

APUS HISTORY / SUPPLEMENTAL READING / UNITS 4-5 (1800 to 1877)

Page 152.....	Marshall
Page 157.....	Jefferson
Page 177.....	Pinckney
Page 185.....	Non Property Suffrage
Page 187.....	Nullification
Page 189.....	Daniel Webster
Page 205.....	Wage Slave
Page 206.....	Factory Girl
Page 213.....	10 Hour Work Day
Page 217.....	Erie Canal
Page 218.....	World Economy
Page 233.....	Lucy Stone
Page 246.....	Former Slave
Page 247.....	Human Cattle
Page 256.....	Slave labor vs. Wage labor
Page 265.....	Lincoln on Abolition
Page 277.....	President Polk
Page 292.....	1850 Compromise and John Calhoun
Page 312.....	North Breathes Defiance
Page 317.....	Greely Hails a Martyr
Page 361.....	Black Corporal Demands Equal Pay
Page 369.....	Violence in Texas
Page 384.....	Black and White Legislatures

The Triumphs and Travails of the Jeffersonian Republic, 1800–1812

We have a perfect horror at everything like
connecting ourselves with the politics of Europe.

Thomas Jefferson, 1801

Prologue: Following Jefferson's controversial election to the presidency in 1800, Jeffersonians and Federalists alike contributed to the process of nation building. Jefferson's Federalist cousin, Supreme Court Justice John Marshall, handed down a series of Court decisions that significantly strengthened the powers of the federal government at the expense of the individual states. Jefferson himself swallowed some of his constitutional scruples to accomplish the boldest achievement of his presidency—the Louisiana Purchase—which at a stroke doubled the size of the United States and guaranteed American control of the Mississippi River and its crucial ocean port at New Orleans. Jefferson proved less successful in his increasingly desperate efforts to keep the United States out of the war then raging in Europe. Though sorely provoked by British impressment of American sailors, Jefferson consistently tried to avoid fighting. He resorted finally to a self-denying trade embargo as the price he was willing to pay for peace.

A. John Marshall Asserts the Supremacy of the Constitution

*Marshall Asserts the Supremacy of the Constitution (1803)**

No principle is more important to the system of constitutional democracy than the notion that the Constitution represents a higher level of law than that routinely enacted by legislatures. And no American jurist has been more instrumental in asserting that principle than the great Federalist justice John Marshall. Marshall also helped mightily to resolve the question—unclear in the early days of the republic—of where final authority to interpret the Constitution lay. In the following excerpt from his famous decision in the case of Marbury v. Madison, how does he trace the linkages between the Constitution and the concept of limited government?

*William Cranch, *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of the United States, 1801–1815* (Newark, N.Y.: The Lawyers' Co-operative Publishing Company, 1804), vol. 1, p. 137.

The question, whether an act, repugnant to the constitution, can become the law of the land, is a question deeply interesting to the United States; but, happily, not of an intricacy proportioned to its interest. It seems only necessary to recognize certain principles, supposed to have been long and well established, to decide it.

That the people have an original right to establish, for their future government, such principles, as, in their opinion, shall most conduce to their own happiness is the basis on which the whole American fabric has been erected. The exercise of this original right is a very great exertion; nor can it, nor ought it, to be frequently repeated. The principles, therefore, so established, are deemed fundamental. And as the authority from which they proceed is supreme, and can seldom act, they are designed to be permanent.

This original and supreme will organizes the government, and assigns to different departments their respective powers. It may either stop here, or establish certain limits not to be transcended by those departments.

The government of the United States is of the latter description. The powers of the legislature are defined and limited; and that those limits may not be mistaken, or forgotten, the constitution is written. To what purpose are powers limited, and to what purpose is that limitation committed to writing, if these limits may, at any time, be passed by those intended to be restrained? The distinction between a government with limited and unlimited powers is abolished, if those limits do not confine the persons on whom they are imposed, and if acts prohibited and acts allowed, are of equal obligation. It is a proposition too plain to be contested, that the constitution controls any legislative act repugnant to it; or, that the legislature may alter the constitution by an ordinary act.

Between these alternatives there is no middle ground. The constitution is either a superior paramount law, unchangeable by ordinary means, or it is on a level with ordinary legislative acts, and, like other acts, is alterable when the legislature shall please to alter it.

If the former part of the alternative be true, then a legislative act contrary to the constitution is not law: if the latter part be true, then written constitutions are absurd attempts, on the part of the people, to limit a power in its own nature illimitable.

Certainly all those who have framed written constitutions contemplate them as forming the fundamental and paramount law of the nation, and, consequently, the theory of every such government must be, that an act of the legislature, repugnant to the constitution, is void.

This theory is essentially attached to a written constitution, and, is consequently, to be considered, by this court, as one of the fundamental principles of our society. It is not therefore to be lost sight of in the further consideration of this subject. . . .

So if a law be in opposition to the constitution; if both the law and the constitution apply to a particular case, so that the court must either decide that case conformably to the law, disregarding the constitution; or conformably to the constitution, disregarding the law; the court must determine which of these conflicting rules governs the case. This is of the very essence of judicial duty.

If, then, the courts are to regard the constitution, and the constitution is superior to any ordinary act of the legislature, the constitution, and not such ordinary act, must govern the case to which they both apply.

Those, then, who controvert the principle that the constitution is to be considered, in court, as a paramount law, are reduced to the necessity of maintaining that courts must close their eyes on the constitution, and see only the law.

This doctrine would subvert the very foundation of all written constitutions. It would declare that an act which, according to the principles and theory of our government, is entirely void, is yet, in practice, completely obligatory. It would declare that if the legislature shall do what is expressly forbidden, such act, notwithstanding the express prohibition, is in reality effectual. It would be giving to the legislature a practical and real omnipotence, with the same breath which professes to restrict their powers within narrow limits. It is prescribing limits, and declaring that those limits may be passed at pleasure.

That it thus reduces to nothing what we have deemed the greatest improvements on political institutions, a written constitution, would of itself be sufficient, in America, where written constitutions have been viewed with so much reverence, for rejecting the construction. . . .

Thus, the particular phraseology of the constitution of the United States confirms and strengthens the principle, supposed to be essential to all written constitutions, that a law repugnant to the constitution is void; and that courts, as well as other departments, are bound by that instrument.

B. The Louisiana Purchase

I. *Napoleon Decides to Dispose of Louisiana (1803)**

Much of early American history was shaped by the endless rivalry between Britain and France, and the Louisiana Purchase was no exception. Having failed in his bid to establish a French empire in the Western Hemisphere, Napoleon Bonaparte resolved to use France's American holdings as a means to fund his ongoing battle with the British. In these statements, recorded by one of Napoleon's closest advisers, the strong-willed emperor detailed his reasons for selling Louisiana—a region France had only recently reacquired from Spain. How did Napoleon feel about the probability that the acquisition of such a vast tract of territory would greatly strengthen the young United States?

I know the full value of Louisiana, and I have been desirous of repairing the fault of the French negotiator who abandoned it in 1763. A few lines of a treaty have restored it to me, and I have scarcely recovered it when I must expect to lose it. But if it escapes from me, it shall one day cost dearer to those who oblige me to strip myself of it than to those to whom I wish to deliver it. The English have successively taken from France, Canada, Cape Breton, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the richest portions of Asia. They are engaged in exciting troubles in St. Domingo [Haiti]. They shall not have the Mississippi which they covet. Louisiana is nothing in comparison with their conquests in all parts of the globe, and yet the jealousy they feel at the

**The History of Louisiana, Particularly of the Cession of That Colony to the United States of America*, by Barbe Marbois. Translated from the French by an American Citizen (1830).

She may say she needs Louisiana for the supply of her West Indies. She does not need it in time of peace. And in war she could not depend on them because they would be so easily intercepted [by the British navy]. . . .

If France considers Louisiana, however, as indispensable for her views, she might perhaps be willing to look about for arrangements which might reconcile it to our interests. If anything could do this, it would be the ceding to us the Island of New Orleans and the Floridas. This would certainly in a great degree remove the causes of jarring and irritation between us, and perhaps for such a length of time as might produce other means of making the measure permanently conciliatory to our interests and friendships.

3. Jefferson Stretches the Constitution to Buy Louisiana (1803)*

In early 1803, Jefferson dispatched James Monroe to Paris to consummate the purchase of Louisiana for the United States. Monroe was instructed to pay up to \$10 million for New Orleans and as much land to the east as he could obtain. To the surprise of Americans, Napoleon offered to sell all of Louisiana, including the vast territory to the west and north of New Orleans. The Americans readily agreed, though Jefferson worried that he was exceeding his constitutional mandate. When he had earlier opposed Hamilton's bank (see p. 139), Jefferson had argued that powers not conferred on the central government were reserved to the states. The Constitution did not specifically empower the president—or the Congress, for that matter—to annex foreign territory, especially territory as large as the nation itself. But the bargain acquisition of Louisiana seemed too breathtaking an opportunity to pass up. In the following letter to Senate leader John Breckinridge, Jefferson defends his action. Is his "guardian" analogy sound?

This treaty must, of course, be laid before both Houses, because both have important functions to exercise respecting it. They, I presume, will see their duty to their country in ratifying and paying for it, so as to secure a good which would otherwise probably be never again in their power. But I suppose they must then appeal to the nation for an additional article [amendment] to the Constitution, approving and confirming an act which the nation had not previously authorized.

The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The Executive, in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of their country, have done an act beyond the Constitution. The Legislature, in casting behind them metaphysical subtleties, and risking themselves like faithful servants, must ratify and pay for it, and throw themselves on their country for doing for them, unauthorized, what we know they would have done for themselves had they been in a situation to do it.

It is the case of a guardian, investing the money of his ward in purchasing an important adjacent territory; and saying to him when of age, "I did this for your good. I pretend to no right to bind you: you may disavow me, and I must get out of the scrape as I can. I thought it my duty to risk myself for you."

But we shall not be disavowed by the nation, and their act of indemnity will confirm and not weaken the Constitution, by more strongly marking out its lines.

*A. A. Lipscomb, ed., *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), vol. 10, pp. 410–411 (August 12, 1803).

the following spirited attack on the Hartford Convention. What, in his view, was the ultimate aim of the Hartfordites?

