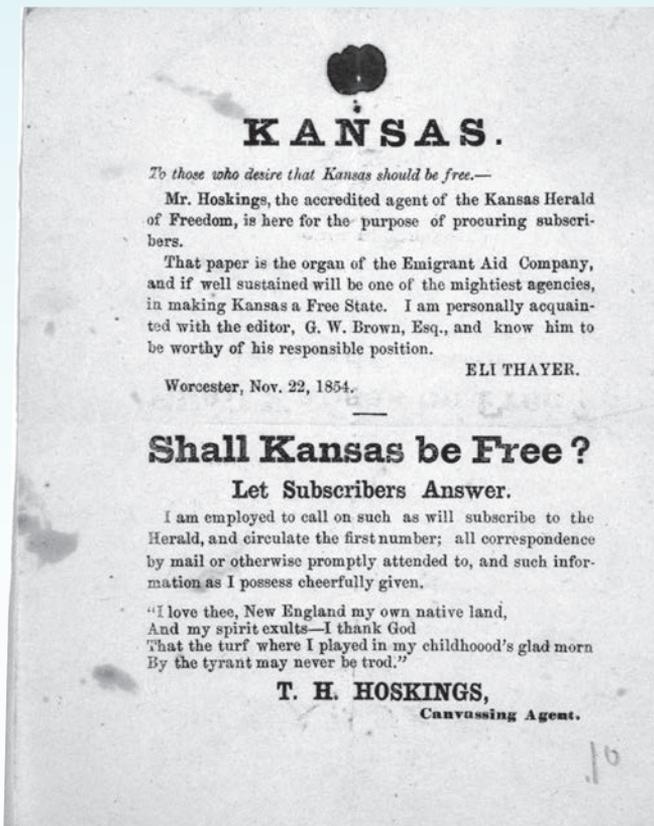


By the Kansas Historical Society

## Fighting Against Slavery in Kansas Territory

Many people came to Kansas Territory to fight against slavery. In New England, **emigrant aid societies** were formed. They organized groups of antislavery settlers to come to Kansas Territory. Many of these people were **abolitionists**. They believed that slavery was morally wrong and should be abolished. Abolitionists not only wanted to prevent Kansas from becoming a slave state, they wanted to end slavery everywhere.

Most people who came to Kansas Territory to fight against slavery were not abolitionists. Many wanted to stop the spread of slavery into the territories. These people were called **freestaters**. Some people felt that slavery gave the South an unfair economic advantage. Slave owners could make more money using slave labor to grow crops. Those who did not own slaves could not compete. Freestaters wanted to prevent this economic inequality in Kansas.



Violence would sometimes break out between antislavery and proslavery settlers. Tensions grew along the Kansas-Missouri border. Missouri was a slave state and many of its citizens wanted to keep antislavery settlers out of Kansas. "**Jayhawkers**" was the name given to antislavery fighters from Kansas. Jayhawkers fought against Missourians during border wars.

Many Northerners raised money and supplies for antislavery settlers in Kansas. Henry Ward Beecher was such a man. Beecher was a minister and a writer who worked to end slavery. Although he never lived in Kansas Territory, his followers founded the **Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony** in Wabaunsee County. Beecher, an abolitionist, raised money for rifles to arm the antislavery settlers in Kansas. Beecher's older sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was the author of the antislavery book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In 1856 Henry Ward Beecher wrote a small pamphlet called *Defence of Kansas*. He wrote against the spread of slavery into Kansas Territory and asked for money and support for the antislavery cause. What is presented here is an excerpt from the pamphlet.

## DEFENCE OF KANSAS

By Henry Ward Beecher

A battle is to be fought. If we are wise, it will be bloodless. . . . And let us know assuredly that civil war will not burst forth in Kansas without spreading. . . . But timidity and indifference will bring down blows there, which will not only echo in our houses . . . but will, by and by, lay the foundation for an armed struggle between the whole North and the South. . . .

Who, then, are these armed men, that already confront each other . . . how have they come into [Kansas] Territory, and what are their errands? On the one side are the representatives of

civilization' on the other, of barbarism. On the one side, stand men of Liberty, Christianity, industry, arts, and universal prosperity; on the other, are the waste and refuse materials of a worn-out Slave State population . . . the Free State men come hither with books, with newspapers, with free schools, . . . with churches, and the . . . institutions of Christian civilization.

The Slave State men come without books—without enough education to read, if they had them—without schools, or a wish for them. . . . they come . . . making free thought a sin, free speech a penitentiary offense, a free press punishable with death . . .

The men of the North . . . built towns, they found cities, they convert wilderness to a garden, and will transmit to coming generations an inheritance such as Old England and such as New England never saw.

. . . if the South inoculates the State with her leprosy, the plains of Kansas are fairer and richer today as a wilderness, than they ever will be again. For Slavery robs first the slave, and then the soil. It sucks the blood from everything it touches. . . .

The men of the north come upon the best, and the men of the South upon the worst, errand that ever engaged men. Peace, and light, and love, and hope, and joy, go with one-war, and blood, and cruelty, wasting and despair, go with the other. . . .

There was never so strong an appeal to public sympathy as that which is presented in the case of Kansas free settlers. . . .



Henry Ward Beecher

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