ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR ROBINSON.

[The following address was delivered by ex-Governor Charles Robinson, at the annual meeting, Jan. 18, 1881, on retiring from the office of President of the Society.]

Gentlemen of the Historical Society: In compliance with a suggestion of the Board of Directors, and a request of the Secretary, that the President should address the Society, at the expiration of his term of office, on some subject appropriate to the occasion, I appear before you with such preparation as I have been able to make in the midst of the daily cares and duties incident to the life of a Kansas farmer.

The purpose of the Society over whose deliberations it has been my privilege to preside, and in which every citizen should feel a deep interest, is not so much to write history, as to gather the materials for the future historian. The time for writing the true history of Kansas has not yet arrived, and will not arrive till the historian shall be so far removed from the actors and passions of the hour as to be able to calmly survey the whole field, and clearly discern, not only events, but causes and effects as well. Distance lends enchantment to a view, and clearness to the vision of the historian. A corporal might narrate the exploits of his foraging squad with accuracy, but would be a poor historian of his company. The part he played with his squad would be more important to him than all the other exploits of his company, however brilliant, and in fact prevent him from witnessing what his comrades might achieve. The colonel of a regiment might narrate with great fidelity the exploits of his regiment of which he was an eye-witness, and in which he was wholly absorbed, but he would be a very poor historian of the entire brigade. A general of a brigade or division might be well qualified to furnish facts connected with his immediate command, but because his mind would be exclusively occupied with his own duties, he would be a poor historian of other brigades or divisions, or of the whole army. So the general-in-chief could tell accurately, if he would, perhaps, what movements he had ordered and had been made by his direction, but before a true history of the war could be written, the powers behind the general must be reviewed—the War Secretary, the Commander-in-Chief of all the forces, the Congress that directs the commander, and the people who make Congress, with the influences and motives that control them—all must be taken into the account.

It is evident the actors in a struggle are unfitted to be the historians of that struggle, and this unfitness extends to all sympathizers and partisans.

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Should an actor attempt to write history, it would necessarily result in magnifying the part he had acted or witnessed, and the disparagement of all others, while a sympathizer or partisan would be incapable of treating all the actors with impartiality. The poorest of all historians is he who selects his own hero, and makes all events revolve about him, as the planets around the sun. Such a person may write tolerable romance or fiction, founded on fact, but history, never.

As the causes that led to the conflict in Kansas have been operative for a generation at least, and the people of the entire Nation were enlisted on one side or the other, and as one result was the war of the Rebellion and the emancipation of 4,000,000 of slaves, and as the status of the ex-slave is not yet well defined, and the war has to be refought with unabated vigor and bitterness once in every four years, the time for the true history of Kansas to be written is still far in the future; but not so of the time for collection of materials for that history — that time is the present. Every private’s, corporal’s, colonel’s and general’s statement should be written out in detail for future use, and preserved by our worthy Secretary. Every fact is important. It is impossible to specify definitely and absolutely the particular acts and influences that turned the scales in favor of a free State, and all should be recorded. It is still an open question what acts, what men and what influences contributed most to this result. Indeed, so extensive was this conflict, involving the entire Nation, including the Federal and State Governments, that it is difficult to decide whether the agencies and influences inside the Territory were the more potent in settling the question, or those outside. Both were indispensable, as neither could have succeeded without the aid of the other.

TERRITORIAL GOVERNORS.

Perhaps I cannot on this occasion better occupy the brief hour allotted me than to give some recollections and impressions of our Territorial Governors as they occur to me. I shall not attempt a biography of each, or a full account of their transactions, but confine myself chiefly to such acts as had a bearing upon the questions in issue, and with which I was more or less cognizant. These Governors were appointed by the Government at Washington, which was under the control of the slave interest, and the inference was legitimate that they would see, as far as possible, that the interests of slavery should be protected, and as I held an appointment from an organization in the East, with both written and verbal instructions to see that the interests of freedom should suffer no detriment, it was made my duty to scan closely every person and agency, and especially every official, coming into the Territory, and it is a few of the facts, impressions and conclusions resulting from this scrutiny that I propose to give.

GOVERNOR REEDER.

Kansas Territory was opened to settlement May 30, 1854, and Andrew H. Reeder, the first Governor, reached the Territory early in October following.
As the organization of the Territory was placed by the organic act largely in his hands, both parties awaited his arrival with intense interest. The Free-State men had everything to fear, and their opponents were full of confidence. Both parties were eager to learn the antecedents, character and inclination of the new Governor. It soon became apparent to the settlers that their Governor was a man of sterling character, and one who was more of a lawyer and statesman than partisan. This discovery gave great hope to one party, and corresponding despondency to the other. The party of Freedom only asked for a clear field and a fair fight, and this they believed their Governor would give them. The other party was for slavery by fair means or foul, and wanted a partisan rather than a lawyer or statesman for Governor.

