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War Clouds Over Oregon

Title: War Clouds Over Oregon

Author: Thomas H. Benton

Date: 1846

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The Oregon boundary dispute, in 1846, came near resulting in a war between Great Britain and the United States. Benton, from whose "Thirty Years' View" this account is taken, was a United States Senator from Missouri at the time and was an authority on western problems of legislation. In the debates on the Oregon question, he took a leading part against the "Fifty-four, forty or fight" advocates, and was spokesman for the Polk administration which was committed by the Democratic platform to demand "the whole of Oregon or none."

This demand, as Benton points out, was based upon ignorance of geography, there being no such line of latitude on the North American continent as 54° 40'. The present boundary line of 49° to the channel between Vancouver and the mainland and thence through the Straits of San Juan de Fuca to the sea, was vigorously advocated by throughout a stormy period.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.13–p.14

Two conventions (1818 and 1828) provided for the joint occupation of the countries respectively claimed by Great Britain and the United States on the north-west coast of America—that of 1818 limiting the joint occupancy to ten years—that of 1828 extending it indefinitely until either of the two powers should give notice to the other of a desire to terminate it. Such agreements are often made when it is found difficult to agree upon the duration of any particular privilege, or duty. They are seductive to the negotiators because they postpone an inconvenient question: they are consolatory to each party, because each says to itself it can get rid of the obligation when it pleases—a consolation always delusive to one of the parties: for the one that has the advantage always resists the notice, and long baffles it, and often through menaces causes it to be considered an unfriendly proceeding. On the other hand, the party to whom it is disadvantageous often sees danger in change; and if the notice is to be given in a legislative body, there will always be a large per centum of easy temperaments who are desirous of avoiding questions, putting off difficulties, and suffering the evils they have in preference of flying to those they know not: and in this way these temporary agreements, to be terminated on the notice of either party, generally continue longer than either party dreamed of when they were made. So it was with this Oregon joint occupancy. The first was for ten years: not being able to agree upon ten years more, the usual delusive resource was fallen upon: and, under the second joint occupation had already continued in operation fourteen years. Western Members of Congress now took up the subject, and moved the Senate to advise the government to give the notice. Mr. Semple, Senator from Illinois, proposed the motion: it was debated many days—resisted by many speakers: and finally defeated. It was first resisted as discourteous to Great Britain—then as offensive to her—then as cause of war on her side—finally, as actual war on our side—and even as a conspiracy to make war….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.14–p.15

Upon all this talk of war the commercial interest became seriously alarmed, and looked upon the delivery of the notice as the signal for a disastrous depression in our foreign trade. In a word, the general uneasiness became so great that there was no chance for doing what we had a right to do, what the safety of our territory required us to do, and without the right to do which the convention of 1828 could not have been concluded….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.15–p.16

This was a pretermitted subject in the general negotiations which led to the Ashburton treaty: it was now taken up as a question for separate settlement. The British government moved in it, Mr. Henry S. Fox, the British Minister in Washington, being instructed to propose the negotiation. This was done in November, 1842, and Mr. Webster, then Secretary of State under Mr. Tyler, immediately replied, accepting the proposal, and declaring it to be the desire of his government to have this territorial question immediately settled. But the movement stopped there. Nothing further took place between Mr. Webster and Fox, and the question slumbered till 1844, when Mr. (since Sir) Richard Pakenham, arrived in the United States as British Minister, and renewed the proposition for opening the negotiation to Mr. Upshur, then Secretary of State. This was February 24th, 1844. Mr. Upshur replied promptly, that is to say, on the 26th of the same month, accepting the proposal, and naming an early day for receiving Mr. Pakenham to begin the negotiation. Before that day came he had perished in the disastrous explosion of the great gun on board the Princeton man-of-war. The subject again slumbered six months, and at the end of that time, July 22nd, was again brought to the notice of the American government by a note from the British minister to Mr. Calhoun, successor to Mr. Upshur in the Department of State. Referring to the note received from Mr. Upshur the day before his death, he said:

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.16

"The lamented death of Mr. Upshur, which occurred within a few days after the date of that note, the interval which took place between that event and the appointment of a successor, and the urgency and importance of various matters which offered themselves to your attention immediately after your accession to office, sufficiently explain why it has not hitherto been in the power of your government, sir, to attend to the important matters to which I refer. But, the session of Congress having been brought to a close, and the present being the season of the year when the least possible business is usually transacted, it occurs to me that you may now feel at leisure to proceed to the consideration of that subject. At all events it becomes my duty to recall it to your recollection, and to repeat the earnest desire of Her Majesty's government, that a question, on which so much interest is felt in both countries, should be disposed of at the earliest moment consistent with the convenience of the government of the United States."

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.16–p.17–p.18

Mr. Calhoun answered the 22nd of August, declaring his readiness to begin the negotiation, and fixing the next day for taking up the subject. It was taken up accordingly, and conducted in the approved and safe way of conducting such negotiations, that is to say, a protocol of every conference signed by the two negotiators before they separated, and the propositions submitted by each always reduced to writing. This was the proper and satisfactory mode of proceeding, the neglect and total omission of which had constituted so just and so loud a complaint against the manner in which Mr. Webster and Lord Ashburton had conducted their conferences. Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Pakenham met seven times, exchanged arguments and propositions, and came to a balk, which suspended their labors. Mr. Calhoun, rejecting the usual arts of diplomacy, which holds in reserve the ultimate and true offer while putting forward fictitious ones for experiment, went at once to his ultimatum, and proposed the continuation of the parallel of the 49th degree of north latitude, which, after the acquisition of Louisiana, had been adopted by Great Britain and the United States as the dividing line between their possessions, from the Lake of the Woods (fixed as a land-mark under the treaty of Utrecht), to the summit of the Rocky Mountains—the United States insisting at the same time to continue that line to the Pacific Ocean under the terms of the same treaty. Mr. Pakenham declined this proposition in the part that carried the line to the ocean, but offered to continue it from the summit of the mountains, to the Columbia River, a distance of some three hundred miles; and then follow the river to the ocean. This was refused by Mr. Calhoun; and the ultimatum having been delivered on one hand, and no instructions being possessed on the other to yield any thing, the negotiations, after continuing through the month of September, came to a stand. At the end of four months (January 1845) Mr. Pakenham, by the direction of his government, proposed to leave the question to arbitration, which was declined by the American Secretary, and very properly; for, while arbitrament is the commendable mode of settling minor questions, and especially those which arise from the construction of existing treaties, yet the boundaries of a country are of too much gravity to be so submitted.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.18

Mr. Calhoun showed a manly spirit in proposing the line of 49, as the dominant party in the United States, and the one to which he belonged, were then in a high state of exultation for the boundary of 54 degrees 40 minutes, and the presidential canvass, on the democratic side, was raging upon that cry. The Baltimore presidential convention had followed a pernicious practice, of recent invention, in laying down a platform of principles on which the canvass was to be conducted, and 54-40 for the northern boundary of Oregon, had been made a canon of political faith, from which there was to be no departure except upon the penalty of political damnation. Mr. Calhoun had braved this penalty, and in doing so had acted up to his public and responsible duty.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.18–p.19

The new President, Mr. Polk, elected under that cry, came into office on the 4th of March, and acting upon it, put into his inaugural address a declaration that our title to the whole of Oregon (meaning up to 54-40), was clear and indisputable; and a further declaration that he meant to maintain that title. It was certainly an unusual thing—perhaps unprecedented in diplomacy—that, while negotiations were depending (which was still the case in this instance, for the last note of Mr. Calhoun in January, declining the arbitration, gave as a reason for it that he expected the question to be settled by negotiation), one of the parties should authoritatively declare its right to the whole matter in dispute, and show itself ready to maintain it by arms. The declaration in the inaugural had its natural effect in Great Britain. It roused the British spirit as high as that of the American. Their excited voice came thundering back, to be received with indignation by the great democracy; and war—"inevitable war"—was the cry through the land.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.19–p.20–p.21

The new administration felt itself to be in a dilemma. To stand upon 54-40 was to have war in reality: to recede from it, might be to incur the penalty laid down in the Baltimore platform. Mr. Buchanan, the new Secretary of State, did me the honor to consult me. I answered him promptly and frankly, that I held 49 to be the right line, and that, if the administration made a treaty upon that line, I should support it. This was early in April. The Secretary seemed to expect some further proposition from the British government; but none came. The rebuff in the inaugural address had been too public, and too violent, to admit that government to take the initiative again. It said nothing: the war cry continued to rage: and at the end of four months our government found itself under the necessity to take the initiative, and recommence negotiations as the means of avoiding war. Accordingly, on the 22nd of July, Mr. Buchanan (the direction of the President being always understood) addressed a note to Mr. Pakenham, resuming the negotiation at the point at which it had been left by Mr. Calhoun; and, conforming to the offer that he had made, and because he had made it, again proposed the line of 49 to the ocean. The British Minister again refused that line, and invited a "fairer" proposition. In the meantime the offer of 49 got wind. The democracy was in commotion. A storm was got up (foremost in raising which was the new administration organ, Mr. Ritchie's "Daily Union"), before which the administration quailed—recoiled—and withdrew its offer of 49. There was a dead pause in the negotiation again; and so the affair remained at the meeting of Congress, which came together under the loud cry of war, in which Mr. Cass was the leader, but followed by the body of the democracy, and backed and cheered on by the democratic press—some hundreds of papers. Of course the Oregon question occupied a place, and a prominent one, in the President's message—(which has been noticed)—and, on communicating the failure of the negotiation to Congress, he recommended strong measures for the security and assertion of our title. The delivery of the notice which was to abrogate the joint occupation of the country by the citizens of the two powers, was one of these recommendations, and the debate upon that question brought out the full expression of the opinions of Congress upon the whole subject, and took the management of the questions into the hands of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.21

The proposition for the line of 49 having been withdrawn by the American government on its non-acceptance by the British, had appeased the democratic storm which had been got up against the President; and his recommendation for strong measures to assert and secure our title was entirely satisfactory to those who now came to be called the Fifty-Four Forties. The debate was advancing well upon this question of notice, when a sinister rumor—only sinister to the extreme party—began to spread, that the British government would propose 49, and that the President was favorable to it….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.21–p.22

Mr. Benton then addressed the Senate: Mr. President, the bill before the Senate proposes to extend the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the United States over all our territories west of the Rocky Mountains, without saying what is the extent and what are the limits of this territory. This is wrong, in my opinion. We ought to define the limits within which our agents are to do such acts as this bill contemplates, otherwise we commit to them the solution of questions which we find too hard for ourselves. This indefinite extension of authority, in a case which requires the utmost precision, forces me to sneak, and to give my opinion of the true extent of our territories beyond the Rocky Mountains. I have delayed doing this during the whole session, not from any desire to conceal my opinions (which, in fact, were told to all that asked for them), but because I thought it the business of negotiation, not of legislation, to settle these boundaries. I waited for negotiation: but negotiation lags, while events go forward; and now we are in the process of acting upon measures, upon the adoption of which it may no longer be in the power either of negotiation or of legislation to control the events to which they may give rise. The bill before us is without definition of the territory to be occupied. And why this vagueness in a case requiring the utmost precision? Why not define the boundaries of these territories? Precisely because we do not know them! And this presents a case which requires me to wait no longer for negotiation, but to come forward with my own opinions, and to do what I can to prevent the evils of vague and indefinite legislation. My object will be to show, if I can, the true extent and nature of our territorial claims beyond the Rocky Mountains, with a view to just and wise decisions; and, in doing so, I shall endeavor to act upon the great maxim, "Ask nothing but what is right—submit to nothing that is wrong."

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.22

It is my ungracious task, in attempting to act upon this maxim, to commence by exposing error at home, and endeavoring to clear up some great mistakes under which the public mind has labored.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.23

It has been assumed for two years, and the assumption has been made the cause of all the Oregon excitement of the country, that we have a dividing line with Russia, made so by the convention of 1824, along the parallel of 54° 40', from the sea to the Rocky Mountains, up to which our title is good. This is a great mistake. No such line was ever established; and so far as proposed and discussed, it was proposed and discussed as a northern British, and not as a northern American line. The public treaties will prove there is no such line; documents will prove that, so far as 54° 40', from the sea to the mountains, was ever proposed as a northern boundary for any power, it was proposed by us for the British, and not for ourselves.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.23–p.24

To make myself intelligible in what I shall say on this point, it is necessary to go back to the epoch of the Russian convention of 1824, and to recall the recollection of the circumstances out of which that convention grew. The circumstances were these: In the year 1821 the Emperor Alexander, acting upon a leading idea of Russian policy (in relation to the North Pacific Ocean) from the time of Peter the Great, undertook to treat that ocean as a close sea, and to exercise municipal authority over a great extent of its shores and waters. In September of that year, the emperor issued a decree, bottomed upon this pretension, assuming exclusive sovereignty and jurisdiction over both shores of the North Pacific Ocean, and over the high seas, in front of each coast, to the extent of one hundred Italian miles, from Behring's Straits down to latitude fifty-one, on the American coast, and to forty-five on the Asiatic; and denouncing the penalties of confiscation upon all ships, of whatsoever nation, that should approach the coasts within the interdicted distances. This was a very startling decree. Coming from a feeble nation, it would have been smiled at; coming from Russia, it gave uneasiness to all nations.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.24–p.25

Great Britain and the United States, as having the largest commerce in the North Pacific Ocean, and as having large territorial claims on the north-west coast of America, were the first to take the alarm, and to send remonstrances to St. Petersburg against the formidable ukase. They found themselves suddenly thrown together, and standing side by side in this new and portentous contest with Russia. They remonstrated in concert, and here the wise and pacific conduct of the Emperor Alexander displayed itself in the most prompt and honorable manner. He immediately suspended the ukase (which, in fact, had remained without execution), and invited the United States and Great Britain to unite with Russia in a convention to settle amicably, and in a spirit of mutual convenience, all the questions between them, and especially their respective territorial claims on the northwest coast of America. This magnanimous proposition was immediately met by the two powers in a corresponding spirit; and, the ukase being voluntarily relinquished by the emperor, a convention was quickly signed by Russia with each power, settling, so far as Russia was concerned, with each, all their territorial claims in Northwest America. The Emperor Alexander had proposed that it should be a joint convention of the three powers—a tripartite convention—settling the claims of each and of all at the same time; and if this wise suggestion had been followed, all the subsequent and all the present difficulties between the United States and Great Britain, with respect to this territory, would have been entirely avoided. But it was not followed: an act of our own prevented it. After Great Britain had consented, the non-colonization principle—the principle of non-colonization in America by any European power—was promulgated by our government, and for that reason Great Britain chose to treat separately with each power, and so it was done.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.25–p.26

Great Britain and the United States treated separately with Russia, and with each other; and each came to agreements with Russia, but to none among themselves. The agreements with Russia were contained in two conventions, signed nearly at the same time, and nearly in the same words, limiting the territorial claim of Russia to 54° 40', confining her to the coasts and islands, and leaving the continent, out to the Rocky Mountains, to be divided between the United States and Great Britain, by an agreement between themselves. The emperor finished up his own business and quit the concern. In fact, it would seem, from the promptitude, moderation, and fairness with which he adjusted all differences both with the United States and Great Britain, that his only object of issuing the alarming ukase of 1821 was to bring those powers to a settlement; acting upon the homely, but wise maxim, that short settlements make long friends.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.26–p.27

Well, there is no such line as 54° 40'; and that would seem to be enough to quiet the excitement which has been got up about it. But there is more to come. I set out with saying, that although this fifty-four forty was never established as a northern boundary for the United States, yet it was proposed to be established as a northern boundary, not for us, but for Great Britain—and that proposal was made to Great Britain by ourselves. This must sound like a strange statement in the ears of the fifty-four-forties; but it is no more strange than true; and after stating the facts, I mean to prove them. The plan of the United States at that time was this: That each of the three powers (Great Britain, Russia, and the United States) having claims on the northwest coast of America, should divide the country between them, each taking a third. In this plan of partition, each was to receive a share of the continent from the sea to the Rocky Mountains, Russia taking the northern slice, the United States the southern, and Great Britain the center, with fifty-four forty for her northern boundary, and forty-nine for her southern. The document from which I now read will say fifty-one; but that was the first offer—forty-nine was the real one, as I will hereafter show. This was our plan. The moderation of Russia defeated it. That power had no settlements on that part of the continent, and rejected the continental share which we offered her. She limited herself to the coasts and islands where she had settlements, and left Great Britain and the United States to share the continent between themselves. But before this was known, we had proposed to her fifty-four forty for the Russian southern boundary, and to Great Britain the same for her northern boundary. I say fifty-four forty; for, although the word in the proposition was fifty-five, yet it was on the principle which gave fifty-four forty—namely, running from the south end of Prince of Wales' Island, supposed to be in fifty-five, but found to have a point to it running down to fifty-four forty. We proposed this to Great Britain. She refused it, saying she would establish her northern boundary with Russia, who was on her north, and not with the United States, who was on her south. This seemed reasonable; and the United States then, and not until then, relinquished the business of pressing fifty-four forty upon Great Britain for her northern boundary. The proof is in the executive documents. Here it is—a despatch from Mr. Rush, our minister in London, to Mr. Adams, Secretary of State, dated December 19, 1823.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.27–p.28

(The despatch read.)

Here is the offer, in the most explicit terms, in 1823, to make fifty-five, which was in fact fifty-four forty, the northern boundary of Great Britain; and here is her answer to that proposition. It is the next paragraph in the same despatch from Mr. Rush to Mr. Adams.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.28–p.29

(The answer read.)

This was her answer, refusing to take, in 1823, as a northern boundary coming south for quantity, what is now prescribed to her, at the peril of war, for a southern boundary, with nothing north!—for, although the fact happens to be that Russia is not there, bounding us on the north, yet that makes no difference in the philosophy of our "fifty-four-forties," who believe it to be so; and, on that belief, are ready to fight. Their notion is, that we go jam up to 54° 40', and the Russians come jam down to the same, leaving no place for the British lion to put down a paw, although that paw should be no bigger than the sole of the dove's foot which sought a resting-place from Noah's ark. This must seem a little strange to British statesmen, who do not grow so fast as to leave all knowledge behind them. They remember that Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet—the President and Cabinet who acquired the Spanish title under which we now propose to squeeze them out of the continent—actually offered them six degrees of latitude in that very place; and they will certainly want reasons for this so much compression now, where we offered them so much expansion then. These reasons cannot be given. There is no boundary at 54° 40'; and so far as we proposed to make it one, it was for the British and not for ourselves; and so ends this redoubtable line, up to which all true patriots were to march! and marching, fight! and fighting, die! if need be! singing all the while, with Horace—

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.29

I come to the line of Utrecht, the existence of which is denied upon this floor by Senators whose fate it seems to be to assert the existence of a line that is not, and to deny the existence of one that it. A clerk in the Department of State has compiled a volume of voyages and of treaties, and, undertaking to set the world right, has denied that commissioners ever met under the treaty of Utrecht, and fixed boundaries between the British northern and French Canadian possessions in North America. That denial has been produced and accredited on this floor by a senator in his place (Mr. Cass); and this production of a blundering book, with this senatorial endorsement of its blunder, lays me under the necessity of correcting a third error which the "fifty-four-forties" hug to their bosom, and the correction of which becomes necessary for the vindication of history, the establishment of a political right, and the protection of the Senate from the suspicion of ignorance. I affirm that the line was established; that the commissioners met and did their work; and that what they did has been acquiesced in by all the powers interested from the year 1713 down to the present time.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.29–p.30

In the year 1805, being the second year after the acquisition of Louisiana, President Jefferson sent ministers to Madrid (Messrs. Monroe and Charles Pinckney) to adjust the southern and southwestern boundaries with her; and, in doing so, the principles which had governed the settlement of the northern boundary of the same province became a proper illustration of their ideas. They quoted these principles, and gave the line of Utrecht as the example; and this to Don Pedro Cevallos, one of the most accomplished statesmen of Europe. They say to him:

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.30

"It is believed that this principle has been admitted and acted on invariably since the discovery of America, in respect to their possessions there, by all the European powers. It is particularly illustrated by the stipulations of their most important treaties concerning those possessions and the practice under them, viz., the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, and that of Paris in 1763. In conformity with the 10th article of the first-mentioned treaty, the boundary between Canada and Louisiana on the one side, and the Hudson Bay and Northwestern Companies on the other, was established by commissioners, by a line to commence at a cape or promontory on the ocean, in 58° 31' north latitude; to run thence, southwestwardly, to latitude 49° north from the equator; and along that line indefinitely westward. Since that time, no attempt has been made to extend the limits of Louisiana or Canada to the north of that line, or of those companies to the south of it, by purchase, conquest, or grants from the Indians."

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.31

This is what Messrs. Monroe and Charles Pinckney said to Don Pedro Cevallos—a minister who must be supposed to be as well acquainted with the treaties which settled the boundaries of the late Spanish province of Louisiana as we are with the treaties which settle the boundaries of the United States. The line of Utrecht, and in the very words which carry it from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific Ocean, and which confine the British to the north, and the French and Spanish to the south of that line, are quoted to Mr. Cevallos as a fact which he and all the world knew. He received it as such; and thus Spanish authority comes in aid of British, French, and American, to vindicate our rights and the truth of history.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.31–p.32

Another contribution, which I have pleasure to acknowledge, is from a gentleman of Baltimore, formerly of the House of Representatives (Mr. Kennedy), who gives me an extract from the Journal of the British House of Commons, March 5th, 1714, directing a writ to be issued for electing a burgess in the place of Frederick Herne, Esq., who, since his election, hath accepted, as the Journal says, the office of one of his Majesty's commissioners for treating with commissioners on the part of France for settling the trade between Great Britain and France. The same entry occurs at the same time with respect to James Murray, Esq., and Sir Joseph Martyn. The tenth article of the treaty of Utrecht applies to limits in North America, the eleventh and fifteenth to commerce; and these commissioners were appointed under some or all of these articles. Others might have been appointed by the king, and not mentioned in the journals, as not being members of Parliament whose vacated seats were to be filled. All three of the articles of the treaty were equally obligatory for the appointment of commissioners; and here is proof that three were appointed under the commercial articles.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.32

One more piece of testimony, and I have done. And, first, a little statement to introduce it. We all know that in one of the debates which took place in the British House of Commons on the Ashburton treaty, and after that treaty was ratified and past recall, mention was made of a certain map called the King's map, which had belonged to the late King (George III), and hung in his library during his lifetime, and afterwards in the Foreign Office, from which said office the said map silently disappeared about the time of the Ashburton treaty, and which certainly was not before our Senate at the time of the ratification of that treaty. Well, the member who mentioned it in Parliament said there was a strong red line upon it, about the tenth of an inch wide, running all along where the Americans said the true boundary was, with these words written along it in four places in King George's handwriting: "This is Oswald's line;" meaning, it is the line of the treaty of peace negotiated by Mr. Oswald on the British side, and therefore called Oswald's line.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.33

Now, what I have to say is this: That whenever this royal map shall emerge from its retreat and resume its place in the Foreign Office, on it will be found another strong red line about the tenth of an inch wide, in another place, with these words written on it: Boundaries between the British and French possessions in America "as fixed by the treaty of Utrecht." To complete this last and crowning piece of testimony, I have to add that the evidence of it is in the Department of State, as is nearly the whole of the evidence which I have used in crushing this piepoudre insurrection—"this puddle-lane rebellion"—against the truth and majesty of history, which, beginning with a clerk in the Department of State, spread to all the organs, big and little; then reached the Senate of the United States, held divided empire in this chamber for four months, and now dies the death of the ridiculous.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.33–p.34–p.35

We must now introduce the gentlemen of 54-40 to Fraser's River, an acquaintance which they will be obliged to make before they arrive at their inexorable line; for it lies in their course, and must be crossed—both itself and the British province of New Caledonia, which it waters. This, then, is the introduction to that inevitable acquaintance, hitherto ignored. It is a river of about a thousand miles in length (following its windings), rising in the Rocky Mountains, opposite the head of the Unjigah, or Peace River, which flows into the Frozen Ocean in latitude about 70. The course of this river is nearly north and south, rising in latitude 55, flowing south to near latitude 49, and along that parallel, and just north of it, to the Gulf of Georgia, into which it falls behind Vancouver's Island. The upper part of this river is good for navigation; the lower half, plunging through volcanic chasms in mountains of rock, is wholly unnavigable for any species of craft. This river was discovered by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793, was settled by the Northwest Company in 1806, and soon covered by their establishments from head to mouth. No American or Spaniard had ever left a track upon this river or its valley. Our claim to it, as far as I can see, rested wholly upon the treaty with Spain of 1819; and her claim rested wholly upon those discoveries among the islands, the value of which, as conferring claims upon the continent, it has been my province to show in our negotiations with Russia in 1824. At the time that we acquired this Spanish claim to Frazer's River, it had already been discovered twenty-six years by the British; had been settled by them for twelve years; was known by a British name; and no Spaniard had ever made a track on its banks. New Caledonia, or Western Caledonia, was the name which it then bore; and it so happens that an American citizen, a native of Vermont, respectably known to the Senators now present from that State, and who had spent twenty years of his life in the hyperborean regions of Northwest America, in publishing an account of his travels and sojournings in that quarter, actually published a description of this New Caledonia, as a British province, at the very moment that we were getting it from Spain, and without the least suspicion that it belonged to Spain! I speak of Mr. David Harmon, whose Journal of Nineteen Years' Residence between latitudes 47 and 58 in Northwestern America, was published at Andover, in his native State, in the year 1820, the precise year after we had purchased this New Caledonia from the Spaniards….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.35–p.36

The abrogation of the article in the conventions of 1818 and 1828, for the joint occupation of the Columbia, was a measure right in itself, indispensable in the actual condition of the territory—colonies from two nations planting themselves upon it together—and necessary to stimulate the conclusion of the treaty which was to separate the possessions of the two countries. Every consideration required the notice to be given, and Congress finally voted it; but not without a struggle in each House, longer and more determined than the disparity of the vote would indicate. In the House of Representatives the vote in its favor was 154—headed by Mr. John Quincy Adams: the nays were 54. The resolution as adopted by the House, then went to the Senate for its concurrence, where, on the motion of Mr. Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, it underwent a very material alteration in form, without impairing its effect, adopting a preamble containing the motives for the notice, and of which the leading were to show that amicable settlement of the title by negotiation was an object in view, and intended to be promoted by a separation of interests between the parties. Thus amended, the resolution was passed by a good majority—40 to 14….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.36

These nays were not all opposed to the notice itself, but to the form it had adopted, and to the clause which left it discretional with the President to give it when he should think proper. They constituted the body of the extreme friends of Oregon, standing on the Baltimore platform—"the whole of Oregon or none"—looking to war as inevitable, and who certainly would have made it if their course had been followed. In the House the Senate's amendment was substantially adopted, and by an increased vote; and the authority for terminating the joint occupancy—a great political blunder in itself, and fraught with dangerous consequences—was eventually given, but after the lapse of a quarter of a century, and after bringing the two countries to the brink of hostilities. The President acted at once upon the discretion which was given him—caused the notice for the abrogation of the joint occupant article to be immediately given to the British government—and urged Congress to the adoption of the measures which were necessary for the protection of the American citizens who had gone to the territory.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.36–p.37–p.38–p.39

The news of the broken off negotiations was received with regret in Great Britain. Sir Robert Peel, with the frankness and integrity which constitute the patriotic statesman, openly expressed his regret in Parliament that the offer of 49, when made by the American government, had not been accepted by the British government; and it was evident that negotiations would be renewed. They were so: and in a way to induce a speedy conclusion of the question—being no less than a fair and open offer on the side of the British to accept the line we had offered. The administration was in a quandary (qu'en dirai-je? what shall I say to it?), at this unexpected offer. They felt that it was just, and that it ought to be accepted: at the same time they had stood upon the platform of the Baltimore convention—had helped to make it—had had the benefit of it in the election; and were loth to show themselves inconsistent, or ignorant. Besides the fifty-four forties were in commotion against it. A specimen of their temper has been shown in Mr. Hannegan's denunciation of the President. All the government newspapers—the official organ at Washington City, and the five hundred democratic papers throughout the Union which followed its lead, were all vehement against it. Underhandedly they did what they could to allay the storm which was raging—encouraging Mr. Haywood, Mr. Benton, and others to speak; but the pride of consistency, and the fear of reproach, kept them in the background, and even ostensibly in favor of 54-40, while encouraging the events which would enable them to settle on 49. Mr. Pakenham made his offer: it was not a case for delay:and acceptance or rejection became inevitable. It was accepted; and nothing remained but to put the treaty into form. A device was necessary, and it was found in the early practice of the government—that of the President asking the advice of the Senate upon the articles of a treaty before the negotiation. Mr. Benton proposed this course to Mr. Polk. He was pleased with it, but feared its feasibility. The advice of the Senate would be his sufficient shield: but could it be obtained? The chances seemed to be against it. It was an up-hill business, requiring a vote of two-thirds: it was a novelty, not practised since the time of Washington: it was a submission to the Whigs, with the risk of defeat; for unless they stood by the President against the dominant division of his own friends, the advice desired would not be given; and the embarrassment of the administration would be greater than ever. In this uneasy and uncertain state of mind, the President had many conferences with Mr. Benton, the point of which was to know, beyond the chance of mistake, how far he could rely upon the Whig Senators. Mr. Benton talked with them all—with Webster, Archer, Berrien, John M. Clayton, Crittenden, Corwin, Davis of Massachusetts, Dayton, Greene of Rhode Island, Huntington of Connecticut, Reverdy Johnson, Henry Johnson of Louisiana, Miller of New Jersey, Phelps, Simmons, Upham, Woodbridge,—and saw fully that they intended to act for their country, and not for their party: and reported to the President that he would be safe in trusting to them—that their united voice would be in favor of the advice, which, added to the minority of the democracy, would make the two-thirds which were requisite. The most auspicious mode of applying for this advice was deemed to be the submission of a "projet" of a treaty, presented by the British Minister, and to be laid before the Senate for their opinion upon its acceptance. The "projet" was accordingly received by Mr. Buchanan, a message drawn up, and the desired advice was to be asked the next day, 10th of June. A prey to anxiety as to the conduct of the Whigs, the mere absence of part of whom would defeat the measure, the President sent for Mr. Benton the night before, to get himself reassured on that point. Mr. Benton was clear and positive that they would be in their places, and would vote the advice, and that the measure would be carried….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.39–p.40

It was clear, then, that the fact of treaty or no treaty depended upon the Senate—that the whole responsibility was placed upon it—that the issue of peace or war depended upon that body. Far from shunning this responsibility, that body was glad to take it, and gave the President a faithful support against himself, against his Cabinet, and against his peculiar friends. These friends struggled hard, and exhausted parliamentary tactics to defeat the application, and though a small minority, were formidable in a vote where each one counted two against the opposite side. The first motion was to refer the message to the Committee on Foreign Relations, where the fifty-four forties were in the majority, and from whose action delay and embarrassment might ensue. Failing in that motion, it was moved to lay the message on the table. Failing again, it was moved to postpone the consideration of the subject to the next week. That motion being rejected, the consideration of the message was commenced, and then succeeded a series of motions to amend and alter the terms of the proposition as submitted. All these failed, and at the end of two days the vote was taken and the advice given.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.40

The advice was in these words:

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.40

"Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring), That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, advised to accept the proposal of the British government, accompanying his message to the Senate dated 10th June, 1846, for a convention to settle boundaries, &c., between the United States and Great Britain west of the Rocky or Stony mountains.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.40

"Ordered, That the Secretary lay the said resolution before the President of the United States."

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.40

Four days afterwards the treaty was sent in in due form, accompanied by a message which still left its responsibility on the advising Senate….

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.40

Two days more were consumed in efforts to amend or alter the treaty in various of its provisions, all of which failing, the final vote on its ratification was taken, and carried by an increased vote on each side—41 to 14.

Benton, War Clouds Over Oregon, America, Vol.7, p.41–p.42–p.43

An anomaly was presented in the progress of this question—that of the daily attack, by all the government papers, upon the Senators who were accomplishing the wishes of the President. The organ at Washington, conducted by Mr. Ritchie, was incessant and unmeasured in these attacks, especially on Mr. Benton, whose place in the party, and his geographical position in the West, gave him the privilege of being considered the leader of the forty-nines, and therefore the most obnoxious. It was a new thing under the sun to see the Senator daily assailed, in the government papers, for carrying into effect the wishes of the government—to see him attacked in the morning for what the President was hurrying him to do the night before. His course was equally independent of the wishes of the government, and the abuse of its papers. He had studied the Oregon question for twenty-five years—had his mind made up upon it—and should have acted according to his convictions without regard to support or resistance from any quarter. The issue was an instructive commentary upon the improvidence of these party platforms, adopted for an electioneering campaign, made into a party watch-word, often fraught with great mischief to the country, and often founded in ignorance or disregard of the public welfare. This Oregon platform was eminently of that character. It was a party platform for the campaign: its architects knew but little of the geography of the north-west coast, or of its diplomatic history. They had never heard of the line of the treaty of Utrecht, and denied its existence: they had never heard of the multiplied offers of our government to settle upon that line, and treated the offer now as a novelty and an abandonment of our rights: they had never heard that their 54-40 was no line on the continent, but only a point on an island on the coast, fixed by the Emperor Paul as the southern limit of the charter granted by him to the Russian Fur Company: had never heard of Frazer's River and New Caledonia, which lay between Oregon and their indisputable line, and ignored the existence of that river and province. The pride of consistency made them adhere to these errors; and a desire to destroy Mr. Benton for not joining in the hurrahs for the "whole of Oregon, or none," and for the "immediate annexation of Texas without regard to consequences," lent additional force to the attacks upon him. The conduct of the Whigs was patriotic in preferring their country to their party—in preventing a war with Great Britain—and in saving the administration from itself and its friends. Great Britain acted magnanimously, and was worthily represented by her minister, Mr. (now Sir Richard) Pakenham. Her adoption and renewal of our own offer, settled the last remaining controversy between the countries—left them in a condition which they had not seen since the peace of 1783—without any thing to quarrel about, and with a mutuality of interest in the preservation of peace which promised a long continuance of peace. But, alas, Great Britain is to the United States now what Spain was for centuries to her—the raw-head and bloody-bones which inspires terror and rage. During these centuries a ministry, or a public man that was losing ground at home, had only to raise a cry of some insult, aggression, or evil design on the part of Spain to have Great Britain in arms against her. And so it is in the United States at present, putting Great Britain in the place of Spain, and ourselves in hers. We have periodical returns of complaints against her, each to perish when it has served its turn, and to be succeeded by another, evanescent as itself. Thus far, no war has been made; but politicians have gained reputations; newspapers have taken fire; stocks have vacillated, to the profit of jobbers; great expense incurred for national defence in ships and forts, when there is nothing to defend against: and if there was, the electric telegraph and the steam car would do the work with little expense either of time or money.

The Acquisition of California, Fremont's Successful Invasion

Title: The Acquisition of California, Fremont's Successful Invasion

Author: Thomas H. Benton

Date: 1846

Source: America, Vol.7, p.44

Four years before the date on which this account opens (1846), John Charles Fremont, the distinguished soldier-explorer, had become a son-in-law of Senator Benton, who is thus well-qualified to discuss his exploits.

California had hitherto been under Spanish and Mexican domination. The first settlement, at San Diego, was founded by Spanish friars in 1769. By the end of the century eighteen missions were flourishing, and several thousand native converts were counted for Christianity. As late at 1800 the Spanish population did not exceed 1,700, and forty years later the whites numbered less than 6,000. At the time of the conquest, the total was popularly estimated at between 8,000 and 12,000.

Benton omits to say that, for acting as Governor of California in defiance of General Kearney's orders, Fremont was court-martialed and sentenced to dismissal from the service. Later he was permitted to resign.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.44

In the month of May, 1845, Mr. Fremont, then a brevet captain of engineers (appointed a lieutenant-colonel of rifles before he returned), set out on his third expedition of geographical and scientific exploration in the Great West. Hostilities had not broken out between the United States and Mexico; but Texas had been incorporated; the preservation of peace was precarious, and Mr. Fremont was determined, by no act of his, to increase the difficulties, or to give any just cause of complaint to the Mexican Government. His line of observation would lead him to the Pacific Ocean, through a Mexican province—through the desert parts first, and the settled part afterward of the Alta California.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.45

Approaching the settled parts of the province at the commencement of winter, he left his equipment of 60 men and 200 horses on the frontier, and proceeded alone to Monterey, to make known to the Governor the object of his coming, and his desire to pass the winter (for the refreshment of his men and horses) in the uninhabited parts of the valley of the San Joaquin. The permission was granted; but soon revoked, under the pretext that Mr. Fremont had come into California, not to pursue science, but to excite the American settlers to revolt against the Mexican Government. Upon this pretext troops were raised, and marched to attack him. Having notice of their approach, he took a position on the mountain, hoisted the flag of the United States, and determined, with his sixty brave men, to defend himself to the last extremity—never surrendering; and dying, if need be, to the last man. A messenger came into his camp, bringing a letter from the American consul at Monterey, to apprise him of his danger: that messenger, returning, reported that 2,000 men could not force the American position; and that information had its effect….

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.45–p.46

It was in the midst of dangers in the wildest regions of the Farthest West that Mr. Fremont was pursuing science and shunning war, when the arrival of Lieutenant Gillespie, and his communications from Washington, suddenly changed all his plans, turned him back from Oregon, and opened a new and splendid field of operations in California itself. He arrived in the valley of the Sacramento in the month of May, 1846, and found the country alarmingly and critically situated. Three great operations, fatal to American interests, were then going on, and without remedy, if not arrested at once. These were: 1. The massacre of the Americans, and the destruction of their settlements, in the valley of the Sacramento. 2. The subjection of California to British protection. 3. The transfer of the public domain to British subjects. And all this with a view to anticipate the events of a Mexican war, and to shelter California from the arms of the United States.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.46

The American settlers sent a deputation to the camp of Mr. Fremont, in the valley of the Sacramento, laid all these dangers before him, and implored him to place himself at their head and save them from destruction. General Castro was then in march upon them: the Indians were incited to attack their families, and burn their wheat fields, and were only waiting for the dry season to apply the torch. Juntas were in session to transfer the country to Great Britain: the public domain was passing away in large grants to British subjects: a British fleet was expected on the coast: the British vice-consul, Forbes, and the emissary priest, Macnamara, ruling and conducting everything: and all their plans so far advanced as to render the least delay fatal.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.47

It was then the beginning of June. War had broken out between the United States and Mexico, but that was unknown in California. Mr. Fremont had left the two countries at peace when he set out upon his expedition, and was determined to do nothing to disturb their relations: he had even left California to avoid giving offense; and to return and take up arms in so short a time was apparently to discredit his own previous conduct as well as to implicate his Government. He felt all the responsibilities of his position; but the actual approach of Castro, and the immediate danger of the settlers, left him no alternative. He determined to put himself at the head of the people, and to save the country. To repulse Castro was not sufficient: to overturn the Mexican Government in California, and to establish Californian independence, was the bold resolve, and the only measure adequate to the emergency.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.47

That resolve was taken, and executed with a celerity that gave it a romantic success. The American settlers rushed to his camp—brought their arms, horses and ammunition—were formed into a battalion; and obeyed with zeal and alacrity the orders they received. In thirty days all the northern part of California was freed from Mexican authority—independence proclaimed—the flag of independence raised—Castro flying to the south—the American settlers saved from destruction; and the British party in California counteracted and broken up in all their schemes.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.48–p.49

This movement for independence was the salvation of California, and snatched it out of the hands of the British at the moment they were ready to clutch it. For two hundred years—from the time of the navigator Drake, who almost claimed it as a discovery, and placed the English name of New Albion upon it—the eye of England has been upon California; and the magnificent bay of San Francisco, the great seaport of the north Pacific Ocean, has been surveyed as her own. The approaching war between Mexico and the United States was the crisis in which she expected to realize the long-deferred wish for its acquisition; and carefully she took her measures accordingly. She sent two squadrons to the Pacific as soon as Texas was incorporated—well seeing the actual war which was to grow out of that event—a small one into the mouth of the Columbia, an imposing one to Mazatlan, on the Mexican coast, to watch the United States squadron there, and to anticipate its movement upon California. Commodore Sloat, commanding the squadron at Mazatlan, saw that he was watched, and pursued, by Admiral Seymour, who lay alongside of him, and he determined to deceive him. He stood out to sea, and was followed by the British admiral. During the day he bore west, across the ocean, as if going to the Sandwich Islands: Admiral Seymour followed. In the night the American commodore tacked, and ran up the coast toward California: the British admiral, not seeing the tack, continued on his course, and went entirely to the Sandwich Islands before he was undeceived. Commodore Sloat arrived before Monterey on the second of July, entering the port amicably, and offering to salute the town, which the authorities declined on the pretext that they had no powder to return it—in reality because they momentarily expected the British fleet.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.49–p.50

Commodore Sloat remained five days before the town, and until he heard of Fremont's operations: then believing that Fremont had orders from his Government to take California, he having none himself, he determined to act himself. He received the news of Fremont's successes on the 6th day of July; on the 7th he took the town of Monterey, and sent a dispatch to Fremont. This latter came to him in all speed, at the head of his mounted force. Going immediately on board the commodore's vessel, an explanation took place. The commodore learned with astonishment that Fremont had no orders from his Government to commence hostilities—that he had acted entirely on his own responsibility. This left the commodore without authority for having taken Monterey; for still at this time the commencement of the war with Mexico was unknown. Uneasiness came upon the commodore. He remembered the fate of Captain Jones in making the mistake of seizing the town once before in time of peace. He resolved to return to the United States, which he did—turning over the command of the squadron to Commodore Stockton, who had arrived on the 15th. The next day (16th) Admiral Seymour arrived; his flagship the "Collingwood," of 80 guns, and his squadron the largest British fleet ever seen in the Pacific. To his astonishment he beheld the American flag flying over Monterey, the American squadron in its harbor, and Fremont's mounted riflemen encamped over the town.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.50

His mission was at an end. The prize had escaped him. He attempted nothing further, and Fremont and Stockton rapidly pressed the conquest of California to its conclusion. The subsequent military events can be traced by any history: they were the natural sequence of the great measure conceived and executed by Fremont before any squadron had arrived upon the coast, before he knew of any war with Mexico, and without any authority from his Government, except the equivocal and enigmatical visit of Mr. Gillespie. Before the junction of Mr. Fremont with Commodores Sloat and Stockton his operations had been carried on under the flag of independence—the Bear Flag, as it was called—the device of the bear being adopted on account of the courageous qualities of that animal (the white bear), which never gives the road to men—which attacks any number—and fights to the last with increasing ferocity, with amazing strength of muscle, and with an incredible tenacity of the vital principle—never more formidable and dangerous than when mortally wounded. The independents took the device of this bear for their flag, and established the independence of California under it: and in joining the United States forces, hauled down this flag, and hoisted the flag of the United States.

Benton, Acquisition of California, America, Vol.7, p.51

And the fate of California would have been the same whether the United States squadrons had arrived, or not; and whether the Mexican War had happened or not. California was in a revolutionary state, already divided from Mexico politically as it had always been geographically. The last governor-general from Mexico, Don Michel Toreno, had been resisted—fought—captured—and shipped back to Mexico, with his 300 cutthroat soldiers. An insurgent government was in operation, determined to be free of Mexico, sensible of inability to stand alone, and looking, part to the United States, part to Great Britain, for the support which they needed. All the American settlers were for the United States protection, and joined Fremont. The leading Californians were also joining him. His conciliatory course drew them rapidly to him. The Picos, who were the leading men of the revolt (Don Pico, Don Andres and Don Jesus), became his friends. California became independent of Mexico by the revolt of the Picos, and independent of them by the revolt of the American settlers, had its destiny to fulfill—which was, to be handed over to the United States. So that its incorporation with the American Republic was equally sure in any and every event.

The American Alcalde at Monterey

Title: The American Alcalde at Monterey

Author: Walter Colton

Date: 1846

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.52-62

Walter Colton, a graduate of Yale and the Andover Theological Seminary, was a friend of President Jackson, by whom he was appointed chaplain in the United States Navy in 1831. While assigned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard he became editor of the Philadelphia "North American."

At the prospect of war with Mexico, he returned to active service and went to California in 1846 as chaplain of the U. S. S. "Congress." Military and naval forces under Colonel Fremont, Commodore Stockton and General Kearney having wrested California from Mexico, Colton was appointed Alcalde of Monterey. He was one of the founders of the first American newspaper on the Pacific Coast, the "Californian," established in Monterey in 1846.

These extracts from his journal, dated 1846, present a vivid picture of Spanish-Californian life in various phases—a siesta of civilization rudely disturbed by the American conquest.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.53–p.54

Commodore Stockton informed me to-day [Tuesday, July 28, 1846] that I had been appointed Alcalde of Monterey and its jurisdiction. I had dreamed in the course of my life, as most people have, of the thousand things I might become, but it never entered my visions that I should succeed to the dignity of a Spanish alcalde. I much preferred my berth on board the "Congress," and that the judicial functions in question should continue to be discharged by the two intelligent gentlemen, Purser R. M. Price and Dr. Edward Gilchrist, upon whom they had been devolved. But the services of these officers were deemed indispensable to the efficiency of the ships to which they were attached. This left me no alternative; my trunks were packed, my books boxed, and in an hour I was on shore, a guest in the house of our consul, T. O. Larkin, Esq., whose munificent hospitalities reach every officer of the squadron, and every functionary in the interest of the flag. This is the more appreciated from the fact that there is not a public table or hotel in all California. High and low, rich and poor, are thrown together on the private liberality of the citizens. Though a quasi war exists, all the amenities and courtesies of life are preserved; your person, life, and liberty are as sacred at the hearth of the Californian as they would be at your own fireside. He will never betray you; the rights of hospitality, in his generous judgment, require him to Imperil his own life in defence of yours. He may fight you on the field, but in his family, you may dance with his daughters, and he will himself wake the waltzing string….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.53–p.54

Thursday, July 30. Today I entered on the duties of my office as Alcalde of Monterey: my jurisdiction extends over an immense extent of territory, and over a most heterogeneous population. Almost every nation has, in some emigrant, a representative here—a representative of its peculiar habits, virtues, and vices. Here is the reckless Californian, the half-wild Indian, the roving trapper of the West, the lawless Mexican, the licentious Spaniard, the scolding Englishman, the absconding Frenchman, the luckless Irishman, the plodding German, the adventurous Russian, and the discontented Mormon. All have come here with the expectation of finding but little work and less law, Through this discordant mass I am to maintain order, punish crime, and redress injuries.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.54

Friday, July 31. Nearly all the houses in Monterey are of one story, with a corridor. The walls are built of adobes or sun-baked brick, with tiled roofs. The center is occupied by a large hall, to which the dining-room and sleeping apartments seem mere appurtenances. Everything is in subordination to the hall, and this is designed and used for dancing. It has a wood floor, and springs nightly to the step of those who are often greeted in the whirl of their amusements by the risen sun. The dance and a dashing horse are the two objects which overpower all others in interest with the Californians. The fiddle has been silent since our flag went up, from the fact that many of the gentlemen have left to join General Castro. But if they return, though covered with disaster, the fiddle will be called upon to resume its fantastic functions. You might as well attempt to extinguish a love of air in a life-preserver as the dancing propensity of this people….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.54–p.55

Tuesday, Aug. 4. The military chieftains, who have successively usurped the government of California, have arbitrarily imposed such duties on foreign imports as their avarice or exigency suggested. A few examples will be sufficient to show the spirit and character of these imposts. Unbleached cottons, which cost in the United States six cents the yard cost here fifty and shirtings cost seventy-five. Plain knives and forks cost ten dollars the dozen; coarse cowhide shoes three dollars the pair; the cheapest tea three dollars the pound; and a pair of common truck-wheels seventy-five dollars. The duty alone on the coarsest hat, even if made of straw, is three dollars.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.55

The revenues derived from these enormous imposts have passed into the pockets of a few individuals who have placed themselves, by violence or fraud, at the head of the government, and have never reached the public in any beneficial form. These exactions, enforced by an irresponsible tyranny, have kept California poor, have crushed all enterprise, and have rolled back the tide of emigration from her soil as the resisting rock the rushing stream. But the barriers are now broken, and broken forever. California is free….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.55

Saturday, Aug. 15. To-day the first newspaper ever published in California made its appearance. The honor, if such it be, of writing its Prospectus, fell to me. It is to be issued every Saturday, and is published by Semple and Colton. Little did I think when relinquishing the editorship of the "North" in Philadelphia, that my next feat in this line would be off here in California. My partner is an emigrant from Kentucky, who stands six feet eight in his stockings. He is in a buckskin dress, a foxskin cap; is true with his rifle, ready with his pen, and quick at the type-case.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.55–p.56

He created the materials of our office out of the chaos of a small concern, which had been used by a Roman Catholic monk in printing a few sectarian tracts. The press was old enough to be preserved as a curiosity; the mice had burrowed in the balls; there were no rules, no leads, and the types were rusty and all in pi. It was only by scouring that the letters could be made to show their faces. A sheet or two of tin were procured, and these, with a jack-knife, were cut into rules and leads. Luckily we found, with the press, the greater part of a keg of ink; and now came the main scratch for paper. None could be found, except what is used to envelop the tobacco of the cigar smoked here by the natives. A coaster had a small supply of this on board, which we procured. It is in sheets a little larger than the common-sized foolscap. And this is the size of our first paper, which we have christened the "Californian."

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.56–p.57

Though small in dimensions, our first number is as full of news as a black-walnut is of meat, We have received by couriers, during the week, intelligence from all the important military posts through the territory. Very little of this has transpired; it reaches the public for the first time through our sheet. We have, also, the declaration of war between the United States and Mexico, with an abstract of the debate in the Senate. A crowd was waiting when the first sheet was thrown from the press. It produced quite a little sensation. Never was a bank run upon harder; not, however, by people with paper to get specie, but exactly the reverse. One-half of the paper is in English, the other in Spanish. The subscription for a year is five dollars; the price of a single sheet is twelve and a half cents….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.57

Wednesday, Aug. 26. The Californians breakfast at eight, dine at twelve, take tea at four, supper at eight, and then go to bed—unless there is a fandango. The supper is the most substantial meal of the three, and would visit anybody but a Californian with the nightmare. But their constant exercise in the open air and on horseback gives them the digestion of the ostrich.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.57

The only meat consumed here to any extent is beef. It is beef for breakfast, beef for dinner, and beef for supper. A pig is quite a rarity; and as for chickens, they are reserved for the sick. The woods are full of partridges and hare; the streams and lagoons are covered with ducks and wild geese; and the harbor abounds with the most delicious fish. But no Californian will angle or hunt, while he has a horse or saddle left. And as for the Indians, but very few of them have any hunting gear beyond the bow and arrow; with these they can kill the deer and elk, but a partridge and hare are too shy and too quick. They spear a large salmon which frequents Carmel river, three miles distant, and bring it in to market. This fish is often three feet long, extremely fat, and of a flavor that takes from Lent half the merit of its abstinence. Spearing them is high sport for the Indian, and is another feature in California life….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.57–p.58

Friday, Aug. 28. The ox-cart of the Californian is quite unique and primitive. The wheels are cut transversely from the butt-end of a tree, and have holes through the centre of a huge wood axle. The tongue is a long, heavy beam, and the yoke resting on the necks of the oxen, is lashed to their horns, close down to the roots; from these they draw, instead of the chest, as with us; and they draw enormous loads, but the animals are large and powerful.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.58

But to return to the cart. On gala days it is swept out, and covered with mats; a deep body is put on, which is arched with loop-poles, and over these a pair of sheets are extended for a covering. Into this the ladies are tumbled, when three or four yoke of oxen, with as many Indian drivers, and ten times as many dogs, start ahead. The hallooing of the drivers, the barking of the dogs, and the loud laughter of the girls make a common chorus. The quail takes to the covert as the roaring establishment comes on, and even the owl suspends his melancholy note. What has his sad tone to do amid such noise and mirth? It is like the piping cry of an infant amid the revelry and tumult of the carnival….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.58–p.59

Tuesday, Oct. 20. The mode of cultivating land in California is eminently primitive. In December or January they take a piece of wood in the shape of a ship's knee, dress it down a little with a dull axe, and spike a piece of iron to the lower point. A pole, by which the oxen draw, runs from the inner bend of the knee to the yoke. This pole has a mortise, about eight inches long, made slanting, and about a foot from the after end; a piece of wood, about two inches by six, runs up through the plough and pole, and is so wedged into the mortise of the pole, as to make the plough run shallow or deep as required. But if the ground happens to be hard the plough will not enter an inch, and if there are roots in the ground it must be lifted over, or it will be invariably broken. Such is a California plough; such a fair specimen of the arts here….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.59

Wednesday, Oct. 21. If late in the season, the Californian rarely prepares the ground by any furrowing attempts. He scatters the seed about the field, and then scratches it in with the thing which he calls a plough. Should this scratching fail of yielding him sixty bushels to the acre, he grumbles. In reaping he cuts so high, to save a little trouble in threshing, which is done here by horses, that he loses one-eighth of his crop; but this eighth serves for seed the next season; and what to him is better still, saves the trouble of sowing. So that his second crop plants itself from the first, and is often nearly as large as its predecessor. Even the third self-planted crop is quite respectable, and would satisfy a New England farmer for his laborious toil; but here it generally goes to the blackbirds….

HORSES AND HORSEMEN.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.59–p.60

Friday, Dec. 4. The moment a child is born on a farm in California, and the nurse has had time to dress it, it is given to a man on horseback, who, with its future godfather and godmother, ride post-haste with it to some mission, and present it to a priest for baptism. This ceremony concluded, the party, full of glee, start on their return; and the little newcomer may now, perhaps, rest a week or two before he starts on another excursion; but after that, hardly a day will elapse without his being on horseback. He literally rides from his cradle to his grave. Thus, by the time a boy is ten or twelve years of age, he becomes an expert rider, is devoted to the saddle, and looks upon pedestrian motion as a contemptible way of getting through the world. He would sooner travel a hundred miles on horseback than ten on foot, and connect less fatigue and hardship with the result. Most of his labors, too, are on the saddle. He has a farm of twenty or thirty miles to ride over; vast wheat-fields to survey, and perhaps, ten thousand head of cattle to keep from straying….

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.60–p.61

Wednesday, Dec. 9. The horses of California are of a hardy nature; and it is well for them that they are, considering the inhuman manner in which they are generally treated by the natives. If a man wants to ride forty or fifty miles from his residence, he mounts his horse, and spurs off upon the gallop. On arriving at the place of his destination, he ties him to a post, where he stands two or three days waiting for his master. During this time he is not once fed, and is quite fortunate if he gets a swallow of water. At last his rider comes, mounts him, and he takes him back again at the same free and easy gait with which he first started. This, of course, is confined to the summer season, when the grass has the most substance and nutriment: still it is almost incredible. Besides the weight of his heavy rider, the horse generally carries fifty or sixty pounds in the gear of his saddle, and double this in a soaking rain. It requires two large tanned ox hides to fit out a Californian saddle; then add to this, the wooden stirrups, three inches thick, the saddle-tree, with its stout iron rings and buckles, a pair of goat-skins across the pommel, holsters and pistols, and spurs at the heels of the rider, weighing from four to six pounds, and we have some idea of what a Californian horse has to carry. Still he is cheerful and spirited, and never flags till nature sinks with exhaustion. A man who can abuse such an animal, ought to be bitted and saddled himself.

AN AMERICAN PIONEER.

Colton, American Alcalde at Monterey, America, Vol.7, p.61–p.62

Thursday, Dec. 10. The old as well as the young are coming over the mountains. I had an emigrant to dine with me to-day, who has recently arrived, and who is seventy-six years of age. His locks are as free of gray hairs as those of a child, and his eye still flashes with the fires of youth. He is among the volunteers, and you may see him every day on a spirited horse, with a rifle at his saddle-bow. He has four sons with Colonel Fremont. They enlisted before they had time to unpack their saddles, and have with them the remnants of the biscuit and cheese which they brought from the United States, I asked the old man what could induce him at his age to come to California, He said his children were coming, and so he determined to come too. I asked him if he had no compunction in taking up arms against the inhabitants the moment of his arrival. He said he had Scripture example for it. The Israelites took the promised land of the East by arms, and the Americans must take the promised land of the West in the same way. I told him that would do, if he could show the same high commission. But I find this kind of parallel running in the imagination of all the emigrants. They seem to look upon this beautiful land as their own Canaan, and the motley race around them as the Hittites, the Hivites, and Jebusites, whom they are to drive out. But they have gone at it with other weapons than rams' horns, except as powder-flasks.

Reasons for the War with Mexico

Title: Reasons for the War with Mexico

Author: James K. Polk

Date: 1846

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.68-74

The reasons for the Mexican War given by President Polk, in this message to Congress (1846), do not cover the real grounds, which involved our relations with England over the Oregon boundary and a growing determination to conquer and annex California and New Mexico. Polk was an avowed expansionist. Few Presidents have met with such powerful opposition in Congress. Yet he completed the annexation of Texas, solved the Oregon problem, but without securing all the disputed territory, settled the long-standing tariff dispute between the South and North, and established a new treasury system which lasted until the Civil War.

John Slidell, whom he mentions here, had been sent to Mexico to negotiate the purchase of New Mexico and California. He failed. Meanwhile a small American army under General Zachary Taylor had occupied part of the territory claimed by Texas in 1845, and disputed by Mexico, whose forces attacked Taylor and started the war.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.68

THE existing state of the relations between the United States and Mexico renders it proper that I should bring the subject to consideration of Congress. In my message at the commencement of your present session the state of these relations, the causes which led to the suspension of diplomatic intercourse between the two countries in March, 1845, and the long-continued and unredressed wrongs and injuries committed by the Mexican Government on citizens of the United states in their persons and property were briefly set forth….

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.68–p.69

Mr. Slidell arrived at Vera Cruz on the 30th of November [1845], and was courteously received by the authorities of that city. But the Government of General Herrera was then tottering to its fall. The revolutionary party had seized upon the Texas question to effect or hasten its overthrow. Its determination to restore friendly relations with the United States, and to receive our minister to negotiate for the settlement of this question, was violently assailed, and was made the great theme of denunciation against it. The Government of General Herrera, there is good reason to believe, was sincerely desirous to receive our minister; but it yielded to the storm raised by its enemies, and on the 21st of December refused to accredit Mr. Slidell upon the most frivolous pretexts. These are so fully and ably exposed in the note of Mr. Slidell of the 24th of December last to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, herewith transmitted, that I deem it unnecessary to enter into further detail on this portion of the subject.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.69

Five days after the date of Mr. Slidell's note General Herrera yielded the Government to General Paredes without a struggle, and on the 30th of December resigned the Presidency. This revolution was accomplished solely by the army, the people having taken little part in the contest; and thus the supreme power of Mexico passed into the hands of a military leader. . .

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.69–p.70

Under the circumstances, Mr. Slidell, in obedience to my direction, addressed a note to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, under date of the 1st of March last, asking to be received by that Government in the diplomatic character to which he had been appointed. This Minister in his reply, under date of the 12th of March, reiterated the arguments of his predecessor, and in terms that may be considered as giving just grounds of offense to the Government and people of the United States denied the application of Mr. Slidell. Nothing therefore remained for our envoy but to demand his passports and return to his own country.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.70

Thus the Government of Mexico, though solemnly pledged by official acts in October last to receive and accredit an American envoy, violated their plighted faith and refused the offer of a peaceful adjustment of our difficulties. Not only was the offer rejected, but the indignity of its rejection was enhanced by the manifest breach of faith in refusing to admit the envoy who came because they had bound themselves to receive him. Nor can it be said that the offer was fruitless from the want of opportunity of discussing it; our envoy was present on their own soil. Nor can it be ascribed to a want of sufficient powers; our envoy had full powers to adjust every question of difference. Nor was there room for complaint that our propositions for settlement were unreasonable; permission was not even given our envoy to make any proposition whatever. Nor can it be objected that we, on our part, would not listen to any reasonable terms of their suggestion; the Mexican Government refused all negotiation, and have made no proposition of any kind.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.70–p.71

In my message at the commencement of the present session I informed you that upon the earnest appeal both of the Congress and Convention of Texas I had ordered an efficient military force to take a position "between the Nueces and the Del Norte." This had become necessary to meet a threatened invasion of Texas by the Mexican forces, for which extensive military preparations had been made. The invasion was threatened solely because Texas had determined, in accordance with a solemn resolution of the Congress of the United States, to annex herself to our Union, and under these circumstances it was plainly our duty to extend our protection over her citizens and soil.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.71

This force was concentrated at Corpus Christi, and remained there until after I had received such information from Mexico as rendered it probable, if not certain, that the Mexican Government would refuse to receive our envoy.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.71–p.72

Meantime Texas, by the final action of our Congress, had become an integral part of our Union. The Congress of Texas, by its act of December 19, 1836, had declared the Rio del Norte to be the boundary of that Republic. Its jurisdiction had been extended and exercised beyond the Nueces. The country between that river and the Del Norte had been represented in the Congress and in the Convention of Texas, had thus taken part in the act of annexation itself, and is now included within one of our Congressional districts. Our own Congress had, moreover, with great unanimity, by the act approved December 31, 1845, recognized the country beyond the Nueces as a part of our territory by including it within our own revenue system, and a revenue officer to reside within that district has been appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. It became, therefore, of urgent necessity to provide for the defense of that portion of our country. Accordingly, on the 13th of January last instructions were issued to the general in command of these troops [Zachary Taylor] to occupy the left bank of the Del Norte. This river, which is the southwestern boundary of the State of Texas, is an exposed frontier….

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.72

The movement of the troops to the Del Norte was made by the commanding general under positive instructions to abstain from all aggressive acts toward Mexico or Mexican citizens and to regard the relations between that Republic and the United States as peaceful unless she should declare war or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war. He was specially directed to protect private property and respect personal rights.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.72

The Army moved from Corpus Christi on the 11th of March, and on the 28th of that month arrived on the left bank of the Del Norte opposite to Matamoras, where it encamped on a commanding position, which has since been strengthened by the erection of field-works. A depot has also been established at Point Isabel, near the Brazos Santiago, 30 miles in rear of the encampment. The selection of his position was necessarily confided to the judgment of the general in command.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.72–p.73

The Mexican forces at Matamoras assumed a belligerent attitude, and on the 12th of April General Ampudia, then in command, notified General Taylor to break up his camp within twenty-four hours and to retire beyond the Nueces River, and in the event of his failure to comply with these demands announced that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question. But no open act of hostility was committed until the 24th of April. On that day General Arista, who had succeeded to the command of the Mexican forces, communicated to General Taylor that "he considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them." A party of dragoons of 63 men and officers were on the same day dispatched from the American camp up the Rio del Norte, on its left bank, to ascertain whether the Mexican troops had crossed or were preparing to cross the river, "became engaged with a large body of these troops, and after a short affair, in which some 16 were killed and wounded, appear to have been surrounded and compelled to surrender."

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.73

The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens throughout a long period of years remain unredressed, and solemn treaties pledging her public faith for this redress have been disregarded. A government either unable or unwilling to enforce the execution of such treaties fails to perform one of its plainest duties.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.73–p.74

Our commerce with Mexico has been almost annihilated. It was formerly highly beneficial to both nations, but our merchants have been deterred from prosecuting it by the system of outrage and extortion which the Mexican authorities have pursued against them, while their appeals through their own Government for indemnity have been made in vain. Our forbearance has gone to such an extreme as to be mistaken in its character. Had we acted with vigor in repelling the insults and redressing the injuries inflicted by Mexico at the commencement, we should doubtless have escaped all the difficulties in which we are now involved.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.74

Instead of this, however, we have been exerting our best efforts to propitiate her good will. Upon the pretext that Texas, a nation as independent as herself, thought proper to unite its destinies with our own, she has affected to believe that we have severed her rightful territory, and in official proclamations and manifestoes has repeatedly threatened to make war upon us for the purpose of reconquering Texas. In the meantime we have tried every effort at reconciliation. The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war.

Polk, Reasons for the War with Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.74

As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights and the interests of our country.

The Northwest Fur Trade

Title: The Northwest Fur Trade

Author: Captain William Sturgis

Date: 1846

Source: America, Vol.4, pp.151-162

From 1788 to 1830 the fur trade between Boston, the Pacific Coast and China was an important stage in American expansion. It led to the discovery of the Columbia River, and to the annexation of two great States. Furthermore, it inaugurated our traditional friendly relations with China.

This is part of a lecture delivered in 1846 and reported in river, in Hunt's Merchant Magazine (Boston). Its author was actively engaged in the Northwest Fur Trade between 1798 and 1829, when, on its ceasing to be profitable, he became a dominant factor in the California hide traffic. It was on one of his vessels that Richard H. Dana sailed "Two Years Before the Mast."

Keenly interested in the Oregon question, it was Sturgis's compromise boundary suggestion, published in pamphlet form in 1845, that influenced the negotiations which established the forty-ninth parallel between this country and Canada.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.151

THE Northwest Fur Trade, in which our citizens largely participated, and at one period nearly monopolized, was principally limited to the sea-coast between the mouth of the Columbia river, in latitude 46°, to the numerous islands bordering this whole extent of coast, and the sounds, bays, and inlets, within these limits. Trade was always carried on alongside, or on board the ship, usually anchored near the shore, the Indians coming off in their canoes. It was seldom safe to admit many of the natives into the ship at the same time, and a departure from this prudent course, has, in numerous instances, been followed by the most disastrous and tragic results.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.152

The vessels usually employed were from one hundred to two hundred and fifty tons burthen, each. The time occupied for a voyage by vessels that remained upon the coast only a single season, was from twenty-two months to two years, but they generally remained out two seasons, and were absent from home nearly three years. The principal object of the voyages was to procure the skins of the sea-otter, which were obtained from the natives by barter, carried to Canton, and there exchanged for the productions of the Celestial Empire, to be brought home or taken to Europe, thus completing what may be called a trading voyage.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.152

Beaver and common otter skins, and other small furs, were occasionally procured in considerable quantities, but in the early period of the trade they were deemed unimportant, and little attention was given to collecting them. The sea-otter skins have ever been held in high estimation by the Chinese and Russians, as an ornamental fur; but its great scarcity and consequent cost, limits the wear to the wealthy and higher classes only. A full-grown prime skin, which has been stretched before drying, is about five feet long, and twenty-four to thirty inches wide, covered with very fine fur, about three-fourths of an inch in length, having a rich jet black, glossy surface, and exhibiting a silver color when blown open. Those are esteemed the finest skins which have some white hairs interspersed and scattered over the whole surface, and a perfectly white head….

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.153

After the expedition of Bering and Co., in 1741, these excursions were slowly extended to other groups between the two continents, and when Cook, in 1778, explored these northern regions, he met with Russian adventurers upon several of the islands in proximity with the American shore. It was, however, the publication of Cook's northern voyages, in 1785, that gave the great impulse to the Northwest Fur Trade, and drew adventurers from several nations to that quarter.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.153

The published journal of Captain King, who succeeded to the command of one of the ships after the death of Captains Cook and Clark, and his remarks, setting forth the favorable prospects for this trade, doubtless roused the spirit of adventure. Between the time of the publication referred to, in 1785, and the close of 1787, expeditions were fitted out from Canton, Macao, Calcutta, and Bombay, in the East; London and Ostend in Europe; and from Boston in the United States. In 1787, the first American expedition was fitted out, and sailed from Boston. It consisted of the ship Columbia, of two hundred and twenty, and the sloop Washington, of ninety tons burthen-the former commanded by John Kendrick, the latter by Robert Gray.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.153–p.154

It is scarcely possible, in the present age, when the departure or return of ships engaged in distant voyages is an every-day occurrence, to appreciate the magnitude of this undertaking, of the obstacles and difficulties that had to be surmounted in carrying it out….

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.154

The project of engaging in the fur trade of the North Pacific, from this country, was first brought forward by the celebrated American traveler, Ledyard. In his erratic wanderings, he entered on board the ship Resolution, as corporal of marines, with Captain Cook, upon his last voyage….

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.154

Bering, a Danish navigator in the service of Russia, who commanded the expedition just mentioned, was wrecked in 1741, upon an island that bears his name, and perished miserably in the course of the winter. He was the first navigator known to have passed through the strait that separates Asia from America; and Cook, who was the next to sail through it, in a commendable spirit of justice, gave to this strait the name of the unfortunate Bering. The fate of Cook is well known. He was killed by the natives of the Sandwich Islands, of which group he was the discoverer….