The [Hartford] Convention represented the extreme portion of the Federalism of New England—the party spirit of the school of Alexander Hamilton combined with the sectional Yankee spirit. . . .

This coalition of Hamiltonian Federalism with the Yankee spirit had produced as incongruous and absurd a system of politics as ever was exhibited in the vagaries of the human mind. It was compounded of the following prejudices:—

1. An utter detestation of the French Revolution and of France, and a corresponding excess of attachment to Great Britain, as the only barrier against the universal, dreaded empire of France.

2. A strong aversion to republics and republican government, with a profound impression that our experiment of a confederated republic had failed for want of virtue in the people.

3. A deep jealousy of the Southern and Western states, and a strong disgust at the effect of the slave representation in the Constitution of the United States.

4. A belief that Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison were servilely devoted to France, and under French influence.

Every one of these sentiments weakened the attachments of those who held them to the Union, and consequently their patriotism. . . .

It will be no longer necessary to search for the objects of the Hartford Convention. They are apparent from the whole tenor of their report and resolutions, compared with the journal of their proceedings. They are admitted in the first and last paragraphs of the report, and they were:

To wait for the issue of the negotiation at Ghent.

In the event of the continuance of the war, to take one more chance of getting into their own hands the administration of the general government.

On the failure of that, a secession from the Union and a New England confederacy.

To these ends, and not to the defense of this part of the country against the foreign enemy, all the measures of the Hartford Convention were adapted.

C. The Missouri Statehood Controversy

1. Representative John Taylor Reviles Slavery (1819)*

The slaveholding territory of Missouri applied to Congress for admission as a state in 1819. Representative James Tallmadge of New York touched off the fireworks when he proposed an amendment to the Missouri statehood bill (a) prohibiting any further introduction of slaves and (b) freeing at age twenty-five all children born to slave parents after the admission of the state. During the ensuing debates, a leading role was played by Representative John W. Taylor, a prominent antislavery leader from New York who was to serve for twenty consecutive years in the House. The South

**Annals of Congress*, 15th Congress, 2d Sess., pp. 1174–1176.

never forgave him, and later engineered his defeat for election as Speaker. In his speech for the Tallmadge amendment, what were the apparent contradictions in the attitude of the South toward blacks?

Having proved . . . our right to legislate in the manner proposed, I proceed to illustrate the propriety of exercising it. And here I might rest satisfied with reminding my [southern] opponents of their own declarations on the subject of slavery. How often, and how eloquently, have they deplored its existence among them! What willingness, nay, what solicitude have they not manifested to be relieved from this burden! How have they wept over the unfortunate policy that first introduced slaves into this country! How have they disclaimed the guilt and shame of that original sin, and thrown it back upon their ancestors!

I have with pleasure heard these avowals of regret and confided in their sincerity. I have hoped to see its effects in the advancement of the cause of humanity. Gentlemen now have an opportunity of putting their principles into practice. If they have tried slavery and found it a curse, if they desire to dissipate the gloom with which it covers their land, I call upon them to exclude it from the Territory in question. Plant not its seeds in this uncorrupt soil. Let not our children, looking back to the proceedings of this day, say of them, as they have been constrained to speak of their fathers, "We wish their decision had been different. We regret the existence of this unfortunate population among us. But we found them here; we know not what to do with them. It is our misfortune; we must bear it with patience."

History will record the decision of this day as exerting its influence for centuries to come over the population of half our continent. If we reject the amendment and suffer this evil, now easily eradicated, to strike its roots so deep in the soil that it can never be removed, shall we not furnish some apology for doubting our sincerity when we deplore its existence? . . .



speaker. In his
fictions in the

I proceed to
with remind
ct of slavery
among them
believed from
it introduced
of that origi-

their sincer-
of humanity.
practice. If
e the gloom
Territory in
ooking back
ed to speak
re existence
e know not
e."

or centuries
dment and
soil that it
ur sincerity



free
slave

© Cengage Learning®

Mr. Chairman, one of the gentlemen from Kentucky (Mr. Clay) has pressed into his service the cause of humanity. He has pathetically urged us to withdraw our amendment and suffer this unfortunate population to be dispersed over the country. He says they will be better fed, clothed, and sheltered, and their whole condition will be greatly improved. . . .

Sir, my heart responds to the call of humanity. I will zealously unite in any practicable means of bettering the condition of this oppressed people. I am ready to appropriate a territory to their use, and to aid them in settling it—but I am not willing, I never will consent, to declare the whole country west of the Mississippi a market overt for human flesh. . . .

To the objection that this amendment will, if adopted, diminish the value of a species of property in one portion of the Union, and thereby operate unequally, I reply that if, by depriving slaveholders of the Missouri market, the business of raising slaves should become less profitable, it would be an effect incidentally produced, but is not the object of the measure. The law prohibiting the importation of foreign slaves was not passed for the purpose of enhancing the value of those then in the country, but that effect has been incidentally produced in a very great degree. . . .

It is further objected that the amendment is calculated to disfranchise our brethren of the South by discouraging their emigration to the country west of the Mississippi. . . . The description of emigrants may be affected, in some measure, by the amendment in question. If slavery shall be tolerated, the country will be settled by rich planters, with their slaves. If it shall be rejected, the emigrants will chiefly consist of the poorer and more laborious classes of society. If it be true that the prosperity and happiness of a country ought to constitute the grand object of its legislators, I cannot hesitate for a moment which species of population deserves most to be encouraged by the laws we may pass.

2. Representative Charles Pinckney Upholds Slavery (1820)*

Angered Southerners spoke so freely of secession and "seas of blood" during the Missouri debate that the aging Thomas Jefferson likened the issue to "a fire bell in the night." The argument inevitably involved the general problem of slavery, and the view of the South was eloquently presented, in a justly famous speech, by Representative Charles Pinckney of South Carolina. Vain, demagogic, and of questionable morals, he was nevertheless touched with genius. As one of the few surviving members of the Philadelphia convention that had framed the Constitution in 1787, and as South Carolina's former governor and U.S. senator, Pinckney was in a position to command attention. What is the most alarming aspect of his speech?

A great deal has been said on the subject of slavery: that it is an infamous stain and blot on the states that hold them, not only degrading the slave, but the master, and making him unfit for republican government; that it is contrary to religion and the law of God; and that Congress ought to do everything in their power to prevent its extension among the new states.

*Annals of Congress, 16th Congress, 1st Sess., 1323-1328, passim.

Now, sir, . . . is there a single line in the Old or New Testament either censuring or forbidding it [slavery]? I answer without hesitation, no. But there are hundreds speaking of and recognizing it. . . . Hagar, from whom millions sprang, was an African slave, brought out of Egypt by Abraham, the father of the faithful and the beloved servant of the Most High; and he had, besides, three hundred and eighteen male slaves. The Jews, in the time of the theocracy, and the Greeks and Romans, had all slaves; at that time there was no nation without them.

If we are to believe that this world was formed by a great and omnipotent Being, that nothing is permitted to exist here but by his will, and then throw our eyes throughout the whole of it, we should form an opinion very different indeed from that asserted, that slavery was against the law of God. . . .

It will not be a matter of surprise to anyone that so much anxiety should be shown by the slaveholding states, when it is known that the alarm, given by this attempt to legislate on slavery, has led to the opinion that the very foundations of that kind of property are shaken; that the establishment of the precedent is a measure of the most alarming nature. . . . For, should succeeding Congresses continue to push it, there is no knowing to what length it may be carried.

Have the Northern states any idea of the value of our slaves? At least, sir, six hundred millions of dollars. If we lose them, the value of the lands they cultivate will be diminished in all cases one half, and in many they will become wholly useless. And an annual income of at least forty millions of dollars will be lost to your citizens, the loss of which will not alone be felt by the non-slaveholding states, but by the whole Union. For to whom, at present, do the Eastern states, most particularly, and the Eastern and Northern, generally, look for the employment of their shipping, in transporting our bulky and valuable products [cotton], and bringing us the manufactures and merchandises of Europe?

Another thing, in case of these losses being brought on us, and our being forced into a division of the Union, what becomes of your public debt? Who are to pay this, and how will it be paid? In a pecuniary view of this subject, therefore, it must ever be the policy of the Eastern and Northern states to continue connected with us.

But, sir, there is an infinitely greater call upon them, and this is the call of justice, of affection, and humanity. Reposing at a great distance, in safety, in the full enjoyment of all their federal and state rights, unattacked in either, or in their individual rights, can they, with indifference, or ought they, to risk, in the remotest degree, the consequences which this measure may produce? These may be the division of this Union and a civil war. Knowing that whatever is said here must get into the public prints, I am unwilling, for obvious reasons, to go into the description of the horrors which such a war must produce, and ardently pray that none of us may ever live to witness such an event.

[Other Southerners, so reported Representative William Plumer, Jr., of New Hampshire, "throw out many threats, and talk loudly of separation." Even "Mr. [Henry] Clay declares that he will go home and raise troops, if necessary, to defend the people of Missouri." But the Tallmadge amendment was rejected, and the famed Missouri Compromise was finally hammered out in 1820. The delicate sectional balance subsisting between the eleven free states and eleven slave states was cleverly preserved:

Maine (then a part of Massachusetts) was to come in as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. But henceforth slavery was forbidden elsewhere in the Louisiana Purchase territory north of the line of 36° 30'—the southern border of Missouri. John Quincy Adams wrote prophetically: "I take it for granted that the present question is a mere preamble—a title page to a great tragic volume."

D. Launching the Monroe Doctrine

I. John Quincy Adams Rejects a Joint Declaration (1823)*

John Quincy Adams, President James Monroe's stiff-backed and lone-wolf secretary of state, strongly suspected the motives of British foreign secretary George Canning in approaching the American minister in London, Richard Rush, to propose a joint warning against foreign intervention in the newly independent republics of Spanish America. Adams cleverly calculated that the potent British navy would not permit these newly opened markets to be closed, and he therefore concluded that the European monarchs were powerless to intervene, no matter what the United States did. He did not share secretary of war John Calhoun's fear of the French army, which, acting as the avenging sword of the reactionary powers, was then crushing a republican uprising in Spain. Adams here records in his diary the relevant Cabinet discussion. Of the arguments he advanced against cooperation with Canning, which was strongest? Why?