Soon after his arrival, the Governor commenced the work of organizing the Territory, and made a visit to the settlements in that interest. He was not long in discovering that a purpose existed in Missouri to make Kansas a slave State at all hazards, and he took every precaution in his power to secure a fair election of Territorial Delegate. His proclamation for the Delegate election in November was so guarded as to give offense to the people of Missouri and the Pro-Slavery party, and at a meeting held in Leavenworth, November 15, 1854, he was most bitterly denounced, and a committee appointed, composed partly of citizens of Missouri, to wait on him and make certain demands. This meeting, being held immediately after his election proclamation, was generally attributed to the fact that the proclamation contained a provision for contesting elections, illegally held, before him, and did not provide for an election for a Legislature. The Slavery party was desirous of an early election for a Legislature, and wanted no power of review of their conduct at the polls by such a Governor as Reeder.

As no census was taken previous to the election of Delegate, it was never contested, although manifestly carried by an incursion of Missourians, yet no blame was cast upon the Governor by the bona fide settlers. Early in 1855, a census was taken, preparatory to an election for the Legislature. The judges of the election and all the arrangements were equitable, and, under ordinary circumstances, would have resulted in a fair election by the people; but an open invasion from Missouri swept away all barriers and carried the election by storm. This outrage was premeditated, open and deliberate. Previous to the election, at a meeting held at St. Joseph, Missouri, one of the speakers is reported in the Leavenworth Herald, a pro-slavery paper, as saying: “I tell you to mark every scoundrel among you that is the least tainted with free-soilism, or abolitionism, and exterminate him. Neither give nor take quarter from the d—d rascals. I propose to mark them in this house, and on the present occasion, so you may crush them out. To those having qualms of conscience, as to violating laws, State or National, the time has come when such impositions must be disregarded, as your lives and property are in danger, and I advise you, one and all, to enter every
election district in Kansas, in defiance of Reeder and his vile myrmidons, and vote at the point of the bowie-knife and revolver. Neither give nor take quarter, as our cause demands it. It is enough that the slaveholding interest wills it, from which there is no appeal. What right has Governor Reeder to rule Missourians in Kansas? His proclamation and prescribed oath must be disregarded; it is your interest to do so. Mind that slavery is established where it is not prohibited."

Gov. Reeder was not ignorant of the threats and purposes of the people of Missouri to deprive the people of the Territory of the right of self-government under the organic act, neither was he ignorant of the invasion. He resided on the border, at the Shawnee Mission, and could witness from his office window, as it were, the hordes as they marched to their infamous work. What should be done? The settlers demanded that the whole election should be set aside, and a new one ordered. It was no case for individual contests, but the election itself was a fraud and usurpation. The crisis had arrived. The decision of this case would seem to settle the fate of Slavery and Freedom in Kansas and the Nation. To doubt, to hesitate, was fatal. What was done? The members elected by this invading horde assembled at the executive office, and with threats and curses demanded their certificates. Word came to Lawrence that the Governor wanted a few trusty men to go to the Mission to stand by him, while he discharged his duty to the people. Some dozen of us promptly responded, and were ready to defend him with our lives, hoping and believing that the election would be set aside. But we were disappointed. When the Governor’s action became known, it was seen that certificates had been given to a majority of the invaders, and only a meager minority thrown out. This settled the question so far as the Governor could settle it. It was painfully evident that Reeder was not a Jackson. He was a good lawyer and statesman, but no man to take responsibility outside of prescribed forms. The case to all human probability was lost. The organic act left the people perfectly free, through their Legislature, to regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, and the slave men had the Legislature. With it slavery could be at once established, and the machinery set in motion, which should insure a constitution fastening slavery upon the State forever. One thing only remained to the Free-State cause, and that was to repudiate the action of the Governor, the Legislature, and the laws it might enact; and this repudiation commenced then and there, and spread till it involved the whole Territory. But if Gov. Reeder was lacking on this occasion, it was not for want of sympathy with the cause of the people. He had lived in the East an upright, peaceable and conservative life, and could not evidently comprehend the reckless disregard of law and right he found in the West. His eyes, however, were effectually opened from this time, and he took the first opportunity, or rather made an opportunity, to join the repudiators. He proceeded to Washington, and before the public, and with the President, most eloquently plead the cause of the people. The people of the country
heard him gladly, but the President, at length, turned the cold shoulder, and wanted his resignation. In his own testimony, before the Congressional committee, he says: "Early in May, I went to the President, and gave him, in the fullest manner, all the information which I had upon the subject, and endeavored to impress upon him the conviction which was upon my mind, that unless some decided course was taken, the actual settlers of the Territory would be subjected to most cruel persecution; that there was evidently a settled determination on the part of the border counties of Missouri—strong in men and means—to deprive them of the right of governing themselves, and regulating their own affairs. I stated to him, that the seizure of the polls at the two elections which had been held, together with the intermeddling and tyrannical spirit which pervaded the entire actions of our Missouri neighbors, concurred with all the information I had received to convince me that there was a settled determination, by intimidation and force, to subjugate the Territory entirely to their will, in defiance of the right of the majority and the principle of the organic law. I had learned some new facts since the grant of the certificates of election, which I also made known to him." With regard to resignation, he says: "I told the President promptly and decidedly that I would not resign the office; that two considerations forbade me to think of it; that, as things now stood, the executive office in my hands was the only means of protection for the people against the persecutions and oppressions which had been perpetrated, and would be continued, from the State of Missouri; that it would be base and dishonorable in me to betray and abandon them, and that no considerations of personal danger to myself would induce me to think of it; that, besides this consideration, the whole country had resounded with threats against myself in case I should return, and that a resignation of my office under such circumstances would be attributed to pusillanimity and cowardice."