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.154

Kendrick was fated never to return. After remaining with both vessels two seasons on the northwest coast, he sent the Columbia home, in charge of Captain Gray, and remained himself in the sloop Washington. He continued in her several years, trading on the coast and at the Sandwich Islands.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.154–p.155

In 1792, while lying in the harbor of Honolulu, at one of these islands, and receiving, upon his birthday, a complimentary salute from the captain of an English trading vessel anchored near, he was instantly killed by a shot carelessly left in one of the guns fired on the occasion.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.155

Captain Gray reached home in the Columbia, in the summer of 1790, and thus completed the first circumnavigation of the globe under the American flag. He was immediately fitted out for a second voyage in the same ship, and it was during this voyage that he discovered, entered, and gave the name to the Columbia river, a circumstance now relied upon as one of the strongest grounds to maintain our claim to the Oregon Territory. He died abroad some years ago.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.155–p.156

The voyage of the Columbia was not profitable to her owners, in a pecuniary view, but it opened the way for other adventures, which were commenced on her return. In 1791, there were seven vessels from the United States in the North Pacific in pursuit of furs. For various reasons, the American traders so far gained the ascendency, that at the close of the eighteenth century, with the exception of the Russian establishment on the northern part of the coast, the whole trade was in our hands; and so remained until the close of the war with Great Britain, in 1815. This trade was confined almost exclusively to Boston. It was attempted, unsuccessfully, from Philadelphia and New York, and from Providence and Bristol, in Rhode Island. Even the intelligent and enterprising merchants of Salem, failed of success; some of them, however, were interested in several of the most successful northwestern voyages carried on from Boston. So many of the vessels engaged in this trade belonged here, the Indians had the impression that Boston was our whole country. Had any one spoken to them of American ships, or American people, he would not have been understood. We were only known as Boston ships, and Boston people.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.156

Subsequently, the war with Great Britain interrupted the trade for a time; but after the peace of 1815, it was resumed, and flourished for some years. The difficulties and uncertainty in procuring furs became so serious, that in 1829 the business north of California was abandoned.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.156

The narrative of Cook's voyage shows the value of a prime skin to have been, at the time of that voyage, $ 120. In 1802, when the largest collection was made, the average price of large and small skins, at Canton, was only about $20 each. At the present time, those of first quality would sell readily at $ 150. Some seventy or eighty ordinary California skins, brought home a few months ago, were sold here at nearly $60 each, to send to the north of Europe.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.156

The trade on the coast was altogether a barter trade. It consisted in part of blankets, coarse cloths, greatcoats, fire-arms and ammunition, rice, molasses, and biscuit, coarse cottons, cutlery, and hard-ware, a great variety of trinkets, &c.; in fact, everything that one can imagine. Copper has long been known, and highly prized by the Indians. It was put to no use, but was considered very valuable, and a person having a few pieces was deemed a wealthy man.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.157

The natives had no currency. But the skin of the ermine, found in limited numbers upon the northern part of the continent, was held in such universal estimation, and of such uniform value, among many tribes, that it in a measure supplied the place of currency. The skin of this little slender animal is from eight to twelve inches in length, perfectly white, except the tip of the tail, which is jet black.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.157

[Urged by some Indian friends, in 1802, Mr. Sturgis obtained and sent home a fine specimen, with a request that a quantity should be ordered at the annual Leipsic fair, where he supposed they might be obtained. About 5,000 were procured, which he took out with him on the next voyage, and arrived at Kigarnee, one of the principal trading places on the coast, early 1804. Having previously encouraged the Indians to expect them, the first question was, if he had "clicks" (the Indian name for the ermine skin) for sale, and being answered in the affirmative, great earnestness was manifested to obtain them, and it was on that occasion that he purchased 560 prime sea-otter skins, at that time worth $50 apiece at Canton, in a single forenoon, giving for each five ermine skins, that cost less than thirty cents each in Boston. He succeeded in disposing of all his ermines at the same rate, before others carried them out—but in less than two years from that time, one hundred of them would not bring a sea-otter skin].

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.157–p.158

Among a portion of the Indians, the management of trade was entrusted to the women. The reason given by the men was, that women could talk with the white men better than they could, and were willing to talk more.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.158

When the natives had a number of skins for sale, it was usual to fix a price for those of the first quality as a standard, which required a great deal of haggling. In addition to the staple articles of blankets, or cloth, or muskets, &c., that constituted this price, several smaller articles were given as presents, nominally, but in reality formed part of the price. Of these articles, different individuals would require a different assortment: a system of equivalents was accordingly established. For instance, an iron pot and an ax were held to be of equal value—so of a knife and a file, a pocket looking-glass and a pair of scissors.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.158

Various efforts were made by the Indians to obtain a more valuable article than the established equivalent. To avoid trouble, which would certainly follow if the trader yielded in a single instance, he often found it necessary to waste hours in a contest with a woman about articles of no greater value than a skein of thread or a sewing-needle. From various causes, the northwest trade was liable to great fluctuations. The laws of supply and demand were frequently disregarded, and prices consequently often unsettled. Prime sea-otter skins were obtained for articles that did not cost fifty cents at home. . .

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.158–p.159

While most of those who have rushed into this trade without knowledge, experience, or sufficient capital to carry it on, have been subjected to such serious losses, they were compelled to abandon it; to all who pursued it systematically and perseveringly, for a series of years, it proved highly lucrative. Among those who were the most successful in this trade, were the late firm of J. & T. H. Perkins, J. & Thos. Lamb, Edward Dorr & Sons, Boardman & Pope, Geo. W. Lyman, Wm. H. Boardman, the late Theodore Lyman, and several others, each of whom acquired a very ample fortune.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.159

These fortunes were not acquired, as individual wealth not unfrequently is, at the expense of our own community, by a tax upon the whole body of consumers, in the form of enhanced prices, often from adventitious causes. They were obtained abroad by giving to the Indians articles which they valued more than their furs, and then selling those furs to the Chinese for such prices as they are willing to pay; thus adding to the wealth of the country at the expense of foreigners, all that was acquired by individuals beyond the usual return for the use of capital, and suitable compensation for the services of those employed. This excess was sometimes very large. More than once a capital of $40,000, employed in a northwest voyage, yielded a return exceeding $150,000. In one instance, an outfit not exceeding $50,000, gave a gross return of $284,000. The individual who conducted the voyage is now a prominent merchant of Boston.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.159–p.160

(In conclusion, the lecturer gave a brief account of the two great fur companies.) In 1785 an association of merchants was formed in Siberia for the purpose of collecting furs in the North Pacific. In 1799 they were chartered under the name of the Russian American Company, with the exclusive privilege of procuring furs within the Russian limits, (540 40') for a period of twenty years, which has since been extended.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.160

The British Hudson Bay Company was chartered by Charles II., in 1669, with the grant of the exclusive use and control of a very extensive though not well-defined country, north and west of Canada. This uncertainty as to limits, led to the formation of an association of merchants in Canada in 1787, called the Northwest Company, for carrying on the fur trade without the supposed boundaries of the Hudson Bay Company.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.160–p.161

Those in the service of these concerns soon came in collision. Disputes and personal violence followed. At length, in June, 1816, a pitched battle was fought near a settlement that had been made by Lord Selkirk, upon the Red River, under a grant from the Hudson Bay Company, between the settlers and a party in the service of the Northwest Company, in which Governor Semple and seventeen of his men were killed. This roused the attention of the British government, and in 1821, the two companies were united, or rather, the Northwest Company was merged into the Hudson Bay Company. Previous to this, however, the Northwest Company had, in 1806, established trading posts beyond the Rocky Mountains. During the last war with Great Britain, they got possession of Mr. Astor's settlement at the mouth of the Columbia, and extended their posts on several branches of that river. These establishments being united, it infused new life, and their operations have since been conducted with increased vigor. They have now, practically, a monopoly of the fur trade, from 42° to 54° 40', on the western sea-board, and from 49° to the Northern Ocean, upon the rest of the American continent.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.161

With the exception of the British East India Company, the Hudson Bay Company is the most extensive and powerful association of individuals for private emolument now in existence, and their influence has hitherto prevented an adjustment of the Oregon question…. The whole business of collecting furs upon our western continent, without the acknowledged limits of the United States, is now monopolized by two great corporations, the Russian and British Fur Companies.

Sturgis, Northwest Fur Trade, America, Vol.4, p.161–p.162

After the peace in 1815, the British Northwest Company—partly in consequence of the monopoly of the East India Company—were compelled to seek the aid of American merchants and American vessels, in carrying on an important branch of their business. For a number of years, all the supplies for British establishments, west of the Rocky Mountains, were brought from London to Boston, and carried hence to the mouth of the Columbia in American ships, and all their collections of furs sent to Canton, consigned to an American house, and the proceeds shipped to England or the United States, in the same vessels; a fact which speaks loudly in favor of the freedom of our institutions and the enterprise of our merchants. Our respected fellow citizens, Messrs. Perkins & Co., furnished the ships, and transacted the business.

Wilmot Defends His Proviso

Title: Wilmot Defends His Proviso

Author: David Wilmot

Date: 1847

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.81-84

Wilmot was a Democratic Congressman from Pennsylvania, who approved an appropriation of $2,000,000 to be used by the United States Government in satisfying Mexican claims to the disputed territory of New Mexico and California, provided "that neither slavery or involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted." This famous proviso, first introduced in 1846, was the bugle-call which aroused the North to the intention of the South to extend slavery beyond Texas.

Wilmot made this speech on February 8, 1847, when he again moved his proviso to a bill (appropriating $3,000,000 instead of $2,000,000), which was finally passed without the support of the Democratic Senate. Lincoln once declared that he had voted forty-two times, while in Congress, for the principle of the Wilmot proviso.

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.81

SIR, It will be recollected by all present, at the last session of Congress, an amendment was moved by me to a bill of the same character as this, by which slavery should be excluded from any territory that might be subsequently be acquired by the United States from the Republic of Mexico.

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.81–p.82

Sir, on that occasion, that proviso was sustained by a very decided majority of this House. Nay, sir, more, it was sustained by a majority of the Republican party on this floor. I am prepared, I think, to show that the entire South were then willing to acquiesce in what appeared to be, and, in so far as the action of this House was concerned, what was the legislative will and declaration of the Union on this subject. It passed this House. Sir, there were no threats of disunion sounded in our ears. It passed here and went to the Senate, and it was the judgment of the public, and of men well informed, that, had it not been defeated there for want of time, it would have passed that body and become the established law of the land….

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.82

. . . There was then no cry that the Union was to be severed in consequence. The South, like brave men defeated, bowed to the voice and judgment of the nation. No, sir, no cry of disunion then. Why now? The hesitation and the wavering of northern men on this question has encouraged the South to assume a bolder attitude. This cry of disunion proceeds from no resolve of the South. It comes, sir, from the cowardice of the North….

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.82–p.83

But, sir, the issue now presented is not whether slavery shall exist unmolested where it now is, but whether it shall be carried to new and distant regions, now free, where the footprint of a slave cannot be found. This, sir, is the issue. Upon it I take my stand, and from it I cannot be frightened or driven by idle charges of abolitionism. I ask not that slavery be abolished. I demand that this Government preserve the integrity of free territory against the aggressions of slavery—against its wrongful usurpations. Sir, I was in favor of the annexation of Texas…. The Democracy of the North, almost to a man, went for annexation. Yes, sir, here was an empire larger than France given up to slavery. Shall further concessions be made by the North? Shall we give up free territory, the inheritance of free labor? Must we yield this also? Never, sir, never, until we ourselves are fit to be slaves. The North may be betrayed by her Representatives, but upon this great question she will be true to herself—true to posterity. Defeat! Sir, there can be no defeat. Defeat to-day will but arouse the teeming millions of the North, and lead to a more decisive and triumphant victory to-morrow.

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.83

But, sir, we are told, that the joint blood and treasure of the whole country being expended in this acquisition, therefore it should be divided, and slavery allowed to take its share. Sir, the South has her share already; the instalment for slavery was paid in advance. We are fighting this war for Texas and for the South. I affirm it—every intelligent man knows it—Texas is the primary cause of this war. For this, sir, northern treasure is being exhausted, and northern blood poured out upon the plains of Mexico. We are fighting this war cheerfully, not reluctantly—cheerfully fighting this war for Texas; and yet we seek not to change the character of her institutions. Slavery is there: there let it remain….

Wilmot Defends His Proviso, America, Vol.7, p.83–p.84

Now, sir, we are told that California is ours; that New Mexico is ours—won by the valor of our arms. They are free. Shall they remain free? Shall these fair provinces be the inheritance and homes of the white labor of freemen or the black labor of slaves? This, sir, is the issue—this the question. The North has the right, and her representatives here have the power…. But the South contend, that in their emigration to this free territory, they have the right to take and hold slaves, the same as other property. Unless the amendment I have offered be adopted, or other early legislation is had upon this subject, they will do so. Indeed, they unitedly, as one man, have declared their right and purpose so to do, and the work has already begun. Slavery follows in the rear of our armies. Shall the war power of our Government be exerted to produce such a result? Shall this Government depart from its neutrality on this question, and lend its power and influence to plant slavery in these territories? There is no question of abolition here, sir. Shall the South be permitted, by aggression, by invasion of the right, by subduing free territory, and planting slavery upon it, to wrest these provinces from northern freemen, and turn them to the accomplishment of their own sectional purposes and schemes? This is the question. Men of the North answer, Shall it be so? Shall we of the North submit to it? If we do, we are coward slaves, and deserve to have the manacles fastened upon our own limbs.

A Contemporary Senatorial Opponent of the War

Title: A Contemporary Senatorial Opponent of the War

Author: Thomas Corwin

Date: 1847

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.83-88

This arraignment of the Polk Administration for the war with Mexico was a notable oratorical effort of 1847, which gained Senator Corwin wide contemporary renown, but made him many enemies and damaged his political career. Nevertheless, after having served in Congress from 1830 to 1840, and a term as Governor of Ohio, he was in the United States Senate from 1844 to 1850, when he became Secretary of the Treasury in Fillmore Cabinet.

Corwin was one of the most eloquent speakers of his time, and was equally celebrated as a lawyer and as a law-maker and administrator. As an orator he won his greatest distinction, his speeches both on the stump and in debate being examples, not only of eloquence but of resourcefulness and courage.

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.83–p.84

MR. PRESIDENT, I…beg the indulgence of the Senate to some reflections on the particular bill now under consideration. I voted for a bill somewhat like the present at the last session—our army was then in the neighborhood of our line. I then hoped that the President did sincerely desire a peace. Our army had not then penetrated far into Mexico, and I hope that, with the two millions then proposed, we might get peace, and avoid the slaughter, the shame, the crime, of an aggressive, unprovoked war. But now you have overrun half of Mexico—you have exasperated and irritated her people—you claim indemnity for all expenses incurred in doing this mischief, and boldly ask her to give up New Mexico and California; and, as a bribe to her patriotism, seizing on her property, you offer three millions to pay the soldiers she has called out to repel your invasion, on condition that she will give up to you at least one-third of her whole territory….

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.86

But, sir, let us see what, as the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations explains it, we are to get by the combined processes of conquest and treaty.

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.86

What is the territory, Mr, President, which you propose to wrest from Mexico? It is consecrated to the heart of the Mexican by many a well-fought battle with his old Castilian master. His Bunker Hills, and Saratogas, and Yorktowns, are there! The Mexican can say, "There I bled for liberty! and shall I surrender that consecrated home of my affections to the Anglo-Saxon invaders? What do they want with it? They have Texas already. They have possessed themselves of the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. What else do they want? To what shall I point my children as memorials of that independence which I bequeath to them when those battle-fields shall have passed from my possession?"

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.86–p.87

Sir, had one come and demanded Bunker Hill of the people of Massachusetts, had England's Lion ever showed himself there, is there a man over thirteen and under ninety who would not have been ready to meet him? Is there a river on this continent that would not have run red with blood? Is there a field but would have been piled high with the unburied bones of slaughtered Americans before these consecrated battle-fields of liberty should have been wrested from us? But this same American goes into a sister Republic and says to poor, weak Mexico, "Give up your territory, you are unworthy to possess it; I have got one-half already, and all I ask of you is to give up the other!" England might as well, in the circumstances I have described, have come and demanded of us, "Give up the Atlantic slope—give up this trifling territory from the Alleghany Mountains to the sea; it is only from Maine to St. Mary's—only about one-third of your Republic, and the least interesting portion of it." What would be the response? They would say, we must give this up to John Bull. Why? "He wants room." The Senator from Michigan says he must have this. Why, my worthy Christian brother, on what principle of justice? "I want room!"

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.87

Sir, look at this pretence of want of room. With twenty millions of people, you have about one thousand millions of acres of land, inviting settlement by every conceivable argument, bringing them down to a quarter of a dollar an acre, and allowing every man to squat where he pleases. But the Senator from Michigan says we will be two hundred millions in a few years, and we want room. If I were a Mexican I would tell you, "Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine, we will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves."

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.87–p.88

Why, says the chairman of this Committee on Foreign Relations, it is the most reasonable thing in the world! We ought to have the Bay of San Francisco. Why? Because it is the best harbor on the Pacific! It has been my fortune, Mr. President, to have practised a good deal in criminal courts in the course of my life, but I never yet heard a thief, arraigned for stealing a horse, plead that it was the best horse that he could find in the country! We want California. What for? Why, says the Senator from Michigan, we will have it; and the Senator from South Carolina, with a very mistaken view, I think, of policy, says you can't keep our people from going there. I don't desire to prevent them. Let them go and seek their happiness in whatever country or clime it pleases them.

Corwin, Contemporary Senatorial Opponent, America, Vol.7, p.88

All I ask of them is not to require this Government to protect them with that banner consecrated to war waged for principles—eternal enduring truth. Sir, it is not meet that our old flag should throw its protecting folds over expeditions for lucre or for land. But you still say you want room for your people. This has been the plea of every robber chief from Nimrod to the present hour….

The Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City

Title: The Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City

Author: General Winfield Scott

Date: 1847

Source: America, Vol.7, p.89-95

This is from Scott's official report, written at the National Palace in the City of Mexico, September 18, 1847. Scott had emerged from the War of 1812 at the age of 28, the youngest General in the service.

In 1841 he became Commander-in-Chief and served as such in the Mexican War. After capturing Vera Cruz on March 26, 1847, Scott's army stormed the heights of Cerro Gordo on April 18, entered Puebla on May 15, was victorious at Contreras and Churubusco on August 19-20, and won the sharp and sanguinary battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec on the 8th. and 13th. of September respectively, entering Mexico City the following day. As a reward he was brevetted the first Lieutenant-General, U. S. A.

General William J. Worth, whom Scott honorably mentions, had been second in command at Monterey. General John A. Quitman, a native of Rhinebeck, New York, was afterward Governor of Mississippi.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.89

AT the end of another series of arduous and brilliant operations, of more than forty-eight hours' continuance, this glorious army hoisted, on the morning of the 14th [September, 1847], the colors of the United States on the walls of this palace….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.89–p.90

This city stands upon a slight swell of ground, near the center of an irregular basin, and is girdled with a ditch in its greater extent—a navigable canal of great breadth and depth—very difficult to bridge in the presence of an enemy, and serving at once for drainage, custom-house purposes and military defense; leaving eight entrances or gates over arches, each of which we found defended by a system of strong works, that seemed to require nothing but some men and guns to be impregnable….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.90

Outside, and within the cross-fires of those gates, we found to the south other obstacles but little less formidable. All the approaches near the city are over causeways, cut in many places (to oppose us) and flanked on both sides by ditches, also, of unusual dimensions. The numerous cross-roads are flanked in like manner, having bridges at the intersections, recently broken. The meadows thus chequered, are, moreover, in many spots, under water, or marshy; for, it will be remembered, we were in the midst of the wet season, though with less rain than usual, and we could not wait for the fall of the neighboring lakes and the consequent drainage of the wet grounds at the edge of the city—the lowest in the whole basin.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.90

After a close personal survey of the southern gates, covered by Pillow's division and Riley's brigade, and Twigg's, with four times our numbers concentrated in our immediate front, I determined, on the 11th, to avoid that network of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion to the southwest and west, less favorable approaches. . .

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.90–p.91

The first step in the new movement was to carry Chapultepec, a natural and isolated mound, of great elevation, strongly fortified at its base, on its acclivities and heights. Besides a numerous garrison, here was the military college of the republic, with a large number of sub-lieutenants and other students. Those works were within direct gunshot of the village of Tacubaya, and, until carried, we could not approach the city on the west without making a circuit too wade and too hazardous….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.91

The signal I had appointed for the attack was the momentary cessation of fire on the part of our heavy batteries. About eight o'clock in the morning of the 13th, judging that the time had arrived, by the effect of the missiles we had thrown, I sent an aide-de-camp to Pillow, and another to Quitman, with notice that the concerted signal was about to be given.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.91

Both columns now advanced with an alacrity that gave assurance of prompt success. The batteries, seizing opportunities, threw shots and shells upon the enemy over the heads of our men, with good effect, particularly at every attempt to reinforce the works from without to meet our assault….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.91–p.92

The broken acclivity was still to be ascended, and a strong redoubt, midway, to be carried, before reaching the castle on the heights. The advance of our brave men, led by brave officers, though necessarily slow, was unwavering, over rocks, chasms and mines, and under the hottest fire of cannon and musketry. The redoubt now yielded to resistless valor, and the shouts that followed announced to the castle the fate that impended. The enemy were steadily driven from shelter to shelter. The retreat allowed not time to fire a single mine, without the certainty of blowing up friend and foe. Those who at a distance attempted to apply matches to the long trains were shot down by our men. There was death below, as well as above, ground.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.92

At length the ditch and wall of the main work were reached; the scaling-ladders were brought up and planted by the storming parties; some of the daring spirits first in the assault were cast down—killed or wounded; but a lodgment was soon made; streams of heroes followed; all opposition was overcome, and several of the regimental colors flung out from the upper walls, amid long-continued shouts and cheers, which sent dismay into the capital. No scene could have been more animating or glorious…. There are two routes from Chapultepec to the capital—the one on the right entering the same gate, Belen, with the road from the south via Piedad; and the other obliquing to the left, to intersect the great western or San Cosme road, in a suburb outside of the gate of San Cosme….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.92–p.93

At this junction of roads, we first passed one of the formidable systems of city defenses, and it had not a gun!—a strong proof: 1. That the enemy had expected us to fall in the attack upon Chapultepec, even if we meant anything more than a feint; 2. That, in either case, we designed, in his belief, to return and double our forces against the southern gates, a delusion kept up by the active demonstrations of Twiggs and the forces posted on that side; and 3. That advancing rapidly from the reduction of Chapultepec, the enemy had not time to shift guns—our previous captures had left him, comparatively, but few—from the southern gates.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.93

Within those disgarnished works I found our troops engaged in a street fight against the enemy posted in gardens, at windows, and on housetops—all flat, with parapets. Worth ordered forward the mountain-howitzers of Cadwalader's brigade, preceded by skirmishers and pioneers, with pickaxes and crowbars, to force windows and doors, or to burrow through walls. The assailants were soon in an equality of position fatal to the enemy. By eight o'clock in the evening, Worth had carried two batteries in this suburb. According to my instructions, he here posted guards and sentinels, and placed his troops under shelter for the night. There was but one more obstacle—the San Cosme gate (custom-house)….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.93

Quitman, within the city, adding several new defenses to the position he had won, and sheltering his corps as well as practicable, now awaited the return of daylight under the guns of the formidable citadel, yet to be subdued….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.93–p.94

At about 4 o'clock next morning (September 14) a deputation of the ayuntamiento (city council) waited upon me to report that the Federal Government and the army of Mexico had fled from the capital some three hours before, and to demand terms of capitulation in favor of the church, the citizens and the municipal authorities. I promptly replied, that I would sign no capitulation; that the city had been virtually in our possession from the time of the lodgments effected by Worth and Quitman the day before; that I regretted the silent escape of the Mexican army; that I should levy upon the city a moderate contribution, for special purposes; and that the American army should come under no terms, not self-imposed—such only as its own honor, the dignity of the United States, and the spirit of the age should, in my opinion, imperiously demand and impose….

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.94

At the termination of the interview with the city deputation, I communicated, about daylight, orders to Worth and Quitman to advance slowly and cautiously (to guard against treachery) toward the heart of the city, and to occupy its stronger and more commanding points. Quitman proceeded to the great plaza or square, planted guards, and hoisted the colors of the United States on the national palace—containing the halls of Congress and executive apartments of Federal Mexico.

Scott, Capture of Chapultepec and Mexico City, America, Vol.7, p.94–p.95

Soon after we had entered, and were in the act of occupying the city, a fire was opened upon us from the flat roofs of the houses, from windows and corners of streets by some two thousand convicts, liberated the night before by the flying government—joined by, perhaps, as many Mexican soldiers, who had disbanded themselves and thrown off their uniforms…. Their objects were to gratify national hatred; and, in general alarm and confusion, to plunder the wealthy inhabitants—particularly the deserted homes. But families are now generally returning; business of every kind has been resumed, and the city is already tranquil and cheerful, under the admirable conduct (with exceptions very few and trifling) of our gallant troops….

Grant in Mexico

Title: Grant in Mexico

Author: Ulysses Simpson Grant

Date: 1847

Source: America, Vol.7, p.96

Graduating from Westpoint, in 1843, twenty-first in a class of thirty-nine, young Second-Lieutenant Ulysses Grant served under General Zachary Taylor at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma and at the capture of Monterey.

Under General Winfield Scott his bravery at Molino del Rey gained him a first-lieutenancy; and for his gallantry in action at the storming of Chapultepec, here described, he was brevetted captain, and was mentioned in several war department reports, among others in that of Major Robert E. Lee.

Major Lee, who had graduated from West Point fourteen years earlier than Grant, also distinguished himself at Chapultepec, being brevetted colonel.

Grant in Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.96–p.97

I WAS with the earliest troops to enter the Mills. In passing through the north side, looking towards Chapultepec I happened to notice that there were armed Mexicans still on top of the building, only a few feet from many of our men. Not seeing any stairway or ladder reaching to the top of the building, I took a few soldiers, and had a cart that happened to be standing near brought up, and, placing the shafts against the wall and chocking the wheels so that the cart could not back, used the shafts as a sort of ladder extending to within three or four feet of the top. By this I climbed to the roof of the building, followed by a few men, but found a private soldier had preceded me by some other way. There were still quite a number of Mexicans on the roof, among them a major and five or six officers of lower grades, who had not succeeded in getting away before our troops occupied the building. They still had their arms, while the soldier before mentioned was walking as sentry, guarding the prisoners he had surrounded, all by himself. I halted the sentinel, received the swords from the commissioned officers, and proceeded, with the assistance of the soldiers now with me, to disable the muskets by striking them against the edge of the wall, and throwing them to the ground below. . .

Grant in Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.97

During the night of the 11th (September) batteries were established which could play upon the fortifications of Chapultepec. The bombardment commenced early in the morning of the 12th, but there was no further engagement during this day than that of the artillery. General Scott assigned the capture of Chapultepec to General Pillow, but did not leave the details to his judgment. Two assaulting columns, two hundred and fifty men each, composed of volunteers for the occasion, were formed. They were commanded by Captains McKinzie and Casey respectively. The assault was successful, but bloody. . .

Grant in Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.97–p.98

Worth's command gradually advanced to the front…. Later in the day in reconnoitering I found a church off to the south of the road, which looked to me as if the belfry would command the ground back of the garita San Cosme. I got an officer of the voltigeurs, with a mountain howitzer and men to work it, to go with me. The road being in possession of the enemy, we had to take the field to the south to reach the church. This took us over several ditches breast deep in water and grown up with water plants. These ditches, however, were not over eight or ten feet in width. The howitzer was taken to pieces and carried by the men to its destination. When I knocked for admission a priest came to the door, who, while extremely polite, declined to admit us. With the little Spanish then at my command, I explained to him that he might save property by opening the door, and he certainly would save himself from becoming a prisoner, for a time at least; and besides, I intended to go in whether he consented or not. He began to see his duty in the same light that I did, and opened the door, though he did not look as if it gave him special pleasure to do so. The gun was carried to the belfry and put together. We were not more than two or three hundred yards from San Cosme. The shots from our little gun dropped in upon the enemy and created great confusion. Why they did not send out a small party and capture us, I do not know. We had no infantry or other defences besides our one gun.

Grant in Mexico, America, Vol.7, p.98–p.99

The effect of this gun upon the troops about the gate of the city was so marked that General Worth saw it from his position. He was so pleased that he sent a staff officer, Lieutenant Pemberton . . . to bring me to him. He expressed his gratification at the services the howitzer in the church steeple was doing, saying that every shot was effective, and ordered a captain of voltigeurs to report to me with another howitzer to be placed along with the one already rendering so much service. I could not tell the General that there was not room enough in the steeple for another gun, because he probably would have looked upon such a statement as a contradiction from a second lieutenant. I took the captain with me, but did not use his gun.

Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed

Title: Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed

Author: James K. Polk

Date: 1847

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.100-105

In all American history there are few such revelations of the inside workings of war and diplomacy as come to light in Polk's Diary, edited by George Bancroft, from which these extracts concerning Mexico are taken. Although Polk has been accused of forcing the war on Mexico for purposes of territorial aggrandizement, his Diary would indicate that but for his resistance to Buchanan and others in his Cabinet Mexico would have disappeared as a nation.

Polk appointed Nicholas P. Trist, whom he mentions here, a special agent to negotiate for peace, and Polk named the terms, but without notifying General Scott. On the arrival of Trist in Mexico a violent quarrel ensued between him and Scott, and his authority was revoked. After the capture of Mexico City, Trist was advised by Scott, now mollified, to resume peace negotiations; and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo resulted.

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.100–p.101

I SAID [September 4, 1847] that I would be unwilling to pay the sum which Mr. Trist had been authorized to pay, in the settlement of a boundary by which it was contemplated that the United States would acquire New Mexico and the Californias; and that if Mexico continued obstinately to refuse to treat, I was decidedly in favor of insisting on more territory than the provinces named. I expressed the opinion further that as our expenses had been greatly enlarged by the obstinacy of Mexico, in refusing to negotiate, since Mr. Trist's instructions were prepared in April last, if a treaty had not been made when we next heard from Mexico, that his instructions should be modified….

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.101–p.102

September 7.—The distinct question submitted was whether the amount which Mr. Trist had been authorized to pay for the cession of New Mexico and the Californias, and right of passage through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec should not be reduced, and whether we should not now demand more territory than we now did. All seemed to agree that the maximum sum to be paid for the cessions above described should be reduced. Mr. Buchanan suggested that this sum should be reduced from 30 to 15 millions, and that the cession of the right of passage through the Isthmus of lower, as well as upper California and New Mexico should be made a "sine qua non." He suggested also that the line should run on the parallel of 31° or 31°. 30' of North Latitude from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of California, instead of on the parallel of 32° which Mr. Trist had been authorized to accept. Upon the question of acquiring more territory than this, there was some difference of opinion. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General were in favor of acquiring in addition the Department or State of Tamaulipas which includes the port of Tampico. The Postmaster General and the Secretary of the Navy concurred with him. I expressed myself as being entirely agreed to reduce the sum to be paid from 30 to 15 millions and to modify the line as suggested by Mr. Buchanan. I declared myself as being in favor of acquiring the cession of the Department of Tamaulipas, if it should be found practicable….

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.102

November 9.—Mr. Buchanan spoke to-day in an unsettled tone, and said I must take one of two courses in my next message: viz. to designate the part of Mexican territory which we intended to hold as an indemnity, or to occupy all Mexico by a largely increased force and subdue the country and promise protection to the inhabitants. He said he would express no opinion between these two plans; but after the despatches which were expected from the army were received he would do so. I remarked that I thought our policy had been settled upon sometime since, but as the subject was now brought up as one that was still open, I would read what I had written on the subject, and I did so. My views as thus reduced to writing were in substance that we would continue the prosecution of the war with an increased force, hold all the country we had conquered, or might conquer, and levy contributions upon the enemy to support the war, until a just peace was obtained, that we must have indemnity in territory, and that as a part indemnity, the Californias and New Mexico should under no circumstances be restored to Mexico, but that they should henceforward be considered a part of the United States and permanent territorial governments be established over them; and that if Mexico protracted the war additional territory must be acquired as further indemnity.

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103

His change of opinion will not alter my views; I am fixed in my course, and I think all the Cabinet except Mr. Buchanan still concur with me, and he may yet do so….

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103

November 18.—I requested Mr. Buchanan to prepare a paragraph for the message to the effect that failing to obtain a peace, we should continue to occupy Mexico with our troops, and encourage and protect the friends of peace in Mexico to establish and maintain a republican government, able and willing to make peace.

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103

In Mr. Buchanan's draft, he stated in that event that "we must fulfill that destiny which Providence may have in store for both countries."

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103

I thought this would be too indefinite and that it would be avoiding my constitutional responsibility. I preferred to state in substance that we should, in that event, take the measure of our indemnity into our own hands and dictate our own terms to Mexico….

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103

November 23.—Mr. Buchanan still preferred his own draft, and so did Mr. Walker, the latter avowing as a reason that he was for taking the whole of Mexico, if necessary, and he thought the construction placed upon Mr. Buchanan's draft by a large majority of the people would be that it looked to that object.

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.103–p.104

I replied that I was not prepared to go to that extent, and furthermore, that I did not desire that anything I said in the message should be so obscure as to give rise to doubt or discussion as to what my true meaning was; that I had in my last message declared that I did not contemplate the conquest of Mexico, and that in another part of this paper I had said the same thing….

Polk, Why the Whole of Mexico was not Annexed, America, Vol.7, p.104–p.105

February 21 [1848].—I announced to the Cabinet that under all the circumstances of the case I would submit it to the Senate for ratification, with a recommendation to strike out the tenth article. I assigned my reasons for this decision. They were, briefly, that the treaty conformed on the main question of limits and boundary to the instructions given Mr. Trist in April last, and that though if the treaty was now to be made I should demand more territory, perhaps, to make the Sierra Madre the line, yet it was doubtful whether this could be ever obtained by the consent of Mexico. I looked to the consequences of its rejection. A majority of one branch of Congress was opposed to my Administration; they have falsely charged that the war was brought on and is continued by me with a view to the conquest of Mexico, and if I were now to reject a treaty made upon my own terms, as authorized in April last, with the unanimous approbation of the Cabinet, the probability is that Congress would not grant either men or money to prosecute the war. Should this be the result, the army now in Mexico would be constantly wasting and diminishing in numbers, and I might at last be compelled to withdraw them, and then lose the two provinces of New Mexico and Upper California, which were ceded to the U. S. by this treaty. Should the opponents of my Administration succeed in carrying the next Presidential election, the great probability is that the country would lose all the advantages secured by this treaty. I adverted to the immense value of Upper California, and concluded by saying that if I were now to reject my own terms as offered in April last I did not see how it was possible for my Administration to be sustained….

Peter Wilson on the Empire State, Peter Wilson, 1847

Peter Wilson on the Empire State

Title: Peter Wilson on the Empire State

Author: Peter Wilson

Date: 1847

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.8, pp.25-26

Delivered before the New York Historical Society on May 4, 1847. Peter Wilson was a Cayuga chief, whose Indian name, Waowawanaonk, means, "They hear his voice." Printed here from a copy in the archives of the Society. Abridged.

Peter Wilson on the Empire State, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.25

You see before you an Iroquois; yes, a native American! You have heard the history of the Indian trails and the geography of the State of New York before it was known to the palefaces. The land of Fa-nun-no was once laced by these trails from Albany to Buffalo, trails that my people had trod for centuries—worn so deep by the feet of the Iroquois that they became your own roads of travel, when my people no longer walked in them. Your highways still lie in those paths; the same lines of communication bind one part of the Long House to another. My friend has told you that the Iroquois have no monuments. These highways are their monuments; this land of Ga-nun-no, this Empire State, is our monument. We wish to lay our bones under its soil, among those of our fathers. We shall not long occupy much room in living—still less when we are gone.

Peter Wilson on the Empire State, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.25

Have we, the first holders of this prosperous region, no longer a share in that history? Glad were your forefathers to sit down upon the threshold of the Long House. Rich did they then hold themselves in getting the mere sweepings from its door. Had our forefathers spurned you from it, when the French were thundering at the opposite end to cut a passage through and drive you into the sea, whatever has been the fate of other Indians, the Iroquois might still have been a nation; and I, too, might have had—a country!

Peter Wilson on the Empire State, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.26

There was a prophet of our race in early times who said that the day would come when troubles would fall upon the Indians so that they would knock their heads together. When that time came they were to search for a large palm-tree and shelter their heads beneath its shade, letting their bodies be buried at its roots, and cause that tree to flourish and become a fitting monument of the Iroquois race. That time has now come; we are in trouble and distress—we knock our heads together in agony, and we desire to find the palm-tree that we may lie down and die beneath it. We wish that palm-tree to be the State of New York, that it may be the monument of the Iroquois.

The Discovery of Gold in California

Title: The Discovery of Gold in California

Author: Walter Colton

Date: 1848

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.114-121

In his journal of events that transpired while he was Alcalde of Monterey, California, during 1846-7-8, entitled "Three Years in California," Colton records nothing more dramatic or interesting than the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, near Coloma, in 1848. Strangely enough, the epoch-making event, which gave an impetus to immigration from all parts of the globe, brought nothing but disaster to John Augustus Sutter, the Swiss immigrant, on whose property the first nuggets were found. Gold-seekers preempted his lands, and except an annual pension of $3,000 granted him by the California Legislature, he received practically nothing.

The great body of gold-seekers, "the Argonauts," arrived in 1849, during which year the population of California increased 100,000. Colton, as Alcalde, or Mayor, of Monterey, was in an admirable position to observe every phase of the phenomenon that attended the discovery, of which he gives this fascinating account.

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.114–p.115

A STRAGGLER came in to-day [Monday, June 12, 1848] from the American Fork, bringing a piece of yellow ore weighing an ounce. The young dashed the dirt from their eyes, and the old from their spectacles. One brought a spyglass, another an iron ladle; some wanted to melt it, others to hammer it, and a few were satisfied with smelling it. All were full of tests; and many, who could not be gratified in making their experiments, declared it a humbug. One lady sent me a huge gold ring, in the hope of reaching the truth by comparison; while a gentleman placed the specimen on the top of his gold-headed cane and held it up, challenging the sharpest eyes to detect a difference. But doubts still hovered on the minds of the great mass. They could not conceive that such a treasure could have lain there so long undiscovered. The idea seemed to convict them of stupidity. There is nothing of which a man is more tenacious than his claims to sagacity. He sticks to them like an old bachelor to the idea of his personal attractions, or a toper to the strength of his temperance ability, whenever he shall wish to call it into play….

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.115–p.116

Tuesday, June 20. My messenger sent to the mines, has returned with specimens of the gold; he dismounted in a sea of upturned faces. As he drew forth the yellow lumps from his pockets, and passed them around among the eager crowd, the doubts which had lingered till now, fled. All admitted they were gold, except one old man, who still persisted they were some Yankee invention, got up to reconcile the people to the change of flag. The excitement produced was intense; and many were soon busy in their hasty preparations for a departure to the mines. The family who had kept house for me caught the moving infection. Husband and wife were both packing up; the blacksmith dropped his hammer, the carpenter his plane, the mason his trowel, the farmer his sickle, the baker his loaf, and the tapster his bottle. All were off for the mines, some on horses, some on carts, and some on crutches, and one went in a litter. An American woman, who had recently established a boarding-house here, pulled up stakes, and was off before her lodgers had even time to pay their bills. Debtors ran, of course. I have only a community of women left, and a gang of prisoners, with here and there a soldier, who will give his captain the slip at the first chance. I don't blame the fellow a whit; seven dollars a month, while others are making two or three hundred a day! that is too much for human nature to stand.

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.116

Saturday, July 15. The gold fever has reached every servant in Monterey; none are to be trusted in their engagement beyond a week, and as for compulsion, it is like attempting to drive fish into a net with the ocean before them. General Mason, Lieutenant Lanman, and myself, form a mess; we have a house, and all the table furniture and culinary apparatus requisite; but our servants have run, one after another, till we are almost in despair: even Sambo, who we thought would stick by from laziness, if no other cause, ran last night; and this morning, for the fortieth time, we had to take to the kitchen, and cook our own breakfast. A general of the United States Army, the commander of a man-of-war, and the Alcalde of Monterey, in a smoking kitchen, grinding coffee, toasting a herring, and peeling onions! These gold mines are going to upset all the domestic arrangements of society, turning the head to the tail, and the tail to the head. Well, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good: the nabobs have had their time, and now comes that of the "niggers." We shall all live just as long, and be quite as fit to die.

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.117

Tuesday, July 18. Another bag of gold from the mines, and another spasm in the community. It was brought down by a sailor from Yuba river, and contains a hundred and thirty-six ounces. It is the most beautiful gold that has appeared in the market; it looks like the yellow scales of the dolphin, passing through his rainbow hues at death. My carpenters, at work on the school-house, on seeing it, threw down their saws and planes, shouldered their picks, and are off for the Yuba. Three seamen ran from the "Warren," forfeiting their four years' pay; and a whole platoon of soldiers from the fort left only their colors behind. One old woman declared she would never again break an egg or kill a chicken, without examining yolk and gizzard.

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.117

Monday, Oct. 2. I went among the gold-diggers; found half a dozen at the bottom of the ravine, tearing up the bogs, and up to their knees in mud. Beneath these bogs lay a bed of clay sprinkled in spots with gold. These deposits, and the earth mixed with them, were shovelled into bowls, taken to a pool near by, and washed out. The bowl, in working, is held in both hands, whirled violently back and forth through half a circle, and pitched this way and that sufficiently to throw off the earth and water, while the gold settles to the bottom. The process is extremely laborious, and taxes the entire muscles of the frame. In its effect it is more like swinging a scythe than any work I ever attempted.

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.118

Not having much relish for the bogs and mud, I procured a light crowbar and went to splitting the slaterocks which project into the ravine. I found between the layers, which were not perfectly closed, particles of gold, resembling in shape the small and delicate scales of a fish. These were easily scraped from the slate by a hunter's knife, and readily separated in the washbowl from other foreign substances. . .

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.118

There are about seventy persons at work in this ravine, and all within a few yards of each other. They average about one ounce per diem each. They who get less are discontented, and they who get more are not satisfied. Every day brings in some fresh report of richer discoveries in some quarter not far remote, and the diggers are consequently kept in a state of feverish excitement. One woman, a Sonoranian, who was washing here, finding at the bottom of her bowl only the amount of half a dollar or so, hurled it back again into the water, and straightening herself up to her full height, strode off with the indignant air of one who feels himself insulted….

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.118

Wednesday, Oct. 4. Our camping-ground is in a broad ravine through which a rivulet wanders, and which is dotted with the frequent tents of gold-diggers. The sounds of the crowbar and pick, as they shake or shiver the rock, are echoed from a thousand cliffs; while the hum of human voices rolls off on the breeze to mingle with the barking of wolves. . .

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.119

The provisions with which we left San Jose are gone, and we have been obliged to supply ourselves here. We pay at the rate of four hundred dollars a barrel for flour; four dollars a pound for poor brown sugar, and four dollars a pound for indifferent coffee. And as for meat, there is none to be got except jerked beef, which is the flesh of the bullock cut into strings and hung up in the sun to dry, and which has about as much juice in it as a strip of bark dangling in the wind from a dead tree….

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.119–p.120

Friday, Oct. 6. The most efficient gold-washer here is the cradle, which resembles in shape that appendage of the nursery, from which it takes its name. It is nine or ten feet long, open at one end and closed at the other. At the end which is closed, a sheet-iron pan, four inches deep, and sixteen over, and perforated in the bottom with holes, is let in even with the sides of the cradle. The earth is thrown into the pan, water turned on it, and the cradle, which is on an inclined plane, set in motion. The earth and water pass through the pan, and then down the cradle, while the gold, owing to its specific gravity, is caught by cleats fastened across the bottom. Very little escapes; it generally lodges before it reaches the last cleat. It requires four or five men to supply the earth and water to work such a machine to advantage. The quantity of gold washed out must depend on the relative proportion of gold in the earth. The one worked in this ravine yields a hundred dollars a day; but this is considered a slender result. Most of the diggers use the bowl or pan; its lightness never embarrasses their roving habits; and it can be put in motion wherever they find a stream or spring. It can be purchased now in the mines for five or six dollars; a few months since it cost an ounce—sixteen dollars for a wooden bowl! . . .

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.120

Wednesday, Oct. 11. It is near sunset, and the gold-diggers are returning from their labors, each one bearing on his head a brush-heap, with which he will kindle his evening fire. Their wild halloos, as they come in, fill the cliffs with their echoes. All are merry, whatever may have been the fortunes of the day with them. Not one among the whole can anticipate a more luxurious supper than a cake baked in the ashes, with a cup of coffee and a bit of jerked beef, except in the case of a new-comer, who had brought with him a few pounds of buckwheat flour; he can have a pancake, that is, if he has anything with which to grease his pan, which is extremely doubtful. There is not a bottle of liquor in the ravine, and every one must, perforce, turn in sober. Every streamlet preaches temperance, and the wind-stirred pine sings its soft eulogy on the charmed air….

Colton, Discovery of Gold in California, America, Vol.7, p.120–p.121

Monday, Oct. 16. I encountered this morning, in the person of a Welshman, a pretty marked specimen of the gold-digger. He stood some six feet eight in his shoes, with giant limbs and frame. A leather strap fastened his coarse trousers above the hips, and confined the flowing bunt of his flannel shirt. A broad-rimmed hat sheltered his browny features, while his unshorn beard and hair flowed in tangled confusion to his waist. To his back was lashed a blanket and bag of provisions; on one shoulder rested a huge crowbar, to which were hung a gold-washer and skillet: on the other rested a rifle, a spade, and pick, from which dangled a cup and pair of heavy shoes. He recognized me at once as the magistrate who had once arrested him for a breach of the peace. "Well, Senor Alcalde," said he, "I am glad to see you in these diggings. You had some trouble with me in Monterey; I was on a burster, you did your duty, and I respect you for it; and now let me settle the difference between us with a bit of gold: it shall be the first I strike under this bog." I told him there was no difference between us; that I knew at the time it was rum which had raised the rumpus. But before I had finished my disclaiming speech, his traps were on the ground, and his heavy pick was tearing up bog after bog from the snarl in which it had struck its tangling roots. These removed, he struck a layer of clay; "Here she comes!" he ejaculated, and turned out a piece of gold that would weigh an ounce or more. "There," he said, "Senor Alcalde, accept that; and when you reach home, where I hope you will find all well, have a bracelet made of it for your good lady"….

Treaty with Mexico, 1848

Title: Treaty with Mexico

Author: The U.S. and Mexican Governments

Date: 1848

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.309-326

By the Louisiana Purchase, Texas had become a part of the United States; but in 1819 it had been ceded to Spain in the negotiations for Florida. Two years later Mexico, including Texas, had become independent, and the United States made two unsuccessful attempts to purchase Texas from Mexico. The settlement of Texas by immigrants from the United States finally led to the secession of Texas and its annexation by the United States, with the result that the Mexican War broke out in May, 1846. It was closed by this treaty, by which the United States gained not only Texas but New Mexico and Upper California.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.309

TREATY OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP, LIMITS, AND SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, CONCLUDED AT GUADALUPE HIDALGO, FEBRUARY 2, 1848; RATIFICATION ADVISED BY SENATE, WITH AMENDMENTS, MARCH 10, 1848; RATIFIED BY PRESIDENT, MARCH 16, 1848; RATIFICATIONS EXCHANGED AT QUERETARO, MAY 30, 1848; PROCLAIMED, JULY 4, 1848.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.309

IN THE name of Almighty God:

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.309

The United States of America and the United Mexican States animated by a sincere desire to put an end to the calamities of the war which unhappily exists between the two Republics, and to establish upon a solid basis relations of peace and friendship, which shall confer reciprocal benefits upon the citizens of both, and assure the concord, harmony, and mutual confidence wherein the two people should live, as good neighbours, have for that purpose appointed their respective plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.309

The President of the United States has appointed Nicholas P Trist, a citizen of the United States, and the President of the Mexican Republic has appointed Don Luis Gonzaga Cuevas, Don Bernardo Couto, and Don Miguel Atristain, citizens of the said Republic;

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.310

'Who, after a reciprocal communication of their respective full powers, have, under the protection of Almighty God, the author of peace, arranged, agreed upon, and signed the following: Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic.

ARTICLE I

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.310

There shall be firm and universal peace between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, and between their respective countries, territories, cities, towns, and people, without exception of places or persons.

ARTICLE II

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.310

Immediately upon the signature of this treaty, a convention shall be entered into between a commissioner or commissioners appointed by the General-in-chief of the forces of the United States, and such as may be appointed by the Mexican Government, to the end that a provisional suspension of hostilities shall take place, and that, in the places occupied by the said forces, constitutional order may be reestablished, as regards the political, administrative, and judicial branches, so far as this shall be permitted by the circumstances of military occupation.

ARTICLE III

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.310

Immediately upon the ratification of the present treaty by the Government of the United States, orders shall be transmitted to the commanders of their land and naval forces, requiring the latter (provided this treaty shall then have been ratified by the Government of the Mexican Republic, and the ratifications exchanged) immediately to desist from blockading any Mexican ports and requiring the former (under the same condition) to commence, at the earliest moment practicable, withdrawing all troops of the United States then in the interior of the Mexican Republic, to points that shall be selected by common agreement, at a distance from the seaports not exceeding thirty leagues; and such evacuation of the interior of the Republic shall be completed with the least possible delay; the Mexican Government hereby binding itself to afford every facility in its power for rendering the same convenient to the troops, on their march and in their new positions, and for promoting a good understanding between them and the inhabitants. In like manner orders shall be despatched to the persons in charge of the custom-houses at all ports occupied by the forces of the United States, requiring them (under the same condition) immediately to deliver possession of the same to the persons authorized by the Mexican Government to receive it, together with all bonds and evidences of debt for duties on importations and on exportations, not yet fallen due. Moreover, a faithful and exact account shall be made out, showing the entire amount of all duties on imports and on exports, collected at such custom-houses, or elsewhere in Mexico, by authority of the United States, from and after the day of ratification of this treaty by the Government of the Mexican Republic; and also an account of the cost of collection; and such entire amount, deducting only the cost of collection, shall be delivered to the Mexican Government, at the city of Mexico, within three months after the exchange of ratifications.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.311

The evacuation of the capital of the Mexican Republic by the troops of the United States, in virtue of the above stipulation, shall be completed in one month after the orders there stipulated for shall have been received by the commander of said troops, or sooner if possible.

ARTICLE IV

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.311

Immediately after the exchange of ratifications of the present treaty all castles, forts, territories, places, and possessions, which have been taken or occupied by the forces of the United States during the present war, within the limits of the Mexican Republic, as about to be established by the following article, shall be definitely restored to the said Republic, together with all the artillery, arms, apparatus of war, munitions, and other public property, which were in the said castles and forts when captured, and which shall remain there at the time when this treaty shall be duly ratified by the Government of the Mexican Republic. To this end, immediately upon the signature of this treaty, orders shall be despatched to the American officers commanding such castles and forts, securing against the removal or destruction of any such artillery, arms, apparatus of war, munitions, or other public property. The city of Mexico, within the inner line of intrenchments surrounding the said city, is comprehended in the above stipulation, as regards the restoration of artillery, apparatus of war, &c.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.312

The final evacuation of the territory of the Mexican Republic, by the forces of the United States, shall be completed in three months from the said exchange of ratifications, or sooner if possible; the Mexican Government hereby engaging, as in the foregoing article, to use all means in its power for facilitating such evacuation, and rendering it convenient to the troops, and for promoting a good understanding between them and the inhabitants.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.312

If, however, the ratification of this treaty by both parties should not take place in time to allow the embarcation of the troops of the United States to be completed before the commencement of the sickly season, at the Mexican ports on the Gulf of Mexico, in such case a friendly arrangement shall be entered into between the General-in-chief of the said troops and the Mexican Government, whereby healthy and otherwise suitable places, at a distance from the ports not exceeding thirty leagues, shall be designated for the residence of such troops as may not yet have embarked, until the return of the healthy season. And the space of time here referred to as comprehending the sickly season shall be understood to extend from the first day of May to the first day of November.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.312

All prisoners of war taken on either side, on land or on sea, shall be restored as soon as practicable after the exchange of ratifications of this treaty. It is also agreed that if any Mexicans should now be held as captives by any savage tribe within the limits of the United States, as about to be established by the following article, the Government of the said United States will exact the release of such captives, and cause them to be restored to their country.

ARTICLE V

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.313

The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte, or opposite the mouth of its deepest branch, if it should have more than one branch emptying directly into the sea; from thence up the middle of that river, following the deepest channel, where it has more than one, to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence, westwardly, along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called Paso) to its western termination; thence, northward, along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the river Gila; (or if it should not intersect any branch of that river, then to the point on the said line nearest to such branch, and thence in a direct line to the same); thence down the middle of the said branch and of the said river, until it empties into the Rio Colorado; thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.313

The southern and western limits of New Mexico, mentioned in this article, are those laid down in the map entitled "Map of the United Mexican States, as organized and defined by various acts of the Congress of said republic, and constructed according to the best authorities. Revised edition. Published at New York, in 1847, by J. Disturnell;" of which map a copy is added to this treaty, bearing the signatures and seals of the undersigned Plenipotentiaries. And, in order to preclude all difficulty in tracing upon the ground the limit separating Upper from Lower California, it is agreed that the said limit shall consist of a straight line drawn from the middle of the Rio Gila, where it unites with the Colorado, to a point on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, distant one marine league due south of the southernmost point of the port of San Diego, according to the plan of said port made in the year 1782 by Don Juan Pantoja, second sailing-master of the Spanish fleet, and published at Madrid in the year 1802, in the atlas to the voyage of the schooners Sutil and Mexicana; of which plan a copy is hereunto added, signed and sealed by the respective Plenipotentiaries.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.314

In order to designate the boundary line with due precision, upon authoritative maps, and to establish upon the ground land-marks which shall show the limits of both republics, as described in the present article, the two Governments shall each appoint a commissioner and a surveyor, who, before the expiration of one year from the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty, shall meet at the port of San Diego, and proceed to run and mark the said boundary in its whole course to the mouth of the Rio Bravo del Norte. They shall keep journals and make out plans of their operations; and the result agreed upon by them shall be deemed a part of this treaty, and shall have the same force as if it were inserted therein. The two Governments will amicably agree regarding what may be necessary to these persons, and also as to their respective escorts, should such be necessary.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.314

The boundary line established by this article shall be religiously respected by each of the two republics, and no change shall ever be made therein, except by the express and free consent of both nations, lawfully given by the General Government of each, in conformity with its own constitution.

ARTICLE VI

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.314

The vessels and citizens of the United States shall, in all time, have a free and uninterrupted passage by the Gulf of California, and by the river Colorado below its confluence with the Gila, to and from their possessions situated north of the boundary line defined in the preceding article; it being understood that this passage is to be by navigating the Gulf of California and the river Colorado, and not by land, without the express consent of the Mexican Government.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.314

If, by the examinations which may be made, it should be ascertained to be practicable and advantageous to construct a road, canal, or railway, which should in whole or in part run upon the river Gila, or upon its right or its left bank, within the space of one marine league from either margin of the river, the Governments of both republics will form an agreement regarding its construction, in order that it may serve equally for the use and advantage of both countries.

ARTICLE VII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.315

The river Gila, and the part of the Rio Bravo del Norte lying below the southern boundary of New Mexico, being, agreeably to the fifth article, divided in the middle between the two republics, the navigation of the Gila and of the Bravo below said boundary shall be free and common to the vessels and citizens of both countries; and neither shall, without the consent of the other, construct any work that may impede or interrupt, in whole or in part, the exercise of this right; not even for the purpose of favoring new methods of navigation. Nor shall any tax or contribution, under any denomination or title, be levied upon vessels or persons navigating the same, or upon merchandise or effects transported thereon, except in the case of landing upon one of their shores. If, for the purpose of making the said rivers navigable, or for maintaining them in such state, it should be necessary or advantageous to establish any tax or contribution, this shall not be done without the consent of both Governments.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.315

The stipulations contained in the present article shall not impair the territorial rights of either republic within its established limits.

ARTICLE VIII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.315

Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico, and which remain for the future within the limits of the United States, as defined by the present treaty, shall be free to continue where they now reside, or to remove at any time to the Mexican Republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories, or disposing thereof, and removing the proceeds wherever they please, without their being subjected, on this account, to any contribution, tax, or charge whatever.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.316

Those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories may either retain the title and rights of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of the United States. But they shall be under the obligation to make their election within one year from the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty; and those who shall remain in the said territories after the expiration of that year, without having declared their intention to retain the character of Mexicans, shall be considered to have elected to become citizens of the United States.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.316

In the said territories, property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may here-after acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it guarantees equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States.

ARTICLE IX

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.316

The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and be admitted at the proper time (to be judged of by the Congress of the United States) to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States, according to the principles of the Constitution; and in the mean time, shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and secured in the free exercise of their religion without restriction.

ARTICLE X

[Stricken out.]

ARTICLE XI

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.316

Considering that a great part of the territories, which, by the present treaty, are to be comprehended for the future within the limits of the United States, is now occupied by savage tribes, who will hereafter be under the exclusive control of the Government of the United States, and whose incursions within the territory of Mexico would be prejudicial in the extreme, it is solemnly agreed that all such incursions shall be forcibly restrained by the Government of the United States whensoever this may be necessary; and that when they cannot be prevented, they shall be punished by the said Government, and satisfaction for the same shall be exacted—all in the same way, and with equal diligence and energy, as if the same Incursions were meditated or committed within its own territory, against its own citizens.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.317

It shall not be lawful, under any pretext whatever, for any inhabitant of the United States to purchase or acquire any Mexican, or any foreigner residing in Mexico, who may have been captured by Indians inhabiting the territory of either of the two republics; nor to purchase or acquire horses, mules, cattle, or property of any kind, stolen within Mexican territory by such Indians.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.317

And in the event of any person or persons, captured within Mexican territory by Indians, being carried into the territory of the United States, the Government of the latter engages and binds itself, in the most solemn manner, so soon as it shall know of such captives being within its territory, and shall be able SO to do, through the faithful exercise of its influence and power, to rescue them and return them to their country, or deliver them to the agent or representative of the Mexican Government. The Mexican authorities will, as far as practicable, give to the Government of the United States notice of such captures; and its agents shall pay the expenses incurred in the maintenance and transmission of the rescued captives; who, in the mean time, shall be treated with the utmost hospitality by the American authorities at the place where they may be. But if the Government of the United States, before receiving such notice from Mexico, should obtain intelligence, through any other channel, of the existence of Mexican captives within its territory, it will proceed forth-with to effect their release and delivery to the Mexican agent, as above stipulated.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.317

For the purpose of giving to these stipulations the fullest possible efficacy, thereby affording the security and redress demanded by their true spirit and intent, the Government of the United States will now and hereafter pass, without unnecessary delay, and always vigilantly enforce, such laws as the nature of the subject may require. And, finally, the sacredness of this obligation shall never be lost sight of by the said Government, when providing for the removal of the Indians from any portion of the said territories, or for its being settled by citizens of the United States; but, on the contrary, special care shall then be taken not to place its Indian occupants under the necessity of seeking new homes, by committing those invasions which the United States have solemnly obliged themselves to restrain.

ARTICLE XII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.318

In consideration of the extension acquired by the boundaries of the United States, as defined in the fifth article of the present treaty, the Government of the United States engages to pay to that of the Mexican Republic the sum of fifteen millions of dollars.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.318

Immediately after the treaty shall have been duly ratified by the Government of the Mexican Republic, the sum of three millions of dollars shall be paid to the said Government by that of the United States, at the city of Mexico, in the gold or silver coin of Mexico The remaining twelve millions of dollars shall be paid at the same place, and in the same coin, in annual instalments of three millions of dollars each, together with interest on the same at the rate of six per centum per annum. This interest shall begin to run upon the whole sum of twelve millions from the day of the ratification of the present treaty by the Mexican Government, and the first of the instalments shall be paid at the expiration of one year from the same day. Together with each annual instalment, as it falls due, the whole interest accruing on such instalment from the beginning shall also be paid.

ARTICLE XIII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.318

The United States engage, moreover, to assume and pay to the claimants all the amounts now due them, and those hereafter to become due, by reason of the claims already liquidated and decided ago inst the Mexican Republic, under the conventions between the two republics severally concluded on the eleventh day of April, eighteen hundred and thirty-nine, and on the thirtieth day of January, eighteen hundred and forty-three; so that the Mexican Republic shall be absolutely exempt, for the future, from all expense whatever on account of the said claims.

ARTICLE XIV

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.319

The United States do furthermore discharge the Mexican Republic from all claims of citizens of the United States, not heretofore decided against the Mexican Government, which may have arisen previously to the date of the signature of this treaty; which discharge shall be final and perpetual, whether the said claims be rejected or be allowed by the board of commissioners provided for in the following article, and whatever shall be the total amount of those allowed.

ARTICLE XV

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.319

The United States, exonerating Mexico from all demands on account of the claims of their citizens mentioned in the preceding article, and considering them entirely and forever cancelled, whatever their amount may be, undertake to make satisfaction for the same, to an amount not exceeding three and one-quarter millions of dollars. To ascertain the validity and amount of those claims, a board of commissioners shall be established by the Government of the United States, whose awards shall be final and conclusive; provided that, in deciding upon the validity of each claim, the board shall be guided and governed by the principles and rules of decision prescribed by the first and fifth articles of the unratified convention, concluded at the city of Mexico on the twentieth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and forty-three; and in no case shall an award be made in favour of any claim not embraced by these principles and rules.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.319

If, in the opinion of the said board of commissioners or of the claimants, any books, records, or documents, in the possession or power of the Government of the Mexican Republic, shall be deemed necessary to the just decision of any claim, the commissioners, or the claimants through them, shall, within such period as Congress may designate, make an application in writing for the same, addressed to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, to be transmitted by the Secretary of State of the United States; and the Mexican Government engages, at the earliest possible moment after the receipt of such demand, to cause any of the books, records, or documents so specified, which shall be in their possession or power (or authenticated copies or extracts of the same), to be transmitted to the said Secretary of State, who shall immediately deliver them over to the said board of commissioners; provided that no such application shall be made by or at the instance of any claimant, until the facts which it is expected to prove by such books, records, or documents, shall have been stated under oath or affirmation.

ARTICLE XVI

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.320

Each of the contracting parties reserves to itself the entire right to fortify whatever point within its territory it may judge proper so to fortify for its security.

ARTICLE XVII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.320

The treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, concluded at the city of Mexico, on the fifth day of April, A. D. 1831, between the United States of America and the United Mexican States, except the additional article, and except so far as the stipulations of the said treaty may be incompatible with any stipulation contained in the present treaty, is hereby revived for the period of eight years from the day of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty, with the same force and virtue as if incorporated therein; it being understood that each of the contracting parties reserves to itself the right, at any time after the said period of eight years shall have expired, to terminate the same by giving one year's notice of such intention to the other party.

ARTICLE XVIII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.321

All supplies whatever for troops of the United States in Mexico, arriving at ports in the occupation of such troops previous to the final evacuation thereof, although subsequently to the restoration of the custom-houses at such ports, shall be entirely exempt from duties and charges of any kind; the Government of the United States hereby engaging and pledging its faith to establish and vigilantly to enforce, all possible guards for Securing the revenue of Mexico, by preventing the importation, under cover of this stipulation, of any articles other than such, both in kind and in quantity, as shall really be wanted for the use and consumption of the forces of the United States during the time they may remain in Mexico. To this end it shall be the duty of all officers and agents of the United States to denounce to the Mexican authorities at the respective ports any attempts at a fraudulent abuse of this stipulation, which they may know of, or may have reason to suspect, and to give to such authorities all the aid in their power with regard thereto; and every such attempt, when duly proved and established by sentence of a competent tribunal, shall be punished by the confiscation of the property so attempted to be fraudulently introduced.

ARTICLE XIX

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.321

With respect to all merchandise, effects, and property whatsoever, imported into ports of Mexico, whilst in the occupation of the forces of the United States, whether by citizens of either republic, or by citizens or subjects of any neutral nation, the following rules shall be observed:

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.321

(1) All such merchandise, effects, and property, if imported previously to the restoration of the custom-houses to the Mexican authorities, as stipulated for in the third article of this treaty, shall be exempt from confiscation, although the importation of the same be prohibited by the Mexican tariff.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.321

(2) The same perfect exemption shall be enjoyed by all such merchandise, effects, and property, imported subsequently to the restoration of the custom-houses, and previously to the sixty days fixed in the following article for the coming into force of the Mexican tariff at such ports respectively; the said merchandise, effects, and property being, however, at the time of their importation, subject to the payment of duties, as provided for in the said following article.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.322

(3) All merchandise, effects, and property described in the two rules foregoing shall, during their continuance at the place of importation, and upon their leaving such place for the interior, be exempt from all duty, tax, or imposts of every kind, under whatsoever title or denomination. Nor shall they be there subject to any charge whatsoever upon the sale thereof.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.322

(4) All merchandise, effects, and property, described in the first and second rules, which shall have been removed to any place in the interior, whilst such place was in the occupation of the forces of the United States, shall, during their continuance therein, be exempt from all tax upon the sale or consumption thereof, and from every kind of impost or contribution, under whatsoever title or denomination.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.322

(5) But if any merchandise, effects, or property, described in the first and second rules, shall be removed to any place not occupied at the time by the forces of the United States, they shall, upon their introduction into such place, or upon their sale or consumption there, be subject to the same duties which, under the Mexican laws, they would be required to pay in such cases if they had been imported in time of peace, through the maritime custom-houses, and had there paid the duties conformably with the Mexican tariff.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.322

(6) The owners of all merchandise, effects, or property, described in the first and second rules, and existing in any port of Mexico, shall have the right to reship the same, exempt from all tax, impost, or contribution whatever.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.322

With respect to the metals, or other property, exported from any Mexican port whilst in the occupation of the forces of the United States, and previously to the restoration of the custom-house at such port, no person shall be required by the Mexican authorities, whether general or state, to pay any tax, duty, or contribution upon any such exportation, or in any manner to account for the same to the said authorities.

ARTICLE XX

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.323

Through consideration for the interests of commerce generally, it is agreed, that if less than sixty days should elapse between the date of the signature of this treaty and the restoration of the custom-houses, conformably with the stipulation in the third article, in such case all merchandise, effects and property whatsoever, arriving at the Mexican ports after the restoration of the said custom-houses, and previously to the expiration of sixty days after the day of signature of this treaty, shall be admitted to entry; and no other duties shall be levied thereon than the duties established by the tariff found in force at such custom-houses at the time of the restoration of the same. And to all such merchandise, effects, and property, the rules established by the preceding article shall apply.

ARTICLE XXI

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.323

If unhappily any disagreement should hereafter arise between the Governments of the two republics, whether with respect to the interpretation of any stipulation in this treaty, or with respect to any other particular concerning the political or commercial relations of the two nations, the said Governments, in the name of those nations, do promise to each other that they will endeavour, in the most sincere and earnest manner, to settle the differences so arising, and to preserve the state of peace and friendship in which the two countries are now placing themselves, using, for this end, mutual representations and pacific negotiations. And if, by these means, they should not be enabled to come to an agreement, a resort shall not, on this account, be had to reprisals, aggression, or hostility of any kind, by the one republic against the other, until the Government of that which deems itself aggrieved shall have maturely considered, in the spirit of peace and good neighbourship, whether it would not be better that such difference should be settled by the arbitration of commissioners appointed on each side, or by that of a friendly nation. And should such course be proposed by either party, it shall be acceded to by the other, unless deemed by it altogether incompatible with the nature of the difference, or the circumstances of the case.

ARTICLE XXII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.323

If (which is not to be expected, and which God forbid) war should unhappily break out between the two republics, they do now, with a view to such calamity, solemnly pledge themselves to each other and to the world to observe the following rules; absolutely where the nature of the subject permits, and as closely as possible in all cases where such absolute observance shall be impossible:

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.324

(1) The merchants of either republic then residing in the other shall be allowed to remain twelve months (for those dwelling in the interior), and six months (for those dwelling at the seaports) to collect their debts and settle their affairs; during which periods they shall enjoy the same protection, and be on the same footing, in all respects, as the citizens or subjects of the most friendly nations; and, at the expiration thereof, or at any time before, they shall have full liberty to depart, carrying off all their effects without molestation or hindrance, conforming therein to the same laws which the citizens or subjects of the most friendly nations are required to conform to. Upon the entrance of the armies of either nation into the territories of the other, women and children, ecclesiastics, scholars of every faculty, cultivators of the earth, merchants, artisans, manufacturers, and fishermen, unarmed and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages, or places, and in general all persons whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, shall be allowed to continue their respective employments, unmolested in their persons. Nor shall their houses or goods be burnt or otherwise destroyed, nor their cattle taken, nor their fields wasted, by the armed force into whose power, by the events of war, they may happen to fall; but if the necessity arise to take anything from them for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at an equitable price. All churches, hospitals, schools, colleges, libraries, and other establishments for charitable and beneficent purposes, shall be respected, and all persons connected with the same protected in the discharge of their duties, and the pursuit of their vocations.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.325

(2) In order that the fate of prisoners of war may be alleviated, all such practices as those of sending them into distant, inclement, or unwholesome districts, or crowding them into close and noxious places, shall be studiously avoided. They shall not be confined in dungeons, prisonships, or prisons; nor be put in irons, or bound, or otherwise restrained in the use of their limbs. The officers shall enjoy liberty on their paroles, within convenient districts, and have comfortable quarters; and the common soldiers shall be disposed in cantonments, open and extensive enough for air and exercise, and lodged in barracks as roomy and good as are provided by the party in whose power they are for its own troops. But if any officer shall break his parole by leaving the district so assigned him, or any other prisoner shall escape from the limits of his cantonment, after they shall have been designated to him, such individual, officer, or other prisoner, shall forfeit so much of the benefit of this article as provides for his liberty on parole or in cantonment. And if any officer so breaking his parole, or any common soldier so escaping from the limits assigned him, shall afterwards be found in arms, previously to his being regularly exchanged, the person so offending shall be dealt with according to the established laws of war. The officers shall be daily furnished, by the party in whose power they are, with as many rations, and of the same articles, as are allowed, either in kind or by commutation, to officers of equal rank in its own army; and all others shall be daily furnished with such ration as is allowed to a common soldier in its own service; the value of all which supplies shall, at the close of the war, or at periods to be agreed upon between the respective commanders, be paid by the other party, on a mutual adjustment of accounts for the subsistence of prisoners; and such accounts shall not be mingled with or set off against any others, nor the balance due on them withheld, as a compensation or reprisal for any cause whatever, real or pretended. Each party shall be allowed to keep a commissary of prisoners, appointed by itself, with every cantonment of prisoners, in possession of the other; which commissary shall see the prisoners as often as he pleases; shall be allowed to receive, exempt from all duties or taxes, and to distribute, whatever comforts may be sent to them by their friends; and shall be free to transmit his reports in open letters to the party by whom he is employed.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.326

And it is declared that neither the pretence that war dissolves all treaties, nor any other whatever, shall be considered as annulling or suspending the solemn covenant contained in this article. On the contrary, the state of war is precisely that for which it is provided; and, during which, its stipulations are to be as sacredly observed as the most acknowledged obligations under the law of nature or nations.