Washington, November 7th.—Cabinet meeting at the President's from half-past one till four. Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War, and Mr. Southard, Secretary of the Navy, present. The subject for consideration was the confidential proposals of the British Secretary of State, George Canning, to Richard Rush, and the correspondence between them relating to the projects of the Holy Alliance upon South America. There was much conversation without coming to any definite point. The object of Canning appears to have been to obtain some public pledge from the government of the United States, ostensibly against the forcible interference of the Holy Alliance between Spain and South America, but really or especially against the acquisition to the United States themselves of any part of the Spanish-American possessions.

Mr. Calhoun inclined to giving a discretionary power to Mr. Rush to join in a declaration against the interference of the Holy Allies, if necessary, even if it should pledge us not to take Cuba or the province of Texas; because the power of Great Britain being greater than ours to seize upon them, we should get the advantage of obtaining from her the same declaration we should make ourselves.

I thought the cases not parallel. We have no intentions of seizing either Texas or Cuba. But the inhabitants of either or both may exercise their primitive rights, and solicit a union with us. They will certainly do no such thing to Great Britain. By joining with her, therefore, in her proposed declaration, we give her a substantial and perhaps inconvenient pledge against ourselves, and really obtain nothing in return.

*C. F. Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), vol. 6, pp. 177-179.

"Don't you live here?"

"I stay here."

"And who are you then?"

"Why, I am Mr. —'s help. I'd have you to know, man, that I am no sarvant. None but negers are sarvants."

2. A Plea for Nonproperty Suffrage (1841)*

Until the days of Jacksonian democracy, property qualifications were generally demanded of all voters. In Virginia, where such restrictions discouraged immigration and encouraged emigration, a memorable convention met at Richmond in 1829–1830 to revise the state constitution. The result was a widening of the suffrage, in accord with the New Democracy, but a retention of certain property qualifications. One of the strongest arguments against change—an argument repeated in other conservative states—was that possession of property provided the surest guarantee of a permanent stake in the community. Grave dangers would presumably be courted if political power were put into the hands of the irresponsible, propertyless "bipeds of the forest." A popular author, George S. Camp, took sharp issue with the advocates of property qualifications in a long-lived book on democracy. In the light of his argument, is it true that the propertyless have as much of a stake in the community as the propertied?

All should have an equal voice in the public deliberations of the state, however unequal in point of circumstances, since human rights, by virtue of which alone we are entitled to vote at all, are the attributes of the man, not of his circumstances.

Should the right to vote, the characteristic and the highest prerogative of a free man, be at the mercy of a casualty? I am rich today, worth my hundred thousands. But my wealth consists in stock and merchandise; it may be in storehouses, it may be upon the ocean. I have been unable to effect an insurance, or there is some concealed legal defect in my policy. The fire or the storms devour my wealth in an hour: am I the less competent to vote? Have I less of the capacity of a moral and intelligent being? Am I the less a good citizen? Is it not enough that I have been deprived of my fortune—must I be disfranchised by community?

My having a greater or less amount of property does not alter my rights. Property is merely the subject on which rights are exercised; its amount does not alter rights themselves. If it were otherwise, every one of us would be in some degree subject to some wealthier neighbor. And, if the representation of property were consistently carried out, the affairs of every community, instead of being governed by the majority of rational and intelligent beings, would be governed by a preponderance of houses, lands, stocks, plate, jewelry, merchandise, and money!

It is not true that one man has more at stake in the commonwealth than another. We all have our rights, and no man has anything more. If we look at the subject philosophically, and consider how much superior man is by nature to what he is by external condition, how much superior his real attributes are to what he

*George S. Camp, *Democracy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841), pp. 145–146.

acquires from the accidents of fortune, we shall then view the distinctions of rank and wealth in their true comparative insignificance, and make as little difference on these accounts with the political as with the moral man.

3. Davy Crockett Advises Politicians (1836)*

David (Davy) Crockett—notorious Tennessee frontiersman, Indian scout, rifleman, bear hunter, and braggart—was a homespun product of the New Democracy. His scanty six months of schooling led him to scorn both grammar and “book larnin’,” although he became a justice of the peace, an elected militia colonel, and a member of the state legislature. When a joking remark prompted him to campaign for Congress, he overwhelmed his two opponents with a barrage of ridicule and humorous stories. Reelected for two additional terms, he attracted wide attention in Washington with his backwoods dress, racy language, homely wit, shrewd common sense, and presumed naïveté regarding the aristocratic East. Ruggedly independent, he delighted eastern conservatives by refusing to follow President Jackson on all issues. His advice to aspiring politicians, though offered in a jocular vein, reveals the debased tone of the new manhood-suffrage democracy. Which of his recommended devices are still employed by politicians today?

“Attend all public meetings,” says I, “and get some friend to move that you take the chair. If you fail in this attempt, make a push to be appointed secretary. The proceedings of course will be published, and your name is introduced to the public. But should you fail in both undertakings, get two or three acquaintances, over a bottle of whisky, to pass some resolutions, no matter on what subject. Publish them, even if you pay the printer. It will answer the purpose of breaking the ice, which is the main point in these matters.

“Intrigue until you are elected an officer of the militia. This is the second step toward promotion, and can be accomplished with ease, as I know an instance of an election being advertised, and no one attending, the innkeeper at whose house it was to be held, having a military turn, elected himself colonel of his regiment.” Says I, “You may not accomplish your ends with as little difficulty, but do not be discouraged—Rome wasn’t built in a day.

“If your ambition or circumstances compel you to serve your country, and earn three dollars a day, by becoming a member of the legislature, you must first publicly avow that the constitution of the state is a shackle upon free and liberal legislation, and is, therefore, of as little use in the present enlightened age as an old almanac of the year in which the instrument was framed. There is policy in this measure, for by making the constitution a mere dead letter, your headlong proceedings will be attributed to a bold and unshackled mind; whereas, it might otherwise be thought they arose from sheer mulish ignorance. ‘The Government’ has set the example in his [Jackson’s] attack upon the Constitution of the United States, and who should fear to follow where ‘the Government’ leads?”

*David Crockett, *Exploits and Adventures in Texas* . . . (1836), pp. 56–59 (a pseudo-autobiography generally ascribed to Richard Penn Smith).

"When the day of election approaches, visit your constituents far and wide. Treat liberally, and drink freely, in order to rise in their estimation, though you fall in your own. True, you may be called a drunken dog by some of the clean-shirt and silk-stocking gentry, but the real roughnecks will style you a jovial fellow. Their votes are certain, and frequently count double.

"Do all you can to appear to advantage in the eyes of the women. That's easily done. You have but to kiss and slabber [slobber over] their children, wipe their noses, and pat them on the head. This cannot fail to please their mothers, and you may rely on your business being done in that quarter.

"Promise all that is asked," said I, "and more if you can think of anything. Offer to build a bridge or a church, to divide a county, create a batch of new offices, make a turnpike, or anything they like. Promises cost nothing; therefore, deny nobody who has a vote or sufficient influence to obtain one.

"Get up on all occasions, and sometimes on no occasion at all, and make long-winded speeches, though composed of nothing else than wind. Talk of your devotion to your country, your modesty and disinterestedness, or on any such fanciful subject. Rail against taxes of all kinds, officeholders, and bad harvest weather; and wind up with a flourish about the heroes who fought and bled for our liberties in the times that tried men's souls. To be sure, you run the risk of being considered a bladder of wind, or an empty barrel. But never mind that; you will find enough of the same fraternity to keep you in countenance.

"If any charity be going forward, be at the top of it, provided it is to be advertised publicly. If not, it isn't worth your while. None but a fool would place his candle under a bushel on such an occasion.

"These few directions," said I, "if properly attended to, will do your business. And when once elected—why, a fig for the dirty children, the promises, the bridges, the churches, the taxes, the offices, and the subscriptions. For it is absolutely necessary to forget all these before you can become a thoroughgoing politician, and a patriot of the first water."

Andrew Jackson

B. The Nullification Crisis

1. Senator Robert Hayne Advocates Nullification (1830)*

The restrictive "Tariff of Abominations" of 1828 had angered the South, especially the South Carolinians, who protested vehemently against an "unconstitutional" tax levied indirectly on them to support "greedy" Yankee manufacturers. An eruption finally occurred in the Senate when Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina—fluent, skillful, and personally attractive—attacked New England's inconsistency, greed, and selfishness, notably during the War of 1812. The only way to resist usurpations by the federal government, Hayne insisted, was for the states to nullify unauthorized acts of

*Register of Debates in Congress (1829–1830), vol. 6, part 1 (January 25, 1830) p. 58.

Congress, as foreshadowed by Jefferson in the Kentucky resolutions of 1798-1799. In this peroration of his impressive speech, is Hayne a disunionist? Was he willing to let the Supreme Court rule on the unconstitutionality of acts of Congress?

Thus it will be seen, Mr. President, that the South Carolina doctrine [of nullification] is the [Jeffersonian] Republican doctrine of 1798; that it was first promulgated by the Fathers of the Faith; that it was maintained by Virginia and Kentucky in the worst of times; that it constituted the very pivot on which the political revolution of that day turned; that it embraces the very principles the triumph of which at that time saved the Constitution at its last gasp, and which New England statesmen were not unwilling to adopt [at Hartford in 1814] when they believed themselves to be the victims of unconstitutional legislation.

Sir, as to the doctrine that the federal government is the exclusive judge of the extent as well as the limitations of its powers, it seems to me to be utterly subversive of the sovereignty and independence of the states. It makes but little difference in my estimation whether Congress or the Supreme Court are invested with this power. If the federal government in all or any of its departments is to prescribe the limits of its own authority, and the states are bound to submit to the decision and are not allowed to examine and decide for themselves when the barriers of the Constitution shall be overleaped, this is practically "a government without limitation of powers." The states are at once reduced to mere petty corporations and the people are entirely at your mercy.

I have but one word more to add. In all the efforts that have been made by South Carolina to resist the unconstitutional [tariff] laws which Congress has extended over them, she has kept steadily in view the preservation of the Union by the only means by which she believes it can be long preserved—a firm, manly, and steady resistance against usurpation.

