

American Party Platform of 1856

[Also known as the "Know Nothing Party".]

February 21, 1856

1. An humble acknowledgment to the Supreme Being, for his protecting care vouchsafed to our fathers in their successful Revolutionary struggle, and hitherto manifested to us, their descendants, in the preservation of the liberties, the independence, and the union of these States.
2. The perpetuation of the Federal Union and Constitution, as the palladium of our civil and religious liberties, and the only sure bulwarks of American Independence.
3. *Americans must rule America*; and to this end *native-born* citizens should be selected for all State, Federal and municipal offices of government employment, in preference to all others. *Nevertheless*,
4. Persons born of American parents residing temporarily abroad, should be entitled to all the rights of native-born citizens.
5. No person should be selected for political station (whether of native or foreign birth), who recognizes any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or power, or who refuses to recognize the Federal and State Constitutions (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, as rules of political action.
6. The unqualified recognition and maintenance of the reserved rights of the several States, and the cultivation of harmony and fraternal good will between the citizens of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions appertaining solely to the individual States, and non-intervention by each State with the affairs of any other State.
7. The recognition of the right of native-born and naturalized citizens of the United States, permanently residing in any territory thereof, to frame their constitution and laws, and to regulate their domestic and social affairs in their own mode, subject only to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the privilege of admission into the Union whenever they have the requisite population for one Representative in Congress: *Provided, always*, that none but those who are citizens of the United States, under the Constitution and laws thereof, and who have a fixed residence in any such Territory, ought to participate in the formation of the Constitution, or in the enactment of laws for said Territory or State.

8. An enforcement of the principles that no State or Territory ought to admit others than citizens to the right of suffrage, or of holding political offices of the United States.

9. A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years, of all not heretofore provided for, an indispensable requisite for citizenship hereafter, and excluding all paupers, and persons convicted of crime, from landing upon our shores; but no interference with the vested rights of foreigners.

10. Opposition to any union between Church and State; no interference with religious faith or worship, and no test oaths for office.

11. Free and thorough investigation into any and all alleged abuses of public functionaries, and a strict economy in public expenditures.

12. The maintenance and enforcement of all laws constitutionally enacted until said laws shall be repealed, or shall be declared null and void by competent judicial authority.

13. Opposition to the reckless and unwise policy of the present Administration in the general management of our national affairs, and more especially as shown in removing "Americans" (by designation) and Conservatives in principle, from office, and placing foreigners and Ultraists in their places; as shown in a truckling subserviency to the stronger, and an insolent and cowardly bravado toward the weaker powers; as shown in reopening sectional agitation, by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; as shown in granting to unnaturalized foreigners the right of suffrage in Kansas and Nebraska; as shown in its vacillating course on the Kansas and Nebraska question; as shown in the corruptions which pervade some of the Departments of the Government; as shown in disgracing meritorious naval officers through prejudice or caprice; and as shown in the blundering mismanagement of our foreign relations.

14. Therefore, to remedy existing evils, and prevent the disastrous consequences otherwise resulting therefrom, we would build up the "American Party" upon the principles herein before stated.

15. That each State Council shall have authority to amend their several constitutions, so as to abolish the several degrees and substitute a pledge of honor, instead of other obligations, for fellowship and admission into the party.

16. A free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our Platform.

Beecher's Bibles

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Beecher's Bibles" was the name given to the breech-loading Sharps rifle that were supplied to and used by the anti-slavery settlers and combatants in Kansas, during the Bleeding Kansas period (1854–1860). The breech loading model 1853 Sharps Carbines were shipped in crates marked "Books and Bibles". After an 1856 article in the *New-York Tribune* carried a quote by Henry Ward Beecher, the Sharps Carbines became known as Beecher's Bibles.

Background

For decades there had been a conflict between pro-slavery and anti-slavery activists in America. Before Missouri asked to be admitted to the United States there were 11 free and 11 slave states. Missouri was admitted as a slave state and Maine was admitted as a free state. The 1820 Missouri Compromise stated that all states south of Missouri could be admitted as slave states. In 1854 Congress initiated the Kansas–Nebraska Act which said voters could decide. Settlers from both sides came to Kansas. Violence was common between the two sides in Kansas. It was during this conflict that Minister Henry Ward Beecher raised funds to buy rifles for the free staters: Beecher's Bibles were sent to the territory. Henry W. Beecher believed that such weapons were, "a greater moral urgency among border ruffians than the scriptures".

History

The name "Beecher's Bibles" in reference to Sharps rifles and carbines was inspired by the comments and activities of the abolitionist New England minister Henry Ward Beecher, of the New England Emigrant Aid Society, of whom it was written in a February 8, 1856, article in the *New-York Tribune*: Beecher was an outspoken abolitionist and he raised funds to buy weapons for Kansas free state settlers. Some newspapers began calling Beecher's

church the "Bible and Rifle Company". From there the guns that were purchased and sent came to be known as Beecher's Bibles.

The term originated from the method of shipment: New England abolitionists sent Sharps Carbines to Kansas in an attempt to assist anti-slavery settlers there. The carbines were shipped in crates which were covered by bibles.^[4] The crates were marked with the words "Books and Bibles". The Sharps Carbines were hi-tech and they incorporated a breech loading design.^[4] The rifles were the Sharps Model 1853.^[8] The Federal and state authorities had forbidden sending arms to the territory but that did not stop abolitionists from donating funds for firearm purchases. Doctor Samuel Cabot donated \$12,500 USD for the purchase of Sharps Carbines. Also according to Amos A. Lawrence, the treasure for the New England Emigrant Aid Society, the society purchased 100 rifles for the cause. There were approximately 900 Beecher's Bibles which were used in the Kansas conflict.

This is the text, as taken down by an observer, from David Atchison's pep speech to pro-slavery forces before the sack of Lawrence, Kansas, May 21, 1856:

Gentlemen, Officers & Soldiers! - (Yells) This is the most glorious day of my life! This is the day I am a border ruffian! (Yells.) The U.S. Marshall has just given you his orders and has kindly invited me to address you. For this invitation, coming from no less than U.S. authority, I thank him most sincerely, and now allow me, in true border-ruffian style, to extend to you the right hand of fellowship. (Cheers.)

Men of the South, I greet you as border-ruffian brothers. (Repeated yells & waving of hats.) Though I have seen more years than most of you, I am yet young in the same glorious cause that has made you leave your homes in the South. Boys I am one of your number today (Yells.) and today you have a glorious duty to perform, today you will earn laurels that will ever show you to have been true sons of the noble South! (Cheers.) You have endured many hardships, have suffered many privations on your trips, but for this you will be more than compensated by the work laid out by the Marshal, - and what you know is to be done as the program of the day. Now Boys, let your work be well done! (Cheers.) Faint not as you approach the city of Lawrence, but remembering your mission act with true Southern heroism, & at the word, Spring like your bloodhounds at home upon that damned accursed abolition hole; break through everything that may oppose your never flinching courage! - (Yells.)