ARTICLE XXIII

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.326

This treaty shall be ratified by the President of the United States of America, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof; and by the President of the Mexican Republic, with the previous approbation of its general Congress; and the ratifications shall be exchanged in the City of Washington, or at the seat of Government of Mexico, in four months from the date of the signature hereof, or sooner if practicable.

Treaty with Mexico, 1848, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.326

In faith whereof we, the respective Plenipotentiaries, have signed this treaty of peace, friendship, limits, and settlement, and have hereunto affixed our seals respectively. Done in quintuplicate, at the dry of Guadalupe Hidalgo, on the second day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight.

 N. P. TRIST [L. S.]

 LOIS P. CUEVAS [L. S.]

 BERNANO COUTO [L. S.]

 MIGL. ATRISTAIN [L. S.]

The Discovery of Gold in California, 1847

Title: The Discovery of Gold in California

Author: John S. Hittell

Date: 1847

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.88-96

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.88

As Edmund Hammond Hargraves is the hero of the Australian, so is James W. Marshall of the Californian, gold discovery. Marshall, in a letter dated January 28, 1856, and addrest to Charles E. Pickett, gave the following account of the gold discovery:

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.88

"Toward the end of August, 1847, Captain Sutter and I formed a copartnership to build and run a sawmill upon a site selected by myself (since known as Coloma). We employed P.L. Weimer and family to remove from the Fort (Sutter's Fort) to the mill-site, to cook and labor for us. Nearly the first work done was the building of a double log cabin, about half a mile from the millsite. We commenced the mill about Christmas. Some of the mill-hands wanted a cabin near the mill. This was built, and I went to the Fort to superintend the construction of the mill-irons, leaving orders to cut a narrow ditch where the race was to be made. Upon my return, 1848, I found the ditch cut, as directed, and those who were working on the same were doing so at a great disadvantage, expending their labor upon the head of the race instead of the foot.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.89

"I immediately changed the course of things, and upon the 19th of the same month of January discovered the gold near the lower end of the race, about two hundred yards below the mill. William Scott was the second man to see the metal. He was at work at a carpenter's bench near the mill. I showed the gold to him. Alexander Stephens, James Brown, Henry Bigler, and William Johnston were likewise working in front of the mill, framing the upper story. They were called up next, and, of course, saw the precious metal. P. L. Weimer and Charles Bennett were at the old double log cabin (where Hastings and Company afterward kept a store).

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.89

"In the mean time we put in some wheat and peas, nearly five acres, across the river. In February the Captain (Captain Sutter) came to the mountains for the first time. Then we consummated a treaty with the Indians, which had been previously negotiated. The tenor of this was that we were to pay them tho hundred dollars yearly in goods, at Yerba Buena prices, for the joint possession and occupation of the land with them; they agreeing not to kill our stock, viz., horses, cattle, hogs, or sheep, nor burn the grass within the limits fixt by the treaty. At the same time Captain Sutter, myself, and Isaac Humphrey, entered into a copartnership to dig gold. A short time afterward, P. L. Weimer moved away from the mill, and was away two or three months, when he returned. With all the events that subsequently occurred, you and the public are well informed."

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.90

This is the most precise and is generally considered to be the most correct account of the gold discovery. Other versions of the story have been published, however, and the following, from an article published in the Coloma Argus, in the latter part of the year 1855, is one of them. The statement was evidently derived from Weimer, who lives at Coloma:

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.90

"That James W. Marshall picked up the first piece of gold is beyond doubt. Peter L. Weimer, who resides in this place, states positively that Marshall picked up the gold in his presence; they both saw it, and each spoke at the same time, 'What's that yellow stuff?' Marshall, being a step in advance, picked it up. This first piece of gold is now in the possession of Mrs. Weimer, and weighs six pennyweights eleven grains. The piece was given to her by Marshall himself. The dam was finished early in January, the frame for the mill also erected, and the flume and bulkhead completed. It was at this time that Marshall and Weimer adopted the plan of raising the gate during the night to wash out sand from the mill-race, closing it during the day, when work would be continued with shovels, etc.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.90

"Early in February—the exact day is not remembered—in the morning, after shutting off the water, Marshall and Weimer walked down the race together to see what the water had accomplished during the night. Having gone about twenty yards below the mill, they both saw the piece of gold before mentioned, and Marshall picked it up. After an examination, the gold was taken to the cabin of Weimer and Mrs. Weimer instructed to boil it in saleratus water; but she, being engagedin making soap, pitched the piece into the soap-kettle, where it was boiled all day and all night. The following morning the strange stuff was fished out of the soap, all the brighter for the boiling.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.91

"Discussion now commenced, and all exprest the opinion that perhaps the yellow substance might be gold. Little was said on the subject; but every one each morning searched in the race for more, and every day found several small scales. The Indians also picked up many small thin pieces, and carried them always to Mrs. Weimer. About three weeks after the first piece was obtained, Marshall took the fine gold, amounting to between two and three ounces, and went to San Francisco to have the strange metal tested. On his return he informed Weimer that the stuff was gold.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.91

"All hands now began to search for the 'root of all evil.' Shortly after, Captain Sutter came to Coloma, and he and Marshall assembled the Indians and bought of them a large tract of country about Coloma, in exchange for a lot of beads and a few cotton handkerchiefs. They, under color of this Indian title, required one-third of all the gold dug on their domain, and collected at this rate until the fall of 1848, when a mining party from Oregon declined paying 'tithes' as they called it.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.91

"During February, 1848, Marshall and Weimer went down the river to Mormon Island, and there found scales of gold on the rocks. Some weeks later they sent Mr. Henderson, Sydney Willis, and Mr. Fifield, Mormons, down there to dig, telling them that that place was better than Coloma. These were the first miners at Mormon Island."

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.92

Marshall was a man of an active, enthusiastic mind, and he at once attached great importance to his discovery. His ideas, however, were vague; he knew nothing about gold-mining; he did not know how to take advantage of what he had found. Only an experienced gold-miner could understand the importance of the discovery and make it of practical value to all the world. That gold-miner, fortunately, was near at hand; his name was Isaac Humphrey. He was residing in the town of San Francisco, in the month of February, when a Mr. Bennett, one of the party employed at Marshall's mill, went down to that place with some of the dust to have it tested; for it was still a matter of doubt whether this yellow metal really was gold. Bennett told his errand to a friend whom he met in San Francisco, and this friend introduced him to Humphrey, who had been a gold-miner in Georgia, and was therefore competent to pass an opinion.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.92

Humphrey looked at the dust, pronounced it gold at the first glance, and exprest a belief that the diggings must be rich. He made inquiries about the place where the gold was found, and subsequent inquiries about the trustworthiness of Mr. Bennett, and on March 7th he was at the mill. He tried to induce several of his friends in San Francisco to go with him; they all thought his expedition a foolish one, and he had to go alone. He found that there was some talk about the gold, and persons would occasionally go about looking for pieces of it; but no one was engaged in mining, and the work of the mill was going on as usual. On the 8th he went out prospecting with a pan, and satisfied himself that the country in that vicinity was rich in gold. He then made a rocker and commenced the business of washing gold, and thus began the business of mining in California.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.93

Others saw how he did it, followed his example, found that the work was profitable, and abandoned all other occupations. The news of their success spread; people flocked to the place, learned how to use the rocker, discovered new diggings, and in the course of a few months the country had been overturned by a social and industrial revolution.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.93

About the middle of March, P. B. Reading, an American, now a prominent and wealthy citizen of the State, then the owner of a large ranch on the western bank of the Sacramento River, near where it issues from the mountains, came to Coloma, and after looking about at the diggings, said that if similarity in the appearance of the country could be taken as a guide there must be gold in the hills near his ranch; and he went off, declaring his intention to go back and make an examination of them. John Bidwell, another American, now a wealthy and influential citizen, then residing on his ranch on the bank of Feather River, came to Coloma about a week later, and he said there must be gold near his ranch, and he went off with expressions similar to those used by Reading. In a few weeks news came that Reading had found diggings near Clear Creek, at the head of the Sacramento Valley, and was at work there with his Indians; and not long after, it was reported that Bidwell was at work with his Indians on a rich bar of Feather River, since called "Bidwell's Bar."

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.93

Altho Bennett had arrived at San Francisco in February with some of the dust, the editors of the town—for two papers were published in the place at the time—did not hear of the discovery till some weeks later. The first published notice of the gold appeared in the Californian (published in San Francisco) on March 15th, as follows: "In the newly made raceway of the sawmill recently erected by Captain Sutter, on the American Fork, gold has been found in considerable quantities. One person brought thirty dollars' worth to New Helvetia, gathered there in a short time. California, no doubt, is rich in mineral wealth; great chances here for scientific capitalists. Gold has been found in almost every part of the country."

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.94

It was not until more than three months after Marshall's discovery that the San Francisco papers stated that gold-mining had become a regular and profitable business in the new placers. The Californian of April 26th said: "From a gentleman just from the gold region we learn that many new discoveries of gold have very recently been made, and it is fully ascertained that a large extent of country abounds with that precious mineral. Seven men, with picks and spades, gathered one thousand six hundred dollars worth in fifteen days. Many persons are settling on the lands with the view of holding preemptions, but as yet every person takes the right to gather all he can without any regard to claims. The largest piece yet found is worth six dollars."

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.94

The news spread, men came from all the settled parts of the territory, and as they came they went to work mining, and gradually they moved farther and farther from Coloma, and before the rainy season had commenced (in December) miners were washing rich auriferous dirt all along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, from the Feather to the Tuolumne River, a distance of one hundred fifty miles; and also over a space of about fifteen miles square, near the place now known as the town of Shasta, in the Coast Mountains, at the head of the Sacramento Valley. The whole country had been turned topsy-turvy; towns had been deserted, ore left only to the women and children; fields had been left unreaped; herds of cattle went without any one to care for them. But gold-mining, which had become the great interest of the country, was not neglected. The people learned rapidly and worked hard.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.95

In the latter part of 1848 adventurers began to arrive from Oregon, the Sandwich Islands, and Mexico. The winter found the miners with very little preparation, but most of them were accustomed to a rough manner of life in the Western wilds, and they considered their large profits an abundant compensation for their privations and hardships. The weather was so mild in December and January that they could work almost as well as in the summer, and the rain gave them facilities for washing such as they could not have in the dry season.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.95

In September, 1848, the first rumors of the gold discovery began to reach New York; in October they attracted attention; in November people looked with interest for new reports; in December the news gained general credence, and a great excitement arose. Preparations were made for a migration to California by somebody in nearly every town in the United States. The great body of the emigrants went across the plains with ox or mule teams or around Cape Horn in sailing-vessels. A few took passage in the steamer by way of Panama.

Hittell, Discovery of Gold in California, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.96

Not fewer than one hundred thousand men, representing their nativity every State in the Union, went to California that year. Of these, twenty-thousand crossed the continent by way of the South Pass; and nearly all of them started from the Missouri River between Independence and St. Joseph, in the month of May. They formed an army; in daytime their trains filled up the roads for miles, and at night their campfires glittered in every direction about the places blest with grass and water. The excitement continued from 1850 to 1853; emigrants continued to come by land and sea, from Europe and America, and in the last-named year from China also. In 1854 the migration fell off, and since that time until the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad California received the chief accessions to her white population by the Panama steamers.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, 19 and 20 July 1848

The Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, 1848

Title: The Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Author: Mary McClintock

Date: 1848

Source: The official report printed by John Dick

REPORT

of the

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION

Held at SENECA FALLS, N.Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848.

ROCHESTER: Printed by John Dick, at the North Star Office.

 REPORT

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

A Convention to discuss the SOCIAL, CIVIL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF WOMAN, was called by the Women of Seneca County, N.Y., and held at the village of Seneca Falls, in the Wesleyan Chapel, on the 19th and 20th of July, 1848.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The question was discussed throughout two entire days: the first day by women exclusively, the second day men participated in the deliberations. LUCRETIA MOTT, of Philadelphia, was the moving spirit of the occasion.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

On the morning of the 19th, the Convention assembled at 11 o'clock. The meeting was organized by appointing MARY MCCLINTOCK Secretary. The object of the meeting was then stated by ELIZABETH C. STANTON; after which, remarks were made by LUCRETIA MOTT, urging the women present to throw aside the trammels of education, and not allow their new position to prevent them from joining in the debates of the meeting. The Declaration of Sentiments, offered for the acceptance of the Convention, was then read by E. C. STANTON. A proposition was made to have it re-read by paragraph, and after much consideration, some changes were suggested and adopted. The propriety of obtaining the signatures of men to the Declaration was discussed in an animated manner: a vote in favor was given; but concluding that the final decision would be the legitimate business of the next day, it was referred.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Adjourned to half-past two.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

In the afternoon, the meeting assembled according to adjournment, and was opened by reading the minutes of the morning session. E. C. STANTON then addressed the meeting, and was followed by LUCRETIA MOTT. The reading of the Declaration was called for, an addition having been inserted since the morning session. A vote taken upon the amendment was carried, and papers circulated to obtain signatures. The following resolutions were then read:

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Whereas, the great precept of nature is conceded to be; "that man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness." Blackstone, in his Commentaries, remarks, that this law of Nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; not human laws are of any validity if contrary to this, and such of them as are valid, derive all their force, and all their validity, and all their authority, mediately and immediately, from this original; Therefore,

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and of no validity; for this is "superior in obligation to any other."

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That woman is man's equal—was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation, by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, not their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak, and teach as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior, that is required of woman in the social state, should also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert, or in the feats of the circus.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, Therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause, by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self-evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self-evident truth, growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, and custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as self-evident falsehood, and at war with the interests of mankind.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

LUCRETIA MOTT read a humorous article from a newspaper, written by MARTHA C. WRIGHT. After an address by E. W. MCCLINTOCK, the meeting adjourned to 10 o'clock the next morning.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

In the evening, LUCRETIA MOTT spoke with her usual eloquence and power to a large and intelligent audience on the subject of Reforms in general.

THURSDAY MORNING.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The Convention assembled at the hour appointed, JAMES MOTT, of Philadelphia, in the Chair. The minutes of the previous day having been read, E. C. STANTON again read the Declaration of Sentiments, which was freely discussed by LUCRETIA MOTT, ANSEL BASCOM, S. E. WOODWORTH, THOMAS AND MARY ANN MCCLINTOCK, FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AMY POST, CATHARINE STEBBINS, AND ELIZABETH C. STANTON, and was unanimously adopted, as follows:

DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes, with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

Lucretia Mott

Harriet Cady Eaton

Margaret Pryor

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Eunice Newton Foote

Mary Ann McClintock

Margaret Schooley

Martha C. Wright

Jane C. Hunt

Amy Post

Catharine F. Stebbins

Mary Ann Frink

Lydia Mount

Delia Mathews

Catharine C. Paine

Elizabeth W. McClintock

Malvina Seymour

Phebe Mosher

Catharine Shaw

Deborah Scott

Sarah Hallowell

Mary McClintock

Mary Gilbert

Sophrone Taylor Cynthia Davis

Hannah Plant

Lucy Jones

Sarah Whitney

Mary H. Hallowell

Elizabeth Conklin

Sally Pitcher

Mary Conklin

Susan Quinn

Mary S. Mirror

Phebe King

Julia Ann Drake

Charlotte Woodward

Martha Underhill

Dorothy Mathews

Eunice Barker

Sarah R. Woods

Lydia Gild

Sarah Hoffman

Elizabeth Leslie

Martha Ridley

Rachel D. Bonnel

Betsey Tewksbury

Rhoda Palmer Margaret Jenkins

Cynthia Fuller

Mary Martin

P. A. Culvert

Susan R. Doty

Rebecca Race

Sarah A. Mosher

Mary E. Vail

Lucy Spalding

Lavinia Latham

Sarah Smith

Eliza Martin

Maria E. Wilbur

Elizabeth D. Smith

Caroline Barker

Ann Porter

Experience Gibbs

Antoinette E. Segur

Hannah J. Latham

Sarah Sisson

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The following are the names of the gentlemen present in favor of the movement:

Richard P. Hunt

Samuel D. Tillman

Justin Williams

Elisha Foote

Frederick Douglass

Henry Seymour

Henry W. Seymour

David Spalding

William G. Barker

Elias J. Doty

John Jones William S. Dell

James Mott

William Burroughs

Robert Smallbridge

Jacob Mathews

Charles L. Hoskins

Thomas McClintock

Saron Phillips

Jacob P. Chamberlain

Jonathan Metcalf

Nathan J. Milliken S.E. Woodworth

Edward F. Underhill

George W. Pryor

Joel D. Bunker

Isaac Van Tassel

Thomas Dell

E. W. Capron

Stephen Shear

Henry Hatley

Azaliah Schooley

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The meeting adjourned until two o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

At the appointed hour the meeting convened. The minutes having been read, the resolutions of the day before were read and taken up separately. Some, from their self-evident truth, elicited but little remark; others, after some criticism, much debate, and some slight alterations, were finally passed by a large majority. The meeting closed with a forcible speech from LUCRETIA MOTT.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Adjourned to half-past seven o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The meeting opened by reading the minutes, E. C. STANTON volunteered an address in defence of the many severe accusations brought against the much-abused "Lords of Creation."

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK then read several extracts from Blackstone, in proof of woman's servitude to man; after which LUCRETIA MOTT offered and spoke to the following resolution:

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The Resolution was adopted.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

M. A. MCCLINTOCK, JR. delivered a short, but impressive address, calling upon woman to arouse from her lethargy and be true to herself and her God. When she had concluded, FREDERICK DOUGLASS arose, and in an excellent and appropriate speech, ably supported the cause of woman.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

The meeting was closed by one of LUCRETIA MOTT'S most beautiful and spiritual appeals. She commanded the earnest attention of that large audience for nearly an hour.

Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention

M. A. MCCLINTOCK, E. N. FOOTE, AMY POST, E. W. MCCLINTOCK, AND E. C. STANTON, were appointed a Committee to prepare the proceedings of the Convention for publication.

The Clay Compromise (Clay)

Title: The Clay Compromise

Author: Henry Clay

Date: 1850

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.131-150

Alarmed at the fierce display of sectional feeling over slavery, Clay introduced, January 29, his famous series of resolutions known as the Compromise of 1850. His proposals were attacked both by the Southern advocates of slavery and by the more extreme anti-slavery element of the North.

After weeks of heated debate, including Calhoun's last speech and Webster's famous "seventh of March speech," the whole matter was referred to a committee of thirteen, from which committee Clay reported three bills on May 8. The first provided for the debt and boundary line of Texas, for granting statehood to California, with its anti-slavery Constitution, and for the Territorial organization of New Mexico and Utah, with slavery permitted. The second provided for a modified fugitive-slave law; the third for the abolition of slave-trading in the District of Columbia.

Clay's plan eventually became law, although divided into several statutes.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.131–p.132

MR. PRESIDENT, I hold in my hand a series of resolutions which I desire to submit to the consideration of this body. Taken together, in combination, they propose an amicable arrangement of all questions in controversy between the free and the slave States, growing out of the subject of slavery. It is not my intention, Mr. President, at this time, to enter into a full and elaborate discussion of each of these resolutions, taken separately, or the whole of them combined together, as composing a system of measures; but I desire to present a few observations upon each resolution, with the purpose chiefly of exposing it fairly and fully before the Senate and before the country; and I may add, with the indulgence of the Senate, toward the conclusion, some general observations upon the state of the country, and the condition of the questions to which the resolutions relate. Whether they shall or shall not meet with the approbation and concurrence of the Senate, as I most ardently hope they may, as I most sincerely believe they ought, I trust that at least some portion of the long time which I have devoted with care and deliberation, to the preparation of these resolutions, and to the presentation of this great national scheme of compromise and harmony, will be employed by each Senator before he pronounces against the propositions embraced in these resolutions. The resolutions, sir, are all preceded by a short preamble, to which, of course, I attach no very great importance. The preamble and first resolution are as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.132

"It being desirable for the peace, concord, and harmony of the Union of these States to settle and adjust amicably all existing questions of controversy between them arising out of the institution of slavery, upon a fair, equitable and just basis. Therefore:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.132

"1st. Resolved, That California, with suitable boundaries, ought, upon her application, to be admitted as one of the States of this Union, without the imposition by Congress of any restriction in respect to the exclusion or introduction of slavery within those boundaries."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.132–p.133

Mr. President, it must be acknowledged that there has been some irregularity in the movements which have terminated in the adoption of a constitution by California, and in the expression of her wish, not yet formally communicated to Congress it is true, but which may be anticipated in a few days, to be admitted into the Union as a state. There has been some irregularity in the manner in which they have framed that constitution. It was not preceded by any act of Congress authorizing the Convention and designating the boundaries of the proposed State, according to all the early practice of this Government, according to all the cases of the admission of new States into this Union, which occurred, I think, prior to that of Michigan. Michigan, if I am not mistaken, was the first State which, unbidden, unauthorized by any previous act of Congress, undertook to form for herself a constitution, and to knock at the door of Congress for admission into the Union. I recollect that at the time when Michigan thus presented herself, I was opposed, in consequence of that deviation from the early practice of the Government, to the admission. The majority determined otherwise; and it must be in candor admitted by all men that California had much more reason to do what she has done, unsanctioned and unauthorized by a previous act of Congress, than Michigan had to do what she did.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.133–p.134

Sir, notwithstanding the irregularity of the admission of Michigan into the Union, it has been a happy event. She forms now one of the bright stars of this glorious Confederacy. She has sent here to mingle in our councils senators and representatives—men eminently distinguished, with whom we may all associate with pride, with pleasure, and with satisfaction. And I trust that if California, irregular as her previous action may have been in the adoption of a constitution, but more justifiable than was the action of Michigan—if she also shall be admitted, as is proposed by the first resolution, with suitable limits, that she too, will make her contribution of wisdom, of patriotism, and of good feeling to this body, in order to conduct the affairs of this great and boundless empire.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.134

The resolution proposes her admission when she applies for it. There is no intention on my part to anticipate such an application, but I thought it right to present this resolution as a part of the general plan which I propose for the adjustment of these unhappy difficulties.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.134

The second resolution, sir, is as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.134

"2nd. Resolved, That as slavery does not exist by law, and is not likely to be introduced into any of the territory acquired by the United States from the Republic of Mexico, it is inexpedient for Congress to provide by law either for its introduction into or exclusion from any part of the said territory; and that appropriate territorial governments ought to be established by Congress in all of the said territory not assigned as the boundaries of the proposed State of California, without the adoption of any restriction or condition on the subject of slavery."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.134–p.135

This resolution, sir, proposes, in the first instance, a declaration of two truths, one of law and the other of fact. The truth of law which it declares is that there does not exist at this time slavery within any portion of the territory acquired by the United States from Mexico. When I say, sir, it is a truth, I speak my own solemn and deliberate conviction. I am aware that some gentlemen have held a different doctrine; but I persuade myself that they themselves, when they come to review the whole ground, will see sufficient reasons for a change, or at least a modification of their opinions; but that, at all events, if they adhere to that doctrine, they will be found to compose a very small minority of the whole mass of the people of the United States.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.135

The next truth which the resolution asserts is that slavery is not likely to be introduced into any portion of that territory. That is a matter of fact; and all the evidence upon which the fact rests is, perhaps, as accessible to other Senators as it is to me; but I must say that, from all I have heard or read, from the testimony of all the witnesses I have seen and conversed with, from all that has transpired and is transpiring, I do believe that not within one foot of the territory acquired by us from Mexico will slavery ever be planted, and I believe it could not be done even by the force and power of public authority.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.135–p.136

Sir, facts are daily occurring to justify me in this opinion. Sir, what has occurred? And upon that subject, and indeed upon this whole subject, I invite Senators from the free States especially to consider what has occurred even since the last session—even since the commencement of this session—since they left their respective constituencies without an opportunity of consulting with them upon that great and momentous fact—the fact that California herself, of which it was asserted and predicted that she never would establish slavery within her limits when she came to be admitted as a State; that California herself, embracing, of all other portions of the country acquired by us from Mexico, that country into which it would have been most likely that slavery should have been introduced; that California herself has met in convention, and by a unanimous vote, embracing in that body slaveholders from the State of Mississippi, as well as from other parts, who concurred in the resolution—that California by a unanimous vote, has declared against the introduction of slavery within her limits. I think, then, that taking this leading fact in connection with all the evidence we have from other sources on the subject, I am warranted in the conclusion which constitutes the second truth which I have stated in this resolution, that slavery is "not likely to be introduced into any of the territory acquired by us from Mexico."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.136

Sir, the latter part of the resolution asserts that it is the duty of Congress to establish appropriate territorial governments within all the country acquired from Mexico, exclusive of California, not embracing in the acts by which these governments shall be constituted either a prohibition or admission of slavery.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.136–p.137

Sir, much as I am disposed to defer to high authority, anxious as I really am to find myself in a position that would enable me to co-operate heartily with the other departments of the government in conducting the affairs of this great people, I must say that I can not without a dereliction of duty consent to an abandonment of them without government, leaving them to all those scenes of disorder, confusion and anarchy which I apprehend, in respect of some of them, there is too much reason to anticipate will arise. It is the duty, the solemn—I was going to add the most sacred—duty of Congress to legislate for their government, if they can, and, at all events, to legislate for them, and to give them the benefit of law, and order and security.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.137

The next resolutions are the third and fourth, which, having an immediate connection with each other, should be read and considered together. They are as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.137

"3rd. Resolved, That the western boundary of the State of Texas ought to be fixed on the Rio del Norte, commencing one marine league from its mouth, and running up that river to the southern line of New Mexico; thence with that line eastwardly, and so continuing in the same direction to the line established between the United States and Spain, excluding any portion of New Mexico, whether lying on the east or west of that river."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.137–p.138

"4th. Resolved, That it be proposed to the State of Texas, that the United States will provide for the payment of all that portion of the legitimate and bona fide public debt of that State, contracted prior to its annexation to the United States, and for which the duties on foreign imports were pledged by the said State to its creditors, not exceeding the sum of $——, in consideration of the said dues so pledged having been no longer applicable to that object after the said annexation, but having thenceforward become payable to the United States; and upon the condition also, that the said State of Texas shall by some solemn and authentic act of her legislature, or of a convention, relinquish to the United States any claim which it has to any part of New Mexico."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.138–p.139

Mr. President, I do not mean now, I do not know that I shall at any time (it is a very complex subject, and one not free from difficulty) to go into the question of what are the true limits of Texas. My own opinion is, I must say, without intending by the remark to go into any argument, that Texas has not a good title to any portion of what is called New Mexico. And yet, sir, I am free to admit that, looking at the grounds which her representatives assumed, first in the war with Santa Anna in 1836, then at what transpired between Mr. Trist and the Mexican negotiators when the treaty of peace was negotiated, and then the fact that the United States have acquired all the country which Texas claimed as constituting a portion of her territory; looking at all these facts, but without attaching to them, either together or separately, the same degree of force which gentlemen who think that Texas has a right to New Mexico do, I must say that there is plausibility, to say the least of it, in the pretensions that she sets up to New Mexico. I do not think that they constitute or demonstrate the existence of a good title, but a plausible one. Well, then, sir, what do I propose? Without entering into any inquiry whether the Nueces or the Rio Grande was the true boundary of Texas, I propose, by the first of these two resolutions, that its western limits shall be fixed on the Rio del Norte, extending west from the Sabine to the mouth of the Rio del Norte, and that it shall follow up the Bravo or the Rio del Norte, to where it strikes the southern line of New Mexico, and then, diverging from that line, follow on in that direction until it reaches the line as fixed by the United States and Spain, by their treaty of 1819; and thus embracing a vast country, abundantly competent to form two or three States—a country which I think the highest ambition of her greatest men ought to be satisfied with as a State and member of this Union.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.139–p.140

But, sir, the second of these resolutions makes a proposition to the State of Texas upon which I desire to say a few words. It proposes that the Government of the United States will provide for the payment of all that portion of the debt of Texas for which the duties received upon imports from foreign countries were pledged by Texas at a time when she had authority to make pledges. How much it will amount to I have endeavored to ascertain, but all the means requisite to the ascertainment of the sum have not been received, and it is not very essential at this time, because it is the principle and not the amount that is most worthy of consideration. Now, sir, the ground upon which I base this liability on the part of the United States to pay a specified portion of the debt of Texas is not new to me. It is one which I have again and again announced to be an opinion entertained by me. I think it is founded upon principles of truth and eternal justice. Texas, being an independent power, recognized as such by all the great powers of the earth, invited loans to be made to her, to enable her to prosecute the then existing war between her and Mexico. She told those whom she invited to make these loans, that "if you make them, the duties on foreign imports shall be sacredly pledged for the reimbursement of the loans." The loans were made. The money was received, and expended in the establishment of her liberty and her independence. After all this, she annexed herself to the United States, who thenceforward acquired the right to the identical pledge which she had made to the public creditor to satisfy the loan of money which he had advanced to her. The United States became the owners of that pledge, and the recipient of all the duties payable in the ports of Texas.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.140–p.141

Now, sir, I do say that, in my humble judgment, if there be honor, or justice, or truth among men, we do owe to the creditors who thus advanced their money upon that pledge, the reimbursement of the money, at all events to the extent that the pledged fund which have reimbursed it, if it had never been appropriated by us to our use. We must recollect, sir, that in relation to that pledge, and to the loan made in virtue and on the faith of it, there were three parties bound—I mean after annexation—the United States, Texas, and the creditor of Texas, who had advanced his money on the faith of a solemn pledge made by Texas.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.141

Texas and the United States might do what they thought proper; but in justice they could do nothing to deprive the creditor of a full reliance upon the pledge upon the faith of which he had advanced his money. Sir, it is impossible now to ascertain how much would have been received from that source of revenue by the State of Texas, if she had remained independent. It would be most unjust to go there now and examine at Galveston and her other ports, to ascertain how much she now receives by her foreign imports; because, by being incorporated into this Union, all her supplies, which formerly were received from foreign countries, and subject—many of them at least—to import duties, are now received by the coasting trade, instead of being received from other countries, as they would have been, if she had remained independent. Considering the extent of her territory, and the rapid manner in which her population is increasing, and is likely to increase, it is probable that in the course of a few years there might have been such an amount received at the various ports of Texas—she remaining independent—as would have been adequate to the extinction of the debt to which I have referred.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.142

But, sir, it is not merely in the discharge of what I consider to be a valid and legitimate obligation resting upon the United States to discharge the specified duty, it is not upon that condition alone that this payment is proposed to be made; it is also upon the further condition that Texas shall relinquish to the United States any claim that she has to any portion of New Mexico. Now, sir, although, as I believe, she has not a valid title to any portion of New Mexico, she has a claim; and for the sake of that general quiet and harmony, for the sake of that accommodation, which ought to be as much the object of legislation as it is of individuals in their transactions in private life, we may do now what an individual in analogous circumstances might do—give something for the relinquishment of a claim, although it should not be well founded, for the sake of peace. It is, therefore, proposed—and this resolution does propose—that we shall pay the amount of the debt contracted by Texas prior to its annexation to the United States, in consideration of our reception of the duties applicable to the extinction of that debt; and that Texas shall also, in consideration of a sum to be advanced, relinquish any claim which she has to any portion of New Mexico.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.142

The fifth resolution, sir, and the sixth, like the third and fourth, are somewhat connected together. They are as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.142–p.143

"5th. Resolved, That it is inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while that institution continues to exist in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that State, without the consent of the people of the District, and without just compensation to the owners of slaves within the District.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.143

"6th. But Resolved, That it is expedient to prohibit within the District the slave-trade, in slaves brought into it from States or places beyond the limits of the District, either to be sold therein as merchandise, or to be transported to other markets, without the District of Columbia."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.143

The first of these resolutions, Mr. President, in somewhat different language, asserts substantially no other principle than that which was asserted by the Senate of the United States twelve years ago, upon the resolutions which I then offered, and which passed—at least the particular resolution passed—by a majority of four-fifths of the Senate. I allude to the resolution presented by me in 1838. I shall not enlarge on that resolution; it speaks for itself; it declares that the institution of slavery should not be abolished in the District of Columbia without the concurrence of three conditions; first, the assent of Maryland; second, the assent of the people within the District; and third, compensation to the owners of the slaves within the District for their property.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.143–p.144–p.145

The next resolution proposed deserves a passing remark. It is that the slave-trade within the District ought to be abolished, prohibited. I do not mean by that the alienation and transfer of slaves from the inhabitants within this District—the sale by one neighbor to another of a slave which the one owns and the other wants, that a husband may perhaps be put along with his wife, or a wife with her husband. I do not mean to touch at all the question of the right of property in slaves among persons living within the District; but the slave-trade to which I refer was, I think, pronounced an abomination more than forty years ago, by one of the most gifted and distinguished sons of Virginia, the late Mr. Randolph. And who is there who is not shocked at its enormity? Sir, it is a great mistake at the North, if they suppose that gentlemen living in the slave States look upon one who is a regular trader in slaves with any particular favor or kindness. They are often—sometimes unjustly, perhaps—excluded from social intercourse. I have known some memorable instances of this sort. But, then, what is this trade? It is a good deal limited since the retrocession of that portion of the District formerly belonging to Virginia. There are Alexandria, Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk, south of the Potomac, and Baltimore, Annapolis, and perhaps other ports, north of the Potomac. Let the slave-dealer, who chooses to collect his slaves in Virginia and Maryland, go to these places; let him not come here and establish his jails, and put on his chains, and sometimes shock the sensibilities of our nature by a long train of slaves passing through that avenue leading from this Capitol to the house of the Chief Magistrate of one of the most glorious Republics that ever existed. Why should he not do it? Sir, I am sure I speak the sentiments of every Southern man, and every man coming from the slave States, when I say let it terminate, and that it is an abomination; and there is no occasion for it; it ought no longer to be tolerated.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

The seventh resolution relates to a subject embraced in a bill now under consideration by the Senate. It is as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

"7th. Resolved, That more effectual provision ought to be made by law, according to the requirement of the Constitution, for the restitution and delivery of persons bound to service or labor in any State who may escape into any other State or Territory in the Union."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

Sir, that is so evident, and has been so clearly shown by the debate which has already taken place on the subject, that I have not now occasion to add another word.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

The last resolution of the series of eight is as follows:

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

"And 8th. Resolved, That Congress has no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States; but that the admission or exclusion of slaves brought from one into another of them, depends exclusively upon their own particular laws."

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.145

It is obvious that no legislation is necessary or intended to follow that resolution. It merely asserts a truth established by the highest authority of law in this country, and, in conformity with that decision, I trust there will be one universal acquiescence.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.146

I should not have thought it necessary to embrace in that resolution the declaration which is embraced in it, but that I thought it might be useful in treating of the whole subject, and in accordance with the practice of our British and American ancestors occasionally to resort to great fundamental principles, and bring them freshly and manifestly before our eyes, from time to time, to avoid their being violated upon any occasion.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.146

Mr. President, you have before you the whole series of resolutions, the whole scheme of arrangement and accommodation of these distracting questions, which I have to offer, after having bestowed on these subjects the most anxious, intensely anxious, consideration ever since I have been in this body. How far it may prove acceptable to both or either of the parties on these great questions, it is not for me to say. I think it ought to be acceptable to both. There is no sacrifice of any principle, proposed in any of them, by either party. The plan is founded upon mutual forbearance, originating in a spirit of reconciliation and concession; not of principles, but of matters of feeling. At the North, sir, I know that from feeling, by many at least cherished as being dictated by considerations of humanity and philanthropy, there exists a sentiment adverse to the institution of slavery.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.146–p.147

Sir, I might, I think—although I believe this project contains about an equal amount of concession and forbearance on both sides—have asked from the free States of the North a more liberal and extensive concession than should be asked from the slave States. And why, sir? With you, gentlemen Senators of the free States, what is it? An abstraction, a sentiment—a sentiment, if you please, of humanity and philanthropy—a noble sentiment, when directed rightly, with no sinister or party purposes; an atrocious sentiment—a detestable sentiment—or rather the abuse of it—when directed to the accomplishment of unworthy purposes. I said that I might ask from you larger and more expensive concessions than from the slave States. And why? You are numerically more powerful than the slave States. Not that there is any difference—for upon that subject I can not go along with the ardent expression of feeling by some of my friends coming from the same class of States from which I come—not that there is any difference in valor, in prowess, in noble and patriotic daring, whenever it is required for the safety and salvation of the country, between the people of one class of States and those of the other. You are, in point of numbers, however, greater; and greatness and magnanimity should ever be allied.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.147–p.148

But there are other reasons why concession upon such a subject as this should be more liberal, more expansive, coming from the free than from the slave States. It is, as I remarked, a sentiment, a sentiment of humanity and philanthropy on your side. Ay, sir, and when a sentiment of that kind is honestly and earnestly cherished, with a disposition to make sacrifices to enforce it, it is a noble and beautiful sentiment; but, sir, when the sacrifice is not to be made by those who cherish that sentiment and inculcate it, but by another people, in whose situation it is impossible, from their position, to sympathize and to share all and every thing that belongs to them, I must say to you, Senators from the free States, it is a totally different question. On your side it is a sentiment without sacrifice, a sentiment without danger, a sentiment without hazard, without peril, without loss. But how is it on the other side, to which, as I have said, a greater amount of concession ought to be made in any scheme of compromise?

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.148

In the first place, sir, there is a vast and incalculable amount of property to be sacrificed, and to be sacrificed, not by your sharing in the common burdens, but exclusive of you. And this is not all. The social intercourse, habit, safety, property, life, every thing is at hazard, in a greater or less degree, in the slave States.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.148

Sir, look at the storm which is now raging before you, beating in all its rage pitilessly on your family. They are in the South. But where are your families, where are your people, Senators from the free States? They are safely housed, enjoying all the blessings of domestic comfort, peace, and quiet, in the bosoms of their own families.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.148–p.149

Behold, Mr. President, that dwelling-house now wrapped in flames. Listen, sir, to the rafters and beams which fall in succession, amid the crash; and the flames ascending higher and higher as they tumble down. Behold those women and children who are flying from the calamitous scene, and with their shrieks and lamentations imploring the aid of high Heaven. Whose house is that? Whose wives and children are they? Yours in the free States? No. You are looking on in safety and security, while the conflagration which I have described is raging in the slave States, and produced, not intentionally, by you, but produced from the inevitable tendency of the measures which you have adopted, and which others have carried far beyond what you have wished.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.149

In the one scale, then, we behold sentiment, sentiment, sentiment alone; in the other property, the social fabric, life, and all that makes life desirable and happy.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.149

But, sir, I find myself engaged much beyond what I intended, when I came this morning from my lodgings, in the exposition with which I intended these resolutions should go forth to the consideration of the world. I can not omit, however, before I conclude, relating an incident, a thrilling incident, which occurred prior to my leaving my lodgings this morning.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.149–p.150

A man came to my room—the same at whose instance, a few days ago, I presented a memorial calling upon Congress for the purchase of Mount Vernon for the use of the public—and, without being at all aware of what purpose I entertained in the discharge of my public duty to-day, he said to me: "Mr. Clay, I heard you make a remark the other day which induces me to suppose that a precious relic in my possession would be acceptable to you." He then drew out of his pocket, and presented to me the object which I now hold in my hand. And what, Mr. President, do you suppose it is? It is a fragment of the coffin of Washington—a fragment of that coffin in which now repose in silence, in sleep, and speechless, all the earthly remains of the venerated Father of his country. Was it portentous that it should have been thus presented to me? Was it a sad presage of what might happen to that fabric which Washington's virtue, patriotism and valor established? No, sir, no. It was a warning voice, coming from the grave to the Congress now in session to beware, to pause, to reflect, before they lend themselves to any purposes which shall destroy that Union which was cemented by his exertions and example. Sir, I hope an impression may be made on your mind such as that which was made on mine by the reception of this precious relic.

Clay Compromise, America, Vol.7, p.150

And, in conclusion, I now ask every Senator, I entreat you, gentlemen, in fairness and candor, to examine the plan of accommodation which this series of resolutions proposes, and not to pronounce against them until convinced after a thorough examination. I move that the resolutions be read and received.

The Clay Compromise (Schurz)

Title: The Clay Compromise

Author: Carl Schurz

Date: 1850

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.97-105

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.97

When Congress met, in December, 1848, the last session under Polk's Presidency, it had to confront a state of things unexpected a year before. The discovery of rich gold mines in California had attracted thither from all parts of the country a sudden and unexampled emigration, increasing in volume from day to day. In a few months a population gathered there strong enough in numbers to authorize the organization of a State government. In any event, the character of that population and the adventurous nature of its pursuits rendered the establishment of some legal authority peculiarly pressing. Polk, therefore, strongly urged that the provisional military rule in New Mexico and California, which ought to have ceased with the war, should be superseded by legally organized territorial governments.

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.97

As to the slavery question, he recommended the extension of the Missouri Compromise line. Various schemes were proposed in Congress, provoking hot debates between pro-slavery and anti-slavery men. The excitement was increased by vigorous protests from the inhabitants of New Mexico and California against the introduction of slavery there; by an attempt on the part of Calhoun to organize a distinctively Southern party; and by threats that the Union would be dissolved in case the North insisted upon the exclusion of slavery from the new conquests; until finally, the impossibility of an agreement becoming evident, the Thirtieth Congress adjourned, leaving the decision of the great question to its successor….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.98

The slaveholding interest watched these proceedings with constantly increasing alarm. The territories taken from Mexico were eluding its grasp. Instead of adding to the strength of the South, they would increase the power of the free States. It was a terrible shock. The mere anticipation of it had brought forth suggestions of desperate remedies. The cry of disunion was raised with increasing frequency and violence. Many meant it only as a threat to frighten the North into concession. But there were not a few Southern men also who had regretfully arrived at the conclusion that the dissolution of the Union was necessary to the salvation of slavery. On the other hand, while every Southern legislature save one denounced the exclusion of slavery as a violation of Southern rights, every Northern legislature save one passed resolutions in favor of the Wilmot Proviso….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.98

Clay, on January 29, 1850, unfolded his "comprehensive scheme of adjustment." His object was to save the Union, and he reasoned thus: The Union is threatened by the disunion spirit growing up in the South. That disunion spirit springs from an apprehension that slavery is not safe in the Union. The disunion spirit must be disarmed by concessions calculated to quiet that apprehension. These concessions must be such as not to alarm the North. Clay proposed, in a set of resolutions to be followed by appropriate bills, a series of measures intended to compromise all conflicting interests and aspirations. The first declared that California should be speedily admitted as a State—of course, with her free-State constitution; the second, that, as slavery did not by law exist, and was not likely to be introduced in any of the territories acquired from Mexico, Congress should provide territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, without any restriction as to slavery—thus sacrificing the Wilmot Proviso—without, however, authorizing slaveholders to take their slaves there—thus adjourning the slavery question as to those territories to a future day; the third and fourth, that a boundary line between Texas and New Mexico should be fixt, giving to Texas but little of the New Mexican territory she claimed, but granting her a certain sum of money for the payment of that part of her public debt for which, during her independent existence, her customs revenue had been pledged; the fifth, that it was inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of Maryland, etc; the sixth, that the slave-trade in the District should be prohibited; the seventh, that a more effectual fugitive-slave law should be enacted; and the eighth, that Congress had no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States. The preamble declared the purpose of these resolutions to be "for the peace, concord, and harmony of these States, to settle and adjust amicably all existing questions of controversy between them, arising out of the institution of slavery, upon a fair, equitable, and just basis."

The Wilmot Proviso of 1846 prohibited slavery in territory that was about to be purchased from Mexico. It never became a law.

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.100

This was Clay's plan of compromise. There was at once a rattling fusillade of objections and protests from Southern men, Whigs as well as Democrats. On February 5 Clay supported his plan of adjustment with a great speech. The infirmities of old age began to tell upon him. Walking up to the Capitol, he asked a friend who accompanied him, "Will you lend me your arm? I feel myself quite weak and exhausted this morning." He ascended the long flight of steps with difficulty, being several times obliged to stop in order to recover his breath. The friend suggested that he should defer his speech, as he was too ill to exert himself that day. "I consider our country in danger," replied Clay; "and if I can be the means in any measure of averting that danger, my health and life is of little consequence."

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.100

When he arrived at the Senate chamber, he beheld a spectacle well apt to inspire an orator. For several days his intention had been known to address the Senate on February 5, and from far and near—from Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and places still more distant—men and women had come in great numbers to hear him. The avenues of the Senate chamber were buzzing with an eager multitude who in vain struggled to gain access to the thronged galleries and the equally crowded floor. When Clay arose to speak, an outburst of applause in the chamber greeted him. The noise was heard without, and the great crowdassembled there raised such a shout that the orator could not make himself heard until the officers of the Senate, had gone out and cleared the entrances. Clay's speech occupied two days….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.101

The debate which followed called forth all the great men of the Senate. On March 4 Calhoun appeared, gaunt and haggard, too ill to speak, but still full of that grim energy with which he had been for so many years defending the interests of slavery, calling them the rights of the South. His oration was read to the Senate by Mason of Virginia. Calhoun's mind was narrow, but within its narrow sphere acute. He saw with perfect clearness that slavery could not be saved within the Union, and that every compromise putting off the decisive crisis only made its final doom all the more certain….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.101

There he sat, the old champion of slavery, himself the picture of his doomed cause—a cause at war with the civilization of the age, vainly struggling against destiny—a cause which neither union nor disunion, neither eloquence in council, nor skill in diplomacy, nor bravery in battle, could save: there he sat, motionless like a statue, with the hand of death upon him; his dark eyes flashing with feverish luster from beneath his knitted brows; listening to his own words from another's mouth, and anxiously watching on the faces of those around their effect—words of mournful despair, heralding the coming fate, and, without hope, still trying to avert it by counseling impossible expedients. Four weeks later Calhoun closed his eyes forever, leaving his cherished cause to its doom. Clay and Webster were among those who strewed flowers of eulogy upon his grave.

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.102

On July 22, nearly six months after the introduction of his resolutions, and two and a half months after the Committee of Thirteen had presented its report, Clay made his closing speech. Ever since January 28 he had been on the floor almost day after day, sometimes so ill that he could hardly drag his tottering limbs to the Senate chamber….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.102

His patriotism was, however, not all meekness. In the same speech he severely censured the Abolitionists as reckless agitators, and denounced the Southern fire-eaters for their disunion tendencies, reflecting especially upon a member of the Nashville Convention, Rhett of South Carolina, who, after his return to Charleston, had in a public meeting openly proposed to hoist the standard of secession. When Clay had finished his appeal for peace and union, Barnwell of South Carolina, Calhoun's successor, rose and declared his dissatisfaction with Clay's remarks, "not a little disrespectful to a friend" whom he held very dear, and upon whose character he then proceeded to pronounce a warm eulogy, intimating that the opinions held and expressed by Mr. Rhett might possibly be those of South Carolina. Clay was quickly upon his feet. "Mr. President," he replied, "I said nothing with respect to the character of Mr. Rhett. I know him personally, and have some respect for him. But, if he pronounced the sentiment attributed to him of raising the standard of disunion and of resistance to the common government, whatever he has been, if he follows up that declaration by corresponding overt acts"—the old man's eye flashed and his voice rang out in a thundering peal—"he will be a traitor, and Ihope he will meet the fate of a traitor!" Like an electric shock the word thrilled the audience, and volleys of applause broke forth from the crowded galleries.

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.103

After Clay's closing speech the voting began. Several Southern Senators, who at first had been bitterly opposed to Clay's plan, had gradually become persuaded. But the compromise had to suffer a disheartening defeat before achieving its victory. Amendments were offered in perplexing profusion. The Omnibus Bill was disfigured almost beyond recognition. At last, after a series of confusing manipulations, Clay himself incautiously accepted an amendment offered by a Senator from Georgia, that, until a final settlement of the Texas boundary was effected with the assent of Texas, the territorial government of New Mexico should not go into operation east of the Rio Grande. As this was virtually delivering over New Mexico to Texas, the whole provision concerning New Mexico was struck out by the aid of friends of the compromise; and when on July 31 the bill was passed, there was nothing left in the "Omnibus" but the establishment of a territorial government for Utah. All the rest had been amended out of it. The compromise seemed to be lost.

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.103

The next day Clay appeared in the Senate once more to avow his devotion to the Union, and to defy its enemies; for he feared that, the compromise having failed, it might now be impossible to save it without the employment of force. "I stand here in my place," he said, "meaning to be unawed by any threats, whether they come from individuals or from States. I should deplore, asmuch as any man living or dead, that arms should be raised against the authority of the Union, either by individuals or by States. But if, after all that has occurred, any one State, or the people of any State, choose to place themselves in military array against the Government of the Union, I am for trying the strength of the Government." The galleries broke out in applause, which was checked by the presiding officer….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.104

At last, on August 2, mortified, exhausted, broken in health, he gave up his leadership and went to Newport to rest and recuperate. Then, in Clay's absence, that proved true, which had been frequently urged against the Omnibus Bill, namely, that measures which could not be adopted when lumped together, might be adopted separately….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.104

 When Clay returned to Washington in the last week of August, he found that the Senate had carried out the whole program laid down in his compromise resolutions seven months before, except the interdiction of the slave traffic in the District of Columbia. After a long debate, in which Clay with great emphasis exprest his expectation that slavery would pass away in the District, adding that he was glad of it, that bill, too, passed and became a law. The compromise of 1850 was then substantially complete….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.104

The compromise of 1850 was perhaps the best that could be made under the circumstances to effect a temporary truce. But no compromise could have been devised to keep the antagonistic forces of freedom and slavery permanently at peace. Calhoun was perfectly right in his conclusion that slavery, in order to exist with secu-rity in the Union, must rule it. It needed controlling political power—more Slave States, more representation, an absolute veto upon all legislation hostile to it. If slavery could not obtain this within the Union, and still desired to live, it had to try its fortunes outside. Calhoun's great error was to believe that slavery could survive at all in the nineteenth century….

Schurz, Clay Compromise, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.105

A prolific source of mischief later was the fugitive-slave law. No doubt a large number of slaves had in the course of time escaped from the South and found shelter in the North. No doubt the Northern States had been remiss in performing their constitutional obligations as to the return of fugitives, for in some of them the enforcement of the existing law was actually obstructed by State legislation. No doubt the South had in this respect occasion to complain. But an institution like slavery was naturally exposed to such losses. It would have been prudent to bear them in silence. It was certainly most unwise to make laws calculated to bring the most odious features of slavery home to a free people naturally impatient of its existence. This the fugitive-slave law did in a very provoking form. It gave United States commissioners the power, by summary process, to turn over a colored man or woman claimed as a fugitive slave to the claimant. It exclude from the evidence the testimony of the defendant. It "commanded" all good citizens, whenever summoned, to aid in the prompt and effective execution of the law, including the capture of the fugitive. It made the United States marshal liable for the full value of the slave, if a recaptured fugitive escaped from his custody.

Webster's Seventh of March Speech

Title: Webster's Seventh of March Speech

Author: James G. Blaine

Date: 1850

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.106-109

Blaine, Webster's Seventh of March Speech, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.106

Mr. Webster delivered, on the 7th of March, the memorable speech which cost him the loss of so many of his stanch and lifelong friends. The anti-slavery Whigs of the North, who, as the discussion went on, had waited to be vindicated by the commanding argument of Mr. Webster, were dismayed and cast down by his unexpected utterance. Instead of arraigning the propagandists of slavery, he arraigned its opponents. Instead of indicting the Disunionists of the South, he poured out his wrath upon the Abolitionists of the North. He maintained that the North had unduly exaggerated the dangers of slavery extension at this crisis. California was coming in as a free State. Texas, north of 36° 30', if her boundary should extend so far, had been declared free in the articles of annexation. In the mountainous and sterile character of New Mexico and Utah he found a stronger prohibition of slavery than in any possible ordinance, enactment, or proviso placed on the statute-book by Congress.

Blaine, Webster's Seventh of March Speech, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.107

He would not, therefore, "reenact the Law of God." He would not force a quarrel with the South when nothing was to be gained. He would not irritate or causelessly wound the feelings of those who were just beginning to realize that they had lost in the issue put at stake in the Mexican War. The speech undoubtedly had great influence in the North, and caused many anti-slavery men to turn back. But on the other hand, it embittered thousands who prest forward with sturdy principle and with a quickened zeal, not unmixed with resentment and a sense of betrayal. In many parts of the country, and especially in the Middle and Southern States, the speech was received with enthusiastic approval. But in New England, the loss of whose good opinion could not be compensated to Mr. Webster by the applause of a world outside, he never regained his hold upon the popular affection. New friends came to him, but they did not supply the place of the old friends, who for a lifetime had stood by him with unswerving principle and with ever-increasing pride.

Blaine, Webster's Seventh of March Speech, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.107

Excitement and passion do not, however, always issue decrees and pronounce judgments of absolute right. In the zeal of that hour, Northern anti-slavery opinion failed to appreciate the influence which wrought so powerfully on the mind of Mr. Webster. He belonged with those who could remember much of the hardships and sorrows of the Revolutionary period, who were born to poverty and reared in privation. To these, the formation of the Federal Government had come as a gift from Heaven, and they had heard from the lipsof the living Washington in his farewell words, that "the Union is the edifice of our real independence, the support of our tranquillity at home, our peace abroad, our prosperity, our safety, and of the very liberty which we so highly prize, habitual, immovable attachment, and should discountenance whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned."

Blaine, Webster's Seventh of March Speech, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.108

Mr. Webster had in his own lifetime seen the thirteen colonies grow to thirty powerful States. He had seen three millions of people, enfeebled and impoverished by a long struggle, increased eightfold in number, surrounded by all the comforts, charms, and securities of life. All this spoke to him of the Union and of its priceless blessings. He now heard its advantages discust, its perpetuity doubted, its existence threatened. A convention of slaveholding States had been called, to meet at Nashville, for the purpose of considering the possible separation of the sections. Mr. Webster felt that a generation had been born who were undervaluing their inheritance, and who might, by temerity, destroy it. Under motives inspired by these surroundings, he spoke for the preservation of the Union. He believed it to be seriously endangered. His apprehensions were ridiculed by many who, ten years after Mr. Webster was in his grave, saw for the first time how real and how terrible were the perils upon which those apprehensions were founded.

Blaine, Webster's Seventh of March Speech, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.108

When the hour of actual conflict came, every patriot realized that a great magazine of strength for the Union was stored in the teachings of Mr. Webster. For thirty years preceding the Nullifi-cation troubles in South Carolina, the Government had been administered on the States'-rights theory, in which the power of the nation was subordinated, and its capacity to subdue the revolt of seceding States was dangerously weakened. His speech in reply to Hayne in 1830 was like an amendment to the Constitution. It corrected traditions, changed convictions, revolutionized conclusions. It gave to the friends of the Union the abundant logic which established the right and the power of the Government to preserve itself. A fame so lofty, a work so grand, can not be marred by one mistake, if mistake it be conceded. The thoughtful reconsideration of his severest critics must allow that Mr. Webster saw before him a divide duty, and that he chose the part which in his patriotic judgment was demanded by the supreme danger of the hour.

Jenny Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York

Title: Jenny Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York

Author: New York Tribune

Date: 1850

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.116-127

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.116

September 2, 1850.—The long expectation is over—Jenny Lind has landed on our shores. It was confidently expected yesterday morning that the Atlantic would arrive in the course of the day, and crowds collected on all points where a lookout down the bay could be had, eager to catch the first glimpse of her hull in the distance.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.116

Toward 1 o'clock, two guns were heard in the direction of Sandy Hook, and immediately after the signal-flag of a steamer was run up at the telegraph station above Clifton. In a few minutes the Atlantic hove in sight, her giant bulk looming through the light mist which still lay on the outer bay…. On the top of a light deckhouse, erected over the forward companionway, sat the subject of the day's excitement—the veritable Jenny Lind—as fresh and rosy as if the sea had spared her its usual discomforts, and enjoying the novel interest of everything she saw, with an apparent unconsciousness of the observation she excited. At her side stood Mr. Jules Benedict, the distinguished composer, and Signor Giovanni Belleti, the celebrated basso, her artistic companion.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.117

Mr. Barnum, who had by this time climbed on board, with a choice bouquet carefully stuck in the bosom of his white vest, was taken forward and presented by Captain West. But Mr. Collins had for once stolen a march on him, having got on board in advance, and presented to Miss Lind a bouquet about three times the size of Barnum's. The songstress received the latter with great cordiality.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.117

Her manners are very frank and engaging, and there is an expression of habitual good humor in her clear, blue eye, which would win her the heart of a crowd by a single glance. She is about twenty-nine years of age, and rather more robust in face and person that her portraits would indicate. Her forehead is finely formed, shaded by waves of pale brown hair; her eyes, light blue and joyous; her nose and mouth, tho molded on the large Swedish type, convey an impression of benevolence and sound goodness of heart, which is thoroughly in keeping with the many stories we have heard of her charitable doings. Mademoiselle Lind was drest with great taste and simplicity. She wore a visite of rich black cashmere over a dress of silver-gray silk, with a pale blue silk hat and black veil. At her feet lay a silky little lap-dog, with ears almost half the length of its body; it was of that rare breed which are worth their weight in gold, and was a present from Queen Victoria….

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.117

As soon as Captain West had conducted Mademoiselle Lind to the gangway, the rush commenced. Mademoiselle Ahmansen, with Messrs. Benedict and Belleti, followed, and all four took their seats in the carriage, Mr. Barnum mounting to the driver's place. The crowd inside the gates immediately surrounded the carriage, clinging to the wheels and crowding about the windows, cheering all the while with an enthusiasm we never saw surpassed. The multitude outside began to press against the gates, which were unbolted in all haste to prevent being forced in. Scarcely had one gate been thrown back, however, before the torrent burst in, with an energy frightful to witness. The other half of the gate instantly gave way, the planks snapping like reeds before the pressure. The foremost ranks were forced down upon the floor, and those behind, urged on from without, were piled upon them till a serious loss of life seemed almost inevitable. The spectacle was most alarming; some forty or fifty persons lay crusht by the inexorable crowd, stretching out their hands and crying for help. Finally, some of the police officers, and some of the gentlemen who happened to be near, succeeded with great difficulty in driving back the crowd and rescuing the sufferers. Many were severely bruised, some came off with bloody noses, and two boys, about twelve years of age, appeared to be seriously injured. Had not the rush been checked in time, many lives would have been lost.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.118

The carriage containing the freight of song was started with difficulty, owing to the enthusiastic crowd around it. Mademoiselle Lind and her cousin, Mademoiselle Ahmansen, occupied the back seat; the former bowed repeatedly as she passed through the gathered thousands. The people fell back respectfully and made way, literally heaping the carriage with flowers as she passed along. More than 200 bouquets were thrown into the windows. Once clear of the throng, the carriage was driven off rapidly and succeeded in reaching the Irving House without allowing the people in the streets time to collect. Mademoiselle Lind's elegant suite of apartments in the second story of the hotel were all in readiness, and a couple of police officers crowded the entrance in Chambers Street to prevent the crowd from rushing in. The block around the Irving House was filled with a dense mass of people, with heads upturned, gazing at the different windows, many of which were graced with ladies; but Jenny not among them. At last she appeared at one of the parlor windows opening on Broadway, and there was a general stampede to get sight of her. She bowed repeatedly and kissed her hand in answer to the cheers; her face wore a radiant and delighted expression, and her whole demeanor was winning and graceful.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.119

Her arrival created nearly as much excitement in the Irving House as in the streets. There are at present 530 guests in the house, and each one is anxious to get a glimpse of her. All the passages leading to her apartments are crowded. The great flag of Sweden and Norway was hoisted upon her arrival. Throughout the evening crowds continued to collect about the hotel, and so incessant were their calls that she was obliged to appear twice again at the windows. Finally, being quite exhausted by the excitement of the day, she retired, and her faithful Swedish servants kept watch to prevent disturbance.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.120

September 9.—Notwithstanding the pouring rain on Saturday morning, great numbers of people wended their way down Broadway at an early hour, to attend the ticket auction at Castle Garden for the first concert of Jenny Lind. The rain, which came down in torrents sufficient to damp everybody's ardor at the hour of commencing the performances, no doubt deterred a number who would otherwise have entered into the spirit of the scene with ardor. At least 3,000 persons were present, filling the whole body of the Garden, and leaving a goodly number to occupy the balcony. The auctioneer, Mr. Leeds, appeared punctually at the time appointed. Mr. Barnum appeared a few minutes before the bidding commenced, and was greeted by the most tumultuous and enthusiastic applause.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.120

Mr. Leeds now mounted his platform, and made an off-hand statement of the rules and regulations of the day. All the tickets sold must be called for before 12 o'clock on Monday (to-day). All those not applied for at the time specified will be disposed of to the first person applying. The choice of tickets was sold with the privilege of purchasing 1 to 10. No privilege higher than 10 was given.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.120

Now commenced the exciting struggle for the first choice. The first bid was $20. From this starting point the calls grew louder and more energetic. "Twenty-five"—"thirty"—"thirty-five"—"forty"—"sixty"—"seventy-five"—"eighty"—("Give me the $100," cried Mr. Leeds), "ninety"—"one hundred" (auctioneer—"I've got it!")—"one hundred and five" ("a very low price! Mr. Leeds")—"one hundred andten"—"twenty-five"—"thirty"—"forty"—"one hundred and fifty"—"one hundred and seventy-five"—"two hundred" (loud cheers)—"two hundred and twenty-five" ($225). Here there was at last a stop, and curious glances were shot around to discover the fortunate candidate.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.121

"Genin, Hatter," was announced. So the honor of the first purchase is fairly won by Mr. John N. Genin, the well-known hatter, of No. 214 Broadway. The competition for this choice was very spirited, and there were many candidates for the honor. The announcement of the success of Mr. Genin was received with a tremendous outburst of applause.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.121

The bidding then proceeded with considerable rapidity, and in comparative quietness, tho there were still abundant tokens of enthusiasm. The second choice of seats sold for $25. The third brought $15. The stage box on the left (four seats, at $35 each) was sold to the New York Hotel for $140. The remaining box has been reserved for Mademoiselle Lind herself. Several single chairs near the stage were sold at $8.50 each, and a number at $8. The next seats offered were in the front row of the balcony, which brought $5 to $9.50 each. The front bench seats below, in the rear of the chairs, brought $7, $6.50 and $5 each. The second row brought about the same. The bidding for the second row of the balcony was finished about 2 P.M.; the prices ranged from $7.59 to $5.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.121

Upward of 1,400 seats were disposed of by 3 o'clock, and the sale was adjourned till Monday, since it became necessary to clear the house for the operatic performance of the evening. The 1,400 seats were disposed of at an average of nearly $6.50 per seat. As the sale proceeds, it is likely that this average will be reduced, but probably not below $5. At this rate Jenny Lind's first concert in America will realize for the manager about $30,000.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.122

September 12.—Jenny Lind's first concert is over, and all doubts are at an end. She is the greatest singer we have ever heard, and her success is all that was anticipated from her genius and her fame. All the preparatory arrangements for the concert were made with great care, and from an admirable system observed none of the usual disagreeable features of such an event were experienced. Outside of the gate there was a double row of policemen extending up the main avenue of the Battery grounds. Carriages only were permitted to drive up to the gate from the Whitehall side, and pass over into Battery Place. At one time the line of carriages extended to Whitehall and up State Street into Broadway. The chief of police with about sixty men came on the ground at five o'clock, and maintained the most complete order to the end. Mr. Barnum, according to promise, had put up a substantial framework, and thrown an immense awning over the bridge, which is some 200 feet in length. This was brilliantly lighted, and had almost the appearance of a triumphal avenue on entering the gate. There was an immense crowd on the Battery clustering around the gates during the whole evening, but no acts of disorder occurred. When Jenny Lind's carriage came, but very few persons knew it, and no great excitement followed.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.123

The principal annoyance was occasioned by a noisy crowd of boys in boats, who gathered around the outer wall of the Castle, and, being by their position secure from the police, tried to disturb those within by a hideous clamor of shouts and yells, accompanied by a discordant din of drums and fifes. There must have been more than 200 boats and 1,000 persons on the water. They caused some annoyance to that portion of the audience in the back seats of the balcony, but the nuisance was felt by none in the parquette. By 10 o'clock they had either become tired or ashamed of the contemptible outrage they were attempting, and dispersed.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.123

On entering the Castle, a company of ushers, distinguished by their badges, were in readiness to direct the visitor to that part of the hall where their seats were located. Colored lamps and hangings suspended to the pillars indicated at a glance the different divisions, and the task of seating the whole audience of near 7,000 persons was thus accomplished without the least inconvenience. The hall was brilliantly lighted, tho from its vast extent the stage looked somewhat dim. The wooden partition which was built up in place of the drop curtain is covered with a painting representing the combined standards of America and Sweden, below which are arabesque ornaments in white and gold. Considering the short time allowed for these improvements, the change was remarkable. The only instance of bad taste which we noticed was a large motto, worked in flowers, suspended over the pillars of the balcony, directly in front of the stage. "Welcome, Sweet Warbler" (so ran the words) was not only tame and commonplace, but out of place.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.124

The sight of the grand hall, with its gay decorations, its glittering lamps, and its vast throng of expectant auditors, was in itself almost worth a $5 ticket. We were surprized to notice that not more than one-eighth of the audience were ladies. They must stay at home, it seems, when the tickets are high, but the gentlemen go, nevertheless. For its size, the audience was one of the most quiet, refined and appreciative we ever saw assembled in this city….

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.124

Now came a moment of breathless expectation. A moment more, and Jenny Lind, clad in a white dress which well became the frank sincerity of her face, came forward through the orchestra. It is impossible to describe the spontaneous burst of welcome which greeted her. The vast assembly rose as one man, and for some minutes nothing could be seen but the waving of hands and handkerchiefs, nothing heard but a storm of tumultuous cheers. The enthusiasm of the moment, for a time beyond all bounds, was at last subdued, after prolonging itself by its own fruitless efforts to subdue itself, and the divine songstress, with that perfect bearing, that air of a dignity and sweetness, blending a childlike simplicity and half-trembling womanly modesty with the beautiful confidence of genius and serene wisdom of art, addrest herself to song, as the orchestral symphony prepared the way for the voice in "Casta Diva."

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.125

A better test piece could not have been selected for her debut. Every soprano lady has sung it to us; but nearly every one has seemed only trying to make something of it, while Jenny Lind was the very music of it for the time being. We would say no less than that; for the wisest and honestest part of criticism on such a first hearing of a thing so perfect, was to give itself purely up to it, without question, and attempt no analysis of what too truly fills one to have yet begun to be an object of thought.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.125

If it were possible, we would describe the quality of that voice, so pure, so sweet, so fine, so whole and all-pervading, in its lowest breathings a miniature fioriture as well as in its strongest volume. We never heard tones which in their sweetness went so far. They brought the most distant and ill-seated auditor close to her. They were tones, every one of them, and the whole air had to take the law of their vibrations. The voice and the delivery had in them all the good qualities of all the good singers. Song in her has that integral beauty which at once proclaims it as a type for all, and is most naturally worshiped as such by the multitude….

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.125

Her voice is a genuine soprano, reaching the extra high notes with that ease and certainty which make each highest one a triumph of expression purely, and not a physical marvel. The gradual growth and sostenuto of her tones; the light and shade, rhythmic undulation and balance of her passages; the birdlike ecstacy of her trill; faultless precision and fluency of her chromatic scales; above all, the sure reservation of such volume of voice as to crown each protracted climax withglory, not needing a new effort to raise force for the final blow; and indeed all the points one looks for in a mistress of the vocal art, were eminently hers in "Casta Diva," but the charm lay not in any point, but rather in the inspired vitality, the hearty, genuine outpouring of the whole—the real and yet truly ideal humanity of all her singing. That is what has won the world to Jenny Lind; it is that her whole soul and being goes out in her song, and that her voice becomes the impersonation of that song's soul if it have any, that is, if it be a song. There is plainly no vanity in her, no aim to effect; it is all frank and real and harmoniously earnest….

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.126

At the close, the audience (who made no movement to leave till the last note had been uttered), broke out in a tempest of cheers, only less vehement than those which welcomed her in "Casta Diva." She came forward again, bowed with a bright, grateful face, and retired. The cheers were now mingled with shouts of "Barnum," who at last came forward, and with some difficulty obtained sufficient order to speak. "My friends," said he, "you have often heard it asked, 'Where's Barnum?'" Amid the cheers and laughter which followed this, we could only catch the words: "Henceforth, you may say, 'Barnum's nowhere!'"

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.126

Mr. Barnum, after expressing his gratification at the splendid welcome which had been given Mademoiselle Lind, stated that he would disclose a piece of news which he could no longer keep secret, and which would show how well that welcome was deserved. Mademoiselle Lind on Monday morning informed him that it was her intention to give her share of the net proceeds of the present concert, amounting to considerably more than $10,000, to the various charities of this city. This announcement was the signal for another storm. We did not count the number of cheers given, but we never witnessed such a pitch of enthusiasm. Mr. Barnum then proceeded to read the list of her donations, interrupted at every name by a fresh burst of applause:

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.127

To the Fire Department Fund, $3,000; Musical Fund Society, $2,000; Home for the Friendless, $500; Society for the Relief of Indigent Females, $500; Dramatic Fund Association, $500; Home for Colored and Aged Persons, $500; Colored and Orphan Association, $500; Lying-in Asylum for Destitute Females, $500; Protestant Half-orphan Asylum, $500; Roman Catholic Half-orphan Asylum, $500; total, $10,000.

Lind's Arrival and First Concert in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.127

In case the money coming to her shall exceed this sum, she will hereafter designate the charity to which it is to be appropriated. Mr. Barnum was then about to retire, when there was a universal call for Jenny Lind. The songstress, however, had already taken her departure, and the excited crowd, after giving a few more cheers, followed her example, and slowly surged out of the Castle door, and down the canopied bridge, in a glow of good humor and admiration. A few disorderly vagrants collected on the bridges leading to the bath-houses hooted at the throng as it passed out, but everybody went home quietly, with a new joy at his heart, and a new thought in his brain.