All these were brave words, and characteristic of the man. But the President saved him the trouble of a resignation by a removal so soon as he found his Governor could not be used to further the cause of slavery in Kansas. Thenceforth ex-Governor Reeder was found foremost among the repudiators, and owing to his high character and standing before the country was a tower of strength to the cause of free Kansas. His name was put forward on all suitable occasions, such as Senator, under the Topeka constitution, candidate for Congress, &c. But it is not my purpose to follow him in his unofficial career, which is well remembered. It is sufficient to say that the name of Andrew H. Reeder finds a warm place in the hearts of the early settlers, and the historian will give him honorable mention.

GOVERNOR SHANNON.

The next Governor in order was Wilson Shannon, of Ohio. He too was an able lawyer and statesman, with large political experience, but he was also a faithful partisan. The first step had been taken. The Legislature had been elected, organized, and indorsed by the authorities at Washington,
but repudiated by the Free-State men of the Territory. The next step was
to make the people submit to and recognize the usurpation as the gov-
ernment of Kansas. This was the work in hand, and the task he undertook to
perform. His duty, from his standpoint, was plain. He had simply to see
that the laws were duly enforced. To him all repudiators were rebels, to be
brought into subjection to the government. He had not learned that a hand-
ful of men in the right could successfully baffle and thwart the purposes of a
powerful government. He was backed by the federal executive with its
army and navy, while the rebels were backed by the moral sentiment of the
Nation. The Governor had the law for the pound of flesh, but how to get
the flesh without drawing blood was the problem to be solved. Such was
the excitement throughout the country that the spilling of much blood was
exceedingly dangerous, and could not be indulged in without just provoc-
tion. The Governor, residing on the border, mingled but little with the peo-
ple, and associated chiefly with the pro-slavery men and residents of Missouri.
The parties remained passively watching each other's movements till the fall of 1855, when Sheriff Jones called upon the Governor for the militia to put
down the rebels. Without stopping to investigate the case, the Governor re-
sponded, and the border hordes came rushing into the Territory for the de-
struction of Lawrence, the chief nest of the rebels. The little rebellion
against Jones was on the prairie several miles from Lawrence, and that town
was not a party to it. The rebels saw their advantage, and at once took their
position. They knew that the Governor could not attack them without a
good cause, and Lawrence had given no such cause. If the Governor could
afford to issue his proclamation and call out all Missouri to hunt a handful
of rebels scattered over the prairie, they could afford to let him, and proposed
to maintain an armed neutrality. They notified the Governor of their posi-
tion, and demanded protection from the lawless depredations of his militia.
Thus far he had been led as an officer and partisan, but he had now arrived
at a point where the man and lawyer must come to the front, and right hon-
erably did he respond. On the 28th of November he could write the Presi-
dent as follows: "Under existing circumstances, the importance of sustain-
ing the sheriff of Douglas county, and enabling him to execute his process, inde-
dependent of other considerations connected with the peace and good order of
society, will strike you at once; and to do this by the aid and assistance of
the citizens of this Territory is the great object to be accomplished. . . .
I believe this can be done." Accordingly he issued his proclamation, and let
loose the dogs of war. But while proceeding to Lawrence with his horde,
breathing out threatenings and slaughter, a great light shone upon him, and
he, trembling and astonished, said, What can I do? And he was told to
arise and go to the doomed city, and it should be told him what he must do.
On entering the city there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he re-
ceived his sight forthwith, and he began to preach a new doctrine, and on the
11th of December he could write to the same President as follows: "Large
numbers of men from that State [Missouri], in irregular bodies, rushed to the county of Douglas, and many of them enrolled themselves in the sheriff’s posse. . . . The excitement increased and spread, not only throughout this whole Territory, but was worked up to the utmost point of intensity in the whole of the upper part of Missouri. Armed men were seen rushing from all quarters toward Lawrence, some to defend the place, others to demolish it. . . . In this state of affairs I saw no way of avoiding a deadly conflict but to obtain the use of the U. S. forces at Fort Leavenworth,” &c. He found he had caught a wolf by the ears, and called lustily for Col. Sumner to help him let go. He tells the President his interview with the committee of the people of Lawrence “was entirely satisfactory, but to satisfy the forces that surrounded Lawrence, so that they could be induced to retire in order, was the great difficulty to be overcome.” To accomplish this the Governor disbanded his militia, or posse, or mob, and gave authority to the rebels at Lawrence to protect the town against them.