Yes, ruffians, draw your revolvers & bowie knives, & cool them in the heart's blood of all those damned dogs, that dare defend that damned breathing hole of hell. (Yells.) Tear down their boasted Free State Hotel, and if those Hellish lying free-soilers have left no port holes in it, with your unerring cannon make some, Yes, riddle it till it shall fall to the ground. Throw into the Kansas their printing presses, & let's see if any more free speeches will be issued from them! Boys, do the Marshall's full bidding! - Do the sheriff's entire command! - (Yells.) for today Mr. Jones is not only Sheriff, but deputy Marshall, so that whatever he commands will be right, and under the authority of the administration of the U.S.! - and for it you will be amply paid as U.S. troops, besides having an opportunity of benefitting your wardrobes from the private dwellings of those infernal nigger-stealers. (Cheers.)

Courage for a few hours & the victory is ours, falter & all is lost! - Are you determined? Will every one of you swear to bathe your steel in the black blood of

some of those black sons of ---- (cries & yells of yes, yes.) Yes, I know you will, the South has always proved itself ready for honorable fight, & you, who are noble sons of noble sires, I know you will never fail, but will burn, sack & destroy, until every vestige of these Northern Abolitionists is wiped out.

Men of the South & Missouri, I am Proud of this day! I have received office and honor before; - I have occupied the vice-presidents place in the greatest republic the light of God's sun ever shone upon; - but, ruffian brothers, (yells.) that glory, that honor was nothing, it was an Empty bauble, compared with the solid grandeur & magnificent glory of this momentous occasion! Here, on this beautiful prairie-bluff, with naught but the canopy of heaven for my covering, with my splendid Arabian charger for my seat, to whose well tried fleetness I may yet have to depend for my life, unless this day's work shall annihilate from our western world these hellish Emigrant Aid paupers, whose bellies are filled with beggars' food, & whose houses are stored with "Beecher's Rifles (Bibbs!) (Yells prolonged.) I say, here, with the cool breeze of the morning blowing fresh around my head, with the U.S. Marshall at my left, - completely surrounded by my younger brothers, (terrible enthusiasm.) each supporting a U.S. rifle, and on the manly countenance of each, plainly seen, his high & fixed determination to carry out to the letter the lofty & glorious resolves that have brought him here - the resolves of the entire South, and of the present Administration, that is, to carry the war into the heart of the country, (cheers.) never to slacken or stop until every spark of free-state, free-speech, free-niggers, or free in any shape is quenched out of Kansas! (Long shouting & cheering.)

And what is also pleasing beyond my powers of description, is the fact that, having above me, - as I speak the honest sentiments of my heart and the sentiments of the administration & the blessed pro-slavery party throughout this great nation, - is the only flag we recognize, and the only one under whose folds we will march into Lawrence, the only one under which these damned Abolitionist prisoners were arrested - who are now outside yonder tent endeavoring to hear me, which I care not a damn if they do! (Cheers.) Yes, these God damned sons of damned puritan stock will learn their fate, and they may go home and tell their cowardly friends what I say! - I care not for them! - I defy & damn them all to Hell. (roars & yells.)

Yes, that large red flag denotes our purpose to press the matter even to blood, - the large lone white star in the centre denotes the purity of our purpose, & the words "Southern Rights" above it clearly indicate the righteousness of our principles. I say under all these circumstances I am now enjoying the proudest moments of my life, - but I will detain you no longer. (Cries of go on, go on.) No boys! - I cannot

stay your spirit of patriotism, I cannot even stay my own; - our precious time is wasting. - No hasten to work, - follow your worthy and immediate leader, Col. Stringfellow! (Yells.) He will lead you on to a glorious victory, & I will be there to support all your acts & assist as best I may in all your acts, & assist completing the overthrow of that hellish party, & in crushing out the last sign of damned abolitionism in the territory of Kansas. - (Three times Yells for Atchison.)

Excerpts from the Proposed Lecompton Constitution (1857)

ARTICLE V.

SEC. 25. It shall be the duty of all civil officers of this State to use due diligence in the securing and rendition of persons held to service or labor in this State, either of the States or Territories of the United States; and the legislature shall enact such laws as may be necessary for the honest and faithful carrying out of this provision of the constitution.

ARTICLE VII.

SLAVERY.

SECTION I. The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction, and the right of the owner of a slave to such slave and its increase is the same, and as inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever.

SEC. 2. The legislature shall have no power to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves without the consent of the owners, or without paying the owners previous to their emancipation a full equivalent in money for the slaves so emancipated. They shall have no power to prevent emigrants to the State from bringing with them such persons as are deemed slaves by the laws of any one of the United States or Territories, so long as any person of the same age or description shall be continued in slavery by the laws of this State; Provided, That such person or slave be the bona-fide property of such emigrants: And provided also, That laws may be passed to prohibit the introduction into this State of slaves who have committed high crimes in other States or Territories. They shall have power to pass laws to permit the owners of slaves to emancipate them, saving the rights of creditors, and preventing them from becoming a public charge. They shall have power to oblige the owners of slaves to treat them with humanity, to provide for them necessary food and clothing, to abstain from all injuries to them extending to life or limb, and, in case of their neglect or refusal to comply with the direction of such laws, - to have such slave or slaves sold for the benefit of the owner or owners. . . .

BILL OF RIGHTS.

23. Free negroes shall not be permitted to live in this State under any circumstances.

SCHEDULE.

SEC. 7. This constitution shall be submitted to the Congress of the United States at its next ensuing session. . . . Before this constitution shall be sent to Congress, asking for admission into the Union as a State, it shall be submitted to all the white male inhabitants of this Territory, for approval or disapproval, as follows: . . . The voting shall be by ballot. The judges of said election shall cause to be kept two poll-books by two clerks, by them appointed. The ballots cast at said election shall be endorsed, "Constitution with slavery," and "Constitution with no slavery." . . . The president [of the convention] with two or more members of this convention, shall examine said poll-books, and if it shall appear upon said examination that a majority of the legal votes cast at said election be in favor of the "Constitution with slavery," he shall immediately have the same transmitted to the Congress of the United States, as hereinbefore provided; but if, upon such examination of said poll-books, it shall appear that a majority of the legal votes cast at said election be in favor of the " Constitution with no slavery," then the article providing for slavery shall be stricken from this constitution by the president of this convention, and slavery shall no longer exist in the State of Kansas, except that the right of property in slaves now in this Territory shall in no manner be interfered with, and shall have transmitted the constitution, so ratified, (to Congress the constitution, so ratified,) to the Congress of the United States, as hereinbefore provided....

Lincoln Letter to Joshua F. Speed

August 24, 1855

by Abraham Lincoln

[Lincoln's longtime friend, Joshua Speed, was a Kentuckian who was the son of an owner of a large plantation. He opposed the antislavery cause. They had worked together in Illinois during the 1830s and remained close, despite political differences. Speed did remain loyal to the Union and to Lincoln during the War, and assisted Union activities in Kentucky. In this famous letter (which is heavily excerpted), written during a period before Lincoln joined the Republican Party, Lincoln discusses the general issue of slavery and the specific issue of the Kansas controversy, as well as his strong views on nativism – views that he did not ever repeat so strongly in public.]

As regards nativism, in the views of many historians Lincoln neither wished to alienate nativists who might eventually join into the coalition against expansion of slavery nor to offend immigrants who might also be interested in joining. (In fact, sizeable numbers of ex-nativists and Upper Mid-West (mostly protestant) Germans did join the Republican coalition.). Although Lincoln never publicly attacked the Nativists, he did work behind the scenes to undercut the influences of nativist policies within the Republican Party.]

