidates compared to others in the population at the time? How did the wealth accumulation of these candidates compare to others in the population? How did the wealth levels and accumulation vary by party? How did those candidates who won a congressional race by a close margin compare with those who lost by a close margin? This last quantity provides a good estimate of the monetary “rents” to a congressional seat at that time.

1. Introduction

Corruption is bad. Everyone agrees. To take one prominent example, the World Bank states its position as follows: “The Bank has identified corruption as among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development. It undermines development by distorting the rule of law and weakening the institutional foundation on which economic growth depends. The harmful effects of corruption are especially severe on the poor, who are hardest hit by economic decline, are most reliant on the provision of public services, and are least capable of paying the extra costs associated with bribery, fraud, and the misappropriation of economic privileges.”¹

In the second half of the 19th century, the United States was a “developing” nation, or at least an industrializing one. And by most accounts, U.S. politics at the time was highly corrupt. Railroads paid bribes for massive land grants and loans. Steamship companies paid for lucrative mail routes, construction companies paid for canal contracts, and manufacturers and public utilities of all sorts paid for high tariffs and monopoly privileges. Politicians helped war profiteers sell shoddy goods to the government at inflated prices during the Civil War. Gross conflicts of interest were common and unpunished. Public officials sold a wide variety of services, including aid in obtaining appointments to military academies, assistance in lobbying for war claims and Indian claims, and tips about when the government was planning to sell gold. The spoils system dictated the distribution of government jobs. Electoral fraud was widespread. The press was partisan or bought off or both. Bosses dominated politics in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Maryland, and a railroad dominated in California. Local machines or bosses ran New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Cleveland, and a host of other cities. Simon Cameron summed up the political ethics of the era nicely with his famous line: “An honest politician is one who, when he is bought, will stay bought.”²

¹See <http://go.worldbank.org/K6AEEPROC0>.

²Simon Cameron was one of the first political “bosses” in the U.S.. He was a Senator from Pennsylvania and the first Secretary of War under Lincoln. He was forced to resign in 1862 because of rampant corruption in the granting of war contracts, and was sent to serve as minister to Russia. Cameron had a notorious

Reformers at the time identified two key problems: (1) politicians were no longer drawn from the pool of “the best men,” and (2) as a result they treated politics simply as a way to make money for themselves and their friends. For example, *Harper’s Weekly* lamented that “men of property and intelligence” had surrendered power “to men inferior in every proper recommendation... who follow politics just as any other money-making business.” The magazine went on to criticize “the pecuniary corruption omnipresent in our Legislative Halls, which controls land grants and steamer contracts, and is incarnated in that gigantic corruption-fund, the public printing.” The *Cincinnati Enquirer* described politicians as a “class of inferior men who have come out of public stations far richer than they went into them.” Even Ralph Waldo Emerson railed against the “class of privileged thieves who infest our politics... those well dressed well-bred fellows... who get into government and rob without stint and without disgrace.”³

Many later scholars agree with these claims. Summers (1987) writes, “In every way the decade before the Civil War was corrupt. The 1850s were as depraved as any other age, and, at least from the evidence available to historians, far more debauched than the 1840s” (page 14).⁴ Writing about the events of 1857, Stampf (1990) notes, “Corruption

reputation. Congressman Thaddeus Stevens once told Lincoln, “I don’t think that he would steal a red hot stove.” When Cameron demanded Stevens retract this statement, Stevens told Lincoln “I believe I told you he would not steal a red-hot stove. I will now take that back.” Cameron was known as a man “who never forgot a friend or forgave an enemy.”

³James Bryce’s description in *The American Commonwealth* is even more colorful: “A statesman of this type [ward politician] usually begins as a saloon or barkeeper, an occupation which enables him to form a large circle of acquaintances, especially among the ‘loafer’ class who have votes but no reason for using them one way more than another... But he may have started as a lawyer of the lowest kind, or lodging-house keeper, or have taken to politics after failure at store-keeping... They are usually vulgar, sometimes brutal, not so often criminal... Above them stand... the party managers, including the members of Congress and chief men in the State legislatures, and the editors of influential newspapers... What characterizes them as compared with the corresponding class in Europe is that their whole time is more frequently given to political work, that most of them draw an income from politics and the rest hope to do so, and that they come more largely from the poorer and less cultivated than from the higher ranks of society” (page 64-66).

