

# Curator's Choice

## A Familiar Face

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Voters often spread word about which political candidate they are supporting by showcasing objects with catchy slogans and the name of their favorite candidate. Pins, hats, flags, bumper stickers, and shirts in an array of styles and designs are the most popular way voters proudly show their support. Historically, one way that political candidates spread the word of their campaign was by producing their likeness on everyday objects, such as tobacco pipes (National Park Service: n.d.). Known as Presidential or campaign pipes, these pipes reflected a candidate's likeness and usually included their name. An example of which is a Franklin Pierce pipe found during the excavations of the 19th and 20th century Maynard-Burgess House site in Annapolis, Maryland (Mullins and Warner 1993: 76) (Figure A).

Anthropomorphic pipes, or face pipes, depict the faces of mostly well-known characters or political candidates (Cande 2019). These pipes came into fashion during the nineteenth century and depicted an array of famous people from George Washington and Ulysses S. Grant to Emily Bronte. (Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest 2016). The Franklin Pierce pipe was made from red clay with a clear lead glaze. With markings of "FR. PIERCE" on one side and "PRESIDENT" on another, this design was produced from 1853-1858 (Bell 2004: 52).

Franklin Pierce, a Democrat from New Hampshire, served as a Democratic representative and a senator before winning the Presidential nomination in 1852 (Figure B). A veteran of the Mexican-American war and support of pro-slavery states, Pierce won the popular vote against his Whig candidate General Winfield Scott. Pierce served as 14th President of the United States from 1853-1857 and was the youngest person ever elected to the office.

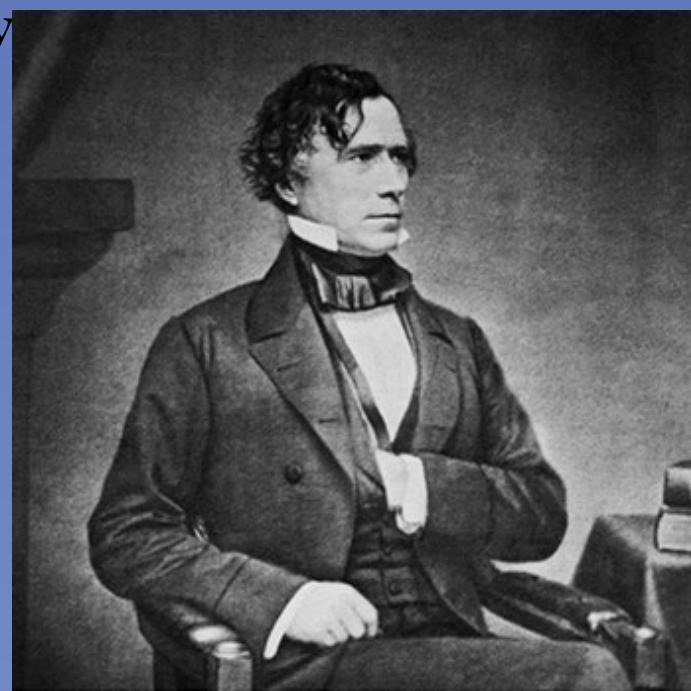


Figure B. Franklin Pierce served as the 14th president of the United States from 1853-1857 (The White House).

During his time as President, the country saw national tensions only rise as the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 led to heightened tension between the North and South. This act allowed states to determine whether they were a free state or a slave state. Kansas



Figure A. The right side of the pipe reads "PRESIDENT," the left side "FR."

became a battleground as citizens flooded the state, trying to influence the state's decision. These tensions came to a tipping point as violence erupted in a series of violent altercations between groups, dubbing the area "bleeding Kansas." This series of bloody clashes between abolitionists led by John Brown and pro-slavery settlers became a precursor to the Civil War (American Battlefield Trust: n.d., Figure C). Pierce's presidency represented the political conflict and turmoil that defined this time in America's history.

