

## The Politics of Slavery

Robert S. Todd, the Whig candidate, was widely believed to be the “emancipation candidate” because of his longtime association with Henry Clay. Todd, however, asserted he would not “interfere with slavery as a vested right in any manner whatsoever.” Todd’s record both as senator and as a representative was used against him: He had opposed repealing the Nonimportation Act of 1833 that prevented slaves from being brought into the state for the purpose of sale. After its repeal in early 1849, Todd also voted against the Immunity Act that protected those who had illegally imported slave merchandise into Kentucky.

Opposing Todd was Col. Oliver Anderson, also a Whig, who ran on the Union Party ticket. Anderson owned a hundred slaves and was considered a strong opponent of emancipation, calling himself “a thorough pro-slavery man,” asserting slavery was “recognized and countenanced by both Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.”

The election of Aug. 6-8, 1849, produced a sweeping victory for the proslavery Union ticket.

Abraham Lincoln followed the campaign events from Springfield, Illinois, recalling:

*There is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us; the signal failure of Henry Clay, and other good and great men, in 1849, to*

*effect any thing [sic] in favor of gradual emancipation in Kentucky ...  
extinguishes that hope utterly.*

– Abraham Lincoln, August 15, 1855

letter to Judge George Robertson of Lexington