The [tariff] measures of the federal government have, it is true, prostrated her interests, and will soon involve the whole South in irretrievable ruin. But even this evil, great as it is, is not the chief ground of our complaints. It is the principle involved in the contest—a principle which, substituting the discretion of Congress for the limitations of the Constitution, brings the states and the people to the feet of the federal government and leaves them nothing they can call their own.

Sir, if the measures of the federal government were less oppressive; we should still strive against this usurpation. The South is acting on a principle she has always held sacred—resistance to unauthorized taxation.

These, sir, are the principles which induced the immortal [John] Hampden to resist the payment [in 1637] of a tax of twenty shillings [to the English government]. Would twenty shillings have ruined his fortune? No! but the payment of half twenty shillings on the principle on which it was demanded would have made him a slave.

Sir, if in acting on these high motives, if animated by that ardent love of liberty which has always been the most prominent trait in the Southern character, we should be hurried beyond the bounds of a cold and calculating prudence, who is there with one noble and generous sentiment in his bosom that would not be disposed, in the language of [Edmund] Burke, to exclaim, "You must pardon something to the spirit of liberty!"

2. Daniel Webster Pleads for the Union (1830)*

Daniel Webster, native son of New Hampshire and adopted son of Massachusetts, sprang to the defense of New England and the Union in a running debate with Hayne that lasted two weeks and ranged over many subjects. The crowded Senate galleries thrilled to the eloquence of the two parliamentary gladiators, as the states' rightism of the South clashed head-on with the buoyant nationalism of the North. Webster's main points were that the people and not the states had formed the Constitution of 1787 (here he was historically shaky); that although the people were sovereign, the national government was supreme in its sphere and the state governments were supreme in their spheres; that if each of the twenty-four states could defy the laws of Congress at will, there would be no Union but only "a rope of sand"; and that there was a better solution than nullification if the people disapproved of their fundamental law. What was it? In Webster's magnificent peroration, memorized by countless nineteenth-century schoolchildren, are liberty and Union mutually incompatible? What objective did Webster and Hayne have in common?

If anything be found in the national Constitution, either by original provision or subsequent interpretation, which ought not to be in it, the people know how to get rid of it. If any construction be established, unacceptable to them, so as to become, practically, a part of the Constitution, they will amend it, at their sovereign pleasure. But while the people choose to maintain it as it is—while they are satisfied with it, and refuse to change it—who has given, or who can give, to the state legislatures a right to alter it, either by interference, construction, or otherwise? . . .

I profess, sir, in my career, hitherto, to have kept steadily in view the prosperity and honor of the whole country, and the preservation of our Federal Union. It is to that Union we owe our safety at home and our consideration and dignity abroad. It is to that Union that we are chiefly indebted for whatever makes us most proud of our country.

That Union we reached only by the discipline of our virtues in the severe school of adversity. It had its origin in the necessities of disordered finance, prostrate commerce, and ruined credit. Under its benign influence, these great interests immediately awoke us from the dead and sprang forth with newness of life. Every year of its duration has teemed with fresh proofs of its utility and its blessings; and although our territory has stretched out wider and wider, and our population spread farther and farther, they have not outrun its protection or its benefits. It has been to us all a copious fountain of national, social, and personal happiness.

I have not allowed myself, sir, to look beyond the Union to see what might lie hidden in the dark recess behind. I have not coolly weighed the chances of preserving liberty when the bonds that unite us together shall be broken asunder. I have not accustomed myself to hang over the precipice of disunion to see whether, with my short sight, I can fathom the depth of the abyss below. Nor could I regard him as a safe counselor in the affairs of this government whose thoughts should be mainly bent on considering not how the Union should be best preserved, but how tolerable might be the condition of the people when it shall be broken up and destroyed.

**The Works of Daniel Webster*, 20th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890), vol. 3 (January 26, 1830), pp. 340–342.

While the Union lasts we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us—for us and our children. Beyond that, I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise! God grant that, on my vision, never may be opened what lies behind!

When my eyes shall be turned to behold, for the last time, the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on states dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original luster, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured, bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as “What is all this worth?” nor those other words of delusion and folly, “Liberty first and Union afterward”; but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!

3. South Carolina Threatens Secession (1832)*

As if detonated by a delayed-action fuse, the tariff issue exploded during the Jackson versus Clay campaign for the presidency in 1832. The recent tariff act of 1832, though watering down the “abominable” Tariff of 1828, aroused the South Carolinians by its reassertion of the protective principle. Excitedly summoning a special convention in Columbia, they formally declared that the two tariff acts “are unauthorized by the Constitution of the United States, and violate the true meaning and intent thereof, and are null, void, and no law, nor binding upon this State, its officers or citizens.” The convention specifically forbade enforcement of the federal tariff within the borders of the state and bluntly threatened secession if the federal government employed force. Before adjourning, the delegates issued the following public appeal to the American people. Comment critically on the assumption that the other Southern states would have to follow South Carolina in dissolving the Union and that the tariff law was unconstitutional. Were the South Carolinians acting in earnest?

If South Carolina should be driven out of the Union, all the other planting states, and some of the Western states, would follow by an almost absolute necessity. Can it be believed that Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and even Kentucky, would continue to pay a tribute of 50 percent upon their consumption to the Northern states, for the privilege of being united to them, when they could receive all their supplies through the ports of South Carolina without paying a single cent for tribute?

The separation of South Carolina would inevitably produce a general dissolution of the Union, and, as a necessary consequence, the protecting system, with all its pecuniary bounties to the Northern states, and its pecuniary burdens upon the Southern states, would be utterly overthrown and demolished, involving the ruin of thousands and hundreds of thousands in the manufacturing states. . . .

**Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), December 7, 1832.

Forging the National Economy, 1790–1860

Take not from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned.

Thomas Jefferson, 1801

Prologue: The Industrial Revolution spawned the factory, and in turn the factory-magnet drew from the hallowed home countless men, women, and even tiny children. Alexander Hamilton himself had stressed the spiritual value of training “the little innocents” in honest habits of industry. But the exploitation of little innocents, as well as their elders, resulted in grave abuses. For more than a century, labor fought an uphill fight against employers for a gradual improvement of its lot. Meanwhile, the spread of the factory was spurred by the canal network, the river steamboat, and then the railroad. The fast-growing states of the Ohio Valley and the Upper Mississippi Valley became less dependent on the mouth of the Mississippi as the outlet for their produce, because the new arteries of transportation carried their exports cheaply and swiftly to the cities of the eastern seaboard. The ties of the Union, conspicuously in an east-west direction, were thus greatly strengthened. Meanwhile, America’s foreign trade kept pace with the rate of internal economic development.

A. The Spread of the Factory

1. Wage Slavery in New England (1832)*

Seth Luther, a poorly educated carpenter who helped construct New England textile factories, ranks as one of the most forceful of the early labor reformers. In numerous speeches and pamphlets, he condemned such abuses as paternalistic control, “blacklists” of troublemakers, low wages, and overlong hours. He especially deplored the exploitation of children, who were sometimes dragged to “whipping rooms.” His deadly earnestness and biting sarcasm were partly responsible for the United States’ first law to control child labor, enacted by Massachusetts in 1842. It prohibited children under age twelve from working more than ten hours a day. What were the most serious abuses that Luther here discusses? In what specific ways were they harmful?

A [western] member of the United States Senate seems to be extremely pleased with cotton mills. He says in the Senate, “Who has not been delighted with the

*Seth Luther, *An Address to the Working Men of New England . . .*, 2nd ed. (New York: George H. Evans, 1833), pp. 17–21.

clockwork movements of a large cotton manufactory?" He had visited them often, and always with increased delight. He says the women work in large airy apartments, well warmed. They are neatly dressed, with ruddy complexions, and happy countenances. They mend the broken threads and replace the exhausted balls or broaches, and at stated periods they go to and return from their meals with light and cheerful step. (While on a visit to that pink of perfection, Waltham [Massachusetts], I remarked that the females moved with a very light step, and well they might, for the bell rang for them to return to the mill from their homes in nineteen minutes after it had rung for them to go to breakfast. Some of these females boarded the largest part of a half a mile from the mill.)

And the grand climax [says the western senator] is that at the end of the week, after working like slaves for thirteen or fourteen hours every day, "they enter the temples of God on the Sabbath, and thank him for all his benefits. . . ." We remark that whatever girls or others may do west of the Allegheny Mountains, we do not believe there can be a single person found east of those mountains who ever thanked God for permission to work in a cotton mill. . . .

We would respectfully advise the honorable Senator to travel incognito when he visits cotton mills. If he wishes to come at the truth, he must not be known. Let him put on a short jacket and trousers, and join the "lower orders" for a short time. . . . In that case we could show him, in some of the prisons in New England called cotton mills, instead of rosy cheeks, the pale, sickly, haggard countenance of the ragged child—haggard from the worse than slavish confinement in the cotton mill. He might see that child driven up to the "clockwork" by the cowskin [whip], in some cases. He might see, in some instances, the child taken from his bed at four in the morning, and plunged into cold water to drive away his slumbers and prepare him for the labors of the mill. After all this he might see that child robbed, yes, robbed of a part of his time allowed for meals by moving the hands of the clock backwards, or forwards, as would best accomplish that purpose. . . . He might see in some, and not infrequent, instances, the child, and the female child too, driven up to the "clockwork" with the cowhide, or well-seasoned strap of American manufacture.

We could show him many females who have had corporeal punishment inflicted upon them; one girl eleven years of age who had her leg broken with a billet of wood; another who had a board split over her head by a heartless monster in the shape of an overseer of a cotton mill "paradise."

We shall for want of time . . . omit entering more largely into detail for the present respecting the cruelties practiced in some of the American mills. Our wish is to show that education is neglected, . . . because if thirteen hours' actual labor is required each day, it is impossible to attend to education among children, or to improvement among adults.

2. A Factory Girl Describes Her Treatment (1844)*

Life in the mills was harsh, but for many young women, already accustomed to toiling long hours on their family farms, mill work at least offered a modicum of

*Harriet Farley, ed., *The Lowell Offering* (Lowell, MA: Misses Curtis and Farley, 1844), pp. 169–171, 237.

independence. Even under the paternalistic gaze of Lowell operators, girls could accumulate personal savings, acquire new friends, and socialize with members of the opposite sex. In a series of letters, a Lowell weaver reflected on the lures and liabilities of mill work. What did she find most challenging about her job? What does she see as the redeeming qualities of her new vocation?