Dear Speed:

You know what a poor correspondent I am. Ever since I received your very agreeable letter of the 22nd. of May I have been intending to write you in answer to it. You suggest that in political action now, you and I would differ. I suppose we would; not quite as much, however, as you may think. You know I dislike slavery; and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. So far there is no cause of difference. But you say that sooner than yield your legal right to the slave — especially at the bidding of those who are not themselves interested, you would see the Union dissolved. I am not aware that *any one* is bidding you to yield that right; very certainly I am not. I leave that matter entirely to yourself. I also

acknowledge *your* rights and *my* obligations, under the constitution, in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down, and caught, and carried back to their stripes, and unrewarded toils; but I bite my lip and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had together a tedious low water trip, on a Steamboat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio, there were, on board, ten or a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons. That sight was a continued torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave border. It is hardly fair for you to assume, that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union.

I do oppose the extension of slavery, because my judgment and feelings so prompt me; and I am under no obligation to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must. You say if you were President, you would send an army and hang the leaders of the Missouri outrages upon the Kansas elections; still, if Kansas fairly votes herself a slave state, she must be admitted, or the Union must be dissolved. But how if she votes herself a slave State *unfairly* — that is, by the very means for which you say you would hang men? Must she still be admitted, or the Union be dissolved? That will be the phase of the question when it first becomes a practical one. In your assumption that there may be a *fair* decision of the slavery question in Kansas, I plainly see you and I would differ about the Nebraska law. I look upon that enactment not as a *law*, but as *violence* from the beginning. It was conceived in violence, passed in violence, is maintained in violence, and is being executed in violence. I say it was *conceived* in violence, because the destruction of the Missouri Compromise, under the circumstances, was nothing less than violence. It was *passed* in violence, because it could not have passed at all but for the votes of many members in violence of the known will of their constituents. It is *maintained* in

violence because the elections since, clearly demand it's repeal, and this demand is openly disregarded. *You* say men ought to be hung for the way they are executing that law; and *I* say the way it is being executed is quite as good as any of its antecedents. It is being executed in the precise way which was intended from the first; else why does no Nebraska man express astonishment or condemnation? Poor Reeder is the only public man who has been silly enough to believe that anything like fairness was ever intended; and he has been bravely undeceived.

That Kansas will form a Slave Constitution, and, with it, will ask to be admitted into the Union, I take to be an already settled question; and so settled by the very means you so pointedly condemn. By every principle of law, ever held by any court, North or South, every negro taken to Kansas is free; yet, in utter disregard of this — in the spirit of violence merely — that beautiful Legislature gravely passes a law to hang men who shall venture to inform a negro of his legal rights. This is the substance, and real object of the law. If, like Haman, they should hang upon the gallows of their own building, I shall not be among the mourners for their fate.

In my humble sphere, I shall advocate the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, so long as Kansas remains a territory; and when, by all these foul means, it seeks to come into the Union as a Slave state, I shall oppose it. I am very loth, in any case, to withhold my assent to the enjoyment of property *acquired*, or *located*, in good faith; but I do not admit that *good faith*, in taking a negro to Kansas, to be held in slavery, is a *possibility* with any man. Any man who has sense enough to be the controller of his own property, has too much sense to misunderstand the outrageous character of this whole Nebraska business. But I digress. In my opposition to the admission of Kansas I shall have some company; but we may be beaten. If we are, I shall not, on that account, attempt to dissolve the Union. On the contrary, if we succeed, there will be enough of us to take care of the Union. I think it probable, however, we shall be beaten. Standing

as a unit among yourselves, you can, directly, and indirectly, bribe enough of our men to carry the day — as you could on an open proposition to establish monarchy. Get hold of some man in the North, whose position and ability is such, that he can make the support of your measure — whatever it may be — a *democratic party necessity*, and the thing is done. Apropos of this, let me tell you an anecdote. Douglas introduced the Nebraska bill in January. In February afterwards, there was a call session of the Illinois Legislature. Of the one hundred members composing the two branches of that body, about seventy were democrats. These latter held a caucus, in which the Nebraska bill was talked of, if not formally discussed. It was thereby discovered that just three, and no more, were in favor of the measure. In a day of two Douglas's orders came on to have resolutions passed approving the bill; and they were passed by large majorities!!! The truth of this is vouched for by a bolting democratic member. The masses too, democratic as well as Whig, were even, nearer unanimous against it; but as soon as the party necessity of supporting it, became apparent, the way the democracy began to see the *wisdom* and *justice* of it, was perfectly astonishing.

You say if Kansas fairly votes herself a free state, as a Christian you will rather rejoice at it. All decent slaveholders *talk* that way; and I do not doubt their candor. But they never *vote* that way. Although in a private letter, or conversation, you will express your preference that Kansas shall be free, you would vote for no man for Congress who would say the same thing publicly. No such man could be elected from any district in a slave state. You think Stringfellow & Co¹ ought to be hung; and yet, at the next presidential election you will vote for the exact type and representative of Stringfellow. The slave breeders and slave traders are a small, odious and detested class, among you; and yet in politics, they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters, as you are the master of your own negroes. You inquire where I now

¹ Benjamin Stringfellow was one of the leaders of the Missouri-based, pro-slavery, paramilitary group known as the “Border Ruffians” in Kansas.

stand. That is a disputed point — I think I am a Whig; but others say there are no Whigs, and that I am an abolitionist. When I was in Washington I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty times, and I never heard of anyone attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the *extension* of slavery.

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that “*all men are created equal.*” We now practically read it “*all men are created equal, except negroes*” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read “*all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.*” When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty — to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.

Mary will probably pass a day or two in Louisville in October. My kindest regards to Mrs. Speed. On the leading subject of this letter, I have more of her sympathy than I have of yours. And yet let me say I am

Your friend forever

A. Lincoln

Proceedings and Resolutions of the Pro-Slavery Convention of Missouri

Held at Lexington (July 1855)

ADDRESS. TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

We have been appointed by a Convention of citizens of Missouri, mainly representing that portion of the State lying contiguous to the Territory of Kansas, to lay before you some suggestions, upon a topic which vitally concerns our State, and which, it is believed, may to a serious extent affect the general welfare of our country.

We propose to discharge this duty by a concise and candid exposition of facts, touching our condition, and its bearing upon Kansas, accompanied with such reflections as the facts naturally suggest.

That portion of Missouri which borders on Kansas contains, as nearly as can now be ascertained, a population of fifty thousand slaves, and their estimated value, at the prices prevailing here, is about twenty-five millions of dollars. As the whole State contains but about one hundred thousand slaves, it will be seen that one-half of the entire slave population of Missouri is located in the eighteen counties bordering on Kansas, the greater portion of which is separated from that Territory by no natural boundary, and is within a day's ride of the line. This part of our State is distinguished by an uniform fertility of soil, a temperate and healthful climate, and a population progressing rapidly in all the elements that constitute a prosperous community. Agriculture is in a most flourishing condition, and the towns and villages which have sprung up, indicate a steady progress towards wealth, refinement and commercial importance. Nor have the higher interests of education, religion and science, been neglected; but common schools, and respectable institutions of a higher grade, and churches of every Christian denomination, are found in every county. The great staple of this district is hemp, although tobacco, and corn, and wheat are also largely produced. The culture of hemp has been found profitable,—more so than cotton in the South; and this fact, with the additional ones, that almost every foot of land within the counties alluded to, is wonderfully adapted by nature to its production, in greater quantities, and finer qualities, and at smaller

cost, than in any other State in the Union, and that the climate is such as to permit the growers of this article to reside on their estates, will readily explain and account for the unexampled growth of the country. Already it constitutes the most densely populated portion of our State, and its remarkable fertility of soil, and general salubrity of climate, with the facilities for outlet furnished by a noble river, running through its midst, and two great railroads, destined soon to traverse its upper and lower border, will render it at no distant period, if left undisturbed, as desirable and flourishing a district as can be found in the Mississippi Valley.

