

# SUPPLEMENT TO THE LEWISBURG CHRONICLE.

## Aggressions and Usurpations

### OF THE SLAVE POWER.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

### OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

ADDRESS OF THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION, AT PITTSBURG, FEB. 22, 1856.

#### TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Having met in Convention at the City of Pittsburg, in the State of Pennsylvania, this 22d day of February, 1856, as the representatives of the people in various sections of the Union, to consult upon the political evils by which the country is menaced, and the political action by which those evils may be averted, we address to you this Declaration of our Principles and of the purposes which we seek to promote.

We declare, in the first place, our fixed and unalterable devotion to the Constitution of the United States—to the ends for which it was established, and to the means which it provided for their attainment. We accept the solemn protestation of the People of the United States, that they ordained it "in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity." We believe that the powers which it confers upon the Government of the United States are ample for the accomplishment of these objects, and that if these powers are exercised in the spirit of the Constitution itself, they cannot lead to any other result. We respect those great rights which the Constitution declares to be inviolable—Freedom of Speech and of the Press, the free exercise of Religious Belief, and the right of the People peacefully to assemble and to petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances. We would preserve those great safeguards of civil freedom, the HABEAS CORPUS, the right of trial by jury, and the right of personal liberty, unless deprived thereof for crime by due process of law. We declare our purpose to obey, in all things, the requirements of the Constitution and of all laws enacted in pursuance thereof. We cherish a profound reverence for the wise and patriotic men by whom it was framed, and a lively sense of the blessings it has conferred upon our country and upon mankind throughout the world. In every crisis of difficulty and of danger we shall invoke its spirit and proclaim the supremacy of its authority.

In the next place, we declare our ardent and unshaken attachment to this Union of American States, which the Constitution created and has thus far preserved. We revere it as the purchase of the blood of our forefathers, as the condition of our national renown, and as the guardian and guaranty of that liberty which the Constitution was designed to secure. We will defend and protect it against all its enemies. We will recognize no geographical divisions, no local interests, no narrow or sectional prejudices, in our endeavors to preserve the Union of these States against foreign aggression and domestic strife. What we claim for ourselves, we claim for all. The rights, privileges and liberties which we demand as our inheritance, we concede as their inheritance to all the citizens of this Republic.

Holding these opinions, and animated by these sentiments, we declare our conviction that the Government of the United States is not administered in accordance with the Constitution, or for the preservation and prosperity of the American Union; but that its powers are systematically wielded for the PROMOTION AND EXTENSION OF THE INTEREST OF SLAVERY, in direct hostility to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, in flagrant disregard of other great interests of the country, and in open contempt of the public sentiment of the American people and of the Christian world. We proclaim our belief that the policy which has for years past been adopted in the Administration of the General Government, tends to the utter subversion of each of the great ends for which the Constitution was established, and that, unless it shall be arrested by the prompt interposition of the People, the hold of the Union upon their loyalty and affection will be relaxed, the domestic tranquility will be disturbed, and all Constitutional securities for the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity will be destroyed. The Slaveholding interest cannot be permanently paramount in the General Government without involving consequences fatal to Free institutions. We acknowledge that it is large and powerful; that in the States where it exists it is entitled under the Constitution, like all other local interests, to immunity from the interferences of the General Government, and that it must necessarily exercise through its representatives a considerable share of political power. But there is nothing in its position, as there is certainly nothing in its character, to sustain the supremacy which it seeks to establish. There is not a State in the Union in which the slaveholders number one-tenth part of the free white population—nor in the aggregate do they number one fiftieth part of the white population of the United States. The annual productions of the other classes in the Union far exceed the total value of all the slaves. To say nothing, therefore, of the questions of natural justice, and of political economy which Slavery involves, neither its magnitude nor the numbers of those by whom it is represented entitle it to one-tenth part of the political powers conferred upon the Federal Government by the Constitution. Yet we see it seeking, and at this moment yielding, all the functions of the Government—executive, legislative, and judicial—and using them for the augmentation of its powers and the establishment of its ascendancy.

From this ascendancy the principles of the Constitution, the rights of the several States, the safety of the Union, and the welfare of the people of the United States, demand that it should be dislodged.

#### HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE PROGRESS OF SLAVERY TOWARD ASCENDANCY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

It is not necessary for us to rehearse in detail the successive steps by which the slaveholding interest has secured the influence it now exerts in the General Government. Close students of political events will readily trace the path of its ambition through the past twenty-five years of our national history.