Threat of Civil War

Title: Threat of Civil War

Author: Daniel Webster

Date: 1850

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.151-156

Webster, at sixty-eight, made this famous "seventh of March speech" on the Compromise Measures of 1850. Delivered in the United States Senate, it was his last great speech and one of the most notable of his life. It rebukes the North for agitating the slavery question and for violating the Fugitive Slave Law, and advocates concessions to the South.

The speech aroused general indignation in the North, bringing upon Webster an avalanche of criticism from the anti-slavery people. They charged him with truckling to the South in order to gain support in his candidacy for President. Nevertheless, the speech is, on the whole, in harmony with his earlier utterances; for the burden of his argument always was "liberty and union," and he considered a compromise necessary to preserve the Union.

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.151

I NOW say, sir, as the proposition upon which I stand this day, and upon the truth and firmness of which I intend to act until it is overthrown, that there is not, at this moment, within the United States, a single foot of land, the character of which, in regard to its being free-soil territory or slave territory, is not fixed by some law, and some irrepealable law, beyond the power of the action of this Government. Now, is it not so with respect to Texas? Why, it is most manifestly so….

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.151–p.152

But now that, under certain conditions, Texas is in, with all her territories, as a slave State, with a solemn pledge that if she is divided into many States, those States may come in as slave States south of 360 30', how are we to deal with this subject? I know no way of honorable legislation, when the proper time comes for the enactment, but to carry into effect all that we have stipulated to do….

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.152–p.153

Now, as to California and New Mexico, I hold slavery to be excluded from those territories by a law even superior to that which admits and sanctions it in Texas—I mean the law of nature—of physical geography—the law of the formation of the earth. That law settles forever, with a strength beyond all terms of human enactment, that slavery cannot exist in California or New Mexico…. I look upon it, therefore, as a fixed fact, to use an expression current at this day, that both California and New Mexico are destined to be free, so far as they are settled at all, which I believe, especially in regard to New Mexico, will be very little for a great length of time—free by the arrangement of things by the Power above us. I have therefore to say, in this respect also, that this country is fixed for freedom, to as many persons as shall ever live there, by as irrepealable and a more irrepealable law, than the law that attaches to the right of holding slaves in Texas; and I will say further, that if a resolution, or a law, were now before us, to provide a territorial government for New Mexico, I would not vote to put any prohibition into it whatever. The use of such a prohibition would be idle, as it respects any effect it would have upon the territory; and I would not take pains to reaffirm an ordinance of nature, nor to reenact the will of God. And I would put in no Wilmot proviso, for the purpose of a taunt or a reproach. I would put into it no evidence of the votes of superior power, to wound the pride, even whether a just pride, a rational pride, or an irrational pride—to wound the pride of the gentlemen who belong to the southern States….

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.153–p.154

Mr. President, in the excited times in which we live, there is found to exist a state of crimination and recrimination between the North and the South…. I will state these complaints, especially one complaint of the South, which has in my opinion just foundation; and that is, that there has been found at the North, among individuals and among the Legislatures of the North, a disinclination to perform, fully, their constitutional duties, in regard to the return of persons bound to service, who have escaped into the free States. In that respect, it is my judgment that the South is right, and the North is wrong. Every member of every northern Legislature is bound, by oath, like every other officer in the country, to support the Constitution of the United States; and this article of the Constitution, which says to these States, they shall deliver up fugitives from service, is as binding in honor and conscience as any other article…. I put it to all the sober and sound minds at the North, as a question of morals and a question of conscience, What right have they, in all their legislative capacity, or any other, to endeavor to get round this Constitution, to embarrass the free exercise or the rights secured by the Constitution, to the persons whose slaves escape from them? None at all—none at all. Neither in the forum of conscience, nor before the face of the Constitution, are they justified, in my opinion. Of course, it is a matter for their consideration. They probably, in the turmoil of the times, have not stopped to consider of this; they have followed what seemed to be the current of thought and of motives as the occasion arose, and neglected to investigate fully the real question, and to consider their constitutional obligations, as I am sure, if they did consider, they would fulfill them with alacrity….

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.154–p.155

Then, sir, there are those abolition societies, of which I am unwilling to speak, but in regard to which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations for the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable. At the same time, I know thousands of them are honest and good men; perfectly well-meaning men. They have excited feelings; they think they must do something for the cause of liberty; and in their sphere of action they do not see what else they can do than to contribute to an abolition press, or an abolition society, or to pay an abolition lecturer. I do not mean to impute gross motives even to the leaders of these societies, but I am not blind to the consequences. I cannot but see what mischiefs their interference with the South has produced…. The bonds of the slaves were bound more firmly than before; their rivets were more strongly fastened. Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be exhibited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion of the question, drew back and shut itself up in its castle…. We all know the fact, and we all know the cause, and everything that this agitating people have done has been, not to enlarge, but to restrain, not to set free, but to bind faster, the slave population of the South….

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.155

Now, sir, so far as any of these grievances have their foundation in matters of law, they can be redressed, and ought to be redressed; and so far as they have foundation in matters of opinion, in sentiment, in mutual crimination and recrimination, all that we can do is to endeavor to allay the agitation, and cultivate a better feeling and more fraternal sentiments between the South and the North.

Webster, Threat of Civil War, America, Vol.7, p.155–p.156

Mr. President, I should much prefer to have heard, from every member on this floor, declarations of opinion that this Union should never be dissolved, than the declaration of opinion that in any case, under the pressure of any circumstances, such a dissolution was possible. I hear with pain, and anguish, and distress, the word secession, especially when it falls from the lips of those who are eminently patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world, for their political services. Secession! Peaceable secession Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country without convulsion! The breaking up of the fountains of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish—I beg everybody's pardon—as to expect to see any such thing? Sir, he who sees these States, now revolving in harmony around a common center, and expects to see them quit their places and fly off without convulsion, may look the next hour to see the heavenly bodies rush from their spheres, and jostle against each other in the realms of space, without producing the crush of the universe. There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live here—covering this whole country—is it to be thawed and melted away by secession, as the snows on the mountains melt under the influence of a vernal sun—disappear almost unobserved, and die off? No, sir! no, sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the State; but, sir, I see it as plainly as I see the sun in heaven—I see that disruption must produce such a war as I will not describe, in its twofold characters.

The Underground Railroad

Title: The Underground Railroad

Author: Levi Coffin

Date: 1850

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.157-170

Coffin, from whose "Reminiscences this account is taken, was commonly styled the president of the institution known as "The Underground Railroad" for aiding fugitive slaves to escape to Canada beyond the reach of the Fugitive Slave Law. The most favored routes lay through Pennsylvania and Ohio. Coffin, who was actively engaged in the work in Cincinnati, claimed to have received into his house an average of 100 fugitives annually over a period of thirty-three years.

Professor W. H. Siebert, in his exhaustive work on the subject, gives the names of 3,211 "agents, station keepers and conductors" in the service; and it is estimated that 500 negroes annually made trips from Canada to the South to aid their friends and relatives in escaping, before the outbreak of the war. This account shows the methods of making connections northward.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.157–p.158

IN the winter of 1826-27, fugitives began to come to our house, and as it became more widely known on different routes that the slaves fleeing from bondage would find a welcome and shelter at our house, and be forwarded safely on their journey, the number increased. Friends in the neighborhood, who had formerly stood aloof from the work, fearful of the penalty of the law, were encouraged to engage in it when they saw the fearless manner in which I acted, and the success that attended my efforts. They would contribute to clothe the fugitives, and would aid in forwarding them on their way, but were timid about sheltering them under their roof; so that part of the work devolved on us. Some seemed really glad to see the work go on, if somebody else would do it. Others doubted the propriety of it, and tried to discourage me, and dissuade me from running such risks. They manifested great concern for my safety and pecuniary interests, telling me that such a course of action would injure my business and perhaps ruin me; that I ought to consider the welfare of my family; and warning me that my life was in danger, as there were many threats made against me by the slave-hunters and those who sympathized with them.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.158–p.159

After listening quietly to these counselors, I told them that I felt no condemnation for anything that I had ever done for the fugitive slaves. If by doing my duty and endeavoring to fulfill the injunctions of the Bible, I injured my business, then let my business go. As to my safety, my life was in the hands of my Divine Master, and I felt that I had his approval. I had no fear of the danger that seemed to threaten my life or my business. If I was faithful to duty, and honest and industrious, I felt that I would be preserved, and that I could make enough to support my family. At one time there came to see me a good old Friend, who was apparently very deeply concerned for my welfare. He said he was as much opposed to slavery as I was, but thought it very wrong to harbor fugitive slaves. No one there knew of what crimes they were guilty; they might have killed their masters, or committed some other atrocious deed, then those who sheltered them, and aided them in their escape from justice would indirectly be accomplices. He mentioned other objections which he wished me to consider, and then talked for some time, trying to convince me of the errors of my ways. I heard him patiently until he had relieved his mind of the burden upon it, and then asked if he thought the Good Samaritan stopped to inquire whether the man who fell among thieves was guilty of any crime before he attempted to help him? I asked him if he were to see a stranger who had fallen into the ditch would he not help him out until satisfied that he had committed no atrocious deed? These, and many other questions which I put to him, he did not seem able to answer satisfactorily. He was so perplexed and confused that I really pitied the good old man, and advised him to go home and read his Bible thoroughly, and pray over it, and I thought his concern about my aiding fugitive slaves would be removed from his mind, and that he would feel like helping me in the work. We parted in good feeling, and he always manifested warm friendship toward me until the end of his days.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.159–p.160

Many of my pro-slavery customers left me for a time, my sales were diminished, and for a while my business prospects were discouraging, yet my faith was not shaken, nor my efforts for the slaves lessened. New customers soon came in to fill the places of those who had left me. New settlements were rapidly forming to the north of us, and our own was filling up with emigrants from North Carolina, and other States. My trade increased, and I enlarged my business. I was blessed in all my efforts and succeeded beyond my expectations. The Underground Railroad business increased as time advanced, and it was attended with heavy expenses, which I could not have borne had not my affairs been prosperous. I found it necessary to keep a team and a wagon always at command, to convey the fugitive slaves on their journey. Sometimes, when we had large companies, one or two other teams and wagons were required. These journeys had to be made at night, often through deep mud and bad roads, and along by-ways that were seldom traveled. Every precaution to evade pursuit had to be used, as the hunters were often on the track, and sometimes ahead of the slaves. We had different routes for sending the fugitives to depots, ten, fifteen, or twenty miles distant, and when we heard of slave-hunters having passed on one road, we forwarded our passengers by another.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.160

In some instances where we learned that the pursuers were ahead of them, we sent a messenger and had the fugitives brought back to my house to remain in concealment until the bloodhounds in human shape had lost the trail and given up the pursuit.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.160–p.161–p.162

I soon became extensively known to the friends of the slaves, at different points on the Ohio River, where fugitives generally crossed, and to those northward of us on the various routes leading to Canada. Depots were established on the different lines of the Underground Railroad, south and north of Newport, and a perfect understanding was maintained between those who kept them. Three principal lines from the South converged at my house; one from Cincinnati, one from Madison, and one from Jeffersonville, Indiana. The roads were always in running order, the connections were good, the conductors active and zealous, and there was no lack of passengers. Seldom a week passed without our receiving passengers by this mysterious road. We found it necessary to be always prepared to receive such company and properly care for them. We knew not what night or what hour of the night we would be roused from slumber by a gentle rap at the door. That was the signal announcing the arrival of a train of the Underground Railroad, for the locomotive did not whistle, nor make any unnecessary noise. I have often been awakened by this signal, and sprang out of bed in the dark and opened the door. Outside in the cold or rain, there would be a two-horse wagon loaded with fugitives, perhaps the greater part of them women and children. I would invite them, in a low tone, to come in, and they would follow me into the darkened house without a word, for we knew not who might be watching and listening. When they were all safely inside and the door fastened, I would cover the windows, strike a light and build a good fire. By this time my wife would be up and preparing victuals for them, and in a short time the cold and hungry fugitive's would be made comfortable. I would accompany the conductor of the train to the stable, and care for the horses, that had, perhaps, been driven twenty-five or thirty miles that night, through the cold and rain, The fugitives would rest on pallets before the fire the rest of the night. Frequently, wagon-loads of passengers from the different lines have met at our house, having no previous knowledge of each other. The companies varied in number, from two or three fugitives to seventeen.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.162

The care of so many necessitated much work and anxiety on our part, but we assumed the burden of our own will and bore it cheerfully. It was never too cold or stormy, or the hour of night too late for my wife to rise from sleep, and provide food and comfortable lodging for the fugitives. Her sympathy for those in distress never tired, and her efforts in their behalf never abated. This work was kept up during the time we lived at Newport, a period of more than twenty years. The number of fugitives varied considerably in different years, but the annual average was more than one hundred. They generally came to us destitute of clothing, and were often barefooted. Clothing must be collected and kept on hand, if possible, and money must be raised to buy shoes, and purchase goods to make garments for women and children. The young ladies in the neighborhood organized a sewing society, and met at our house frequently, to make clothes for the fugitives.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.162–p.163

Sometimes when the fugitives came to us destitute, we kept them several days, until they could be provided with comfortable clothes. This depended on the circumstances of danger. If they had come a long distance and had been out several weeks or months—as was sometimes the case—and it was not probable that hunters were on their track, we thought it safe for them to remain with us until fitted for traveling through the thinly settled country to the North. Sometimes fugitives have come to our house in rags, foot-sore and toil-worn, and almost wild, having been out for several months traveling at night, hiding in canebrakes or thickets during the day, often being lost and making little headway at night, particularly in cloudy weather, when the north star could not be seen, sometimes almost perishing for want of food, and afraid of every white person they saw, even after they came into a free State, knowing that slaves were often captured and taken back after crossing the Ohio River.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.163–p.164

Such as these we have kept until they were recruited in strength, provided with clothes, and able to travel. When they first came to us they were generally unwilling to tell their stories, or let us know what part of the South they came from. They would not give their names, or the names of their masters, correctly, fearing that they would be betrayed. In several instances fugitives came to our house sick from exhaustion and exposure, and lay several weeks. One case was that of a woman and her two children—little girls. Hearing that her children were to be sold away from her, she determined to take them with her and attempt to reach Canada. She had heard that Canada was a place where all were free, and that by traveling toward the north star she could reach it. She managed to get over the Ohio River with her two little girls, and then commenced her long and toilsome journey northward. Fearing to travel on the road, even at night, lest she should meet somebody, she made her way through the woods and across fields, living on fruits and green corn, when she could procure them, and sometimes suffering severely for lack of food. Thus she wandered on, and at last reached our neighborhood. Seeing a cabin where some colored people lived she made her way to it. The people received her kindly, and at once conducted her to our house. She was so exhausted by the hardships of her long journey, and so weakened by hunger, having denied herself to feed her children, that she soon became quite sick. Her children were very tired, but soon recovered their strength, and were in good health. They had no shoes nor clothing except what they had on, and that was in tatters. Dr. Henry H. Way was called in, and faithfully attended the sick woman, until her health was restored. Then the little party were provided with good clothing and other comforts, and were sent on their way to Canada.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.164

Dr. Way was a warm friend to the fugitive slaves, and a hearty co-worker with me in anti-slavery matters. The number of those who were friendly to the fugitives increased in our neighborhood as time passed on. Many were willing to aid in clothing them and helping them on their way, and a few were willing to aid in secreting them, but the depot seemed to be established at my house….

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.165

The fugitives generally arrived in the night, and were secreted among the friendly colored people or hidden in the upper room of our house. They came alone or in companies, and in a few instances had a white guide to direct them.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.165

One company of twenty-eight that crossed the Ohio River at Lawrenceburg, Indiana—twenty miles below Cincinnati—had for conductor a white man whom they had employed to assist them. The company of twenty-eight slaves referred to, all lived in the same neighborhood in Kentucky, and had been planning for some time how they could make their escape from slavery. This white man—John Fairfield—had been in the neighborhood for some weeks buying poultry, etc., for market, and though among the whites he assumed to be very pro-slavery, the negroes soon found that he was their friend.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.165–p.166

He was engaged by the slaves to help them across the Ohio River, and conduct them to Cincinnati. They paid him some money which they had managed to accumulate. The amount was small, considering the risk the conductor assumed, but it was all they had. Several of the men had their wives with them, and one woman a little child with her, a few months old. John Fairfield conducted the party to the Ohio River, opposite the mouth of the Big Miami, where he knew there were several skiffs tied to the bank, near a woodyard. The entire party crowded into three large skiffs or yawls, and made their way slowly across the river. The boats were overloaded and sank so deep that the passage was made in much peril. The boat John Fairfield was in was leaky, and began to sink when a few rods from the Ohio bank, and he sprang out On the sand-bar, where the water was two or three feet deep, and tried to drag the boat to the shore. He sank to his waist in mud and quick-sands, and had to be pulled out by some of the negroes. The entire party waded out through mud and water and reached the shore safely, though all were wet, and several lost their shoes. They hastened along the bank toward Cincinnati, but it was now late in the night and daylight appeared before they reached the city.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.166–p.167

Their plight was a most pitiable one. They were cold, hungry and exhausted; those who had lost their shoes in the mud suffered from bruised and lacerated feet, while to add to their discomfort a drizzling rain fell during the latter part of the night. They could not enter the city, for their appearance would at once proclaim them to be fugitives. When they reached the outskirts Of the city, below Mill Creek, John Fairfield hid them as well as he could, in ravines that had been washed in the sides of the steep hills, and told them not to move until he returned. He then went directly to John Hatfield, a worthy colored man, a deacon in the Zion Baptist church, and told his story. He had applied to Hatfield before, and knew him to be a great friend to the fugitives—one who had often sheltered them under his roof and aided them in every way be could. When he arrived, wet and muddy, at John Hatfield's house, he was scarcely recognized. He soon made himself and his errand known, and Hatfield at once sent a messenger to me, requesting me to come to his house without delay, as there were fugitives in danger. I went at once and met several prominent colored men who had also been summoned. While dry clothes and a warm breakfast were furnished to John Fairfield, we anxiously discussed the situation of the twenty-eight fugitives who were lying hungry and shivering, in the hills in sight of the city.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.167

Several plans were suggested, but none seemed practicable. At last I suggested that some one should go immediately to a certain German livery stable in the city and hire two coaches, and that several colored men should go out in buggies and take the women and children from their hiding-places, then that the coaches and buggies should form a procession as if going to a funeral, and march solemnly along the road leading to Cumminsville, on the west side of the Mill Creek. In the western part of Cumminsville was the Methodist Episcopal burying-ground where a certain lot of ground had been set apart for the use of the colored people. They should pass this and continue on the Colerain pike till they reached a right-hand road leading to College Hill. At the latter place they would find a few colored families, living in the outskirts of the village, and could take refuge among them. Jonathan Cable, a Presbyterian minister, who lived near Farmer's College, on the west side of the village, was a prominent Abolitionist, and I knew that he would give prompt assistance to the fugitives.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.168

I advised that one of the buggies should leave the procession at Cumminsville, after passing the burying ground, and hasten to College Hill to apprise friend Cable of the coming of the fugitives, that he might make arrangements for their reception in suitable places. My suggestions and advice were agreed to, and acted upon as quickly as possible.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.168–p.169

While the carriages and buggies were being procured, John Hatfield's wife and daughter, and other colored women of the neighborhood, busied themselves in preparing provisions to be sent to the fugitives. A large stone jug was filled with hot coffee, and this, together with a supply of bread and other provisions, was placed in a buggy and sent on ahead of the carriages, that the hungry fugitives might receive some nourishment before starting. The conductor of the party, accompanied by John Hatfield, went in the buggy, in order to apprise the fugitives of the arrangements that had been made, and have them in readiness to approach the road as soon as the carriages arrived. Several blankets were provided to wrap around the women and children, whom we knew must be chilled by their exposure to the rain and cold. The fugitives were very glad to get the supply of food; the hot coffee especially was a great treat to them, and much revived them. About the time they finished their breakfast the carriages and buggies drove up and halted in the road, and the fugitives were quickly conducted to them and placed inside. The women in the tight carriages wrapped themselves in the blankets, and the woman who had a young babe muffled it closely to keep it warm, and to prevent its cries from being heard. The little thing seemed to be suffering much pain, having been exposed so long to the rain and cold.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.169

All the arrangements were carried out, and the party reached College Hill in safety, and were kindly received and cared for.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.169

When it was known by some of the prominent ladies of the village that a large company of fugitives were in the neighborhood, they met together to prepare some clothing for them. Jonathan Cable ascertained the number and size of the shoes needed, and the clothes required to fit the fugitives for traveling, and came down in his carriage to my house, knowing that the Anti-Slavery Sewing Society had their depository there. I went with him to purchase the shoes that were needed and my wife selected all the clothing we had that was suitable for the occasion; the rest was furnished by the noble women of College Hill.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.169–p.170

I requested friend Cable to keep the fugitives as secluded as possible until a way could be provided for safely forwarding them on their way to Canada. Friend Cable was a stockholder in the Underground Railroad, and we consulted together about the best route, finally deciding on the line by way of Hamilton, West Elkton, Eaton, Paris, and Newport, Indiana. I wrote to one of my particular friends at West Elkton, informing him that I had some valuable stock on hand which I wished to forward to Newport, and requested him to send three two-horse wagons—covered—to College Hill, where the stock was resting, in charge of Jonathan Cable.

Coffin, Underground Railroad, America, Vol.7, p.170

The three wagons arrived promptly at the time mentioned, and a little after dark took in the party, together with another fugitive who had arrived the night before, and whom we added to the company. They went through to West Elkton safely that night, and the next night reached Newport, Indiana. With little delay they were forwarded on from station to station through Indiana and Michigan to Detroit, having fresh teams and conductors each night, and resting during the day. I had letters from different stations, as they progressed, giving accounts of the arrival and departure of the train, and I also heard of their safe arrival on the Canada shore.

Fugitive Slave Act

Title: Fugitive Slave Act

Author: U.S. Congress

Date: 1850

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.327-332

The Fugitive Slave Act was part of the group of measures known collectively as the "Compromise of 1850." By this compromise, the antislavery party gained the admission of California as a free state, and the prohibition of slave-trading in the District of Columbia. The slavery party, on the other hand, besides concessions with regard to Texas, gained this act, which, however, by its stringency did much to rouse abolitionist sentiment in the North.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.327

BE IT enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the persons who have been, or may hereafter be, appointed commissioners, in virtue of any act of Congress, by the Circuit Courts of the United States, and Who, in consequence of such appointment, are authorized to exercise the powers that any justice of the peace, or other magistrate of any of the United States, may exercise in respect to offenders for any crime or offense against the United States, by arresting, imprisoning, or bailing the same under and by the virtue of the thirty-third section of the act of the twenty-fourth of September seventeen hundred and eighty-nine, entitled "An Act to establish the judicial courts of the United States" shall be, and are hereby, authorized and required to exercise and discharge all the powers and duties conferred by this act.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.327

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That the Superior Court of each organized Territory of the United States shall have the same power to appoint commissioners to take acknowledgments of bail and affidavits, and to take depositions of witnesses in civil causes, which is now possessed by the Circuit Court of the United States; and all commissioners who shall hereafter be appointed for such purposes by the Superior Court of any organized Territory of the United States, shall possess all the powers, and exercise all the duties, conferred by law upon the commissioners appointed by the Circuit Courts of the United States for similar purposes, and shall moreover exercise and discharge all the powers and duties conferred by this act.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.328

SEC. 3. And be it further enacted, That the Circuit Courts of the United States shall from time to time enlarge the number of the commissioners, with a view to afford reasonable facilities to reclaim fugitives from labor, and to the prompt discharge of the duties imposed by this act.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.328

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, That the commissioners above named shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the judges of the Circuit and District Courts of the United States, in their respective circuits and districts within the several States, and the judges of the Superior Courts of the Territories, severally and collectively, in term-time and vacation; shall grant certificates to such claimants, upon satisfactory proof being made, with authority to ake and remove such fugitives from service or labor, under the restrictions herein contained, to the State or Territory from which such persons may have escaped or fled.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.328

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of all marshals and deputy marshals to obey and execute all warrants and precepts issued under the provisions of this act, when to them directed; and should any marshal or deputy marshal refuse to receive such warrant, or other process, when tendered, or to use all proper means diligently to execute the same, he shall, on conviction thereof, be fined in the sum of one thousand dollars, to the use of such claimant, on the motion of such claimant, by the Circuit or District Court for the district of such marshal; and after arrest of such fugitive, by such marshal or his deputy, or whilst at any time in his custody under the provisions of this act, should such fugitive escape, whether with or without the assent of such marshal or his deputy, such marshal shall be liable, on his official bond, to be prosecuted for the benefit of such claimant, for the full value of the service or labor of said fugitive in the State, Territory, or District whence he escaped: and the better to enable the said commissioners, when thus appointed, to execute their duties faithfully and efficiently, in conformity with the requirements of the Constitution of the United States and of this act, they are hereby authorized and empowered, within their counties respectively, to appoint, in writing under their hands, any one or more suitable persons, from time to time, to execute all such warrants and other process as may be issued by them in the lawful performance of their respective duties; with authority to such commissioners, or the persons to be appointed by them, to execute process as aforesaid, to summon and call to their aid the bystanders, or posse comitatus of the proper county, when necessary to ensure a faithful observance of the clause of the Constitution referred to, in conformity with the provisions of this act; and all good citizens are hereby commanded to aid and assist in the prompt and efficient execution of this law, whenever their services may be required, as aforesaid, for that purpose; and said warrants shall run, and be executed by said officers, any where in the State within which they are issued.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.329

SEC. 6. And be it further enacted, That when a person held to service or labor in any State or Territory of the United States, ha: heretofore or shall hereafter escape into another State or Territory of the United States, the person or persons to whom such service 01 labor may be due, or his, her, or their agent or attorney, duly authorized, by power of attorney, in writing, acknowledged and certified under the seal of some legal officer or court of the State or Territory in which the same may be executed, may pursue and reclaim such fugitive person, either by procuring a warrant from some one of the courts, judges, or commissioners aforesaid, of the proper circuit, district, or county, for the apprehension of such fugitive from service or labor, or by seizing and arresting such fugitive, where the same can be done without process, and by taking, or causing such person to be taken, forthwith before such court, judge, or commissioner, whose duty it shall be to hear and determine the case of such claimant in a summary manner; and upon satisfactory proof being made, by deposition or affidavit, in writing, to be taken and certified by such court, judge, or commissioner, or by other satisfactory testimony, duly taken and certified by some court, magistrate, justice of the peace, or other legal officer authorized to administer an oath and take depositions under the laws of the State or Territory from which such person owing service or labor may have escaped, with a certificate of such magistracy or other authority, as aforesaid, with the seal of the proper court or officer thereto attached, which seal shall be sufficient to establish the competency of the proof, and with proof, also by affidavit, of the identity of the person whose service or labor is claimed to be due as aforesaid, that the person so arrested does in fact owe service or labor to the person or persons claiming him or her, in the State or Territory from which such fugitive may have escaped as aforesaid, and that said person escaped, to make out and deliver to such claimant, his or her agent or attorney, a certificate setting forth the substantial facts as to the service or labor due from such fugitive to the claimant, and of his or her escape from the State or Territory in which he or she was arrested, with authority to such claimant, or his or her agent or attorney, to use such reasonable force and restraint as may be necessary, under the circumstances of the case, to take and remove such fugitive person back to the State or Territory whence he or she may have escaped as aforesaid. In no trial or hearing under this act shall the testimony of such alleged fugitive be admitted in evidence; and the certificates in this and the first [fourth] section mentioned, shall be conclusive of the right of the person or persons in whose favor granted, to remove such fugitive to the State or Territory from which he escaped, and shall prevent all molestation of such person or persons by any process issued by any court, judge, magistrate, or other person whomsoever.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.330

SEC. 7. And be it further enacted, That any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct, hinder, or prevent such claimant, his agent or attorney, or any person or persons lawfully assisting him, her, or them, from arresting such a fugitive from service or labor, either with or without process as aforesaid, or shall rescue, or attempt to rescue, such fugitive from service or labor, from the custody of such claimant, his or her agent or attorney, or other person or persons lawfully assisting as aforesaid, when so arrested, pursuant to the authority herein given and declared; or shall aid, abet, or assist such person so owing service or labor as aforesaid, directly or indirectly, to escape from such claimant, his agent or attorney, or other person or persons legally authorized as aforesaid; or shall harbor or conceal such fugitive, so as to prevent the discovery and arrest of such person, after notice or knowledge of the fact that such person was a fugitive from service or labor as aforesaid, shall, for either of said offences, be subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months, by indictment and conviction before the District Court of the United States for the district in which such offence may have been committed, or before the proper court of criminal jurisdiction, if committed within any one of the organized Territories of the United States; and shall moreover forfeit and pay, by way of civil damages to the party injured by such illegal conduct, the sum of one thousand dollars for each fugitive so lost as aforesaid, to be recovered by action of debt, in any of the District or Territorial Courts aforesaid, within whose jurisdiction the said offence may have been committed.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.331

Sec. 8. And be it further enacted, That the marshals, their deputies, and the clerks of the said District and Territorial Courts, shall be paid, for their services, the like fees as may be allowed for similar services in other cases; and where such services are rendered exclusively in the arrest, custody, and delivery of the fugitive to the claimant, his or her agent or attorney, or where such supposed fugitive may be discharged out of custody for the want of sufficient proof as aforesaid, then such fees are to be paid in whole by such claimant, his or her agent or attorney; and in all cases where the proceedings are before a commissioner, he shall be entitled to a fee of ten dollars in full for his services in each case, upon the delivery of the said certificate to the claimant, his agent or attorney; or a fee of five dollars in cases where the proof shall not, in the opinion of such commissioner, warrant such certificate and delivery, inclusive of all services incident to such arrest and examination, to be paid, in either case, by the claimant, his or her agent or attorney. The person or persons authorized to execute the process to be issued by such commissioner for the arrest and detention of fugitives from service or labor as aforesaid, shall also be entitled to a fee of five dollars each for each person he or they may arrest, and take before any commissioner as aforesaid, at the instance and request of such claimant, with such other fees as may be deemed reasonable by such commissioner for such other additional services as may be necessarily performed by him or them; such as attending at the examination, keeping the fugitive in custody, and providing him with food and lodging during his detention, and until the final determination of such commissioners; and, in general, for performing such other duties as may be required by such claimant, his or her attorney or agent, or commissioner in the premises, such fees to be made up in conformity with the fees usually charged by the officers of the courts of justice within the proper district or county, as near as may be practicable, and paid by such claimants, their agents or attorneys, whether such supposed fugitives from service or labor be ordered to be delivered to such claimant by the final determination of such commissioner or not.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.332

SEC. 9. And be it further enacted, That, upon affidavit made by the claimant of such fugitive, his agent or attorney, after such certificate has been issued, that he has reason to apprehend that such fugitive will be rescued by force from his or their possession before he can be taken beyond the limits of the State in which the arrest is made, it shall be the duty of the officer making the arrest to retain such fugitive in his custody, and to remove him to the State whence he fled, and there to deliver him to said claimant, his agent, or attorney. And to this end, the officer aforesaid is hereby authorized and required to employ so many persons as he may deem necessary to overcome such force, and to retain them in his service so long as circumstances may require. The said officer and his assistants, while so employed, to receive the same compensation, and to be allowed the same expenses, as are now allowed by law for transportation of criminals, to be certified by the judge of the district within which the arrest is made, and paid out of the treasury of the United States.

Fugitive Slave Act, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.332

SEC. 10. And be it further enacted, That when any person held to service or labor in any State or Territory, or in the District of Columbia, shall escape therefrom, the party to whom such service or labor shall be due, his, her, or their agent or attorney, may apply to any court of record therein, or judge thereof in vacation, and make satisfactory proof to such court, or judge in vacation, of the escape aforesaid, and that the person escaping owed service or labor to such party. Whereupon the court shall cause a record to be made of the matters so proved, and also a general description of the person so escaping, with such convenient certainty as may be; and a transcript of such record, authenticated by the attestation of the clerk and of the seal of the said court, being produced in any other State, Territory, or district in which the person so escaping may be found, and being exhibited to any judge, commissioner, or other officer authorized by the law of the United States to cause persons escaping from service or labor to be delivered up, shall be held and taken to be full and conclusive evidence of the fact of escape, and that the service or labor of the person escaping is due to the party in such record mentioned. And upon the production by the said party of other and further evidence if necessary, either oral or by affidavit, in addition to what is contained in the said record of the identity of the person escaping, he or she shall be delivered up to the claimant. And the said court, commissioner, judge, or other person authorized by this act to grant certificates to claimants or fugitives, shall, upon the production of the record and other evidences aforesaid, grant to such claimant a certificate of his right to take any such person identified and proved to be owing service or labor as aforesaid, which certificate shall authorize such claimant to seize or arrest and transport such person to the State or Territory from which he escaped: Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed as requiring the production of a transcript of such record as evidence as aforesaid. But in its absence the claim shall be heard and determined upon other satisfactory proofs, competent in law.

Approved, September 18, 1850

The Clay Compromise, Daniel Webster, 1850

The Clay Compromise (Webster)

Title: The Clay Compromise

Author: Daniel Webster

Date: 1850

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.64-75

Otherwise known as "The Seventh of March Speech." Delivered in the United States Senate in support of Clay's compromise resolutions. Abridged. Curtis, the biographer of Webster, admits that this speech met with general disfavor throughout the North. Schurz describes the antislavery men as contemplating "the fall of an archangel." Webster was called "a recreant son of Massachusetts," "a fallen star," and "a bankrupt politician gambling for the presidency," while Whittier in one of his poems wrote:

"All else is gone; from those great eyes

 The soul has fled;

When faith is lost, when honor dies,

 The man is dead.

"Then pay the reverence of old days

 To his dead fame;

Walk backward with averted gaze

 And hid his shame."

The calmer judgment of alter times has dealt more favorably with Webster's speech. It has even been held that owing to its influence the war was postponed for ten years, the North thus gaining time to increase its resources. Blaine has pointed out that in 1861 a recession from the antislavery position of an earlier period had become with Republicans "part of the conciliatory policy of the hour," and that they, as led by Seward, "took precisely the same ground held by Mr. Webster in 1850, and acted from precisely the same motives that inspired 'The Seventh of March Speech.'"

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.64

SLAVERY did exist in the States before the adoption of this Constitution, and at that time. Let us, therefore, consider for a moment what was the state of sentiment, North and South, in regard to slavery—in regard to slavery, at the time this Constitution was adopted. A remarkable change has taken place since; but what did the wise and great men of all parts of the country think of slavery then? In what estimattion did they hold it at the time when this Constitution was adopted? It will be found, sir, if we will carry ourselves by historical research back to that day, and ascertain men's opinions by authentic records still existing among us, that there was no diversity of opinion between the North and the South upon the subject of slavery. It will be found that both parts of the country held it equally an evil, a moral and political evil. It will not be found that, either at the North or at the South, there was much, tho there was some, invective against slavery as inhuman and cruel.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.65

The great ground of objection to it was political; that it weakened the social fabric; that, taking the place of free labor, society became less strong and labor less productive; and therefore we find from all the eminent men of the time the clearest expression of their opinion that slavery is an evil. They ascribed its existence here, not without truth, and not without some acerbity of temper and force of language, to the injurious policy of the mother country, who, to favor the navigator, had entailed these evils upon the Colonies.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.65

The whole interest of the South became connected, more or less, with the extension of slavery. If we look back to the history of the commerce of this country in the early years of this government, what were our exports? Cotton was hardly, or but to a very limited extent, known. In 1791 the first parcel of cotton of the growth of the United States was exported, and amounted only to 19,200 pounds. It has gone on increasing rapidly, until the whole crop may now, perhaps, in a season of great product and high prices, amount to a hundred millions of dollars. In the years I have mentioned, there was more of almost every article of export from the South, than of cotton. When Mr. Jay negotiated the treaty of 1794 with England, it is evident from the Twelfth Article of the Treaty, which was suspended by the Senate, that he did not know that cotton was exported at all from the United States.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.66

Mr. President, in the excited times in which we live, there is found to exist a state of crimination and recrimination between the North and South. There are lists of grievances produced by each; and those grievances, real or supposed, alienate the minds of one portion of the country from the other, exasperate the feelings, and subdue the sense of fraternal affection, patriotic love, and mutual regard. I shall bestow a little attention, sir, upon these various grievances existing on the one side and on the other. I begin with complaints of the South. I will not answer, further than I have, the general statements of the honorable senator from South Carolina, that the North has prospered at the expense of the South in consequence of the manner of administering this government, in the collection of its revenues, and so forth. These are disputed topics, and I have no inclination to enter into them.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.67

But I will allude to other complaints of the South, and especially to one which has, in my opinion, just foundation; and that is, that there has been found at the North, among individuals and among legislators, a disinclination to perform fully their constitutional duties in regard to the return of persons bound to service who have escaped into the free States. In that respect, the South, in my judgment, is right, and the North is wrong. Every member of every Northern Legislature is bound by oath, like every other officer in the country, to support the Constitution of the United States; and the article of the Constitution which says to these States that they shall deliver up fugitives from service, is as binding in honor and conscience as any other article. No man fulfils his duty in any Legislature who sets himself to find excuses, evasions, escapes from this constitutional obligation. I have always thought that the Constitution addressed itself to the Legislatures of the States or to the States themselves. It says that those persons escaping to other States "shall be delivered up," and I confess I have always been of the opinion that it was an injunction upon the States themselves. When it is said that a person escaping into another State, and coming therefore within the jurisdiction of that State, shall be delivered up, it seems to me the import of the clause is, that the State itself, in obedience to the Constitution, shall cause him to be delivered up. That is my judgment. I have always entertained that opinion, and I entertain it now.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.68

Then, sir, there are the abolition societies, of which I am unwilling to speak, but in regard to which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations for the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable. At the same time, I believe thousands of their members to be honest and good men, perfectly well-meaning men. They have excited feelings; they think they must do something for the cause of liberty; and, in their sphere of action, they do not see what else they can do than to contribute to an abolition press, or an abolition society, or to pay an abolition lecturer.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.68

I do not mean to impute gross motives even to the leaders of these societies, but I am not blind to the consequences of their proceedings. I can not but see what mischief their interference with the South has produced. And is it not plain to every man? Let any gentleman who entertains doubts on this point, recur to the debates in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1832, and he will see with what freedom a proposition made by Mr. Jefferson Randolph, for the gradual abolition of slavery was discussed in that body. Every one spoke of slavery as he thought; very ignominious and disparaging names and epithets were applied to it. The debates in the House of Delegates on that occasion, I believe were all published. They were read by every colored man who could read, and to those who could not read, those debates were read by others. At that time Virginia was not unwilling or afraid to discuss this question, and to let that part of her population know as much of the discussion as they could learn.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.69

That was in 1832. As has been said by the honorable member from South Carolina, these abolition societies commenced their course of action in 1835. It is said, I do not know how true it may be, that they sent incendiary publications into the slave States; at any rate, they attempted to arouse, and did arouse, a very strong feeling; in other words, they created great agitation in the North against Southern slavery. Well, what was the result? The bonds of the slaves were bound more firmly than before; their rivets were more strongly fastened. Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be exhibited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion of the question, drew back and shut itself up in its castle. I wish to know whether anybody in Virginia can now talk openly, as Mr. Randolph, Governor McDowel, and others talked in 1832, and sent their remarks to the Press? We all know the fact, and we all know the cause; and everything that these agitating people have done has been, not to enlarge, but to restrain, not to set free, but to bind faster, the slave population of the South.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.70

Mr. President, I should much prefer to have heard from every member on this floor declarations of opinion that this Union could never be dissolved, than the declaration of opinion by anybody, that in any case, under the pressure of any circumstances, such a dissolution was possible. I hear with distress and anguish the word "secession," especially when it falls from the lips of those who are patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world for their political services. Secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country without convulsion! The breaking up of the fountains of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish—I beg everybody's pardon—as to expect to see any such thing?

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.70

Sir, he who sees these States now revolving in harmony around a common center, and expects to see them quit their places and fly off without convulsion, may look the next hour to see the heavenly bodies rush from their spheres, and jostle against each other in the realms of space, without causing the crush of the universe. There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live, covering this whole country, is it to be thawed and melted away by secession, as the snows on the mountain melt under the influence of a vernal sun, disappear almost unobserved, and run off? No, sir! No, sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the Union; but, sir, I see, as plainly as I see the sun in heaven, what the disruption itself must produce; i see that it must produce war, and such a war as I will not describe, in its twofold character.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.71

Peaceable secession!—peaceable secession! The concurrent agreement of all the members of this great Republic to separate! A voluntary separation, with alimony on one side and on the other. Why, what would be the result? Where is the line to be drawn? What States are to secede? What is to remain American? What am I to be? An American no longer? Am I to become a sectional man, a local man, a separatist, with no country in common with the gentlemen who sit around me here, or who fill the other House of Congress? Heaven forbid! Where is the flag of the Republic to remain? Where is the eagle still to tower?—or is he to cower, and shrink, and fall to the ground?

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.71

Why, sir, our ancestors—our fathers and our grandfathers, those of them that are yet living among us, with prolonged lives—would rebuke and reproach us; and our children and our grandchildren would cry out shame upon us, if we, of this generation, should dishonor these ensigns of the power of the government and the harmony of that Union, which is every day felt among us with so much joy and gratitude. What is to become of the army? What is to become of the navy? What is to become of the public lands? How is any one of the thirty States to defend itself?

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.72

Sir, we could not sit down here to-day, and draw a line of separation that would satisfy any five men in the country. There are natural causes that wound keep and tie us together; and there are social and domestic relations which we could not break if we would, and which we should not if we could.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.72

Sir, nobody can look over the face of this country at the present moment, nobody can see where its population is the most dense and growing, without being ready to admit, and compelled to admit, that ere long the strength of America will be in the valley of the Mississippi. Well, now, sir, I beg to inquire what the wildest enthusiast has to say on the possibility of cutting that river in two, and leaving free States at its source and on its branches, and slave States down near its mouth, each forming a separate government? Pray, sir, let me say to the people of this country, that these things are worthy of their pondering and of their consideration. Here, sir, are five millions of freemen in the free States north of the river Ohio.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.73

Can anybody suppose that this population can be severed, by a line that divides them from the territory of a foreign and alien government, down somewhere, the Lord knows where, upon the lower banks of the Mississippi? What would become of Missouri? Will she join the arrondissement of the slave States? Shall the man from the Yellowstone and the Platte be connected, in the new Republic, with the man who lives on the southern extremity of the Cape of Florida? Sir, I am ashamed to pursue this line of remark. I dislike it; I have an utter disgust for it. I would rather hear of natural blasts and mildews, war, pestilence, and famine, than to hear gentlemen talk of secession. To break up this country! to astonish Europe with an act of folly such as Europe for two centuries has never beheld in any government or any people! No, sir! no, sir! There will be no secession! Gentlemen are not serious when they talk of secession.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.73

And now, Mr. President, instead of speaking of the possibility or utility of secession, instead of dwelling in these caverns of darkness, instead of groping with those ideas so full of all that is horrid and horrible, let us come out into the light of day; let us enjoy the fresh air of liberty and union; let us cherish those hopes which belong to us; let us devote ourselves to those great objects that are fit for our consideration and our action; let us raise our conceptions to the magnitude and the importance of the duties that devolve upon us; let our comprehension be as broad as the country for which we act, our aspirations as high as its certain destiny; let us not be pigmies in a case that calls for men. Never did there devolve on any generation of men higher trusts than now devolve upon us, for the preservation of this Constitution, and the harmony and peace of all who are destined to live under it. Let us make our generation one of the strongest and brightest links in that golden chain, which is destined, I fondly believe, to grapple the people of all the States to this Constitution for ages to come.

Webster, Clay Compromise, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.74

We have a great, popular, constitutional government, guarded by law and by judicature, and defended by the whole affections of the people. No monarchical throne presses these States together; no iron chain of military power encircles them; they live and stand upon a government popular in its form, representative in its character, founded upon principles of equality, and so constructed, we hope, as to last for ever. In all its history it has been beneficent; it has trodden down no man's liberty; it has crushed no State. Its daily respiration is liberty and patriotism; its yet youthful veins are full of enterprise, courage, and honorable love of glory and renown. Large before, the country has now, by recent events, become vastly larger. This Republic now extends, with a vast breadth, across the whole continent. The two great seas of the world wash the one and the other shore. We realize, on a mighty scale, the beautiful description of the ornamental edging of the buckler of Achilles,—

Now the broad shield complete, the artist crowned

With his last hand, and poured the ocean round:

In living silver seemed the waves to roll,

And beat the buckler's verge, and bound the whole.

The South and the Public Domain, Alexander H. Stephens, 1850

The South and the Public Domain

Title: The South and the Public Domain

Author: Alexander H. Stephens

Date: 1850

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.137-143

From a speech in the House of Representatives, August 6, 1850.

Born in 1812, died in 1883; elected to Congress in 1843-59; opposed Secession in 1860; Vice-President of the Confederacy in 1861-65; imprisoned in Boston Harbor from May to October, 1865; elected United States Senator in 1866, but not seated; Member of Congress in 1873-82; elected Governor of Georgia in 1883.

Stephens, The South and the Public Domain, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.137

A PUBLIC domain has been acquired by the common blood and common treasure of all, and the South, which is charged with endeavoring to control the government for its purposes, asks nothing but that the common territory which is the public property may be opened to the entry and settlement and equal enjoyment of all the citizens of every part of the Republic, all the citizens of every part of the Republic, with their property of every description; while it is the North which comes here and demands that the whole of this common domain shall be set apart exclusively for itself, or for itself and such persons from the South as will strip themselves of a certain species of their property, and conform their views to the policy of the North. I submit it to every candid man in this House, and to every intelligent and candid man in the world, outside of the House, if this is not a fair statement of the question. The South asks no discrimination in her favor. It is the North that is seeking to obtain discriminations against her and her people. And who leads in this endeavor to control the action of the government for sectional objects? It is the gentleman himself who brings this charge against the South. Sir, I deny the charge, and repel it. And I tell that gentleman and the House if these agitations are not to cease until the South shall quietly and silently yield to these demands of the North, it is useless to talk of any amicable settlement of the matters in controversy. If that is the basis you propose, we need say nothing further about agreement or adjustment—upon those terms we can never settle. The people of the South have as much right to occupy, enjoy, and colonize these Territories with their property as the people of the North have with theirs. This is the basis upon which I stand, and the principles upon which its rests are as immutable as right and justice. They are the principles of natural law, founded in natural justice, as recognized by the ablest publicists who have written upon the laws of nations and the rights pertaining to conquests. These acquisitions belong to the whole people of the United States, as conquerors. They hold them under the Constitution and the general government as common property in a corporate capacity.

Stephens, The South and the Public Domain, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.138

Under our Constitution the power of making regulations for the enjoyment of the common domain devolves upon Congress—the common agent of all the parties interested in it. In the execution of this trust it is the duty of Congress to pass all laws for an equal and just participation in it. And far from this common agent having any right to exclude a portion of the people, or "to make distinctions to their disadvantage," it is the duty of Congress to open the country by the removal of all obstructions, whether they be existing laws or anything else, and to give equal protection to all who may avail themselves of the right to use it. But you men of the North say that we of the South wish to carry our slaves there, and that the free labor of the North can not submit to the degradation of being associated with slave labor. Well, then we say, as the patriarch of old said to his friend and kinsman, when disputes arose between the herdsmen of their cattle: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, form me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." In other words, we say, if you can not agree to enjoy this public domain in common, let us divide it. You take a share, and let us take a share. And I again submit to an intelligent and candid world if the proposition is not fair and just?—and whether its rejection does not amount to a clear expression of your fixed determination to exclude us entirely from any participation in this public domain?

Stephens, The South and the Public Domain, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.140

Now, sir, all that we ask, or all that I ask, is for Congress to open the entire country, and give an equal right to all the citizens of all the States to enter, settle and colonize it with their property of every kind; or to make an equitable division of it. Is this wrong? Is it endeavoring to control the action of Congress improperly to carry out sectional views and interests? And am I to subject myself to the intended reproach of being an ultraist for insisting upon nothing but what is just and right? If so, I am willing to bear whatever of reproach the epithet may impart. If a man be an ultraist for insisting upon nothing but his rights, with a willingness to compromise even these upon any fair and reasonable terms, without a total abandonment, then I am an ultraist. And I am mistaken in the character of that people among whom I was born and with whom I have been reared, if a large majority of them, when all their propositions for adjustment and compromise shall have been rejected, will not be ultraists, too. Be not deceived and do not deceive others—this Union can never be maintained by force. With the confidence and affections of the people of all sections of the country, it is capable of being the strongest and best government on earth. But it can never be maintained upon any other principles than those upon which it was formed. All free governments are the creatures of volition—a breath can make them and a breath can destroy them. This government is no exception to the rule. And when once its spirit shall have departed, no power on earth can ever again infuse in it the Promethean spark of life and vitality. You might just as well attempt to raise the dead.

Stephens, The South and the Public Domain, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.141

Mr. Chairman, when I look to the causes which lie at the bottom of these differences of opinion between the North and the South, and out of which this agitation springs; when I look at their character, extent, and radical nature—entering, as they necessarily do, into the very organization of society with us, I must confess that unpleasant apprehensions for the future permanent peace and quiet of the different States of this Union force themselves upon my mind. I am not, however, disposed to anticipate evil by indulging those apprehensions unless compelled to do so. It may be that we have the seeds of dissolution in our system which no skill can eradicate, just as we carry with us in our bodies the seeds of death which will certainly do their work at the allotted time. But because we are all conscious that we must die, it does not follow that we should hasten the event by an act of suicide. We have the business, duties, and obligations of life to discharge. So with this government. Because I may have serious apprehensions of the workings of causes known to exist, I do not conceive it therefore to be in the line of duty to anticipate the natural effects of those causes by any rash or unjustifiable act. I am disposed rather to hope for the best, while I feel bound to be prepared for the worst. What is really to be the future fate and destiny of this Republic is a matter of interesting speculation; but I am well satisfied that it can not last long, even if the present differences be adjusted, unless these violent and bitter sectional feelings of the North be kept out of the national halls. This is a conclusion that all must come to, who know anything of the lessons of history. But our business to-day is with the present, and not the future; and I would now invoke every member of this House who hears me, with the same frankness, earnestness, and singleness of purpose with which I have addressed them throughout these remarks, to come up like men and patriots, and relieve the country from the dangerous embarrassments by which it is at this time surrounded. It is a duty we owe to ourselves, to the millions we represent, and to the whole civilized world. To do this, I tell you again, there must be concessions by the North as well as the South. Are you not prepared to make them? Are feelings too narrow and restricted to embrace the whole country and to deal justly by all its parts? Have you formed a fixed, firm, and inflexible determination to carry your measures in this House by numerical strength, and then to enforce them by the bayonet? If so, you may be prepared to meet the consequences of whatever follows. The responsibility will rest upon your own heads. You may think that the suppression of an outbreak in the Southern States would be a holiday job for a few of your Northern regiments, but you may find to your cost, in the end, that seven millions of people fighting for their rights, their homes, and their hearthstones, can not be "easily conquered." I submit the matter to your deliberate consideration.

Stephens, The South and the Public Domain, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.143

I have told you, sincerely and honestly, that I am for peace and the Union upon any fair and reasonable terms—it is the most cherished sentiment of my heart. But if you deny these terms—if you continue "deaf to the voice" of that spirit of justice, right, and equality, which should always characterize the deliberations of statesmen, I know of no other alternative that will be left to the people of the South, but, sooner or later, "to acquiesce in the necessity" of "holding you, as the rest of mankind, enemies in war—in peace, friends."

The Clay Compromise Measures, Calhoun, 1850

The Clay Compromise Measures

Title: The Clay Compromise Measures

Author: Calhoun

Date: 1850

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.108-122

This is perhaps the most famous of Calhoun's speeches. Being too ill to deliver it himself, he had carefully written it out, and on March 4, 1850, it was read by another senator, Calhoun being present. Calhoun died on March 31 of this year. Von Holst, Calhoun's biographer, writing of the scene in the Senate when the speech was delivered, says: "The galleries were hushed into the deepest silence by the extraordinary scene which had something of the impressive solemnity of a funeral ceremony." Mr. Schouler describes how Calhoun "listened to the delivery like some disembodied spirit, reviewing the deeds of the flesh." "It was a strangely haunting spectacle," he adds. "The author turned half round and listened as tho all were new to him, moving not a muscle of his face, but keeping his immovable posture—pale, skinny, and emaciated that he was—his eyes partially closed, until the last words were uttered and the spell was broken." When the Senate adjourned, Von Holst says Calhoun, "supported on the shoulders of two of his friends, tottered out of the Senate-chamber." Abridged.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.108

I HAVE, senators, believed from the first that the agitation of the subject of slavery would, if not prevented by some timely and effective measure, end in disunion. Entertaining this opinion, I have, on all proper occasions, endeavored to call the attention of both the two great parties which divided the country to adopt some measure to prevent so great a disaster, but without success. The agitation has been permitted to proceed with almost no attempt to resist it, until it has reached a point when it can no longer be disguised or denied that the Union is in danger. You have thus had forced upon you the greatest and gravest question that can ever come under your consideration: How can the Union be preserved?

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.109

To give a satisfactory answer to this mighty question, it is indispensable to have an accurate and thorough knowledge of the nature and the character of the cause by which the Union is endangered. Without such knowledge it is impossible to pronounce with any certainty, by what measure it can be saved; just as it would be impossible for a physician to pronounce in the case of some dangerous disease, with any certainty, by what remedy the patient could be saved, without similar knowledge of the nature and character of the cause which produce it. The first question, then, presented for consideration in the investigation I propose to make in order to obtain such knowledge is: What is it that has endangered the Union?

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.109

To this question there can be but one answer,—that the immediate cause is the almost universal discontent which pervades all the States composing the Southern section of the Union. This widely extended discontent is not of recent origin. It commenced with the agitation of the slavery question and has been increasing ever since. The next question, going one step further back, is: What has caused this widely diffused and almost universal discontent?

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.110

It is a great mistake to suppose, as is by some, that it originated with demagogs who excited the discontent with the intention of aiding their personal advancement, or with the disappointed ambition of certain politicians who resorted to it as the means of retrieving their fortunes. On the contrary, all the great political influences of the section were arrayed against excitement, and exerted to the utmost to keep the people quiet. The great mass of the people of the South were divided, as in the other section, into Whigs and Democrats. The leaders and the presses of both parties in the South were very solicitous to prevent excitement and to preserve quiet; because it was seen that the effects of the former would necessarily tend to weaken, if not destroy, the political ties which united them with their respective parties in the other section.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.110

Those who know the strength of party ties will readily appreciate the immense force which this cause exerted against agitation and in favor of preserving quiet. But, great as it was, it was not sufficient to prevent the widespread discontent which now pervades the section.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.111

No; some cause far deeper and more powerful than the one supposed must exist, to account for discontent so wide and deep. The question then recurs: What is the cause of this discontent? It will be found in the belief of the people of the Southern States, as prevalent as the discontent itself, that they can not remain, as things now are, consistently with honor and safety, in the Union. The next question to be considered is: What has caused this belief?

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.111

One of the causes is, undoubtedly, to be traced to the long-continued agitation of the slave question on the part of the North, and the many aggressions which they have made on the rights of the South during the time. I will not enumerate them at present, as it will be done hereafter in its proper place.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.111

There is another lying back of it—with which this is intimately connected—that may be regarded as the great and primary cause. This is to be found in the fact that the equilibrium between the two sections in the government as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the government put in action has been destroyed. At that time there was nearly a perfect equilibrium between the two, which afforded ample means to each to protect itself against the aggression of the other; but, as it now stands, one section has the exclusive power of controlling the government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.112

The result of the whole is to give the Northern section a predominance in every department of the government, and thereby concentrate in it the two elements which constitute the federal government: a majority of States, and a majority of their population, estimated in federal numbers. Whatever section concentrates the two in itself possesses the control of the entire government.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.112

But we are just at the close of the sixth decade and the commencement of the seventh. The census is to be taken this year, which must add greatly to the decided preponderance of the North in the House of Representatives and in the Electoral College. The prospect is, also, that a great increase will be added to its present preponderance in the Senate, during the period of the decade, by the addition of new States. Two Territories, Oregon and Minnesota, are already in progress, and strenuous efforts are making to bring in three additional States from the Territory recently conquered from Mexico; which, if successful, will add three other States in a short time to the Northern section, making five States, and increasing the present number of its States from fifteen to twenty, and of its senators from thirty to forty.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.112

On the contrary, there is not a single Territory in progress in the Southern section, and no certainty that any additional State will be added to it during the decade. The prospect then is, that the two sections in the Senate, should the efforts now made to exclude the South from the newly acquired Territories succeed, will stand, before the end of the decade, twenty Northern States to fourteen Southern (considering Delaware as neutral), and forty Northern senators to twenty-eight Southern. This great increase of senators, added to the great increase of members of the House of Representatives and the Electoral College on the part of the North, which must take place under the next decade, will effectually and irretrievably destroy the equilibrium which existed when the government commenced.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.113

Had this destruction been the operation of time without the interference of government, the South would have had no reason to complain; but such was not the fact. It was caused by the legislation of this government, which was appointed as the common agent of all and charged with the protection of the interests and security of all.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.113

The legislation by which it has been effected may be classed under three heads: The first is that series of acts by which the South has been excluded from the common territory belonging to all the States as members of the federal Union—which have had the effect of extending vastly the portion allotted to the Northern section, and restricting within narrow limits the portion left the South. The next consists in adopting a system of revenue and disbursements by which an undue proportion of the burden of taxation has been imposed upon the South, and an undue proportion of its proceeds appropriated to the North. And the last is a system of political measures by which the original character of the government has been radically changed. I propose to bestow upon each of these, in the order they stand, a few remarks, with the view of showing that it is owing to the action of this government that the equilibrium between the two sections has been destroyed, and the whole powers of the system centered in a sectional majority.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.114

I have not included the territory recently acquired by the treaty with Mexico. The North is making the most strenuous efforts to appropriate the whole to herself, by excluding the South from every foot of it. If she should succeed, it will add to that from which the South has already been excluded 526,078 square miles, and would increase the whole which the North has appropriated to herself to 1,764,023, not including the portion that she may succeed in excluding us from in Texas. To sum up the whole, the United States, since they declared their independence, have acquired 2,373,046 square miles of territory, from which the North will have excluded the South, if she should succeed in monopolizing the newly-acquired Territories, about three-fourths of the whole, leaving to the South but about one-fourth. Such is the first and great cause that has destroyed the equilibrium between the two sections in the government.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.115

The next is the system of revenue and disbursements which has been adopted by the government. It is well known that the government has derived its revenue mainly from duties on imports. I shall not undertake to show that such duties must necessarily fall mainly on the exporting States, and that the South, as the great exporting portion of the Union, has in reality paid vastly more than her due proportion of the revenue; because I deem it unnecessary, as the subject has on so many occasions been fully discussed. Nor shall I, for the same reason, undertake to show that a far greater portion of the revenue has been disbursed in the North, than its due share; and that the joint effect of these causes has been to transfer a vast amount from South to North, which, under an equal system of revenue and disbursements, would not have been lost to her. If to this be added that many of the duties were imposed, not for revenue but for protection—that is, intended to put money, not in the Treasury, but directly into the pocket of the manufacturers—some conception may be formed of the immense amount which in the long course of sixty years has been transferred from South to North. There are no data by which it can be estimated with any certainty; but it is safe to say that it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars. Under the most moderate estimate it would be sufficient to add greatly to the wealthy of the North, and thus greatly increase her population by attracting immigration from all quarters to that section.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.116

This, combined with the great primary cause, amply explains why the North has acquired a preponderance in every department of the government by its disproportionate increase of population and States. The former, as has been shown, has increased, in fifty years, 2,400,000 over that of the South. This increase of population during so long a period is satisfactorily accounted for by the number of immigrants, and the increase of their descendants, which have been attracted to the Northern section from Europe and the South, in consequence of the advantages derived from the causes assigned. If they had not existed—if the South had retained all the capital which has been extracted from her by the fiscal action of the government; and if it had not been excluded by the Ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise, from the region lying between the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers, and between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains north of 36° 30'—it scarcely admits of a doubt that it would have divided the immigration with the North, and by retaining her own people would have at least equaled the North in population under the census of 1840, and probably under that about to be taken. She would also, if she had retained her equal rights in those territories, have maintained an equality in the number of States with the North, and have preserved the equilibrium between the two sections that existed at the commencement of the government. The loss, then, of the equilibrium is to be attributed to the action of this government.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.117

There is a question of vital importance to the Southern section, in reference to which the views and feelings of the two sections are as opposite and hostile as they can possibly be. I refer to the relation between the two races in the Southern section, which constitutes a vital portion of her social organization. Every portion of the North entertains views and feelings more or less hostile to it. Those most opposed and hostile regard it as a sin, and consider themselves under the most sacred obligation to use every effort to destroy it.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.117

Indeed, to the extent that they conceive that they have power, they regard themselves as implicated in the sin, and responsible for not suppressing it by the use of all and every means. Those less opposed and hostile regard it as a crime—an offense against humanity, as they call it and, altho not so fanatical, feel themselves bound to use all efforts to effect the same object; while those who are least opposed and hostile regard it as a blot and a stain on the character of what they call the "nation," and feel themselves accordingly bound to give it no countenance or support. On the contrary, the Southern section regards the relation as one which can not be destroyed without subjecting the two races to the greatest calamity, and the section to poverty, desolation, and wretchedness; and accordingly they feel bound by every consideration of interest and safety to defend it.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.118

Unless something decisive is done, I again ask, What is to stop this agitation before the great and final object at which it aims—the abolition of slavery in the States—is consummated? Is it, then, not certain that if something is not done to arrest it, the South will be forced to choose between abolition and secession? Indeed, as events are now moving, it will not require the South to secede in order to dissolve the Union. Agitation will of itself effect it, of which its past history furnishes abundant proof—as I shall next proceed to show.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.118

It is a great mistake to suppose that disunion can be effected by a single blow. The cords which bind these States together in one common Union are far too numerous and powerful for that. Disunion must be the work of time. It is only through a long process, and successively, that the cords can be snapped until the whole fabric falls asunder. Already the agitation of the slavery question has snapped some of the most important, and has greatly weakened all the others.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.118

If the agitation goes on, the same force, acting with increased intensity, as has been shown, will finally snap every cord, when nothing will be left to hold the States together except force. But surely that can with no propriety of language be called a Union when the only means by which the weaker is held connected with the stronger portion is force. It may, indeed, keep them connected; but the connection will partake much more of the character of subjugation on the part of the weaker to the stronger than the union of free, independent, and sovereign States in one confederation, as they stood in the early stages of the government, and which only is worthy of the sacred name of Union.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.119

Having now, senators, explained what it is that endangers the Union, and traced it to its cause, and explained its nature and character, the question again recurs, How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is by adopting such measures as will satisfy the States belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. There is, again, only one way by which this can be effected, and that is by removing the causes by which this belief has been produced. Do this, and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question, then, is, How can this be done? There is but one way by which it can with any certainty; and that is by a full and final settlement, on the principle of justice, of all the questions at issue between the two sections. The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution, and no concession or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, and remove all cause of discontent, by satisfying the South that she could remain honorably and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and for ever settle the question at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.120

But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can of itself do nothing—not even protect itself—but by the stronger. The North has only to will it to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled—to cease the agitation of the slave question, and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South, in substance, the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government. There will be no difficulty in devising such a provision—one that will protect the South, and which at the same time will improve and strengthen the government instead of impairing and weakening it.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.120

But will the North agree to this? It is for her to answer the question. But, I will say, she can not refuse if she has half the love of the Union which she professes to have, or without justly exposing herself to the charge that her love of power and aggrandizement is far greater than her love of the Union. At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union rests on the North, and not on the South. The South can not save it by any act of hers, and the North may save it without any sacrifice whatever, unless to do justice and to perform her duties under the Constitution should be regarded by her as a sacrifice.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.121

It is time, senators, that there should be an open and manly avowal on all sides as to what is intended to be done. If the question is not now settled, it is uncertain whether it ever can hereafter be; and we, as the representatives of the States of this Union regarded as governments, should come to a distinct understanding as to our respective views, in order to ascertain whether the great questions at issue can be settled or not. If you who represent the stronger portion, can not agree to settle them on the broad principle of justice and duty, say so; and let the States we both represent agree to separate and part in peace.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.121

If you are unwilling we should part in peace, tell us so; and we shall know what to do when you reduce the question to submission or resistance. If you remain silent, you will compel us to infer by your acts what you intend. In that case California will become the test question. If you admit her under all the difficulties that oppose her admission, you compel us to infer that you intend to exclude us from the whole of the acquired Territories, with the intention of destroying irretrievably the equilibrium between the two sections. We should be blind not to perceive in that case that your real objects are power and aggrandizement, and infatuated, not to act accordingly.

Calhoun, Clay Compromise Measures, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.122

I have now, senators, done my duty in expressing my opinions fully, freely, and candidly on this solemn occasion. In doing so I have been governed by the motives which have governed me in all the stages of the agitation of the slavery question since its commencement. I have exerted myself during the whole period to arrest it, with the intention of saving the Union if it could be done; and if it could not, to save the section where it has pleased providence to cast my lot, and which I sincerely believe has justice and the Constitution on its side. Having faithfully done my duty to the best of my ability, both to the Union and my section, throughout this agitation, I shall have the consolation, let what will come, that I am free from all responsibility.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Bryant, 1851

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth

Title: Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth

Author: Bryant

Date: 1851

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.144-148

Delivered at the banquet given by the Press of New York to Kossuth on December 15, 1851, Bryant presiding.

Born in 1794, died in 1878; admitted to the Bar in 1815; published "Thanatopsis" in 1816; became connected with the New York Evening Post in 1826, being Editor until his death; opposed the extension of slavery and supported the Union cause.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.144

LET me ask you to imagine the contest, in which the United States asserted their independence of Great Britain, had been unsuccessful; that our armies, through treason or a league of tyrants against us, had been broken and scattered; that the great men who led them, and who swayed our councils—Washington, our Franklin, and the venerable president of the American Congress—had been driven forth as exiles. If there had existed at that day, in any part of the civilized world, a powerful Republic, with institutions resting on the same foundations of liberty, which our own countrymen sought to establish, would there have been in that Republic any hospitality too cordial, any sympathy too deep, any zeal for their glorious but unfortunate cause, too fervent or too active to be shown toward these illustrious fugitives? Gentlemen, the case I have supposed is before you. The Washingtons, the Franklins, the Hancocks of Hungary, driven out by a far worse tyranny than was ever endured here, are wanderers in foreign lands. Some of them have sought a refuge in our country—one sits with his company our guest to-night—and we must measure the duty we owe them by the same standard which we would have had history apply, if our ancestors had met with a fate like theirs.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.145

I have compared the exiled Hungarians to the great men of our own history. Difficulty, my brethren, is the nurse of greatness—a harsh nurse, who roughly rocks her foster-children into strength and athletic proportion. The mind grappling with great aims and wrestling with mighty ingredients, grows, by certain necessity, to their stature. Scarce anything so convinces me of the capacity of the human intellect for indefinite expansion in the different stages of its being, as this power of enlarging itself to the compass of surrounding emergencies. These men have been trained to greatness by a quicker and surer method than a peaceful country and a tranquil period can know.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.145

But it is not merely or principally for their personal qualities that we honor them; we honor them for the cause in which they failed so gloriously. Great issues hang upon that cause, and great interests of mankind are crushed by its downfall. I was on the continent of Europe when the treason of Gorgey laid Hungary bound at the feet of the Tsar. Europe was at that time in the midst of the reaction; the ebb-tide was rushing violently back, sweeping all that the friends of freedom had planned into the black bosom of the deep. In France the liberty of the Press was extinct—Paris in a state of siege—the soldiery of that Republic had just quenched in blood the freedom of Rome—Austria had suppressed liberty in northern Italy—absolutism was restored in Russia, along the Rhine, and in the towns and villages of Wurtemberg and Bavaria, troops withdrawn from the barracks and garrisons filled the streets and kept the inhabitants quiet with the bayonet at their breast. Hungary at that moment alone upheld, and upheld with a firm hand and dauntless heart, the blazing torch of liberty. To Hungary were turned the eyes, to Hungary clung the hopes of all who did not despair of the freedom of Europe.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.146

I recollect that while the armies of Russia were moving like a tempest from the North upon the Hungarian host, the progress of events was watched with the deepest solicitude by the people of Germany. I was at that time in Munich, the splendid capital of Bavaria. The Germans seemed for the time to have put off their usual character, and scrambled for the daily prints, wet from the press, with such eagerness that I almost thought myself in America. The news of the catastrophe at last arrived; Gorgey had betrayed the cause of Hungary and yielded to the demands of the Russians. Immediately a funeral gloom settled like a noonday darkness upon the city. I heard the muttered exclamations of the people, "It is all over—the last hope of European liberty is gone."

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.147

Russia did not misjudge. If she had allowed Hungary to become independent, or free, the reaction in favor of absolutism had been incomplete; there would have been one perilous example of successful resistance to despotism—in one corner of Europe a flame would have been kept alive, at which the other nations might have rekindled, among themselves, the light of liberty. Hungary was subdued; but does anyone who hears me believe that the present state of things in Europe will last? The despots themselves fear that it will not; and made cruel by their fears, are heaping chain on chain around the limbs of their subjects.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.147

They are hastening the event they dread. Every added shackle galls, into a more fiery impotence, those who wear them. I look with mingling hope and horror to the day—a day bloodier, perhaps, than we have yet seen—when the exasperated nations shall snap their chains and start to their feet. It may well be that Hungary, made less patient of the yoke by the remembrance of her own many and glorious struggles for independence, and better fitted than other nations, by the peculiar structure of her institutions, for founding the liberty of her citizens on a rational basis, will take the lead. In that glorious and hazardous enterprise, in that hour of care, need, and peril, I hope she will be cheered and strengthened with aid from this side of the Atlantic; aid given not with the stinted hand, not with a cowardly and selfish apprehension, lest we should not err on the safe side—wisely, if you please. I care not with how broad a regard to the future, but in large, generous, effective measure.