An idea has to some extent prevailed abroad, that Missouri contained but a very small slave population, and that the permanence of this institution here was threatened by the existence of at least a respectable minority of her citizens, ready and anxious to abolish it, and that only a slight external pressure was necessary to accomplish this purpose. We regret that this opinion has to some extent received countenance from the publication and patronage of journals in our commercial metropolis, evidently aiming at such a result. Without, however, going into any explanation of political parties here, which would be entirely foreign to our purpose, we think it proper to state, that the idea above alluded to is unfounded; and that no respectable party can be found in this State, outside of St. Louis, prepared to embark in any such schemes. . . .

Previous to the repeal of the Congressional restriction of 1820, by which Missouri was thrown into an isolated position in reference to the question of slavery, and made a solitary exception to a general rule, her condition in regard to the territory west of her border, and yet north of the geographical line which Congress had fixed as the terminus of Southern institutions, was truly unenviable. With two States on her northern and eastern border, in many portions of which the Constitution of the United States, and the Fugitive Slave Law, passed in pursuance thereof, were known to be as inefficacious for the protection of our rights as they would have been in London or Canada, it was left to the will of Congress, by enforcing the restriction of 1820, to cut Missouri off almost entirely from all territorial connexion with States having institutions congenial to her own, and with populations ready and willing to protect and defend them. No alternative was left to that body but to repeal the restriction, and thus leave to the Constitution and the laws of nature, the settlement of our territories, or, by retaining the restriction, indirectly to abolish slavery in Missouri. If the latter alternative had to be selected, it would have been an act of charity and mercy to the slaveholders of Missouri, to warn them in time of the necessity of abandoning their homes, or manumitting or selling their slaves—to give them ample time to determine between the sacrifice of fifty millions of slave

property, or seventy millions of landed estate. Direct legislation would have been preferable to indirect legislation, leading to the same result, and the enforcement of the restriction in the settlement of Kansas was virtually the abolition of slavery in Missouri. But Congress acted more wisely, as we think, and with greater fidelity to the Constitution and the Union.

The history of the Kansas-Nebraska bill is known to the country. It abolished the geographical line of 36 deg. 30 min., by which the limits of slavery were restricted, and substituted a constitutional and just principle, which left to the settlers of the territories to adopt such domestic institutions as suited themselves. If ever there was a principle calculated to commend itself to all reasonable men, and reconcile all conflicting interests, this would seem to have been the one. It was the principle of popular sovereignty—the basis upon which our independence had been achieved—and it was therefore supposed to be justly dear to all Americans, of every latitude and every creed. But fanaticism was not satisfied. The abolitionists and their allies moved heaven and earth to accomplish its defeat, and although unsuccessful, they did not therefore despair. Out-voted in Congress, receiving no countenance from the Executive, they retired to another theatre of action, and, strange to say, they prostituted an ancient and respectable Commonwealth—one of the Old Thirteen—to commence, in her sovereign capacity as a State, with the means and imposing attitude incident to such a position, a crusade against slavery, novel in its character, more alarming in its features, and likely to be more fatal in its consequences, than all the fanatical movements hitherto attempted, since the appearance of abolitionism as a political party in 1835. They originated and matured a scheme, never before heard of or thought of in this country, the object and effect of which was to evade the principle of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and in lieu of *non-intervention by Congress*, to substitute *active intervention by the States*. An act of incorporation was passed; a company with a capital of five millions was chartered; and this company was authorized to enlist an army of mercenary fanatics, and transport them to Kansas. Recruiting officers were stationed in places most likely to furnish the proper material; premiums were offered for recruits; the public mind was stimulated by glowing and false descriptions of the country proposed to be occupied, and a *Hessian* band of mercenaries was thus prepared and forwarded, to commence and carry on a war of extermination against slavery.

To call these people *emigrants*, is a sheer perversion of language. They are not sent to cultivate the soil, to better their social condition, to add to their individual comforts, or the aggregate wealth of the nation. They do not move from choice or taste, or from any motive affecting, or supposed to affect, themselves or their

families. They have none of the marks of the old pioneers, who cut down the forests of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana, or levelled the cane brakes of Tennessee and Mississippi, or broke up the plains of Illinois and Missouri. They are mostly ignorant of agriculture; picked up in cities or villages, they of course have no experience as farmers, and if left to their unaided resources—if not clothed and fed by the same power which has effected their transportation—they would starve or freeze. They are *hirelings*—an army of hirelings—recruited and shipped indirectly by a sovereign state of this Union, to make war upon an institution *now* existing in the Territory to which they are transplanted, and thence to inflict a fatal blow upon the resources, the prosperity and the peace of a neighboring State. They are *military* colonies, planted by a State government, to subdue a territory opened to settlement by Congress, and take exclusive possession thereof. In addition to that *esprit du corps*, which of necessity pervades such an organization, they have in common a reckless and desperate fanaticism, which teaches them that slavery is a sin, and that they are doing God's service in hastening its destruction. They have been picked and culled from the ignorant masses, which Old England and New England negro philanthropy has stirred up and aroused to madness on this topic, and have been selected with reference to their views on this topic alone. They are men with a single idea; and to carry out this, they have been instructed and taught to disregard the laws of God and man; to consider bloodshed and arson, insurrection, destruction of property, or servile war, as the merest trifles, compared with the glory and honor of seducing a single slave from his master, or harboring and protecting the thief who has carried him off!

That such a population would be fatal to the peace and security of the neighboring State of Missouri, and immediate destruction of such owners of slaves as had already moved to the Territory of Kansas, is too clear to admit of argument. A horde of our western savages, with avowed purposes of destruction to the white race, would be less formidable neighbors.

The colonization of Kansas with a population of this character was a circumstance which aroused attention, and excited alarm among our citizens here, and those who had already emigrated to Kansas. Could any other result have been expected? Did sensible men at the North—did the abolitionists themselves, expect any other? . . .

We have no thought of discussing the subject of slavery. Viewed in its social, moral or economical aspects, it is regarded, as the resolutions of the Convention

declare, as solely and exclusively a matter of State jurisdiction, and therefore, one which does not concern the Federal Government, or the States where it does not exist. We have merely adverted to the fact, in connexion with the recent abolition movements upon Kansas, that amidst all their fierce denunciations of slavery for twenty years past, these fanatics have never yet been able to suggest a plan for its removal, consistent with the safety of the white race—saying nothing of constitutional guarantees, Federal and State.

The colonization scheme of Massachusetts, as we have said, excited alarm in Missouri. Its obvious design was to operate further than the mere prevention of the natural expansion of slavery. It was intended to narrow its existing limits, —to destroy all equilibrium of power between the North and the South, and leave the slaveholder at the will of a majority, ready to disregard constitutional obligations, and carry out to their bitter end the mandates of ignorance, prejudice and bigotry. Its success manifestly involved a radical change in our Federal Government, or its total overthrow. . . .

