

# BLEEDING KANSAS

RULES BOOKLET



 DECISION  
GAMES



# BLEEDING

*Horace Greeley coined the term "Bleeding Kansas" in the Republican New York Tribune in the mid-1850s. It now refers to the territorial violence that occurred in Kansas from 1856 to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Historians consider the struggle between pro- and anti-slavery forces there one of, if not the, key factor in the outbreak of Civil War.*

Large tracts of Western land had been acquired following the Mexican American War. The U.S. had also obtained sweeping swaths of land from relocated American Indian tribes. The nation now had to decide if the states to be carved from the territories were to allow slavery or remain free. Influential Illinois senator, Stephen Douglas, nicknamed the "Little Giant" for his short stature but commanding presence, proposed Popular Sovereignty. In plain words, he suggested that the people of each proposed state choose for themselves.

Douglas authored and helped pass the Kansas-Nebraska Act turning his proposal into law. Unfortunately, his compromise negated the Missouri Compromise. This angered Northerners who saw that slavery could now be made legal in the north. It angered

Southerners who saw this as a clever ploy to prevent the spread of slavery by filling the territories with anti-slavery immigrants. Both sides determined to outpace the other and the race was on to fill the Kansas territory with like-minded settlers. New England abolitionists formed immigrant societies to financially aid in the transport of settlers into Kansas. Southerners formed Blue Lodges, secret societies to combat abolitionist goals. Anti-slavery settlers were provided Sharps rifles (nicknamed Beecher Bibles) to defend themselves. Missouri sent hordes of Border ruffians into the Kansas Territory to harass and clear out anti-slavery sentiment. Tensions rapidly escalated as both sides built their own factional towns. Soon brawling and blame turned into bullets and burning.

The first territorial Election Day was a joke. So many armed Missourians skewed the voting that, although most anti-slavery voters were too intimidated to go to the polls, results revealed the vote total more than doubled legal registered voters. A pro-slavery legislature swept into office. Outraged by the fraudulent election, the anti-slavery faction elected an opposition government and the Governor declared the territory in insurrection.



# KANSAS

The first major incident occurred with the sacking of Lawrence, an anti-slavery stronghold, by a large pro-slavery force. John Brown retaliated by massacring pro-slavery settlers. This sparked additional reprisals, murders, raids, and armed confrontations. Across the nation, Northerners and Southerners alike were riveted on headlines exaggerating the growing violence. The caning and crippling of abolitionist Senator Sumner on the Senate floor, the Supreme Court Decision against Dredd Scott, the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, the rise of the Know Nothing Party and Lincoln's Wide-Awake Army, even Brown's infamous raid on Harper's Ferry and his subsequent hanging, all of these events inflamed the unrest in the territories and the country at large. Kansas did enter the Union as a free state but only as the country braced for war.

*To my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to "game" this inflammatory period, and for good reason. It is extremely complex and deals with the uncomfortable history of slavery. However, it is a period that is vital to the understanding of the origins of our country's crucible conflict—the Civil War. I have therefore created a two player, card-driven game that is simple to understand, plays quickly,*

*and will leave players with a much better understanding of exactly what happened in and to "Bleeding Kansas."*

*One player represents pro-slavery forces, the other represents free-soilers or abolitionist forces. Using card symbols (representing: Politics, Influence, Cooperation, Movement, Migration, Skirmish, and Burn) players manipulate political position and population cubes on the map through political contests, intimidation, and outright clashes. The game progresses through four election cycles. During each election, players determine the vote count in all counties containing settlements. The game ends after the final territorial vote.*

*Note that the game is focused on building influence and converting that into votes, as well as through politics and intimidation. There was far less "blood-letting" in Bleeding Kansas than we have been led to believe. Fatalities during the unrest probably numbered no more than 60 poor souls. Nevertheless, this was a pivotal conflict.*

*-John Poniske*

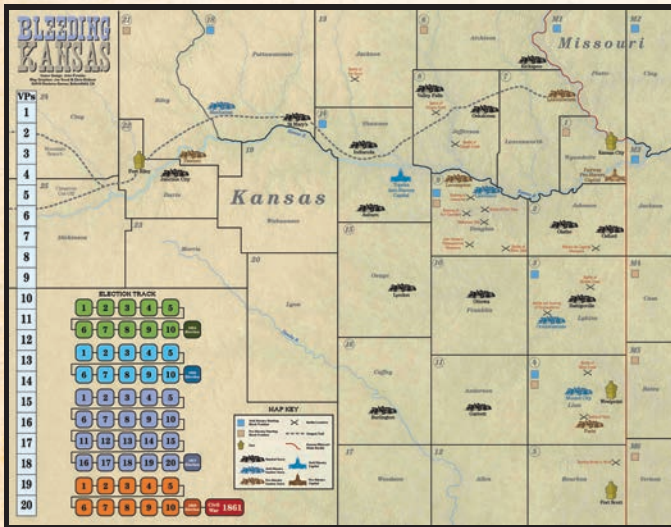
## Contents

- 40 White Migrant Cubes
- 30 Blue Anti-Slavery Faction Cubes
- 30 Butternut Pro-Slavery Faction Cubes
- 1 Black Federal Troops Cube
- 2 Six-sided Dice
- 55 Cards
- 100 Markers
- 1 Mounted Game Board
- 1 Rules Book
- 1 Campaign Analysis

