The convention opened on Wednesday, May 16, with David Wilmot of Pennsylvania serving as temporary chairman.¹ Orville Browning called him “a dull, chuckle headed, booby looking man” who “makes a poor presiding officer.”² The convention hall, specially built for the occasion, was known as the Wigwam because it resembled an Indian longhouse. A large, clumsy, solid, barn-like structure, measuring 100 x 180 feet, with a capacity of twelve thousand people, it was constructed “of rough timber, decorated so completely with flags banner, bunting, etc., that when filled it seemed a gorgeous pavilion aflame with color and all aflutter with pennants and streamers.” The interior resembled a huge theater whose stage was occupied by the delegates and the press. The acoustics were so good that an ordinary voice could easily be heard throughout the building.³ One journalist deemed it a “small edition of the New York Crystal Palace.”⁴