No southern or slaveholding State has ever attempted to colonize a Territory. Our public lands have been left to the occupancy of such settlers as soil and climate invited. The South has sent no armies to force slave labor upon those who preferred free labor. Kentucky sprung from Virginia, as did Tennessee from North Carolina, and Kansas will from Missouri—from contiguity of territory, and similarity of climate. Emigration has followed the parallels of latitude and will continue to do so, unless diverted by such organizations as Emigrant Aid Societies and Kansas Leagues.

It has been said that the citizens of Massachusetts have an undoubted right to emigrate to Kansas; that this right may be exercised individually, or in families, or in larger private associations; and that associated enterprise, under the sanction of legislative enactments, is but another and equally justifiable form of emigration. Political actions, like those of individuals, must be judged by their motives and effects. Unquestionably, emigration, both individual and collective, from the free States to the South, and, *vice versa*, from the slave States to the North, has been progressing from the foundation of our government to the present day, without comment and without objection. It is not pretended that such emigration, even if fostered by State patronage, would be illegal, or in any respect objectionable. The wide expanse of the fertile West, and the deserted wastes of the sunny South, invite occupation; and no man, from the southern extremity of Florida to the northern

boundary of Missouri, has ever objected to an emigrant simply because he was from the North, and preferred free labor to that of slaves. Upon this subject he is allowed to consult his own taste, convenience, and conscience; and it is expected that he will permit his neighbors to exercise the same privilege. But, no one can fail to distinguish between an honest, *bona fide* emigration, prompted by choice or necessity, and an organized colonization with offensive purposes upon the institutions of the country proposed to be settled. Nor can there be any doubt in which class to place the movements of Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Societies and Kansas Leagues. Their motives have been candidly avowed, and their objects boldly proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the land. Were this not the case, it would still be impossible to mistake them. Why, we might well enquire, if simple emigration was in view, are these extraordinary efforts confined to the Territory of Kansas? Is Nebraska, which was opened to settlement by the same law, less desirable, less inviting to northern adventurers, than Kansas? Are Iowa, and Washington, and Oregon, and Minnesota, and Illinois and Michigan, filled up with population—their lands all occupied, and furnishing no room for Massachusetts emigrants? Is Massachusetts herself overrun with population—obliged to rid herself of paupers whom she cannot feed at home? Or, is Kansas, as eastern orators have insinuated, a newly discovered paradise—a modern El Dorado, where gold and precious stones can be gathered at pleasure; or an Arcadia, where nature is so bountiful as not to need the aid of man, and fruits and vegetables of every desirable description spontaneously spring up?

There can be but one answer to these questions, and that answer shows conclusively the spirit and intent of this miscalled and pretended emigration. *It is an anti-slavery movement.* As such it was organized and put in motion by an anti-slavery legislature; as such, the organized army was equipped in Massachusetts, and transported to Kansas; and, as such, it was met there and defeated.

If further illustration was needed of the illegality of these movements upon Kansas, we might extend our observations to the probable reception of similar movements upon a State. If the Massachusetts legislature, or that of any other State, have the right to send an army of abolitionists into Kansas, they have the same right to transport them to Missouri. We are not apprised of any provisions in the constitutions or laws of the States, which in this respect distinguishes their condition from that of a territory. We have no laws, and we presume no slaveholding State has, which forbids the emigration of non-slaveholders. Such laws, if passed, would clearly conflict with the Federal Constitution. The southern and south-western slaveholding States are as open to emigration from non-slaveholding States as

Kansas. They differ only in the price of land and the density of population. Let us suppose, then, that Massachusetts should turn her attention to Texas, and should ascertain that the population of that State was nearly divided between those who favored and those who opposed slavery, and that one thousand votes would turn the scale in favor of emancipation, and, acting in accordance with her world-wide philanthropy, she should resolve to transport the thousand voters necessary to abolish slavery in Texas, how would such a movement be received there? Or, to reverse the proposition, let it be supposed that South Carolina, with her large slaveholding population, should undertake to transport a thousand slaveholders to Delaware, with a view to turn the scale in that State, now understood to be rapidly passing over to the list of free States, would the gallant sons of that ancient State, small as she is territorially, submit to such interference?

Now, the institutions of Kansas are as much fixed and as solemnly guaranteed by statute, as those of Delaware or Texas. The laws of Kansas Territory may be abrogated by succeeding legislatures; but, so also may the laws, and even the constitutions, of Texas and Delaware. Kansas only differs from their condition in her limited resources, her small population, and her large amount of marketable lands. There is no difference in principle between the cases supposed; if justifiable and legal in the one, it is equally so in the other. They differ only in point of practicability and expediency; the one would be an outrage, easily perceived, promptly met, and speedily repelled; the other is disguised under the forms of emigration, and meets with no populous and organized community to resent it. . . .

We conclude, then, that this irruption upon Kansas by Emigrant Aid Societies and Kansas Leagues, under the patronage of the Massachusetts legislature, is to be regarded in no other light than a new phase of abolitionism, more practical in its aims, and therefore more dangerous than any form it has yet assumed. We have shown it to be at variance with the true intent of the act of Congress, by which the Territory was opened to settlement; at variance with the spirit of the Constitution of the United States, and with the institutions of the Territory, already recognized by law; totally destructive of that fellowship and good feeling which should exist among citizens of confederated States; ruinous to the security, peace and prosperity of a neighboring State; unprecedented in our political annals up to this date, and pregnant with the most disastrous consequences to the harmony and stability of the Union. Thus far its purposes have been defeated; but renewed efforts are threatened. Political conventions at the north and north-west have declared for the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska law, and, anticipating a failure in this direction, are stimulating the anti-slavery sentiment to fresh exertions, for abolitionizing Kansas after the

Massachusetts fashion. We have discharged our duty in declaring the light in which such demonstrations are viewed here, and our firm belief of the spirit by which they will be met. If civil war and ultimate disunion are desired, a renewal of these efforts will be admirably adapted to such purposes. Missouri has taken her position in the resolutions adopted by the Lexington Convention, and from that position she will not be likely to recede. It is based upon the Constitution—upon justice, and equality of rights among the States. What she has done, and what she is still prepared to do, is in self-defence and for self-preservation; and from these duties she will hardly be expected to shrink.

With her, everything is at stake; the security of a large slave property, the prosperity of her citizens, and their exemption from perpetual agitation and border feuds; whilst the emissaries of abolition are pursuing a phantom—an abstraction, which, if realized, could add nothing to their possessions or happiness, and would be productive of decided injury to the race for whose benefit they profess to labor. If slavery is an evil, and it is conceded that Congress cannot interfere with it in the States, it is most manifest that its diffusion through a new territory, where land is valueless and labor productive, tends greatly to ameliorate the condition of the slaves.