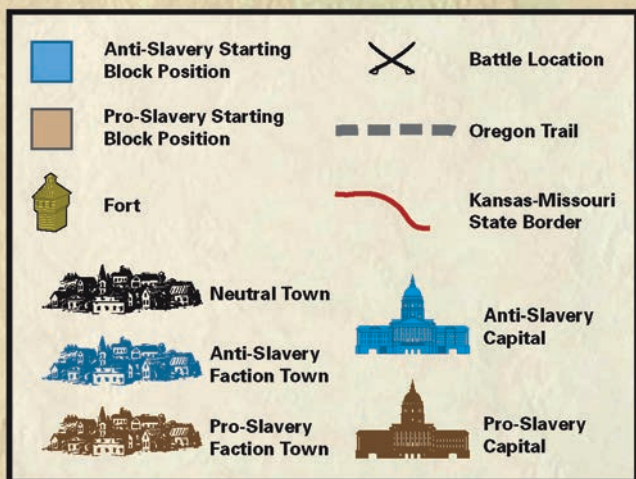


## Map

The map shows the area in which the conflict occurred. Note the counties that have settlements and count toward elections have their numbers circled for easy identification. Also, the various battle sites are only for reference—they do not affect play.



## MAP KEY



## Cubes

**Bleeding Kansas** is a two-player game. Each player represents one of the two competing factions represented in the struggle with colored cubes. The number of cubes is a limit.

### Butternut cubes



These cubes represent pro-slavery forces, hereafter known as Pro forces.

### Blue cubes



These cubes represent anti-slavery forces, hereafter known as Anti forces.

### White cubes



These cubes represent Migrants moving into and through the Kansas territory. These cubes have not taken sides in the conflict but may be converted by either player using the Influence card symbol. Hereafter these are known as Migrants.

### Black cube



This oversized cube represents the Federal Troops stationed at Fort Leavenworth. They played a key role in keeping peace in the Kansas Territory. Skirmish, Burn, and Influence may not be performed in a county occupied by the black Federal Troops cube (see Cooperation action). Hereafter known as Troops.

## Rules

These rules are color-coded. **Red** text identifies important rules, clarifications, and special circumstances to make them easy to locate. **Blue** text identifies examples of play. **Green** text identifies important play notes.

## How to Win

The player with the most accumulated points by the end of the fourth election wins the game. Points are earned from three sources:

1. **Election results:** the winner of each election earns Victory Points (VP) equal to the margin of victory.
2. **Election track marker majority:** the player with the majority of Political and Violence markers on the Election track at the start of an Election count earns 2 VP.
3. **Card Coordination Bonus:** a player turning in a set of three cards with six different symbols earns 1 VP.

## Set-Up

1. Place 23 white migrant cubes, one in every Missouri county (M1–M6), and one in all Kansas counties possessing one or more settlements (county numbers are circled for easy identification—each contains at least one town, capital, or fort).
2. Place 8 butternut Pro faction cubes, one in every county possessing a butternut square in the upper left corner of the county.
3. Place 8 blue Anti faction cubes, one in every county possessing a blue square in the upper left corner of the county.
4. Place the Federal Troops cube in Leavenworth County, Kansas.
5. Place the Victory Point markers above the 1 on the VP track.
6. Set the Burn markers off beside the VP track.
7. Give each player their faction's Politics and Violence markers.
8. Shuffle the card deck, deal two cards to each player, and place it to one side of the map.
9. Each player rolls a die. The player with the higher roll goes first. Re-roll ties.

## Turn Sequence

1. Active player draws one card then,
  - a. Plays one of the three cards in hand face-up on the table.
  - b. Declares the symbol(s) to be used (or that the card is a discard with no action). If the card has the player's faction star, he may play each symbol once (either one first), one symbol twice, or special two symbol actions.
  - c. Takes action(s) based on symbol choice in any order.
  - d. Places Political, Violence, and/or Burn markers as indicated by actions.
  - e. If the card has an opposing faction star, the Opposing player takes an action using either symbol.
  - f. If a marker is placed on an Election space, proceed to an Election.
  - g. **Instead of playing one card and proceeding through steps a–f, turn up all three cards to show a Coordination Bonus, records 1 VP, and draw two new cards.**
2. Opponent becomes Active player and completes steps a–g.
3. Whenever the card deck runs out, reshuffle the discards and continue the game.

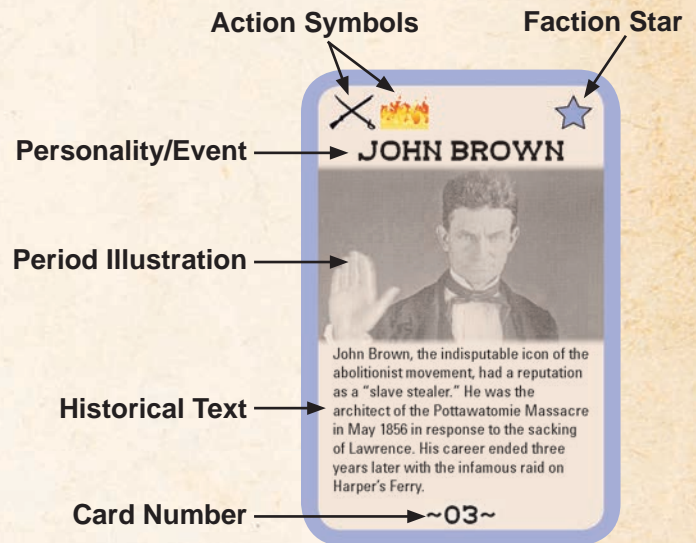
The game ends after the 1859 election count is completed. Player with the most VP wins.