It is due to Gov. Shannon to say that, on his arrival at Lawrence, and learning the facts, he at once acknowledged his mistake, and was only solicitous to protect the town from his own forces. He had had enough of Kansas militia in enforcing bogus or other laws, and wrote the President that he was “satisfied that the only forces that can be used in this Territory in enforcing the laws, or preserving the peace, are those of the United States,” and he never afterwards called upon any other. The Pro-Slavery men were not pleased with his course, and Jones said he would never call upon him again, but issue a call himself for a posse, or take advantage of the absence of Gov. Shannon from the Territory, and call upon Secretary Woodson. It has been erroneously charged that Gov. Shannon was so much under the influence of liquor, he did not act himself on this occasion. This is a mistake. It is true he drank perhaps two or three glasses during the interview, but there were no visible effects from it. He, with his friends, dined at my house, and no person could detect the least impropriety.

Baffled in their raid ostensibly to arrest the Branson rescuers, the Slave party, during the winter of 1855–6, matured their plans for other game, which was no less than the Topeka Constitution and Government. Accordingly, when the courts were in session in the spring, the officials and leading actors in that movement were indicted, as well as hotels, bridges, printing presses, and the like. This was to be no boy’s play. A clean sweep was to be made of every vestige of the hated Free-State movement. But this time Governor Shannon was excused from taking the post of responsibility. After the indictments, the U. S. Marshal called his own posse and took command in person, with Sheriff Jones in company. But they found the town non-combative, and disposed to give no excuse to the United States officer to use force in executing his writs, although smarting under a most insulting message from the Marshal. Thus the forces must either leave the hated town as it stood, or destroy it under pretended legal authority, which
authority would be scouted as infamous throughout the civilized world. The work was done, but the victory was as before, with the Free-State party. They had gained in moral support a thousand fold more than the value of the property destroyed, and the Pro-Slavery party lost in proportion. Such work as this Governor Shannon was incapable of doing, and he was accordingly excused. He did send, however, a requisition to Missouri for one of the indicted traitors, but he took every precaution for his protection from the Marshal’s force, or other men thirsting for Free-State blood.

In the state of anarchy that followed upon the destruction of this property in Lawrence, under the protection of the Government of the United States, Governor Shannon had a most perplexing part to act. He could not indorse the position of the Free-State party in repudiating the bogus laws; neither could he sanction the lawless acts of the “Law-and-Order” party, so called. Hence he had the confidence of neither party, but the ill-will of both. He seemed willing, if not desirous, that the Free-State men should be made to yield to the bogus code; but he was too much of a man and lawyer to be a party to much that the slave power demanded. At length, when the Free-State men seemed to be gaining sympathy and friends in the country by this state of anarchy and lawlessness, he issued his proclamation, on the 4th of June, “commanding all persons belonging to military companies unauthorized by law to disperse, otherwise they would be dispersed by the United States troops.” He made a requisition upon Col. Sumner for a force sufficient to compel obedience to the proclamation. All aggressive parties outside the Territory were to be repulsed, and the property of all law-abiding citizens protected. While this proclamation was interpreted by the Pro-Slavery men, and perhaps the Governor, to apply only to Free-State military companies and aggressive parties reported to be coming from the North, Col. Sumner interpreted it to suit himself, and said he would send the Missourians over the line or to hell; and the proclamation, with Col. Sumner to enforce it, proved a very good document.

The Fourth of July, 1856, was approaching, when the Topeka Legislature was to meet, and it had been determined by the Pro-Slavery sanhedrin that this Legislature must be dispersed. This was a work not to the taste of Shannon. He was too good a lawyer and too much of a man to hurl a proclamation against the constitution of the United States. He therefore found it convenient to be absent, and the honor of that proclamation must rest upon Secretary Woodson.

Instead of allaying the disturbances, the dispersion of the Legislature was like adding petroleum to the flames of discord, and the lurid glare lit up the whole heavens from San Francisco to Boston. With each succeeding outrage upon the rights of free men, the rebels gathered strength and boldness, till they finally captured Titus within sight of the United States troops and menaced Lecompton. Shannon was appealed to in vain, by the Pro-Slavery men, to call out the militia once more, but on the contrary he went
to Lawrence with Major Sedgwick and made another treaty, and exchanged prisoners of war. In a speech on that occasion he said he wished to set himself right before the people of Lawrence; that he desired peace and harmony for the few days of his continuance in office, and concluded by saying: "The few days that I remain in office shall be devoted, so help me Heaven, in carrying out faithfully my part of the agreement in preserving order."

Immediately after this he sent for all the troops at the fort, to preserve the peace of the Territory. He was afterwards importuned to call out the militia, but persistently refused. At length he resigned, and left the field to Woodson, who at once declared the Territory in a state of insurrection, and called out the militia. Governor Shannon left the Territory, as did Reeder before him, in fear of assassination. He called on the United States officers for an escort, but was refused, and left as best he could. His unofficial life in Kansas endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. He was a most estimable citizen, and respected by all who knew him.