Bryants' Welcome to Kossuth, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.148

And you, our guest, fearless, eloquent, large of heart and mind, whose one thought is the salvation of oppressed Hungary, unfortunate but undiscouraged, struck down in the battle of liberty, but great in defeat, and gathering strength for future triumphs, receive this at our hands, that in this great attempt of man to repossess himself of the rights which God gave him, tho the strife be waged under a distant belt of longitude, and with the mightiest despotism of the world, the Press of America takes part with you and your countrymen. I give you—"LOUIS KOSSUTH."

Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech

Title: Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech

Author: Frances Dana Gage

Date: 1851

Source: Narrative of Sojourner Truth, p.62-63

Sojourner Truth gave her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. (The women's rights movement grew in large part out of the anti-slavery movement.) No formal record of the speech exists, but Frances Gage, an abolitionist and president of the Convention, recounted Truth's words. There is debate about the accuracy of this account because Gage did not record the account until 1863 and her record differs somewhat from newspaper accounts of 1851. However it is Gage's report that endures and it is clear that, whatever the exact words, "Ain't I a Woman?" made a great impact at the Convention and has become a classic expression of women's rights.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

Several ministers attended the second day of the Woman's Rights Convention, and were not shy in voicing their opinion of man's superiority over women. One claimed "superior intellect", one spoke of the "manhood of Christ," and still another referred to the "sin of our first mother."

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

Suddenly, Sojourner Truth rose from her seat in the corner of the church.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"For God's sake, Mrs. Gage, don't let her speak!" half a dozen women whispered loudly, fearing that their cause would be mixed up with Abolition.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

Sojourner walked to the podium and slowly took off her sunbonnet. Her six-foot frame towered over the audience. She began to speak in her deep, resonant voice: "Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter, I think between the Negroes of the South and the women of the North—all talking about rights—the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this talking about?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

Sojourner pointed to one of the ministers. "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps me any best place. And ain't I a woman?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

Sojourner raised herself to her full height. "Look at me! Look at my arm." She bared her right arm and flexed her powerful muscles. "I have plowed, I have planted and I have gathered into barns. And no man could head me. And ain't I a woman?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"I could work as much, and eat as much as man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne children and seen most of them sold into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

The women in the audience began to cheer wildly.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

She pointed to another minister. "He talks about this thing in the head. What's that they call it?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"Intellect," whispered a woman nearby.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"That's it, honey. What's intellect got to do with women's rights or black folks' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"That little man in black there! He says women can't have as much rights as men. ‘Cause Christ wasn't a woman." She stood with outstretched arms and eyes of fire. "Where did your Christ come from?"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"Where did your Christ come from?", she thundered again. "From God and a Woman! Man had nothing to do with him!"

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

The entire church now roared with deafening applause.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right-side up again. And now that they are asking to do it the men better let them."

[A Contemporaneous Account From the Anti-Slavery Bugle,

Salem, Ohio, June 21, 1851.]

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

One of the most unique and interesting speeches of the Convention was made by Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave. It is impossible to transfer it to paper, or convey any adequate idea of the effect it produced upon the audience. Those only can appreciate it who saw her powerful form, her whole-souled, earnest gesture, and listened to her strong and truthful tones. She came forward to the platform and addressing the President (Frances Gage) said with great simplicity:

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

May I say a few words? Receiving an affirmative answer, she proceeded; I want to say a few words about this matter. I am for woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

As for intellect, all I can say is, if woman have a pint and a man a quart—why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much—for we won't take more than our pint will hold.

Gage, Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech

The poor men seem to be all in confusion and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and there won't be so much trouble.

The Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York

Title: The Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York

Author: New York Times

Date: 1853

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.137-143

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.137

The Crystal Palace is opened! The great event on which so many hopes, expectations, and anxieties were clustered, is at last completed. No event, for a long time, has created so general and so profound an interest in the public mind. The whole city was alive yesterday with the interest and excitement which the event occasioned. Throngs of spectators were eager to catch a glimpse of the grand procession by which the President of the United States was to be escorted to the palace. An immense tide of travel moved toward the building during the whole forenoon. Sixth Avenue cars ran once a minute, each crowded to its utmost capacity. Stages running to the vicinity of the building were also densely filled.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.137

At an early hour, the Palace was besieged by applicants for admission. Stern officials guarded the entrances, and informed all who came, that until 10 o'clock none but exhibitors would be admitted. At 10, however, the jealous gates unclosed, and red, yellow, white, and blue invitations poured in at the different entrances. The throng, even then, was excessive. The omnibuses, cars, hackney coaches, all poured forth their live freight at Forty-second Street, and ladies and gentlemen, at every degree of temperature, ascended the stairs that led to the interior. Foreigners, we observed, distinguished themselves much. French gentlemen, invested in magical waistcoats, would persist in delivering their red cards of admission where only blue were admitted, and we observed numbers of very energetic Germans who wanted to go in everywhere. There was, seemingly, however, a large amount of happiness diffused over every one's face. New dresses were displayed—husbands were attentive, and there seemed to be a universal determination to be joyful, which was, as far as we could see, carried out to the very letter.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.138

The interior of the palace was even more imposing than we could have anticipated. The change wrought in it since the night before seemed a miracle. Everything was neat and orderly. The floors were thoroughly swept, much of the contributions were displayed, among which Thorwaldsen's noble series of "Christ and His Apostles," in the Danish section, attracted much deserved attention. Bright banners flaunted from the galleries, suits of old armor, from the Tower of London, frowned grimly on the scene, as if the spirit of antiquity was wroth within them at the contrast between our days, bright with intellectual progress, and those good, old benighted times in which they saw service. And over all, the great dome stretched its painted canopy, joining together the diverging naves, as the building itself drew together widely differing nations.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.139

The palace filled rapidly. At the intersections of the naves, and all beneath the dome, the floor was soon parti-colored as a garden with brilliant bonnets and silks, and young ladies who were afraid of being too enthusiastic, lest they should be laughed at, walked wonderingly about. The platform in the north nave, which was to be the great scene of interest for the day, began about this time to be animated. Members of the Senate, guests invited by special request, martial officers, looking anything but easy in their uniforms, and the president of the Crystal Palace with his official staff, and a host of other persons too distinguished to be well known, made their appearance on the boards. The Press, too, took possession of its table at the base of the Washington's statue, and nibbed its pens, and arranged its note-books with great solemnity.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.139

It was already 1 o'clock, and the President, without whom nothing could go on, had not arrived. Watches innumerable were pulled out on the platform. Mr. Sedgwick looked grave. His staff looked still more grave, and among all outside barbarians who were not on the platform, there was a great craning of heads over other people's shoulders, to see if they could not catch a glimpse of the Chief Magistrate. But he came not—and people took to wandering once more through the galleries and naves. Presently there was a stir and a hum, and the people surged to and fro, and all that could run, ran, and arrived in time to see a tall, soldierly, and not ungraceful gentleman cross the platform. A loud clapping of hands greeted the hero of Chippewa. Then some more celebrities mounted the stage unrecognized by any popular demonstration. The time wore rapidly on, diversified by a slight panic on the stage, created by the breaking of a pane of glass in the dome, and the fall of some of the fragments, until, at length, the sound of trumpets was caught up in the distance, and then everybody settled themselves firmly in their places or sought new ones, or strove to regain their old—for it was announced that the President had come.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.140

At this moment the scene presented from the gallery by the crowd upon the floor below was one of unequaled brilliancy. The whole space under the dome, extending nearly to the end of each nave, was densely filled by the eager mass. Ladies in great numbers, many of them exceedingly handsome, and all gaily drest, filled the benches, sat upon the stairs, or stood anxiously looking over the gallery railing. Here and there, scattered through the mass, rose the tall plumes of the military, adding variety and brilliancy to a scene already gay with many colors. The platform set apart for the reception of President Pierce was erected in the north nave of the palace, toward the center of the building; and on it were ranged seats for over 700 persons. . .

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.141

The honor of originating an international exhibition has been very generally awarded by the English people to Prince Albert; that people, in their loyalty, are always glad of an opportunity to decorate the brows of their rulers; but in reality, the thought of an industrial exposition of the industries of all nations took its rise almost simultaneously in the minds of several English gentlemen, among whom were Digby Wyatt and S.C. Hall, the editor and proprietor of the London Art Journal. However disposed one may be to cavil at a prince's undue honors, one must yield to Prince Albert all praise for the heartiness and alacrity with which he entered into the undertaking. In England, royal patronage is all that is required to make anything successful. It no sooner became known that the "highest personage in the land" was interesting herself in the scheme of an international exhibition, than support came from all quarters.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.141

The grandeur of the conception was immediately recognized on all sides; and that which, if presented by a private individual, would have been sneered down as chimerical and impossible, became, in the hands of a royal sponsor, not only feasible, but sublime. Meanwhile, the great work went on. Sir Joseph, then plain Mr. Paxton, greenhouse architect to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, having, from constant associationwith conservatories, a natural taste for glass houses, conceived the happy idea of a crystal palace. Tho late in the field, as all the other architects had long since sent in plans for a suitable building in which to hold the exhibition, with wonderful energy; completed his plans in an incredibly short space of time, and forwarded them to the Committee of Judgment. The novelty of the idea, the beauty of the proposed structure, its many advantages over erections of soldier materials, at once overwhelmed any scruples which so bold a conception might have otherwise generated, and Mr. Paxton was declared the successful competitor.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.142

The details of his plan were no sooner made public than all the distrust of novelty, so peculiar to the English character, broke out in full force. The press, while acknowledging the boldness of the conception, took occasion to predict its utter failure. Architectural publications entered into elaborate calculations, to prove that such a building was not capable of sustaining its own weight. Nervous ladies declared that they would never enter so unstable a structure, and rival architects wrote savage letters to the Times, denouncing Mr. Paxton as a humbug, and the Crystal Palace as a huge trap in which unwary citizens on the day of the opening would be caught.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.142

Undeterred by these assaults, Mr. Paxton went steadily on, and soon the calm waters of the Serpentine reflected columns, derricks, girders, and all the other paraphernalia of builders. Having exhausted themselves in attacking the stability of the building, critics turned to its decora-tions. These had been entrusted to Mr. Owen Jones, a gentleman of great skill, who devoted much time and labor to chromatic decorations. When the public saw Mr. Jones painting the ironwork of the palace in patches of bright blue and red, varied with white, orange, and black, they declared that the building was about to be reduced to a vulgar show, painted in glaring colors. When the whole was complete, however, they saw how those hues, blended into one another, produced a soft and varied effect that pleased without tiring the eye.

Opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.143

On the 1st of May, 1851, all objections were answered, all evil predictions confuted, all invective silenced, when the solemn opening of the Crystal Palace was effected by her Majesty Queen Victory in person. The writer was present on that memorable occasion. The pageant which he beheld will not easily be forgotten. Twenty-five thousand men and women had assembled to witness the ceremony. The vast building, covering eleven acres of ground, was thronged, the crowd for the most part silent, and duly imprest with the solemnity of the occasion. When some ruffian from without flung a stone on the roof, and the noise of its rebounds echoed like thunder through the huge hall, the great tide of human life gave one sudden surge of fear. Every one thought of the mournful prognostications that the building would fall; but the panic lasted only a moment. Then the organ pealed out its grand devotional music, which flowed like a mighty river through the long halls, and the Queen walked confidingly among her subjects.

Eulogy of Webster, Rufus Choate, 1853

Eulogy of Webster

Title: Eulogy of Webster

Author: Rufus Choate

Date: 1853

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.149-159

From a commemorative address before the faculty, students, and alumni of Dartmouth College on July 27, 1853. Choate, as well as Webster, was a graduate of Dartmouth.

Born in 1799, died in 1859; elected to Congress in 1830; reelected in 1832 and resigned in 1834; United States Senator in 1841, serving while Webster was Secretary of State; succeeded by Webster in 1845.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.149

WEBSTER possessed the element of an impressive character, inspiring regard, trust, and admiration, not unmingled with love. It had, I think, intrinsically a charm such as belongs only to a good, noble, and beautiful nature. In its combination with so much fame, so much force of will, and so much intellect, it filled and fascinated the imagination and heart. It was affectionate in childhood and youth, and it was more than ever so in the few last months of his long life. It is the universal testimony that he gave to his parents, in largest measure, honor, love, obedience; that he eagerly appropriated the first means which he could command to relieve the father from the debts contracted to educate his brother and himself; that he selected his first place of professional practise that he might soothe the coming on of his old age.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.150

Equally beautiful was his love of all his kindred and of all his friends. When I hear him accused of selfishness, and a cold, bad nature, I recall him lying sleepless all night, not without tears of boyhood, conferring with Ezekiel how the darling desire of both hearts should be compassed, and he, too, admitted to the precious privileges of education; courageously pleading the cause of both brothers in the morning; prevailing by the wise and discerning affection of the mother; suspending his studies of the law, and registering deeds and teaching school to earn the means, for both, of availing themselves of the opportunity which the parental self-sacrifice had placed within their reach; loving him through life, mourning him when dead, with a love and a sorrow very wonderful, passing the sorrow of woman; I recall the husband, the father of the living and of the early departed, the friend, the counselor of many years, and my heart grows too full and liquid for the refutation of words.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.150

His affectionate nature, craving ever friendship, as well as the presence of kindred blood, diffused itself through all his private life, gave sincerity to all his hospitalities, kindness to his eye, warmth to the pressure of his hand, made his greatness and genius unbend themselves to the playfulness of childhood, flowed out in graceful memories indulged of the past or the dead, of incidents when life was young and promised to be happy,—gave generous sketches of his rivals,—the high contention now hidden by the handful of earth,—hours passed fifty years ago with great authors, recalled for the vernal emotions which then they made to live and revel in the soul. And from these conversations of friendship, no man—no man, old or young—went away to remember one word of profaneness, one allusion of indelicacy, one impure thought, one unbelieving suggestion, one doubt cast on the reality of virtue, of patriotism, of enthusiasm, of the progress of man,—one doubt cast on righteousness, or temperance, or judgment to come.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.151

I have learned by evidence the most direct and satisfactory, that in the last months of his life, the whole affectionateness of his nature—his consideration of others; his gentleness; his desire to make them happy and to see them happy—seemed to come out in more and more beautiful and habitual expressions than ever before. The long day's public tasks were felt to be done; the cares, the uncertainties, the mental conflicts of high place, were ended; and he came home to recover himself for the few years which he might still expect would be his before he should go hence to be here no more. And there, I am assured and fully believe, no unbecoming regrets pursued him; no discontent, as for injustice suffered or expectations unfulfilled; no self-reproach for anything done or anything omitted by himself: no irritation, no peevishness unworthy of his noble nature; but instead, love and hope for his country, when she became the subject of conversation, and for all around him, the dearest and most indifferent, for all breathing things about him, the overflow of the kindest heart growing in gentleness and benevolence—paternal, patriarchal affections, seeming to become more natural, warm, and communicative every hour. Softer and yet brighter grew the tints on the sky of parting day; and the last lingering rays, more even than the glories of noon, announced how divine was the source from which they proceeded; how incapable to be quenched; how certain to rise on a morning which no night should follow.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.152

Such a character was made to be loved. It was loved. Those who knew and saw it in its hour of calm—those who could repose on that soft green—loved him. His plain neighbors loved him; and one said, when he was laid in his grave, "How lonesome the world seems!" Educated young men loved him. The ministers of the gospel, the general intelligence of the country, the masses afar off, loved him. True, they had not found in his speeches, read by millions, so much adulation of the people; so much of the music which robs the public reason of itself; so many phrases of humanity and philanthropy; and some had told them he was lofty and cold—solitary in his greatness; but every year they came nearer and nearer to him, and as they came nearer, they loved him better; they heard how tender the son had been, the husband, the brother, the father, the friend, and neighbor; that he was plain, simple, natural, generous, hospitable—the heart larger than the brain; that he loved little children and reverenced God, the Scriptures, the Sabbath-day, the Constitution, and the law—and their hearts clave unto him. More truly of him than even of the great naval darling of England might it be said that "his presence would set the church-bells ringing, and give schoolboys a holiday,—would bring children from school and old men from the chimney-corner, to gaze on him ere he died." The great and unavailing lamentations first revealed the deep place he had in the hearts of his countrymen.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.153

You are now to add to this his extraordinary power of influencing the convictions of others by speech, and you have completed the survey of the means of his greatness. And here, again, I begin, by admiring an aggregate made up of excellences and triumphs, ordinarily deemed incompatible. He spoke with consummate ability to the bench, and yet exactly as, according to every sound canon of taste and ethics, the bench ought to be addressed. He spoke with consummate ability to the jury, and yet exactly as, according to every sound canon, that totally different tribunal ought to be addressed. In the halls of Congress, before the people assembled for political discussion in masses, before audiences smaller and more select, assembled for some solemn commemoration of the past or of the dead,—in each of these, again, his speech, of the first form of ability, was exactly adapted, also, to the critical proprieties of the place; each achieved, when delivered, the most instant and and specific success of eloquence—some of them in a splendid and remarkable degree; and yet, stranger still, when reduced to writing, as they fell from his lips, they compose a body of reading, in many volumes—solid, clear, rich, and full of harmony—a classical and permanent political literature.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.154

And yet all these modes of his eloquence, exactly adapted each to its stage and its end, were stamped with its image and superscription, identified by characteristics incapable to be counterfeited and impossible to be mistaken. The same high power of reason, intent in every one to explore and display some truth; some truth of judicial, or historical, or biographical fact; some truth of law, deduced by construction, perhaps, or by illation; some truth of policy, for want whereof a nation, generations, may be the worse—reason seeking and unfolding truth; the same tone, in all, of deep earnestness, expressive of strong desire that that which he felt to be important should be accepted as true, and spring up to action; the same transparent, plain, forcible, and direct speech, conveying his exact thought to the mind—not something less or more; the same sovereignty of form, of brow, and eye, and tone, and manner—everywhere the intellectual king of men, standing before you—that same marvelousness of qualities and results, residing, I know not where, in words, in pictures, in the ordering of ideas, in felicities indescribable, by means whereof, coming from his tongue, all things seemed mended—truth seemed more true, probability more plausible, greatness more grand, goodness more awful, every affection more tender than when coming from other tongues—these are, in all, his eloquence.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.155

But sometimes it became individualized and discriminated even from itself; sometimes place and circumstances, great interests at stake, a stage, an audience fitted for the highest historic action, a crisis, personal or national, upon him, stirred the depths of that emotional nature, as the anger of the goddess stirs the sea on which the great epic is beginning; strong passions, themselves kindled to intensity, quickened every faculty to a new life; the stimulated associations of ideas brought all treasures of thought and knowledge within command; the spell, which often held his imagination fast, dissolved, and she arose and gave him to choose of her urn of gold; earnestness became vehemence, the simple, perspicuous, measured, and direct language became a headlong, full, and burning tide of speech; the discourse of reason, wisdom, gravity, and beauty, changed to that superhuman, that rarest consummate eloquence—grand, rapid, pathetic, terrible; the aliquid immensum infinitumque that Cicero might have recognized; the master triumph of man in the rarest opportunity of his noblest power.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.156

Such elevation above himself, in congressional debate, was most uncommon. Some such there were in the great discussions of executive power following the removal of the deposits, which they who heard them will never forget, and some which rest in the tradition of hearers only. But there were other fields of oratory on which, under the influence of more uncommon springs of inspiration, he exemplified, in still other forms, an eloquence in which I do not know that he has had a superior among men. Addressing masses by tens of thousands in the open air, on the urgent political question of the day, or designated to lead the meditations of an hour devoted to the remembrance of some national era, or of some incident marking the progress of the nation, and lifting him up to a view of what is, and what is past, and some indistinct revelation of the glory that lies in the future, or of some great historical name, just borne by the nation to his tomb—we have learned that then and there, at the base of Bunker Hill, before the corner-stone was laid, and again when from the finished column the centuries looked on him; in Faneuil Hall, mourning for those with whose spoken or written eloquence of freedom its arches had so often resounded; on the Rock of Plymouth; before the Capitol, of which there shall not be one stone left on another before his memory shall have ceased to live—in such scenes, unfettered by the laws of forensic or parliamentary debate, multitudes uncounted lifting up their eyes to him; some great historical scenes of America around; all symbols of her glory and art and power and fortune there; voices of the past, not unheard; shapes beckoning from the future, not unseen—sometimes that mighty intellect, borne upward to a height and kindled to an illumination which we shall see no more, wrought out, as it were, in an instant a picture of vision, warning, prediction; the progress of the nation; the contrasts of its eras; the heroic deaths; the motives to patriotism; the maxims and arts imperial by which the glory has been gathered an may be heightened—wrought out, in an instant, a picture to fade only when all record of our mind shall die.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.157

In looking over the public remains of his oratory, it is striking to remark how, even in that most sober and massive understanding and nature, you see gathered and expressed the characteristic sentiments and the passing time of our America. It is the strong old oak which ascends before you; yet our soil, our heaven, are attested in it as perfectly as if it were a flower that could grow in no other climate and in no other hour of the year or day. Let me instance in one thing only. It is a peculiarity of some schools of eloquence that they embody and utter, not merely the individual genius and character of the speaker, but a national consciousness—a national era, a mood, a hope, a dread, a despair—in which you listen to the spoken history of the time. There is an eloquence of an expiring nation, such as seems to sadden the glorious speech of Demosthenes; such as breathes grand and gloomy from the visions of the prophets of the last days of Israel and Judah; such as gave a spell to the expression of Grattan and of Kossuth—the sweetest, most mournful, most awful of the words which man may utter, or which man may hear—the eloquence of a perishing nation.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.158

There is another eloquence, in which the national consciousness of a young or renewed and vast strength, of trust in a dazzling, certain, and limitless future, an inward glorying victories yet to be won, sounds out as by voice of clarion, challenging to contest for the highest prize of earth; such as that in which the leader of Israel in its first days holds up to the new nation of the Land of Promise; such as that which in the well-imagined speeches scattered by Livy over the history of the "majestic series of victories" speaks the Roman consciousness of growing aggrandizement which should subject the world; such as that through which, at the tribunes of her revolution, in the bulletins of her rising soldiers, France told to the world her dream of glory.

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.158

And of this kind somewhat is ours—cheerful, hopeful, trusting, as befits youth and spring; the eloquence of a State beginning to ascend to the first class of power, eminence, and consideration, and conscious of itself. It is to no purpose that they tell you it is in bad taste; that it partakes of arrogance and vanity; that a true national good breeding would not know, or seem to know, whether the nation is old or young; whether the tides of being are in their flow or ebb; whether these coursers of the sun are sinking slowly to rest; wearied with a journey of a thousand years, or just bounding from the Orient unbreathed. Higher laws than those of taste determine the consciousness of nations. Higher laws than those of taste determine the general forms of the expression of that consciousness. Let the downward age of America find its orators and poets and artists to erect its spirit, or grace and soothe its dying; be it ours to go up with Webster to the Rock, the Monument, the Capitol, and bid "the distance generations hail!"

Choate, Eulogy of Webster, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.159

Until the seventh day of March, 1850, I think it would have been accorded to him by an almost universal acclaim, as general and as expressive of profound and intelligent conviction and of enthusiasm, love, and trust, as ever saluted conspicuous statesmanship, tried by many crises of affairs in a great nation, agitated ever by parties, and wholly free.

Vicissitudes of A Forty-Niner

Title: Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner

Author: Alonzo Delano

Date: 1854

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.122-130

Taken from Delano's "Life on the Plains and Among the Diggings" (1854) this is a true and valuable record of the hardships endured on the overland journey across the plains in 1849, and of the trials, failures and successes of the "Argonauts," especially in the smaller mining camps. During that memorable year it is estimated that more than 60,000 emigrants journeyed to California by land and 30,000 or more by sea.

The majority of the former gathered from May to June of each year at Independence or St. Joseph, Missouri, at that time on the frontier of civilization, and then proceeded to Sacramento in long caravans, continually harassed by the Indians and subjected to fatigue, exposure and starvation. The emigrant train reached Sacramento in August, 1849, and others followed in quick succession.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.122

OUR general rendezvous was to be at St. Joseph, on the Missouri, from which we intended to take our departure. I had engaged men, purchased cattle and a wagon, and subsequently laid in my supplies for the trip, at St. Louis. My wagon I shipped by water to St. Joseph, and sent my cattle across the country about the middle of March, [1849] to meet me at the place of rendezvous, in April….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.122

[May 21.] Our desire to be upon the road induced us to be stirring early, and we were moving as soon as our cattle had eaten their fill, when a drive of a mile placed us upon the great thoroughfare of the gold seekers.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.122–p.123

For miles, to the extent of vision, an animated mass of beings broke upon our view. Long trains of wagons with their white covers were moving slowly along, a multitude of horsemen were prancing on the road, companies of men were traveling on foot, and although the scene was not a gorgeous one, yet the display of banners from many wagons, and the multitude of armed men, looked as if a mighty army was on its march; and in a few moments we took our station in the line, a component part of the motley throng of gold seekers, who were leaving home and friends far behind, to encounter the peril of mountain and plain….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.123

[June 29.] On leaving the Missouri, nearly every train was an organized company, with general regulations for mutual safety, and with a captain chosen by themselves, as a nominal head. On reaching the South Pass, we found that the great majority had either divided, or broken up entirely, making independent and helter-skelter marches towards California. . .

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.123–p.124

[August 10.] Reports began to reach us of hard roads ahead; that there was no grass at the Sink, or place where the river disappears in the sands of the desert, and that from that place a desert of sand, with water but once in forty-five miles, had to be crossed. In our worn-out condition this looked discouraging, and it was with a kind of dread that we looked to the passage of that sandy plain. At the same time an indefinite tale was circulated among the emigrants, that a new road had been discovered, by which the Sacramento might be reached in a shorter distance, avoiding altogether the dread desert; and that there was plenty of grass and water on the route….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.124

[August 11.] …. There were a great many men daily passing, who, having worn down their cattle and mules, had abandoned their wagons, and were trying to get through as they might; but their woebegone countenances and meagre accoutrements for such a journey, with want and excessive labor staring them in the face, excited our pity, wretched as we felt ourselves. Our own cattle had been prudently driven, and were still in good condition to perform the journey. Although our stock of provisions was getting low, we felt that under any circumstances we could get through, and notwithstanding we felt anxious, we were not discouraged….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.124

[August 15.] . . . It was decided, finally, that we would go the northern route, although some of our company had misgivings. The younger portion being fond of adventure, were loud in favor of the road….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.124

[August 16.] . . . Beyond us, far as we could see, was a barren waste, without a blade of grass or a drop of water for thirty miles at least. Instead of avoiding the desert, instead of the promised water, grass, and a better road, we were in fact upon a more dreary and wider waste, without either grass or water, and with a harder road before us. . .

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.124–p.125

[August 17.] As I walked on slowly and with effort, I encountered a great many animals, perishing for want of food and water, on the desert plain. Some would be just gasping for breath, others unable to stand, would issue low moans as I came up, in a most distressing manner, showing intense agony; and still others, unable to walk, seemed to brace themselves up on their legs to prevent falling, while here and there a poor ox, or horse, just able to drag himself along, would stagger towards me with a low sound, as if begging for a drop of water. My sympathies were excited at their sufferings, yet, instead of affording them aid, I was a subject for relief myself.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.125

High above the plain, in the direction of our road, a black, bare mountain reared its head, at the distance of fifteen miles; and ten miles this side the plains was flat, composed of baked earth, without a sign of vegetation, and in many places covered with incrustations of salt. Pits had been sunk in moist places, but the water was salt as brine, and utterly useless….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.125

The train had passed me in the night, and our cattle traveled steadily without faltering, reaching the spring about nine o'clock in the morning, after traveling nearly forty hours without food or water. If ever a cup of coffee and slice of bacon was relished by man, it was by me that morning, on arriving at the encampment a little after ten.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.125

We found this to be an oasis in the desert. A large hot spring, nearly three rods in diameter, and very deep, irrigated about twenty acres of ground—the water cooling as it ran off. . .

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.125–p.126

[August 20.] . . . Through the day there was a constant arrival of wagons, and by night there were several hundred men together; yet we learned by a mule train that at least one hundred and fifty wagons had turned back to the first spring west of the Humboldt, on learning the dangers of crossing the desert, taking wisely the old road again. This change of route, however, did not continue long, and the rear trains, comprising a large portion of the emigration, took our route, and suffered even worse than we did. It was resolved that several trains should always travel within supporting distance of each other, so that in case of an attack from the Indians, a sufficient body of men should be together to protect themselves. . . Reports again reached us corroborating the great loss of cattle on the desert beyond the Sink. The road was filled with dead animals, and the offensive effluvia had produced much sickness; but shortly afterward, our own portion of the desert presented the same catastrophe, and the road was lined with the dead bodies of worn out and starved animals, and their debilitated masters, in many cases, were left to struggle on foot, combating hunger, thirst and fatigue, in a desperate exertion to get through. . .

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.126

[September 17.] . . . Ascending to the top of an inclined plain, the long-sought, the long-wished-for and welcome valley of the Sacramento, lay before me, five or six miles distant….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.126–p.127

In May, 1850, a report reached the settlements that a wonderful lake had been discovered, an hundred miles back among the mountains, towards the head of the Middle Fork of Feather River, the shores of which abounded with gold, and to such an extent that it lay like pebbles on the beach. An extraordinary ferment among the people ensued, and a grand rush was made from the towns, in search of this splendid El Dorado. Stores were left to take care of themselves, business of all kinds was dropped, mules were suddenly bought up at exorbitant prices, and crowds started off to search for the golden lake.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.127–p.128

Days passed away, when at length adventurers began to return, with disappointed looks, and their worn out and dilapidated garments showed that they had 'seen some service," and it proved that, though several lakes had been discovered, the Gold Lake "par excellence" was not found. The mountains swarmed with men, exhausted and worn out with toil and hunger; mules were starved, or killed by falling from precipices. Still the search was continued over snow forty or fifty feet deep, till the highest ridge of the Sierra was passed, when the disappointed crowds began to return, without getting a glimpse of the grand "desideratum," having had their labor for their pains. Yet this sally was not without some practical and beneficial results. The country was more perfectly explored, some rich diggings were found, and, as usual, a few among the many were benefited. A new field for enterprise was opened, and within a month, roads were made and traversed by wagons, trading posts were established, and a new mining country was opened, which really proved in the main to be rich, and had it not been for the gold-lake fever, it might have remained many months undiscovered and unoccupied….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.128

From the mouth of Nelson's Creek to its source, men were at work in digging. Sometimes the stream was turned from its bed, and the channel worked; in other places, wing dams were thrown out, and the bed partially worked; while in some, the banks only were dug. Some of these, as is the case everywhere in the mines, paid well, some, fair wages, while many were failures. One evening, while waiting for my second supply of goods, I strolled by a deserted camp. I was attracted to the ruins of a shanty by observing the effigy of a man standing upright in an old, torn shirt, a pair of ragged pantaloons, and boots which looked as if they had been clambering over rocks since they were made—in short, the image represented a lean, meager, worn-out and woe-begone miner, such as might daily be seen at almost every point in the upper mines. On the shirt was inscribed, in a good business hand, "My claim failed—will you pay the taxes ?" (an allusion to the tax on foreigners.) Appended to the figure was a paper, bearing the following words: "Californians—Oh, Californians, look at me! once fat and saucy as a privateersman, but now—look ye—a miserable skeleton. In a word, I am a used up man"….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.128–p.129

Ludicrous as it may appear, it was a truthful commentary on the efforts of hundreds of poor fellows in the "golden land." This company had penetrated the mountain snows with infinite labor, in the early part of the season, enduring hardships of no ordinary character—had patiently toiled for weeks, living on the coarsest fare; had spent time and money in building a dam and digging a race through rocks to drain off the water; endured wet and cold, in the chilling atmosphere of the country, and when the last stone was turned, at the very close of all this labor, they did not find a single cent to reward them for their toil and privations, and what was still more aggravating, a small, wing dam, on the very claim below them, yielded several thousand dollars. Having paid out their money, and lost their labor, they were compelled to abandon the claim, and search for other diggings, where the result might be precisely the same….

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.129–p.130

The population of Independence represented almost every State in the Union, while France, England, Ireland, Germany and even Bohemia had their delegates. As soon as breakfast was dispatched, all hands were engaged in digging and washing gold in the banks, or in the bed of the stream. When evening came, large fires were built, around which the miners congregated, some engrossed with thoughts of home and friends, some to talk of new discoveries, and richer diggings somewhere else; or, sometimes a subject of debate was started, and the evening was whiled away in pleasant, and often instructive, discussion, while many, for whom this kind of recreation had not excitement enough, resorted to dealing monte, on a small scale, thus either exciting or keeping up a passion for play. Some weeks were passed in this way under the clear blue sky of the mountains, and many had made respectable piles. I highly enjoyed the wild scenery, and, quite as well, the wild life we were leading, for there were many accomplished and intelligent men; and a subject for amusement or debate was rarely wanting. As for ceremony or dress, it gave us no trouble: we were all alike…. At length a monte dealer arrived, with a respectable bank.

Delano, Vicissitudes of a Forty-Niner, America, Vol.7, p.130

A change had been gradually coming over many of our people, and for three or four days several industrious men had commenced drinking, and after the monte bank was set up, it seemed as if the long smothered fire burst forth into a flame. Labor, with few exceptions, seemed suspended, and a great many miners spent their time in riot and debauchery. . . The monte dealer, who, in his way was a gentleman, and honorable according to the notions of that class of men, won in two nights three thousand dollars! When he had collected his taxes on our bar, he went to Onion Valley, six miles distant, and lost in one night four thousand, exemplifying the fact, that a gambler may be rich to-day, and a beggar to-morrow….

The First Treaty with Japan

Title: The First Treaty with Japan

Author: M. C. Perry

Date: 1854

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.194-198

Having delivered President Fillmore's letter to the proper representatives of the Mikado on July 14, 1853, and been received with impressive ceremonies on Japanese soil, Commodore Perry led his squadron to Chinese waters, where he remained until the next February. Returning to Japan, he was cordially received, made an exhibition to the Japanese of the telegraph and railroad, of agricultural implements and other articles of western progress, which were greatly admired, and succeeded on March 31, 1854, in making the desired treaty, as given here, which was soon followed by similar treaties between Japan and other nations.

This brilliant achievement marked the beginning of the wonderful new industrial life of Japan. In 1903, the fiftieth anniversary of Perry's landing in Japan, a monument in honor of the event was dedicated at the place of the landing by the Japanese government and people.

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.194–p.195

THE United States of America and the Empire of Japan, desiring to establish firm, lasting and sincere friendship between the two nations, have resolved to fix, in a manner clear and positive, by means of a treaty or general convention of peace and amity, the rules which shall in future be mutually observed in the intercourse of their respective countries; for which most desirable object the President of the United States has conferred full powers on his commissioner, Matthew Calbraith Perry, Special Ambassador of the United States to Japan, and the August Sovereign of Japan has given similar full powers to his Commissioners, Hayashi, Daigaku-no-kami; Ido, Prince of Tsus-Sema; Izawa, Prince of Mima-saki; and Udono, Member of the Board of Revenue. And the said Commissioners, after having exchanged their said full powers, and duly considered the premises, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.195

There shall be a perfect, permanent, and universal peace, and a sincere and cordial amity between the United States of America on the one part, and the Empire of Japan on the other part, and between their people respectively, without exception of persons or places.

ARTICLE II

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.195

The port of Simoda, in the principality of Iduz, and the port of Hakodade, in the principality of Matsmai, are granted by the Japanese as ports for the reception of American ships, where they can be supplied with wood, water, provisions and coal, and other articles their necessities may require, as far as the Japanese have them. The time for opening the first-named port is immediately on signing this treaty; the last-named port is to be opened immediately after the same day in the ensuing Japanese year.

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.195

Note.—A tariff of prices shall be given by the Japanese officers of the things which they can furnish, payment for which shall be made in gold and silver coin.

 ARTICLE III

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.195–p.196

Whenever ships of the United States are thrown or wrecked on the coast of Japan, the Japanese vessels will assist them, and carry their crews to Simoda, Or Hakodade, and hand them over to their countrymen, appointed to receive them; whatever articles the shipwrecked men may have preserved shall likewise be restored, and the expenses incurred in the rescue and support of Americans and Japanese who may thus be thrown upon the shores of either nation are not to be refunded.

ARTICLE IV

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.196

Those shipwrecked persons and other citizens of the United States shall be free as in other countries, and not subjected to confinement, but shall be amenable to just laws.

ARTICLE V

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.196

Shipwrecked men and other citizens of the United States, temporarily living at Simoda and Hakodade, shall not be subject to restrictions and confinement as the Dutch and Chinese are at Nagasaki, but shall be free at Simoda to go where they please within the limits of seven Japanese miles (or ri) from a small island in the harbor of Simoda marked on the accompanying chart hereto appended; and in like manner shall be free to go where they please at Hakodade, within limits to be defined after the visit of the United States squadron to that place.

ARTICLE VI

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.196

If there be any other sort of goods wanted, or business which shall require to be arranged, there shall be careful deliberation between the parties in order to settle such matters.

ARTICLE VII

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.196

It is agreed that ships of the United States resorting to the ports open to them shall be permitted to exchange gold and silver coin and articles of goods, under such regulations as shall be temporarily established by the Japanese Government for that purpose. It is stipulated, however, that the ships of the United States shall be permitted to carry away whatever articles they are unwilling to exchange.

ARTICLE VIII

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.197

Wood, water, provisions, coal, and goods required, shall only be procurred through the agency of Japanese officers appointed for that purpose, and in no other manner.

ARTICLE IX

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.197

It is agreed that if at any future day the Government of Japan shall grant to any other nations privileges and advantages which are not granted to the United States and the citizens thereof, that these same privileges and advantages shall be granted likewise to the United States and to the citizens thereof, without any consultation or delay.

ARTICLE X

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.197–p.198

Ships of the United States shall be permitted to resort to no other ports in Japan but Simoda and Hakodade, unless in distress or forced by stress of weather.

ARTICLE XI

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.198

There shall be appointed by the Government of the United States, Consuls or Agents to reside in Simoda, at any time after the expiration of eighteen months from the date of the signing Of this treaty; provided that either Of the two governments deem such arrangement necessary.

ARTICLE XII

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.198

The present convention having been concluded and duly signed, shall be obligatory and faithfully observed by the United States of America and Japan, and by the citizens and subjects of each respective Power; and it is to be ratified and approved by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, and by the august Sovereign of Japan, and the ratification shall be exchanged within eighteen months from the date of the signature thereof, or sooner if practicable.

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.198

In faith whereof we, the respective Plenipotentiaries of the United States of America and the Empire of Japan aforesaid have signed and sealed these presents.

First Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.198

Done at Kanagawa, this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, and of Kayei the seventh year, third month, and third day.

M.C. Perry.

Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill

Title: Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill

Author: Stephen A. Douglas

Date: 1854

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.205-210

Douglas, who is chiefly remembered for his memorable debates with Abraham Lincoln, formulated the doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," which denied the power of the Federal Government to legislate on slavery within the Territories, and recognized the right of the citizens of each Territory to legislate as they chose. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, presented in 1854, brought upon Douglas much harsh criticism throughout the North, and indicated, on the other hand, the increasing strength of the upholders of slavery. He probably was the only man in Congress who would have ventured to introduce or could have carried through the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, a voluntary offering to the South by a Northern Democrat. It strengthened Douglas as a national political force, though he never attained his Presidential ambition. This account is an indirect form of reminiscence, and is of course a special plea.

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.205–p.206

At the next meeting of Congress after the election of General Pierce, Mr. Douglas, as chairman of the committee on Territories, reported the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, accompanied by a special report, in which he said, "that the object of the committee was to organize all Territories in the future upon the principles of the compromise measures of 1850. That these measures were intended to have a much broader and more enduring effect than to merely adjust the disputed questions growing out of the acquisition of Mexican territory, by prescribing certain great fundamental principles, which, while they adjusted the existing difficulties, would prescribe rules of action in all future time, when new Territories were to be organized or new States to be admitted into the Union." The report then proceeded to show that the principle upon which the Territories of 1850 were organized was, that the slavery question should be banished from the halls of Congress and the political arena, and referred to the Territories and States that were immediately interested in the question, and alone responsible for its existence; and concluded, by saying "that the bill reported by the committee proposed to carry into effect these principles in the precise language of the compromise measures of 1850."

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.206

By reference to those sections of the Kansas-Nebraska Act which define the powers of the Territorial Legislature, it will be perceived that they are in the precise language of the acts of 1850, and confer upon the Territorial Legislature power over all rightful subjects of legislation, consistent with the Constitution, without excepting African slavery.

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.206–p.207

During the discussion of this measure it was suggested that the 8th section of the act of March 6,1820, commonly called the Missouri Compromise, would deprive the people of the Territory, while they remained in a Territorial condition of the right to decide the slavery question, unless said 8th section should be repealed. In order to obviate this objection, and to allow the people the privilege of controlling this question, while they remained in a Territorial condition, the said restriction was declared inoperative and void, by an amendment which was incorporated into the bill, on the motion of Mr. Douglas, with these words in explanation of the object of the repeal: "it being the true intent and meaning of this act, not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." In this form, and with this intent, the Kansas-Nebraska Act became a law, by the approval of the President, on the 30th of May, 1854.

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.207

This bill and its author were principally assailed upon two points. First, that it was not necessary to renew slavery agitation, by the introduction of the measure; and secondly, that there was no necessity for the repeal of the Missouri restriction.

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.207–p.208–p.209–p.210

To the first objection it was replied, that there was a necessity for the organization of the Territory, which could no longer be denied or resisted. That Mr. Douglas, as early as the session of 1843, had introduced a bill to organize the Territory of Nebraska, . . . Mr. Douglas renewed the introduction of his bill for the organization of Nebraska Territory in each session of Congress, from 1844 to 1854, a period of ten years, and while he had failed to secure the passage of the act, in consequence of the Mexican war intervening, and the slavery agitation which ensued, no one had objected to it upon the ground that there was no necessity for the organization of the Territory. During the discussions upon our Territorial questions during this period, Mr. Douglas often called attention to the fact that a line of policy had been adopted many years ago, and was being executed each year, which was entirely incompatible with the growth and development of our country. It had originated as' early as the administration of Mr. Monroe, and had been continued by Mr. Adams, General Jackson, Mr. Van Buren, Harrison, and by Tyler, by which treaties had been made with the Indians to the east of the Mississippi River, for their removal to the country bordering upon the States west of the Mississippi or Missouri Rivers, with guaranties in said treaties that the country within which these Indians were located should never be embraced within any Territory or State, or subjected to the jurisdiction of either, so long as grass should grow and water should run. These Indian settlements, thus secured by treaty, commenced upon the northern borders of Texas, or Red River, and were continued from year to year westward, until, when in 1844, Mr. Douglas introduced his first Nebraska Bill, they had reached the Nebraska or Platte River, and the Secretary of War was then engaged in the very act of removing Indians from Iowa, and settling them in the valley of the Platte River, with similar guaranties of perpetuity, by which the road to Oregon was forever to be closed. It was the avowed object of this Indian policy to form an Indian barrier on the western borders of Arkansas, Missouri and Iowa, by Indian settlements, secured in perpetuity by a compact, that the white settlements should never extend westward of that line. This policy originated in the jealousy, on the part of the Atlantic States, of the growth and expansion of the Mississippi Valley, which threatened in a few years to become the controlling power of the nation. Even Colonel Benton, of Missouri, who always claimed to be the champion of the West, made a speech, in which he erected the god Terminus upon the summit of the Rocky Mountains, facing eastward, and with uplifted hand, saying to Civilization and Christianity, "Thus far mayest thou go, and no farther!" and General Cass, while Secretary of War, was zealous in the execution of this policy. This restrictive system received its first check in 1844, by the introduction of the Nebraska Bill, which was served on the Secretary of War, by its author, on the day of its introduction, with a notice that Congress was about to organize the Territory, and therefore he must not locate any more Indians there. In consequence of this notice, the Secretary (by courtesy) suspended his operations until Congress should have an opportunity of acting upon the bill; and inasmuch as Congress failed to act that session, Mr. Douglas renewed his bill and notice to the Secretary each year, and thus prevented action for ten years, and until he could procure action on the bill. In the mean time the passion of the Western people for emigration had become so aroused that they could be no longer restrained; and Colonel Benton, who was a candidate in Missouri for reelection to the Senate in 1852 and 1853, so far yielded to the popular clamor as to advise the emigrants, who had assembled in a force of fifteen or twenty thousand on the western border of Missouri, carrying their tents and wagons, to invade the Territory and take possession, in defiance of the Indian intercourse laws, and of the authority of the Federal Government, which, if executed, must inevitably have precipitated an Indian war with all those tribes.

Douglas, Defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.210

When this movement on the part of Colonel Benton became known at Washington, the President of the United States despatched the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the scene of excitement, with orders to the commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth to use the United States army in resisting the invasion, if he could not succeed in restraining the emigrants by persuasion and remonstrances. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs succeeded in procuring the agreement of the emigrants that they would encamp on the western borders of Missouri until the end of the next session of Congress, in order to see if Congress would not in the mean time, by law, open the country to emigration. When Congress assembled at the session of 1853-54, in view of this state of facts, Mr. Douglas renewed his Nebraska Act, which was modified, pending discussion, by dividing into two Territories, and became the Kansas-Nebraska Act. From these facts you can draw your own conclusion, whether there was any necessity for the organization of the Territory and of Congressional action at that time.

Civil War in Kansas

Title: Civil War in Kansas

Author: George Cary Eggleston

Date: 1855-1859

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.164-168

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.164

With the aid of a considerable Northern vote in Congress the South succeeded in passing the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, repealing the Missouri Compromise, and under the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty" throwing all the territories open to slavery, at least as a possibility. The North at once took alarm, and the Free-soil party, newly named the Republican party, grew in numbers and enthusiasm as no other party had ever done before.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.164

Events mightily aided this growth, driving into the Free-soil, or Republican, party many thousands of men who had before held aloof from a movement which they thought to be dangerous to the perpetuity of the Union and to peace within its borders. First of these events was the outbreak of civil war in Kansas. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise opened that territory at once to settlement by men from both sections and at the same time opened the question whether it should become a free or a slave State. Incidentally a contest of factions began which raged hotly to the end.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.165

Whether Kansas should be a slave State or a free State depended upon the will of the settlers alone. The land was in many respects a tempting one to emigrants in spite of the aridity of its western part, so that even without any incentive of politics its speedy settlement was quite a matter of course. But politics North and South enormously aided in that behalf. There was a rush from both sections to fill up and occupy the land in order to control it. From the Missouri border and from farther south slaveholders and the representatives of slavery poured into the territory in great numbers with the purpose of voting it into the Union as a slave State. In the slang of the period these were called "border ruffians." On the other hand, there was an "assisted emigration" from the North, the emigration of men whose way was paid in consideration of their votes and their rifle practise against slavery in Kansas. These called themselves "Free State Men," but they were called by their adversaries "Jayhawkers."

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.165

In order to promote the emigration of these men to Kansas, societies were formed in Massachusetts and other States which not only paid their way, but furnished them with rifles of animproved pattern, and ammunition in plenty, with the distinct understanding that it was their duty to ply both the bullet and the ballot in aid of the cause they represented. These two groups of men quickly fell by the ears, as it was intended that they should, and civil war in the strictest sense of that term ensued. John Brown—an able, adventurous, and fanatical man—took command of the free State forces, and between him and his adversaries there was a contest for supremacy which involved every outrage to which civil war, waged by uncivilized man, can give birth. Small battles were fought. Men on either side were shot or hanged without mercy. Homes were desolated. Women and children were driven forth suffer all the agonies of starvation, of cold, and of homelessness—all in aid of the voting one way or the other.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.166

In our time such a situation in a territory subject to national control would be instantly ended by the sending of troops to the disturbed region with instructions to preserve order, to suppress all manner of lawlessness, and to protect all citizens equally in the enjoyment of the peaceful possession of the land. But in the fifties the government of the United States was still unused to such exercise of its authority—parties were too evenly divided, political feeling was too hot and voters were far too sensitive, to admit of such a treatment of the situation as would in our time seem quite a matter of course. Troops were sent to Kansas, it is true, but in quite insufficient numbers and under inadequate instructions. So the war in Kansas went on and otherwise peaceful citizens of the Union actively aided it upon the one side or the other quite as if it had not been a civil war within the Union and in a territory in which the authority of Congress was supreme beyond even the possibility of question.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.167

At the South companies of armed men were organized, equipped, and sent into Kansas nominally to settle there and vote to make a slave State of the territory, but really, if possible, to drive out every "Free State" man, or to overawe or overcome them all, so that the voting might all be one way. At the North similar companies of men were organized and armed and aided to emigrate for the purpose of doing very much the same thing to the representatives of slavery and achieving a contrary result at the ballot-box.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.167

Many of the men on both sides were not genuine settlers at all, but merely armed bandits engaged in a mission of violence. Yet on both sides they were supported, encouraged, and defended in their lawlessness by the pulpit, the press, and every other agency of civilization. Elections were held in the territory in which both sides votedtheir men without question as to their age, the length of their residence within the territory, or any other qualification for voting which the loose laws of the time provided. Every devilish device of fraud and swindling that had up to that time been invented by ingeniously unscrupulous politicians was employed on the other side or the other, without so much as a qualm of conscience or a scruple of conventionality.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.168

It was war that these men were engaged in, and elections were a mere pretense. War habitually has no scruples as to the means it uses for the overcoming of an adversary. On each side men voted who had arrived within the territory just in time for the election, cheerfully perjuring themselves in order to do so, an incident which nobody seemed to regard as a serious matter. Each side voted its men as often as it could under the loose election laws of the time, and in some cases that was very often. Ballot-boxes were stuffed with fraudulent votes by one side and were seized and destroyed by the other. Conventions fraudulently chosen by such practises as these framed constitutions which were one after another rejected by Congress.

Eggleston, Civil War in Kansas, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.168

The story need not be told here in further detail. The struggle continued until the end of the decade, and it was not until after the Confederate War had begun that the Territory was admitted to the Union as a State. In the meanwhile, the eyes and minds of all the people in the country were concentrated upon that center of disturbance, and the situation there enormously increased the intensity of that acrimony which already characterized the relations of men North and South.

The Rise of the Republican Party

Title: The Rise of the Republican Party

Author: George Washington Julian

Date: 1855

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.211-220

Julian was a native of Indiana who, in 1848, became a leader of the Free-Soil movement, and in the following year was elected to Congress by a coalition of Whigs and Free-Soil Democrats. In 1852 he was a candidate for Vice-President on the Free-Soil ticket. With Charles Sumner and John P. Hale he threw the Free-Soil influence into the formation of the Republican Party, and in 1856 he was a delegate to its first Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, where he was chairman of the Committee on Organization.

The platform declared it to be "both the right and the duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery," and demanded the immediate admission of Kansas as a free State.

This account is taken from Julian's "Political Recollections" mainly of the period between 1852 and 1870, the last ten years of which he served as a Republican member of Congress.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.211

WHEN President Pierce was inaugurated, on the fourth of March, 1853, the pride and power of the Democratic Party seemed to be at their flood. In his inaugural message he expressed the fervent hope that the slavery question was "forever at rest," and he doubtless fully believed that this hope would be realized. In his annual message, in December following, he lauded the compromise measures with great emphasis and declared that the repose which they had brought to the country should receive no shock during his term of office if he could avert it….

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.211–p.212

In the beginning the session gave promise of a quiet one, but on the twenty-third of January the precious repose of the country, to which the President had so lovingly referred in his message, was rudely shocked by the proposition of Senator Douglas to repeal the Missouri Compromise. This surprising demonstration from a leading friend of the Administration and a champion of the compromise measures marked a new epoch in the career of slavery, and rekindled the fires of sectional strife. After a very exciting debate in both houses, which lasted four months, the measure finally became a law on the thirtieth of May, 1854. It was a sprout from the grave of the Wilmot proviso; for if, under the Constitution, it was the duty of Congress to abandon the policy of restriction adopted in 1850, and provide that Utah and New Mexico should be received into the Union, with or without slavery, according to the choice of their people, the Missouri Compromise line should never have been established, and was a rock of offense to the slave holders. The Compromise Acts of 1850 had not abrogated that line, and related only to our Mexican acquisitions; but they had affirmed a principle, and if that principle was sound, the Missouri restriction was indefensible. The whole question of slavery was thus reopened, for the sacredness of the compact of 1820 and the wickedness of its violation depended largely upon the character of slavery itself, and our constitutional relations to it.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.212–p.213

On all sides the situation was exceedingly critical and peculiar. The Whigs, in their now practically disbanded condition, were free to act as they saw fit, and were very indignant at this new demonstration in the interest of slavery, while they were yet in no mood to countenance any form of "abolitionism. Multitudes of Democrats were equally indignant, and were quite ready to join hands with the Whigs in branding slavery with the violation of its plighted faith. Both made the sacredness of the bargain of 1820 and the crime of its violation the sole bass of their hostility. Their hatred of slavery was geographical, spending its force north of the Missouri restriction. They talked far more eloquently about the duty of keeping covenants, and the wickedness of reviving sectional agitation, than the evils of slavery and the cold-blooded conspiracy to spread it over an empire of free soil. Their watch-word and rallying cry was "the restoration of the Missouri Compromise;" but this demand was not made merely as a preliminary to other measures, which would restore the free States to the complete assertion of their constitutional rights, but as a means of propitiating the spirit of compromise, and a convenient retreat to the adjustment acts of 1850 and the "finality" platform of 1852. In some States and localities the antislavery position of these parties was somewhat broader; but as a general rule the ground on which they marshaled their forces was substantially what I have stated.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.213–p.214

The position of the Free-Soilers was radically different. They opposed slavery upon principle, and irrespective of any compact or compromise. They did not demand the restoration of the Missouri Compromise; and although they rejoiced at the popular condemnation of the perfidy which had repealed it, they regarded it as a false issue. It was an instrument on which different tunes could be played. To restore this compromise would prevent the spread of slavery over soil that was free; but it would reaffirm the binding obligation of a compact that should never have been made, and from which we were now offered a favorable opportunity of deliverance….

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.214

The situation was complicated by two other political elements. One of these was Temperance, which now, for the first time, had become a most absorbing political issue. The "Maine Law" agitation had reached the West, and the demand of the temperance leaders was "search, seizure, confiscation, and destruction of liquors kept for illegal sale." . . .

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.214–p.215

The other element refer?ed to made its appearance in the closing months of 1853, and took the name of the Know-Nothing Party. It was a secret oath-bound political order, and its demand was the proscription of Catholics and a probation of twenty-one years for the foreigner as a qualification for the right of suffrage. Its career was as remarkable as it was disgraceful. Thousands were made to believe that the Romish hierarchy was about to overthrow our liberties, and that the evils of "foreignism" had become so alarming as to justify the extraordinary measures by which it was proposed to counteract them…. It drew to itself, as the great festering center of corruption, all the known rascalities of the previous generation and assigned them to active duty in its service. It was an embodied lie of the first magnitude, a horrid conspiracy against decency, the rights of man, and the principle of human brotherhood.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.215

Its birth, simultaneously with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was not an accident, as any one could see who had studied the tactics of the slaveholders. It was a well-timed scheme to divide the people of the free States upon trifles and side issues, while the South remained a unit in defense of its great interest. It was the cunning attempt to balk and divert the indignation aroused by the repeal of the Missouri restriction, which else would spend its force upon the aggressions of slavery; for by thus kindling the Protestant jealousy of our people against the Pope, and enlisting them in a crusade against the foreigner, the South could all the more successfully push forward its schemes….

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.215–p.216

Such were the elements which mingled and commingled in the political ferment of 1854, and out of which an anti-slavery party was to be evolved capable of trying conclusions with the perfectly disciplined power of slavery. The problem was exceedingly difficult, and could not be solved in a day. The necessary conditions of progress could not be slighted, and the element of time must necessarily be a large one in the grand movement which was to come. The dispersion of the old parties was one thing, but the organization of their fragments into a new one on a just basis was quite a different thing. The honor of taking the first step in the formation of the Republican party belongs to Michigan, where the Whigs and Free Soilers met in State convention on the sixth of July, formed a complete fusion into one party, and adopted the name Republican. This action was followed soon after by like movements in the States of Wisconsin and Vermont. In Indiana a State "fusion" convention was held on the thirteenth of July, which adopted a platform, nominated a ticket, and called the new movement the "People's Party." The platform, however, was narrow and equivocal, and the ticket nominated had been agreed on the day before by the Know-Nothings, in secret conclave, as the outside world afterward learned. The ticket was elected, but it was done by combining opposite and irreconcilable elements, and was not only barren of good fruits but prolific of bad ones, through its demoralizing example; for the same dishonest game was attempted the year following, and was overwhelmingly defeated by the Democrats.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.216–p.217

In New York the Whigs refused to disband, and the attempt to form a new party failed. The same was true of Massachusetts and Ohio. The latter State, however, in 1855, fell into the Republican column, and nominated Mr. Chase for Governor, who was elected by a large majority. A Republican movement was attempted this year in Massachusetts, where conservative Whiggery and Know-Nothingism blocked the way of progress, as they did also in the State of New York. In November of the year 1854 the Know-Nothing Party held a National Convention in Cincinnati, in which the hand of slavery was clearly revealed, and the "Third Degree," or proslavery obligation of the order, was adopted; and it was estimated that at least a million and a half of men afterward bound themselves by this obligation In June of the following year another National Convention of the order was held in Philadelphia, and at this convention the party was finally disrupted on the issue of slavery, and its errand of mischief henceforward prosecuted by fragmentary and irregular methods; but even the Northern wing of this Order was untrustworthy on the slavery issue, having proposed, as a condition of union, to limit its anti-slavery demand to the restoration of the Missouri restriction and the admission of Kansas and Nebraska as free States.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.217–p.218

. . . An unprecedented struggle for the Speakership began with the opening of the Thirty-fourth Congress, and lasted till the second day of February, when the free States finally achieved their first victory in the election of Banks. Northern manhood at last was at a premium, and this was largely the fruit of the "border ruffian" attempts to make Kansas a slave State, which had stirred the blood of the people during the year 1855. In the meantime, the arbitrary enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act still further contributed to the growth of an anti-slavery opinion. The famous case of Anthony Burns in Boston, the prosecution of S. M. Booth in Wisconsin, and the decision of the Supreme Court of that State, the imprisonment of Passmore Williamson in Philadelphia, and the outrageous rulings of Judge Kane, and the case of Margaret Garner in Ohio, all played their part in preparing the people of the free States for organized political action against the aggressions of slavery.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.218–p.219

Near the close of the year 1855, the chairmen of the Republican State Committees of Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Wisconsin issued a call for a National Republican Convention to be held at Pittsburgh, on the 22d of February, 1856, for the purpose of organizing a National Republican party, and making provision for a subsequent convention to nominate candidates for President and Vice President. It was very largely attended, and bore witness to the spirit and courage which the desperate measures of the slave oligarchy had awakened throughout the Northern States. All the free States were represented, and eight of the slave holding ones…. The convention assembled in Lafayette Hall and the Hon. John A. King, of New York, a son of Rufus King, was made temporary chairman, and Francis P. Blair, of Maryland, the intimate friend of President Jackson, was made its permanent president. It was quite manifest that it was a Republican Convention, and not a mere aggregation of Whigs, Know-Nothings and dissatisfied Democrats. It contained a considerable Know-Nothing element, but it made no attempt at leadership…. The convention was in session two days, and was singularly harmonious throughout. Its resolutions and addresses to the people did not fitly echo the feeling and purpose of its members, but this was a preliminary movement, and it was evident that nothing could stay the progress of the cause. As chairman of the committee on organization, I had the honor to report the plan of action through which the new party took life, providing for the appointment of a National Executive Committee, the holding of a National Convention in Philadelphia on the seventeenth of June, for the nomination of candidates for President and Vice-President, and the organization of party in counties and districts throughout the States.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.219–p.220

The Philadelphia convention was very large, and marked by unbounded enthusiasm. The spirit of liberty was up, and side issues forgotten. If Know-Nothingism was present, it prudently accepted an attitude of subordination. The platform reasserted the self-evident truth of the Declaration of Independence, and denied that Congress, the people of a Territory, or any other authority, could give legal existence to slavery in any Territory of the United States. It asserted the sovereign power of Congress over the Territories, and its right and duty to prohibit it therein. Know-Nothingism received no recognition, and the double-faced issue of the restoration of the Missouri Compromise was disowned, while the freedom of Kansas was dealt with as a mere incident of the conflict between liberty and slavery. On this broad platform John C. Fremont was nominated for President on the first ballot, and William L. Dayton was unanimously nominated for Vice-President.

Julian, Rise of the Republican Party, America, Vol.7, p.220

The National Republican Party was thus splendidly launched, and nothing seemed to stand in the way of its triumph but the mischievous action of the Know-Nothing Party, and a surviving faction of pro-slavery Whigs….

Commodore Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan

Title: Commodore Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan

Author: Reports and Correspondence Published by Order of Congress

Date: 1856

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.171-193

Matthew Calbraith Perry was a younger brother of Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of the Battle of Lake Erie. Graduating from Annapolis, he served in the War of 1812, and in 1819 convoyed the first colony of negroes from this country to Africa, selecting the site of the future Monrovia.

His record and ability prompted the Czar Nicholas to offer him a high command in the Russian Navy, in 1829, which he declined. He commanded the squadron sent to Africa, in 1843, to enforce the Webster-Ashburton Treaty; and in the Mexican War he commanded the fleet which co-operated with General Scott, successfully bombarding Vera Cruz.

Commodore Perry's chief title to fame, however, lies in his wise and efficient organization and command of the expedition to Japan during 1852-3-4, after many vain attempts by western powers to establish trade and general relations with that hermit nation. This account was published in 1856.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.171–p.172

THE day appointed for the reception of a reply from Yedo (Tuesday, July 12, 1853) had now arrived. Accordingly, at about half past nine o'clock in the morning, three boats were seen to approach the steamer "Susquehanna" from the shores of Uraga. These were different from the usual government craft, and seemed, unlike the others, to be built after an European model; the rowers sat to their oars, and moved them as our boatmen do, though somewhat awkwardly, instead of standing and sculling at the sides, in accordance with the usual Japanese practice. The construction of the boats was evidently very strong, and their models fair. Their masts, sails, and rigging were of the ordinary Japanese fashion. The crews were numerous, there being thirty in the largest boat, and thirteen in each of the others, and their great swarthy frames were clothed in the usual uniform of loose blue dresses slashed with white stripes.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.172

The boat in advance was distinguished, in addition to the government mark of a horizontal black stripe across her broad sail, by the black and white flag, which indicated the presence of some officers of distinction, and such in fact were now on board of her. As she approached nearer to the ship, the governor, Kayama Yezaiman, in his rich' silken robes, was recognized, seated on mats spread in the center of the deck of the vessel, and surrounded by his interpreters and suite.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.172

The advance boat now came alongside, leaving the other two floating at some distance from the "Susquehanna." His Highness, Kayama Yezaiman, with his two interpreters, Hori Tatznoske, the principal, and Fatcisko Tokushumo, his second, were admitted at once on board, and, having been received with due formality, were ushered into the presence of Captains Buchanan and Adams, who were prepared to communicate with them.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.172

The Commodore had, previously to the arrival of the governor, written the following letter to the Emperor:—

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.173

 United States Steam Frigate "Susquehanna,"

Uraga, July 12, 1853.

The Commander-in-Chief of the United States naval forces in these seas, being invested with full powers to negotiate treaties, is desirous of conferring with one of the highest officers of the Empire of Japan, in view of making arrangements for the presentation of the original of his letter of credence, as also the original of a letter with which he is charged, addressed to his Imperial Majesty by the President of the United States.

It is hoped that an early day will be appointed for the proposed interview.

To his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.173–p.174

The governor's first statement was to the effect that there had been a misapprehension as to the delivery of the translations of the papers before the originals had been received. Although the Commodore was certain that there had been no such misunderstanding, nevertheless he, on the second interview in the course of the afternoon, consented, after much discussion, to deliver the translations and originals, as also a letter from himself to the Emperor, at the same time, provided the latter should appoint a suitable officer to receive them directly from the hands of the Commodore, who repeated that he would consent to present them to no other than a Japanese dignitary of the highest rank. The governor then said that a building would be erected on shore for the reception of the Commodore and his suite, and that a high official personage, specially appointed by the Emperor, would be in attendance to receive the letters. He, however, added that no answer would be given in the bay of Yedo, but that it would be transmitted to Nagasaki, through the Dutch or Chinese superintendents. This being reported to the Commodore, he wrote the following memorandum and directed it to be translated into Dutch, and fully explained to the governor:—

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.174

"The Commander-in-Chief will not go to Nagasaki, and will receive no communication through the Dutch or Chinese.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.174

"He has a letter from the President of the United States to deliver to the Emperor of Japan, or to his secretary of foreign affairs, and he will deliver the original to none other: if this friendly letter of the President to the Emperor is not received and duly replied to, he will consider his country insulted, and will not hold himself accountable for the consequences.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.174

"He expects a reply of some sort in a few days, and he will receive such reply nowhere but in this neighborhood." [Bay of Uraga.]

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.174–p.175

When this was communicated to the governor, he took his departure, probably to consult some higher authority, as doubtless there was more than one high officer of the court at Uraga, secretly directing the negotiations. The interview had lasted three hours, and it was fully one o'clock before the governor left the ship. All passed in the most quiet way without any interruption to the usual courtesies of friendly negotiation. The shore showed every indication of tranquillity, and no movement was observed on the part of the fortresses or the many government boats along the shore.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.175

The governor, in accordance with his promise on leaving in the morning, returned in the afternoon accompanied, as usual by his interpreters and suite. He came off, however, in one of the ordinary Japanese boats, and not, as earlier in the day, in the vessel built after the European model. Captains Buchanan and Adams were in readiness to receive the party, and resumed the renewed conference with the same form and ceremony as before; the Commodore still preserving his seclusion and communicating with the Japanese only through others….

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.175–p.176

The next day was Wednesday (July 13), and the visit of the governor was naturally expected at an early hour, in fulfilment of his promise. There was, however, no indication through the morning of his coming, and everything remained in a state of tranquil expectation. There seemed to be some little movement on the part of the authorities, as far as could be gathered from an observation of the neighboring land. From the opposite shores numerous vessels, loaded with soldiers, crossed to the Uraga side, and a large junk with the usual government flag and insignia put into the harbor. The brisk trade of the bay was carried On as usual, and Japanese boats, both large and small, were moving up and down in constant circulation. The various towns and villages grouped about the bay were thus interchanging their elements of life, and, stimulated into commercial activity by the throb from the busy heart of the great city, poured into Yedo their overflowing abundance. There were no less than sixty-seven junks counted as passing up the bay during the single day….

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.176

The expected visit of the governor occurred at last, at about four o'clock in the afternoon. His highness Kayama Yezaiman, accompanied, as usual, by his first and second interpreters, presented himself, with a thousand apologies for not having come earlier, as the high officer from Yedo had but just arrived The apologies having been made, the governor exhibited the original order of the Emperor, addressed to the functionary who had been appointed to receive the Commodore. The Emperor's letter was short, and was certified by a large seal attached to it. This imperial epistle, which was wrapped in velvet, and enclosed in a box made of sandal-wood, was treated by the governor with such reverence that he would allow no one to touch it. A copy of it in Dutch, and a certificate verifying the authenticity of the document, and of the Emperor's seal attached thereto, given under the hand of Kayama Yezaiman, the governor, were also presented. The translations were as follows:—

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.177

TRANSLATION OF LETTER OF CREDENCE GIVEN BY THE EMPEROR

OF JAPAN TO HIS HIGHNESS, TODA, PRINCE OF INZU.

I send you to Uraga to receive the letter of the President of the United States to me, which letter has recently been brought to Uraga by the Admiral, upon receiving which you will proceed to Yedo, and take the same to me.

[Here is the Emperor's seal.]

Sixth month in 1853.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.177

TRANSLATION OF CERTIFICATE OF KAYAMA YEZAIMAN, GOVERNOR OF

URAGA, VERIFYING THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EMPEROR'S LETTER AND SEAL.

You can rest assured that the high officer who has been accredited by the Emperor of Japan himself, and who consequently comes here to Uraga from Yedo for the purpose of receiving the original and translated letters, is of very high rank, equal to that of the Lord Admiral. I do assure that.

KAYAMA YEZAIMAN.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.177–p.178

The governor, in the course of the conference, took care to state that the person appointed by the Emperor had no authority to enter into discussions with the Commodore, but was merely empowered to receive the papers and convey them to his sovereign. He also stated that he had made inquiry as to the practicability of changing the place of meeting, and said that, as a suitable building had already been erected, it would be inconvenient to change. The Commodore was prepared for this reply, and, as he could not know whether any treachery was intended or not, he had determined to provide, as far as he could, against every contingency, and had therefore ordered the surveying party to examine the little bay at the head of which the building had been erected for his reception. The officers sent upon this service promptly performed the duty, and reported that the ships could be brought within gunshot of the place, where great numbers of the people had been observed employed in the completion of the building, in transporting furniture, and in otherwise preparing for the occasion.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.178

The governor offered to accompany a boat to the place appointed for the reception, but this was declined, and he was informed that, as it did not befit the dignity of the Commodore to proceed a long distance in a small boat, the squadron would be removed to a position nearer the building designed for the reception. It was then agreed that the Commodore and his party should leave the ships between eight and nine o'clock the next day (Thursday), although the Japanese seemed particularly anxious that the interview should take place at an earlier hour, assigning as a reason that the heat of the day might thus be avoided. . .