Bleeding Kansas

## Cards

Players share a 53 card deck consisting of 52 historic personality and event cards and one Insurrection Joker. Each card other than the Joker displays, in the upper left corner of the card, two of the seven symbols used in the game: Skirmish, Burn, Politics, Migration, Movement, Cooperation, and Influence. A third symbol, Faction Star, may also appear in the upper right corner along with a blue or brown frame. Players choose and use these symbols to take actions and affect the course of the game.

We urge you to take the time to read the brief background information on these events and personalities. In doing so you may obtain a more in-depth understanding of how our country was led to and over the brink into Civil War. If you are drawn to further research on one or more of the topics here presented, we consider our efforts more than successful.



## Action Symbols

Each card symbol allows a player to take a different type of action in the game.



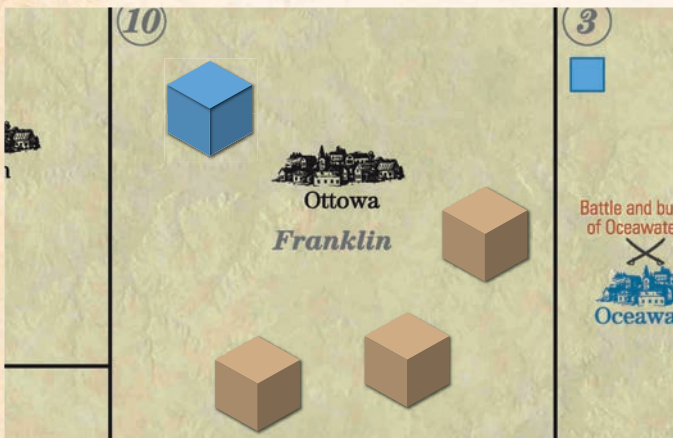
# SKIRMISH



When playing a skirmish symbol, you are ordering an armed conflict in one county containing faction CUBES from BOTH sides (butternut and blue) in order to disband or displace your opponent's forces. In a Skirmish, both players roll a die.

1. Each side adds their faction points to their die roll. The side having the greater result wins.

Example: Anti forces with 1 blue cube Skirmish with Pro forces with 3 butternut cubes in Franklin County. The Anti player adds +1 to their die roll while Pro adds +3 to their die roll.



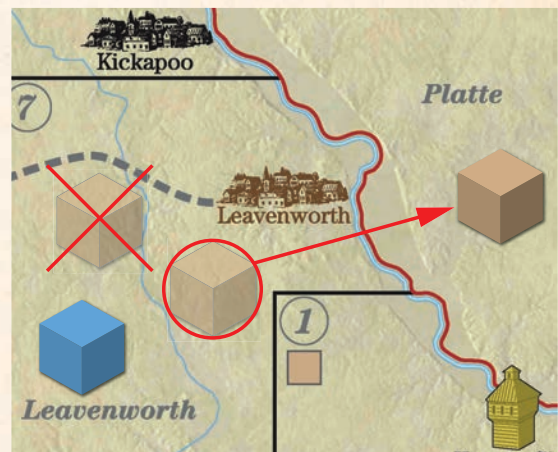
2. Each faction cube adds one faction point. Migrant cubes are ignored.
3. Each faction town (butternut or blue color) adds one faction point for that faction. Towns are not damaged in a skirmish. They can only be damaged through the play of Burn symbols. Non-faction towns and forts never count.
4. Each faction's capital adds two faction points. Capitals are not damaged in a skirmish. They can only be damaged through the play of Burn symbols.
5. If the results are a tie, nothing happens on the map.
6. If the winning side wins the modified die roll by one or two, retreat the losing side's cubes that survive the engagement into adjacent counties.
7. The winning side moves one of the losing side's cubes, then the losing side moves one cube, alternating until all cubes have been moved out of the county in which the Skirmish occurred. Note: cubes moved into an adjacent county that already has the maximum of five cubes of that faction move on to a second county that is within the cube limit.
8. If the winning side wins the modified die roll by three or more, the winning side removes rather than retreats the first cube. This cube is returned to the player's off-map pool and can return to play later. The rest of the losing force is retreated as above (i.e. the second cube would be retreated by the losing side, etc.).

9. If there is no opposing faction cube in a county, a skirmish is not possible. A player may not skirmish with a town or capital, only other faction cubes.
10. The reverse is also true. If the only faction support a player has in a county is a faction town or capital, a skirmish may not be launched against enemy cubes in that county.
11. When the skirmish ends, regardless of the outcome, the Active player places one of his Violence markers on the current election track.
12. When playing two Skirmish symbols (see Faction Star), conduct two Skirmishes, or declare "Old Sacramento" and conduct one Skirmish with a +2 modifier. This was a small artillery piece stolen from a federal arsenal that each side controlled for a time during the conflict.

Example: Anti forces with 1 faction cube invade Leavenworth County containing two Pro cubes and one Pro faction town. The Anti force player rolls a 6 and adds +1 for a modified total of 7. The Pro force player rolls a 1 and adds +3 for a modified total of 4.



Since the Anti force wins with a difference of 3 (7-4=3), the Anti force player removes one of the Pro faction cubes, then the Anti faction moves the remaining cube to an adjacent county.



The Anti player places a Violence marker on the election track.

# BURN



When playing a Burn symbol, a player must have one or more of his faction cubes in any county containing a target town or capital and the Burn marker can only be placed on a faction town or capital.