It was under the Administration of President Tyler, and during the negotiation which preceded the annexation of Texas, that the Federal Administration for the first time declared, in its diplomatic correspondence with foreign nations, that Slavery in the United States was a "POLITICAL INSTITUTION, ESSENTIAL TO THE PEACE, SAFETY AND PROSPERITY OF THESE STATES OF THE UNION IN WHICH IT EXISTS;" and that the paramount motive of the American Government, in annexing Texas, was twofold—First: To prevent the abolition of Slavery within its limits, and, Second: To render Slavery more secure and more powerful within the slaveholding States of the Union. Slavery was thus taken under the special care and protection of the Federal Government. It was no longer to be left as a State institution, to be controlled exclusively by the States themselves; it was to be defended by the General Government, not only against invasion or insurrection of armed enemies, but against

the moral sentiment of humanity and the natural development of population and material power.

This was the whole current of our national history suddenly and unconsciously reversed. The General Government, abandoning the position it had always held, declared its purpose to protect and perpetuate what the great founders of the Republic had regarded as an evil—as at variance with the principles on which our institutions were based, and as a source of weakness, social and political, to the communities in which it existed. At the time of the Revolution Slavery existed in all the Colonies; but neither then, nor for half a century afterward, had it been an element of political strife, for there was no difference of opinion or of policy in regard to it. The tendency of affairs had been toward emancipation. Half the original thirteen States had taken measures at an early day to free themselves from the blighting influence and the reproach of Slavery. Virginia and North Carolina had anticipated the Continental Congress of 1774, in checking the increase of their Slave population by prohibiting the Slave trade at any of their ports. SENTIMENTS OF THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION CONCERNING SLAVERY

The Constitution, conferring upon Congress full power to prevent the increase of Slavery by prohibiting the Slave trade, out of regard for existing interests and vested rights, postponed the exercise of that power over the States then existing until the year 1808; leaving Congress free to exercise it over new States and over the Territories of the United States by prohibiting the migration or importation of slaves into them, without any restriction except such as its own discretion might supply. Congress promptly availed itself of this permission by confirming that great Ordinance of the Confederation by which it was ordained and decreed that all the territory then belonging to the United States should be forever free. Four new States were formed out of territory lying south of the Ohio river, and admitted into the Union previous to 1820; but the territory from which they were formed had belonged to States in which Slavery existed at the time of their formation; and in ceding it to the General Government, or in assenting to the formation of new States within it, the old States to which it belonged had inserted a proviso against any regulation of Congress that should tend to the emancipation of slaves. Congress was thus prevented from prohibiting Slavery in these new States by the action of the old States out of which they had been formed. But as soon as the constitutional limitation upon its power over the States then existing had expired, Congress prohibited by fearful penalties the addition by importation of a single slave to the numbers already in the country.

The framers of the Constitution, although the historical record of their opinions proves that they were earnest and undivided in their dislike of Slavery, and in their conviction that it was hostile to its nature and its influences to Republican Freedom, after taking these steps to prevent its increase, did not interfere with it further in the States where it then existed. Those States were separate communities, jealous of their sovereignty, and unwilling to enter into any league which should trench, in the least degree, upon their own control over their own affairs. This sentiment the framers of the Constitution were compelled to respect, and they accordingly left Slavery, as they left all other local interests, to the control of the several States. But no one who reads with care the debates and the recorded opinions of that age, can doubt that the ultimate removal of Slavery was desired by the people of the whole country, and that Congress had been empowered to prevent its increase, with a view to its gradual and ultimate extinction. Nor did the period of emancipation seem remote. Slave labor, employed as it was in agriculture, was less profitable than the free labor which was pouring in to take its place. And even in the States where this consideration did not prevail, other influences tended to the same result. The spirit of liberty was then young, generous, and strong. The men of the nation had made sacrifices and waged battles for the vindication of their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and it was not possible for them to sit down in the quiet enjoyment of blessings thus achieved, without feeling the injustice as well as the inconvenience of holding great numbers of their fellow-men in bondage. In all the States, therefore, there existed a strong tendency toward emancipation. The removal of so great an evil was felt to be a worthy object of ambition by the best and most sagacious statesmen of that age; and Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and all the great leaders and representatives of public opinion, were active and earnest in devising measures by which it could be accomplished.