Opposition to the extension of slavery is not, then, founded upon any philanthropic views, or upon any love for the slave. It is a mere grasp for political power, beyond what the Constitution of the United States concedes; and it is so understood by the leaders of the movement. And this additional power is not desired for constitutional purposes—for the advancement of the general welfare, or the national reputation. For such purposes the majority in the North is already sufficient, and no future events are likely to diminish it. The slaveholding States are in a minority, but so far, a minority which has commanded respect in the national councils. It has answered, and we hope will continue to subserve the purposes of self-protection. Conservative men from other quarters have come up to the rescue, when the rights of the South have been seriously threatened. But it is essential to the purposes of self-preservation, that this minority should not be materially weakened; it is essential to the preservation of our present form of government, that the slave States should retain sufficient power to make effectual resistance against outward aggression upon an institution peculiar to them alone. Parchment guarantees, as all history shows, avail nothing against an overwhelming public clamor. The fate of the Fugitive Slave Law affords an instructive warning on the subject, and shows that the most solemn constitutional obligations will be evaded or scorned, where popular

prejudice resists their execution. The South must rely on herself for protection, and to this end her strength in the Federal Government cannot be safely diminished.

If indeed it be true, as public men at the North have declared, and political assemblages have endorsed, that a determination has been reached in that quarter to refuse admission to any more slave States, there is an end to all argument on the subject. To reject Kansas, or any other Territory from the Union, simply and solely because slavery is recognized within her limits, would be regarded here, and, we presume, throughout the South and South-west, as an open repudiation of the Constitution—a distinct and unequivocal step towards a dissolution of the Union. We presume it would be so regarded everywhere, North and South. Taken in connexion with the abrogation of that provision of the Constitution which enforces the rights of the owners of slaves in all the States of the Union, into which they might escape, which has been effected *practically* throughout nearly all the free States, and more formally by solemn legislative enactments in a portion of them, the rejection of Kansas on account of slavery would be disunion in a form of grossest insult to the sixteen slave States now comprehended in the nation. It would be a declaration that slavery was incompatible with republican government, in the face of at least *two formal recognitions* of its legality, *in terms*, by the Federal Constitution.

We trust that such counsels have not the remotest prospect of prevailing in our National Legislature, and will not dwell upon the consequence of their adoption. We prefer to anticipate a returning fidelity to national obligations—a faithful adherence to the Constitutional guarantees, and the consequent prospect—cheering to the patriot of this and other lands—of a continued and *perpetual* UNION.

New England Emigrant Aid Company

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Trade sign used at the Boston headquarters of the New England Emigrant Aid Company

The **New England Emigrant Aid Company** (originally the **Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company**) was a transportation company founded in [Boston, Massachusetts](#) by activist [Eli Thayer](#) in the wake of the [Kansas–Nebraska Act](#), which allowed the population of Kansas Territory to choose whether slavery would be legal. The Company's ultimate purpose was to transport anti-slavery [immigrants](#) into the [Kansas Territory](#). The Company believed that if enough anti-slavery immigrants settled *en masse* in the newly-opened territory, they would be able to shift the balance of political power in the territory, which in turn would lead to Kansas becoming a [free state](#) (rather than a [slave state](#)) when it eventually joined the United States. The New England Emigrant Aid Company is noted less for its direct impact than for the psychological impact it had on [pro-slavery](#) and [anti-slavery](#) elements. Thayer's prediction that the Company would eventually be able to send 20,000 immigrants a year never came to fruition, but it spurred [Border Ruffians](#) from nearby [Missouri](#), where slavery was legal, to move to Kansas to ensure its admission to the Union as a slave state. That, in turn, further galvanized [Free-Staters](#) and enemies of the [Slave Power](#).

Thayer's intention was to capitalize on anti-slavery sentiment in the [Northern United States](#) and to send settlers to Kansas to purchase land and build houses, shops, and mills. They could then sell the land at a significant profit and send the

proceeds back to Thayer and his investors. At the behest of several investors, who found the notion of profiting from the anti-slavery cause distasteful, the company's model was shifted to that of a benevolent society, and it was renamed the New England Emigrant Aid Company in 1855. While the company achieved neither a profit nor a significant impact on the population of Kansas, it played an important role in the events that would later be termed [Bleeding Kansas](#).

Creation

The Company was formed in the midst of the [sectional crisis](#) that preceded the [American Civil War](#). To the Northern United States, the concept of [popular sovereignty](#), which stated that the population of each new [U.S. state](#) should be allowed to decide if it allowed slavery, was an attempt by Southerners to gain power. When the [Kansas–Nebraska Act](#) threatened to extend popular sovereignty into the new [Kansas Territory](#), Eli Thayer, a second-term Congressman from Massachusetts, hatched the idea of an Emigrant Aid Company in the winter of 1853–1854. His primary partners in the venture were [Alexander H. Bullock](#) and [Edward Everett Hale](#), and together, they set Thayer's plans in motion on March 5, 1854. Thayer announced the Company at a rally against the impending passage of the Kansas–Nebraska Act in [Worcester](#) on March 11. Shortly thereafter, the Company's charter was approved by the [Massachusetts Legislature](#) for up to \$5,000,000 in capital.

Officially, the Company was a profit-making venture, and how the settlers voted was of no consequence to the company. For example, the company secretary, Thomas Webb released a pamphlet in 1855 stating that although the settlers sent to the territories would not be required to vote for one side or the other, they were expected to support the free-state movement. A number of abolitionists questioned the profit motive behind the company, and even many of Thayer's potential investors balked at the notion "that people might say we were influenced by pecuniary considerations in our patriotic work." Although Thayer personally disagreed with such hesitations, in 1855 the Company reorganized as a [benevolent society](#) and changed its name to the New England Emigrant Aid Company.

Reaction

The success of the endeavor prompted other aid assistance companies to form back East, in [New York](#) and [Ohio](#), with new companies such as the Worcester County Emigrant Aid Society.

Impact

The company was directly responsible for creating the [Kansas](#) towns of [Lawrence](#) and [Manhattan](#), and it played a key role in founding [Topeka](#) and [Osawatomie](#). Lawrence was named after the Company secretary, [Amos Adams Lawrence](#). Multiple politicians were found in the emigrants who left for Kansas, such as [Daniel Read Anthony](#), [Charles L. Robinson](#), [Samuel C. Pomeroy](#), and [Martin F. Conway](#), who would later be Kansas's first [US Representative](#).

The exact number of people who left for Kansas is unknown. James Rawley puts the numbers somewhere around 2000, about a third of whom returned home, but the [Kansas Historical Society](#) puts the number at around 900 for those who left for Kansas in 1855 alone.

The Company's mission was ultimately successful, and Kansas entered the United States as a free state in 1861.

The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Documentary Collection (William E. Gienapp, editor) (Norton, 2001), at 38-39.

that the new State shall be excluded from the Union, if it chooses to adopt a free labor Constitution. But it leaves this question to be determined by the free will of the new sovereign, and accepts their decision as final. The position of the two sections is clearly illustrated in the following article from the *Richmond Enquirer*, which shows that if the South could so far forget what is due to its confederates, and were to retort upon them in kind, the demands which are made upon her, she could do so with great show of reason, though at the expense of an immense hubbub from the North:

NO MORE SLAVE STATES.—Suppose the South should insist that there should be no more free States; would not this be more of good sense, of humanity and justice, in her position, than in that of the North?

First—slavery exists neither in theory or practice, any law-abiding citizens of free States from the States where it exists. Slave States are equally open to all the people of the Union with all of their property.

whilst free society is a little experiment, small in extent, and short in duration, yet which has been attended (by the showing of its own authors,) with a thousand times greater evils, than slavery has inflicted on mankind, throughout all ages, and all countries. . . .