1. Place a Burn Marker on a targeted faction town or capital. A Burn Marker negates one faction point if placed in a county that has a faction town or capital.
2. The Federal Troops cube can be moved to a county by a Cooperation action to prevent Burn marker placement.
3. Burn markers can be removed by Cooperation action.
4. A county can only contain Burn Markers equal to the number of towns and/or capital occupying the county. A county with only one town or capital can contain only one Burn Marker, a county holding two faction towns (Douglas and Linn)—two Burn Markers, one from each side.
5. Note that a capital can only have one Burn marker placed on it. Since a capital is worth two faction points, a damaged capital still counts as one faction point.
6. When playing two Burn symbols (see Faction Star), place Burn markers in two different counties, or a single Burn marker can be placed in a county adjacent to a county with a faction cube.
7. Once you have placed a Burn Marker, place one of your Violence markers on the current Election track.
8. If you play two Burn symbols—you also place two Violence markers on the election track as well.

Example: The Pro Player plays Card #4 (Sacking of Lawrence) in Douglas County where each side has 3 cubes and a faction town. They choose to use the Burn symbol to place a Burn marker on Lawrence.



Then they use the faction star to play a Skirmish action now that they have reduced the Anti die roll modifier. Both sides roll 5's so the Pro player wins ( $5+4=9$  versus  $5+3=8$ ) and the Anti cubes are retreated. The Pro player places two Violence markers on the election track (one for the Burn action and one for the Skirmish action).



# MIGRATION



Move all migrant (white) cubes one county west. Start at the highest numbered county (#25). Move any migrant cubes one county to the west. A county is defined as farther west if its western border is farther west than the county the migrant cubes is exiting. If there is a map edge on the western edge of the county (counties #16, 17, and 20), the cube(s) may exit the map at the player's discretion. Counties are limited to five white cubes; if all counties to the west have five white cubes, the excess are removed.

Movement can be directly west, northwest, or southwest, and a diagonal move (one through a corner such as M2 to 7: the Northeast most Missouri county to Leavenworth) is allowed. Once all migrant cubes have been moved, add one new migrant cube to each of the six Missouri counties up to the availability of white cubes.

When playing two Migration symbols (see Faction Star), move each migrant cube one or two adjacent counties, add one new migrant cube to each of the six Missouri counties, and place two additional migrants anywhere on the map.

Migration also occurs following each of the first three elections (see Elections-Migration).

Example: Pro player uses the migration action. They move the white cubes (starting from the left side) to counties west of their current location. The Pro player chooses to move the white cubes to counties that would benefit them more than the Anti player. Then they add a single white cube to each Missouri county.

**BLEEDING KANSAS**  
Game Designer: John Pevske  
Map Graphics: Jan Tveit & Chris Dickson  
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**VPs** 24

1	Clay
2	Mountain Branch
3	
4	
5	Cimarron Cut-Off
6	
7	Dickinson
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	

**ELECTION TRACK**

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

**MAP KEY**

- Add Slavery Symbol
- Block Position
- Pro-Slavery Symbol
- Block Position
- Fort
- Pro-Slavery Faction Town
- Anti-Slavery Faction Town
- Pro-Slavery Capital
- Anti-Slavery Capital
- Pro-Slavery Capital
- Anti-Slavery Capital
- Pro-Slavery Capital
- Anti-Slavery Capital



# POLITICS



When playing a Politics symbol, place a Political marker on the lowest box number in the current Election track.

If you play two Politics symbols (see Faction Star)—place two Political Markers on the current election track or remove two opposing Political markers from the current election track.

Empty spaces will be filled by Violence and Politics markers beginning again with the lowest numbered open space.



# MOVEMENT

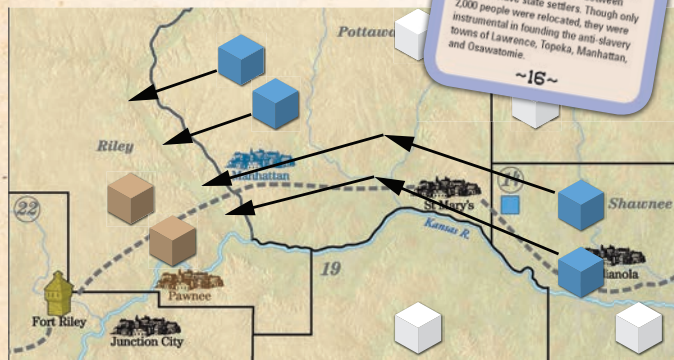
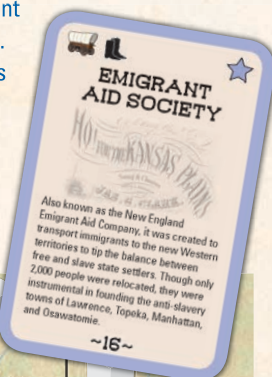


When playing a Movement symbol, move any or all of your faction cubes (butternut or blue) in one Missouri or Kansas County to one or more adjacent counties.

Diagonal moves are allowed. Cubes need not be moved to the same destination. Players may not exceed five faction cubes in any one destination county. If there are more than five cubes of one faction in a county, remove the excess to the faction cube pile off map.