But the great change produced in the industry of the Southern States, in the early part of the present century, by the increased culture of cotton, the introduction of new inventions to prepare it for use, and its growing importance to the commerce of the country and the labor of the world, by making slave labor more profitable than it had ever before been, checked this tendency toward emancipation and soon put an end to it altogether. As the demand for cotton increased, the interests of the cotton-growing States became more and more connected with Slavery; the spirit of Freedom gradually gave way before the spirit of gain; the sentiments and the language of the Southern States became changed; and all attempts at emancipation began to be regarded, and resisted as assaults upon the rights and the interests of the slaveholding section of the Union. For many years, however, this change did not affect the political relations of the subject. States, both free and slaveholding, were successively added to the Confederacy without exciting the fears of either section. Vermont came into the Union in 1791 with a Constitution, excluding Slavery. Kentucky, formed out of Virginia, was admitted in 1792; Tennessee in 1796; Mississippi in 1817, and Alabama in 1819—all Slave States, and having Slavery established in them at the time of their formation. On the other hand, Ohio was admitted in 1803, Indiana in 1816, and Illinois in 1818, having formed State Governments under acts of Congress which made it a fundamental condition that their Constitutions should contain nothing repugnant to the ordinance of 1787—or, in other words, that Slavery should be prohibited within their limits forever. In all these occurrences, as in the admission of Louisiana in 1812, there had been no contest between Freedom and Slavery, for it had not been generally felt that the interests of either were seriously involved.

#### THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

The first contest concerning the admission of a new State, which turned upon the question of Slavery, occurred in 1819, when Missouri, formed out of territory purchased from France in 1803, applied to Congress for admission to the Union as a slaveholding State. The application was strenuously resisted by the people of the Free States. It was everywhere felt that the decision involved consequences of the last importance to the welfare of the country, and that, if the progress of Slavery was ever to be arrested, that was the time to arrest it. The slaveholding interest demanded its admission as a right, and denied the power of Congress to impose conditions upon new States applying to be admitted into the Confederacy. The power rested with the Free States, and Missouri was denied admission. But the subject was reviewed. The slaveholding interest, with characteristic and timely sagacity, abated something of its pretensions and settled the controversy on the basis of compromise.

Missouri was admitted into the Union, by an act bearing date March 6, 1820, in which it was also declared that "in all that Territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36 deg. 30 min. of north latitude, not included within the limits of the State of Missouri, SLAVERY AND INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, SHALL BE, AND IS HEREBY FOREVER PROHIBITED." In each House of Congress a majority of the Members from slaveholding States voted in favor of this bill with this provision, thus declaring and exercising by their votes the constitutional power of Congress to prohibit Slavery even in territories where it had been permitted by the law of France at the date of their cession to the United States. A new Slave State, Arkansas, formed out of that portion of this territory lying south of 36 deg. 30 min., to which the prohibition was not extended, was admitted to the Union in 1836. Two Slave States thus came into the Confederacy by virtue of this arrangement; while Freedom gained nothing by it but the prohibition of Slavery from a vast region which Freedom had made no attempt to penetrate.

Thus ended the first great contest of Freedom and Slavery for position and power in the General Government. The slaveholding interest had achieved a virtual victory. It secured all the immediate results for which it struggled, it acquired the power of offsetting in the Federal Senate two of the Free States of the Confederacy, and the time could not be foreseen when, in the fulfillment of its compact, it would yield any positive and practical advantage to the interests of Freedom. Neither then, nor for many years thereafter, did any statesman dream that, when the period should arrive, the slaveholding interest would trample on its bond and fling its faith to the winds.

A quarter of a century elapsed before the annexation of Texas. Slavery had been active, meantime, in fastening its hold upon the Government, in binding political parties to its chariot, and in seeking in Congress to stifle the right of petition, and to crush all freedom of speech and of the press. In every slaveholding State, none but slaveholders, or those whose interests are identified with Slavery, were admitted to fill any office, or exercise any authority, civil or political. Free whites, not slaveholders, in their presence, or in the midst of their society, were reduced to a vassalage little less degrading than that of the slaves themselves. Even at this day, although the white population of the slaveholding States is more than six millions, of whom but 347,525, or less than one-seventeenth, are the owners of slaves, none but a slaveholder, or one who will act with exclusive reference to Slavery, is ever allowed to represent the State in any National Convention, in either branch of Congress, or in any high position of civil trust and political power. The slaveholding class, small as it is, is the governing class, and shapes legislation and guides all public action for the advancement of its own interests and the promotion of its own ends. During all that time, and from that time even to the present, all slaveholding delegates in National Conventions, upon whatever else they may differ, always concur in imposing upon the Convention assent to their requisitions in regard to Slavery, as the indispensable condition of their support. Holding thus in their hands power to decide the result of the election, and using that power undeviatingly and sternly for the extortion of their demands, they have always been able to control the nominations of both parties, and thus, whatever may be the issue, to secure a President who is sure to be the instrument of their behests. Thus has it come to pass that for twenty years we have never had a President who would appoint to the humblest office within his gift, in any section of the Union, any man known to hold opinions hostile to Slavery, or to be active in resisting its aggressions and usurpations of power. Men, the most upright and most respectable, in States where Slavery is only known by name, have been ineligible to the smallest trust—have been held unfit to distribute letters from the Federal post-office to their neighbors, or trim the lamps of a light-house upon the remotest point of our extended coast. Millions of our citizens have been thus disfranchised for their opinions concerning Slavery, and the vast patronage of the General Government has been systematically wielded in its service and for the promotion of its designs.