[April] I went into the mill to work a few days after I wrote to you. It looked very pleasant at first, the rooms were so light, spacious, and clean, the girls so pretty and neatly dressed, and the machinery so brightly polished or nicely painted. The plants in the windows, or on the overseer's bench or desk, gave a pleasant aspect to things. You will wish to know what work I am doing. I will tell you of the different kinds of work.

There is, first, the carding-room, where the cotton flies most, and the girls get the dirtiest. But this is easy, and the females are allowed time to go out at night before the bell rings—on Saturday night at least, if not on all other nights. Then there is the spinning-room, which is very neat and pretty. In this room are the spinners and doffers. The spinners watch the frames; keep them clean, and the threads mended if they break. The doffers take off the full bobbins, and put on the empty ones. They have nothing to do in the long intervals when the frames are in motion, and can go out to their boarding-houses, or do any thing else that they like. In some of the factories the spinners do their own doffing, and when this is the case they work no harder than the weavers. These last have the hardest time of all—or can have, if they choose to take charge of three or four looms, instead of the one pair which is the allotment. And they are the most constantly confined. The spinners and dressers have but the weavers to keep supplied, and then their work can stop. The dressers never work before breakfast, and they stay out a great deal in the afternoons. The drawers-in, or girls who draw the threads through the harnesses, also work in the dressing-room, and they all have very good wages—better than the weavers who have but the usual work. The dressing-rooms are very neat, and the frames move with a gentle undulating motion which is really graceful. But these rooms are kept very warm, and are disagreeably scented with the “sizing,” or starch, which stiffens the “beams,” or unwoven webs. There are many plants in these rooms, and it is really a good green-house for them. The dressers are generally quite tall girls, and must have pretty tall minds too, as their work requires much care and attention. . . .

At first the hours seemed very long, but I was so interested in learning that I endured it very well; and when I went out at night the sound of the mill was in my ears, as of crickets, frogs, and jewsharps, all mingled together in strange discord. After that it seemed as though cotton-wool was in my ears, but now I do not mind it at all. You know that people learn to sleep with the thunder of Niagara in their ears, and a cotton mill is no worse, though you wonder that we do not have to hold our breath in such a noise.

It makes my feet ache and swell to stand so much, but I suppose I shall get accustomed to that too. The girls generally wear old shoes about their work, and you know nothing is easier; but they almost all say that when they have worked here a year or two they have to procure shoes a size or two larger than before they came.

ited them often,
large airy apart-
tions, and happy
rausted balls or
ls with light and
[Massachusetts],
they might, for
neteen minutes
es boarded the

d of the week,
'they enter the
..” We remark
ntains, we do
ains who ever

gnito when he
own. Let him
ort time. . . . In
called cotton
of the ragged
mill. He might
me cases. He
morning, and
for the labors
a part of his
forwards, as
t infrequent,
ork” with the

ient inflicted
h a billet of
nster in the

etail for the
s. Our wish
ctual labor
ldren, or to

ustomed to
odicum of

9-171, 237.

The right hand, which is the one used in stopping and starting the loom, becomes larger than the left; but in other respects the factory is not detrimental to a young girl's appearance. Here they look delicate, but not sickly; they laugh at those who are much exposed, and get pretty brown; but I, for one, had rather be brown than pure white. I never saw so many pretty looking girls as there are here. Though the number of men is small in proportion there are many marriages here, and a great deal of courting. I will tell you of this last sometime. . . .

You ask if the girls are contented here: I ask you, if you know of *any one* who is perfectly contented. Do you remember the old story of the philosopher, who offered a field to the person who was contented with his lot; and, when one claimed it, he asked him why, if he was so perfectly satisfied, he wanted his field. The girls here are not contented; and there is no disadvantage in their situation which they do not perceive as quickly, and lament as loudly, as the sternest opponents of the factory system do. They would scorn to say they were contented, if asked the question; for it would compromise their Yankee spirit—their pride, penetration, independence, and love of “freedom and equality” to say that they were *contented* with such a life as this. Yet, withal, they are cheerful. I never saw a happier set of beings. . . .

You ask if the work is not disagreeable. Not when one is accustomed to it. It tried my patience sadly at first, and does now when it does not run well; but, in general, I like it very much. It is easy to do, and does not require very violent exertion, as much of our farm work does. . . .

[July] You complain that I do not keep my promise of being a good correspondent, but if you could know how sultry it is here, and how fatigued I am by my work this warm weather, you would not blame me. It is now that I begin to dislike these hot brick pavements, and glaring buildings. I want to be at home—to go down to the brook over which the wild grapes have made a natural arbor, and to sit by the cool spring around which the fresh soft brakes cluster so lovingly. I think of the time when, with my little bare feet, I used to follow in aunt Nabby's footsteps through the fields of corn—stepping high and long till we came to the bleaching ground; and I remember—but I must stop, for I know you wish me to write of what I am now doing, as you already know of what I have done.

3. Disaster in a Massachusetts Mill (1860)*

The lot of women factory workers in New England seemed less idyllic after an appalling accident in the five-story Pemberton textile mill, described next. George T. Strong, a prominent New York lawyer and public-spirited citizen, poured his indignation into his diary. Who was at fault? Why might the South have taken some secret satisfaction in the tragedy?

January 11 [1860]. News today of a fearful tragedy at Lawrence, Massachusetts, one of the wholesale murders commonly known in newspaper literature as accident

*From *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*.

2. Agitation for the Ten-Hour Day (1835)*

A reduction of daily working hours from thirteen or more was a primary goal of labor in the 1830s. During a third unsuccessful strike for the ten-hour day, the Boston artisans issued the following circular. It led to the successful general strike in Philadelphia on the coal wharves. What was the employers' main objection to the ten-hour day, and how did the workers try to meet it?

In the name of the Carpenters, Masons, and Stone Cutters [we] do respectfully represent—

That we are now engaged in a cause which is not only of vital importance to ourselves, our families, and our children, but is equally interesting and equally important to every mechanic in the United States and the whole world. We are contending for the recognition of the natural right to dispose of our own time in such quantities as we deem and believe to be most conducive to our own happiness and the welfare of all those engaged in manual labor.

The work in which we are now engaged is neither more nor less than a contest between money and labor. Capital, which can only be made productive by labor, is endeavoring to crush labor, the only source of all wealth.

We have been too long subjected to the odious, cruel, unjust, and tyrannical system which compels the operative mechanic to exhaust his physical and mental powers by excessive toil, until he has no desire to eat and sleep, and in many cases he has no power to do either from extreme debility. . . .

It is for the rights of humanity we contend. Our cause is the cause of philanthropy. Our opposers resort to the most degrading obloquy to injure us—not degrading to us, but to the authors of such unmerited opprobrium which they attempt to cast upon us. They tell us, “We shall spend all our hours of leisure in drunkenness and debauchery if the hours of labor are reduced.” We hurl from us the base, ungenerous, ungrateful, detestable, cruel, malicious slander, with scorn and indignation. . . .

To show the utter fallacy of their idiotic reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, we have only to say they employ us about eight months in the year during the longest and the hottest days, and in short days hundreds of us remain idle for want of work for three or four months, when our expenses must of course be the heaviest during winter. When the long days again appear, our guardians set us to work, as they say, “to keep us from getting drunk.” No fear has ever been expressed by these benevolent employers respecting our morals while we are idle in short days, through their avarice. . . . Further, they threaten to starve us into submission to their will. Starve us to prevent us from getting drunk!! Wonderful wisdom!! Refined benevolence!! Exalted philanthropy!!

3. Chattel Slavery Versus Wage Slavery (1840)†

Orestes A. Brownson, a self-taught Vermonteer, made his mark as a preacher, magazine editor, lecturer, reformer, socialist, transcendentalist, and writer (twenty volumes).

*Quoted in Irving Mark and E. I. Schwaab, *The Faith of Our Fathers* (New York: Knopf, 1952), pp. 342–343.
†*Boston Quarterly Review* 3 (1840): 368–370.

trust themselves in such conveyances but preferred making their long and weary pilgrimage on foot.

2. The Impact of the Erie Canal (1853)*

The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, wrote epochal new chapters in the history of American transportation and industry. Projected by western-minded New Yorkers, it was bitterly opposed by New York City, which shortsightedly clung to its seaboard orientation. When the issue was debated in the state legislature and the question arose of filling the canal with water, one eastern member exclaimed, "Give yourself no trouble—the tears of our constituents will fill it!" The most immediate result of the canal was to reduce sharply the cost of moving bulk shipments. Further results were analyzed as follows in a graphic report by the secretary of the Treasury in 1853. Why did other cities lose out in competition with New York? Which section of the United States gained the most from the canal?

Although the rates of transportation over the Erie Canal, at its opening, were nearly double the present charges . . . it immediately became the convenient and favorite route for a large portion of the produce of the Northwestern states, and secured to the City of New York the position which she now holds as the emporium of the Confederacy [Union].

Previous to the opening of the Canal, the trade of the West was chiefly carried on through the cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia, particularly the latter, which was at that time the first city of the United States in population and wealth, and in the amount of its internal commerce.

As soon as the [Great] Lakes were reached, the line of navigable water was extended through them nearly one thousand miles farther into the interior. The Western states immediately commenced the construction of similar works, for the purpose of opening a communication, from the more remote portions of their territories, with this great water-line. All these works took their direction and character from the Erie Canal, which in this manner became the outlet for almost the greater part of the West.

It is difficult to estimate the influence which this Canal has exerted upon the commerce, growth, and prosperity of the whole country, for it is impossible to imagine what would have been the state of things without it.

But for this work, the West would have held out few inducements to the settler, who would have been without a market for his most important products, and consequently without the means of supplying many of his most essential wants. That portion of the country would have remained comparatively unsettled up to the present time; and, where now exist rich and populous communities, we should find an uncultivated wilderness.

The East would have been equally without the elements of growth. The Canal has supplied it with cheap food, and has opened an outlet and created a market for the products of its manufactures and commerce.

*Senate Executive Documents, 32d Congress, 1st session, no. 112, pp. 278-279.