⁴Summers goes on to argue that corruption was a factor leading to secession. In particular, it helped bolster the arguments of both abolitionists and Southern Rights men. The former argued that corruption enabled the “Slave Power” to dominate the national government. It achieved its goals, especially the extension of slavery into the territories, by bribing weak and venal northerner politicians. The latter argued that “only disunion could keep the South from being infected with Northern corruption, just as revolution had freed the colonists from the contagion of British practice in 1776” (page 290). Greenberg (1985) makes similar arguments.

was not a new phenomenon in American politics... but corruption had become distressingly common in this period of accelerating commercialization and industrial growth” (page 30). He explains the growth as follows: “Most of the financial corruption resulted from the temptations dangled before politicians by land speculators, railroad promoters, government contractors, and seekers after bank charters or street railway franchises. Often the politicians were themselves investors in western lands, town properties, railroad projects, or banking enterprises, and the distinction between the public good and private interests could easily become blurred in their minds” (Stamp, 1990, page 28). zzz corruption during civil war.⁵ Finally, the administration of Ulysses S. Grant is considered by many historians to be the most corrupt in U.S. history, and the post-Civil War period has been dubbed The Era of Good Stealings. In his discussion of the many scandals of the Grant administration, Josephson (1938) argues, “It is high time that we cease to think of the spoils of the General Grant Era as ‘accidental’ phenomena, as regrettable lapses into moral frailty... We must turn rather to examine the systematic, rational, organized nature of the plundering which was carried on at the time” (page 127).⁶ Sproat (1968) argues that most liberal reformers in the late 1860s longed for a bygone era when politicians were statesmen and gentlemen – “men of unbending integrity, ‘sturdy independence,’ and unimpeachable honest” (page 50). They viewed the typical politician of the post-civil war era as “a slave to organizational tyranny and a pawn of special interest” (page 51).

In this paper we assess these claims using a source of data never before exploited for this purpose, data on wealth from the U.S. censuses of 1850, 1860 and 1870. Specifically, we find the census records of virtually all serious congressional candidates during the period 1840-1870, and record their wealth, age, occupation, county of residence, and other household information. We then estimate how wealthy these candidates were relative to other groups in the population. We also estimate whether these candidates grew wealthier at faster rates than others in the population. Within the set of candidates we compare members of different

⁵Although, Brandes (19zz) argues that large war profits were due not mainly to corruption.

⁶For a revisionist view, see Summers (1993).

parties. In particular, we look for differences between members of the majority party and other parties. We also compare party and committee leaders with the ordinary rank-and-file. Finally, using a regression discontinuity approach that compares candidates who barely won office with those who barely lost, we obtain an estimate of the value of office that is arguably a causal effect of holding a congressional seat.

2. Data and Methods

As noted above, the censuses of 1850, 1860 and 1870 all record data on wealth. All three censuses contain data on the value of real estate wealth, and the 1860 and 1870 censuses also contain data on the value of personal wealth. All three of these censuses were administered in person, by U.S. assistant marshals. The exact instructions given to the enumerators for the 1860 census were as follows. For the Value of Real Estate: “Under heading 8, insert the value of the real estate owned by each individual enumerated. You are to obtain this information by personal inquiry of each head of a family, and are to insert the amount in dollars, be the estate located where it may. You are not to consider any question of lien or encumbrance; it is simply your duty to enter the value as given by the respondent.” Similarly, for the Value of Personal Estate: “Under heading 9, insert (in dollars) the value of personal property or estate. Here you are to include the value of all the property, possessions, or wealth of each individual which is not embraced in the column previous consist of what it may; the value of bonds, mortgages, notes, slaves, live stock, plate, jewels or furniture; in fine, the value of whatever constitutes the personal wealth of individuals. Exact accuracy may not be arrived at, but all persons should be encouraged to give a near and prompt estimate for your information. Should any respondent manifest hesitation or unwillingness to make a free reply on this or any other subject, you will direct attention to Nos. 6 and 13 of your general instructions and the 15th section of the law.”