GOVERNOR GEARY.

The next Governor was John W. Geary, from Pennsylvania, who arrived in Kansas, September 9, 1856. He was a man of activity and dash, and had acquired some reputation for courage in connection with the Mexican war and vigilance committees in California. On his arrival he found the Territory at its worst. On assuming the executive authority after the departure of Shannon, Woodson had given loose reins to the Pro-Slavery men, and fire and sword did their work as never before. Atchison was commander of the border forces. He and Stringfellow collect a force at Little Santa Fe; Reid and White march upon and destroy Osawatomie; and Emory and his band have complete control at Leavenworth, where Phillips is killed and over one hundred citizens are sent down the river. There is no outlet for Free-State men, as all roads are blockaded, and men robbed and murdered at will. Also, an army is gathering in Missouri some 3,000 strong, to march upon Lawrence. Jefferson Davis writes to General Smith, in command at Fort Leavenworth, authorizing him to call upon the Governor for militia to suppress and crush the rebellion in Kansas. Many Free-State men were leaving or had left the Territory in fear or despair, and among them the commander of the Free-State forces. On his arrival Governor Geary wrote the President that "the town of Leavenworth is now in the hands of armed bodies of men, who, having been enrolled as militia, perpetrate outrages of the most atrocious character under the shadow of authority from the Territorial government. ... In isolated or country places no man's life is safe. The roads are filled with armed robbers, and murders for mere plunder are of daily occurrence. Almost every farm-house is deserted, and no traveler has the temerity to venture upon the highways without an escort." Afterwards, in describing the condition when he arrived, he said: "Desolation and ruin reigned on every hand; homes and firesides were deserted; the smoke of burning dwellings darkened the atmosphere; women and children, driven
from their habitations, wandered over the prairies and among the woodlands, or sought refuge and protection even among 'the Indian tribes.'

On the 14th of September, soon after his arrival, the Missouri army, 2,800 strong, arrived at Lawrence, threatening its destruction, as well as the destruction of every Free-State town. The question is, who saved the Free-State towns and men and cause at this crisis? As various answers have been given to this question, perhaps I shall be pardoned if on the present occasion I shall give in brief my answer. In the first place I will say, Kansas was not saved at this juncture by her own residents alone. The Free-State men were utterly powerless and incapable of contending with this force. What are these facts? The general condition of the Territory was as given above. Lawrence was defenseless, not more than 200 armed men being in the town. The commander of the Free-State forces left the Territory as this army marched into it, and as he left ordered all the best-armed men, with the cannon, out of the town and county to attack a force that had intercepted him. As I had been out of the prisoners' camp but four days, I was ignorant of the organization of our forces, and had no connection with it. Being free to go at will, I made it my business to thoroughly investigate the situation and watch every movement. The condition in Lawrence was one of complete demoralization. There was a skeleton organization, the remains of what had been the Free-State army, with the best arms and best-drilled men absent. Major Abbott was in command, and did all that any man could do under the circumstances, but I do not believe Lawrence could have withstood an attack in earnest by a formidable force, such as was gathered against it, fifteen minutes. It is said John Brown was in command, and saved the town. John Brown was present, but had no men with him or arms, and he had no command and gave no orders. I saw him almost constantly, as neither of us had any connection with any company, and could go as we pleased. He was as powerless as the rest. The men who went out to meet the scouting party from Franklin, were volunteers who happened to have Sharp's rifles. They went not in a body, but one or more at a time, apparently under command of no one. Most of them passed me as they went out.

The reconnoitering party halted when they met the Sharp's rifles, and at length returned to their command. John Brown said he knew of no reason why these 2,800 men did not attack Lawrence, unless these Sharp's rifle volunteers prevented them, and there was nothing at Lawrence to prevent them, as all who were present well know. Who, then, saved Lawrence? I answer, Governor Geary was the instrument that saved Lawrence, Topeka, and other Free-State towns, from destruction at that time. My reason for this answer, in addition to the defenseless condition of this town, is the word and action of the Governor. As these men were marching into the Territory, I met Gov. Geary, at Lawrence, and had a full and frank discussion of the situation. Each had known of the other by reputation in California, and the usual freedom and cordiality of old Californians was indulged. He assured
me that he knew all about this force, and it would be subject to his orders, and he would guarantee the safety of the town. When I told him these men cared but little for authority, and might attack the town in defiance of orders, he said he would exempt the forces at Lawrence from the operation of his proclamation (to disperse armed bodies of men) till he had sent this force home. He said he was going to Lecompton, where were Col. Cooke and his command, and he would return in time to meet the Missourians. I felt that his word was our only hope, and relied upon it implicitly. Accordingly, as this force approached, a messenger was sent to the Governor notifying him of the fact; and, when the reconnoitering party came in sight of the town, I dispatched another messenger, and reminded the Governor of his pledge and of the situation. He at once sent the whole force of United States troops, then with him, to Lawrence, where they arrived in the night and put an end to all anxiety. Governor Geary went to Franklin in the morning, and sent the Missourians home as he had promised. As evidence that they went by his instrumentality, I give the action of the leading men, as set forth in a series of resolutions, as follows:

Whereas, Under the proclamation of Acting-Governor Woodson, we have reached the town of Franklin, three miles from Lawrence, on our way to the latter place, in search of an organized band of murderers and robbers, said to be under the command of Lane, who have plundered and butchered large numbers of our fellow-citizens, with the intention of overpowering and driving that band from the Territory; and whereas, we have here met and conferred with Gov. Geary, who has arrived in the Territory since we were here called, and who has given us satisfactory evidence of his intention and power to execute the laws of the Territory, and called on us to dissolve our present organization, and to leave the preservation of the peace of the Territory to his hands; and whereas, Gov. Geary has assured us his intention to muster into service a portion of the militia of the Territory for the purpose of giving the strongest assurance of protection to its citizens: therefore,

Resolved, 1. That, relying upon the assurance of Gov. Geary to give protection to our peace, in the spirit of order-loving and law-abiding citizens we cordially conform to his wishes by dissolving our organization, and will disperse to our homes as speedily as the circumstances under which we are placed will admit of.

2. That the Governor be requested to organize and place in the field immediately one battalion (part mounted and part foot-men) of Kansas militia, and distribute them over the Territory in such a manner as will best protect the settlers in their homes, persons and property.

3. That, in view of the condition of things in southern Kansas, we respectfully recommend to the Governor that he station a company of one hundred mounted men at Potteratomi creek, in Franklin, Anderson, and Lykins counties, to give protection to the law-abiding citizens of that section of the country.

4. That we respectfully recommend Col. H. T. Titus (Colonel of the Douglas county militia) as commander of the Territorial militia now to be mustered into the service.

G. W. Clark,
Sam'l. J. Jones,
H. T. Titus, and others,
Committee.

A copy of the preamble and resolutions was ordered to be furnished to the Governor.
(Signed) D. R. Atchison, Chairman.
The question will be asked by the future historian, Why were not Secretary Woodson, Atchison, Reid and others permitted to go on as they had commenced until the Free-State men and cause had been entirely crushed out?—and why was Gov. Geary sent out with directions to call a halt in this nefarious business? I desire to call that historian's attention to a few facts which I think will throw some light upon these questions:

Early in May, 1856, the Congressional committee took testimony at Tecumseh, and on the same day, Mrs. Sherman, Mrs. Robinson and myself rode up to Topeka, where Mr. Howard and Mr. Sherman arrived in the evening. On our way up, James F. Legate, one of the grand jury, sitting at Lecompton, met us and disclosed the plan of the Pro-Slavery party. It was nothing less than to indict all men connected with the constitutional movement, as well as other men of influence in the Free-State party, with a view to a complete suppression of all opposition to a slave State. Sufficient was told to make it clear that a crisis was imminent, that would be decisive of the contest. There were laws on the bogus statute book that, if enforced, would send to the penitentiary every Free-State man in the Territory, as any man who had or should, "by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that persons have not the right to hold slaves in this Territory, or should introduce into this Territory, print, publish, write, circulate or cause to be introduced into this Territory, written, printed, published or circulated in this Territory, any book, paper, magazine, pamphlet or circular containing any denial of the right of persons to hold slaves in this Territory, such person shall be deemed guilty of felony, and punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term of not less than two years." That evening, (or night, rather,) in the Garvey House, William A. Howard, John Sherman, William Y. Roberts, Mrs. Sherman, Mrs. Robinson and myself discussed the report of Mr. Legate till morning. It was there decided, that with the bogus laws to base action upon, and the whole power of the Federal Government to enforce them, heroic treatment of the case would be required—that Kansas, unaided, must fall an easy prey to the slave power.