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.178–p.179

Thursday (July 14) opened with a sun that was somewhat obscured at early dawn, but which soon came out brightly and dispelled the fogs and clouds which overhung the land and seemed to give an inauspicious aspect to the occasion. As the atmosphere cleared and the shores were disclosed to view, the steady labors of the Japanese during the night were revealed in the showy effect on the Uraga shore. Ornamental screens of cloth had been so arranged as to give a more distinct prominence, as well as the appearance of greater size to the bastions and forts; and two tents had been spread among the trees. The screens were stretched tightly in the usual way upon posts of wood, and each interval between the posts was thus distinctly marked, and had, in the distance, the appearance of panelling. Upon these seeming panels were emblazoned the imperial arms, alternating with the device of a scarlet flower bearing large heart-shaped leaves. Flags and streamers, upon which were various designs represented in gay colors, hung from the several angles of the screens, while behind them thronged crowds of soldiers, arrayed in a costume which had not been before observed, and which was supposed to belong to high occasions only. The main portion of the dress was a species of frock of a dark color, with short skirts, the waists of which were gathered in with a sash, and which was without sleeves, the arms of the wearers being bare.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.179–p.180

All on board the ships were alert from the earliest hour, making the necessary preparations. Steam was got up and the anchors were weighed that the ships might be moved to a position where their guns could command the place of reception. The sailing vessels, however, because of the calm, were unable to get into position. The officers, seamen, and marines who were to accompany the Commodore were selected, and as large a number Of them mustered as could possibly be spared from the whole squadron. All, of course, were eager to bear a part in the ceremonies of the day, but all could not possibly go, as a sufficient number must be left to do ships' duty. Many of the officers and men were selected by lot, and when the full complement, which amounted to nearly three hundred, was filled up, each one busied himself getting his person ready for the occasion. The officers, as had been ordered, were in full official dress, while the sailors and marines were in their naval and military uniforms of blue and white.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.180–p.181

Before eight bells in the morning watch had struck, the "Susquehanna" and "Mississippi" moved slowly down the bay. Simultaneously with this movement of our ships, six Japanese boats were observed to sail in the same direction, but more within the land. The government striped flag distinguished two of them, showing the presence of some high officials, while the others carried red banners, and were supposed to have on board a retinue or guard of soldiers. On doubling the headland, which separated the former anchorage from the bay below, the preparations of the Japanese on the shore came suddenly into view. The land bordering the head of the bay was gay with a long stretch of painted screens of cloth, upon which was emblazoned the arms of the Emperor. Nine tall standards stood in the center of an immense number of banners of divers lively colors, which were ar ranged on either side, until the whole formed a crescent of variously tinted flags, which fluttered brightly in the rays of the morning sun. From the tall standards were suspended broad pennons of rich scarlet which swept the ground with their flowing length. On the beach in front of this display were ranged regiments of soldiers, who stood in fixed order, evidently arrayed to give an appearance of martial force, that the Americans might be duly impressed with the military power of the Japanese.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.181–p.182

As the beholder faced the bay, he saw on the left of the village of Gori-Hama a straggling group of peak-roofed houses, built between the beach and the base of the high ground which ran in green acclivities behind, and ascended from height to height to tho distant mountains. A luxuriant valley or gorge, walled in with richly wooded hills, opened at the head of the bay, and, breaking the uniformity of the curve of the shore, gave a beautiful variety to the landscape. On the right some hundred Japanese boats, or more, were arranged in parallel lines along the margin of the shore, with a red flag flying at the stern of each. The whole effect, though not startling, was novel and cheerful, and everything combined to give a pleasing aspect to the picture. The day was bright, with a clear sunlight which seemed to give fresh vitality alike to the verdant hillsides and the gay banners and the glittering soldiery. Back from the beach,' opposite the center of the curved shore of the bay, the building, just constructed for the reception, rose in three pyramidal-shaped roofs, high above the surrounding houses. It was covered in front by striped cloth, which was extended in screens to either side. It had a new, fresh look, indicative of its recent erection, and with its peaked summits was not unlike, in the distance, a group Of very large ricks of grain.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.182–p.183

Two boats approached as the steamers neared the Opening of the bay, and when the anchors were dropped they came alongside the "Susquehanna." Kayama Yezaiman, with his two interpreters, came on board, followed immediately by Nagazima Saboroske and an officer in attendance, who had come in the second boat. They were duly received at the gangway and conducted to seats on the quarter deck. All were dressed in full official costume, somewhat different from their ordinary garments. Their gowns, though of the usual shape, were much more elaborately adorned. The material was of very rich silk brocade of gay colors, turned up with yellow velvet, and the whole dress was highly embroidered with gold lace in various figures, among which was conspicuously displayed on the back, sleeves, and breast the arms of the wearer. Saboroske, the sub-governor of Uraga, wore a pair of very broad but very short trousers, which, when his legs (which was not often the case) stood still and together, looked very much like a slit petticoat, while below his nether limbs were partly naked and partly covered by black woolen socks. Saboroske, in spite of his elaborate toilette and his finery, all bedizened with gold thread, glossy silk, and gay colors, did not produce a very impressive effect, but by his comical appearance provoked mirth rather than admiration. He had, in fact, very much the appearance of an unusually brilliant knave of trumps.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.183

A signal was now hoisted from the "Susquehanna" as a summons for the boats from the other ships, and in the course of half an hour they had all pulled alongside with their various officers, sailors, and marines, detailed for the day's ceremonies. The launches and cutters numbered no less than fifteen, and presented quite an imposing array; and with all on board them, in proper uniform, a picturesque effect was not wanting. Captain Buchanan, having taken his place in his barge, led the way, flanked on either side by the two Japanese boats containing the governor and vice-governor of Uraga with their respective suites; and these dignitaries acted as masters of ceremony and pointed out the course to the American flotilla. The rest of the ships' boats followed after in order, with the cutters, containing the two bands of the steamers, who enlivened the occasion with their cheerful music.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.183–p.184

The boats skimmed briskly over the smooth waters; for such was the skill and consequent rapidity of the Japanese scullers that our sturdy oarsmen were put to their mettle to keep up with their guides. When the boats had reached half-way to the shore, the thirteen guns of the "Susquehanna" began to boom away and re-echo among the hills. This announced the departure of the Commodore, who, stepping into his barge, was rowed off to the land.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.184–p.185

The guides in the Japanese boats pointed to the landing place toward the center of the curved shore, where a temporary wharf had been built out from the beach by means of bags of sand and straw. The advance boat soon touched the spot, and Captain Buchanan, who commanded the party, sprang ashore, being the first of the Americans who landed in the Kingdom of Japan. He was immediately followed by Major Zeilin, of the marines. The rest of the boats now pulled in and disembarked their respective loads. The marines (one hundred) marched up the wharf and formed into line on either side, facing the sea; then came the hundred sailors, who were also ranged in rank and file as they advanced, while the two bands brought up the rear. The whole number of Americans, including sailors, marines, musicians, and officers, amounted to nearly three hundred; no very formidable array, but still quite enough for a peaceful occasion, and composed of very vigorous, able-bodied men, who contrasted strongly with the smaller and more effeminate-looking Japanese. These latter had mustered in great force, the amount of which the governor of Uraga stated to be five thousand; but, seemingly, they far outnumbered that. Their line extended around the whole circuit of the beach, from the further extremity of the village to the abrupt acclivity of the hill which bounded the bay on the northern side; while an immense number of the soldiers thronged in, behind and under cover of the cloth screens which stretched along the rear. The loose order of this Japanese army did not betoken any very great degree of discipline. The soldiers were tolerably well armed and equipped. Their uniform was very much like the ordinary Japanese dress. Their arms were swords, spears, and match-locks. Those in front were all infantry, archers and lancers; but large bodies of cavalry were seen behind, somewhat in the distance, as if held in reserve. The horses of these seemed of a fine breed, hardy, of good bottom, and brisk in action; and these troopers, with their rich caparisons, presented at least a showy cavalcade. Along the base of the rising ground which ascended behind the village, and entirely in the rear of the soldiers, was a large number of the inhabitants, among whom there was quite an assemblage of women, who gazed with intense curiosity, through the openings in the line of the military, upon the stranger visitors from another hemisphere.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.185–p.186

On the arrival of the Commodore his suite of officers formed a double line along the landing place, and, as he passed up between, they fell into order behind him. The procession was then formed and took up its march toward the house of reception, the route to which was pointed out by Kayama Yezaiman and his interpreter, who preceded the party. The marines led the way, and, the sailors following, the Commodore was duly escorted up the beach. The United States flag and the broad pennant were borne by two athletic seamen, who had been selected from the crews of their squadron On account Of their stalwart proportions. Two boys, dressed for the ceremony, preceded the Commodore, bearing in an envelope of scarlet cloth the boxes which contained his credentials and the President's letter. These documents, of folio size, were beautifully written on vellum, and not folded, but bound in blue silk velvet. Each seal, attached by cords of interwoven gold and silk with pendant gold tassels, was encased in a circular box six inches in diameter and three in depth, wrought of pure gold. Each of the documents, together with its seal, was placed in a box of rosewood about a foot long, with lock, hinges, and mountings, all of gold. On either side of the Commodore marched a tall, well-formed negro, who, armed to the teeth, acted as his personal guard. These blacks, selected for the occasion, were two of the best-looking fellows of their color that the squadron could furnish. All this, of course, was but for effect.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.186–p.187

The procession was obliged to make a somewhat circular movement to reach the entrance of the house of reception. This gave a good opportunity for the display of the escort. The building, which was but a short distance from the landing, was soon reached. In front of the entrance were two small brass cannon, which were old and apparently of European manufacture; on either side were grouped a rather straggling company of Japanese guards, whose costume was different from that of the other soldiers. Those on the right were dressed in tunics, gathered in at the waist with broad sashes, and in full trousers of a gray color, the capacious width of which was drawn in at the knees, while their heads were bound with a white cloth in the form of a turban. They were armed with muskets upon which bayonets and flint-locks were observed. The guards on the left were dressed in a rather dingy, brown-colored uniform turned up with yellow, and carried old-fashioned match-locks.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.187–p.188

The Commodore, having been escorted to the door of the house of reception, entered with his suite. The building showed marks of hasty erection, and the timbers and boards of pine wood were numbered, as if they had been fashioned previously and brought to the spot all ready to be put together. The first portion of the structure entered was a kind of tent, principally constructed of painted canvas, upon which in various places the imperial arms was painted. Its area enclosed a space of nearly forty feet square. Beyond this entrance hall was an inner apartment to which a carpeted path led. The floor of the outer room was generally covered with white cloth, but through its center passed a slip of red-colored carpet, which showed the direction to the interior chamber. This latter was entirely carpeted with red cloth, and was the state apartment of the building where the reception was to take place. Its floor was somewhat raised, like a dais, above the general level, and was handsomely adorned for the occasion. Violet-colored hangings of silk and fine cotton, with the imperial coat-of-arms embroidered in white, hung from the walls which enclosed the inner room, on three sides, while the front was left open to the antechamber or outer room.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.188

As the Commodore and his suite ascended to the reception room, the two dignitaries who were seated on the left arose and bowed, and the Commodore and suite were conducted to the arm-chairs which had been provided for them on the right. The interpreters announced the names and titles of the high Japanese functionaries as "Toda-Idzu-no-kami," Toda, prince of Idzu, and "Ido-Iwami-no-kami," Ido, prince of Iwami. They were both men of advanced years, the former apparently about fifty, and the latter some ten or fifteen years older. Prince Toda was the better-looking man of the two, and the intellectual expression of his large forehead and amiable look of his regular features contrasted very favorably with the more wrinkled and contracted and less intelligent face of his associate, the prince of Iwami. They were both very richly dressed, their garments being of heavy silk brocade interwoven with elaborately wrought figures in gold and silver.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.188–p.189

From the beginning, the two princes had assumed an air of statuesque formality which they preserved during the whole interview, as they never spoke a word, and rose from their seats only at the entrance and exit of the Commodore, when they made a grave and formal bow. Yezaiman and his interpreters acted as masters of ceremony during the occasion. On entering, they took their positions at the upper end of the room, kneeling down beside a large lacquered box of scarlet color, supported by feet, gilt or of brass.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.189–p.190

For some time after the Commodore and his suite had taken their seats there was a pause of some minutes, not a word being uttered on either side. Tatznoske, the principal interpreter, was the first to break silence, which he did by asking Mr. Portman, the Dutch interpreter, whether the letters were ready for delivery, and stating that the prince Toda was prepared to receive them; and that the scarlet box at the upper end of the room was prepared as the receptacle for them. The Commodore, upon this being communicated to him, beckoned to the boys who stood in the lower hall to advance, when they immediately obeyed his summons and came forward, bearing the handsome boxes which contained the President's letter and other documents. The two stalwart negroes followed immediately in rear of the boys, and, marching up to the scarlet receptacle, received the boxes from the hands of the bearers, opened them, took out the letters, and, displaying the writing and seals, laid them upon the lid of the Japanese box—all in perfect silence. The President's letter, the Commodore's letter of credence, and two communications from the Commodore to the Emperor are here given. A third letter from him has already been presented on a previous page. All these, however, accompanied the letter from the President and were delivered at the same time with it.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.190

MILLARD FILLMORE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF

AMERICA, TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, THE EMPEROR

OF JAPAN.

Great and good Friend: I send you this public letter by Commodore Matthew C. Perry, an officer of the highest rank in the navy of the United States, and commander of the squadron now visiting your imperial majesty's dominions.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.190

I have directed Commodore Perry to assure your imperial majesty that I entertain the kindest feelings toward your majesty's person and government, and that I have no other object in sending him to Japan but to propose to your imperial majesty that the United States and Japan should live in friendship and have commercial intercourse with each other.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.190

The Constitution and laws of the United States forbid all interference with the religious or political concerns of other nations. I have particularly charged Commodore Perry to abstain from every act which could possibly disturb the tranquillity of your imperial majesty's dominions.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.190

The United States of America reach from ocean to ocean, and our Territory of Oregon and State of California lie directly opposite to the dominions of your imperial majesty. Our steamships can go from California to Japan in eighteen days.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.191

Our great State of California produces about sixty millions of dollars in gold every year, besides silver, quicksilver, precious stones, and many other valuable articles. Japan is also a rich and fertile country, and produces many very valuable articles. Your imperial majesty's subjects are skilled in many of the arts. I am desirous that our two countries should trade with each other, for the benefit both of Japan and the United States.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.191

We know that the ancient laws of your imperial majesty's government do not allow of foreign trade, except with the Chinese and the Dutch; but, as the state of the world changes and new governments are formed, it seems to be wise, from time to time, to make new laws. There was a time when the ancient laws of your imperial majesty's government were first made.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.191

About the same time America, which is sometimes called the New World, was first discovered and settled by the Europeans. For a long time there were but a few people, and they were poor. They have now become quite numerous; their commerce is very extensive; and they think that if your imperial majesty were so far to change the ancient laws as to allow a free trade between the two countries it would be extremely beneficial to both.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.191–p.192

If your imperial majesty is not satisfied that it would be safe altogether to abrogate the ancient laws which forbid foreign trade, they might be suspended for five or ten years, so as to try the experiment. If it does not prove as beneficial as was hoped, the ancient laws can be restored. The United States often limit their treaties with foreign States to a few years, and then renew them or not, as they please.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.192

I have directed Commodore Perry to mention another thing to your imperial majesty. Many of our ships pass ever year from California to China; and great numbers of our people pursue the whale fishery near the shores of Japan. It sometimes happens, in stormy weather, that one of our ships is wrecked on your imperial majesty's shores. In all such cases we ask, and expect, that our unfortunate people should be treated with kindness, and that their property should be protected till we can send a vessel and bring them away. We are very much in earnest in this.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.192

Commodore Perry is also directed by me to represent to your imperial majesty that we understand there is a great abundance of coal and provisions in the Empire of Japan. Our steamships, in crossing the great ocean, burn a great deal of coal, and it is not convenient to bring it all the way from America. We wish that our steamships and other vessels should be allowed to stop in Japan and supply themselves with coal, provisions and water. They will pay for them in money, or anything else your imperial majesty's subjects may prefer; and we request your imperial majesty to appoint a convenient port, in the southern part of the Empire, where our vessels may stop for this purpose. We are very desirous of this.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.193

These are the only objects for which I have sent Commodore Perry, with a powerful squadron, to pay a visit to your imperial majesty's renowned city of Yedo: friendship, commerce, a supply of coal and provisions, and protection for our shipwrecked people.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.193

We have directed Commodore Perry to beg your imperial majesty's acceptance of a few presents. They are of no great value in themselves; but some of them may serve as specimens of the articles manufactured in the United States, and they are intended as tokens of our sincere and respectful friendship.

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.193

May the Almighty have your imperial majesty in His great and holy keeping!

Perry Negotiates a Treaty with Japan, America, Vol.7, p.193

In witness whereof, I have caused the great seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed, and have subscribed the same with my name, at the city of Washington, in America, the seat of my government, on the thirteenth day of the month of November, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two.

 [Seal attached.]

 Your good friend,

 MILLARD FILLMORE.

 EDWARD EVERETT.

 Secretary of State.

 By the President:

Civil War in Kansas

Title: Civil War in Kansas

Author: Thomas H. Gladstone

Date: 1856

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.221-228

This account of the guerilla warfare carried on by the rival Pro-Slavery and Free State Parties in Kansas during 1855-6 is by a kinsman of the great English Prime Minister, William E. Gladstone, who was touring the United States when he witnessed the events here described. His observations ere to a large extent from the pro-slavery side; and his correspondence, first published in the London "Times," is perhaps the most impartial existing contemporary narrative of that border-state struggle.

Following the sacking of Lawrence by the Pro-Slavery men occurred the massacre of five men on Pottowatomie Creek by John Brown and his son, on May 23, 1856. Thus begun, the border war continued through the month of June until Federal troops suppressed the combatants. On July 4, 1856, the Free-State Legislature met at Topeka, but was dispersed.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.221–p.222

The autumn of 1854 witnessed the erection of the first log-huts of Lawrence [Kansas] by a few families of New England settlers. During the year 1855 its population increased rapidly, chiefly by the arrival of emigrants from the Northern States. Its log-hut existence gave way to a more advanced stage, in which buildings of brick and stone were introduced; and the growing prosperity of the "Yankee town" early began to excite the jealousy of the abettors of slavery. Viewed as the stronghold of the Free-State Party, it was made the point of attack during what was called "the Wakarusa war" in the winter of 1855. Before the termination of this its first siege, the necessity of some means of defense being manifest, the inhabitants of Lawrence proceeded to fortify their town by the erection of four or five circular earthworks, thrown up about seven feet in height, and measuring a hundred feet in diameter. These were connected with long lines of earthwork entrenchments, rifle-pits, and other means of fortification. Whilst these engineering operations were being carried on, the men might have been seen, day and night, working in the trenches, in haste to complete the defense of their Western Sebastopol. The inhabitants were also placed under arms, formed into companies, with their respective commanders, under the generalship of Robinson and Lane, had their daily drill, mounted guard day and night upon the forts, and sent out at night a horse-patrol to watch the outer posts, and give warning of approaching danger.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.222

The pacification which followed the Wakarusa campaign in December, 1855, afforded only a temporary lull. Although war had ceased, the people did not cease to carry arms, and used them, when occasion offered, with fatal effect. The Missourians did not conceal that they were organizing another invasion, which should effectually "wipe out Lawrence," and win Kansas for slavery, "though they should wade to the knees in blood to obtain it." The Southern States were being appealed to far and wide to aid by men and money in the extirpation of every Northern settler….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.222–p.223

The month of May arrived, and the state of parties continued as before. The pro-slavery, or, as it was commonly termed, the border-ruffian army, had, how ever, gained strength by large reinforcements from the States. Colonel Buford was there with his determined bands from Alabama, Colonel Titus from Florida, Colonel Wilkes and other with companies from South Carolina and Georgia, all of whom had sworn to fight the battles of the South in Kansas. The President, too, through his Secretary of War, had placed the Federal troops at the command of Governor Shannon, and the Chief Justice Lecompte had declared, in a notable charge to a grand jury, that all who resisted the laws made by the fraudulently elected Legislature were to be found guilty of high treason….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.223

Meanwhile, Sheriff Jones rode about the country with a "posse" of United States troops, arresting whomsoever he pleased; the grand jury declared the Free-State Hotel and the offices of the "Herald of Freedom" and "Kansas Free-State" newspapers in Lawrence to be nuisances, and as such to be removed; Governor Robinson and several other men of influence in the Free-State cause were severally seized and held as prisoners; Free-State men were daily molested in the highway, some robbed, and others killed; and a constantly increasing army was encamping right and left of Lawrence, pressing daily more closely around it, and openly declaring that their intention was to wipe out the traitorous city, and not to leave an abolitionist alive in the territory…. .

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.223–p.224

At length the day approached when Lawrence was to fall. On the night previous to May 21st, could any one have taken a survey of the country around, he would have seen the old encampment at Franklin, four miles to the southeast of Lawrence, which was occupied during the Wakarusa war, again bristling with the arms of Colonel Buford's companies, brought from the States. This formed the lower division of the invading army. On the west of Lawrence, at twelve miles distance, he would have seen another encampment in the neighborhood of Lecompton, occupied by the forces under Colonel Titus and Colonel Wilkes. These were reinforced by General Atchison, with his Platte County Rifles and two pieces of artillery; by Captain Dunn, heading the Kickapoo Rangers; by the Doniphan Tigers, and another company under General Clark, as well as by General Stringfellow, with his brother, the doctor, who had left for a time his editorship to take a military command, and other leaders, who brought up all the lawless rabble of the border-towns, to aid in the attack. These on the west of Lawrence formed the upper division. A large proportion were cavalry. The general control of the troops was in the hands of the United States Marshal, Donaldson, the whole body, of some six or eight hundred armed men, being regarded as a "posse comitatus" to aid this officer in the execution of his duties….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.224–p.225

During the forenoon Fain, the Deputy-Marshal, entered Lawrence with some assistants, to make arrests of its citizens. He failed, however, in provoking the resistance desired, on which to found a pretext for attacking the city; for the citizens permitted the arrests to be made, and responded to his demand for a posse' to aid him….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.225

The United States Marshal had now, he stated, no more need of the troops; but, as Sheriff Jones had some processes to serve in Lawrence, he would hand them over to him as a "posse comitatus."

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.225

Accordingly, in the afternoon, Jones rode into Lawrence at the head of twenty or more men, mounted and armed, and placed himself in front of the Free-State Hotel, demanding of General Pomeroy the surrender of all arms. He gave him five minutes for his decision, failing which the posse would be ordered to bombard the town. General Pomeroy gave up their brass howitzer and some small pieces, the only arms that were not private property. Jones then demanded the removal of the furniture from the the hotel, stating that the District Court for Douglas County had adjudged the hotel and the two Free-State newspaper offices to be nuisances, and as nuisances to be removed, and that he was there as Sheriff to execute these indictments, and summarily remove the obnoxious buildings.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.225

In the mean time the forces had left the hill, and were at the entrance of the town, under Titus and Buford, Atchison and Stringfellow. . .

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.225–p.226

The newspaper offices were the first objects of attack. First that of the "Free-State," then that of the "Herald of Freedom," underwent a thorough demolition. The presses were in each case broken to pieces, and the offending type carried away to the river. The papers and books were treated in like manner, until the soldiers became weary of carrying them to the Kaw, when they thrust them in piles into the street, and burnt, tore, or otherwise destroyed them.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.226

From the printing offices they went to the hotel….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.226

As orders were given to remove the furniture, the wild mob threw the articles out of the windows, but shortly found more congenial employment in emptying the cellars. By this time four cannon had been brought opposite the hotel, and, under Atchison's command, they commenced to batter down the building. In this, however, they failed. The General's "Now, boys, let her rip!" was answered by some of the shot missing the mark, although the breadth of Massachusetts Street alone intervened, and the remainder of some scores of rounds leaving the walls of the hotel unharmed. They then placed kegs of gunpowder in the lower parts of the building, and attempted to blow it up. The only result was the shattering of some of the windows and other limited damage. At length, to complete the work which their own clumsiness or inebriety had rendered difficult hitherto, orders were given to fire the building in a number of places, and, as a consequence, it was soon encircled in a mass of flames. Before evening, all that remained of the Eldridge House was a portion of one wall standing erect, and for the rest a shapeless heap of ruins.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.227

The firing of the cannon had been the signal for most of the women and children in Lawrence to leave the city. This they did, not knowing whither to turn their steps. The male portion of its citizens watched, without offering resistance, the destruction of the buildings named, and next had to see their own houses made the objects of unscrupulous plunder.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.227

The sack of Lawrence occupied the remainder of the afternoon. Sheriff Jones, after gazing on the flames rising from the hotel, and saying that it was "the happiest day of his life," dismissed his "posse," and they immediately commenced their lawless pillage. In this officers and men all participated, and they did not terminate until they had rifled all the principal houses of whatever articles of value they could lay their hands upon, and had destroyed that which they could not carry away. Finally, Governor Robinson's house on Mount Oread was set fire to after it had been searched for papers and valuables, and its burning walls lit up the evening sky as the army of desperadoes, now wild with plunder and excesses, and maddened with drink, retired from the pillaged city.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.227

The value of the property stolen and destroyed during the day in Lawrence is estimated to have amounted to nearly thirty thousand pounds sterling.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.227

Life was fortunately not taken, as the inhabitants of Lawrence disappointed their invaders of a fight, by offering no resistance. . .

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.227–p.228

Among all the scenes of violence I witnessed, it is remarkable that the offending parties were invariably on the Pro-slavery side. The Free-State men appeared to me to be intimidated and overawed, in consequence not merely of the determination and defiant boldness of their opponents, but still more through the sanction given to these acts by the Government.

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.228

I often heard the remark that they would resist, but that they were resolved not to bring themselves into collision with the Federal power….

Gladstone, Civil War in Kansas, America, Vol.7, p.228

Their later conduct, however, was different. In the hands of their oppressors all justice had been set at defiance. They had been driven out of house and home by an armed mob, acting under territorial authority. The Federal power had been appealed to in vain. The Free-State men were driven to desperation. It was but natural that some revulsion of feeling should be experienced. As it was, guerrilla parties were organized by some of the less passive spirits on the Free-State side, corresponding with those already existing amongst their opponents. These thought themselves justified in recovering stolen horses and other property. Other acts of retaliation occurred. In several instances the opposing parties came into collision, and violence ensued. For some time, therefore, after the attack upon Lawrence, an irregular strife was maintained, and a bitter remembrance filled each man's mind, and impelled to daily acts of hostility and not unfrequent bloodshed.

The Crime Against Kansas, Sumner, 1856

The Crime Against Kansas

Title: The Crime Against Kansas

Author: Sumner

Date: 1856

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.160-173

Delivered in the United States Senate, May 15-20, 1856. It was this speech that led to the famous assault on Sumner by Preston S. Brooks. Sumner had severely arraigned Senator Butler of South Carolina, an uncle of Brooks, Brooks being himself a member of Congress from the same State. Two days after Sumner finished his speech, while he was sitting at his desk alone in the Senate-chamber, after the adjournment, Brooks entered and, after speaking a few words, struck Sumner violently on the head with a heavy stick. While Sumner was trying to extricate himself from his seat at the desk, Brooks repeated the blows until Sumner sank to the floor, bloody and senseless. Morefield Storey, one of Sumner's biographers, says Brooks's cane was "a heavy gutta-percha cane" and that the blows were continued "until the cane broke." So great was the excitement produced in the country by this event, that many predicted that civil war would come at once. Sumner was long incapacitated for further work, remaining absent from the Senate nearly four years. An effort was made in the House to expel Brooks. He was censured, but the necessary two-thirds vote for expulsion could not be secured. Brooks then resigned (on July 14), but was reelected by his district in South Carolina, receiving all the votes cast except six, and on August 1 took his seat again.

The judgment of later times on Sumner's speech as an attack on Butler, has not been favorable to Sumner. Rhodes says: "The vituperation was unworthy of him and his cause, and the allusion to Butler's condition while speaking (Butler being absent from Washington at the time, ungenerous and pharisaical." Seward read the speech before its delivery, and in vain advised a toning down of the offensive remarks. Abridged.

Born in 1811, died in 1874; admitted to the Bar in 1834; an unsuccessful Free Soil candidate for Congress in 1848; elected united States Senator by Free Soil and Democratic votes in 1851; assaulted in the Senate by Preston Brooks in 1856; reelected Senator as a Republican in 1857, 1863 and 1869; advocated the Civil Rights Bill for negroes; joined the Liberal Republican party in 1872.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.160

YOU are now called to redress a great transgression. Seldom in the history of nations has such a question been presented. Tariffs, army bills, navy bills, land bills, are important, and justly occupy your care; but these all belong to the course of ordinary legislation. As means and instruments only, they are necessarily subordinate to the conservation of government itself. Grant them or deny them, in greater or less degree, and you will inflict no shock. The machinery of government will continue to move. The State will not cease to exist. Far otherwise is it with the eminent question now before you, involving, as it does, liberty in a broad territory, and also involving the peace of the whole country, with our good name in history for ever more.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.162

Against this Territory, thus fortunate in position and population, a crime has been committed, which is without example in the records of the past. Not in plundered provinces or in the cruelties of selfish governors will you find its parallel; and yet there is an ancient instance, which may show at least the path of justice. In the terrible impeachment by which the great Roman orator has blasted through all time the name of Verres, amid charges of robbery and sacrilege, the enormity which most aroused the indignant voice of his accuser, and which still stands forth with strongest distinctness, arresting the sympathetic indignation of all who read the story, is, that away in Sicily he had scourged a citizen of Rome—that the cry, "I am a Roman citizen," had been interposed in vain against the lash of the tyrant governor. Other charges were that he had carried away productions of art, and that he had violated the sacred shrines. It was in the presence of the Roman Senate that this arraignment proceeded; in a temple of the Forum; amid crowds—such as no orator had ever before drawn together—thronging the porticos and colonnades, even clinging to the housetops and neighboring slopes—and under the anxious gaze of witnesses summoned from the scene of crime.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.163

But an audience grander far—of higher dignity—of more various people, and of wider intelligence—the countless multitude of succeeding generations, in every land where eloquence has been studied, or where the Roman name has been recognized—has listened to the accusation, and throbbed with condemnation of the criminal. Sir, speaking in an age of light, and a land of constitutional liberty, where the safeguards of elections are justly placed among the highest triumphs of civilization, I fearlessly assert that the wrongs of much-abused Sicily, thus memorable in history, were small by the side of the wrongs of Kansas, where the very shrines of popular institutions, more sacred than any heathen altar, have been desecrated; where the ballot-box, more precious than any work, in ivory or marble, from the cunning hand of art, has been plundered; and where the cry, "I am an American citizen," has been interposed in vain against outrage of every kind, even upon life itself. Are you against sacrilege? I present it for your execration. Are you against robbery? I hold it up to your scorn. Are you for the protection of American citizens? I show you how their dearest rights have been cloven down, while a tyrannical usurpation has sought to instal itself on their very necks!

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.164

But the wickedness which I now begin to expose is immeasurably aggravated by the motive which prompted it. Not in any common lust for power did this uncommon tragedy have its origin. It is the rape of a virgin Territory, compelling it to the hateful embrace of slavery; and it may be clearly traced to a depraved longing for a new slave State, the hideous offspring of such a crime, in the hope of adding to the power of slavery in the national government. Yes, sir, when the whole world, alike Christian and Turk, is rising up to condemn this wrong, and to make it a hissing to the nations, here in our Republic, force—ay, sir, FORCE—has been openly employed in compelling Kansas to this pollution, and all for the sake of political power. There is the simple fact which you will in vain attempt to deny, but which in itself presents an essential wickedness that makes other public crimes seem like public virtues.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.165

But this enormity, vast beyond comparison, swells to dimensions of wickedness which the imagination toils in vain to grasp, when it is understood that for this purpose are hazarded the horrors of intestine feud not only in this distant Territory, but everywhere throughout the country. Already the muster has begun. The strife is no longer local but national. Even now, while I speak, portents hang on all the arches of the horizon threatening to darken the broad land which already yawns with the mutterings of civil war; the fury of the propagandists of slavery, and the calm determination of their opponents, are now diffused from the distant Territory over widespread communities, and the whole country, in all its extent—marshaling hostile divisions, and foreshadowing a strife which, unless happily averted by the triumph of freedom, will become war—fratricidal, parricidal war—with an accumulated wickedness beyond the wickedness of any war in human annals, justly provoking the avenging judgment of providence and the avenging pen of history, and constituting a strife, in the language of the ancient writer, more than foreign, more than social, more than civil; but something compounded of all these strifes, and in itself more than war; sed potius commune quoddam ex omnibus, et plus quam bellum.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.165

Such is the crime which you are to judge. But the criminal also must be dragged into day, that you may see and measure the power by which all this wrong is sustained. From no common source could it proceed. In its perpetration was needed a spirit of vaulting ambition which would hesitate at nothing; a hardihood of purpose which was insensible to the judgment of mankind; a madness for slavery which would disregard the Constitution, the laws, and all the great examples of our history; also a consciousness of power such as comes from the habit of power; a combination of energies found only in a hundred arms directed by a hundred eyes; a control of public opinion through venal pens and a prostituted Press; an ability to subsidize crowds in every vocation of life—the politician with his local importance, the lawyer with his subtle tongue, and even the authority of the judge on the bench; and a familiar use of men in places high and low, so that none, from the president to the lowest border postmaster, should decline to be its tool; all these things and more were needed, and they were found in the slave power of our Republic. There, sir, stands the criminal, all unmasked before you—heartless, grasping, and tyrannical—with an audacity beyond that of Verres, a subtlety beyond that of Machiavelli, a meanness beyond that of Bacon, and an ability beyond that of Hastings. Justice to Kansas can be secured only by the prostration of this influence; for this the power behind—greater than any president—which succors and sustains the crime. Nay, the proceedings I now arraign derive their fearful consequences only from this connection.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.167

In now opening this great matter, I am not insensible to the austere demands of the occasion; but the dependence of the crime against Kansas upon the slave power is so peculiar and important, that I trust to be pardoned while I impress it with an illustration which to some may seem trivial. It is related in Northern mythology that the god of Force, visiting an enchanted region, was challenged by his royal entertainer to what seemed a humble feat of strength—merely, sir, to life a cat from the ground. The god smiled at the challenge, and calmly placing his hand under the belly of the animal with superhuman strength strove, while the back of the feline monster arched far upward, even beyond reach, and one paw actually forsook the earth, until at last the discomfited divinity desisted; but he was little surprised at his defeat when he learned that this creature, which seemed to be a cat and nothing more, was not merely a cat, but that it belonged to and was a part of the great Terrestrial Serpent, which, in its innumerable folds, encircled the whole globe. Even so the creature whose paws are now fastened upon Kansas, whatever it may seem to be, constitutes in reality a part of the slave power which, in its loathsome folds, is now coiled about the whole land. Thus do I expose the extent of the present contest, where we encounter not merely local resistance, but also the unconquered sustaining arm behind. But out of the vastness of the crime attempted, with all its woe and shame, I derive a well-founded assurance of a commensurate vastness of effort against it and by the aroused masses of the country, determined not only to vindicate right against wrong, but to redeem the Republic from the thraldom of that oligarchy which prompts, directs, and concentrates the distant wrong.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.168

Such is the crime, and such is the criminal, which it is my duty in this debate to expose, and, by the blessing of God, this duty shall be done completely to the end.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.168

The senator from South Carolina has read many books of chivalry, and believes himself a chivalrous knight with sentiments of honor and courage. Of course he has chosen a mistress to whom he has made his vows, and who, tho ugly to others, is always lovely to him; tho polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight—I mean the harlot, Slavery. For her, his tongue is always profuse in words. Let her be impeached in character, or any proposition made to shut her out from the extension of her wantonness, and no extravagance of manner or hardihood of assertion is then too great for this senator. The frenzy of Don Quixote in behalf of his wench, Dulcinea del Toboso, is all surpassed. The asserted rights of slavery, which shock equality of all kinds, are cloaked by a fantastic claim of equality. If the slave States can not enjoy what, in mockery of the great fathers of the Republic, he misnames equality under the Constitution—in other words, the full power in the national Territories to compel fellow men to unpaid toil, to separate husband and wife, and to sell little children at the auction block—then, sir, the chivalric senator will conduct the State of South Carolina out of the Union! Heroic knight! Exalted senator! A second Moses come for a second exodus!

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.169

But not content with this poor menace, which we have been twice told was "measured," the senator, in the unrestrained chivalry of his nature, has undertaken to apply opprobrious words to those who differ from him on this floor. He calls them "sectional and fanatical"; and opposition to the usurpation in Kansas he denounces as "an uncalculating fanaticism." To be sure these charges lack all grace of originality, and all sentiment of truth; but the adventurous senator does not hesitate. He is the uncompromising, unblushing representative on this floor of a flagrant sectionalism which now domineers over the Republic, and yet with a ludicrous ignorance of his own position—unable to see himself as others see him—or with an effrontery which even his white head ought not to protect from rebuke, he applies to those here who resist his sectionalism the very epithet which designates himself. The men who strive to bring back the government to its original policy, when freedom and not slavery was sectional, he arraigns as sectional. This will not do. It involves too great a perversion of terms. I tell that senator that it is to himself and to the "organization" of which he is the "committed advocate," that this epithet belongs. I now fasten it upon them. For myself, I care little for names; but since the question has been raised here, I affirm that the Republican party of the Union is in no just sense sectional, but, more than any other party, national; and that it now goes forth to dislodge from the high places of the government the tyrannical sectionalism of which the senator from South Carolina is one of the maddest zealots.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.170

With regret I come again upon the senator from South Carolina [Mr. Butler] who, omnipresent in this debate, overflowed with rage at the simple suggestion that Kansas had applied for admission as a State; and, with incoherent phrases, discharged the loose expectoration of his speech, now upon her representative, and then upon her people. There was no extravagance of the ancient parliamentary debate which he did not repeat; nor was there any possible deviation from truth which he did not make, with so much of passion, I am glad to ad, as to save him from the suspicion of intentional aberration. But the senator touches nothing which he does not disfigure with error—sometimes of principle; sometimes of fact. He shows an incapacity of accuracy whether in stating the Constitution or in stating the law; whether in the details of statistics or the diversions of scholarship. He can not open his mouth but out there flies a blunder. Surely he ought to be familiar with the life of Franklin; and yet he referred to this household character, while acting as agent of our fathers in England, as above suspicion; and this was done that he might give point to a false contrast with the agent of Kansas—not knowing that, however they may differ in genius and fame, in this experience they are alike: that Franklin, when intrusted with the petition of Massachusetts Bay, was assaulted by a foul-mouthed speaker, where he could not be heard in defense, and denounced as a "thief," even as the agent of Kansas has been assaulted on this floor and denounced as a "forger." And let not the vanity of the senator be inspired by the parallel with the British statesman of that day; for it is only in hostility to freedom that any parallel can be recognized.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.171

But it is against the people of Kansas that the sensibilities of the senator are particularly aroused. Coming, as he announces, "from a State"—ay, sir, from South Carolina—he turns with lordly disgust from this newly-formed community, which he will not recognize even as a "body politic." Pray, sir, by what title does he indulge in this egotism? Has he read the history of "the State" which he represents? He can not surely have forgotten its shameful imbecility from slavery, confessed throughout the Revolution, followed by its more shameful assumptions for slavery since. He can not have forgotten its wretched persistence in the slave trade as the very apple of its eye, and the condition of its participation in the Union. He can not have forgotten its Constitution, which is Republican only in name, confirming power in the hands of the few, and founding the qualifications of its legislators on "a settled freehold estate and ten negroes."

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.172

And yet the senator, to whom that "State" has in part committed the guardianship of its good name, instead of moving with backward treading steps, to cover its nakedness, rushes forward in the very ecstacy of madness, to expose it by provoking a comparison with Kansas. South Carolina is old; Kansas is young. South Carolina counts by centuries, where Kansas counts by years. But a beneficent example may be born in a day; and I venture to say that against the two centuries of the older "State" may be already set the two years of trial, evolving corresponding virtue, in the younger community. In the one is the long wail of slavery; in the other, the hymns of freedom. And if we glance at special achievements, it will be difficult to find anything in the history of South Carolina which presents so much of heroic spirit in an heroic cause as appears in that repulse of the Missouri invaders by the beleaguered town of Lawrence, where even the women gave their effective efforts to freedom.

Sumner, Crime Against Kansas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.173

The matrons of Rome, who poured their jewels into the Treasury for the public defense—the wive of Prussia who, with delicate fingers, clothed their defenders against French invasion—the mothers of our own Revolution, who sent forth their sons, covered with prayers and blessings, to combat for human rights, did nothing of self-sacrifice truer than did these women on this occasion. Were the whole history of South Carolina blotted out of existence from its very beginning down to the day of the last election of the senator to his present seat on this floor, civilization might lose—I do not say how little, but surely less than it has already gained by the example of Kansas in its valiant struggle against oppression, and in the development of a new science of emigration. Already, in Lawrence alone, there are newspapers and schools, including a high school, and throughout this infant Territory there is more mature scholarship far, in proportion to its inhabitants, than in all South Carolina. Ah, sir, I tell the senator that Kansas, welcomed as a free State, will be a "ministering angel" to the Republic when South Carolina, in the cloak of darkness which she hugs, "lies howling."

Preston Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Preston S. Brooks, 1856

Preston Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner

Title: Preston Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner

Author: Preston S. Brooks

Date: 1856

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.174-176

Delivered in the House of Representatives on July 14, 1856. Abridged. The assault occurred on May 22.

Born in 1819, died in 1857; elected to Congress from South Carolina in 1853, serving until 1856, when, after the failure of the attempt to expel him, he resigned and appealed to his constituents, who reelected him in the same year almost without opposition; served until his death on January 27, 1857.

Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.174

SOME time since a senator from massachusetts allowed himself, in an elaborately prepared speech, to offer a gross insult to my State, and to a venerable friend who is my State representative and who was absent at the time. Not content with that, he published to the world, and circulated extensively, this uncalled-for libel on my State and my blood. Whatever insults my State insults me. Her history and character have commanded my pious veneration; and in her defense I hope I shall always be prepared, humbly and modestly, to perform the duty of a son. I should have forfeited my own self-respect, and perhaps the good opinion of my countrymen, if I had failed to resent such an injury by calling the offender in question to a personal account. It was a personal affair, and in taking redress into my own hands I meant no disrespect to the Senate of the United States or to this House.

Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.175

But if I had committed a breach of privilege, it was the privilege of the Senate, and not of this House, which was violated. I was answerable there and not here. They had no right, as it seems to me, to prosecute me in these Halls; nor have you the right in law or under the Constitution, as I respectfully submit, to take jurisdiction over offenses committed against them. The Constitution does not justify them in making such a request, nor this House in granting it. If, unhappily, the day should ever come when sectional or party feeling should run so high as to control all other considerations of public duty or justice, how easy it will be to use such precedents for the excuse of arbitrary power, in either House, to expel members of the minority who may have rendered themselves obnoxious to the prevailing spirit in the House to which they belong.

Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.175

If I desired to kill the senator why did I not do it? You all admit that I had him in my power. It was expressly to avoid taking life that I used an ordinary cane, presented to me by a friend in Baltimore nearly three months before its application to the "bare head" of the Massachusetts senator. I went to work very deliberately, as I am charged—and this is admitted—and speculated somewhat as to whether I should employ a horsewhip or a cowhide; but knowing that the senator was my superior in strength, it occurred to me that he might wrest it from my hand, and then—for I never attempt anything I do not perform—I might have been compelled to do that which I would have regretted the balance of my natural life.

Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.176

My answer is, that the senator would not accept a message; and having formed the unalterable determination to punish him, I believed that the offense of "sending a hostile message," superadded to the indictment for assault and battery, would subject me to legal penalties more severe than would be imposed for a simple assault and battery. That is my answer.

Brooks in Defense of His Attack on Sumner, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.176

To such as have given their votes and made their speeches on the constitutional principles involved, and without indulging in personal vilification, I owe my respect. But, sir, they have written me down upon the history of the country as worthy of expulsion, and in no unkindness I must tell them that for all future time my self-respect requires that I shall pass them as strangers. And now, Mr. Speaker, I announce to you and to this House, that I am no longer a member of the Thirty-fourth Congress.

Dred Scott Decision, 1857

Title: Dred Scott Decision, 1857

Author: Roger Brooke Taney

Date: 1857

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.229-239

Taney succeeded John Marshall as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1836. Under the Jackson Administration he had served as Attorney-General of the United States, and was inclined to a strict construction of the Constitution. He was prompted to deliver the Dred Scott decision, a great legal dictum, by the sincere hope that the prestige of a Supreme Court decision would settle forever the slavery question.

Dred Scott, a slave owned by Dr. Emerson, a Missouri resident, had been taken by his owner into Illinois, where slavery was prohibited, and had later been taken into Minnesota—a part of the Louisiana Purchase, in which slavery was expressly prohibited by the Missouri Compromise. Taken back to Missouri, he was aided by free-soil lawyers in suing for freedom, on the ground that, through his residence in territory where slavery was prohibited, he had lost his status as a slave and acquired that of a freeman. The decision was against him.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.229

THE question is simply this: Can a negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States in the cases specified in the Constitution.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.229–p.230

It will be observed that the plea applies to that classs of persons only whose ancestors were negroes of the African race, and imported into this country, and sold and held as slaves. The only matter in issue before the court, therefore, is whether the descendants of such slaves, when they shall be emancipated, or who are born of parents who had become free before their birth, are citizens of a State, in the sense in which the word citizen is used in the Constitution of the United States. And this being the only matter in dispute on the pleadings, the court must be understood as speaking in this opinion of that class only, that is, of those persons who are the descendants of Africans who were imported into this country, and sold as slaves….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.230

The words "people of the United States" and "citizens" . . . mean the same thing…. The question before us is whether the class of persons described in the plea in abatement compose a portion of this people, and are constituent members of this sovereignty? . . .

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.230

In discussing this question, we must not confound the rights of citizenship which a State may confer within its own limits, and the rights of citizenship as a member of the Union. It does not by any means follow, because he has all the rights and privileges of a citizen of a State, that he must be a citizen of the United States….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.230–p.231

It is very clear…. that no State can, by any act or law of its own, passed since the adoption of the Constitution, introduce a new member into the political community created by the Constitution of the United States. It cannot make him a member of this community by making him a member of its own. And for the same reason it cannot introduce any person, or description of persons, who were not intended to be embraced in this new political family, which the Constitution brought into existence, but were intended to be excluded from it….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.231

It is true, every person, and every class and description of persons, who were at the time of the adoption of the Constitution recognized as citizens in the several States, became also citizens of this new political body; but none other; it was formed by them, and for them and their posterity, but for no one else….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.231

It becomes necessary, therefore, to determine who were citizens of the several States when the Constitution was adopted….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.231

In the opinion of the court, the legislation and histories of the times, and the language used in the Declaration of Independence, show that neither the class of persons who had been imported as slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were then acknowledged as a part of the people, nor intended to be included in the general words used in that memorable instrument.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.231

It is difficult at this day to realize the state of public opinion in relation to that unfortunate race, which prevailed in the civilized and enlightened portions of the world at the time of the Declaration of Independence, and when the Constitution of the United States was framed and adopted. But the public history of every European nation displays it in a manner too plain to be mistaken.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.232

They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it. This opinion was at that time fixed and universal in the civilized portion of the white race. It was regarded as an axiom in morals as well as in politics, which no one thought of disputing, or supposed to be open to dispute; and men in every grade and position in society daily and habitually acted upon it in their private pursuits, as well as in matters of public concern, without doubting for a moment the correctness of this opinion.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.232

And in no nation was this opinion more firmly fixed or more uniformly acted upon than by the English government and English people. They not only seized them on the coast of Africa, and sold them or held them in slavery for their own use; but they took them as ordinary articles of merchandise to every country where they could make a profit on them, and were far more extensively engaged in this commerce than any other nation in the world.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.232–p.233

The opinion thus entertained and acted upon in England was naturally impressed upon the colonies they founded on this side of the Atlantic. And, accordingly a negro of the African race was regarded by them as an article of property, and held, and bought and sold as such, in every one of the thirteen colonies which united in the Declaration of Independence, and afterwards formed the Constitution of the United States. The slaves were more or less numerous in the different colonies, as slave labor was found more or less profitable. But no one seems to have doubted the correctness of the prevailing opinion of the time….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.233

The language of the Declaration of Independence is equally conclusive….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.233

. . . "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among them is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.233–p.234

The general words above quoted would seem to embrace the whole human family, and if they were used in a similar instrument at this day would be so understood. But it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this Declaration; for if the language, as understood in that day, would embrace them, the conduct of the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would have been utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted; and instead of the sympathy of mankind, to which they so confidently appealed, they would have deserved and received universal rebuke and reprobation….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.234

But there are two clauses in the Constitution which point directly and specifically to the negro race as a separate class of persons, and show clearly that they were not regarded as a portion of the people or citizens of the government then formed.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.234

One of these clauses reserves to each of the thirteen States the right to import slaves until the year 1808, if it thinks proper…. And by the other provision the States pledge themselves to each other to maintain the right of property of the master, by delivering up to him any slave who may have escaped from his service, and be found within their respective territories…. And these two provisions show, conclusively, that neither the description of persons therein referred to, nor their descendants, were embraced in any of the other provisions of the Constitution; for certainly these two clauses were not intended to confer on them or their posterity the blessings of liberty, or any of the personal rights so carefully provided for the citizen. . .

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.234–p.235

The only two provisions which point to them and include them, treat them as property, and make it the duty of the government to protect it; no other power, in relation to this race, is to be found in the Constitution; and as it is a government of special, delegated, powers, no authority beyond these two provisions can be constitutionally exercised. The government of the United States had no right to interfere for any other purpose but that of protecting the rights of the owner, leaving it altogether with the several States to deal with this race, whether emancipated or not, as each State may think justice, humanity, and the interests and safety of society, require. The States evidently intended to reserve this power exclusively to themselves.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.235

. . . This court was not created by the Constitution for such purposes. Higher and graver trusts have been confided to it, and it must not falter in the path of duty. . .

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.235

And upon a full and careful consideration of the subject, the court is of opinion that, upon the facts stated in the plea in abatement, Dred Scott was not a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, and not entitled as such to sue in its courts; and, consequently, that the circuit court had no jurisdiction of the case, and that the judgment on the plea in abatement is erroneous.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.235

. . . the plaintiff . . . admits that he and his wife were born slaves, but endeavors to make out his title to freedom and citizenship by showing that they were taken by their own to certain places, hereinafter mentioned, where slavery could not by law exist, and that they thereby became free, and upon their return to Missouri became citizens of that State. . .

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.235–p.236

The act of Congress, upon which the plaintiff relies, declares that slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever prohibited in all that part of the territory ceded by France, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude, and not included within the limits of Missouri. And the difficulty which meets us at the threshold of this part of the inquiry is, whether Congress was authorized to pass this law under any of the powers granted to it by the Constitution; for if the authority is not given by that instrument, it is the duty of this court to declare it void and inoperative, and incapable of conferring freedom upon any one who is held as a slave under the laws of any one of the States.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.236

The counsel for the plaintiff has laid much stress upon that article in the Constitution which confers on Congress the power "to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States;" but, in the judgment of the court, that provision has no bearing on the present controversy, and the power there given, whatever it may be, is confined, and was intended to be confined, to the territory which at that time belonged to, or was claimed by, the United States, and was within their boundaries as settled by the treaty with Great Britain, and can have no influence upon a territory afterwards acquired from a foreign government. It was a special provision for a known and particular territory, and to meet a present emergency, and nothing more….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.236

. . . The form of government to be established necessarily rested in the discretion of Congress….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.237

But the power of Congress over the person or property of a citizen can never be a mere disretionary power under our Constitution and form of government. The powers of the government and the rights and privileges of the citizen are regulated and plainly defined by the Constitution itself. And when the territory becomes a part of the United States, the Federal government enters into possession in the character impressed upon it by those who created it. It enters upon it with its powers over the citizen strictly defined, and limited by the Constitution, from which it derives its own existence, and by virtue of which alone it continues to exist and act as a government and sovereignty. It has no power of any kind beyond it; and it cannot, when it enters a territory of the United States, put off its character, and assume discretionary or despotic powers which the constitution has denied to it. It cannot create for itself a new character separated from the citizens of the United States, and the duties it owes them under the provisions of the Constitution. The territory being a part of the United States, the government and the citizen both enter it under the authority of the Constitution, with their respective rights defined and marked out; and the Federal government can exercise no power over his person or property, beyond what that instrument confers, nor lawfully deny any right which it has reserved….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.237–p.238

 . . . in considering the question before us, it must be borne in mind that there is no law of nations standing between the people of the United States and their government, and interfering with their relation to each other . . . if the Constitution recognizes the right of property of the master in a slave, and makes no distinction between that description of property and other property owned by a citizen, no tribunal, acting under the authority of the United States, whether it be legislative, executive, or judicial, has a right to draw such a distinction, or deny to it the benefit of the provisions and guarantees which have been provided for the protection of private property against the encroachments of the government.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.238

Now, as we have already said in an earlier part of this opinion, upon a different point, the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution…. This is done in plain words—too plain to be misunderstood. And no word can be found in the Constitution which gives Congress a greater power over slave property, or which entitles property of that kind to less protection than property of any other description. The only power conferred is the power coupled with the duty of guarding and protecting the owner in his rights.

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.238–p.239

Upon these considerations, it is the opinion of the court that the act of Congress which prohibited a citizen from holding and owning property of this kind in the territory of the United States north of the line therein mentioned, is not warranted by the Constitution, and is therefore void; and that neither Dred Scott himself, nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into this territory; even if they had been carried there by the owner, with the intention of becoming a permanent resident….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.239

. . . And it is contended, on the part of the plaintiff, that he is made free by being taken to Rock Island, in the State of Illinois….

Taney, Dred Scott, 1857, America, Vol.7, p.239

. . . As Scott was a slave when taken into the State of Illinois by his owner, and was there held as such, and brought back in that character, his status, as free or slave, depended on the laws of Missouri, and not of Illinois.

The First Railroad to the Mississippi

Title: The First Railroad to the Mississippi

Author: William Prescott Smith

Date: 1857

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.240-252

The author of this record of the first railroad to operate between the Atlantic seaboard and the Mississippi River participated in the opening of "The American Central Railroad Line" from Baltimore, Maryland, continuously to St. Louis, Missouri, in June, 1857. The immediate occasion which he describes was the completion of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad direct from Cincinnati to St. Louis. In that year the Baltimore and Ohio railroad was extended to Parkersburg on the Ohio River, and the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad was completed. These three events are commemorated in the "Book of the Great Railway Celebrations of 1857," from which this article is taken.

As an appendix to it we publish a letter which appeared in the New York "Times" of June 7, 1857. It was written by its Washington correspondent, who was a member of the party which made the first through railroad trip from Baltimore to St. Louis.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.240

THE grand opening excursion over the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad was set down for Thursday, the 4th of June; but, in order to avoid the rush of the crowd, many of the guests started for St. Louis on the preceding evening. Still the number remaining of the large party concentrated at Cincinnati was immense, and it was deemed quite impossible to carry all over the road in one day, for want of sufficient passenger coaches to meet the extraordinary demand. Fortunately very many preferred remaining behind a few hours, in order to obtain needed rest, or to see a little more of the city.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.240–p.241

Provision was made to carry about twelve or fifteen hundred passengers, who started at six o'clock on Thursday morning, in two trains—the first containing the City Councils of Baltimore and Cincinnati, the principal municipal officers of Marietta and Chillicothe, a portion of the detective police of Cincinnati, a large number of ladies, and the representatives of the press, of whom there were about fifty present. This first train consisted of ten passenger cars, and the second of eight cars. General Cass having determined to visit his home, at Detroit, did not go on to St. Louis; and M. Sartiges also remained behind for a day.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.241–p.242

The cars and engines were handsomely decorated, making a showy appearance as they dashed over the road. The rear car of the first train, in which were the families of the directors of the road, seemed something new in the history of railroad travelling. It was fitted up in four compartments, in each of which were two sofas, each sofa seating two persons, and being capable of transformation into berths for the same number. Several ordinary car chairs in addition made the numerical accommodations about one third as large as those of ordinary cars. There were also a wash-room and toilet table in the car, and a patent heating furnace, which had the faculty of keeping out the dust and of cooling the air. With rich upholstery and elegant painting, these characteristics made the car one of extraordinary comfort for the traveller who was so fortunate as to secure one of its seats. Shortly after six o'clock, we got well under way, and were whirled along at a rapid rate for about fifteen miles, when just as we came opposite the old homestead of General Harrison, at North Bend, the pumps of the engine gave out, and a detention of over half an hour was the consequence.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.242

This gave the party an excellent opportunity of viewing the ancient residence of "Old Tip." It is a plain, republican frame house, two stories high, with wings of one story attached. It is much weatherbeaten, and the white paint which once made its front glow in bright contrast with the green foliage of the venerable trees around it, looks pale and bluish. It is inhabited by the old soldier's widow. A few hundred yards distant, on a green and wooded slope, stands a simply arranged tomb, which holds the ashes of the hero of Tippecanoe.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.242–p.243

The Ohio River monopolized the attention of the traveller for nearly twenty miles, the railroad being built right upon its bank, and between it and a range of low hills to the north or west of the stream. This narrow strip of level land is exceedingly rich, covered with beautiful gardens, from which rise many neat and tasteful gardeners' cottages, presenting an agreeable picture of prosperous and contented industry. On the steep sides of the hills which rise backward from this garden strip, cling the vineyards to which we are indebted for the Catawba wines. Across the river, rise the Kentucky hills, green and grand, dotted and decorated by country residences which seem to affect stateliness and dignity, when compared with their more modest and unobtrusive neighbors on the Ohio banks.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.243

General surprise was expressed by the guests at finding the railroad track so smooth and equal, taking into consideration the short time since it was completed. Its broad gauge, and commodious well-furnished cars, together with the fine scenery of the route, render it a most delightful road to travel over. Every precaution had been taken to render the trip a safe and pleasant one. Extra locomotives were passed at convenient points along the line, with steam up and fretting to be free, ready to take the place of any that should be disabled; and flagmen were distributed at intervals of a mile, to watch the track closely, and signalize the trains should danger of any sort present itself. Refreshments were freely supplied in the cars,—and the cold chicken, ice-cream, and sparkling catawba, were found particularly grateful after the hurried breakfast incidental to an early morning start.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.243–p.244

Along the entire length of the line a jubilant feeling seemed to exist on the part of the inhabitants, and the road at the different stations was thronged with men, women and children. In several places the passing trains were saluted with discharges of cannon, and similar demonstrations. At Aurora, we left the Ohio River, and turned into the State of Indiana, through the immense forest of which we progressed for some hours. Vast beech and ash forests, stiff clay soil, small dwellings, and occasional small village, all having a rough look of newness, and barren of beauty or comfort. Much of the land is a swamp, the ground covered with gigantic trunks of fallen trees, in all stages of decay. Occasionally a road, some of them planked, all running north and south and east and west, opened a long vista through the forest. Wherever cultivated, the soil seems very black and rich, the wheat good, standing up straight among the bleached trunks of the girdled trees.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.244

The Big Miami River was crossed by a beautiful bridge twenty miles out, and about a mile further on the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad was crossed, both roads here running on a level plain. There are stations every half dozen miles along the route, but our train stopped only at the most important ones. At North Vernon, 73 miles from Cincinnati, the road crosses the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, and at Seymour about 14 miles further on the Jeffersonville and Indianapolis Railroad. Within a distance of sixty miles the road crosses the White River, quite a wide stream, four times, by as many substantially built bridges.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.244–p.245

Continuing on our way, we arrived in due time at Fort Ritner, Indiana, a station named for one of the engineers of the road, 113 miles from Cincinnati. Here we were overtaken by the second train, and partook of a bountiful cold collation, with coffee, in the unfinished station-house. Proceeding on, no notable incident occurred until we arrived at Mitchell, 13 miles farther. At this place, a large number of citizens greeted our arrival with repeated cheers, and a band performed inspiriting music as we passed. Mitchell is named for Professor O. M. Mitchell of Cincinnati, to whom, as much as to any other one man, is due the honor of bringing this railroad to completion. His faith in the feasibility of the enterprise was evinced in such works as few men would have undertaken. Through his zealous instrumentality were procured the foreign loans, without which the work could never have been completed. Near this point are two caves, called Hamor's and Linn's caves. From the mouth of the former issues Lost River, which passes to this outlet for many miles under the ground. About the centre of the State, we come to a region of country that seems to be longer settled, the farms being clear of stumps and well tilled, and the buildings good and large.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.245–p.246

The ancient city of Vincennes, Indiana, on the Wabash River, 192 miles from Cincinnati, and the "half-way house" between Cincinnati and St. Louis, was reached about 3 o'clock. A heavy rain was falling at the time, but great numbers of the citizens were out to receive the train. Flags were displayed from many of the buildings, and the roar of cannon announced the occurrence of an unusual event. Here a splendid dinner had been provided for the tourists by the citizens, under the management of the ladies—a portion of the tables being set under the trees where General Harrison made his celebrated treaty with Tecumseh. Everything in the shape of eatables, that an epicure would desire, or that a noble effort to furnish an unrivalled repast could procure, was there in bountiful profusion. There was also no lack of generous wine. The welcome extended by the citizens of Vincennes was in all respects hearty and enthusiastic. Toasts and speeches naturally follow champagne; so a number of the former were soon offered, complimentary of the railroad and its managers, and speeches were made by Judge Ellis, of Vincennes, and Judge Lee, of Baltimore. While this was going on within the building, the outsiders were not forgotten—long tables were spread under temporary sheds, at which the citizens of Vincennes and many of those who have so successfully labored in completing the road, partook of a substantial repast.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.246

The shrill whistle of the locomotive again summoned the party to the train. The new portion of the road having been passed over, the double locomotives were here dispensed with, and two new and beautiful iron steeds took their places, one to each train. They bore the significant names of "San Francisco" and "Sacramento. The enterprising young engine man, in charge of the former, predicted that, ere he closed his engineering career, he would have the honor of running his locomotive across the plains and mountains to the Golden city of the Pacific.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.246–p.247

Leaving Vincennes, we immediately crossed the Wabash River on a large and splendid wooden bridge, built on the McCallum plan, and entered the State of Illinois, being welcomed to its soil by ex-Governor Reynolds of that State. After crossing the flat prairie bottom, we entered upon the broad prairies, and for mile after mile flew on without meeting an acre of rolling ground, and nothing like a tree. Many fine dwellings, however, were passed on the prairie, and extensive herds of cattle were seen grazing on the fertile plains.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.247

We crossed the Little Wabash River about 240 miles from Cincinnati, the branch of the Illinois Central Railroad at Odin, 275 miles out, and the main line of the Central Road at Sandoval, four miles further on. At Carlyle, a few miles beyond, the Kaskaskia River is passed by means of a handsome bridge, and at Caseyville, nine miles from St. Louis, the train reached the American Bottom, a large tract of low land that is occasionally overflowed, which probably gave the name of Egypt to the lower portion of this State. The passage through this region was mostly in the night, but the Egyptians were wide awake. Houses were illuminated at the various towns, wherever they had candles, and where they had not, tar barrels were burned instead. The inhabitants seemed to have turned out en masse, men, women and children, including babies.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.247–p.248

No people have more cause to rejoice at the completion of this railroad enterprise, which opens to valuable markets a large extent of country hitherto almost valueless, although possessing the richest soil on the continent. Indeed, the soil for a hundred miles of our course over the prairie, scarce had seen a plough until since the road between Cincinnati and Vincennes was opened. Now, the country is comparatively thickly settled, and the land, which four years ago was much of it quite unsalable, readily brings from five to fifteen dollars per acre. Indeed, nearly all the way from Vincennes to the Mississippi, the country was one never wearying monotony of living green, rich, deep, and dark. Never was a finer country seen, than that succession of long, level prairies, between St. Louis and Vincennes; and never did those prairies appear more beautiful and gladdening than when our party looked upon them, waving and swaying their wealth of emerald, soon to yellow into a richer wealth of golden grain.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.248–p.249

AN EPOCH-MAKING EVENT IN TRANSPORTATION

The newspapers will furnish you, through their general correspondence, abundant accounts of the festivities marking the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad opening. Upon that score I could add nothing. Perhaps, however, you would like to hear, from one who has no individual interests to warp or color his judgment, some suggestions as to the advantages of this great work in point of location; in relation to the character of its construction, its probable durability, cost of working and repairs, and its prospect of developing a valuable way-business in both passengers and freight. Upon all these points I am free to say that the Ohio and Mississippi road will compare most favorably with any in the United States over which I have travelled,—and I am quite familiar with the principal railroad lines in the Northern, Eastern Middle, and North-western States. Of course I do not mean to say that the travel and traffic over this road are to become immediately as great as over any other; but I do mean that it passes through a country so fertile, and brings into prompt and the most direct communication points of such great commercial importance, that their speedy development under the stimulus and encouragement of this railroad enterprise, is an inevitable necessity, carrying with it a career of prosperity in the future for the road itself, which can scarcely be over-estimated.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.249–p.250

The road between this point and Vincennes, Indiana, has been in operation for some time, and its advantages you probably know all about. It passes in an almost air-line over beautiful rolling prairies, plentifully interspersed with groves of timber, and watered by many small streams. Between Cincinnati and Seymour, also, the road is not altogether new. Here it winds its way along the margin of some rather crooked rivers, but the curves are easy, and generally the grades are light. Everywhere the land over which it passes is exceedingly fertile, holding out irresistible invitations to its speedy cultivation and development. This is true of nearly every mile of the route. Scarce an acre not easily susceptible of improvement is visible, if we except those covered by forests, the timber in which is valuable, and must furnish profitable em ployment for any army of industrious woodsmen. Indeed there is no comparison between Northern Indiana and the southern portion of the State, traversed by this road, so much does the latter surpass the former; and when the "Egypt" of Illinois shall be developed by the population sure to follow in the track of the locomotive, the boastful counties comprising the northern tier will need look to their laurels.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.250–p.251

From Seymour to Vincennes—a hundred miles or more—the road is new. Here we expected to dance by car-loads to the music of the steam-whistle, as we were whirled along over a rough and uneven track. Never were we more disappointed. Although the road is but partially ballasted, the universal testimony is that the running was smoother, steadier, and freer from jolting than that over the New Jersey and Camden and Amboy Railroads, long as the latter have been worked. This is owing in part, doubtless, to the broad gauge adopted by the Ohio and Mississippi Company, but it is due still more to the great care which has been taken in grading and solidifying the road-bed, in laying the track, and in the firm elasticity of the material of which the bed is composed. It is not often that these qualities of solidity and elasticity are so admirably combined. A very small proportion of trestle work has been found necessary throughout the entire line of this road,—the bridges are not numerous, but very substantial, and the construction in all respects gives promise of great durability and very moderate cost for repairs, as there is little opportunity for land-slides, washing away of the road-bed, or any of the other accidential incidents which often enhance so largely the cost of keeping a road in order. It will readily be seen that the advantages enumerated—light grades, easy curves, long stretches of straight track, solidity of the road-bed and non-liability to suffer from rains or floods—combine to promise a cost of working the road rather below than above the average. Fuel is abundant and cheap,—to be had indeed in any quantity for the cost of cutting. Already the stream of paying travel begins to pour through this avenue of communication just opened between the Atlantic seaboard and the Mississippi,—and all along its line the farmers are anxiously awaiting the hour when they can transport their produce over it, and receive the supplies of light lumber and other staples required from abroad.

Smith, First Railroad to the Mississippi, America, Vol.7, p.251–p.252

Perhaps you may deem me enthusiastic in my depiction. If so, I can only answer that I have expressed, in terms quite inadequate, the general and spontaneous convictions of myself and fellow-travellers, who kept our eyes open in going over the road for the express purpose of learning its character and judging of its probable future. I know nothing personally of its managers, save their liberality towards their guests upon this festive celebration; but if the affairs of the company are conducted with any thing approaching the skill and prudence which we may expect from those who had the enterprise to carry so great a work to completion, I shall rely with entire confidence upon the not distant future to vindicate every word that I have here written.

The First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure

Title: The First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure

Author: Henry M. Field

Date: 1858

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.253-257

Henry M. Field, in whose "History of the Atlantic Telegraph to the End of 1865" this account appears, was a brother of Cyrus W. Field, the chief promotor of the cable. He was a Presbyterian minister, who in later life founded and edited the "Evangelist," a New York weekly religious journal.

He writer here of the successful landing of the ends of the first Atlantic cable on the Irish and Newfoundland shores, and the transmission of the first message: "Europe and America are united by telegraph. Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and good-will toward men," on August 17, 1858. The commercial success of the cable was early demonstrated, but it soon became impaired and communication ceased in September of that year. It was not resumed until a new company was organized and a new cable laid and operated in 1866.

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.253–p.254

WHOEVER shall write the history of popular enthusiasms must give a large space to the Atlantic telegraph. Never did the tidings of any great achievement—whether in peace or war—more truly electrify a nation. No doubt, the impression was the greater because it took the country by surprise. Had the attempt succeeded in June it would have found a people prepared for it. But the failure of the first expedition, added to that of the previous year, settled the fate of the enterprise in the minds of the public. It was a very grand but hopeless undertaking; and its projectors shared the usual lot of those who conceive vast designs, and venture on great enterprises which are not successful—to be regarded with a mixture of derision and pity. Such was the temper of the public mind, when at noon of Thursday, the 5th of August, the following dispatch was received:

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.254

United States Frigate "Niagara," Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, August 5, 1858.

"To the Associated Press, New York:

"The Atlantic Telegraph fleet sailed from Queenstown, Ireland, Saturday, July 17th, and met in midocean Wednesday, July 28th. Made the splice at 1 P.M., Thursday, the 29th, and separated—the "Agamemnon and "Valorous," bound to Valentia, Ireland; the "Niagara" and "Gorgon," for this place, where they arrived yesterday, and this morning the end of the cable will be landed.

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"It is 1,696 nautical, or 1,950 statute, miles from the telegraph-house at the head of Valentia harbor to the telegraph-house at the Bay of Bulls, Trinity Bay, and for more than two-thirds of this distance the water is over two miles in depth. The cable has been paid out from the "Agamemnon" at about the same speed as from the "Niagara." The electric signals sent and received through the whole cable are perfect.