In view of these facts, would it not be more reasonable for the South to object to the admission of free States, than for the North to refuse to admit slave States.

We do not intend to imitate the North, become speculative philanthropists and try to set the world to rights, else we might well insist there should be no more free States. We do not wish to abolish free society, nor to prevent its introduction into a fair proportion of the new States, nor do we wish to introduce slavery into any State whose people exclude it when prepared to be admitted as States. Such exclusion is a gross act of injustice to the South; but we are practical men, and will not quarrel about abstractions. If Southern institutions are admitted into a sufficient number of the new States, we shall be satisfied.

8

NEW YORK EVENING POST

Are We Too Slaves? (1856)

Edited by the famous writer and poet William Cullen Bryant, the New York Evening Post had originally been a Democratic newspaper. Its antislavery principles, however, led it to abandon the Democratic party in the mid-1850s and support the new Republican party. It was the organ of the former Democrats who joined the Republican party in New York. In the following editorial, which appeared the day after Brooks's attack on Sumner, it comments on the significance of this event.

The excuse for this base assault is, that Mr. Sumner, on the Senate floor, in the course of debate had spoken disrespectfully of Mr. Butler, a relative of Preston S. Brooks, one of the authors of this outrage. No possible indecorum of language on the part of Mr. Sumner could excuse, much less justify, an attack like this; but we have carefully examined his speech to see if it contains any matter which could even extenuate such an act of violence, and find none. He had ridiculed Mr. Butler's devotion to slavery it is true, but the weapon of ridicule in debate is by common consent as fair and allowable a weapon as argument. . . .

Has it come to this, that we must speak with bated breath in the presence of our Southern masters; that even their follies are too sacred a subject of ridicule; that we must not deny the consistency of their principles or the accuracy of their statements? If we venture to laugh at them, or question their logic, or dispute their facts, are we to be chastised as they chastise their slaves? Are we too, slaves, slaves for life, a target for their brutal blows, when we do not comport ourselves to please them? If this be so, it is time that the people of the free states knew it, and prepared themselves to acquiesce in their fate. They have labored under the delusion hitherto that they were their own masters.

. . . The sudden attack made with deadly weapons upon an unarmed man in the Senate Chamber, where he could not expect it or have been prepared for it, was the act of men who must be poltroons as well as ruffians. It was as indecent, also, as it was cowardly; the Senate floor should be sacred from such outrages; or, if they are committed at all, it should only be by Senatorial blackguards. It is true that the Senate had just adjourned, but the members were still there, many of them in their places; it was their chamber, and this violence committed in their presence was an insult to their body. Yet we have no expectation that the Senate will do anything to vindicate the sacredness and peace of their chamber, or the right of their

members not to be called to account for words spoken in debate. There will be a little discussion; some will denounce and some will defend the assault, and there the matter will end.

The truth is, that the pro-slavery party, which rules in the Senate looks upon violence as the proper instrument of its designs. Violence reigns in the streets of Washington; they are not safe for the man who speaks his mind without reserve. . . . It had been supposed that the Senate Chamber, the room dedicated to the sittings of that "dignified body," as it has been called, was at least free from the intrusion of outside bullies, but violence has now found its way into the Senate chamber. Violence lies in wait on all the navigable rivers and all the railways of Missouri, to obstruct those who pass from the free states to Kansas. Violence overhangs the frontier of that territory like a storm-cloud charged with hail and lightning. Violence has carried election after election in that territory; violence has imposed upon the inhabitants a fictitious legislature and a tyrannical code of laws, and violence is mustering her myrmidons to put that code in execution. In short, violence is the order of the day; the North is to be pushed to the wall by it, and this plot will succeed if the people of the free states are as apathetic as the slaveholders are insolent.

Since we can expect nothing from Congress, the people of the free states must speak out in their public meetings, and denounce the plot and its authors. Here is an attempt to silence a bold and fearless representative of the free states, whose only offence was that he repelled the attacks upon the rights of his constituents with too much plainness of speech. Will the people of the free states stand by him, or will they desert him like cowards, and own that a northern man, who is above fear in the discharge of his duty, deserves to be beaten like a hound? It is idle to wait for what the Senate may do—the Senate will do nothing—it never does anything on such occasions; the people must take the matter into their own hands.



They Must Be Lashed into Submission (1856)

Preston S. Brooks's attack on Charles Sumner produced sharply divergent reactions in the North and South. While some voiced minor criticisms, in general southern papers strongly backed Brooks's action. One of the most vehement endorsements appeared in the influential and widely respected Richmond Enquirer. Already stunned by the fact that a senator had been assaulted in the Senate chamber, northerners were shocked by the language of the southern press in discussing this incident. Because of the Enquirer's national stature, its views commanded particular attention in both sections of the country.

In the main, the press of the South applaud the conduct of Mr. Brooks, without condition or limitation. Our approbation at least is entire and unreserved. We consider the act good in conception, better in execution, and best of all in consequence. These vulgar abolitionists in the Senate are getting above themselves. They have been humored until they forget their position. They have grown saucy, and dare to be impudent to gentlemen! Now, they are a low, mean, scurvy set, with some little book learning, but as utterly devoid of spirit or honor as a pack of curs. Intrenched behind "privilege," they fancy they can slander the South and insult its Representatives, with impunity. The truth is they have been suffered to run too long without collars. They must be lashed into submission. . . . These men are perpetually abusing the people and representatives of the South, for tyrants, robbers, ruffians, adulterers, and what not. Shall we stand it? Can gentlemen sit still in the Senate and House of Representatives, under an incessant stream of denunciation from wretches who avail themselves of the privilege of place, to indulge their devilish passions with impunity? In the absence of an adequate law, Southern gentlemen

must protect their own honor and feelings. It is an idle mockery to challenge one of these scullions. It is equally useless to attempt to disgrace them. They are insensible to shame; and can be brought to reason only by an application of cowhide or gutta percha. Let them once understand that for every vile word spoken against the South, they will suffer so many stripes, and they will soon learn to behave themselves, like decent dogs—they can never be gentlemen. Mr. Brooks has initiated this salutary discipline, and he deserves applause for the bold, judicious manner, in which he chastised the scamp Sumner. It was a proper act, done at the proper time, and in the proper place. Of all places on earth the Senate chamber, the theatre of his vituperative exploits, was the very spot where Sumner should have been made to suffer for his violation of the decencies of decorous debate, and for his brutal denunciation of a venerable statesman. It was literally and entirely proper, that he should be stricken down and beaten just beside the desk against which he leaned as he fulminated his filthy utterances through the capitol. It is idle to talk of the sanctity of the Senate Chamber, since it is polluted by the presence of such fellows as [Henry] Wilson and Sumner and [Benjamin F.] Wade. They have desecrated it, and cannot now fly to it as to a sanctuary from the lash of vengeance.

FROM *Richmond Enquirer*, 2 June 1856.

We trust other gentlemen will follow the example of Mr. Brooks, that so a curb may be imposed upon the truculence and audacity of abolition

speakers.—If need be, let us have a caning or cowhiding every day. If the worse come to the worse, so much the sooner so much the better.