There are several reasons to trust this data for our purposes. First, the information on the census was strictly confidential. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior stated the policy as follow: “... all marshals and assistants are expected to consider the facts intrusted to them

as if obtained exclusively for the use of the Government, and not to be used in any way to the gratification of curiosity, the exposure of any man's business or or pursuits, or for the private emolument of the marshals or assistants, who, while employed in this service, act as agents of the Government in the most confidential capacity." This policy was reinforced for the 1870 census, with the following: "No graver offense can be committed by assistant marshals than to divulge information acquired in the discharge of their duty. All disclosures should be treated as strictly confidential, with the exception hereafter to be noted in the case of the mortality schedule [where professional review by a local physician was authorized]. Information will be solicited of any breach of confidence on the part of assistant marshals. The [Department of Interior] is determined to protect the citizen in all his rights in the present census."

Second, even if people were worried that the information provided would not, in fact be kept confidential, there was no clear incentive for under-reporting or over-reporting wealth. There was no federal tax on wealth at the time, for example, and no estate tax. Personal vanity might have lead to some over-reporting.

Finally, almost of all of the behavior that allowed politicians to benefit from their office was perfectly legal. For example, there was virtually no regulation of "conflict of interest" of members of congress (or any other officeholders).

[Discussion of the many books and articles by economic historians using this data.]

In addition, we are checking with other sources. We have already checked with *The Rich Men of Massachusetts*. This book purports to give the wealth of (most of) the richest 1,500 men in Massachusetts, as of about 1851. As shown in Table 1, the correlation between with wealth reported in this book and the wealth recorded in the censuses of 1850 and 1860 are relatively high. More importantly, there is no evidence of significant under-reporting or over-reporting of politicians compared to non-politicians.

xxx growth in wealth by occupation can help uncover corruption? e.g. – if lawyers get really wealthy then it might simply be lots of new personal contacts, but if farmers or doctors get wealthy then it is more likely due to corruption?

getting wealthy AFTER serving in congress vs. DURING service?

3. Three Colorful Characters

Here we briefly describe three prominent figures of the era, Thurlow Weed, Fernando Wood, and Oakes Ames. This will allow us to illustrate key features of the data in a relatively entertaining fashion.

Thurlow Weed was editor of the Albany *Evening Journal* and the boss of the Whig Party in New York state. He was one of the most powerful politicians in New York for from the late 1830s through the early 1860s. He was a skilled political organizer and lobbyist who worked mainly behind the scenes – the only elected office he held was in the New York State Assembly. He played a major role in the passage of the state legislative act that created the New York Central Railroad, which was at that time the largest corporation in the United States. He was a close friend of William H. Seward and was credited with Seward’s gubernatorial victory in 1838. After the collapse of the Whigs he became an influential leader in the Republican Party, and pushed Seward for the Republican president nomination in 1860. However, his reputation as an unscrupulous machine politician was unpopular with many in the party, and may ultimately have cost Seward the nomination.⁷

Weed eventually became quite wealthy, and died leaving a fortune of around \$1,000,000. The sources of his wealth are unclear. He was implicated in some bribery scandals, and frequently accused of lobbying for measures in which he had a personal interest, but never indicted for any crime.⁸ He invested in railroads, ships, whisky, cotton, quicksilver, and other

⁷Brummer (1911, page 19) writes: “Up to 1860, he [Weed] had kept firm control over his party. He was another Warwick, making senators, governors, and state officers; and in the three decades previous to that year, but three state conventions refused to follow his lead. Speakers of the assembly had been wont to consult him when forming their committees. Those who aspired to office sought his influence. But beginning about 1860, the anti-Weed men raised their heads.” Less glowingly, Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, wrote in mid-August 1864 that Weed “is sagacious, unscrupulous, has ability and great courage, with little honest principle, is fertile in resources, a keen party tactician, but cannot win respect and confidence, for he does not deserve them.”