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.254

"The machinery for paying out the cable worked in the most satisfactory manner, and was not stopped for a single moment from the time the splice was made until we arrived here.

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.254–p.255

"Captain Hudson, Messrs. Everett and Woodhouse, the engineers, the electricians, the officers of the ship, and, in fact, every man on board the telegraph fleet, has exerted himself to the utmost to make the expedition successful, and by the blessing of Divine Providence it has succeeded.

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.255

"After the end of the cable is landed and connected with the land line of telegraph, and the "Niagara" has discharged some cargo belonging to the telegraph company, she will go to St. John's for coal, and then proceed at once to New York.

"Cyrus W. Field."

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.255–p.256

The impression of this simple announcement it is impossible to conceive. It was immediately telegraphed to all parts of the United States, and everywhere produced the greatest excitement. In some places all business were suspended; men rushed into the streets, and flocked to the offices where the news was received. An impressive scene was witnessed at a religious convocation in New England. At Andover, Massachusetts, the news arrived while the alumni of the Theological Seminary were celebrating their semicentennial anniversary by a dinner. One thousand persons were present, all of whom rose to their feet, and gave vent to their excited feelings by continued and enthusiastic cheers. When quiet was restored, Rev. Dr. Adams, of New York, said his heart was too full for a speech, and suggested, as the more fitting utterance of what all felt, that they should join in thanksgiving to Almighty God. Rev. Dr. Hawes of Hartford then led the assembly in fervent prayer, acknowledging the great event as from the hand of God, and as calculated to hasten the triumphs of civilization and Christianity. Then all standing up together, sang, to the tune of Old Hundred, the majestic doxology. Thus, said Dr. Hawes, "we have now consecrated this new power, so far as our agency is concerned, to the building up of the truth." In New York the news was received at first with some incredulity. But as it was confirmed by subsequent dispatches, the city broke out into tumultuous rejoicing. Never was there such an outburst of popular feeling. In Boston a hundred guns were fired on the Common, and the bells of the city were rung for an hour to give utterance to the general joy. Similar scenes were witnessed in all parts of the United States. I have now before me the New York papers of August, 1858, and from the memorable 5th, when the landing took place, to the end of the month, they contain hardly anything else than popular demonstrations in honor of the Atlantic telegraph. It was indeed a national jubilee….

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.256

The next morning, August 17th, the city of New York was awakened by the thunder of artillery. A hundred guns were fired in the Park at daybreak, and the salute was repeated at noon. At this hour, flags were flying from all the public buildings, and the bells of the principal churches began to ring, reminding one of Tennyson's ode to the happy Christmas bells that were ringing out the departing year:

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.257

That night the city was illuminated. Never had it seen such a brilliant spectacle. It seemed as if it were intended to light up the very heavens. Such was the blaze of light around the City Hall that the cupola caught fire, and was consumed, and the Hall itself narrowly escaped destruction. Similar demonstrations took place in other parts of the United States. . .

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.257

While these demonstrations continued, every opposing voice was hushed in the chorus of national rejoicing; yet some there were, no doubt, who looked on with silent envy or whispered detraction. But who could grudge these honors to the hero of the hour—honors so hardly won, and which, as it proved, were soon to give place to harsh censures and unjust imputations?

Field, First Atlantic Cable Laid, But is a Failure, America, Vol.7, p.257

Alas for all human glory! Its paths lead but to the grave. Death is the end of human ambition. That very day that a whole city rose up to do honor to the Atlantic telegraph and its author it gave its last throb, and that first cable was thenceforth to sleep forever silent in its ocean grave. The Atlantic cable was dead! That word fell heavy as a stone on the hearts of those who had staked so much upon it. Years of labor and millions of capital were swept away in an hour into the bosom of the pitiless sea.

William H. Sewards' "Irrepressible Conflict Speech," 25 October 1858

Sewards' "Irrepressible Conflict Speech", 1858

Title: Sewards' "Irrepressible Conflict Speech"

Author: Seward

Date: 1858

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.177-185

From a speech delivered from the stump in Rochester on October 25, 1858, and widely read and commented on at the time. Seward was then the chief leader of the Republican party, and was regarded as its probable candidate for president in the election of 1860. Rhodes doubts if, in the position taken in this speech, Seward was influenced by what Lincoln had said of similar import on June 17 of the same year, at Springfield. "He would at that time," says Rhodes, "have certainly scorned the notion of borrowing ideas from Lincoln; and had he studied the progress of the Illinois canvass, he must have seen that the declaration did not meet with general favor."

Born in 1801, died in 1792; elected to the New York State Senate in 1830; an unsuccessful candidate for Governor of New York in 1834; Governor of New York in 1838 and again in 1840; United States Senator in 1849-61; prominent candidate for the Republican nomination for President in 1860; Secretary of State in 1861-69; his assassination attempted at the time Lincoln was killed in 1865, being severely wounded; prevailed on France to withdraw troops from Mexico; negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.177

THE unmistakable outbreaks of zeal which occur all around me show that you are earnest men—and such a man am I. Let us, therefore, at least for a time, pass all secondary and collateral questions, whether of a personal or of a general nature, and consider the main subject of the present canvass.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.177

Our country is a theater which exhibits in full operation two radically different political systems—the one resting on the basis of servile or slave labor, the other on the basis of voluntary labor of freemen.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.178

The laborers who are enslaved are all negroes, or persons more or less purely of African derivation. But this is only accidental. The principle of the system is that labor in every society, by whomsoever performed, is necessarily unintellectual, groveling, and base; and that the laborer, equally for his own good and for the welfare of the State, ought to be enslaved. The white laboring man, whether native or foreigner, is not enslaved only because he can not as yet be reduced to bondage.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.178

You need not be told now that the slave system is the older of the two and that once it was universal. The emancipation of our own ancestors, Caucasians and Europeans as they were, hardly dates beyond a period of five hundred years. The great melioration of human society which modern times exhibit is mainly due to the incomplete substitution of the system of voluntary labor for the old one of servile labor which has already taken place. This African slave system is one which, in its origin and its growth, has been altogether foreign from the habits of the races which colonized these States and established civilization here. It was introduced on this new continent as an engine of conquest and for the establishment of monarchical power by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and was rapidly extended by them all over South America, Central America, Louisiana, and Mexico. Its legitimate fruits are seen in the poverty imbecility, and anarchy which now pervade all Portuguese and Spanish America.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.179

The free-labor system is of German extraction, and it was established in our country by emigrants from Sweden, Holland, Germany, Great Britain, and Ireland. We justly ascribe to its influences the strength, wealth, greatness, intelligence, and freedom which the whole American people now enjoy. One of the chief elements of the value of human life is freedom in the pursuit of happiness. The slave system is not only intolerable, unjust, and inhuman toward the laborer, whom, only because he is a laborer, it loads down with chains and converts into merchandise; but is scarcely less severe upon the freeman, to whom, only because he is a laborer from necessity, it denies facilities for employment and whom it expels from the community because it can not enslave and convert him into merchandise also. It is necessarily improvident and ruinous because, as a general truth, communities prosper and flourish, or droop and decline in just the degree that they practise or neglect to practise the primary duties of justice and humanity. The free-labor system conforms to the divine law of equality which is written in the hearts and consciences of men, and therefore is always and everywhere beneficent.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.179

The slave system is one of constant danger, distrust, suspicion and watchfulness. It debases those whose toil alone can produce wealth and resources for defense to the lowest degree of which human nature is capable—to guard against mutiny and insurrection; and thus wastes energies which otherwise might be employed in national development and aggrandizement.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.180

Russia yet maintains slavery and is a despotism. Most of the other European States have abolished slavery and adopted the system of free labor. It was the antagonistic political tendencies of the two systems which the first Napoleon was contemplating when he predicted that Europe would ultimately be either all Cossack or all republican. Never did human sagacity utter a more pregnant truth. The two systems are at once perceived to be incongruous. But they are more than incongruous—they are incompatible. They never have permanently existed together in one country and they never can. It would be easy to demonstrate this impossibility from the irreconcilable contrast between their great principles and characteristics. But the experience of mankind has conclusively established it.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.180

Slavery, as I have already intimated, existed in every State in Europe. Free labor has supplanted it everywhere except in Russia and Turkey. State necessities developed in modern times are now obliging even those two nations to encourage and employ free labor; and already, despotic as they are, we find them engaged in abolishing slavery. In the United States slavery came into collision with free labor at the close of the last century, and fell before it in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, but triumphed over it effectually and excluded it for a period yet undetermined, from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Indeed, so incompatible are the two systems that every new State which is organized within our ever-extending domain makes its first political act a choice of the one and the exclusion of the other, even at the cost of civil war if necessary. The slave States, without law, at the last national election successfully forbade, within their own limits, even the casting of votes for a candidate for president of the United States supposed to be favorable to the establishment of the free-labor system in new States.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.181

Hitherto the two systems have existed in different States, but side by side within the American Union. This has happened because the Union is a confederation of States. But in another aspect the United States constitute only one nation. Increase of population, which is filling the State out to their very borders, together with a new and extended network of railroads and other avenues, and an internal commerce which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the States into a higher and more perfect social unity or consolidation. Thus these antagonistic systems are continually coming into closer contact and collision results.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.182

Shall I tell you what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether. It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a free-labor nation. Either the cotton and rice-fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become marts for legitimate merchandise alone, or else the rye-fields and wheat-fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be surrendered by their farmers to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.182

It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromise between the slave and free States, and it is the existence of this great fact that renders all such pretended compromises, when made, vain and ephemeral. Startling as this saying may appear to you, fellow citizens, it is by no means an original or even a modern one. Our forefathers knew it to be true, and unanimously acted upon it when they framed the Constitution of the United States. They regarded the existence of the servile system in so many of the States with sorrow and shame, which they openly confessed, and they looked upon the collision between them, which was then just revealing itself, and which we are now accustomed to deplore, with favor and hope. They knew that either the one or the other system must exclusively prevail.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.183

Unlike too many of those who in modern time invoke their authority, they had a choice between the two. They preferred the system of free labor, and they determined to organize the government and so to direct its activity that that system should surely and certainly prevail. For this purpose, and no other, they based the whole structure of government broadly on the principle that all men are created equal, and therefore free—little dreaming that within the short period of one hundred years their descendants would bear to be told by any orator, however popular, that the utterance of that principle was merely a rhetorical rhapsody; or by any judge, however venerated, that it was attended by mental reservations which rendered it hypocritical and false. By the Ordinance of 1787 they dedicated all of the national domain not yet polluted by slavery to free labor immediately, thenceforth and for ever; while by the new Constitution and laws they invited foreign free labor from all lands under the sun, and interdicted the importation of African slave labor, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances whatsoever. It is true that they necessarily and wisely modified this policy of freedom by leaving it to the several States, affected as they were by differing circumstances, to abolish slavery in their own way and at their own pleasure, instead of confiding that duty to Congress; and that they secured to the slave States, while yet retaining the system of slavery, a three-fifths representation of slaves in the federal government, until they should find themselves able to relinquish it with safety. But the very nature of these modifications fortifies my position—that the fathers knew that the two systems could not endure within the Union, and expected that within a short period slavery would disappear for ever. Moreover, in order that these modifications might not altogether defeat their grand design of a republic maintaining universal equality, they provided that two-thirds of the States might amend the Constitution.

Sewards' Irrepressible Conflict Speech, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.184

The very Constitution of the Democratic party commits it to execute all the designs of the slave-holders, whatever they may be. It is not a party of the whole Union—of all the free States and of all the slave States; nor yet is it a party of the free States in the North and in the Northwest; but it is a sectional and local party, having practically its seat within the slave States and counting its constituency chiefly and almost exclusively there. Of all its representatives in Congress and in the electoral colleges, two-thirds uniformly come from these States. Its great element of strength lies in the vote of the slave-holders, augmented by the representation of three-fifths of the slaves. Deprive the Democratic party of this strength and it would be a helpless and hopeless minority, incapable of continued organization. The Democratic party, being thus local and sectional, acquires new strength from the admission of every new slave State and loses relatively by the admission of every new free State into the Union.

Lincoln's First Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Ottawa, Illinois, 21 August 1858

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, 1858

Title: Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1858

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.227-237

Delivered at Ottawa, Illinois, August 21, 1858. Abridged. The Nicolay and Hay version, used by permission of the Century Company. This debate occurred during the campaign for the election of the Legislature of Illinois, which should choose a successor to Douglas in the United States Senate. Douglas was returned to the Senate, but this debate gave Lincoln a national reputation, making him an available candidate against Douglas for the presidency in 1860. The arguments which Lincoln forced Douglas to make alienated Southern Democrats from Douglas and so lost him their support for president, Lincoln's election being made possible through the nomination of a second Democratic candidate by the South.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.227

WHEN a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented, it provokes him—at least, I find it so with myself; but when misrepresentation becomes very gross and palpable, it is more apt to amuse him. The first thing I see fit to notice is the fact that Judge Douglas alleges, after running through the history of the old Democratic and the old Whig parties, that Judge Trumbull and myself made an arrangement in 1854 by which I was to have the place of General Shields in the United States Senate, and Judge Trumbull was to have the place of Judge Douglas. Now all I have to say upon that subject is that I think no man—not even Judge Douglas—can prove it, because it is not true. I have no doubt he is "conscientious" in saying it. As to those resolutions that he took such a length of time to read, as being the platform of the Republican party in 1854, I say I never had anything to do with them, and I think Trumbull never had. Judge Douglas can not show that either of us ever did have anything to do with them.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.228

Now, about this story that Judge Douglas tells of Trumbull bargaining to sell out the old Democratic party, and Lincoln agreeing to sell out the old Whig party, I have the means of knowing about that; Judge Douglas can not have and I know there is no substance to it whatever. Yet I have no doubt he is "conscientious" about it. I know that after Mr. Lovejoy got into the Legislature that winter, he complained of me that I had told all the old Whigs of his district that the old Whig party was good enough for them, and some of them voted against them because I told them so.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.228

Anything that argues me into his idea of perfect social and political equality with the negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse. I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose directly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably for ever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.229

I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.229

Now I pass on to consider one or two more of these little follies. The judge is wofully at fault about his early friend Lincoln being a "grocery keeper." I do not know that it would be a great sin if I had been; but he is mistaken. Lincoln never kept a grocery anywhere in the world. It is true that Lincoln did work the latter part of one winter in a little still-house up at the head of a hollow. And so I think my friend, the judge, is equally at fault when he charges me at the time when I was in Congress of having opposed our soldiers who were fighting in the Mexican War. The judge did not make his charge very distinctly, but I tell you what he can prove, by referring to the record. You remember I was an old Whig, and whenever the Democratic party tried to get me to vote that the war had been righteously begun by the president, I would not do it. But whenever they asked for any money, or land-warrants, or anything to pay the soldiers there, during all that time, I gave the same vote that Judge Douglas did. You can think as you please as to whether that was consistent.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.230

Such is the truth; and the judge has the right to make all he can out of it. But when he, by a general charge, conveys the idea that I withheld supplies from the soldiers who were fighting in the Mexican War, or did anything else to hinder the soldiers, he is, to say the least, grossly and altogether mistaken, as a consultation of the records will prove to him.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.230

As I have not used up so much of my time as I had supposed, I will dwell a little longer upon one or two of these minor topics upon which the judge has spoken. He has read from my speech in Springfield in which I say that "a house divided against itself can not stand." Does the judge say it can stand? I do not know whether he does or not. The judge does not seem to be attending to me just now, but I would like to know if it is his opinion that a house divided against itself can stand. If it is, then there is a question of veracity, not between him and me, but between the judge and an authority of a somewhat higher character.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.231

Now, my friends, I ask your attention to this matter for the purpose of saying something seriously. I know that the judge may readily enough agree with me that the maxim which was put forth by the Savior is true, but he may allege that I misapply it; and the judge has a right to urge that in my application I do misapply it, and then I have a right to show that I do not misapply it. When he undertakes to say that because I think this nation, so far as the question of slavery is concerned, will all become one thing or all the other, I am in favor of bringing about a dead uniformity in the various States in all their institutions, he argues erroneously. The great variety of the local institutions in the States, springing from differences in the soil, differences in the face of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of union. They do not make "a house divided against itself" but they make a house united. If they produce in one section of the country what is called for by the wants of another section, and this other section can supply the wants of the first, they are not matters of discord but bonds of union, true bonds of union.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.232

But can this question of slavery be considered as among these varieties in the institutions of the country? I leave it to you to say whether, in the history of our government, this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and, on the contrary, been an apple of discord and an element of division in the house. I ask you to consider whether, so long as the moral constitution of men's minds shall continue to be the same, after this generation and assemblage shall sink into the grave, and another race shall arise with the same moral and intellectual development we have—whether, if that institution is standing in the same irritating position in which it now is, it will not continue an element of division?

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.232

If so, then I have a right to say that, in regard to this question, the Union is a house divided against itself; and when the judge reminds me that I have often said to him that the institution of slavery has existed for eighty years in some States, and yet it does not exist in some others, I agree to the fact, and I account for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it—restricting it from the new Territories where it had not gone, and legislating to cut off its source by the abrogation of the slave-trade, thus putting the seal of legislation against its spread. The public mind did rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. But lately, I think—and in this I charge nothing on the judge's motives—lately, I think, that he, and those acting with him, have placed that institution on a new basis, which looks to the perpetuity and nationalization of slavery. And while it is placed upon this new basis, I say, and I have said, that I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South. Now I believe if we could arrest the spread, and place it where Washington and Jefferson and Madison placed it, it would be in the course of ultimate extinction, and the public mind would, as for eighty years past, believe that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. The crisis would be past, and the institution might be let alone for a hundred years—if it should live so long—in the States where it exists, yet it would be going out of existence in the way best for both the black and the white races.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.233

I ask the attention of the people here assembled and elsewhere, to the course that Judge Douglas is pursuing every day as bearing upon this question of making slavery national. Not going back to the records, but taking the speeches he makes—the speeches he made yesterday, and the day before, and makes constantly all over the country—I ask your attention to them. In the first place, what is necessary to make the institution national? Not war. There is no danger that the people of Kentucky will shoulder their muskets, and, with a young nigger stuck on every bayonet, march into Illinois and force them upon us. There is no danger of our going over there and making war upon them. Then what is necessary for the nationalization of slavery? It is simply the next Dred Scott decision.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.234

It is merely for the Supreme Court to decide that no State under the Constitution can exclude it, just as they have already decided that under the Constitution neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature can do it. When that is decided and acquiesced in, the whole thing is done. This being true, and this being the way, as I think, that slavery is to be made national, let us consider what Judge Douglas is doing every day to that end. In the first place, let us see what influence he is exerting on public sentiment. In this and like communities, public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed. This must be borne in mind, as also the additional fact that Judge Douglas is a man of vast influence, so great that it is enough for many men to profess to believe anything when they once find out that Judge Douglas professes to believe it. Consider also the attitude he occupies at the head of large party—a party which he claims has a majority of all the voters in the country.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.235

This man sticks to a decision which forbids the people of a Territory to exclude slavery, and he does so not because he says it is right in itself—he does not give any opinion on that—but because it has been decided by the court, and, being decided by the court, he is, and you are, bound to take it in your political action as law—not that he judges at all of its merits, but because a decision of the court is to him a "Thus saith the Lord." He places it on that ground alone, and you will bear in mind that thus committing himself unreservedly to this decision, commits himself on account of the merit or demerit of the decision, but it is a "Thus saith the Lord." The next decision, as much as this, will be a "Thus saith the Lord." There is nothing that can divert or turn him away from this decision. It is nothing that I point out to him that his great prototype, General Jackson, did not believe in the binding force of decisions. It is nothing to him that Jefferson did not so believe.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.236

But I can not shake Judge Douglas's tooth loose from the Dred Scott decision. Like some obstinate animal (I mean no disrespect) that will hang on when he has once got his teeth fixed—you may cut off a leg, or you may tear away an arm, still he will not relax his hold. And so I may point out to the judge, and say that he is bespattered all over, from the beginning of his political life to the present time, with attacks upon judicial decisions,—I may cut off limb after limb of his public record, and strive to wrench from him a single dictum of the court, yet I can not divert him from it. He hangs to the last to the Dred Scott decision. These things show there is a purpose strong as death and eternity for which he adheres to this decision, and for which he will adhere to all other decisions of the same court. [A Hibernian: "Give us something besides Drid Scott."] Yes; no doubt you want to hear something that does not hurt.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.236

Now, having spoken of the Dred Scott decision, one more word and I am done. Henry Clay—my beau-ideal of a statesman, the man for whom I fought all my humble life—Henry Clay once said of a class of men who would repress all tendencies to liberty and ultimate emancipation, that they must, if they would do this, go back to the era of our independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return; they must blow out the moral lights around us; they must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate there the love of liberty; and then, and not till then, could they penetrate slavery in this country! To my thinking, Judge Douglas is, by his example and vast influence, doing that very thing in this community when he says that the negro has nothing in the Declaration of Independence. Henry Clay plainly understood the contrary.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.237

Judge Douglas is going back to the era of our Revolution, and to the extent of his ability muzzling the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. When he invites any people, willing to have slavery, to establish it, he is blowing out the moral lights around us. When he says he "cares not whether slavery is voted down or voted up"—that it is a sacred right of self-government—he is, in my judgment, penetrating the human soul and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty in this American people. And now I will only say that when, by all these means and appliances, Judge Douglas shall succeed in bringing public sentiment to an exact accordance with his own views—when these vast assemblages shall echo back all these sentiments—when they shall come to repeat his views and to avow his principles, and to assent to all that on these mighty questions,—then it needs only the formality of the second Dred Scott decision, which he indorses in advance, to make slavery alike lawful in all the States—old as well as new, North as well as South.

Stephen A. Douglas's First Debate with Abraham Lincoln, Ottawa, Illinois, 21 August 1858

Stephen Douglas in the First Debate with Lincoln, 1858

Title: Stephen Douglas in the First Debate with Lincoln

Author: Stephen Douglas

Date: 1858

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.259-272

At Ottawa, Illinois, August 21, 1858. The Nicolay and Hay version, used here by permission of the Century Company.

Born in 1813, died in 1861; elected Supreme Court Judge in Illinois in 1841; member of Congress in 1843; United States Senator in 1847 and 1853; reported the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854; had a notable debate with Lincoln in 1858; an unsuccessful candidate against Lincoln in 1860.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.259

PRIOR to 1854 this country was divided into two great political parties, known as the Whig and Democratic parties. Both were national and patriotic, advocating principles that were universal in their application. An old-time Whig could proclaim his principles in Louisiana and Massachusetts alike. Whig principles had no boundary sectional line—they were not limited by the Ohio River, nor by the Potomac, nor by the line of the free and slave States, but applied and were proclaimed wherever the Constitution ruled or the American flag waved over the American soil.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.259

So it was, and so it is with the great Democratic party, which, from the days of Jefferson until this period, has proven itself to be the historic party of this nation. While the Whig and Democratic parties differed in regard to a bank, the tariff distribution, the specie circular, and the subtreasury, they agreed on the great slavery question which now agitates the Union. I say that the Whig party and the Democratic party agreed on the slavery question, while they differed on those matters of expediency to which I have referred. The Whig party and the Democratic party jointly adopted the compromise measure of 1850 as the basis of a proper and just solution of the slavery question in all its forms. Clay was the great leader, with Webster on his right and Cass on his left, and sustained by the patriots in the Whig and Democratic ranks who had devised and enacted the compromise measures in 1850.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.260

In 1854, Mr. Abraham Lincoln and Mr. Lyman Trumbull entered into an arrangement, one with the other, and each with his respective friend to dissolve the old Whig party on the one hand, and to dissolve the old Democratic party on the other, and to connect the members of both into an Abolition party, under the name and disguise of a Republican party. The terms of that arrangement between Lincoln and Trumbull have been published by Lincoln's special friend, James H. Matheny, Esq., and they were that Lincoln should have General Shield's place in the United States Senate, which was then about to become vacant, and that Trumbull should have my seat when my term expired. Lincoln went to work to abolitionize the old Whig party all over the State, pretending that he was then as good a Whig as ever; and Trumbull went to work in his part of the State preaching abolitionism in its milder and lighter form, and trying to abolitionize the Democratic party, and bring old Democrats hand-cuffed and bound hand and foot into the Abolition camp. In pursuance of the arrangement, the parties met at Springfield in October, 1854, and proclaimed their new platform. Lincoln was to bring into the Abolition camp the old-time Whigs, and transfer them over to Giddings, Chase, Fred Douglass, and Parson Lovejoy, who were ready to receive them and christen them in their new faith.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.261

I desire to know whether Mr. Lincoln to-day stands as he did in 1854, in favor of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to-day, as he did in 1854, against the admission of any more slave States into the Union, even if the people want them. I want to know whether he stands pledged against the admission of a new State into the Union with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make. I want to know whether he stands to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to the prohibition of the slave-trade between the different States. I desire to know whether he stands pledged to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the United States, North as well as South of the Missouri Compromise line. I desire him to answer whether he is opposed to the acquisition of any more territory unless slavery is prohibited therein. I want his answer to these questions. Your affirmative cheers in favor of this Abolition platform are not satisfactory.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.262

I ask Abraham Lincoln to answer these questions in order that when I trot him down to lower Egypt, I may put the same questions to him. My principles are the same everywhere. I can proclaim them alike in the North, the South, the East, and the West. My principles will apply wherever the Constitution prevails and the American flag waves. I desire to know whether Mr. Lincoln's principles will bear transplanting from Ottawa to Jonesboro? I put these questions to him to-day distinctly, and ask an answer. I have a right to an answer, for I quote from the platform of the Republican party, made by himself and others at the time that party was formed, and the bargain made by Lincoln to dissolve and kill the old Whig party, and transfer its members, bound hand and foot, to the Abolition party under the direction of Giddings and Fred Douglass.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.262

In the remarks I have made on this platform, and the position of Mr. Lincoln upon it, I mean nothing personally disrespectful or unkind to that gentleman. I have known him for nearly twenty-five years. There were many points of sympathy between us when we first got acquainted. We were both comparatively boys, and both struggling with poverty in a strange land. I was a school-teacher in the town of Winchester, and he a flourishing grocery-keeper in the town of Salem. He was more successful in his occupation than I was in mine, and hence more fortunate in this world's goods. Lincoln is one of those peculiar men who perform with admirable skill everything which they undertake. I made as good a school-teacher as I could, and when a cabinet-maker I made a good bedstead and tables, altho my old boss said I succeeded better with bureaus and secretaries than with anything else; but I believe that Lincoln always was more successful in business than I, for his business enabled him to get into the Legislature.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.263

I met him there, however, and had sympathy with him, because of the uphill struggle we both had in life. He was then just as good at telling an anecdote as now. He could beat any of the boys wrestling, or running a foot-race, in pitching quoits, or tossing a copper; could ruin more liquor than all the boys of the town together, and the dignity and impartiality with which he presided at a horse-race or fist-fight excited the admiration and won the praise of everybody that was present and participated. I sympathized with him because he was struggling with difficulties, and so was I. Mr. Lincoln served with me in the Legislature in 1836 when we both retired, and he subsided, or became submerged, and was lost sight of as a public man for some years.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.264

In 1846, when Wilmot introduced his celebrated proviso, and the Abolition tornado swept over the country, Lincoln again turned up as a member of Congress from the Sangamon district. I was then in the Senate of the United States, and was glad to welcome my old friend and companion. While in Congress, he distinguished himself by his opposition to the Mexican War, taking the side of the common enemy against his own country; and when he returned home he found that the indignation of the people followed him everywhere, and he was again submerged or obliged to retire into private life, forgotten by his former friends. He came up again in 1854, just in time to make an Abolition or Black Republican platform, in company with Giddings, Lovejoy, Chase, and Fred Douglass, for the Republican party to stand upon.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.264

These two men having formed this combination to abolitionize the old Whig party and the old Democratic party, and put themselves into the Senate of the United States, in pursuance of their bargain, are now carrying out that arrangement. Matheny states that Trumbull broke faith; that the bargain was that Lincoln should be the senator in Shield's place, and Trumbull cheated Lincoln, having control of four or five abolitionized Democrats who were holding over in the Senate; he would not let them vote for Lincoln, which obliged the rest of the Abolitionists to support him in order to secure an Abolition senator. There are a number of authorities for the truth of this besides Matheny, and I suppose that even Mr. Lincoln will not deny it.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.265

Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton, Jay and the great men of that day made this government divided into free States and slave States, and left each State perfectly free to do as it pleased on the subject of slavery. Why can it not exist on the same principles on which our fathers made it? They knew when they framed the Constitution that in a country as wide and broad as this, with such variety of climate, production, and interest, the people necessarily required different laws and regulations; what would suit the granite-hills of New Hampshire would be unsuited to the rice-plantations of South Carolina, and they therefore provided that each State should retain its own Legislature and its own sovereignty, with the full and complete power to do as it pleased within its own limits, in all that was local and not national.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.265

One of the reserved rights of the States was the right to regulate the relations between master and servant, on the slavery question. At the time the Constitution was framed, there were thirteen States in the Union, twelve of which were slaveholding States and one a free State. Suppose this doctrine of uniformity preached by Mr. Lincoln, that the States should all be free or all be slave, had prevailed. What would have been the result? Of course, the twelve slaveholding States would have overruled the one free State, and slavery would have fastened by a constitutional provision on every inch of the American Republic, instead of being left, as our fathers wisely left it, to each State to decide for itself. Here I assert that uniformity in the local laws and institutions of the different States is neither possible nor desirable. If uniformity had been adopted when the government was established, it must inevitably have been the uniformity of slavery everywhere, or else the uniformity of slavery everywhere, or else the uniformity of negro citizenship and negro equality everywhere.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.266

We are told by Lincoln that he is utterly opposed to the Dred Scott decision, and will not submit to it, for the reason that he says it deprives the negro of the rights and privileges of citizenship. That is the first and main reason which he assigns for his warfare on the Supreme Court of the United States and its decision. I ask you, are you in favor of conferring upon a negro the rights and privileges of citizenship? Do you desire to strike out of our State Constitution that clause which keeps savages and free negroes out of the State, and allow the free negroes to flow in, and cover your prairies with black-settlements? Do you desire to turn this beautiful State into a free negro colony, in order that when Missouri abolishes slavery she can end one hundred thousand emancipated slaves into Illinois, to become citizens and voters, on an equality with yourselves? If you desire negro citizenship; if you desire to allow them to come into the State and settle with the white man; if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and to adjudge your rights,—then support Mr. Lincoln and the Black Republican party, who are in favor of the citizenship of the negro. For one, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form. I believe this government was made on the white basis. I believe it was made by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity for ever; and I am in favor of confining citizenship to white men, men of European birth and descent, instead of conferring it upon negroes, Indians and other inferior races.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.267

Mr. Lincoln following the example and lead of all the little Abolition orators who go around and lecture in the basements of schools and churches, reads from the Declaration of Independence that all men were created equal, and then asks how can you deprive a negro of that equality which God and the Declaration of Independence award to him? He and they maintain that negro equality is guaranteed by the laws of God, and that it is asserted in the Declaration of Independence. If they think so, of course they have a right to say so, and so vote. I do not question Mr. Lincoln's conscientious belief that the negro was made his equal, and hence is his brother; but for my own part, I do not regard the negro as my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother or any kin to me whatever. Lincoln has evidently learned by heart Parson Lovejoy's catechism. He can repeat it as well as Farnsworth, and he is worthy of a medal from Father Giddings and Fred Douglass for his Abolitionism. He holds that the negro was born his equal and yours, and that he was endowed with equality by the Almighty, and that no human law can deprive him of these rights which were guaranteed to him by the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.268

Now, I do not believe that the Almighty ever intended the negro to be the equal of the white man. If He did, He has been a long time demonstrating the fact. For thousands of years the negro has been a race upon the earth, and during all that time, in all latitudes and climates, wherever he has wandered or been taken, he has been inferior to the race which he has there met. He belongs to an inferior race, and must always occupy an inferior position. I do not hold that because the negro is our inferior therefore he ought to be a slave. By no means can such a conclusion be drawn from what I have said. On the contrary, I hold that humanity and Christianity both require that the negro shall have and enjoy every right, every privilege, and every immunity consistent with the safety of the society in which he lives. On that point, I presume there can be no diversity of opinion. You and I are bound to extend to our inferior and dependent beings every right, every privilege, every faculty and immunity consistent with the public good.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.269

The question then arises, what rights and privileges are consistent with the public good? This is a question which each State and each Territory must decide for itself—Illinois has decided it for herself. We have provided that the negro shall not be a slave, and we have also provided that he shall not be a citizen, but we protect him in his civil rights, in his life, his person and his property, only depriving him of all political rights whatsoever, and refusing to put him on an equality with the white man. That policy of Illinois is satisfactory to the Democratic party and to me, and if it were to the Republicans, there would then be no question upon the subject; but the Republicans say that he ought to be made a citizen, and when he becomes a citizen he becomes your equal, with all your rights and privileges. They assert the Dred Scott decision to be monstrous because it denies that the negro is or can be a citizen under the Constitution.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.269

Now, I hold that Illinois had a right to abolish and prohibit slavery as she did, and I hold that Kentucky has the same right to continue and protect slavery that Illinois had to abolish it. I hold that New York had as much right to abolish slavery as Virginia has to continue it, and that each and every State of this Union is a sovereign power, with the right to do as it pleases upon the question of slavery, and upon all its domestic institutions. Slavery is not the only question which comes up in this controversy. There is a far more important one to you, and that is, what shall be done with the free negro? We have settled the slavery question as far as we are concerned; we have prohibited it in Illinois for ever, and in doing so, I think we have done wisely, and there is no man in the State who would be more strenuous in his opposition to the introduction of slavery than I would; but when we settled it for ourselves, we exhausted all our power over that subject. We have done our whole duty, and can do no more. We must leave each and every other State to decide for itself the same question.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.270

In relation to the policy to be pursued toward the free negroes, we have said that they shall not vote; while Maine, on the other hand, has said that they shall vote. Maine is a sovereign State, and has the power to regulate the qualifications of voters within her limits. I would never consent to confer the right of voting and of citizenship upon a negro, but still I am not going to quarrel with Maine for differing from me in opinion. Let Maine take care of her own negroes, and fix the qualifications of her own voters to suit herself, without interfering with Illinois, and Illinois will not interfere with Maine. So with the State of New York. She allows the negro to vote provided he own two hundred and fifty dollars' worth of property, but not otherwise. While I would not make any distinction whatever between a negro who held property and the one who did not, yet if the sovereign State of New York chooses to make that distinction it is her business and not mine, and I will not quarrel with her for it. She can do as she pleases on this question if she minds her own business, and we will do the same thing.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.271

Now, my friends, if we will only act conscientiously and rigidly upon this great principle of popular sovereignty, which guarantees to each State and Territory the right to do as it pleases on all things, local and domestic, instead of Congress interfering, we will continue at peace one with another. Why should Illinois be at war with Missouri, or Kentucky with Ohio, or Virginia with New York, merely because their institutions differ? They knew that the North and the South, having different climates, productions, and interests, required different institutions. This doctrine of Mr. Lincoln of uniformity among the institutions of the different States, is a new doctrine, never dreamed of by Washington, Madison or the framers of this government. Mr. Lincoln and the Republican party set themselves up as wiser than these men who made this government, which has flourished for seventy years under the principle of popular sovereignty, recognizing the right of each State to do as it pleased.

Lincoln on the First Debate with Douglas, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.272

Under that principle we have grown from a nation of three or four millions to a nation of about thirty millions of people; we have crossed the Alleghany Mountains and filled up the whole Northwest, turning the prairies into a garden, and building up churches and schools, thus spreading civilization and Christianity where before there was nothing but savage barbarism. Under that principle we have become, from a feeble nation, the most powerful on the face of the earth, and if we only adhere to that principle, we can go forward increasing in territory, in power, in strength, and in glory until the Republic of America shall be the north star that shall guide the friends of freedom throughout the civilized world. And why can we not adhere to the great principle of self-government upon which our institutions were originally based? I believe that this new docrtine preached by Mr. Lincoln and his party will dissolve the Union if it succeeds.

The Death and Burial of Washington Irving

Title: The Death and Burial of Washington Irving

Author: Edmund Clarence Stedman

Date: 1859

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.169-176

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.169

The obsequies of a man like Washington Irving are not only a matter of the deepest interest to those who dwell near the legendary shores of the Hudson and the Sound—whose traditions he so exquisitely gave to the world—and to every American, the literature of whose country he so purified and ennobled—but to every Old and New World reader of that language, to which he added some of its choicest treasures, and with which his fame is coextensive and secure.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.169

It was our privilege to mingle reverently with the circle of relatives and near friends, who assembled yesterday morning at Sunnyside, before Mr. Irving's remains were conveyed to the church at Tarrytown, where the public funeral services were held. The day was clear and warm, the landscape mellowed with the haze of the lingering Indian summer, and the broad Tappan Zee, the western uplands, and the romantic fastnesses of "Wolfert's Roost" never blended in more picturesque harmony. But the magician, who had dwelt amid and loved the scene, was silent forever—the charm was broken, and the wand snapt in twain! And, as we wound through the path he had so often trod, it seemed as if the elms and maples, in their naked contrast, were mourning the departure of him whose home they had guarded lovingly and so long.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.170

The remains were yesterday morning, for the first time, placed in the coffin, and were lying in the northwest parlor of the quaintly-gabled cottage, familiar to those who have loved to read of Irving. To all was granted a long, last look at the precious dust, ere it left forever the spot where his years were so ripe and lustrous. Very few were present, except the immediate family connections, it being understood that no services were to be held at the house.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.170

The body was robed in a plain black suit, with white cravat and collar, and as the light struck the features of the deceased it seemed almost as if he were sleeping—so calm and smooth had the touch of death left them. The face was thinner than we had seen it, but there was the same repose, and the same imaginative, noble brow. At the left of the coffin hung the celebrated portrait of Jarvis; by its side were the center-table—as he left it, covered with books—and his favorite chair, standing in the position where he occupied it last. It seemed as if the grief of the bereaved ones was tempered even there and then by the thought of his well-rounded life, and the euthanasy that was his lot. At about 12 M. the family procession left Sunnyside, with the body, winding through the lovely grounds to the east, and then two miles north, over a road lined with beautiful trees and mansions, to the village of Tarrytown.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.171

This church, where the public services were held, is Episcopal, and is the one of which Mr. Irving was a communicant, a warden, and a constant attendant. The Rev. Dr. William Creighton is the rector, and the Rev. James S. Spencer his assistant. It is a plain, brick edifice, erected some twenty-two years ago, and will seat about 600 people. The style of architecture is Grecian, but the windows are Gothic, and of stained glass. The church was filled, except the seats reserved for the families and invited guests, with the inhabitants of Tarrytown, Irvington, and vicinity, and the walks in front, as well as the churchyard, were completely occupied. At about 12:30 o'clock the train from New York brought from 700 to 800 of our citizens, and residents of towns along the road, who had left their daily pursuits to mingle in the last sad rites.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.171

Among the well-known literary and professional men who were present, we observed N. P. Willis, Esq. (who had come down from Idlewild, with his family, on a sad and far different occasion from that of his last visit to Sunnyside, so vividly described in his late letter); the Hon. George Bancroft; ex-Judge Kent; Henry T. Tuckerman, Esq.; the Hon. Ogden Edwards; the Hon. John Van Buren; Frederick Saunders, Esq., Astor Librarian. Thirteen of the members of the New York Board of Councilmen were also present in pursuance of the joint resolutions adopted Wednesday, but not an alderman appeared; also Messrs. William B. Astor, George Folsom, and the other trustees of the Astor Library. A large number of divines from our own and other cities, were in the chancel, testifying by their robed presence to the goodness and purity of the departed man.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.172

In accordance with the often exprest wish of Mr. Irving, the services were strictly in keeping with the beautiful form of the Church of England, with no unusual address or ceremony. A few minutes after one, the coffin was brought up the south aisle, preceded by the Rev. Dr. Creighton and the Rev. Mr. Spencer, the latter of whom read the form, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord," and the pall-bearers, of whom there were eight, as follows: Gouverneur Kemble of Cold Spring, Putnam County, the oldest intimate friend of the deceased; Dr. J. G. Cogswell, Librarian of the Astor Library; Prof. James Renwick; Col. James A. Hamilton; Col. James Watson Webb; Henry Shelton, Esq.; Messrs. George T. Morgan and Nathaniel B. Holmes—the two latter gentlemen being covestrymen of Mr. Irving, and his near friends.

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The mourning relatives followed the coffin and took the seats reserved for them. While the body was being placed in front of the chancel, the choir chanted the anthem from the 39th and 90th Psalms: "Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days." Directly following, the Lesson familiar to all, from the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, was impressively read by the Rev. Dr. Creighton. At the conclusion of the Lesson the choir sang the last three stanzas of the 26th Hymn, commencing "Behold, the unnumbered Angel host." At its close the Rector stated there would be no more services at the church, and that all who chose could have an opportunity of viewing the features of the deceased.

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Passing up the south side and down the north the people looked at the beloved remains. The coffin was of dark rosewood, plainly but richly studded, and adorned with three wreaths of japonicas, entwined with laurel. On a silver plate was the simple inscription: "Washington Irving. Born, April 3, A.D., 1783; died, November 28, A.D., 1859." Just before the lid was closed, a ray of sunlight, shooting through the illumined glass of the south window, lit up the serene face with a glory that seemed the very reflex of the brighter land.

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About 2 P.M. the procession was formed to convey the remains to the last resting place. It moved in the following order: First, the clergy; second, pall-bearers; third, the hearse; fourth, relations and invited guests; fifth, the Common Council of the City of New York; sixth, scholars of the Irving Institute, to the number of about 100, on foot; seventh, citizens in general. The procession itself was about one-quarter of a mile in length, and many hundreds besides had already gathered in the cemetery prior to its arrival. Moving still northward, with the silvery Hudson and the nestling village ever in view, itpassed the Andre monument on the left, and so on for a mile, to the lovely hill where the Tarrytown cemetery is located. The streets through which it moved were draped with mourning, as, indeed, were the shops and dwellings through the place; the flags at the river-side were at half-mast; the church bells tolling, and all business appeared to be suspended for the day.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.174

This burying-ground is romantically located on a hill overlooking the famous "Sleepy Hollow," where the bridge of the "Headless Horseman" is still pointed out. Near the entrance is the old Dutch church alluded to by Mr. Irving in his works. It was erected in 1699, by Frederick Philipse and Catherine Van Courtland, his wife—so says the ancient tablet. The lot of the Irving family has a south elevation on the southwest side of the ground, and commands the loveliest view of the Hudson anywhere obtainable. In it are already deposited the ashes of William Irving and wife—the parents of Washington; his brothers, Peter and William, and the wife of the latter; and the wife and three children of General E. Irving, the surviving brother of the deceased. All the graves are marked with very plain and unpretending marble stones. The grave of Washington Irving was made, at his own request, by the side of his mother's.

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On the arrival of the funeral cortege at the spot, the solemn burial service was read by the Rev. Dr. Creighton, while thousands gathered mournfully and silently around. The rector seemed greatly affected in the performance of this last office. Some members of the choir chanted the anthem: "I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," during which the aged brother of the deceased was visibly overcome. This concluded the services, and the people lingeringly dispersed, but not till after the grave was filled with earth, and sodded over, and honored with a wreath of bays—the tribute to fame—which a lady placed last of all at its head.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.175

And there Washington Irving rests—amid the very scenes he legendized, and consecrated for all time. Fit burial-place for the author and the man; on the banks of his darling river—the trees he best loved waving over him—his tomb the shrine of the dearest literary associations, the future Mecca of many a pilgrim.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.175

General Ebenezer Irving, the surviving brother of the deceased, is 86 years old, and was, consequently, Washington's senior by ten years. He feels keenly the shock of his brother's death, having thought that, in the course of nature, his own summons would have been the first. His three unmarried daughters, Catharine, Julia, and Mary, are the nieces who have kept house for the deceased, and tenderly cherished and lightened his declining age. Another daughter, Sarah, is the wife of William Grinnell, Esq., of Havana, N. Y. His son, the Rev. Pierre M. Irving, of Brighton, Staten Island, was the last person to whom Mr. Irving spoke before his death. The Rev. Theodore Irving, also of Staten Island, is another son—and there are two others, whose names we did not obtain. Pierre P. Irving, Esq., nephew of the deceased by an older brother, and brother of Mrs. Moses H. Grinnell, forms one of the bereaved family at Sunnyside.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.176

Those who have seen much of Mr. Irving, for some time past say that he retained to the last his erectness of posture and noble bearing. A few days before his death, while suffering painfully from the asthmatic attack which hastened it, he stooped a very little only, as if from weakness in the chest. His death was wrongly reported as having taken place at eight o'clock on Monday evening. He conversed with his usual spirits and mingled in the family amusements until about ten o'clock, when he rose to retire, and had proceeded as far as his bed-chamber, on the second story, before he fell in death.

Stedman, Death and Burial of Washington Irving, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.176

It has been said that the most trying test to which the character of a famous author can be subjected is the estimation in which he is held by those every-day neighbors, who feel the actual contact of his social influence, and know him best as a man. The full roundness of fame is seen better at a distance, and the absorbing pursuits of successful authorship are too apt to engender harsh mannerisms that in time overcome the many lesser virtues of private life. But Mr. Irving could well abide the judgment of his fellow townsmen. Not alone the wealthy, well-read residents—who have so enhanced the natural beauties of the vicinity of Sunnyside by their exquisite summer haunts, and revered and loved him with an intellectual sympathy—but the humble villagers and farmers, to whom he was so well known, were among the truest mourners that followed him to his grave.

John Brown at Harper's Ferry

Title: John Brown at Harper's Ferry

Author: Horace Greeley

Date: 1859

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.177-185

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.177

On the 17th of October, 1859, this country was bewildered and astounded, while the fifteen Slave States were convulsed with fear, rage, and hate, by telegraphic dispatches from Baltimore and Washington, announcing the outbreak, at Harper's Ferry, of a conspiracy of Abolitionists and negroes, having for its object the devastation and ruin of the South, and the massacre of her white inhabitants. A report that President Buchanan had been proclaimed Emperor and Autocrat of the North American continent, and had quietly arrested and imprisoned all the members of Congress and judges of the Supreme Court, by way of strengthening his usurpation, would not have seemed more essentially incredible, nor have aroused a more intense excitement.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.177

Probably the more prevalent sensation at first excited by this intelligence was that of blank incredulity. Harper's Ferry being the seat of a national armory, at which a large number of mechanics and artizans were usually employed by the Government, it was supposed by many that some collision respecting wages or hours of labor had occurred between the officers and the workmen, which had provoked a popular tumult, and perhaps a stoppage of the trains passing through that village on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; and that this, magnified by rumor and alarm, had afforded a basis for these monstrous exaggerations. Yet, as time wore on, further advices, with particulars and circumstances, left no room to doubt the substantial truth of the original report. An attempt had actually been made to excite a slave insurrection in northern Virginia, and the one man in America to whom such an enterprise would not seem utter insanity and suicide was at the head of it…. .

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.178

Harper's Ferry was then a village of some five thousand inhabitants, lying on the Virginia side of the Potomac, and on either side of its principal tributary, the Shenandoah, which here enters it from the South. Its site is a mere nest or cup among high, steep mountains; the passage of the united rivers through the Blue Ridge at this point having been pronounced by Jefferson a spectacle which one might well cross the Atlantic to witness and enjoy. Here the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crosses the Potomac; and the rich valley of the Shenandoah is traversed, for a considerable distance hence, by the Winchester and Harper's Ferry Railroad. Washington is 57 miles distant by turnpike; Baltimore, 80miles by railroad. Modest as the village then was, space had been with difficulty found for its habitations, some of which were perched upon ground four hundred feet above the surface of the streams. One of its very few streets was entirely occupied by the workshops and offices of the national armory, and had an iron railing across its entrance. In the old arsenal building there were usually stored from 100,000 to 200,000 stand of arms. The knowledge of this had doubtless determined the point at which the first blow of the liberators was to be struck.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.179

The forces with which Brown made his attack consisted of seventeen white and five colored men, tho it is said that others who escaped assisted outside by cutting the telegraph wires and tearing up the railroad track. The entrance of this petty army into Harper's Ferry on Sunday evening, October 17th, seems to have been effected without creating alarm. They first rapidly extinguished the lights of the town; then took possession of the armory buildings, which were only guarded by three watchmen, whom, without meeting resistance or exciting alarm, they seized and locked up in the guard-house. It is probable that they were aided, or, at least, guided, by friendly negroes belonging in the village. At half past ten the watchmen at the Potomac bridge was seized and secured. At midnight, his successor, arriving, was hailed by Brown's sentinels, but ran, one shot being fired at him from the bridge. He gave the alarm, but still nothing stirred. At a quarter past one, the western train arrived, and its conductor found the bridge guarded by armed men. He and others attempted to walk across but were turned back by presented rifles. One man, a negro, was shot in the back, and died next morning. The passengers took refuge in the hotel, and remained there several hours; the conductor properly refusing to pass the train over, tho permitted, at three o'clock, to do so.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.180

A little after midnight the house of Colonel Washington was visited by six of Brown's men under Captain Stevens, who captured the Colonel, seized his arms, horses, etc., and liberated his slaves. On their return, Stevens and party visited the house of Mr. Alstadt and his son, whom them captured and freed their slaves. These, with each male citizen as he appeared in the street, were confined in the armory until they numbered between forty and fifty. Brown informed his prisoners that they would be liberated on condition of writing to their friends to send a negro apiece as ransom. At daylight the train proceeded, Brown walking over the bridge with the conductor. Whenever any one asked the object of their captors, the uniform answer was, "To free the slaves"; and when one of the workmen, seeing an armed guard at the arsenal gate, asked by what authority they had taken possession of the public property, he was answered, "By the authority of God Almighty!

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.180

The passenger train that sped eastward from Harper's Ferry, by Brown's permission, in the early morning of Monday, October 17th, left that place completely in the military possession of the insurrectionists. They held, without dispute, the arsenal, with its offices, workshops, and grounds. Their sentinels stood on guard at the bridges and principal corners, and were seenwalking up and down the streets. Every workman who ignorantly approached the armory, as day dawned, was seized and imprisoned, with all other white males who seemed capable of making any trouble. By eight o'clock the number of prisoners had been swelled to sixty-odd, and the work was still proceeding.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.181

But it was no longer entirely one-sided. The white Virginians, who had arms, prepared to use them. Soon after daybreak, as Brown's guards were bringing two citizens to a halt, they were fired on by a man named Turner, and directly afterward by a grocer named Boerly, who was instantly killed by the return fire. Several Virginians soon obtained possession of a room overlooking the armory gates, and fired thence at the sentinels who guarded them, one of whom fell dead, and another—Brown's son Watson—was mortally wounded. Still, throughout the forenoon, the liberators remained masters of the town. There were shots fired from one side or the other at intervals, but no more casualties reported. The prisoners were by turns permitted to visit their families under guard, to give assurance that they still lived and were kindly treated. Had Brown chosen to fly to the mountains with his few followers, he might still have done so, tho with a much slenderer chance of impunity than if he had, according to his original plan, decamped at midnight with such arms and ammunition as he could bear away. Why he lingered, to brave inevitable destruction, is not certain; but it may fairly be presumed that he had private assurances that the negroes of thesurrounding country would rise at the first tidings of his movement, and come flocking to his standard; and he chose to court the desperate chances of remaining where arms and ammunition for all could abundantly be had. True, he afterward said that he had arms enough already, either on or about his premises; but, if so, why seize Harper's Ferry at all?

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.182

At all events, if his doom was already sealed, his delay at least hastened it. Half an hour after noon, a militia force, one hundred strong, arrived from Charlestown, the county seat, and were rapidly disposed so as to command every available exit from the place. In taking the Shenandoah bridge, they killed one of the insurgents, and captured William Thompson, a neighbor of Brown at Elba, unwounded. The rifleworks were next attacked, and speedily carried, being defended by five insurgents only. These attempted to cross the river, and four of them succeeded in reaching a rock in the middle of it, whence they fought with 200 Virginians, who lined either bank, until two of them were dead, and a third mortally wounded, when the fourth surrendered. Kagi, Brown's secretary of war, was one of the killed. William H. Leeman, one of Brown's captains, being pursued by scores, plunged into the river, a Virginian wading after him. Leeman turned round, threw up his empty hands, and cried, "Don't shoot!" The Virginian fired his pistol directly in the youth's face—he was but twenty-two—and shattered his head into fragments.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.182

By this time all the houses around the armory buildings were held by the Virginians. CaptainTurner, who had fired the first shot in the morning, was killed by the sentinel at the arsenal gate as he was raising his rifle to fire. Here Dangerfield Newby, a Virginia slave, and Jim, one of Colonel Washington's negroes, with a free negro, who had lived on Washington's estate, were shot dead; and Oliver Brown, another of the old man's sons, being hit by a ball, came inside of the gate as his brother Watson had done, lay quietly down without a word, and in a few moments was dead. Mr. Beckham, mayor of the town, who came within range of the insurgents' rifles as they were exchanging volleys with the Virginians, was likewise killed.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.183

At the suggestion of Mr. Kitzmiller, one of Brown's prisoners, Aaron D. Stevens, one of his most trusted followers from Kansas, was sent out with a flag of truce to call a parley, but was instantly shot down by the Virginians, receiving six balls in his person. Thompson, their prisoner, was attacked by scores of them in the parlor where he was confined, but saved for the moment by a young lady throwing herself between him and their presented rifles, because, as she afterward explained, she "did not want the carpet spoiled." He was dragged out to the bridge, there shot in cold blood, and his body riddled with balls at the base of the pier, whither he had fallen forty feet from the bridge.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.183

By this time more militia had arrived from every quarter, and a party from Martinsburgh, led by a railroad conductor, attacked the armory buildings in the rear, while a detachment of the same force assailed them in front. Brown, seeing that his enemies were in overwhelming force, retreated to the engine-house, where he repulsed his assailants, who lost two killed and six wounded.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.184

Still militia continued to pour in; the telegraph and railroad having been completely repaired, so that the Government at Washington, Governor Wise at Richmond, and the authorities at Baltimore, were in immediate communication with Harper's Ferry, and hurrying forward troops from all quarters to overwhelm the remaining handful of insurgents, whom terror and rumor had multiplied to twenty times their actual number. At 5 P.M. Captain Simms arrived with militia from Maryland, and completed the investment of the armory buildings, whence eighteen prisoners had already been liberated upon the retreat of Brown to the engine-house. Colonel Baylor commanded in chief. The firing ceased at nightfall. Brown offered to liberate his prisoners, upon condition that his men should be permitted to cross the bridge in safety, which was refused. Night found Brown's forces reduced to three unwounded whites beside himself, with perhaps half a dozen negroes from the vicinity. Eight of the insurgents were already dead; another lay dying beside the survivors; two were captives mortally wounded, and one other unhurt. Around the few survivors were 1,500 armed, infuriated foes. Half a dozen of the party, who had been sent out at early morning by Brown to capture slaveholders and liberate slaves, were absent, and unable, even if willing, to rejoin their chief. They fled during the night to Maryland and Pennsylvania; but most of them were ultimately captured. During that night, Colonel Lee, with 90 United States marines and two pieces of artillery, arrived, and took possession of the armory guard, very close to the engine-house.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.185

Brown, of course, remained awake and alert through the night, discomfited and beyond earthly hope, but perfectly cool and calm. Said Governor Wise in a speech at Richmond soon after:

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.185

"Colonel Washington said that Brown was the coolest man he ever saw in defying death and danger. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dearly as possible."

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.185

Conversing with Colonel Washington during that solemn night, he said he had not prest his sons to join him in this expedition, but did not regret their loss—they had died in a good cause.

Greeley, John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.185

At seven in the morning, after a parley which resulted in nothing, the marines advanced to the assault, broke in the door of the engine-house by using a ladder as a batteringram, and rusht into the building. One of the defenders was shot and two marines wounded; but the odds were too great; in an instant all resistance was over. Brown was struck in the face with a saber and knocked down, after which the blow was several times repeated, while a soldier ran a bayonet twice into the old man's body. All the insurgents, it was said, would have been killed on the spot had the Virginians been able to distinguish them with certainty from their prisoners.

The Capture of John Brown

Title: The Capture of John Brown

Author: Robert E. Lee

Date: 1859

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.264-268

Leading a band of white and black marauders into Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, on the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown, who had gained national notoriety by his stand against pro-slavery forces in Kansas, seized the Federal arsenal as a signal for general insurrection of the slaves. This audacious act, however, proved to be disastrous to the participants, and so aroused the South as to preclude any peaceful solution of the slavery problem.

Colonel Robert E. Lee, afterward Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Armies, commanded the Federal troops, which suppressed the raid and captured Brown, as here related in his official report. Lee, who had served through the Mexican War and been superintendent of West Point, was visiting his family in Virginia, on furlough from service in Texas, at the time.

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.264

I HAVE the honor to report, for the information of the Secretary of War, that on arriving here on the night of the 17th instant, in obedience to Special Orders No. 194 of that date from your office, I learned that a party of insurgents, about 11 p.m. on the 16th, had seized the watchmen stationed at the armory, arsenal, rifle factory, and bridge across the Potomac, and taken possession of those points. They then dispatched six men, under one of their party called Captain Aaron C. Stevens, to arrest the principal citizens in the neighborhood and incite the negroes to join in the insurrection. The party took Colonel L. W. Washington from his bed about 1:30 a.m. on the 17th, and brought him, with four of his servants, to this place. Mr. J. H. Allstadt and six of his servants were in the same manner seized about 3 a. m., and arms placed in the hands of the negroes. Upon their return here, John E. Cook, one of the party sent to Mr. Washington's, was dispatched to Maryland, with Mr. Washington's wagon, two of his servants, and three of Mr. Allstadt's, for arms and ammunition, etc.

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.265

As day advanced, and the citizens of Harper's Ferry commenced their usual avocations, they were separately captured, to the number of forty, as well as I could learn, and confined in one room of the fire-engine house of the armory, which seems early to have been selected as a point of defense. About 11 a. m. the volunteer companies from Virginia began to arrive, and the Jefferson Guards and volunteers from Charlestown, under Captain J. W. Rowen, I understood, were first on the ground. The Hamtramck Guards, Captain V. M. Butler; the Shepherdstown troop, Captain Jacob Reinhart; and Captain Alburtis's company from Martinsburg arrived in the afternoon. These companies, under the direction of Colonels R. W. Taylor and John T. Gibson, forced the insurgents to abandon their positions at the bridge and in the village, and to withdraw within the armory inclosure, where they fortified themselves in the fire-engine house, and carried ten of their prisoners for the purpose of insuring their safety and facilitating their escape, whom they termed hostages. . .

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.265–p.266

After sunset more troops arrived. Captain B. B. Washington's company from Winchester, and three companies from Fredericktown, Md., under Colonel Shriver. Later in the evening the companies from Baltimore, under General Charles C. Edgerton, second light brigade, and a detachment of marines, commanded by Lieutenant J. Green accompanied by Major Russell, of that corps, reached Sandy Hook, about one and a half miles east of Harper's Ferry. At this point I came up with these last-named troops, and leaving General Edgerton and his command on the Maryland side of the river for the night, caused the marines to proceed to Harper's Ferry, and placed them within the armory grounds to prevent the possibility of the escape of the insurgents. Having taken measures to halt, in Baltimore, the artillery companies ordered from Fort Monroe, I made preparations to attack the insurgents at daylight. But for the fear of sacrificing the lives of some of the gentlemen held by them as prisoners in a midnight assault, I should have ordered the attack at once.

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.266–p.267

Their safety was the subject of painful consideration, and to prevent, if possible, jeopardizing their lives, I determined to summon the insurgents to surrender. As soon after daylight as the arrangements were made, Lieutenant J. E. B. Stewart, First Calvary, who had accompanied me from Washington as staff officer, was dispatched, under a flag, with a written summons…. Knowing the character of the leader of the insurgents, I did not expect it would be accepted. I had therefore directed that the volunteer troops, under their respective commanders, should be paraded on the lines assigned them outside the armory, and had prepared a storming party of twelve marines, under their commander, Lieutenant Green, and had placed them close to the engine-house, and secure from its fire. Three marines were furnished with sledge-hammers to break in the doors, and the men were instructed how to distinguish our citizens from the insurgents; to attack with the bayonet, and not to injure the blacks detained in custody unless they resisted. Lieutenant Stewart was also directed not to receive from the insurgents any counter propositions. If they accepted the terms offered, they must immediately deliver up their arms and release their prisoners. If they did not, he must, on leaving the engine-house, give me the signal. My object was, with a view of saving our citizens, to have as short an interval as possible between the summons and the attack.

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.267–p.268

The summons, as I had anticipated, was rejected. At the concerted signal the storming party moved quickly to the door and commenced the attack. The fire-engines within the house had been placed by the besieged close to the doors. The doors were fastened by ropes, the spring of which prevented their being broken by the blows of the hammers. The men were therefore ordered to drop the hammers, and, with a portion of the reserve, to use as a battering-ram a heavy ladder, with which they dashed in a part of the door and gave admittance to the storming party. The fire of the insurgents up to this time had been harmless. At the threshold one marine fell mortally wounded. The rest, led by Lieutenant Green and Major Russell, quickly ended the contest. The insurgents that resisted were bayoneted. Their leader, John Brown, was cut down by the sword of Lieutenant Green, and our citizens were protected by both officers and men. The whole was over in a few minutes….

Lee, Capture of John Brown, America, Vol.7, p.268

From the information derived from the papers found upon the persons and among the baggage of the insurgents, and the statement of those now in custody, it appears that the party consisted of nineteen men—fourteen white and five black. That they were headed by John Brown, of some notoriety in Kansas, who in June last located himself in Maryland, at the Kennedy farm, where he has been engaged in preparing to capture the United States works at Harper's Ferry. He avows that his object was the liberation of the slaves of Virginia, and of the whole South; and acknowledges that he has been disappointed in his expectations of aid from the black as well as white population, both in the Southern and Northern States. The blacks whom he forced from their homes in this neighborhood, as far as I could learn, gave him no voluntary assistance. . . The result proves that the plan was the attempt of a fanatic or madman, which could only end in failure; and its temporary success was owing to the panic and confusion he succeeded in creating by magnifying his numbers.

Brown's Trial and Execution

Title: Brown's Trial and Execution

Author: Horace Greeley

Date: 1859

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.190-194

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.190

Of course all Virginia, including her Governor, rushed to Harper's Ferry upon learning that all was over and the insurrection completely supprest. The bleeding survivors were subjected to an alternation of queries and execrations, which they met bravely, as they had confronted the bullets of their numerous and ever-increasing foes. They answered frankly, save where their replies might possibly compromise persons still at liberty; and none of them sought to conceal the fact that they had struck for universal freedom at all hazards. The bearing of Brown was especially praised by his enemies (many of whom have since won notoriety in the ranks of the rebellion) as remarkably simple and noble. Among others, Mr. C. L. Vallandigham, of Ohio, hastened to visit and catechize Brown, in the hope of making political capital out of his confessions, and was answered frankly and fully. On his return to Ohio he said:

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.191

"It is in vain to underrate either the man or the conspiracy. Captain John Brown is as brave and resolute a man as ever headed an insurrection; and in a good cause and with a sufficient force would have been a consummate partizan commander. He has coolness, daring, persistency, the stoic faith and patience, and a firmness of will and purpose unconquerable. He is the farthest possible remove from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic, or madman. Certainly, it was one of the best-planned and best-executed conspiracies that ever failed."

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.191

On Wednesday evening, October 19th, after thirty hours of this discipline, the four surviving prisoners were conveyed to the jail at Charlestown under an escort of marines. Brown and Stevens, badly wounded, were taken in a wagon; Green and Coppoc, unhurt, walked between files of soldiers, followed by hundreds, who at first cried, "Lynch them!" but were very properly shamed into silence by Governor Wise.

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.191

It is not necessary to linger here over the legal proceedings in this case; nor do the complaints, so freely made at the time of indecent haste and unfair dealing, on the part of the Virginia authorities, seem fully justified. That the conviction and death of Brown and his associates were predetermined is quite probable; but the facts and the nature of the case were notorious beyond dispute; and Virginia had but this alternative—to hang John Brown or to abolish slavery. She did not choose to abolish slavery; and she had no remaining choice but to hang John Brown. And as to trying him and Stevens while still weak and suffering severely from their wounds—neither able at times to stand up—it must be considered that the whole State had been terror-stricken by the first news of their attempt, and that fears of insurrection and of an armed rescue were still widely prevalent. That the lawyers of the vicinage who were assigned to the defense of the prisoners did their duty timidly and feebly is certain; but they shared, of course, not only the prejudices, but the terrors, of their neighbors, and knew that the case, at any rate, was hopeless…. .

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.192

The 2d of December was the day appointed for his execution. Nearly 3,000 militia were early on the ground. Fears of a forcible rescue or of a servile insurrection prevented a large attendance of citizens. Cannon were so planted as to sweep every approach to the jail, and to blow the prisoner into shreds upon the first intimation of tumult. Virginia held her breath until she heard that the old man was dead.

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.192

Brown rose at daybreak and continued writing with energy until half past ten, when he was toldto prepare to die. He shook hands with the sheriff, visited the cell of Copeland and Green, to whom he handed a quarter of a dollar each, saying he had no more use for money, and bade them adieu. He next visited Cook and Coppoc, the former of whom had made confession, which he pronounced false; saying he had never sent Cook to Harper's Ferry, as he had stated.

Greeley, Brown's Trial and Execution, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.193

He walked out of the jail at 11 o'clock; an eye-witness said—"with a radiant countenance, and the step of a conqueror." His face was even joyous, and it has been remarked that probably his was the lightest heart in Charlestown that day. A black woman with a little child in her arms stood by the door. He stopt a moment, and, stooping, kissed the child affectionately. Another black woman with a child, as he passed along, exclaimed: "God bless you, old man! I wish I could help you; but I can't." He looked at her with a tear in his eye. He mounted the wagon beside his jailer, Captain Avis, who had been one of the bravest of his captors, who treated him very kindly, and to whom he was profoundly grateful. The wagon was instantly surrounded by six companies of militia. Being asked, on the way, if he felt any fear, he replied: "It has been a characteristic of me from infancy not to suffer from physical fear. I have suffered a thousand times more from bashfulness than from fear." The day was clear and bright, and he remarked, as he rode, that the country seemed very beautiful. Arrived at the gallows, he said: "I see no citizens here; where are they?" "None but the troops are allowed to be present," was the reply. "That ought not to be," said he;"citizens should be allowed to be present as well as others." He bade adieu to some acquaintances at the foot of the gallows, and was first to mount the scaffold. His step was still firm, and his bearing calm, yet hopeful. The hour having come, he said to Captain Avis: "I have no words to thank you for all your kindness to me." His elbows and ankles being pinioned, the white cap drawn over his eyes, the hangman's rope adjusted around his neck, he stood waiting for death. "Captain Brown," said the sheriff, "you are not standing on the drop. Will you come forward?" "I can't see," was his firm answer; "you must lead me." The sheriff led him forward to the center of the drop. "Shall I give you a handkerchief and let you drop it as a signal?" "No; I am ready at any time; but do not keep me needlessly waiting." In defiance of this reasonable request, he was kept standing thus several minutes, while a military parade and display of readiness to repel an imaginary foe were enacted. The time seemed an hour to the impatient spectators; even the soldiers began to murmur, "Shame!" At last the order was given, the rope cut with a hatchet, and the trap fell; but so short a distance that the victim continued to struggle and to suffer for a considerable time. Being at length duly pronounced dead, he was cut down after thirty-eight minutes' suspension. His body was conveyed to Harper's Ferry and delivered to his widow, by whom it was borne to her far northern home among the mountains he so loved and where he was so beloved.

John Brown's Last Speech and Letters

Title: John Brown's Last Speech and Letters

Author: John Brown

Date: 1859

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.269-278

These documents are taken from "The Life and Letters of John Brown," by Frank B. Sanborn, a biography written as it was by one so intimate with his work and purposes, that is likely to remain the final, authoritative word.

In addition to these letters, a final one which Brown wrote and handed to his jail guard on the morning of the execution, December 2, 1859, reads: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood. I had, as I now think vainly, flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done."

Of Brown's twenty children, eight died in early childhood. Four of his sons participated in Harper's Ferry raid.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.269

I HAVE, may it please the Court, a few words to say.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.269

In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted, the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.269–p.270

I have another objection; and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case),—had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends,—either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class,—and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.270

This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done—as I have always freely admitted I have done—in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments,—I submit; so let it be done!

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.271

Let me say one word further.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.271

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.271

Let me say, also, a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.271

Now I have done.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.272–p.273

PRISON LETTERS TO HIS FAMILY

Charlestown, Jefferson County, Va.,

Oct. 31, 1859.

My dear Wife and Children, every one,—I suppose you have learned before this by the newspapers that two weeks ago to-day we were fighting for our lives at Harper's Ferry; that during the fight Watson was mortally wounded, Oliver killed, William Thompson killed, and Dauphin slightly wounded; that on the following day I was taken prisoner, immediately after which I received several sabre-cuts on my head and bayonet-stabs in my body. As nearly as I can learn, Watson died of his wound on Wednesday, the second—or on Thursday, the third—day after I was taken. Dauphin was killed when I was taken, and Anderson I suppose, also. I have since been tried, and found guilty of treason, etc., and of murder in the first degree. I have not yet received my sentence. No others of the company with whom you were acquainted were, so far as I can learn, either killed or taken. Under all these terrible calamities I feel quite cheerful in the assurance that God reigns and will overrule all for his glory and the best possible good. I feel no consciousness of guilt in the matter, nor even mortification on account of my imprisonment and irons; and I feel perfectly sure that very soon no member of my family will feel any possible disposition to "blush on my account." Already dear friends at a distance, with kindest sympathy, are cheering me with the assurance that posterity, at least, will do me justice. I shall commend you all together, with my beloved but bereaved daughters-in-law, to their sympathies, which I do not doubt will soon reach you. I also commend you all to Him "whose mercy endureth forever,—to the God of my fathers, "whose I am, and whom I serve. "He will never leave you nor forsake you," unless you forsake Him. Finally, my dearly beloved, be of good comfort. Be sure to remember and follow my advice, and my example, too, so far as it has been consistent with the holy religion of Jesus Christ,—in which I remain a most firm and humble believer. Never forget the poor, nor think anything you bestow on them to be lost to you, even though they may be black as Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian eunuch, who cared for Jeremiah in the pit of the dungeon; or as black as the one to whom Philip preached Christ. Be sure to entertain strangers, for thereby some have—"Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them."