The increase of commerce, and the growth of the country, have been very accurately measured by the growth of the business of the Canal. It has been one great bond of strength, infusing life and vigor into the whole. Commercially and politically, it has secured and maintained to the United States the characteristics of a homogeneous people.

E. America in the World Economy

1. United States Balance of Trade (1820–1860)*

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the United States remained a minor economic power on the world stage. Though Southern planters produced more than 80% of the world's cotton, Americans continued to import most of their manufactured goods from Europe. The following table presents the magnitude and balance of U.S. trade in the antebellum era. What patterns emerge from the figures below?

	Exports (Millions \$) ^a	Imports (Millions \$)	Balance of Trade (Millions \$)
1821–1830	69	73	–4
1831–1840	104	120	–16
1841–1850	120	118	2
1851–1860	249	284	–35

^aAll figures are annual averages.

2. Composition of U.S. Exports (1820–1850)[†]

The table below lists American exports by broad commodity categories. What products made up the bulk of U.S. exports? Which goods grew in importance as the century progressed?

	Raw Materials	Foods		Semi-Manufactures	Finished Manufactures
		Crude	Processed		
1820	60%	4%	19%	10%	6%
1830	63%	5%	17%	7%	9%
1840	68%	5%	14%	5%	10%
1850	62%	6%	15%	4%	13%

*From Susan B. Carter, et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial ed., vol. 5, 2006, p. 499.

[†]From Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, vol. 2, 2000, p. 702.

3. Destination of U.S. Exports (1819–1858)*

The following table shows the primary destinations for American goods. Which regions and nations received the greatest share of U.S. exports? How had trade patterns evolved by the middle of the century?

	Europe		Americas	
	Total Europe	UK	Total Americas	Canada
1819–1828	64%	34%	34%	3%
1829–1838	71%	43%	27%	3%
1839–1848	73%	47%	24%	5%
1849–1858	73%	48%	23%	8%

4. Origin of U.S. Imports (1821–1858)†

This table lists the main sources of imports to the United States. What countries served as leading suppliers of goods shipped to America? How does the distribution of U.S. imports compare with the distribution of exports in the table above?

	Europe			Americas			Asia	
	Total Europe	UK	France	Total Americas	Canada	Cuba	Brazil	Total
1821–1828	63%	40%	10%	26%	<1%	9%	2%	11%
1829–1838	64%	37%	15%	22%	1%	8%	4%	8%
1839–1848	67%	38%	19%	25%	1%	8%	5%	8%
1849–1858	66%	42%	14%	26%	4%	8%	6%	7%

Thought Provokers

1. What were the principal effects of industrialization on women and the family?
2. Compare the ways in which anti-foreignism manifests itself in the United States today with those of the 1850s and 1860s. Has the nation grown more tolerant?
3. Were the rich of the 1830s really exploiting the workers, or were they providing them with job opportunities? Would you rather have been a black slave in the South or a wage

*From Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, vol. 2, 2000, p. 713.

†From Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, vol. 2, 2000, p. 714.

like black slaves, were divinely ordained to be inferior and would be happier in that status. An editorial in the *New York Herald* wondered what would happen if pregnant sea captains, generals, members of Congress, physicians, and lawyers were suddenly seized with birth pangs in critical situations. The following official report reveals the joking condescension with which the New York legislature approached the problem. How might feminists have answered these jibes?

Mr. Foote, from the Judiciary Committee, made a report on Women's Rights that set the whole House in roars of laughter:

"The Committee is composed of married and single gentlemen. The bachelors on the Committee, with becoming diffidence, have left the subject pretty much to the married gentlemen. They have considered it with the aid of the light they have before them and the experience married life has given them. Thus aided, they are enabled to state that the ladies always have the best place and choicest tidbit at the table. They have the best seat in the cars, carriages, and sleighs; the warmest place in the winter, and the coolest place in the summer. They have their choice on which side of the bed they will lie, front or back. A lady's dress costs three times as much as that of a gentleman; and, at the present time, with the prevailing fashion, one lady occupies three times as much space in the world as a gentleman.

"It has thus appeared to the married gentlemen of your Committee, being a majority (the bachelors being silent for the reason mentioned, and also probably for the further reason that they are still suitors for the favors of the gentler sex), that, if there is any inequality or oppression in the case, the gentlemen are the sufferers. They, however, have presented no petitions for redress; having, doubtless, made up their minds to yield to an inevitable destiny.

"On the whole, the Committee have concluded to recommend no measure, except that as they have observed several instances in which husband and wife have both signed the same petition. In such case, they would recommend the parties to apply for a law authorizing them to change dresses, so that the husband may wear petticoats, and the wife the breeches, and thus indicate to their neighbors and the public the true relation in which they stand to each other."

3. Lucy Stone Protests Traditional Marriage (1855)*

Lucy Stone graduated from Oberlin College (America's first coeducational institution of higher learning) in 1847 and launched herself on a lifelong career as a reformer. She was an outspoken abolitionist and advocate of women's rights. Traditionalists were so irritated with her that they rudely repeated a poem published by a Boston newspaper promising "fame's loud trumpet shall be blown" for the man who "with a wedding kiss shuts up the mouth of Lucy Stone." When she did marry Henry B. Blackwell in 1855, she hardly fell silent. Instead, with her new husband, she used the occasion to dramatize the plight of women. In her wedding declaration, which follows, what aspects of women's condition are most condemned? In what ways does this document suggest the relationship between the abolitionist and feminist crusades?

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage* (1881), vol. 1, pp. 260-261.

Protest

While acknowledging our mutual affection by publicly assuming the relationship of husband and wife, yet in justice to ourselves and a great principle, we deem it a duty to declare that this act on our part implies no sanction of, nor promise of voluntary obedience to such of the present laws of marriage, as refuse to recognize the wife as an independent, rational being; while they confer upon the husband an injurious and unnatural superiority, investing him with legal powers which no honorable man would exercise, and which no man should possess. We protest especially against the laws which give to the husband:

1. The custody of the wife's person.
2. The exclusive control and guardianship of their children.
3. The sole ownership of her personal, and use of her real estate, unless previously settled upon her, or placed in the hands of trustees, as in the case of minors, lunatics, and idiots.
4. The absolute right to the product of her industry.
5. Also against laws which give to the widower so much larger and more permanent an interest in the property of his deceased wife, than they give to the widow in that of the deceased husband.
6. Finally, against the whole system by which "the legal existence of the wife is suspended during marriage," so that in most States, she neither has a legal part in the choice of her residence, nor can she make a will, nor sue or be sued in her own name, nor inherit property.

We believe that personal independence and equal human rights can never be forfeited, except for crime; that marriage should be an equal and permanent partnership, and so recognized by law; that until it is so recognized, married partners should provide against the radical injustice of present laws, by every means in their power.

We believe that where domestic difficulties arise, no appeal should be made to legal tribunals under existing laws, but that all difficulties should be submitted to the equitable adjustment of arbitrators mutually chosen.

Thus reverencing law, we enter our protest against rules and customs which are unworthy of the name, since they violate justice, the essence of law.

(Signed) *Henry B. Blackwell,*
Lucy Stone.

D. Transcendentalism and Earthly Utopias

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson Chides the Reformers (1844)*

Dissatisfied Europeans let off steam in the 1840s in a series of armed revolts; dissatisfied Americans let off steam in various reformist protests. Every brain was seemingly gnawed by a "private maggot." Ralph Waldo Emerson—poet, essayist, transcendentalist, and

*R. W. Emerson, *Complete Works* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), vol. 3, pp. 240–243.

The frequent hearing of my mistress reading the Bible aloud—for she often read aloud when her husband was absent—awakened my curiosity in respect to this mystery of reading, and roused in me the desire to learn. Up to this time I had known nothing whatever of this wonderful art, and my ignorance and inexperience of what it could do for me, as well as my confidence in my mistress, emboldened me to ask her to teach me to read.

With an unconsciousness and inexperience equal to my own, she readily consented, and in an incredibly short time, by her kind assistance, I had mastered the alphabet and could spell words of three or four letters. My mistress seemed almost as proud of my progress as if I had been her own child, and supposing that her husband would be as well pleased, she made no secret of what she was doing for me. Indeed, she exultingly told him of the aptness of her pupil, and of her intention to persevere in teaching me, as she felt her duty to do, at least to read the Bible. . . .

Master Hugh was astounded beyond measure, and probably for the first time proceeded to unfold to his wife the true philosophy of the slave system, and the peculiar rules necessary in the nature of the case to be observed in the management of human chattels. Of course, he forbade her to give me any further instruction, telling her in the first place that to do so was unlawful, as it was also unsafe. "For," said he, "if you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world. If he learns to read the Bible, it will forever unfit him to be a slave. He should know nothing but the will of his master, and learn to obey it. As to himself, learning will do him no good, but a great deal of harm, making him disconsolate and unhappy. If you teach him how to read, he'll want to know how to write, and this accomplished, he'll be running away with himself."

2. *A Former Slave Exposes Slavery (1850)**

Flogged without effect by his master, Douglass was hired out for one year to a notorious "slave breaker," who also professed to be a devout Methodist. Worked almost to death in all kinds of weather, allowed five minutes or less for meals, and brutally whipped about once a week, Douglass admitted that "Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me—in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed; my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died out; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed to a brute!" In this abolitionist speech in Rochester, New York, Douglass spoke from bitter experience. In what respects were the nonphysical abuses of slaves worse than the physical ones? Where was the system most unjust?

More than twenty years of my life were consumed in a state of slavery. My childhood was environed by the baneful peculiarities of the slave system. I grew up to manhood in the presence of this hydra-headed monster—not as a master—not as an idle spectator—not as the guest of the slaveholder; but as a SLAVE, eating the bread and drinking the cup of slavery with the most degraded of my brother bondmen, and sharing with them all the painful conditions of their wretched lot. In consideration of these facts, I feel that I have a right to speak, and to speak strongly. Yet, my friends, I feel bound to speak truly. . . .

*Quoted in Irving Mark and E. L. Schwaab, eds., *The Faith of Our Fathers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952), pp. 157–159.

First of all, I will state, as well as I can, the legal and social relation of master and slave. A master is one (to speak in the vocabulary of the Southern states) who claims and exercises a right of property in the person of a fellow man. This he does with the force of the law and the sanction of Southern religion.

