

Diary Entries

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1854

The Anti-Slavery Question this year absorbed all others. Stephen A. Douglas had introduced his famous resolution for the organization of the rich, virgin Territory of the far West, coveted equally by Slavery and freedom--Although by Congressional acts it had like the Platt purchase been consecrated to freedom:- by the conditions of this act which were resisted by the Northern & Southern liberty loving members to the last; it was again offered a prize to the winning party in the race of freedom or Slavery[.] To the Sections in, and of itself, its attractions were equally inviting.

Upon the arena both equally sanguine entered;- freedom to contest by ballots[,] slavery by bullets. Lovers of freedom sought it as an inviting home for a rising family, giving promise in its deep, dark rich soil & genial climate, and its smooth prairie surface so accessible to the plough of an easy, early harvest of blessings. It required but to pass into the lands open for settlement to be satisfied. The nearby lands were soon taken. Tents, log cabins & ploughed fields were *[text stricken through]* startling proofs that the settlers honest purpose to make a home for himself and family was the ruling *[text stricken through]* motive in coming to Kansas--and that the question of voting would take care of itself at the polls--

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3 Nov[.] *[text stricken through]* 1854

The election for Territorial representative in Congress was held in *[text stricken through]*. The honest settlers who came to make Kansas there home, put *[text stricken through]* the man of their choice in nomination. All *[text stricken through]* started to the Polls, *[text stricken through]* to cast their ballots as in the past. But before they had reached the voting precincts, many were made acquainted with the southern construction put upon the new doctrine, of Squatter Sovereignty. From Osawatomie a [MS. illegible] & a number of Settlers on their way to the polls, met one hundred & fifty men mounted, armed, & officered, having voted at the Dutch Henry Crossing early in the morning, where they had camped for the night & were now on their way back to Missouri, via Paola where they cast their ballots in the afternoon--

Similar methods at other places in the Territory, caused Geo[.] W[.] Whitfield to *[text stricken through]* go to Congress as the first Territorial Delegate--

[text stricken through]

The true inwardness of the Southern method began now to appear.

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In 1855 a territorial Legislature was elected, many of whom resided in Mo. The first protest against those fraudulent votes that reached Gov[.] Reeder was borne by Spencer[']s father R[.] Brown from Osawatomie[.] A majority of this body being in favor of *[text stricken through]* Slavery the infamous Code called the "Bogus Laws" was framed at the Shawnee Mission, by these infamous *[text stricken through]* body--

Subsequently I saw it *[text stricken through]* the ["]Bogus Code" publicly burned in the streets of Lawrence at the sitting of the free state Legislature--

But to rid the Territory of the resultant evils of these spurious Laws was a work of much time and patience--

Counties & Towns had been officered, Indictments against leading citizens had been found for political offences--and arrests were made. To worry annoy & discourage the people, seemed to be the main business of the men in power--

The father, John Brown, & others in Osawatimie, were indicted for expressing their views in a meeting of settlers against the payment of Taxes laid by & under these Bogus Laws--

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1855

Early in April of this the family removed to Kansas---and entered upon the new Western life little thinking of the tragic & bloody & exciting scenes of the border life--

During the first and Second things went in the main smoothly on, Missouri having without hindrance lent her Delegate to the Nations Congress--was content and happy in reaping the rich harvest of trade from the incoming Emigration--And was rich indeed--Their Boats[,] Stages, liveries, Hotels, Stores & teamsters were Taxed to their utmost capacity, and often at exorbitant prices, to meet the demand. The new Comers were well supplied with money--Horses, mules, oxen[,] wagons [*text stricken through*] farming utensils[,] furniture & provisions were in great and constant demand.

Nothing in way of eatables could be had from the soil until late in the second year--For all these, the Settlers must look to Missourians--the intercourse & interest was of mutual concern, and until the politicians sewed the seed of discord, harmony & good feeling prevailed. The settlers were a law unto themselves: All question of disputed claims being adjusted by meetings of the squatters-- [*text stricken through*]

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1855

In the fall of this year serious differences on the great national question occurred in the neighborhood of Lawrence--resulting in violence[,] lawlessness & death[,] Coleman murdering Dow[.] Raiding parties from Mo appearing often upon the scene to the number of 1500 in Lawrence--and a general apprehension of the coming storm oppressed the minds of all thoughtful men--Many of the leading pro slavery element went to Washington to secure official positions in the territory, & to keep secure its strong hold upon the dominant political party--

On the other hand the [*text stricken through*] liberty loving portion despairing of protection in their Kansas rights from Govt, sought such pecuniary aid East & they could command, and the [*text stricken through*] addition of numbers in sympathy with them in the great coming struggle--Hence every family settled upon a new claim was deemed a valuable acquisition of [MS. illegible][.] Any question of defence other than this was quite foreign to the minds of the masses of [*text stricken through*] the pioneers of Kansas--

About this time the Southern Press put forth its views & that of its party, upon the weapons to be employed [*text stricken through*] by the antislavery party in the contest which had been [*text stricken through*] begun in fraud in Whitfield's election and carried to the shedding of blood near Lawrence. The settlers must go back to their puritanical antecedents, and take the Bible for their defence--Thus it stood, shot gun on one side--the Bible on the other as arranged by the proslavery party--