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.273–p.274

I am in charge of a jailer like the one who took charge of Paul and Silas; and you may rest assured that both kind hearts and kind faces are more or less about me, while thousands are thirsting for my blood. "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." I hope to be able to write you again. Copy this, Ruth, and send it to your sorrow-stricken brothers to comfort them. Write me a few words in regard to the welfare of all. God Almighty bless you all, and make you "joyful in the midst of all your tribulations!" Write to John Brown, Charlestown, Jefferson County, Va., care of Captain John Avis.

Your affectionate husband and father,

John Brown.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.274

P.S.—Yesterday, November 2, I was sentenced to be hanged on December 2 next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful. God bless you!

Yours ever,

John Brown.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.274

JOHN BROWN'S LAST LETTER TO HIS FAMILY

Charlestown Prison, Jefferson County, Va.,

Nov. 30, 1859.

My dearly beloved Wife, Sons, and Daughters, every one,—As I now begin probably what is the last letter I shall ever write to any of you, I conclude to write to all at the same time. I will mention some little matters particularly applicable to little property concerns in another place.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.274–p.275

I recently received a letter from my wife, from near Philadelphia, dated November 22, by which it would seem that she was about giving up the idea of seeing me again. I had written her to come on if she felt equal to the undertaking, but I do not know that she will get my letter in time. It was on her own account, chiefly, that I asked her to stay back. At first I had a most strong desire to see her again, but there appeared to be very serious objections; and should we never meet in this life, I trust that she will in the end be satisfied it was for the best at least, if not most for her comfort.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.275–p.276

I am waiting the hour of my public murder with great composure of mind and cheerfulness; feeling the strong assurance that in no other possible way could I be used to so much advantage to the cause of God and of humanity, and that nothing that either I or all my family have sacrificed or suffered will be lost. The reflection that a wise and merciful as well as just and holy God rules not only the affairs of this world, but of all worlds, is a rock to set our feet upon under all circumstances,—even those more severely trying ones in which our own feelings and wrongs have placed us. I have now no doubt but that our seeming disaster will ultimately result in the most glorious success. So, my dear shattered and broken family, be of good cheer, and believe and trust in God with all your heart and with all your soul; for he doeth all things well. Do not feel ashamed on my account, nor for one moment despair of the cause or grow weary of well-doing. I bless God I never felt stronger confidence in the certain and near approach of a bright morning and glorious day than I have felt, and do now feel, since my confinement here. I am endeavoring to return, like a poor prodigal, as I am, to my Father, against whom I have always sinned, in the hope that he may kindly and forgivingly meet me, though a very great way off.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.276

Oh, my dear wife and children, would to God you could know how I have been travailing in birth for you all, that no one of you may fail of the grace of God through Jesus Christ; that no one of you may be blind to the truth and glorious light of his Word, in which life and immortality are brought to light. I beseech you, every one, to make the Bible your daily and nightly study, with a child-like, honest, candid, teachable spirit of love and respect for your husband and father. And I beseech the God of my fathers to open all your eyes to the discovery of the truth. You cannot imagine how much you may soon need the consolations of the Christian religion. Circumstances like my own for more than a month past have convinced me, beyond all doubt, of my own great need of some theories treasured up, when our prejudices are excited, our vanity worked up to the highest pitch. Oh, do not trust your eternal all upon the boisterous ocean, without even a helm or compass to aid you in steering! I do not ask of you to throw away your reason; I only ask you to make a candid, sober use of your reason.

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.276–p.277

My dear young children, will you listen to this last poor admonition of one who can only love you? Oh, be determined at once to give your whole heart to God, and let nothing shake or alter that resolution. You need have no fears of regretting it. Do not be vain and thoughtless, but soberminded; and let me entreat you all to love the whole remnant of our once great family. Try and build up again your broken walls, and to make the utmost of every stone that is left. Nothing can so tend to make life a blessing as the consciousness that your life and example bless and leave others stronger. Still, it is ground of the utmost comfort to my mind to know that so many of you as have had the opportunity have given some proof of your fidelity to the great family of men. Be faithful unto death: from the exercise of habitual love to man it cannot be very hard to love his Maker….

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.277

I beseech you all to live in habitual contentment with moderate circumstances and gains of worldly store, and earnestly to teach this to your children and children's children after you, by example as well as precept. Be determined to know by experience, as soon as may be, whether Bible instruction is of divine origin or not. Be sure to owe no man anything, but to love one another. John Rogers wrote to his children, "Abhor that arrant whore of Rome." John Brown writes to his children to abhor, with undying hatred also, that sum of all villanies,—slavery. Remember, "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty," and "he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Remember also that "they being wise shall shine, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

John Brown's Last Speech And Letters, America, Vol.7, p.278

And now, dearly beloved family, to God and the work of his grace I commend you all.

Your affectionate husband and father,

John Brown.

John Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, John Brown, 1859

John Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial

Title: John Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial

Author: John Brown

Date: 1859

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.186-188

His last speech to the court (November 2, 1859) before which he was tried at Charlestown, West Virginia, his execution taking place on December 2 of the same year. During the night before the execution a company of soldiers, with their arms and accouterments, slept in the court-room where Brown had been tried, and it is a curious fact that one of these soldiers was John Wilkes Booth.

Born in 1800, died in 1859; removed to Kansas in 1855 in order to oppose the extension of slavery; gained a victory over an invading party from Missouri at Ossawatomie in August, 1856; seized the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, October, 1859, for the purpose of arming the negroes for an insurrection; captured two days later, tried by the Commonwealth of Virginia and executed.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.186

I HAVE, may it please the court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted—the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.187

I have another objection; and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case)—had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends—either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class—and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.187

This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done—as I have always freely admitted I have done—in behalf of His despised poor was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments—I submit; so let it be done!

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.188

Let me say one word further.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.188

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated that from the first what was my intention and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.188

Let me say also a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I her it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

Brown's Speech to the Court at His Trial, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.188

Now I have done.

The Death of John Brown, Garrison, 1859

The Death of John Brown

Title: The Death of John Brown

Author: Garrison

Date: 1859

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.189-191

Delivered in Boston a few weeks after John Brown was hanged at Charlestown, West Virginia.

Born in 1805, died in 1879; began to publish The Liberator in 1831; founded an Abolition Society in Boston in 1832; President of the American Antislavery Society in 1843-65.

Garrison, Death of John Brown, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.189

GOD forbid that we should any longer continue the accomplices of thieves and robbers, of men-stealers and women-whippers! We must join in the name of freedom. As for the Union—where is it and what is it? In one-half of it no man can exercise freedom of speech or the Press—no man can utter the words of Washington, of Jefferson, of Patrick Henry—except at the peril of his life; and Northern men are everywhere hunted and driven from the South, if they are supposed to cherish the sentiment of freedom in their bosoms. We are living under an awful despotism—that of a brutal slave oligarchy. And they threaten to leave us, if we do not continue to do their work, as we have hitherto done it, and go down in the dust before them! Would to heaven they would go! It would only be the paupers clearing out from the town, would it not? But no, they do not mean to go; they mean to cling to you and they mean to subdue you.

Garrison, Death of John Brown, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.190

But will you be subdued? I tell you our work is the dissolution of this slavery-cursed Union, if we would have a fragment of our liberties left to us! Surely between freemen, who believe in exact justice and impartial liberty, and slave-holders, who are for cleaving down all human rights at a blow, it is not possible there should be any union whatever. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" The slave-holder with his hands dripping in blood—will I make a compact with him? The man who plunders cradles—will I say to him: "Brother, let us walk together in unity?" The man who, to gratify his lust or his anger, scourges woman with the lash till the soil is red with her blood—will I say to him: "Give me your hand; let us form a glorious Union?" No, never—never! There can be no union between us. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" What union has freedom with slavery? Let us tell the inexorable and remorseless tyrants of the South that their conditions hitherto imposed upon us, whereby we are morally responsible for the existence of slavery, are horribly inhuman and wicked, and we can not carry them out for the sake of their evil company.

Garrison, Death of John Brown, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.190

By the dissolution of the Union we shall give the finishing blow to the slave system; and then God will make it possible for us to form a true, vital, enduring, all-embracing Union from the Atlantic to the Pacific—one God to be worshiped, one Savior to be revered, one policy to be carried out—freedom everywhere to all the people without regard to complexion or race—and the blessing of God resting upon us all! I want to see that glorious day! Now the South is full of tribulation and terror and despair, going down to irretrievable bankruptcy, and fearing each bush an officer! Would to God it might all pass away like a hideous dream! And how easily it might be! What is it that God requires of the South, to remove every root of bitterness, to allay every fear, to fill her borders with prosperity? But one simple act of justice, without violence and convulsion, without danger and hazard. It is this: "Undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free!"

Garrison, Death of John Brown, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.191

How simple and how glorious! It is the complete solution of all the difficulties in the case. Oh that the South may be wise before it is too late, and give heed to the word of the Lord! But whether she will hear or forbear, let us renew our pledges to the cause of bleeding humanity, and spare no effort to make this truly the land of the free and the refuge of the oppressed!

"Onward then, ye fearless band,

Heart to heart, and hand to hand;

Yours shall be the Christian stand,

Or the martyr's grave."

The Arrival of the Great Eastern in New York Harbor

Title: The Arrival of the Great Eastern in New York Harbor

Author: New York Herald

Date: 1860

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.195-200

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.195

After hopes deferred, and delays almost innumerable, the Great Eastern is at last upon us. While we write, her gigantic shadow is quivering in the waters of the North River, and before another sun has set our Oriental friends will be almost forgotten in the contemplation of this new sensation. Public interest has so often been aroused in connection with this huge triumph of art, and so often disappointed, that the various announcements of her trial trips and departure have heretofore had little more effect than to excite the disparaging criticisms of the multitude, who, with Yankee pride, are loath to believe in the promptness of English enterprise. Now that the leviathan is fairly here, however, no one can be found who will gaze upon the magnificent proportions of this mighty ship and cast a slur upon the experiment which, if successful, is destined to revolutionize, in a measure, the maritime intercourse of the world. The first announcement of the arrival of the Great Eastern at this port was received by telegraph from Sandy Hook in the following dispatch:

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.196

"Sandy Hook, June 28th, 10:30 A.M.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.196

"The steamship Great Eastern came in to the Lightship at half past seven o'clock this morning. She left the Needles at 10 A.M. on the 17th. With the exception of two days she has experienced fine weather. She has forty-two passengers, among whom are George Wilkes, Esq., of Wilkes' Spirit of the Times, and several of the directors of the company. She steamed the entire passage, ranging from 254 to 333 miles per twenty-four hours. The engines were not stopt until she was off George's Shoal, for soundings. She came in a route southeast, direct to the Lightship, where she was boarded by our ship-news collector and Mr. John Van Dusen, of pilot-boat Washington No. 4, a business partner of Admiral Murphy, who went out to Southampton for the ship. She was received on reaching the Lightship by Captain Cosgrove, with a salute and a dipping of colors, and as the mist blew away all the vessels in sight set their bunting and cheered her. She is drawing twenty-seven feet water aft, and will be trimmed to an even keel before crossing."

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.196

From one of the passengers we obtained the following information: There were thirty-eight passengers and eight guests, all in the best of health, and have been so during the entire voyage, which has been so during the entire voyage, which has been a particularly fine one and full of interest. It has demonstrated the Great Eastern's superiority as a seagoing vessel, and the excellent reliability of her machinery. The highest speed attained was fourteen and a half knots. The ship's bottom is very foul, and an allowance of at least two knots an hour should be made on that account. The distance from Southampton, as usually steamed, is 3,190 miles, but to avoid the ice she went farther south.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.197

The only New York boat which had the honor of boarding the Great Eastern, with the exception of the yacht of the press, was the steam-tug Achilles. As the tug passed on her way from the dock down the upper bay, at an early hour in the morning, the masts of the monstrous steamer were first discerned raking the sky in a direction across Coney Island (above which they loomed like pillars on the vast desert of waters), and extending to Quarantine almost in a straight line. From the bluff at Fort Tompkins the view of the great steamer was splendid, the elevation at that point tending to raise and relieve her long black hull against the horizon of waters extending beyond.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.197

As the boat passed through the Narrows a fleet of vessels of every description, from a steamer to the most insignificant craft that could carry a sail, was observed behind, coursing on like Flora Temples, vieing with each other in their efforts to first reach and greet the Great Eastern. In fact, so crowded was the Narrows at one time with this fleet that the entrance to our noble harbor appeared one white spread sheet of canvas glistening in the sun, which shone during the whole time with great warmth and brilliancy. Passing Fort Hamilton her spars became more clearly visible over the vast expanse of waters, rising in the distance like a wooded islet in the winter, from the trees of which the cold breath of the frost had stript all their leaves, leaving it a stretch of black against the horizon.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.198

Such was the appearance of the Great Eastern as seen at this time. Passing inside of Sandy Hook, her beautiful tapering masts still loomed above the bleak, sandy shore. Indeed, it seemed as if she was "irrepressible" from the time she anchored off the bar until her arrival in the city. While the boat remained inside the Hook the hull of the great vessel was invisible, consequently, when the point was turned, her monstrous proportions were brought the better into comparison by this sudden glimpse of her, and her immensity was for the first time truly realized.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.198

As the Achilles crossed the neighborhood of the bar, the Great Eastern, which was lying stern and solemn in the distance, like a mighty monster of the deep, was observed to dip her ensign. The Achilles immediately responded by hoisting the American colors to the peak, and shortly afterward made for her in a straight course, reaching her about half past twelve o'clock. A small sloop was observed a few minutes before massing alongside, and under her bows. No better illustration could have been had of the immense size of the Great Eastern than this. The sloop first slowly crept along her whole length from stem to stern, the highest point of her mast reaching the lower portion of the vessel's bulwarks. passing in front the great steamer's size was only the more clearly shown by the little speck of white which the sloop's sails displayed against the blue sky toward the east.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.198

During this time the Great Eastern was sur-rounded by a number of craft of all kinds, many of which, ships, barks, etc., outward bound turned from their course to pass as near as possible and gaze upon her, the whole forming one beautiful, glistening, and ever changing scene, such as the eye seldom dwells upon. Another fact which we may here mention will show the great portions of the steamer. As the Achilles neared her, under a full head of steam, prophecies, which were doomed to prove false, were continually made by those on board as to the time she would be reached. They so proved, owing to her vast outline, which brought her apparently nearer the observer than she was really was. Her majestic hull loomed up against the sky at a distance of five miles almost as clearly as the ordinary steamer at a distance of one.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.199

On nearing and mooring alongside her great size was truly realized. The steamer affixt herself to one of the iron brackets near the wheelhouse, and from her deck, on gazing upward, it appeared like looking toward a housetop in our city, over the edge of which vast numbers were bending to watch the motions of the mimic pigmy boat below. Such was the height of the bulwarks that the smokepipe of the Achilles, the largest steam-tug in New York harbor, reached out slightly above the rail. Her immense steering apparatus, with eight men to work it, also struck the observer with peculiar wonder, as well as the systematic manner in which all orders from the forward deck to the stern were sent with the rapidity of a glance.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.199

The British ensign, which had been hardly discernible, except as a speck, during the trip, madeits appearance at this moment, and its broad and immense folds were now brought into full view, waving broadly in the breeze, which blew strong and fresh from the southwest. The approach of the steam-tug caused no little sensation on board the Great Eastern, and heads were thrust over the rail of the bulwarks and from the cabin windows, the latter forming excellent impromptu photographs, appropriately framed by the iron panel work surrounding those apertures. These photographs, besides aiding in magnifying the vessel's proportions, appeared like miniatures when viewed from the deck of the Achilles beneath.

Arrival of the Great Eastern in NY Harbor, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.200

The Great Eastern had been advertised to sail from Southampton on Saturday, the 15th of June. Workmen were engaged on her up to five o'clock in the afternoon of that day, and before they could be disembarked, the weather, which had been stormy since noon, became thick and hazy, so that it was felt by the pilot that it would be dangerous to attempt taking so large a vessel through the intricate channel of the Solent in the uncertain light of the evening. She lay, therefore, at her moorings in Southampton water till Sunday morning. About seven o'clock orders were given to unshackle the mooring-chains. Such is the ponderous character of these cables that it was some forty-five minutes before this could be effected. Steam was admitted into the cylinders of the paddle engines about ten minutes past eight; shortly after the order was given, "easy ahead with the screw," and the Great Eastern steamed slowly out on her first voyage to sea.

The Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII

Title: The Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII

Author: New York Herald

Date: 1860

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.7, pp.201-208

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.201

Without accident the royal party reached Washington about four o'clock (October 3d). A crowd of thousands of persons, preserving the most excellent order, received the prince at the depot with the heartiest cheers which he has received in this country. A railing was erected around the entrance to the car, and none but officials—not even reporters—were admitted inside. General Cass, the Secretary of State, accompanied by James Buchanan and James Buchanan Henry, the nephews of the President, received the Prince at the cars. In a brief speech Secretary Cass exprest the delight and pleasure which it afforded him personally, and as the representative of the President, to welcome the Prince of Wales to Washington. The Prince replied by bowing and extending his hand. The Duke of Newcastle and the Prince's suite were then introduced.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.201

The Prince and party entered the President's carriages, and were driven directly to the White House. At first the carriages had some difficulty in passing through the crowd, but a lane was opened and they were heartily cheered. During the ride the Prince attentively observed the city, and looked with much apparent interest at the public buildings pointed out by General Cass. At the White House the royal party were introduced to the President by Secretary Cass, and then by the President to Miss Lane. Five of the suite, including the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of St. Germain, remain there. The rest will be the guests of Lord Lyons. The introduction was purely formal, the President receiving the Prince as a private gentleman.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.202

At six o'clock a grand dinner was given by the President, at which the members of the Cabinet and their ladies, Lord Lyons and his Secretary of Legation, Mrs. Senator Slidell, and several other lady friends of the President, were present, the whole company numbering about twenty. The table was most elegantly decorated. In the center, upon a large golden tray, were seven richly ornamented golden vases, the extreme vases being in filagree and the sides of the tray of lattice work. These were filled with beautiful artificial flowers and grasses. Around these were bouquets of natural flowers in splendid vases, and the appearance of the table, with these decorations and its rich service, was superb. The Prince sat on the right of Miss Lane, at the side of the table and opposite the President, at whose right sat the Duke of Newcastle….

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.202

At ten o'clock this morning (October 5th), the Prince, with Miss Lane, the President and Lord Lyons, started for Mount Vernon, the suite, among which was Sir Henry Holland, the Queen's physician, following in carriages to the dock, where the cutter Harriet Lane was prepared for the party. About forty-five persons embarked, among whom were several members of the Cabinet and Mesdames Slidell, Givin, Ledyard, Riggs and others, and the Hon. Augustus Schell, of New York.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.203

The voyage up occupied only a hour and a half. Upon landing the party inspected the entire grounds and gardens most attentively. The Prince and royal party were deeply observant, asking many questions, and apparently were much imprest with the feelings natural to the occasion. Mrs. Riggs, vice-regent of the Mount Vernon Association, acted as chaperon, and the rule excluding all other visitors, altho Friday was the regular visiting day, was rigidly observed, the regular steamers postponing their trips till tomorrow….

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.203

At the request of the Mount Vernon Association, the Prince planted, with but little formality, a young horse-chestnut tree, to commemorate his visit to the place. The tree was planted upon a beautiful little mound, not far from the tomb. This ceremony being over, the party again stood for a few moments before the tomb, and then turning away in thoughtful silence, slowly and silently retraced their way to the Harriet lane, which during their absence had been transformed, by means of canvas and gay flags, into a beautiful dining saloon, with covers laid for the entire party….

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.203

On the arrival in New York of the Harriet Lane (October 11th), alongside the pier there was a general rush in the gallery for front seats, while the cheering on the several vessels in the bay—which were decorated in all their bravery—announced the event to those inside Castle Garden. At half past two, the Prince and his suite entered Castle Garden from the water entrance. He had on his left Lord Lyons and the Earl of St. Germain, and the Duke of Newcastle on his right. He was drest in a blue frock coat, gray trousers, and "garrote" shirt-collar….

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.204

In accordance with the program, as soon as a review in the park had been completed, the Prince, suite, and followers proceeded along Broadway to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. To convey an accurate idea of the crowd, which next to the Prince, was the great curiosity of the day, would be impossible. It was huge, immense, enormous, stupendous, infinite and indefinite. It was a multitude countless as the leaves of the forest—one of those crushes which are perfectly bewildering to the senses. A stratum of humanity was so wedged in and macadamized together that, to move one individual, was to stir the whole mass. Every window-sill was a rough frame, within which the faces of beautiful women and smiling children made up an attractive picture. Every opening, every story, every roof was a parapet, from which constantly played a battery of bright eyes. Every available place was occupied, and where circumstances naturally failed to provide accommodations, ingenuity brought into requisition boxes, benches, tables, and any other appliance that would effect the desired object. As an illustration of the extent to which this speciesof invention was carried, we saw standing on the narrow ledge of the first story of a house, a place not much wider than the heel of one's boot, two young men, who maintained their position by means of a rope passed around their bodies, and going thence inside the building through the windows on either side.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.205

Those who could not enjoy the privilege of a window were content to take to the street, and the quantity of well-drest ladies and children, mixed in with the not over fragrant crowd of unscoured publicans and sinners, was painfully amazing to behold. Once in, it was almost impossible to get out. The poor women were compelled to endure the pains of purgatory to gratify the curiosity they couldn't resist. Even side streets were made use of. Here vehicles of various kinds were prest into service and speedily crowded with human beings….

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.205

For the "Diamond Ball" (October 12th), a magnificent apartment, comprizing the parquette of the Academy of Music, and embracing the stage, was provided. As arranged, it was 135 feet in length by 68 feet in breadth. The ends toward the stage were arranged in semicircular form, while toward the other end were placed three superb couches, the central one for the Prince himself, those on either side for his suite. A supper-room was especially erected for the occasion on ground between the Academy and Medical College. In length it was 144 feet by 28 feet in breadth. Connecting with the ballroom and the supper-room was a passage facing on Fourteenth Street, 154 feet in length and 24 feet in breadth. This passage was covered with stoutscarlet cloth, as were other parts of the building, including the ball and supper-rooms. The carpet, 500 yards in amount, was especially dyed for the occasion, as there had not been a sufficient quantity in the city for the purpose. Twenty brass chandeliers, each containing six burners, were suspended from the roof, making a brilliant display. The building, tho temporary, was constructed in a manner which would have befitted a more permanent edifice. The arrangements for ventilation were perfect. In the center was a tower, rising some forty feet from the level of the street, while two dormer windows were placed at each end.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.206

The entire building was draped in alternate strips of pink and white muslin, with large mirrors intervening. These were twenty-four in number, and made a splendid show. Along the supper-room were parallel tables, from end to end. They were brilliant in all the appointments of gold, silver and china. At the upper end was the Prince's table, raised on a dias, semicircular in form, at which the Prince and his immediate suite were placed. Back of the table were three magnificent mirrors, reflecting and flashing the lights. The center glass in particular was lofty and magnificent. The flooring of this room was not carpeted in scarlet, but in squares, in the center of each a cornucopia, with a red border. This had a very pleasing effect. All around the room were flags, arranged in graceful festoons of red, white and blue, emblematic of America and Great Britain.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.206

On leaving the ballroom for the supper-room, a passage of considerable length was traversed, as already mentioned; but at the entrances fromthe one to the other were placed a number of figures of ancient knights in armor, supposed to represent all previous Princes of Wales. Among them was the celebrated Black Prince, who displayed his bravery on the bloody fields of Poictiers and Cressy, and entered London with two kings as his prisoners, namely, the King of France and the King of Scotland. It was a strange thing, in that temple of democracy, to witness such things as knights and princes, done up in all the panoply of the Middle Ages. Around these entrances were hung battle-axes, spears, shields, and other implements suggestive of the age of the Crusaders.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.207

The Academy gained the only additional attraction it needed when it gained a large, richly-drest crowd. At half past seven o'clock the first of the company began to arrive, at first singly, then in crowds of four, five and six, and at last in a continuous stream of black coats and superb dresses. At first the floor, then the parquette, the dress circle, the upper tiers, the lobbies, the dressing-rooms, were completely filled. The first arrivals were the gentlemen of the committee of arrangements. Then came the bands, in uniform, who took their places in the second tier. Then the policemen, at first drawn up in platoons and afterward stationed along the lobbies and the several entrances, where their onerous duties were quietly but efficiently performed. Then came the guests, wandering curiously around the vast spaces. Soon the crowd became great; the dressing-rooms were closed, promenaders left the supper-room and circled the building, the band struck up a favorite air, and conversation began.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.208

The Academy, at ten o'clock, was filled. Those who arrived later sank unregarded into the throng, like rain-drops into the ocean. The private boxes were occupied by those who preferred to overlook the brilliant assemblage which moved restlessly beneath. Beneath thousands of gaslights the crowds surged backward and forward, shifting and changing like the figures in a kaleidoscope, or like the ocean rippling beneath gentle winds and bright sunshine. But there was no jam, for a "jam" expresses a fixt, immovable body of persons; this was rather a throng, mobile, variable, versatile, fickle, quick, changing—sea of heads, but besides a sea of colors, the light flashing back from the gayest and richest of dresses, from pearly white shoulders and brilliant complexions, from jewels iris-hued and rivaling in brightness the eyes which flashed above them.

Visit of the Prince of Wales King Edward VII, Great Epochs, Vol.7, p.208

The full-dress black coats absorbed the superfluous light and softened the blaze of a thousand lamps. Rich military uniforms, ornamented with golden lace and epaulettes, relieved the uniformity of the gentlemen's toilettes. The throng seemed to diminish the size of the house, and yet, appreciate its great extent. Filled, but not jammed, crowded, but with plenty of room for all to move comfortably and without disturbance—for separate entrances were reserved for egress and ingress—the Academy was now ready for the ball to begin.

"A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand" Speech of Abraham Lincoln, 16 June 1858

Lincoln's "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand" Speech, 1860

Title: "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand"

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1860

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.258-263

In April, 1858, the Democrats of Illinois endorsed the stand Stephen A. Douglas had taken in the Kansas dispute over slavery, and nominated him for the United States Senate. Lincoln expected and received the Republican nomination in June, and in accepting he delivered the carefully considered speech which contained the famous statement that "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

In July he challenged Douglas to the now celebrated series of debates, the direct result of which was to win the latter the Senatorship. Lincoln, however, was not arguing for the Senatorial prize alone, but was fighting for Republican success in the Presidential contest of 1860. The simplicity, force and fitness of this speech, and of his debates with Douglas, made him not only a national figure but a candidate for the Republican nomination for President.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.258–p.259

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION: If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifty year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting and end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crises shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.259

Have we no tendency to the latter condition?

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.259

Let any one who doubts carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination—piece of machinery, so to speak—compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision. Let him consider not only what work the machinery is adapted to do, and how well adapted; but also let him study the history of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather fail, if he can, to trace the evidences of design and concert of action among its chief architects, from the beginning.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.259

The new year of 1854 found slavery excluded from more than half the States by State constitutions, and from most of the national territory by congressional prohibition. Four days later commenced the struggle which ended in repealing that congressional prohibition. This opened all the national territory to slavery, and was the first point gained.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.259

But, so far, Congress only had acted; and an indorsement by the people, real or apparent, was indispensable to save the point already gained and give chance for more.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.260

This necessity had not been overlooked, but had been provided for, as well as might be, in the notable argument of "squatter sovereignty," otherwise called "sacred right of self-government," which latter phrase, though expressive of the only rightful basis of any government, was so perverted in this attempted use of it as to amount to just this: That if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object…. Then opened the roar of loose declamation in favor of "squatter sovereignty" and "sacred right of self-government. "But," said opposition members, "let us amend the bill so as to expressly declare that the people of the Territory may exclude slavery." "Not we," said the friends of the measure; and down they voted the amendment.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.260

While the Nebraska Bill was passing through Congress, a law case involving the question of a negro's freedom, by reason of his owner having voluntarily taken him first into a free State and then into a territory covered by the congressional prohibition, and held him as a slave for a long time in each, was passing through the United States Circuit Court for the District of Missouri; and both Nebraska Bill and lawsuit were brought to a decision in the same month of May, 1854. The negro's name was Dred Scott, which name now designates the decision finally made in the case. Before the then next Presidential election, the law case came to and was argued in the Supreme Court of the United States….

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.261

The election came. Mr. Buchanan was elected, and the indorsement, such as it was, secured. That was the second point gained…. The Supreme Court met again; did not announce their decision, but ordered a reargument. The Presidential inauguration came, and still no decision of the Court; but the incoming President in his inaugural address fervently exhorted the people to abide by the forthcoming decision, whatever it might be. Then, in a few days, came the decision.

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.261

The reputed author of the Nebraska Bill finds an early occasion to make a speech at this capital indorsing the Dred Scott Decision, and vehemently denouncing all opposition to it. The new President, too, seizes the early occasion of the Silliman letter to indorse and strongly construe that decision, and to express his astonishment that any different view had ever been entertained!

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.261–p.262

At length a squabble springs up between the President and the author of the Nebraska Bill, on the mere question of fact, whether the Lecompton constitution was or was not, in any just sense, made by the people of Kansas; and in that quarrel the latter declares that all he wants is a fair vote for the people, and that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up. I do not understand his declaration that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up to be intended by him other than as an apt definition of the policy he would impress upon the public mind—the principle for which he declares he has suffered so much, and is ready to suffer to the end. And well may he cling to that principle. If he has any parental feeling, well may he cling to it. That principle is the only shred left of his original Nebraska doctrine. Under the Dred Scott Decision "squatter sovereignty" squatted out of existence, tumbled down like temporary scaffolding,—like the mold at the foundry, served through one blast and fell back into loose sand,—helped to carry an election, and then was kicked to the winds….

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.262

We cannot absolutely know that all these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert. But when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places and by different workmen,—Stephen, Franklin, Roger and James, for instance,—and we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few, not omitting even scaffolding—or, if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in—in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft drawn up before the first blow was struck….

Lincoln, House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand, America, Vol.7, p.263

Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends—those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work, who do care for the result. Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all then to falter now?—now when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail—if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.

How Lincoln Was Nominated

Title: How Lincoln Was Nominated

Author: Murat Halstead

Date: 1860

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.279-286

On May 18, 1860, Halstead wrote this account of the historic proceedings of the Republican National Convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln for the Presidency, for the Cincinnati "Commercial," as its special staff correspondent. He later became editor of the paper.

The Convention met on May 16 in the famous Wigwam at Chicago. Never before had so many delegates attended a National Convention. Two days were spent in organization and the adoption of a platform. Then came the balloting. Seward's nomination had seemed certain in the beginning, but on the third ballot Lincoln won, and Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, was nominated for Vice-President. The platform, though denying the right of Congress to interfere with slavery in the States, demanded that it be forbidden in the Territories.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.279

AFTER adjournment on Thursday (the second day), there were few men in Chicago who believed it possible to prevent the nomination of Seward….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.279

But there was much done after midnight and before the Convention assembled on Friday morning. There were hundreds of Pennsylvanians, Indianians, and Illinoisans, who never closed their eyes that night….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.279–p.280

The Seward men generally abounded in confidence Friday morning. The air was full of rumors of the caucusing the night before, but the opposition of the doubtful States to Seward was an old story; and after the distress of Pennsylvania, Indiana & Co., on the subject of Seward's availability, had been so freely and ineffectually expressed from the start, it was not imagined their protests would suddenly become effective. The Sewardites marched as usual from their headquarters at the Richmond House after their magnificent band, which was brilliantly uniformed—epaulets shining on their shoulders, and white and scarlet feathers waving from their caps—marched under the orders of recognized leaders, in a style that would have done credit to many volunteer military companies. They were about a thousand strong, and protracting their march a little too far, were not all able to get into the wigwam. This was their first misfortune. They were not where they could scream with the best effect in responding to the mention of the name of William H. Seward.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.280

When the Convention was called to order, breathless attention was given the proceedings. There was not a space a foot square in the wigwam unoccupied. There were tens of thousands still outside, and torrents of men had rushed in at the three broad doors until not another one could squeeze in….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.280

The applause, when Mr. Evarts named Seward, was enthusiastic. When Mr. Judd named Lincoln, the response was prodigious, rising and raging far beyond the Seward shriek. Presently, upon Caleb B. Smith seconding the nomination of Lincoln, the response was absolutely terrific. It now became the Seward men to make another effort, and when Blair of Michigan seconded his nomination,

"At once there rose so wild a yell,

Within that dark and narrow dell;

As all the fiends from heaven that fell

Had pealed the banner cry of hell."

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.281

The effect was startling. Hundreds of persons stopped their ears in pain. The shouting was absolutely frantic, shrill and wild. No Comanches, no panthers ever struck a higher note, or gave screams with more infernal intensity. Looking from the stage over the vast amphitheater, nothing was to be seen below but thousands of hats—a black, mighty swarm of hats—flying with the velocity of hornets over a mass of human heads, most of the mouths of which were open. Above, all around the galleries, hats and handkerchiefs were flying in the tempest together. The wonder of the thing was that the Seward outside pressure should, so far from New York, be so powerful.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.281

Now the Lincoln men had to try it again, and as Mr. Delano of Ohio, on behalf "of a portion of the delegation of that State," seconded the nomination of Lincoln, the uproar was beyond description…. I thought the Seward yell could not be surpassed; but the Lincoln boys were clearly ahead, and feeling their victory, as there was a lull in the storm, took deep breaths all round, and gave a concentrated shriek that was positively awful, and accompanied it with stamping that made every plank and pillar in the building quiver….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.282

. . . The division of the first vote caused a fall in Seward stock. It was seen that Lincoln, Cameron and Bates had the strength to defeat Seward, and it was known that the greater part of the Chase vote would go for Lincoln….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.282

The Convention proceeded to a second ballot. . . The first gain for Lincoln was in New Hampshire. The Chase and the Fremont vote from that State were given him. His next gain was the whole vote of Vermont. This was a blighting blow upon the Seward interest. The New Yorkers started as if an Orsini bomb had exploded. And presently the Cameron vote of Pennsylvania was thrown for Lincoln, increasing his strength forty-four votes. The fate of the day was now determined. New York was "checkmate" next move, and sullenly proceeded with the game, assuming unconsciousness of her inevitable doom. On this ballot Lincoln gained seventy-nine votes! Seward had 184 1/2 votes; Lincoln, 181….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.282–p.283

While this [the third] ballot was taken amid excitement that tested the nerves, the fatal defection from Seward in New England still further appeared—four votes going over from Seward to Lincoln in Massachusetts. The latter received four additional votes from Pennsylvania and fifteen additional votes from Ohio…. The number of votes necessary to a choice were two hundred and thirty-three, and I saw under my pencil, as the Lincoln column was completed, the figures 231 1/2—one vote and a half to give him the nomination. In a moment the fact was whispered about. A hundred pencils had told the same story. The news went over the house wonderfully, and there was a pause. There are always men anxious to distinguish themselves on such occasions. There is nothing that politicians like better than a crisis. I looked up to see who would be the man to give the decisive vote…. In about ten ticks of a watch, Cartter of Ohio was up. I had imagined Ohio would be slippery enough for the crisis. And sure enough! Every eye was on Cartter, and every body who understood the matter at all, knew what he was about to do…. He said, "I rise (eh), Mr. Chairman (eh), to announce the change of four votes of Ohio from Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln." The deed was done. There was a moment's silence. The nerves of the thousands, which through the hours of suspense had been subjected to terrible tension, relaxed, and as deep breaths of relief were taken, there was a noise in the wigwam like the rush of a great wind, in the van of a storm—and in another breath, the storm was there. There were thousands cheering with the energy of insanity.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.283–p.284

A man who had been on the roof, and was engaged in communicating the results of the ballotings to the mighty mass of outsiders, now demanded by gestures at the sky-light over the stage, to know what had happened. One of the secretaries, with a tally sheet in his hands, shouted—"Fire the salute! Abe Lincoln is nominated!" As the cheering inside the wigwam subsided, we could hear that outside, where the news of the nomination had just been announced. And the roar, like the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, that was heard, gave a new impulse to the enthusiasm inside. Then the thunder of the salute rose above the din, and the shouting was repeated with such tremendous fury that some discharges of the cannon were absolutely not heard by those on the stage. Puffs of smoke, drifting by the open doors, and the smell of gunpowder, told what was going on.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.284

The moment that half a dozen men who were on their chairs making motions at the President could be heard, they changed the votes of their States to Mr. Lincoln….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.284

While these votes were being given, the applause continued, and a photograph of Abe Lincoln which had hung in one of the side rooms was brought in, and held upon before the surging and screaming masses. The places of the various delegations were indicated by staffs, to which were attached the names of the States, printed in large black letters on pasteboard. As the Lincoln enthusiasm increased, delegates tore these standards of the States from their places and swung them about their heads. A rush was made to get the New York standard and swing it with the rest, but the New Yorkers would not allow it to be moved, and were wrathful at the suggestion.

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.284–p.285

When the vote was declared, Mr. Evarts, the New York spokesman, mounted the Secretaries' table and handsomely and impressively expressed his grief at the failure of the Convention to nominate Seward—and in melancholy tones, moved that the nomination be made unanimous….

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.285

The town was full of the news of Lincoln's nomination, and could hardly contain itself…. hundreds of men who had been in the wigwam were so prostrated by the excitement they had endured, and their exertions in shrieking for Seward or Lincoln, that they were hardly able to walk to their hotels. There were men who had not tasted liquor, who staggered about like drunkards, unable to manage themselves. The Seward men were terribly stricken down. They were mortified beyond all expression, and walked thoughtfully and silently away from the slaughter house, more ashamed than embittered. They acquisced in the nomination, but did not pretend to be pleased with it; and the tone of their conversations, as to the prospect of electing the candidate, was not hopeful. It was their funeral, and they would not make merry. . .

Halstead, How Lincoln Was Nominated, America, Vol.7, p.285–p.286

I left the city on the night train on the Fort Wayne and Chicago road. The train consisted of eleven cars, every seat full and people standing in the aisles and corners…. At every station where there was a village, until after two o'clock, there were tar barrels burning, drums beating, boys carrying rails; and guns, great and small, banging away. The weary passengers were allowed no rest, but plagued by the thundering jar of cannon, the clamor of drums, the glare of bonfires, the whooping of the boys, who were delighted with the idea of a candidate for the Presidency, who thirty years ago split rails on the Sangamon River—classic stream now and for evermore—and whose neighbors named him "honest."

Threats of Secession

Title: Threats of Secession

Author: R. B. Rhett

Date: 1860

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.287-291

It is of interest that the editor, R. B. Rhett, of the Charleston (South Carolina) "Mercury," who wrote and printed this stirring editorial on September 18, 1860, signed it "Common Sense," the pseudonym made famous by Thomas Paine in his pamphlets which inspired the Declaration of Independence. This Charleston newspaper had for a long time held advanced views on the question of secession, but the accompanying "cry of protest" is one of many indications that public opinion in the South, particularly in South Carolina, was rapidly taking the same shape.

Three months after this editorial appeared, a State convention met at Charleston and passed an ordinance declaring that "the union now existing between South Carolina and other States, under the name of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved."

Rhett, Threats of Secession, America, Vol.7, p.287–p.288

THAT the time has come for the South to look to her interests, when considered in connection with the great political strife now existing between the two sections of this country, I think no true Southerner, who loves liberty and hates oppression, will attempt to deny. If there are any who think that the time has not yet arrived "when patience ceases to be a virtue," and when we, as a free people, should not cry out against the insults and impositions of the North, and declare our independence to the world, they must indeed have charitable and forgiving souls. Isn't it enough that the rights of the South, in the sovereign capacity of her several States, have been most persistently denied her for forty years? Have we not, as a section, been insulted and oppressed, not only at home, but in every Foreign Court in Christendom, by abolition fanatics, who should, as citizens of the same Government, regard us as brothers? The leaders and oracles of the most powerful party in the United States have denounced us as tyrants and unprincipled heathens, through the whole civilized world. They have preached it from their pulpits. They have declared it in the halls of Congress and in their newspapers. In their school-houses they have taught their children (who are to rule this Government in the next generation) to look upon the slaveholder as the especial disciple of the devil himself. They have published books and pamphlets in which the institution of slavery is held up to the world as a blot and a stain upon the escutcheon of America's honor as a nation. They have established Abolition Societies among them for the purpose of raising funds—first to send troops to Kansas to cut the throats of all the slaveholders there, and now to send emissaries among us to incite our slaves to rebellion against the authority of their masters, and thereby endanger the lives of our people and the destruction of our property. They have brought forth an open and avowed enemy to the most cherished and important institution of the South, as candidate for election to the Chief Magistracy of this Government—the very basis of whose political principles is an uncompromising hostility to the institution of slavery under all circumstances.

Rhett, Threats of Secession, America, Vol.7, p.289–p.290

They have virtually repealed the Fugitive Slave Law, and declare their determination not to abide by the decision of the Supreme Court, guaranteeing to us the right to claim our property wherever found in the United States. And, in every conceivable way, the whole Northern people, as a mass, have shown a most implacable hostility to us and our most sacred rights; and this, too, without the slightest provocation on the part of the South. Never, in a single instance, has the South, in any shape or form, interfered with the North in her municipal regulations; but, on the contrary, has tamely submitted to paying tribute to the support of her manufactures, and the establishment of her commercial greatness; yet, like the "serpent warmed in the husbandman's bosom," she turns upon us and stings us to the heart. If Great Britain or any foreign power, had heaped upon us the long catalogue of insult and abuses that the North has, there is not a man in the whole South who would not have long since shouldered his musket, and, if necessary, spilt his heart's blood to have avenged them. But because we are members of the same political family it is contended we must not quarrel, but suffer all the impositions at their hands that in their fanatical spleen they may choose to heap on us. Has a man's own brother, born of the same parents, a right to invade the sacred precincts of his fireside, to wage war upon him and his family, and deprive him of his property? And if he should do so, the aggrieved brother has not only a right, but it is his duty, sanctioned by every principle of right, to cut off all communication with that unnatural brother, to drive him from the sanctuary of his threshold, and treat him as an enemy and a stranger. Then why should we any longer submit to the galling yoke of our tyrant brother—the usurping, domineering, abolition North!

Rhett, Threats of Secession, America, Vol.7, p.290

The political policy of the South demands that we should not hesitate, but rise up with a single voice and proclaim to the world that we will be subservient to the North no longer, but that we will be a free and an independent people. Here, then, would be an end to all political dissensions among us, because our interests, feelings, institutions, wants and pursuits, would be identical. Manufactures would be encouraged at home, our commercial interests enhanced, and our national importance established. Our towns would grow into cities, and our cities soon grow to be respected among the great commercial emporiums of the world. We should then have a national right to demand respect from the North, and the restoration of our property when it is abducted by them, or escapes into their territory. And we should no longer be compelled to pay tribute to the support of a corrupt predominant power, whose boasted principles are based upon an opposition to our interests.

Rhett, Threats of Secession, America, Vol.7, p.290–p.291

All admit that an ultimate dissolution of the Union is inevitable, and we believe the crisis is not far off. Then let it come now; the better for the South that it should be to-day; she cannot afford to wait. With the North it is different. Every day adds to her sectional strength, and every day the balance of power becomes less proportionate between the two sections. In a few more years (unless this course is speedily adopted by us) there will not be an inch of territorial ground for the Southern emigrant to place his foot on. Our doom will be sealed; the decree shall have gone forth: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." But the territories are now the common property of the Government, and in a division of the Union, we should be entitled to our legitimate share in the division, over which, thenceforth, the South would have exclusive jurisdiction, to the exclusion of the meddlesome and power-loving North.

Lincoln Making His Cabinet

Title: Lincoln Making His Cabinet

Author: Thurlow Weed

Date: 1860

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.292-303

Weed, from whose "Autobiography" this account is taken, by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, was a New York State political leader who had supported William H. Seward for the Presidential nomination won by Lincoln. At the time he was editor of the Albany (New York) "Journal."

The interview here chronicled between Weed and Lincoln, at Springfield, Illinois, of course preceded Lincoln's election, which was not a foregone conclusion. As a fact, the country was so divided that Lincoln, feeling the need of all possible support, chose his Cabinet most carefully. He wished even to enlist a Southerner, until his offer to William A. Alexander, of North Carolina, was flatly refused. Graham, as Secretary of the Navy in the Fillmore Cabinet, had organized Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.292–p.293

IMMEDIATELY after the nomination of Mr. Lincoln for President, at Chicago, in the summer of 1860, while annoyed and dejected at the defeat of Governor Seward, as I was preparing to shake the dust of the city from my feet, Messrs. David Davis [afterward a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States], and Leonard Swett called at my room. These gentlemen, warm friends and zealous supporters of Mr. Lincoln, has contributed more than all others to his nomination. After his name was presented as a candidate for President, and received with favor by the citizens of Illinois, Messrs. Davis and Swett visited Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, for the purpose of commending Lincoln to the favorable consideration of prominent men in those States. They now called to converse with me about the approaching canvass. I informed them very frankly that I was so greatly disappointed at the result of the action of the convention as to be unable to think or talk on the subject; that I was going to pass a few days upon the prairies of Iowa, and that by the time I reached Albany I should be prepared to do my duty for the Republican cause and for its nominees. They then urged me to return home via Springfield, where we could talk over the canvass with Mr. Lincoln, saying that they would either join me at Bloomington, where they resided, or meet me at Springfield.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.293–p.294

After passing with a few friends a pleasant week in traveling through Iowa, I repaired to Springfield. We entered immediately upon the question which deeply concerned the welfare of the country, and which had an especial interest for Mr. Lincoln. We discussed freely the prospects of success, assuming that all or nearly all the slave States would be against us. The issues had already been made, and could neither be changed nor modified; but there was much to be considered in regard to the manner of conducting the campaign, and in relation to States that were safe without effort, to those which required attention, and to others that were sure to be vigorously contested. Viewing these questions in their various aspects, I found Mr. Lincoln sagacious and practical. He displayed throughout the conversation so much good sense, such intuitive knowledge of human nature, and such familiarity with the virtues and infirmities of politicians, that I became impressed very favorably with his fitness for the duties which he was not unlikely to be called upon to discharge. This conversation lasted some five hours, and when the train arrived in which we were to depart, I rose all the better prepared to "go to work with a win" in favor of Mr. Lincoln's election, as the interview had inspired me with confidence in his capacity and integrity.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.294

In December of that year, and after the electoral colleges had shown a large majority for Mr. Lincoln, I was invited to visit him at Springfield, where I again met my friends Davis and Swett. Mr. Lincoln, although manifestly gratified with his election, foresaw and appreciated the dangers which threatened the safety both of the Government and of the Union. But while Mr. Lincoln never underestimated the difficulties which surrounded him, his nature was so elastic, and his temperament so cheerful, that he always seemed at ease and undisturbed….

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.294–p.295

Mr. Lincoln remarked, smiling, "that he supposed I had had some experience in Cabinet-making; that he had a job on hand, and as he had never learned that trade he was disposed to avail himself of the suggestions of friends." Taking up his figure, I replied, "that though never a boss Cabinet-maker, I had as a journeyman been occasionally consulted about State cabinets, and that although President Taylor once talked with me about reforming his Cabinet, I had never been concerned in or presumed to meddle with the formation of an original Federal Cabinet, and that he was the first President-elect I had ever seen." The question thus opened became the subject of conversation, at intervals, during that and the following day. I say at intervals, because many hours were consumed in talking of the public men connected with former administrations, interspersed, illustrated, and seasoned pleasantly with Mr. Lincoln's stories, anecdotes, etc.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.295

Mr. Lincoln observed that "the making of a Cabinet, now that he had it to do, was by no means as easy as he had supposed; that he had, even before the result of the election was known, assuming the probability of success, fixed upon the two leading members of his Cabinet, but that in looking about for suitable men to fill the other departments, he had been much embarrassed, partly from his want of acquaintance with the prominent men of the day, and partly, he believed, that while the population of the country had immensely increased, really great men were scarcer than they used to be." He then inquired whether I had any suggestions of a general character affecting the selection of a Cabinet to make.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.295–p.296

I replied that, along with the question of ability, integrity and experience, he ought, in the selection of his Cabinet, to find men whose firmness and courage fitted them for the revolutionary ordeal which was about to test the strength of our Government; and that in my judgment it was desirable that at least two members of his Cabinet should be selected from slaveholding States. He inquired whether, in the emergency which I so much feared, they could be trusted, adding that he did not quite like to hear Southern journals and Southern speakers insisting that there must be no "coercion"; that while he had no disposition to coerce anybody, yet after he had taken an oath to execute the laws, he should not care to see them violated.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.296

As the conversation progressed, Mr. Lincoln remarked that he intended to invite Governor Seward to take the State, and Governor Chase the Treasury Department, remarking that, aside from their long experience in public affairs, and their eminent fitness, they were prominently before the people and the Convention as competitor for the Presidency, each having higher claims than his own for the place which he was to occupy. On naming Gideon Welles as the gentleman he thought of as the representative of New England in the Cabinet, I remarked that I thought he could find several New England gentlemen whose selection for a place in his Cabinet would be more acceptable to the people of New England. "But," said Mr. Lincoln, we must remember that the Republican Party is constituted of two elements, and that we must have men of Democratic as well as of Whig antecedents in the Cabinet."

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.296–p.297

Acquiescing in this view the subject was passed over. And then Mr. Lincoln remarked that Judge Blair had been suggested. I inquired, "What Judge Blair?" and was answered, "Judge Montgomery Blair." "Has he been suggested by any one except his father, Francis P. Blair, Sr.?" "Your question," said Mr. Lincoln, "reminds me of a story," and he proceeded with infinite humor to tell a story, which I would repeat if I did not fear that its spirit and effect would be lost. I finally remarked that if we were legislating on the question, I should move to strike out the name of Montgomery Blair and insert that of Henry Winter Davis. Mr. Lincoln laughingly replied, "Davis has been posting you up on this question. He came from Maryland and has got Davis on the brain. Maryland must, I think, be like New Hampshire, a good State to move from." And then he told a story of a witness in a neighboring county, who, on being asked his age, replied, "Sixty." Being satisfied that he was much older, the judge repeated the question, and on receiving the same answer, admonished the witness, saying that the court knew him to be much older than sixty. "Oh," said the witness, "you're thinking about that fifteen year that I lived down on the eastern shore of Maryland; that was so much lost time and don't count." This story, I perceived, was thrown in to give the conversation a new direction. It was very evident that the selection of Montgomery Blair was a fixed fact; and although I subsequently ascertained the reasons and influences that controlled the selection of other members of the Cabinet, I never did find out how Mr. Blair got there.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.297–p.298–p.299

General Cameron's name was next introduced, and in reference to him and upon the peculiarities and characteristics of Pennsylvania statesmen we had a long conversation. In reply to a question of Mr. Lincoln's, I said that I had personally known General Cameron for twenty-five years; that for the last ten years I had seen a good deal of him; that whenever I had met him at Washington or elsewhere he had treated me with much kindness, inspiring me with friendly feeling. "But you do not," said Mr. Lincoln, "say what you think about him for the Cabinet." On that subject I replied that I was embarrassed; that Mr. Cameron during a long and stirring political life had made warm friends and bitter enemies; that while his appointment would gratify his personal friends, it would offend his opponents, among whom were many of the leading and influential Republicans of that State; that I was, as I had already stated, in view of an impending rebellion, anxious that Mr. Lincoln should have the support of not only a strong Cabinet, but one which would command the confidence of the people. We continued to canvass General Cameron in this spirit for a long time, Mr. Lincoln evidently sharing in the embarrassment which I had expressed, and manifesting, I thought, a desire that I should fully endorse General Cameron. I told him that if it were a personal question I should not hesitate to do so, for that I liked General Cameron, and entertained no doubt of his regard for me, but that as I was not sure that his appointment would give strength to the administration, I must leave the matter with himself. "But," said Mr. Lincoln, "Pennsylvania, any more than New York or Ohio, can not be overlooked. Her strong Republican vote, not less than her numerical importance, entitles her to a representative in the Cabinet. Who is stronger or better than General Cameron?" To this question I was unprepared for a reply, for among General Cameron's friends there was no one eminently qualified, and would have been equally unjust and unwise to take an opponent, and finally General Cameron's case was passed over, but neither decided nor dismissed.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.299–p.300

I now renewed my suggestion about having the slave States represented in the Cabinet. "But," said Mr. Lincoln, "you object to Judge Blair, who resides in a slave State." "I object to Judge Blair because he represents nobody, he has no following, and because his appointment would be obnoxious to the Union men of Maryland; and that, as I believe, while he can look into Maryland, he actually resides in the District of Columbia." "Very well," said Mr. Lincoln, "I will now give you the name of a gentleman who not only resides in a slave State, but who is emphatically a representative man. What objection have you to Edward Bates, of Missouri?" "None, not a shadow or a shade of an objection. That is a selection, as Mr. Webster might have said, 'eminently fit to be made.' The political record of Mr. Bates is proverbially consistent. He was a reliable Whig member of Congress from the State of Missouri thirty years ago; he was the able and popular president of the great River and Harbor Improvement Convention at Chicago twenty years ago; his high personal and professional character, his habits of industry, his equable temper, and his inalienable devotion to the Government and Union, fit and qualify him in my judgment admirably for a Cabinet minister."

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.300–p.301

Mr. Lincoln said in talking of Mr. Bates: "I am reminded of the advice which Mr. Barton, a distinguished lawyer of St. Louis, gave to a client thirty or forty years ago. A young man from Pittsburgh, Pa., stopped at the hotel in St. Louis, and immediately placed a package of money in deposit with the branch Bank of the United States; after which, and during the day, he made several investments and drew several checks. On the following morning a person called on him to say that he was wanted at the bank, where, as he entered, he found several gentlemen in conversation, one of whom informed him that they had received information of a robbery of the bank from which the money he had deposited had been taken, and that, though delicate and unpleasant, it was deemed proper to inquire who he was, and whether he came honestly in possession of so large a sum of money. The young man replied that he was the son of a wealthy and well-known citizen of Pittsburgh, but that he had no acquaintances in St. Louis and was unable to identify himself. The bank men thought, under the circumstances, it was their duty to retain the money until they could be satisfied that he was the honest owner of it. Finding himself in a tight place the landlord advised the young man (whose name I think was Anderson) to employ counsel, and recommended him to Squire Barton, the law partner of the famous Colonel Thomas H. Benton. He found Squire Barton at his office, over a store, in his shirt sleeves, who listened attentively and without speaking until the whole case was laid before him, and then taking the young man to an open window said, 'That's a pretty large amount of money for a stranger to carry around with him. There've been a good many robberies lately. 'Tisn't an honest way of getting a living, but some people don't find that out till they've tried it. If you're the son of General Anderson, as I hope you are, and didn't steal that money, my advice is that you face the music, and I will stand by you; but if, as I strongly suspect, you were tempted, and that money isn't honestly yours, I advise you (pointing in the direction indicated) to make tracks for that tall timber, and to put the Mississippi between you and these bank fellows as soon as you can find a crossing.' 'And how much shall I pay you for your advice?' inquired his client. 'If you intend to hoof it, $5. If you remain and prove yourself an honest lad, nothing!'. . . "

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.301–p.302

It was now settled that Governor Seward was to be Secretary of State, Governor Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Bates the Attorney-General. I was satisfied that Mr. Lincoln intended to give Mr. Welles one of the other places in the Cabinet; that he was strongly inclined to give another place to Mr. Blair, and that his mind was not quite clear in regard to General Cameron. Only one place, therefore, remained open, and that, it was understood, was to be given to Indiana; but whether it was to be Caleb B. Smith or Colonel Lane was undetermined. I inquired whether, in the shape which the question was taking, it was just or wise to concede so many seats in the Cabinet to the Democratic element in the Republican party. He replied that as a Whig he thought he could afford to be liberal to a section of the Republican party without whose votes he could not have been elected.

Weed, Lincoln Making His Cabinet, America, Vol.7, p.302–p.303

I admitted the justice and wisdom of this, adding that in arranging and adjusting questions of place and patronage in our State we had acted in that spirit, but that I doubted both the justice and the wisdom, in inaugurating his administration, of giving to a minority of the Republican party a majority in his Cabinet. I added that the national Convention indicated unmistakably the sentiment of its constituency by nominating for President a candidate with Whig antecedents, while its nominee for Vice-President had been for many years a Democratic representative in Congress. "But," said Mr. Lincoln, "why do you assume that we are giving that section of our party a majority in the Cabinet?" I replied that if Messrs. Chase, Cameron, Welles, and Blair should be designated, the Cabinet would stand four to three. "You seem to forget that I expect to be there; and counting me as one, you see how nicely the Cabinet would be balanced and ballasted. Besides," said Mr. Lincoln, "in talking of General Cameron you admitted that his political status was unexceptionable. I suppose we could say of General Cameron, without offense, that he is 'not Democrat enough to hurt him.' I remember that people used to say, without disturbing my self-respect, that I was not lawyer enough to hurt me." I admitted that I had no political objection to General Cameron, who, I was quite sure, would forget whether applicants for appointment had been Whig or Democrat….

Yancy's Speech of Protest in the Charleston Convention, Yancy, 1860

Yancy's Speech of Protest in the Charleston Convention

Title: Yancy's Speech of Protest in the Charleston Convention

Author: Yancy

Date: 1860

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.192-202

From his speech in the National Democratic Convention at Charleston, April 28, 1860, in support of the protest of the Alabama delegation. Printed here from a rare pamphlet report of the proceedings of the convention, found in the New York Public Library. Yancey in this convention was the leader of the seceders, who afterward met in Baltimore and nominated Breckenridge. Woodrow Wilson says of Yancey's work at this time:

"It was he more than any other, who taught the South what Douglas really meant; he more than any other, who split the ranks of the Democratic party at Charleston, made the election of Douglas impossible, and brought Lincoln in."

Born in 1814, died in 1863; after being active against Nullification in South Carolina, he removed to Alabama in 1836; prominent as an Antiwhig orator in the Presidential campaign of 1840; elected to Congress in 1844; fought a bloodless duel with Congressman Clingman in 1845; author of the "Alabama Platform" of 1847; vigorously opposed the Clay Compromise of 1850; became famous as a secession orator before the Civil War; led the seceders from the Charleston Convention in 1860; went to Europe seeking recognition from England and France of the Southern Confederacy; thereafter until his death a member of the Confederate Senate.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.192

IT has been charged, in order to demoralize whatever influence we might be entitled to, either from our personal or political characteristics or as representatives of the State of Alabama, that we are disruptionists, disunionists per se; that we desire to break up the party in the State of Alabama, to break up the party in the Union, and to dissolve the Union itself. Each and all of these allegations, come from what quarter they may, I pronounce to be false. There is no disunionist, that I know of, in the delegation from the State of Alabama. There is no disruptionist that I know of, and if there are factionists in our delegation they could not have got in there with the knowledge upon the part of our State Convention that they were of so unenviable a character.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.193

We have come here, with the twofold purpose of saving the country and of saving the Democracy; and if the Democracy will not lend itself to that high, holy and elevated purpose; if it can not elevate itself above the mere question of how perfect shall be its mere personal organization and how widespread shall be its mere voting success, then we say to you, gentlemen, mournfully and regretfully, that, in the opinion of the State of Alabama, and I believe, of the whole South, you have failed in your mission, and it will be our duty to go forth and make an appeal to the loyalty of the country to stand by that Constitution which party organizations have deliberately rejected.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.193

The South is in a minority, we have been tauntingly told to-day. In the progress of events and the march of civilization and emigration, the Northwest has grown up, from a mere infant in swaddling clothes, at the formation of the Constitution, into the form and proportions of a giant people; and owing to its institutions and demand for whit labor, and the peculiar nature of our institutions, tho advancing side by side with us in parallel lines, but never necessarily in conflict, it has surpassed us greatly in numbers. We are, therefore, in a numerical minority. But we do not murmur at this; we cheerfully accept the result; but we as firmly claim the right of the minority—and what is that? We claim the benefit of the Constitution that was made for the protection of minorities.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.194

In the march of events, feeling conscious of your numerical power, you have aggressed upon us. We hold up between us and your advancing columns of numbers that written instrument which your and our fathers made, and by the compact of which, you with your power were to respect as to us and our rights. Our and your fathers made it that they and their children should for ever observe it; that, upon all questions affecting the rights of the minority, the majority should not rely upon their voting numbers, but should look, in restraint upon passion, avarice and lust for power, to the written compact, to see in what the minority was to be respected, and how it was to be protected, and to yield an implicit obedience to that compact. Constitutions are made solely for the protection of the minorities in government, and for the guidance of majorities.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.194

Ours are now the institutions which are at stake; ours is the peace that is to be destroyed; ours is the property that is to be destroyed; ours is the honor at stake—the honor of children, the honor of families, the lives, perhaps, of all of us. It all rests upon what your course may ultimately make out of a great heaving volcano of passion. Bear with us then, while we stand sternly upon what is yet a dormant volcano, and say that we can yield no position until we are convinced that we are wrong. We are in a position to ask you to yield. What right of yours, gentlemen of the North, have we of the South ever invaded? What institution of yours have we ever assailed, directly or indirectly? What laws have we ever passed that have invaded, or induced others to invade, the sanctity of your homes, or to put your lives in jeopardy, or that were likely to destroy the fundamental institutions of your States? The wisest, the most learned and the best among you remain silent, because you can not say that we have done this thing.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.195

If your view is right and ours is not one strictly supported by the compact, still the consequence, in a remote degree, of your proposition, may bring a dreaded result upon us all. If you have no domestic, no municipal peace at stake, and no property at stake, and no fundamental institutions of your liberties at stake, are we asking any too much of you to-day when we ask you to yield to us in this matter as brothers, in order to quiet our doubts? For in yielding you lose nothing that is essentially right. Do I state that proposition, gentlemen, any stronger than your own intellects and your own judgment will thoroughly endorse? If I do, I am unconscious of it.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.196

Turn the pages of the recent past as regards the possessions acquired in the Mexican War, in which, gentlemen, it is but modestly stating the fact when I say that Southern chivalry was equal to Northern chivalry—that Southern blood was poured out in equal quantities with Northern blood—and Southern genius shone as bright upon the battle-field as Northern genius; and yet, when the battle was done, and the glittering spoil was brought forward, a vast and disproportionate quantity was given to the North, while the South was made to take the portion of an almost portionless son.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.196

In the Northern States the Democratic party was once overwhelmingly in the ascendent. Why are they not so now? And why is the South more unitedly Democratic? The answer is ready. Antislavery sentiment is dominant in the North—slavery sentiment is dominant in the South. And, gentlemen, let me tell you, if it is not presumption in me to tell you, why you have grown weaker and weaker. It is my belief, from some observation and reflection upon this subject, that you are not now in the ascendent in the North, because you have tampered with the antislavery feeling of that section. I do not mean that you have tampered with it, or yielded to it, as a matter of choice. I do not mean that you are wilful traitors to your convictions of duty; but this is what I do mean: Finding an overwhelming preponderance of power in that antislavery sentiment, believing it to e the common will of your people, you hesitated before it; you trembled at its march. You did not triumph over the young hercules in his cradle, because you made no direct effort to do so.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.197

There is a conviction in our minds that we can not be safe in the Union, unless we obtain your unequivocal pledge to an administration of this government upon plainly avowed constitutional, congressional, as well as executive and judicial, protection of our rights. You have objected that this is a new feature in Democracy. But I say you have taken jurisdiction of this question in years past. In 1844 you took jurisdiction of the slavery question, to protect it from assaults. In 1848 you again took jurisdiction of the slavery question, tho to a limited extent. In 1852 you did the same; and in 1856 when the Territorial issues were forced upon the country by the Free-soilers, you demanded that the Democratic party should take one step farther in advance, in order to be up with the progress of the times, and with the march of aggression. You then added to these former platforms another plank, which it was then deemed would be sufficient to meet the issues urged.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.197

And what was that plank? It was that Congress should not intervene to establish or abolish slavery in State or Territory. What is the fair and just meaning of this proposition? Lawyers and statesmen who are in the habit of construing laws and constitutions by the light of experience and by the rules which the great jurists of all ages have laid down for their construction, know that in order to decide what a law of doubtful import means, you must look at the subject matter, at the cause of its enactment; you must look at the evils it was designed to correct, and the remedy it was designed to give.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.198

Gentlemen of the Convention, that venerable, that able, that revered jurist, the honorable chief justice of the United States, trembling upon the very verge of the grave, for years kept merely alive by the pure spirit of patriotic duty that burns within his breast—a spirit that will not permit him to succumb to the gnawings of disease and to the weaknesses of mortality—which hold him, as it were, suspended between two worlds, with his spotless ermine around him, standing upon the very altar of justice, has given to us the utterance of the Supreme Court of the United States upon this very question.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.198

Let the murmur of the hustings be stilled—let the voices of individual citizens, no matter how great and respected in their appropriate spheres, be hushed, while the law, as expounded by the constituted authority of the country, emotionless, passionless and just, rolls in its silvery cadence over the entire realm, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the ice-bound regions of the North to the glittering waters of the Gulf. What says that decision? That decision tells you, gentlemen, that the Territorial Legislature has no power to interfere with the rights of the slave-owner in the Territory while in a Territorial condition. That decision tells you that this government is a union of sovereign States; which States are coequal, and in trust for which coequal States the government holds the Territories. It tells you that the people of those coequal State shave a right to go into these Territories, thus held in trust, with every species of property which is recognized as property by the United States in which they live, or by the Constitution of the United States.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.199

But, we are met right her with this assertion: we are told by the distinguished advocate of this doctrine of popular sovereignty that this opinion is not a decision of the Supreme Court, but merely the opinion of citizen Taney. He does not tell you, my countrymen, that it is not the opinion of the great majority of the Supreme Court bench. Oh, no! but he tells you that it is a matter that is obiter dicta, outside the jurisdiction of the Court; in other words, extra-judicial—that it is simply the opinion of Chief Justice Taney, as an individual, and not the decision of the Court because it was not the subject-matter before the Court.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.199

Now, Mr. Douglas and all others who make that assertion and undertake to get rid of the moral, the constitutional, the intellectual power of the argument, put themselves directly in conflict with the venerable chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and with the recorded decision of the Court itself; because Chief Justice Taney, after disposing of the demurrer in that case, undertook to go on and to decide the question upon the facts and the merits of the case; and, said he, in doing that we are met with the objection, "That anything we may say upon that part of the case will be extra-judicial and mere obiter dicta. This is a manifest mistake," etc.; and the Court—not Chief Justice Taney, but the whole Court, with but two dissenting voices—decided that it was not obiter dicta; that it was exactly in point, within the jurisdiction of the Court, and that it was the duty of the Court to decide it.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.200

Now then, who shall the Democracy recognize as authority on this point—a statesman, no matter how brilliant and able and powerful in intellect, in the very meridian of life, animated by an ardent and consuming ambition, struggling as no other man has ever done for the high and brilliant position of candidate for the presidency of the United States, at the hand of this great party; or that old and venerable jurist, who, having filled his years with honor, leaves you his last great decision before stepping from the high place of earthly power into the grave, to appear before his Maker, in whose presence deception is impossible, and earthly position is as dust in the balance?

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.200

We simply claim that we, being coequal with you in the Territories, we having property which is as sacred to us as yours is to you, that is recognized as such by the Constitution of our common country—shall enjoy, unmolested, the rights to go into the Territories, and to remain there, and enjoy those rights as citizens of the United States, as long as our common government holds those Territories in trust for the States of which we are citizens. That is all.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.201

We shall go to the wall upon this issue if events shall demand it, and accept defeat upon it. Let the threatened thunders roll and the lightning flash through the sky, and let the dark cloud now resting on the Southern horizon be pointed out by you. Let the world know that our people are in earnest. In accepting defeat upon that issue, my countrymen, we are bound to rise, if there is virtue in the Constitution. But if we accept your policy, where shall we be? We shall then have assented to the great fact involved in adopting your platform, that the government is a failure so far as the protection of the South in the Territories is concerned. We should be estopped for ever from asserting our principle simply by your pointing to the record that we had assented to the fact that the government could not be administered on a clear assertion of our rights. Is it true, gentlemen of the Northwest? Is it true, gentlemen of the whole country, that our government is a failure so far as the plain and unequivocal rights of the South are concerned? If it be a failure, we are not patriots unless we go to work at the very foundation stone of this error and reconstruct this party on a proper basis.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.202

To my countrymen of the South I have a few words here to say. Be true to your constitutional duties and rights. Be true to your own sense of right. Accept of defeat here, if defeat is to attend the assertion of the right, in order that you may secure a permanent victory in whatever contest you carry a constitutional banner. Yield nothing of principle for mere party success—else you will die by the hands of your associates as surely as by the hand of your avowed enemy.

Yancys' Protest in Charleston Convention, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.202

A party, in its noblest sense, is an organized body that pledges itself to the people to administer the government on a constitutional basis. The people have no interest in parties, except to have them pledged to administer the government for the protection of their rights. The leaders of the masses, brilliant men, great statesmen, may, by ever ignoring the people's rights, still have a brilliant destiny in the rewards of office and the distribution of eighty millions annually; but when those leaders, those statesmen, become untrue to the people, and ask the people to vote for a party that ignores their rights, and dares not acknowledge them, in order to put and keep them in office, they ought to be strung upon a political gallows higher than that ever erected for Haman.

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