The decision was also that the State government should be put in running order before the sitting of the court in Shawnee county, and the Governors of the Northern States appealed to for its defense, and the whole North set on fire. For the threefold purpose of avoiding arrest till the Legislature could be called together, of forwarding the testimony taken by the Congressional Committee to Washington, and of notifying the Northern Governors and other influential persons of the crisis, I started East. The people of Missouri, however, being thoroughly posted of all plans and movements, cut my journey short at Lexington; but Mrs. Robinson, who was as well posted in all matters as myself, proceeded on, and visited Governor Chase, of Ohio, Amos A. Lawrence, and other leading citizens of the East. She also attended the State Convention of Illinois, where she met such men as Medill, Lovejoy, Lincoln, Arnold, Trumbull, Browning, and many other prominent
citizens of that State. The precipitate action in destroying the hotel and printing presses at Lawrence, as nuisances, without even a trial, and the arrest of such men as Judge Smith, Deitzler, Brown, Jenkins, and others, prevented any action by the State Legislature, but it added fuel to the fire started in the North. Ex-Governor Reeder, who escaped in disguise down the Missouri river, was at the State Convention in Illinois, and aroused the immense gathering to a frenzy of enthusiasm. Gov. Roberts, Reeder, Klotz, S. N. Wood, Emery, and others, took the stump in Pennsylvania and other States against Buchanan; the correspondents of the Eastern press from Kansas wrote column upon column, which furnished fuel to feed the entire press of the North; the treason prisoners expended much of their time in inditing letters from "Treason Camp, near Leeompton," to their friends and the press; while Thayer wrote, spoke and traveled night and day, and Lawrence, Webb, Williams, Hale, and all connected with the Emigrant Aid Association, were instant in season and out, and left no stone unturned to arouse the people. Contributions for the aid of emigration and the relief of Kansas were freely made, Gerrit Smith giving $1,000 a month, and such men as Wm. M. Evarts one-fifth of all their fortune. And last, but not least, Howard and Sherman made their report in Congress, which went into every hamlet in the North, and Congress itself became a manufactory of thunderbolts by such artisans as Seward, Sumner, and a host of others, and they were hurled with such force and skill as to shake the White House to its foundations, and Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall, and trembled lest the power of the Government should pass from the Democratic party, and Buchanan be defeated. The cry of "free soil, free speech and Fremont" became contagious, and emigrants turned back on the Missouri river from Kansas, organized into an army, and were marching through Iowa. It was under these circumstances that Geary was sent for and directed to hasten to Kansas, put on the brakes and reverse the engine, that the Democratic party might be saved from defeat in the approaching election in Pennsylvania. Here is where the salvation of Lawrence, on the 14th of September, 1856, is to be credited, and the historian will do well to look in the North and East for the heroes who achieved this victory, rather than exclusively in Kansas. As corroborative evidence that this battle was decided in the North and East, I will quote, for the benefit of the historian, a few extracts from a private letter from Amos A. Lawrence, dated September 16, 1856, and before he could have learned of the discharge of the prisoners or the result of the invasion. It will be remembered that at that time letters were, on an average, more than ten days in reaching Kansas from Washington or the Atlantic cities. The families of President Pierce and Mr. Lawrence were connected by marriage and on intimate social relations, and hence this information, at that time, was not only private, but somewhat confidential. But to the letter. He writes:

Boston, September 16, '56.

My Dear Sir: My brother has shown me a letter which he has received from Mr. Pierce, including copies of all the telegraphic communications sent up to the time of
writing his letter. These last do not contain much, but the letter does, and I have no
doubt that as far as you are concerned, and I hope all the other prisoners, the instruc-
tions are favorable. . . . We shall soon have news which will make the calling of
the Legislatures together inexpedient at this time. In fact, many of the leading Repub-
licans oppose it as impolitic. But the signatures for it are being increased in all quar-
ters; they will do no harm, and can be kept for another time. Judge Fletcher is
drawing up a paper to be signed by as many Governors as will—and probably nearly all
the Northern and Western ones will sign—a protest against the action of the Admin-
istration, and a demand for protection for the settlers. Gov. Gardner has just been in
here to say he will sign. . . . Very truly,

A. A. L.

From these, and other like considerations which time would fail to men-
tion, I conclude that while Kansas could not have been made a free State
without the presence, courage, endurance and heroism of the settlers, yet
without the moral, political and material support from outside the Territory
their courage and endurance would have been of no avail.

Gov. Geary called to his aid several companies of bona fide residents of
the Territory, one of them commanded by Capt. Samuel Walker, and the
war of extermination came to an end, but not so the contest for a slave or
free State. The scene only was changed, and it was now a game of politics
rather than of arms. The Slave-State men had in view a constitution of
their own that should establish slavery forever in the new State, while the
Free-State men, shut out from all fair elections under Territorial auspices,
adered to the Topeka constitution. The vital question was, Which Constitu-
tion shall be recognized by Congress and made a law of the land? Gov.
Geary was satisfied the Free-State men were largely in the majority, and was
desirous that the majority should rule. That an end might be put to this
conflict, he sent to the Governor under the Topeka constitution, and desired
an interview at his office. The interview was held in the attic of the log
 cabin now standing, with its stone addition, on the bank of the river, near
the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé station, at Lecompton. At that interview
Governor Geary was ready to favor an admission under the Topeka consti-
tution, and was ready to use his influence with the President and his party
in Congress. It was thought, if there could be a vacancy in the position of
Governor, that he or some other Democrat might be elected to fill it, the
Administration would more readily indorse it. Accordingly, the Topeka
Governor resigned, and went to Washington for the purpose of procuring
admission into the Union. He soon found that the Democratic party at
Washington had no sympathy for any such movement or for Gov. Geary.
Also, the Governor found opposition in his own ranks at home, and was glad
to flee from the Territory in the night to avoid assassination by members of
his own political party. Thus the end of his reign, and his departure from
the Territory, were as inglorious as those of his two predecessors.