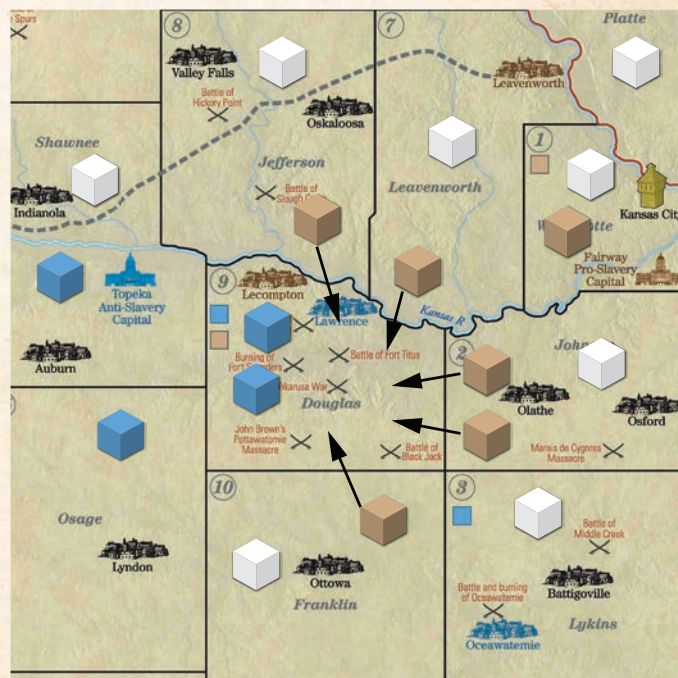
When playing two Movement symbols (see Faction Star), conduct two Movement actions as above, or conduct a Rally move: designate one county and move up to five of your faction cubes from adjacent counties into the designated county.

Example: Anti player plays Card #16 (Emigrant Aid Society) and uses the Movement action. They decide to move two of their blue cubes from Shawnee county to Pottawatomie county. Then, thanks to the faction star, they move four blue cubes into Riley county (two originally from Shawnee and two from Pottawatomie).



Example: Pro player plays Card #7 (Border Ruffians) and decides to use the Movement action. Since the card has a faction star they decide to do a Rally move. The Pro player moved five of their cubes from counties that border Douglas county.

Now there are five butternut cubes and two blue cubes. Although it is now the Anti player's turn, the Pro player is likely setting up a skirmish on their next turn.



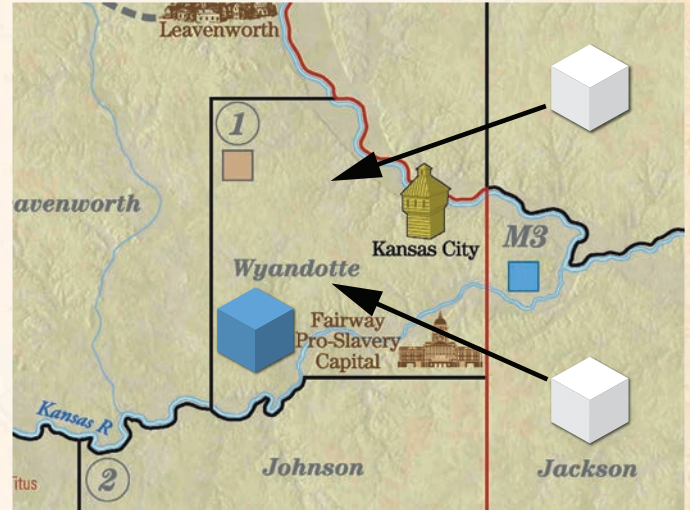
# INFLUENCE



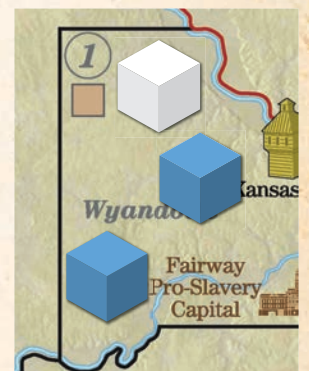
When playing an Influence symbol you are attempting to sway migrants to your way of thinking. This is the only way to obtain additional faction cubes (butternut or blue).

1. You do not need to have a faction cube present in the county where you attempt to influence a migrant cube but you must at least have faction points (town or capital points) to attempt an Influence roll.
2. For each Influence symbol used, roll a die and on a modified roll of 5 or 6 exchange one Migrant cube in that county with one of your faction cubes.
3. Add +1 to the result for every faction point available in that county (+1 for each faction cube, +1 for each faction town, and +2 for your faction capital).
4. The presence of opposing faction points do not count against an Influence action.
5. When playing two Influence symbols (see Faction Star), a player may choose to attempt two Influence actions, or may place a faction cube in any Missouri county.

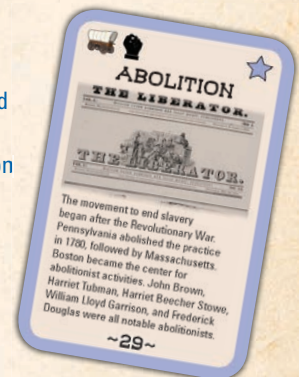
Example: The Pro player uses a Migration action to bring migrant cubes from Clay (M2) and Jackson (M3) into Wyandotte where they hope to use the Pro capital for an Influence action the next turn.



However there is one Anti cube in Wyandotte and the Anti player plays an Influence action and rolls a 4, just enough with his +1 for the one cube to succeed and he replaces one of the white cubes with a blue cube.



If he played a blue faction star card with two Influence symbols, he could next attempt another Influence roll this time adding +2 for the two faction cubes he now has in the county.



# COOPERATION



When playing a Cooperation symbol you have three options:

- Move one opponent's faction cube out of a county where you have a faction cube; OR
- Remove a Burn marker from a county where you have at least one faction point. This removal requires a faction cube, unburned faction town, or faction Capital (burned or not) to be present in the county; OR
- Move the Federal Troops cube to any county that contains a Burn marker.