It was by such a discipline, and under such influences, that the Government and the country were prepared for the second great stride of Slavery toward new dominion, and for the avowal of motives by which it was attended.

#### ANNEXATION OF TEXAS AND THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

Texas was admitted into the Union on the 29th of December, 1845—with a constitution forbidding the abolition of Slavery, and a stipulation that four more States should become members of the Confederacy, whenever they might be formed within her limits, and with or without Slavery, as their inhabitants might decide. The General Government thus made virtual provision for the addition of five new Slave States to the Union—practically securing to the slaveholding interest ten additional members in the Senate—representing States, it might be, with less than 1,000,000 inhabitants, and outvoting five of the old States with an aggregate population of 11,000,000. The corrupt and tyrannical Kings of England, when votes were needed in the House of Lords to sustain them against the people, created Peers as the emergency required. Is there in this anything in more flagrant contradiction to the principles of Republican Freedom, or more dangerous to the public liberties, than in the system practiced by the slaveholding interest represented in the General Government?

But a third opportunity was close at hand, and Slavery made a third struggle for the extension of its domain and the enlargement of its power.

The annexation of Texas involved us in war with Mexico. The war was waged on our part with vigor, skill, and success. It resulted in the cession to the United States of New Mexico, California, and Deseret, vast territories over which was extended by Mexican law a prohibition of Slavery. The slaveholders demanded access to them all—resisted the admission of California and New Mexico, which the energy of freemen, outstripping in its activity the Government and even the slaveholding interest, had already converted into Free States, and treasonably menaced Congress and the Union with overthrow if its demands were not conceded. The free spirit of the country was roused to indignation by these pretensions, and for a time the whole nation rocked to the tempest which they had created. Untoward events aided the wrong. The death of the President threw the whole power of the Administration into timid and faithless hands. Party resentments and party ambitions interposed against the right. Great men, leaders of the people, from whom in better days the people had learned lessons of principle and patriotism, yielded to the howlings of the storm and sought shelter, in submission, from its rage. The slaveholding interest was again victorious. California, with her free constitution, was indeed admitted to the Union; but New Mexico, with her constitution forbidding Slavery within her borders, was denied admission and remanded to the condition of a Territory; and while Congress refused to enact a positive prohibition of Slavery in the Territories of New Mexico and Deseret, it was provided that, when they should apply for admission as States, they should come in with or without Slavery, as their inhabitants might decide. Additional concessions were made to the Slave Power; the General Government assumed the recapture of

fugitive slaves, and passed laws for the accomplishment of that end, subversive at once of State sovereignty, and of the established safeguards of civil freedom. Then the country again had rest. Weated with its efforts, or content with their success, the slaveholding interest proclaimed a truce.

When Franklin Pierce, on the 4th of March, 1853, became President of the United States, no controversy growing out of Slavery was agitating the country. Established laws, some of them enacted with unusual solemnity and under circumstances which made them of more than ordinary obligation, had fixed the character of all the States, and ended the contest concerning the Territories. Sixteen States were Free States, and fifteen States were Slave States. By the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Slavery was forever prohibited from all the Louisiana Territory lying north of the line of 36 deg. 30 min.; while over that Territory lying south of that line, and over the Territories of New Mexico and Deseret, no such prohibition had been extended. The whole country reposed upon this arrangement. All sections and all interests, whether approving it or not, seemed to acquiesce in its terms. The slaveholding interest, through all its organs, and especially through the General Government, proclaimed that this was a final and irrevocable adjustment of the struggle between Freedom and Slavery for political power—that it had been effected by mutual concessions and in the spirit of compromise—and that it should be as enduring as the Union and as sacred as the Constitution itself. Both political parties gave their sanction in their National Conventions—the whole country assented to its validity, and President Pierce, in his first official message to Congress, pledged himself to use all the power of his position to prevent it from being disturbed.