⁸In 1857, the firm Lawrence, Stone and Company supposedly paid \$87,000 in bribes to congressmen to help pass a reduction of the tariff on wool, and congressional testimony linked Weed to scandal. One example of lobbying with a conflict of interest was in 1860. Weed held shares in three New York City street railroads at the same time he was lobbying the state legislature for bills to charter and aid these railroads.

enterprises. He evidently made money during the Civil War trading in southern cotton. In any case, “the perquisites of influence and friendship” clearly played an important role (Van Deusen, 1947, page 283).⁹

As shown in Table 1, the census data reveal the growth of Weed’s fortune. He reported \$5,000 in real estate wealth in 1850, \$20,000 in real estate and \$30,000 in personal wealth in 1860, and \$70,000 in real estate and \$500,000 in personal wealth in 1870. This is consistent with other information about Weed’s wealth. For example, Van Deusen (1947, page 282) writes that “While the financial operations of the eighteen-fifties had added considerably to Weed’s income, he was probably not more than comfortably well off in 1861... By the middle eighteen-sixties, however, Weed had joined the ranks of the wealthy.” His New York property tax assessment was about \$20,000 in 1861 and \$50,000 in 1864, and he declared a taxable income of \$31,000 in 1864.

Fernando Wood was the Mayor of New York from 1855-1858 and 1861-1862, and he also served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1841-1843, 1863-1865, and 1867-1881. He was chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee for part of this time. Wood built his political base through Tammany Hall, and was Grand Sachem from 1850-1856, but was ousted in 1857 and formed a competing Democratic faction, Mozart Hall. He was accused of various corrupt deals while mayor, such as funneling inflated city contracts to his brother.

Wood also became rich, through shipping and investing in real estate. He had little wealth until the mid to late 1840s. For example, in 1844 he sought and obtained a patronage job as a local agent for the State Department, which paid just \$xxx per year. His wealth began with a real estate transaction. In 18xx, he purchased land in Manhattan for a home (far upper west side). He used \$3,500 of his wife’s money as a down payment and took a \$4,000 mortgage for the rest, to buy 150 acres. He later added 50 acres. Within 20 years the land was worth more than \$650,000 (Mushkat, 1990).

⁹One example is Weed’s dealing with the Quicksilver Mining Company. The company was involved in a title dispute on the land where its main mine was located, and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court. Weed was a friend of Leonard Sweet, who was a friend of Justice David Davis and had privileged access to the Court’s decision in the case (Van Deusen, 1947, pages 293-294).

The census data are quite consistent with this (see Table 1). He reported a modest real estate wealth of \$20,000 in 1850, but a massive fortune of \$1,200,000 in 1860. In the 1870 census the wealth columns for Wood are both blank. As noted above, a blank is supposed to mean that a person's wealth was negligible or zero. However, Wood's wealth in 1870 was surely not "negligible" – listed in his household were a coachman, two gardeners, and four domestic servants. The numbers for 1850 and 1860, however, are consistent with other data. He declared taxable wealth of \$25,000 in 1857. Moses Y. Beach guessed that Wood's wealth was \$200,000 in 1855, and Rueben Vose guessed it was \$500,000 in 1861. Mushkat (1990) writes: "None of these figures seems reasonable. The most credible information came from material Wood supplied for the 1860 census. He reported real estate worth \$1 million and personal property of \$200,000" (page 24).

Oakes Ames was a manufacturer from Massachusetts, and one of the most important figures in the building of the Union Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad.¹⁰ He was also influential in establishing the Republican Party in Massachusetts, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1863-1873. To many, he is best known in connection with the Credit Mobilier bribery scandal.¹¹

Ames provides another excellent example of how much conflict of interest was allowed at the time. Credit Mobilier of America was formed by the vice-president in charge of publicity for the Union Pacific Railroad, and was designed "to limit the liability of stockholders and maximize profits from construction." The company was the sole bidder for various construction contracts from Union Pacific (in 1864 it was received contracts to build about 600 miles of the Transcontinental Railroad). In 1867 Oakes Ames became head of Credit Mobilier, and

¹⁰The city of Ames, Iowa is named for him. Initially his company manufactured shovels, and he was nicknamed the "King of Spades".