No Skirmish, Burn, or Influence actions may be played in that county while the Federal Troops cube is present.

When playing two Cooperation symbols (see Faction Star), any of the above may be played twice, OR two of the options may be played, OR a Burn marker can be removed from a county adjacent to a county with a faction point.

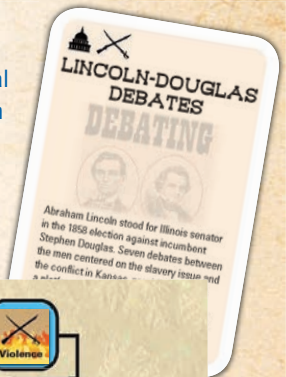
After completing their action, they turn the card around and the Pro player has a choice of Influence or Political action. The current Election track is tied at four markers each.



So they decide to use the Political action to bring their total to five markers.



Then the Pro player plays card #21 (Lincoln-Douglas Debates) from their hand for the Political action and adds a political marker to the Election track bringing their total to six markers. This insures they get the two-VP Election Bonus even if the Anti player plays a Political, Skirmish, or Burn action.



The Anti player cleverly has Card #11 (Popular Sovereignty) in their hand ready to use its Anti-faction star to make a double Political action and remove two Pro Political markers from the current Election track to reverse the advantage.



# FACTION STAR



When playing a card displaying your own Faction Star symbol, you get to flex your own faction muscle and play both displayed symbols or choose one of the displayed symbols and use it twice. When playing a card that displays your opponent's Faction Star symbol you may play only one of the symbols. Your opponent then gets a free action from the same card after you take your action, and may choose either option.

Example: The Anti player plays card #28 (Slavery) and attempts an Influence action.



## The Insurrection Joker

When playing this card, you may choose any one symbol action. The joker may NOT be used to form a Coordination Bonus (see next section).



## Coordination Bonus

Any time your hand of three cards shows six of the seven card symbols: Skirmish, Burn, Politics, Migration, Movement, Cooperation, and Influence (**NOT Faction Star**), you can discard all three cards and add one Victory Point. Note: **this is instead of playing a card to use symbols and take actions.**

## Card Management

A player's hand always has two (2) cards. A third card is drawn at the start of each turn. After a Coordination Bonus hand is scored, the cards are placed in the discard pile and the player draws two cards from the draw deck. When the deck runs out, reshuffle the discard pile and reuse it.

**A player may play a card that has no playable action in order to draw a future card that may be playable, however this is in lieu of symbol/action play. Note that if a card is played that has the opponent's faction star and there is an eligible action for the opponent, the opponent has the option to play that action.**

## County Control

Players are competing for control of 17 counties containing important Kansas settlements (county numbers are circled for easy identification—each contains at least one town, capital, or fort). Control is determined by having the most faction points in a county. The player who has more faction points than his or her opponent controls the county. If there are more Anti faction points then the Anti faction wins the county. If there are more Pro faction cubes then the Pro faction wins the county. Each county is worth one point in the overall election.

## Faction Presence

A faction (butternut or blue) town acts as one permanent faction point while a faction capital provides two permanent faction points. **In both cases these points are added to that faction's control cubes when determining Skirmish, Influence, or county election results.**

## The Election Track

The Election track reflects the violent political furor over the race question in "Bleeding Kansas."

### Marker Placement

Each time a player uses one or more Skirmish, Burn, or Political card symbols, the same number of corresponding Political or Violence markers are placed on the current Election track. A Political marker is placed for each Political symbol played. A Violence marker is placed for each Skirmish or Burn symbol played. Players play their own faction markers and place them in the lowest numbered county in the current Election track.

## Elections

This covers four elections—1854, 1855, 1857, and 1859. When a player's Political or Violence marker is placed on an election space, an election is triggered.

The person with the most markers on the Election track since the last election or beginning of the game earns two bonus VPs; this is recorded on the VP track. Note: there can be no ties as the tracks have either 11 or 21 spaces.

In the first Kansas election (1854), voter fraud was rampant and the results were voided. For purposes of the game, no counties are counted. Only the Election track bonus is scored.



## Election County Count Procedure

Players count the number of settlement (circled numbers) counties they control (see County Control).

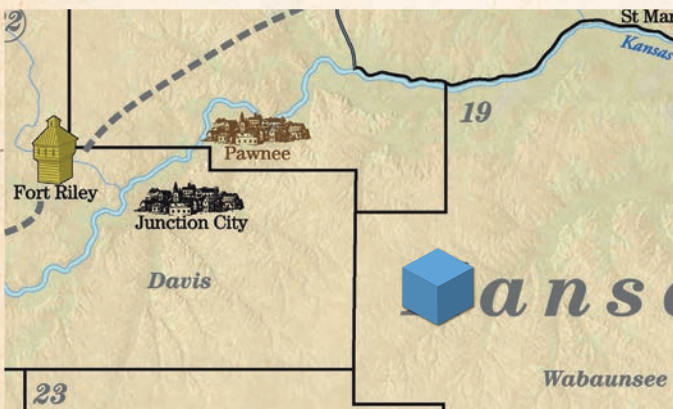
1. A Player who has a clear majority of faction points controls the county.
2. If neither player has faction points in a county or players have equal faction points, players go to a tie-breaker and count each adjacent controlled Kansas county. In this case control of non-settlement counties counts (only for tie-breaking purposes). Counties that are diagonally adjacent do count towards tie-breaking. If the tie-breakers are equal, neither side wins the settlement county in question.
3. A county absent of faction points and absent of influence from surrounding Kansas counties does not count.
4. After county control has been determined, players compare the number of counties they control. The player with the higher total subtracts the lower total and adds the difference to his VP total.