But all these protestations proved delusive, and the acquiescence and contentment which they produced afforded the opportunity not only for new aggressions on the part of Slavery, but for the repudiation of engagements into which its agents had solemnly entered. Less than a year had elapsed before these pledges were broken, and the advantages which they secured to Freedom withdrawn by the slaveholding power.

#### REPEAL OF THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

In the course of time and the natural progress of population, that portion of the Louisiana Territory, lying west of the Mississippi River and north of the line of 36 deg. 30 min., came to be desired for occupation; and on the 24th of May, 1854, an act was passed erecting upon it the two Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, and organizing governments for them both. From this whole region the slaveholding interest thirty-four years before had agreed that "Slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crime, should be forever prohibited," and had received, as the price of this agreement, the admission of Missouri, and subsequently the admission of Arkansas, into the Union. By the Kansas and Nebraska bill, this prohibition was declared to be "inoperative and void," and the intent and meaning of the bill was further declared to be, "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." Thus, without a single petition for such action from any quarter of the Union, but against the earnest remonstrances of thousands of our citizens—against the settled and profound convictions of the great body of the people in every portion of the country, and in wanton disregard of the obligations of justice and of good faith, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was repealed, and the seal which had guaranteed Freedom to that vast Territory which the United States had purchased from France was snatched from the bond. Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Deseret, and the new State acquired from Texas north of 36 deg. 30 min., by compact, were all opened up to Slavery, and those who might first become the inhabitants thereof were authorized to make laws for its establishment and perpetuation.

#### THE INVASION OF KANSAS AND ACTION OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

Nor did the slaveholding interest stop here in its crusade of injustice and of wrong. The first election of members for the Territorial Legislature of Kansas was fixed for the 30th of March, 1855, and the law of Congress prescribed that at that election none but "actual residents of the Territory" should be allowed to vote. Yet, to prevent people of the Territory themselves from exercising the right to prohibit Slavery, which the Act of Congress had conferred upon them, the slaveholding interest sent armed bands of men from the neighboring State of Missouri, who entered the Territory on the day of election, took possession of the polls, excluded the legal voters, and proceeded themselves to elect members of the Legislature without the slightest regard to the qualifications prescribed by law. The Judges of Election appointed under the authority of the Administration at Washington aided and abetted in the perpetration of these outrages upon the rights of the people of Kansas, and the President of the United States removed from office the Governor whom he had himself appointed, but who refused to acknowledge the Legislature which the slaveholding invaders from Missouri had thus imposed upon the Territory.

That Legislature met on the 2d of July, 1855. Its first act was to exclude those members, duly elected, who would not consent to the enactment of laws for the admission of Slavery into the Territory. Having thus silenced all opposition to its behests, the Legislature proceeded to the enactment of laws for the government of Kansas upon the subject of Slavery. The laws of Missouri in regard to it were first extended over the Territory. It was then enacted that every person who should raise an insurrection or rebellion of negroes in the Territory; every person who should entice away a slave with intent to procure his freedom; every person who should aid or assist in so enticing away a slave within the Territory; and every person who should entice or carry away a slave from any other State or Territory of the Union, and bring him within the Territory of Kansas, with the intent to effect or procure his freedom, upon the conviction thereof should suffer DEATH. It was further enacted that if any person should write, print or publish any book, paper, argument, opinion, advice or innuendo, calculated to produce a disorderly, dangerous or rebellious disaffection among the slaves in the Territory, or to induce them to escape from their masters, he should be deemed guilty of a FELONY, and be punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term not less than FIVE YEARS; and that if any free person, by speaking or writing, should assert or maintain that persons have not the right to hold slaves in that Territory; or should introduce or circulate any book, paper, pamphlet or circular containing any such denial of the right of persons to hold slaves in that Territory—he should be deemed guilty of felony, and be punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term not less than two years. It was still further enacted by the same Legislature that every free white male citizen of the United States, and inhabitant of the Territory, who should pay a tax of one dollar and take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, the act organizing the Territory of Kansas, the Territorial laws, and the act for the recapture of fugitive slaves, should be entitled to vote at any election in said Territory—thus making citizens of Missouri or of any other State legal voters in Kansas, upon their presentation at the polls, upon taking the oath prescribed, and upon payment of one dollar—in direct violation of the spirit of the act of Congress,