¹¹In 1867, Ames sold shares in Credit Mobilier of America to members of Congress at prices greatly below their market value. Congress was at that time voting on federal subsidies that would directly benefit Credit Mobilier. The *New York Sun* exposed the scandal in 1872, and congress conducted an investigation in 1873. The House passed a resolution formally censuring Ames: "in seeking to secure congressional attention to the affairs of a corporation in which he was interested, and whose interest directly depended upon the legislation of Congress, by inducing members of Congress to invest in the stocks of said corporation." James Brooks was also censured. Evidently, the scandal did not damage the Ames family's reputation much. Just a decade later, Ames' son Oliver Ames became lieutenant-governor and then governor of Massachusetts.

in 1866, Oakes Ames' brother, Oliver Ames, became head of the Union Pacific Railroad. At the same time, Ames was serving as a member of the committee on railroads in congress. In fact, in 1865 "President Lincoln appealed to him to take control of the Union Pacific portion of the project."

Ames' wealth zz...

4. Wealthy Men

Comparing politicians and non-politicians.

5. Majority vs. Minority Party Status

Democrats did better between 1850 and 1860, but Republicans did better between 1860 and 1870?

5. The Monetary Rents to Serving in Congress

OLS vs. regression discontinuity.

6. Conclusions

- Both winners and losers were quite rich, even relative to an “elite” sample.
- Not sure yet about rents.

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Table xx: Census vs. Rich Men of Mass.			
	Real 1850	Real 1860	Total 1860
RMM Wealth	0.57 (.07)	0.65 (.10)	0.95 (.09)
Politician	0.13 (.12)	0.27 (.16)	0.05 (.14)
R-square	.55	.51	.60
N	455	319	326

Note, town-specific fixed-effects included in all regressions.

Table xx: Examples of Wealth as Reported in the Census, in Dollars							
	1850 Real	1860			1870		
		Real	Personal	Total	Real	Personal	Total
Thurlow Weed ¹	8,000	20,000	30,000	50,000	70,000	500,000	570,000
Fernando Wood	20,000	1,000,000	200,000	1,200,000	na	na	na
Oakes Ames ²	59,583	106,000	119,000	225,000	na	na	na
John A. Logan ¹	2,000	25,000	3,500	28,500	80,000	3,000	83,000
Simon Cameron ¹	34,100	100,000	unknown		225,000	425,000	650,000
Zach. Chandler ¹	18,000	200,000	100,000	300,000			
Roscoe Conkling ¹		5,000	11,000	16,000	45,000	45,000	90,000
Oliver P. Morton ¹	600	17,000	10,000	27,000	20,000	2,000	22,000
Benj. F. Butler ¹	25,000	75,000	83,000	158,000	200,000	250,000	450,000
Schuyler Colfax ²	1,000	4,000	8,000	12,000	10,000	40,000	50,000
James Brooks ²							
Jas. W. Patterson ²							
Henry Wilson ²							
Orsamus Matteson ³	25,000	75,000	25,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	400,000
William A. Gilbert ³	2,500	5,000	1,500	6,500	15,000	35,000	50,000
Francis S. Edwards ³							
William W. Welch ³							
Ben F. Whittemore ⁴							
John T. DeWeese ⁴							
Roderick R. Butler ⁴							
Wm. W. Belknap ⁵		10,000	400	10,400	50,000	50,000	100,000
Coles Bashford ⁶	na	12,000	1,500	13,500	15,000	10,000	25,000
Abraham Lincoln	na	5,000	12,000	17,000	dead	dead	dead

¹ Known as party “bosses.”

² Implicated in Credit Mobilier.

³ Implicated in 1857 Minnesota railroad land grant bribery scandal.

⁴ Sold appointments to military academies.

⁵ Impeached in 1876 for taking bribes in selling of Native American trading posts.

⁶ Took bribe while Governor of Wisconsin during LaCrosse & Milwaukee Railroad Scandal.