Players may want to place Political markers in each county they control to indicate who controls the county. After the election is finished, remove these markers.

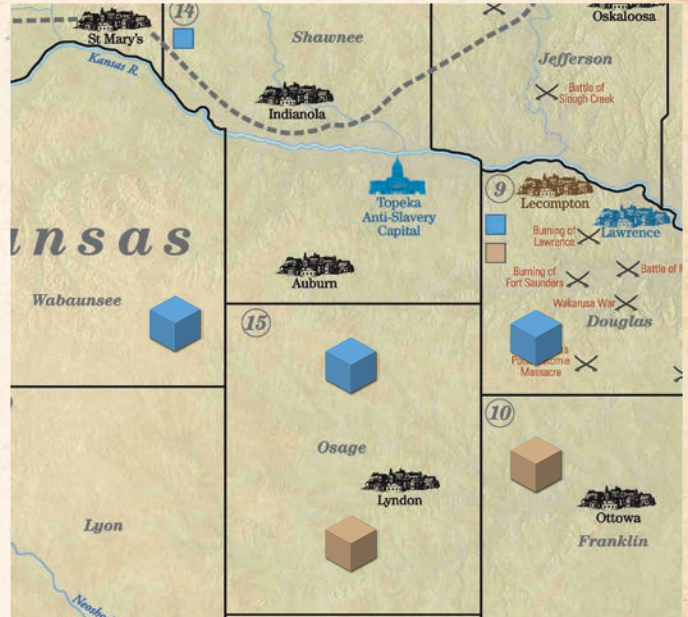
Example: The Anti player just placed a Political marker on the Election track, triggering the 1855 Election. In this case, the Anti player has six markers on the Election track. The Pro player has five markers on the Election track. The Anti faction scores two VP.



Next, county control is determined. Pro-forces control 9 counties outright. Anti-forces have the majority in 6 counties. Davis County is unoccupied. To the north, Riley County is unoccupied but the town of Pawnee counts as one Pro faction point. To the east, Wabaunsee County has one Anti faction cube. Even though it is not a settlement county, it counts for tie-breaking in adjacent counties. Thus Davis County remains a tie and is not awarded to either side.



Osage County is also contested - one Pro faction cube to one Anti-faction cube, but the Anti-faction controls three adjacent counties (Wabaunsee, Shawnee, and Douglas) whereas the Pro-faction controls one adjacent county (Ottawa).



This results in Anti-faction county control and a total of 7 controlled counties. The Pro player scores two VP (9-7=2).

Because the Pro player scored one VP for playing a Coordination Bonus card set, he has a total of 3 VP while the Anti Player has four VP total having won the Election track in both the 1854 and 1855 Elections (2 VP each time). Regardless of what has just happened on the Election track and in the outcome of the election, the Pro player has the lower point total at the moment and conducts the free Migration action.

As the Anti player was the last to play a card (the one that triggered the Election), the Pro player has the next turn.

## Post-Election Migration

After the Election is completed, the player behind in overall VPs or the Pro-player, if VPs are tied, makes one migration action. This does not count as a card play (see Migration).

## Advancing into a New Election

It is possible through a faction star card play that a player places a marker in the Election space with the first action and a second action will also place a marker—that marker is placed on the first space of the next Election track and counts toward the next Election (the marker has no effect on the previous Election). This second action is completed before the Election is conducted, so even though the second marker may not impact the Election track marker count, the action itself may affect County Control and the Election results.

## Optional Rules

### Turning Tide

Variability in cards drawn can sometimes favor one player over the other just as the balance of power switched between the factions in Kansas throughout the conflict. Each time it did, the other side did something to build up their side or reduce the other side. This can be reflected in the game by the following rule:

Remove the Insurrection Joker from the deck before starting the game. It starts face-up on the Pro side of the map. The Anti faction plays first (no die roll to determine who goes first). The Pro player may play the Joker on his turn in addition to regular card play, however it can not be used to create a double play (only a faction start can). The Joker is discarded face-up until after the card deck is exhausted. When the card deck is reshuffled, the Joker is awarded to the side currently behind on the VP track.

### Election Ties

Close elections are never easy to determine, especially in smaller jurisdictions. To provide some variability (and give the underdog a chance), count the adjacent controlled counties to determine a die-roll modifier. Each side rolls a die (like in a Skirmish) and adds their adjacent controlled county count. The higher result wins that tied county election. Re-roll ties.

### Voter Fraud

The 1855 election saw the worst of the voter fraud that occurred during this period. Far more votes than registered voters (more than twice the number by some accounts!) were recorded. For players who want to model this with more detail, we suggest that after the election results are determined, the Pro player rolls a die. Add that number of VP to the Pro total to represent the additional counties they "won." At the same time, add that die roll amount of Anti faction cubes to Missouri counties M1-M3 (maximum of two cubes per county, Anti player's choice) to represent the reaction of the Anti faction.

## HISTORICAL NOTE



### Voter Fraud

In the first Kansas election, voter fraud was rampant and the results were voided. For purposes of the game, no counties are counted. Only the Election track bonus is scored.