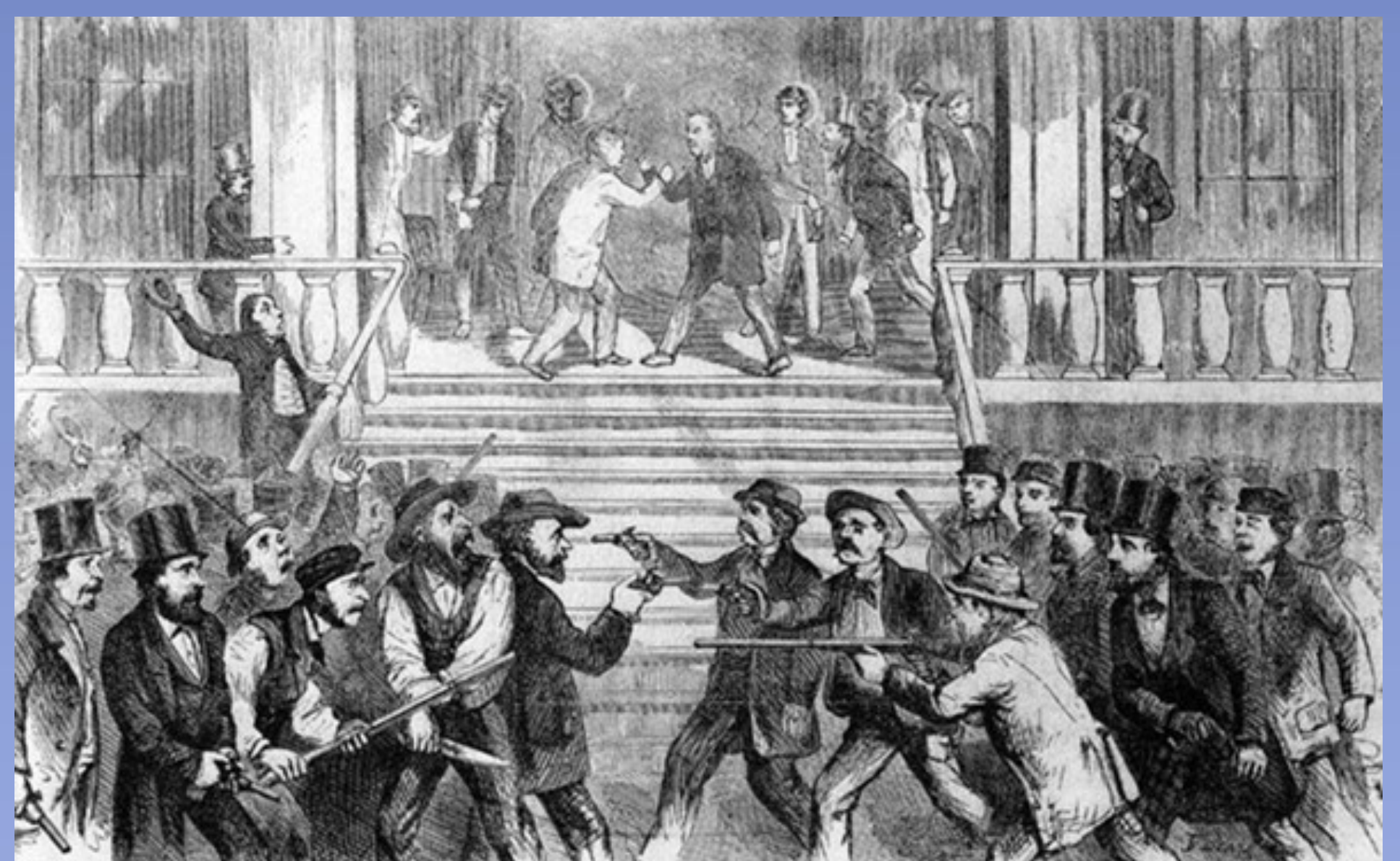


Figure C. Bleeding Kansas Clash between proslavery and antislavery groups in Fort Scott, Kansas Territory, 1850s (Encyclopedia Britannica).

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