Table xx: Wealth as Reported in the Census, in Dollars									
	Medians			Means			90th Percentile		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Real Estate Wealth									
IPUMS	0	0	0	1,105	901	1,232	3,000	2,000	3,000
Elite	0	400	1,000	3,005	3,925	6,040	6,000	10,000	15,000
Lawyers	150	1,000	1,500	6,753	7,246	7,950	18,500	15,000	25,000
Others	0	400	1,000	2,699	3,686	5,910	6,000	9,000	15,000
Politicians	5,323	10,000	20,000	14,832	27,322	49,787			
Lawyers	4,000	9,000	15,000	11,286	20,584	34,622			
Others	8,000	15,600	23,500	19,383	36,220	72,831			
Personal Wealth									
IPUMS	–	0	0	–	446	576	–	800	1,000
Elite	–	700	1,000	–	3,132	4,656	–	7,000	10,000
Lawyers	–	600	900	–	3,557	3,051	–	9,800	10,000
Others	–	700	1,000	–	3,102	4,765	–	7,000	10,000
Politicians	–	5,000	10,000	–	18,817	39,803	–		
Lawyers	–	4,000	6,000	–	10,047	23,374	–		
Others	–	8,000	15,000	–	30,398	64,766	–		
Total Wealth (Real Estate+Personal)									
IPUMS	–	0	0	–	1,347	1,808	–	3,100	4,060
Elite	–	1,900	2,800	–	7,058	10,696	–	15,250	24,000
Lawyers	–	2,040	3,000	–	10,803	11,001	–	23,500	30,000
Others	–	1,900	2,800	–	6,788	10,675	–	15,000	23,000
Politicians	–	18,350	35,000	–	46,139	89,591	–		
Lawyers	–	14,000	28,470	–	30,630	57,995	–		
Others	–	29,900	48,000	–	66,618	137,596	–		

Sample sizes are as follows:

Group	Subgroup	1850	1860	1870
IPUMS	Total	30,909	91,342	123,900
IPUMS	Elite	2,202	3,698	5,049
IPUMS	Lawyers	166	249	321
IPUMS	Others	2,036	3,449	4,728
Politicians	Total	806	1144	844
Politicians	Lawyers	453	651	509
Politicians	Others	353	493	335

Table xx: Wealth of Politicians as Reported in the Census, in Dollars						
	Medians			Means		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Real Estate Wealth						
Winners	5,000	10,000	19,000	15,350	28,705	49,510
Losers	6,000	10,625	20,000	13,551	23,851	50,451
Democrats	5,000	10,000	18,000	12,978	29,188	47,454
Whigs	8,000	15,000	20,000	20,921	33,147	61,483
Republicans	3,800	9,000	19,000	11,153	21,457	48,234
Leaders						
Rank & File						
Personal Wealth						
Winners	–	5,000	10,000	–	18,383	44,784
Losers	–	4,500	8,000	–	19,905	27,900
Democrats	–	5,000	8,000	–	20,908	34,503
Whigs	–	5,350	10,000	–	23,399	59,141
Republicans	–	5,000	10,000	–	13,213	42,053
Leaders	–			–		
Rank & File	–			–		
Total Wealth (Real Estate+Personal)						
Winners	–	19,000	35,000	–	47,089	94,294
Losers	–	17,516	35,000	–	43,755	78,351
Democrats	–	18,000	30,000	–	50,096	81,957
Whigs	–	25,000	40,000	–	56,546	120,623
Republicans	–	15,000	36,000	–	34,669	90,287
Leaders	–			–		
Rank & File	–			–		

Sample sizes are as follows:

Subgroup	1850	1860	1870
Winners	574	818	595
Losers	232	326	249
Democrats	345	513	394
Whigs	191	166	95
Republicans	201	375	305
Leaders	zz	zz	zz
Rank & File	zz	zz	zz