ACTING GOVEROR STANTON.

The next acting Governor was Fred. P. Stanton, who arrived at Lawrence
April 24, 1857, where he met the citizens and made a speech. The com-
parative reign of quiet under Geary, and the discussion of Kansas affairs in
the Presidential canvass, had caused large accessions to the Free-State party, with but comparatively few recruits to the Slave-State men. Accordingly, Secretary Stanton’s threat to enforce the bogus law was received with derision, and the speech was most unfortunate. He was my guest at tea, with McLean, Horace White and others, and was there posted fully as to the impossibility of securing a fair election of delegates to the Constitutional Convention, soon to be held. He came to Kansas evidently determined to insist that the Free-State men should participate in that election, or forever after hold their peace. However, he also insisted that the constitution, the whole constitution, should be submitted to a vote of the people when made. In both cases he was disappointed. The Free-State men did not vote for delegates; neither was the constitution submitted to the people for ratification or rejection, by the convention. To his credit it will forever be said, that he called the Legislature, then Free-State, together for the purpose of submitting that instrument to a vote, and thus virtually ended the contest so far as the Lecompton constitution was concerned. This act of Acting-Governor Stanton, if it did not save Kansas from admission as a slave State, cut short the struggle, perhaps for years. For this act, he lost his official head, and gained a most honorable place in the history of Kansas.

GOVERNOR WALKER.

Gov. Robert J. Walker, although appointed Governor when Stanton was appointed Secretary, arrived at Leavenworth, May 25th, a month later than Stanton. He also came declaring the bogus laws must be enforced to the letter; but he promised that the people should be protected in fair elections. So profuse and strong were his declarations to this end, that the people took him at his word, and participated in the election of a Territorial Legislature held under his auspices. The frauds were repeated at Oxford and other precincts, enough to give the control of the Legislature to the Pro-Slavery party; but, to the lasting honor of Walker and Stanton, it is recorded that they threw out the fraudulent returns and gave the Legislature to the Free-State majority. This was another occasion when the Free-State men were powerless to save themselves, and were saved by others. This act, with Stanton's proclamation calling the Legislature together, will stand out in bold relief as the crowning acts of their administration; and these acts the future historian, to the latest time, will never fail to record.

Time fails to say more of these distinguished men. It is sufficient to say that they both espoused the cause of right and justice, although both were from slave States and pro-slavery, and both gained the lasting gratitude and esteem of the Free-State settlers in Kansas, as well as the hatred and curses of the Slave-State men. No higher encomium could Reeder, Geary and Walker receive from these men, than was given at a Pro-Slavery convention at Lecompton, December 9, 1857, in the following resolution:

"Resolved, That though a Reeder, a Geary and a Walker have sought to reduce and prostitute the Democracy to the unholy ends of the Abolitionists, yet we rejoice that
their careers have closed in Kansas in contempt and infamy to themselves, and without injury to the Democratic party."

The first information received in Kansas of Stanton's removal and Denver's appointment to succeed him, was a dispatch in the Missouri Democrat. On my way to Lecompton, I stopped at Mr. Stanton's residence, the log cabin formerly occupied by G. W. Clark, with this paper, and there found Gen. Denver, then Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Both he and Stanton seemed much surprised at the news. I took the liberty to say that if Stanton's work, for which he had been removed, was to be undone, and another attempt made to deprive the people of their rights, I should abandon conservative counsels, and join the most rabid agitators.

GOVERNOR DENVER.

Gen. Denver, after listening in silence some time, replied that he knew nothing of the truth of the report, but of one thing I might be assured, if he had been, or should be, appointed to succeed Secretary Stanton, he not only should not undo what he had done, but should carry out his policy and recommendations. It is enough to say of Secretary, and afterwards Governor, Denver, that he proved to be as good as his word, and the Territory under his administration prospered politically as well as materially. In the disturbances of southern Kansas, and in every position, he acted with impartiality, and gained the confidence and good-will of the bona fide residents of the Territory of all parties. He was succeeded by Gov. Medary, of Ohio, but as the contest was at an end, and Kansas was secured to freedom before his arrival, the part he acted is not important to this occasion.

—I have thus given a hasty review of our Territorial Governors during the critical period of our history from my standpoint, and from the best information in my possession. The struggle in Kansas was a succession of crises. No sooner was one passed, than another presented itself, and whoever writes the history of that struggle must take them all into the account. The fate of Kansas was not definitely and finally settled by a few deadly encounters, a few harangues, a few resolves, a few conventions, or a few elections, but it took them all combined to make a free State. Kansas was not saved alone by this man or that man, by this town or that town, but it took all the Free-State men and all the Free-State towns in Kansas, aided by the Free-State men of all the States as well, to succeed in establishing freedom where the Slavery men and Slave States, backed by the Federal Government, had determined to establish slavery. All honor, then, not only to every Free-State settler, however humble, and every sympathizer, however distant, but also to every Government official, who prized his manhood above office, and principle above party.