856)

reactions southern orsements : Already er, north- s incident. lar atten-

10

Chief Justice Roger B. Taney Rules against Dred Scott (1857)

Andrew Jackson appointed Roger B. Taney to be chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1835. A citizen of Maryland, Taney had emancipated his slaves some years before, yet he remained extremely sensitive to the security of slavery, bitterly resented the antislavery movement in the North, and was anxious to erect additional constitutional safeguards for the institution. Although every justice issued an opinion in the Dred Scott case, Taney's was considered the most important majority opinion. Certainly his opinion attracted the most attention and stirred up the greatest controversy, particularly his assertion that blacks could not be citizens of the United States and his pronouncement that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery from a territory. In his opinion, Taney did not adopt Calhoun's argument that in governing the territories Congress acted as the agent of all the states. Instead, he relied on the constitutional protection of property and the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

and feelings. It is an of these scullions. It disgrace them. They a be brought to rea- rwhide or gutta per- l that for every vile s, they will suffer so on learn to behave -they can never be itiated this salutary plause for the bold, chastised the scamp done at the proper of all places on earth e of his vituperative here Sumner should his violation of the , and for his brutal tesman. It was liter- e should be stricken le the desk against ated his filthy utter- is idle to talk of the r, since it is polluted rs as [Henry] Wilson E.] Wade. They have fly to it as to a sanc- ce.

When a plaintiff sues in a court of the United States, it is necessary that he should show, in his pleading, that the suit he brings is within the jurisdiction of the court, and that he is entitled to sue there. . . . And if the plaintiff claims a right to sue in a Circuit Court of the United States, under that provision of the Constitution which gives jurisdiction in controversies between citizens of different States, he must distinctly aver in his pleading that they are citizens of different States; and he cannot maintain his suit without showing that fact in the pleadings. . . .

It becomes necessary, therefore, to determine

who were citizens of the several States when the Constitution was adopted. And in order to do this, we must recur to the Governments and institutions of the thirteen colonies when they separated from Great Britain and formed new sovereignties, and took their places in the family of independent nations. We must inquire who, at that time, were recognised as the people or citizens of a State, whose rights and liberties had been outraged by the English Government; and who declared their independence, and assumed the powers of Government to defend their rights by force of arms.

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 be-

FROM *Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sanford*, 19 Howard (1857), pp. 393-454.

Excerpt from Thomas R. Whitney, *A Defence of the American Policy* (1856)

[This excerpt is from an 1856 tract authored by an American Party (“Know-Nothing”) congressman from New York, Thomas R. Whitney arguing the inherent incompatibility of the Roman Catholic religion with republican institutions.]

[W]e set out to show that Romanism is diametrically opposed to Republicanism. . . [T]he Romish Church, in its whole character and spirit, is hostile to the character and spirit of our free institutions. The simple fact that one is an absolute government, and the other a popular government, establishes the antipodal. These are the extremes of social organism, and when extremes meet, decomposition of one or the other must ensue, unless the repulsive power is sufficient in the one or the other to prevent an actual contact.

American Republicanism cultivates intelligence among the people. Romanism suppresses intelligence.

American Republicanism recognizes and secures to all men the right of trial by jury. Romanism adjudicates in the somber dungeon of the inquisition, or through the will of a single prelate, who may be at once the accuser, the judge, and the executioner.

American Republicanism ensures the freedom of the press, and the right of free speech. Romanism silences, or else muzzles the press and forbids discussion; it puts a bridle on the lips of its subjects, as we do on the lips of our state-prison convicts.

American Republicanism secures to its citizens the right of suffrage in the choice of their rulers, with the power to impeach and remove. Romanism chooses its executive officer or sovereign, by a vote of the college of cardinals; that sovereign holds his authority, which is absolute for life, and the cardinals are appointed by him. The people have no voice.

American Republicanism secures the full liberty of conscience to all its people, and to the stranger within its gates. Romanism pronounces liberty of conscience to be a wicked heresy.

American Republicanism permits every human creature to read and study the Word of God. Romanism forbids it. In a word, American Republicanism is FREEDOM; Romanism is slavery.

. . . “The hierarchy [of the Romish Church] in the United States, professes attachment to the government, and her children from the Emerald Isle (made desolate and repulsive through priestcraft), avail themselves of the liberty we give to them, and weave the harp of the oppressed, downtrodden Erin, in the folds of the unsullied ensign of American Liberty. What a mockery of their own vassalage! What a contrast! The relic of national degradation blended with the emblem of national glory and might!

. . . American Republicanism is the parent of progress; it encourages the development of human energy, and gives free play to the faculties. It expands the intellect, invigorates the soul, and elevates the standard of the individual man. It builds locomotives, erects manufactories, disembowels the earth, causing her to yield up her treasures to the uses of man. It encourages commerce and sends it smoking steamships to the far ends of the earth. It strikes out into the wilderness, talks with the savage without enslaving the soul, and develops the resources of the earth. Romanism gives to the red man a cross and a rosary; American Republicanism places in his hands a Bible and a hoe. It builds a schoolhouse for his children, and teaches him that sowing and reaping are more manly and more profitable than hunting and fishing.

. . . Where Romanism prevails, there is stagnation and public lethargy. Where American Republicanism prevails, there is industry, intelligence, energy, and public prosperity.

Thomas R. Whitney, *A Defence of the American Policy*, 1856, excerpted in John Gjerde, ed., *Major Problems in American Immigration & Ethnic History* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 144-146.

Reprinted at <https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1133>

William Seward (NY)
Excerpts from Senate Speech upon the
passage of the
Kansas-Nebraska Act

May 1854

[William Seward was an antislavery Whig Senator from New York State. A former Whig Governor of New York, he was among the most powerful antislavery figures in Congress. During the 1850 debates on the Compromise of 1850, he spoke on the Senate floor about a “higher law” than the Constitution, which led him to oppose slavery and its extension. He was widely criticized for this speech, which was understood as advocating a refusal to obey the Constitution based on one’s own subjective moral theories.]

Seward sought to retain his identification with the Whig Party longer than many, hoping that the Whigs could revive based on attracting many of the Antislavery Democrats who had left their party. He eventually became a Republican, and, as a Republican, he would become Lincoln’s chief rival for the Republican Presidential Nomination in 1860. He would go on to become Lincoln’s Secretary of State.

In this speech (only a small part of which is reproduced here), Seward responds to Congress’ passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. After deploring the passage of the Act, Seward characterized the Act as setting up a contest in Kansas between proslavery and antislavery forces, to determine which group could settle the area first. He announced he would accept this challenge “on behalf of the free states.”]

We are on the eve of the consummation of a great national transaction --a transaction which will close a cycle in the history of our country-- and it is impossible not to desire to pause a moment and survey the scene around us and the prospect before us. . . .

[W]hat has occurred here and in the country during this contest, has compelled a conviction that slavery will gain something, and freedom will endure a severe, though I hope not an irretrievable loss. . . .

[T]his contest involves a moral question. The slave States so present it. They maintain that African slavery is not erroneous, not unjust, not inconsistent with the advancing cause of human nature. Since they so regard it, I do not expect to see

statesmen representing those States indifferent about a vindication of this system by the Congress of the United States. On the other hand, we of the free States regard slavery as erroneous, unjust, oppressive, and therefore absolutely inconsistent with the principles of the American Constitution and Government. Who will expect us to be indifferent to the decisions of the American people and of mankind on such an issue?

Come on, then, gentlemen of the slave States. Since there is no escaping your challenge, I accept it on behalf of the cause of freedom. We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas, and God give victory to the side which is stronger in numbers as it is in right.