Table xx: Changes in Wealth as Reported in the Census, in Dollars				
	Change 1850-1860		Change 1860-1870	
	Nominal	Percent	Nominal	Percent
Real Estate Wealth				
IPUMS Synth. Cohorts		94.5		91.5
Politicians	20,021	100.0	27,875	64.8
Winners	21,934	100.9	28,894	63.0
Losers	15,839	97.8	25,597	68.6
Democrats	23,683	106.5	21,258	58.8
Whigs	15,866	69.4	37,399	51.0
Republicans	16,015	116.4	29,841	82.9
Leaders				
Rank & File				
Personal Wealth				
IPUMS Synth. Cohorts	–	–		65.2
Politicians	–	–	40,561	78.5
Winners	–	–	52,801	85.0
Losers	–	–	13,174	64.0
Democrats	–	–	43,055	67.6
Whigs	–	–	28,495	64.8
Republicans	–	–	33,798	110.2
Leaders	–	–		
Rank & File	–	–		
Total Wealth (Real Estate+Personal)				
IPUMS Synth. Cohorts	–	–		78.3
Politicians	–	–	68,437	76.6
Winners	–	–	81,694	76.9
Losers	–	–	38,771	75.9
Democrats	–	–	64,313	68.8
Whigs	–	–	65,893	56.7
Republicans	–	–	63,639	101.4
Leaders	–	–		
Rank & File	–	–		

Table xx: Summary Information on Congressional Candidates					
Number of Races	=	3,671			
Number of Close Races	=	1,698			
Number of Candidates	=	5,577			
Number of Democrats	=	2,446			
Number of Whigs	=	1,134			
Number of Republicans	=	813			
		Won First Race		Lost First Race	
No. who run 1 time		703	37.7%	2,819	83.5%
No. who run 2+ times		1,160	63.3%	556	16.5%
Average no. of runs		2.05		1.27	
No. who win 0 times		0	0%	3,188	94.5%
No. who win 1 time		1,004	53.9%	102	3.0%
No. who win 2+ times		859	46.1%	85	2.5%
Average no. of wins		1.76		0.10	
Avg. pct. of races won		89%		3%	

Table xx: First Stage Cross Tabulation Statistics			
		Won First Race	
		0	1
Won During 1850s	0	364	27
	1	63	370
		Won First Race	
		0	1
Won During 1860s	0	267	24
	1	42	271

Table xx: First Stage Regression Analysis				
	Won During 1850s	Wins During 1850s	Won During 1860s	Wins During 1860s
Won First Race	0.78 (.02)	1.11 (.06)	0.78 (.02)	1.14 (.06)
Constant	0.15 (.02)	0.25 (.04)	0.14 (.02)	0.20 (.03)
R-square	.62	.33	.61	.37

Robust standard errors in parenthesis.

Sample for 1850s = All candidates who received a vote share between .45 and .55 in their first race for congress held between 1840 and 1859.

Sample for 1860s = All candidates who received a vote share between .45 and .55 in their first race for congress held between 1840 and 1869.

TABLE WITH SECOND STAGE

Dates of Congresses and Partisan Composition				
Cong	Dates	Senate	House of Reps.	President
27	5/31/41 - 3/3/1843	29W, 22D (W)	142W, 98 D + 2 (W)	John Tyler (np)
28	12/4/43 - 3/3/1845	29W, 23D (W)	72W, 147 D + 4 (D)	John Tyler (np)
29	12/1/45 - 3/3/1847	22W, 34D (D)	79W, 142 D + 6 (D)	James K. Polk (D)
30	12/6/47 - 3/3/1849	21W, 38D + 1 (D)	116W, 110 D + 4 (W)	James K. Polk (D)
31	12/3/49 - 3/3/1851	25W, 35D + 2 (D)	108W, 113 D + 11 (D)	Z. Taylor/Fillmore (W)
32	12/1/51 - 3/3/1853	23W, 36D + 3 (D)	85W, 127 D + 7 (D)	Millard Fillmore (W)
33	12/5/53 - 3/3/1855	22W, 38D + 2 (D)	71W, 157 D + 6 (D)	Franklin Pierce (D)
34	12/3/55 - 3/3/1857	39D + 23 (D)	83 D + 151 (?)	Franklin Pierce (D)
35	12/7/57 - 3/3/1859	20R, 41D + 2 (D)	90R, 132 D + 15 (D)	James Buchanan (D)
36	12/5/59 - 3/3/1861	26R, 38D + 2 (D)	116R, 83 D + 39 (R)	James Buchanan (D)
37	7/4/61 - 3/3/1863	31R, 15D + 3 (R)	108R, 44 D + 30 (R)	Abraham Lincoln (R)
38	12/7/63 - 3/3/1865	33R, 10D + 5 (R)	86R, 72 D + 27 (R)	Abraham Lincoln (R)
39	12/4/65 - 3/3/1867	39R, 11D + 3 (R)	136R, 38 D + 19 (R)	Andrew Johnson (U)
40	3/4/67 - 3/3/1869	57R, 9D (R)	173R, 47 D + 4 (R)	Andrew Johnson (U)
41	3/4/69 - 3/3/1871	62R, 12D (R)	171R, 67 D + 5 (R)	Ulysses S. Grant (R)
Average number of days in session per congress = 186				