In the second Kansas election (March 1855), thousands of Pro-slavery Missourians crossed the Missouri-Kansas border to vote (and revote) while intimidating the Kansas anti-slavery faction. This election resulted in the Pro faction having control of the Kansas government. However the Anti faction reacted strongly, eventually forming a second Kansas government. In game terms, the election result stand in terms of the VP result as this best represents the actual Kansas settlers. Players who want to explore how this voter fraud can be simulated should consult the optional rules.

The third and fourth elections were relatively free of voter fraud. The historical fourth 1859 election result was an Anti-slavery victory that led to the loss of balance in the US Senate, and was a major factor for Southern states in their succession decision. The election of Republican Abraham Lincoln the following year was the final straw as both houses of Congress and the Presidency were then anti-slavery.



## Designer Notes

A decade ago, I determined to produce a game that would help players better understand the historical importance of “Bleeding Kansas.” For as long as I can remember, I connected the concept of “Bleeding Kansas” to the Civil War but only recently have I realized how it was in fact the true incubator for the American Civil War. Two years ago I stumbled across the University Press of Kansas volume *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri* on a fellow teacher’s bookshelf. This year I borrowed, read, and applied its concepts in my design, **Bleeding Kansas**.

The biggest problem with the theme had to do with the factions involved. I knew folks would have no problem playing the abolitionist player but somebody had to play the pro-slavery faction. Someone had to play the bad guy. I eventually knuckled down to designing the beast because the ideas in my head wouldn’t let me not do it. On the other hand until I discussed the project with Doc Cummins at WBC 2016, I had little hope of getting it published. Thanks, Doc, for giving the idea wings. And by the way, since playtesting has begun, no one has complained about having to play the bad guy.

My choice of map was simple enough—Kansas, obviously. The question was: how much Kansas territory and how much of the state of Missouri? I had to at least include Missouri border counties to act as a springboard for migrants into the territory. As for Kansas, I limited the area North and South to show only the region that experienced the bulk of violence. Western counties are included but will see little activity as I purposely designed faction influence in the game to revolve around the towns featured in the Eastern counties and those along the Kansas River.

I then turned to the cards. I knew I wanted this to be a card driven game that would use key activation symbols representing the conflict: Skirmish, Burn, Politics, Migration, Movement, Cooperation, and Influence. Cards would allow me to disseminate obscure facts that would help players piece together the puzzle of “Bleeding Kansas.” I started with a single symbol per card but felt this did not offer players enough choice so I added a second symbol. The Doubling faction star further increased player choice and also introduced the twist of having to play an opponent’s “star card” and provide him with a free move. Just for fun I added a wild card “Joker.”

The majority of people in Kansas did not take sides. They were there for the land or they were just moving through to the West. Some were persuaded to take sides and this happened more often where there happened to be a faction concentration. Initially the mechanic to have the Migration symbol add one migrant cube and move one Migrant group failed. No one wanted to waste an action moving one migrant group. We then transitioned to mass migration—moving all migrant cubes. This helped, but still did not provide the effect I was looking for. We then added a migrant move after every election. That did the trick.

So, how to score points? How to win? Since the conflict involved regional influence I knew the game had to include, if not focus on, the various contentious elections, but how? The election track mechanic shows the intertwined aspects of politics and violence leading up to the four contentious elections ending in Kansas statehood and Civil War in 1861. The bulk of the violence and other events occurred between the second and third election periods so that period is longer than the others. I could hardly ignore the hugely fraudulent election of 1855. While in real terms, the results did little to change the minds of those in Kansas, i.e. individuals did not change sides, therefore no change in the game, Doc included an optional rule to reflect the Pro side gaining some VP while the historical Anti reaction is reflected in an immediate influx of Anti faction forces.

This design came about quickly and was smooth playing out of the gate. I certainly hope you enjoy playing it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

-John Poniske

## CREDITS

**Game Design:** John Poniske  
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**Production:** Chris Dickson

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[BK\_Rules\_V6F]

## Set-Up

1. Place 23 white migrant cubes, one in every Missouri county (M1–M6), and one in all Kansas counties possessing one or more settlements (county numbers are circled for easy identification—each contains at least one town, capital, or fort).
2. Place 8 butternut Pro faction cubes, one in every county possessing a butternut square in the upper left corner of the county.
3. Place 8 blue Anti faction cubes, one in every county possessing a blue square in the upper left corner of the county.
4. Place the Federal Troops cube in Leavenworth County, Kansas
5. Place the Victory Point markers above the 1 on the VP track.
6. Set the Burn markers off beside the VP track.
7. Give each player their faction's Politics and Violence markers.
8. Shuffle the card deck, deal two cards to each player, and place it to one side of the map.
9. Each player rolls a die. The player with the higher roll goes first. Re-roll ties.

## Turn Sequence

1. Active player draws one card then,
  - a. Plays one of the three cards in hand face-up on the table.
  - b. Declares the symbol(s) to be used (or that the card is a discard with no action). If the card has the player's faction star, he may play each symbol once (either one first), one symbol twice, or special two symbol actions.
  - c. Takes action(s) based on symbol choice in any order.
  - d. Places Political, Violence, and/or Burn markers as indicated by actions.
  - e. If the card has an opposing faction star, the Opposing player takes an action using either symbol.
  - f. If a marker is placed on an Election space, proceed to an Election.
  - g. Instead of playing one card and proceeding through steps a–f, turn up all three cards to show a Coordination Bonus, records 1 VP, and draw two new cards.
2. Opponent becomes Active player and completes steps a–g.
3. Whenever the card deck runs out, reshuffle the discards and continue the game.

The game ends after the 1859 election count is completed. Player with the most VP wins.