The law gives the master absolute power over the slave. He may work him, flog him, hire him out, sell him, and in certain contingencies kill him with perfect impunity.

The slave is a human being, divested of all rights—reduced to the level of a brute—a mere “chattel” in the eye of the law—placed beyond the circle of human brotherhood—cut off from his kind. His name, which the “recording angel” may have enrolled in heaven among the blest, is impiously inserted in a master’s ledger with horses, sheep, and swine.

In law a slave has no wife, no children, no country, and no home. He can own nothing, possess nothing, acquire nothing, but what must belong to another. To eat the fruit of his own toil, to clothe his person with the work of his own hands, is considered stealing.

He toils, that another may reap the fruit. He is industrious, that another may live in idleness. He eats unbolted meal, that another may eat the bread of fine flour. He labors in chains at home, under a burning sun and biting lash, that another may ride in ease and splendor abroad. He lives in ignorance, that another may be educated. He is abused, that another may be exalted. He rests his toil-worn limbs on the cold, damp ground, that another may repose on the softest pillow. He is clad in coarse and tattered raiment, that another may be arrayed in purple and fine linen. He is sheltered only by the wretched hovel, that a master may dwell in a magnificent mansion. And to this condition he is bound down by an arm of iron.

From this monstrous relation there springs an unceasing stream of most revolting cruelties. The very accompaniments of the slave system stamp it as the offspring of hell itself. To ensure good behavior, the slaveholder relies on the whip. To induce proper humility, he relies on the whip. To rebuke what he is pleased to term insolence, he relies on the whip. To supply the place of wages, as an incentive to toil, he relies on the whip. To bind down the spirit of the slave, to imbrute and destroy his manhood, he relies on the whip, the chain, the gag, the thumb-screw, the pillory, the bowie knife, the pistol, and the bloodhound. . . .

There is a still deeper shade to be given to this picture. The physical cruelties are indeed sufficiently harassing and revolting; but they are as a few grains of sand on the sea shore, or a few drops of water in the great ocean, compared with the stupendous wrongs which it inflicts upon the mental, moral, and religious nature of its hapless victims. It is only when we contemplate the slave as a moral and intellectual being that we can adequately comprehend the unparalleled enormity of slavery, and the intense criminality of the slaveholder.

3. Human Cattle for Sale (c. 1850)*

Slave auctions, ugly affairs at best, received top billing in abolitionist propaganda. Here is an account, less sensational than many, by Solomon Northup, a free black citizen of New York State. Kidnapped in Washington, DC, and enslaved on a Louisiana plantation, he eventually managed to regain his freedom. His narrative, edited

*Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1853), pp. 79–82.

and perhaps ghostwritten by a New York lawyer, bears the earmarks of credibility. What aspect of this New Orleans slave auction, held by a Mr. Freeman, would be most likely to wound Northern sensibilities?

Next day many customers called to examine Freeman's "new lot" [of slaves]. The latter gentleman was very loquacious, dwelling at much length upon our several good points and qualities. He would make us hold up our heads, walk briskly back and forth, while customers would feel of our hands and arms and bodies, turn us about, ask us what we could do, make us open our mouths and show our teeth, precisely as a jockey examines a horse which he is about to barter for or purchase.

Sometimes a man or woman was taken back to the small house in the yard, stripped, and inspected more minutely. Scars upon a slave's back were considered evidence of a rebellious or unruly spirit, and hurt his sale.

One old gentleman, who said he wanted a coachman, appeared to take a fancy to me. From his conversation with Freeman, I learned he was a resident of the city [New Orleans]. I very much desired that he would buy me, because I conceived it would not be difficult to make my escape from New Orleans on some Northern vessel. Freeman asked him \$1,500 for me. The old gentleman insisted it was too much, as times were very hard. Freeman, however, declared that I was sound and healthy, of a good constitution, and intelligent. He made it a point to enlarge upon my musical attainments. The old gentleman argued quite adroitly that there was nothing extraordinary about the nigger, and finally, to my regret, went out, saying he would call again.

During the day, however, a number of sales were made. David and Caroline were purchased together by a Natchez planter. They left us, grinning broadly, and in the most happy state of mind, caused by the fact of their not being separated. Lethe was sold to a planter of Baton Rouge, her eyes flashing with anger as she was led away.

The same man also purchased Randall. The little fellow was made to jump, and run across the floor, and perform many other feats, exhibiting his activity and condition. All the time the trade was going on, Eliza [the mother] was crying aloud, and wringing her hands. She besought the man not to buy him unless he also bought herself and Emily. She promised, in that case, to be the most faithful slave that ever lived. The man answered that he could not afford it, and then Eliza burst into a paroxysm of grief, weeping plaintively.

Freeman turned round to her, savagely, with his whip in his uplifted hand, ordering her to stop her noise, or he would flog her. He would not have such work—such sniveling; and unless she ceased that minute, he would take her to the yard and give her a hundred lashes. Yes, he would take the nonsense out of her pretty quick—if he didn't, might he be d——d.

Eliza shrunk before him, and tried to wipe away her tears, but it was all in vain. She wanted to be with her children, she said, the little time she had to live. All the frowns and threats of Freeman could not wholly silence the afflicted mother. She kept on begging and beseeching them, most piteously, not to separate the three. Over and over again she told them how she loved her boy. A great many times she repeated her former promises—how very faithful and obedient she would be; how hard she would labor day and night, to the last moment of her life, if he would only buy them all together.

But it was of no avail; the man could not afford it. The bargain was agreed upon, and Randall must go alone. Then Eliza ran to him; embraced him passionately;

kissed him again and again; told him to remember her—all the while her tears falling in the boy's face like rain.

4. Cohabitation in the Cabins (c. 1834)*

As the once fertile lands of Maryland and Virginia petered out, the producing of slaves often proved more profitable than the producing of tobacco. Blacks were bred for export to the newly opened cotton lands of the booming Southwest. Frederick Douglass, in his reminiscences, here recounts how his Maryland slave breaker, Mr. Covey, laid the foundations of riches. What does Douglass find most objectionable?

In pursuit of this object [wealth], pious as Mr. Covey was, he proved himself as unscrupulous and base as the worst of his neighbors. In the beginning he was only able—as he said—“to buy one slave”; and scandalous and shocking as is the fact, he boasted that he bought her simply “as a breeder.” But the worst of this is not told in this naked statement. This young woman (Caroline was her name) was virtually compelled by Covey to abandon herself to the object for which he had purchased her; and the result was the birth of twins at the end of the year. At this addition to his human stock Covey and his wife were ecstatic with joy. No one dreamed of reproaching the woman or finding fault with the hired man, Bill Smith, the father of the children, for Mr. Covey himself had locked the two up together every night, thus inviting the result.

But I will pursue this revolting subject no farther. No better illustration of the unchaste, demoralizing, and debasing character of slavery can be found than is furnished in the fact that this professedly Christian slaveholder, amidst all his prayers and hymns, was shamelessly and boastfully encouraging and actually compelling, in his own house, undisguised and unmitigated fornication, as a means of increasing his stock. It was the system of slavery which made this allowable, and which condemned the slaveholder for buying a slave woman and devoting her to this life no more than for buying a cow and raising stock from her; and the same rules were observed, with a view to increasing the number and quality of the one as of the other.

5. From Slavery to Freedom (1835)†

African-born James L. Bradley was one of many slaves who purchased their freedom out of their own hard-gained, meager earnings. Bradley eventually made his way to the Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, a hotbed of abolitionist sentiment presided over by Lyman Beecher, father of the novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe. There he wrote the following short account of his life. What did he see as the worst aspects of slavery? What did his ability to purchase his freedom imply about the character of the slave system? What was his attitude toward Christianity?

I will try to write a short account of my life, as nearly as I can remember; though it makes me sorrowful to think of my past days; for they have been very

*Frederick Douglass et al., *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Hartford, CT: Park, 1882), pp. 150–151.

†Fourth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Cincinnati Lane Seminary (Cincinnati, OH: Lane Seminary, 1834), p. 27.

Then, sir, there are those abolition societies, of which I am unwilling to speak, but in regard to which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations for the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable.

At the same time, I know thousands of them are honest and good men; perfectly well-meaning men. They have excited feelings; they think they must do something for the cause of liberty. And in their sphere of action, they do not see what else they can do than to contribute to an abolition press, or an abolition society, or to pay an abolition lecturer.

I do not mean to impute gross motives even to the leaders of these societies, but I am not blind to the consequences. I cannot but see what mischiefs their interference with the South has produced.

And is it not plain to every man? Let any gentleman who doubts of that recur to the debates in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1832, and he will see with what freedom a proposition made by Mr. Randolph for the gradual abolition of slavery was discussed in that body. Everyone spoke of slavery as he thought; very ignominious and disparaging names and epithets were applied to it.

The debates in the House of Delegates on that occasion, I believe, were all published. They were read by every colored man who could read, and if there were any who could not read, those debates were read to them by others. At that time Virginia was not unwilling nor afraid to discuss this question, and to let that part of her population know as much of it as they could learn.

That was in 1832. . . . These abolition societies commenced their course of action in 1835. It is said—I do not know how true it may be—that they sent incendiary publications into the slave states. At any event, they attempted to arouse, and did arouse, a very strong feeling. In other words, they created great agitation in the North against Southern slavery.

Well, what was the result? The bonds of the slaves were bound more firmly than before; their rivets were more strongly fastened. Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be exhibited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion of the question, drew back and shut itself up in its castle.

I wish to know whether anybody in Virginia can, now, talk openly as Mr. Randolph, Gov. McDowell, and others talked there, openly, and sent their remarks to the press, in 1832.

We all know the fact, and we all know the cause. And everything that this agitating people have done, has been, not to enlarge, but to restrain, not to set free, but to bind faster, the slave population of the South. That is my judgment.

2. Abraham Lincoln Appraises Abolitionism (1854)*

Abolitionism and crackpotism were, for a time, closely associated in the public mind, and the taint of abolitionism was almost fatal to a man aspiring to public office. Southerners commonly regarded Abraham Lincoln as an abolitionist, even though

*R. P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), vol. 2, pp. 255–256.