Examples of Actual and Alleged Malfeasance, 1850-1870

1850s steamship mail contracts (accusations of congressional bribery by “steam beggars”)
1856 congressional bribery, reduction of wool tariff
1857 congressional bribery, Minnesota railroad land grant
1857 congressional bribery accusations, wool tariff reduction
1857 Wisconsin statewide bribery, La Crosse & Milwaukee railroad land grant
1855 bribery and fraud in granting a charter for the Bank of the State of Indiana
1851-1853 New York state canal repair contracts (“\$9 Million Dollar Steal”)
1856 Ohio Board of Public Works canal maintenance and repair contracts
1850s two Michigan State Treasurers stole money (also destroyed incriminating records)
1847-1857 two Ohio State Treasurers stole money (one fled to Canada to avoid prosecution)
1857-1860 multiple scandals in War Department (Sec. of War John B. Floyd was indicted)
1857-1860 multiple scandals in Navy Department (favoritism in contracts on ships, engines, coal, lumber)
1854-1872 multiple scandals by Tammany Hall politicians (“Tweed Ring” supposedly stole \$40-\$200 million; William Tweed convicted in 1873)
1861-1864 multiple Civil War contract scandals (Sec. of War Simon Cameron fired)
1864 congressional bribery accusations, Whisky tax
1867 congressional bribery, Credit Mobilier (exposed in 1873)
1869 Gould-Fisk Gold Conspiracy (“Gold Ring” and Black Friday crash)
1870 congressmen sold appointments to military academies
18??-1875 Whisky Ring (exposed in 1875 but began much earlier)
1869-1877 multiple scandals in Grant administration (many involving Orville E. Babcock)

Overview of the LaCrosse & Milwaukee Railroad Scandal

In 1857 several railroads competed for the land grant in the state; scandal broke in 1858 RR was in danger of going bankrupt, and creditors demanded an accounting, which yielding a number of interesting items (and helped push the company further into bankruptcy)

RR spent over \$800,000 to bribe various federal and Wisconsin officials

\$105,000 to congressmen for federal approval of the land grant (in 1856 – this gave land to Wisconsin, but left it to the state to decide which railroad(s) would receive the grant)

Bribes to 59 assemblymen and 19 state senators

\$10,000 to state supreme court Justice Abram Smith

\$17,000 to state house clerks to expedite business

\$50,000 in stocks and \$15,000 in cash to governor (Coles Bashford, Republican; he was forced to leave the state and went to Arizona; the governor there appointed him as the territory's first Attorney General and President Grant later appointed him as the Secretary of State for the territory)

\$25,000 to silence Horace A. Tenney (key member of the Wisconsin state legislative committee investigating the scandal)

Bribes to newspapers, including \$10,000 to the editor of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*

George W. Parker, one of the state assemblymen, explained why the railroad's payments were not bribes: They were made *after* voting for the railroad's bill, not before. Moreover, having adjourned, they "were no longer a Legislature... [so] our acceptance could in no way be considered or regarded as a bribe... it could in no way affect our honor or integrity as men... and further, that coming at the time it did, and especially when we remembered that the Company had just received at our hands 3 to \$10,000,000 worth of lands as a gratuity, we could not find it in our hearts to refuse." (Summers, page 112)