15



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

ery often;
children.
r's breast,
University

ough the aboli-
ied them in his
e later, p. 271)
antislaveryites.
Hall in Boston,
merican history
act of Benedict
the harm done

his wife's family in Kentucky were slaveholders. Lincoln set forth his views at some length in this memorable speech at Peoria, Illinois, in 1854. On the basis of these remarks, did he deserve to be called an abolitionist? In what respects might the South have resented his position?

Before proceeding, let me say that I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist amongst us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses North and South.

Doubtless there are individuals, on both sides, who would not hold slaves under any circumstances, and others who would gladly introduce slavery anew, if it were out of existence. We know that some Southern men do free their slaves, go North, and become tiptop abolitionists; while some Northern ones go South and become most cruel slave-masters.

When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists, and that it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself.

If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves and send them to Liberia—to their native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me that whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be in this in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. If they all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days; and there are not surplus shipping and surplus money enough to carry them there in many times ten days.

What then? Free them all and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon.

What next? Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people would not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment is not the sole question, if indeed it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot then make them equals.

It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted; but for their tardiness in this I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the South.

When they remind us of their constitutional rights, I acknowledge them, not grudgingly but fully and fairly. And I would give them any legislation for the reclaiming of their fugitives which should not, in its stringency, be more likely to carry a free man into slavery than our ordinary criminal laws are to hang an innocent one.

borders, is undeniable evidence of their existence, while truth compels us to record its impotence in upholding the sacred duties of neutrality between Mexico and the insurgents. . . .

The Texan flag waved over an army of American citizens. Of the six or eight hundred who won the [decisive] battle of San Jacinto, scattering the Mexican forces and capturing their general [Santa Anna], not more than fifty were citizens of Texas having grievances of their own to redress on that field.

The victory was followed by the recognition of the independence of Texas by the United States; while the new state took its place among the nations of the earth. . . .

Certainly our sister republic [Mexico] might feel aggrieved by this conduct. It might justly charge our citizens with disgraceful robbery, while, in seeking extension of slavery, they repudiated the great truths of American freedom.

Meanwhile Texas slept on her arms, constantly expecting new efforts from Mexico to regain her former power. The two combatants regarded each other as enemies. Mexico still asserted her right to the territory wrested from her, and refused to acknowledge its independence.

Texas turned for favor and succor to England. The government of the United States, fearing it might pass under the influence of this power, made overtures for its annexation to our country. This was finally accomplished by joint resolutions of Congress, in defiance of the Constitution, and in gross insensibility to the sacred obligations of amity with Mexico, imposed alike by treaty and by justice, "both strong against the deed." The Mexican minister regarded it as an act offensive to his country, and, demanding his passport, returned home.

2. President James Polk Justifies the Texas Coup (1845)*

The United States had tried to wrest Texas from Spain under the vague terms of the Louisiana Purchase, but had at last abandoned such claims in the swap that netted the Floridas in 1819. The Texan Americans finally staged a successful revolt against Mexico in 1835–1836, but for nine years thereafter lived in constant apprehension of a renewed Mexican invasion. Three days before President Polk took office on March 4, 1845, President John Tyler had signed a joint resolution of Congress offering the republic of Texas annexation to the United States. All that remained was for the Texans to accept the terms, and they formally did so on June 23, 1845. The tension was heightened by the keen interest of Britain and France in making Texas a satellite, with the consequent dangers of involving the United States in war. Polk, a purposeful and persistent expansionist, justified the annexation as follows in his inaugural address. Which of his arguments was the most convincing from the standpoint of the United States? Which was the least convincing from the standpoint of Mexico? Did he handle the slavery issue persuasively?

The Republic of Texas has made known her desire to come into our Union, to form a part of our Confederacy and enjoy with us the blessings of liberty secured

* J. D. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), vol. 4, pp. 379–381.

and guaranteed by our Constitution. Texas was once a part of our country—was unwisely ceded away to a foreign power [in 1819]—is now independent, and possesses an undoubted right to dispose of a part or the whole of her territory, and to merge her sovereignty as a separate and independent state in ours. . . .

I regard the question of annexation as belonging exclusively to the United States and Texas. They are independent powers, competent to contract; and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or to take exception to their reunion. . . . Foreign powers should therefore look on the annexation of Texas to the United States, not as the conquest of a nation seeking to extend her dominions by arms and violence, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once her own, by adding another member to our Confederation, with the consent of that member, thereby diminishing the chances of war and opening to them new and ever-increasing markets for their products.

To Texas, the reunion is important because the strong protecting arm of our government would be extended over her, and the vast resources of her fertile soil and genial climate would be speedily developed, while the safety of New Orleans and of our whole southwestern frontier against hostile aggression, as well as the interests of the whole Union, would be promoted by it. . . .

None can fail to see the danger to our safety and future peace if Texas remains an independent state, or becomes an ally or dependency of some foreign nation more powerful than herself. Is there one among our citizens who would not prefer perpetual peace with Texas to occasional wars, which so often occur between bordering independent nations? Is there one who would not prefer free intercourse with her, to high duties on all our products and manufactures which enter her ports or cross her frontiers? Is there one who would not prefer an unrestricted communication with her citizens, to the frontier obstructions which must occur if she remains out of the Union?

Whatever is good or evil in the local [slave] institutions of Texas will remain her own, whether annexed to the United States or not. None of the present states will be responsible for them any more than they are for the local institutions of each other. They have confederated together for certain specific objects. Upon the same principle that they would refuse to form a perpetual union with Texas because of her local institutions, our forefathers would have been prevented from forming our present Union.

3. *The Cabinet Debates War (1846)**

The expansionist Polk, fearing that so-called British land-grabbers would forestall him, was eager to purchase California from Mexico. But the proud Mexicans, though bankrupt, refused to sell. They also threatened war over the annexation of Texas and defaulted on their payment of claims to Americans for damages during their recent revolutionary disturbances. Polk made a last-hope effort to buy California and adjust other disputes when he sent John Slidell to Mexico as a special envoy late in 1845, but the Mexicans refused to negotiate with Slidell. Polk then ordered General Taylor to

*M. M. Quaife, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 384–386.

slavery in the District of Columbia and for organizing California and New Mexico as territories without slavery—that is, on the basis of the unpassed Wilmot Proviso. Outraged Southerners responded with cries of disunion. The following incendiary outbursts all occurred on the floor of the House on December 13, 1849. The most famous speaker was hale and hearty Robert Toombs of Georgia, a brilliant orator and one of the more moderate Southern planters. (He later became secretary of state for the Confederacy.) Why was the South so bitterly aroused over the question of slavery in the territories?

Mr. Meade [of Virginia]—But, sir, if the organization of this House is to be followed by the passage of these bills—if these outrages are to be committed upon my people—I trust in God, sir, that my eyes have rested upon the last Speaker of the House of Representatives. . . .

Mr. Toombs [of Georgia]—I do not, then, hesitate to avow before this House and the country, and in the presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you [Northerners] seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this District [of Columbia], thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon half the states of this Confederacy, *I am for disunion*. And if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions of right and duty, I will devote all I am and all I have on earth to its consummation.

From 1787 to this hour, the people of the South have asked nothing but justice—nothing but the maintenance of the principles and the spirit which controlled our fathers in the formation of the Constitution. Unless we are unworthy of our ancestors, we will never accept less as a condition of union. . . .

The Territories are the common property of the people of the United States, purchased by their common blood and treasure. You [the Congress] are their common agents. It is your duty, while they are in a territorial state, to remove all impediments to their free enjoyment by all sections and people of the Union, the slaveholder and the non-slaveholder. . . .

Mr. Colcock [of South Carolina]— . . . I here pledge myself that if any bill should be passed at this Congress abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or incorporating the Wilmot Proviso in any form, I will introduce a resolution in this House declaring, in terms, *that this Union ought to be dissolved*.

B. The Compromise Debates of 1850

I. John Calhoun Demands Southern Rights (1850)*

Two burning questions brought the sectional controversy to a furious boil in 1850. The first was the failure of Northerners loyally to uphold both the Constitution and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 regarding runaway slaves. The second was the effort of California to win admission as a free state, thus establishing a precedent for the

*Congressional Globe, 31st Congress, 1st session (March 4, 1850), pp. 453, 455.

rest of the Mexican Cession territory. The subsequent debate over the compromise measures of 1850 featured a galaxy of forensic giants: Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Thomas H. Benton, William H. Seward, Stephen A. Douglas, Jefferson Davis, and many others. Highly revealing was the following swan-song speech of Senator Calhoun. On the verge of death from tuberculosis, he authorized a colleague to read it for him. What were his views on the Constitution, the Union, and secession? How successfully did he place the onus of insincerity and aggression on the North? How practicable were his remedies for preserving the Union?

How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is by adopting such measures as will satisfy the states belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. There is, again, only one way by which this can be effected, and that is by removing the causes by which this belief [that the South cannot honorably and safely remain in the Union] has been produced. Do that and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question, then, is, By what can this be done? But, before I undertake to answer this question, I propose to show by what the Union cannot be saved.

It cannot, then, be saved by eulogies on the Union, however splendid or numerous. The cry of "Union, Union, the glorious Union!" can no more prevent disunion than the cry of "Health, health, glorious health!" on the part of the physician can save a patient lying dangerously ill. So long as the Union, instead of being regarded as a protector, is regarded in the opposite character by not much less than a majority of the states, it will be in vain to attempt to conciliate them by pronouncing eulogies on it.

Besides, this cry of Union comes commonly from those whom we cannot believe to be sincere. It usually comes from our assailants. But we cannot believe them to be sincere; for, if they loved the Union, they would necessarily be devoted to the Constitution. It made the Union, and to destroy the Constitution would be to destroy the Union. But the only reliable and certain evidence of devotion to the Constitution is to abstain, on the one hand, from violating it, and to repel, on the other, all attempts to violate it. It is only by faithfully performing these high duties that the Constitution can be preserved, and with it the Union. . . .

Having now shown what cannot save the Union, I return to the question with which I commenced, How can the Union be saved? There is but one way by which it can, with any certainty; and that is by a full and final settlement, on the principle of justice, of all the questions at issue between the two sections.

The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution; and no concession or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, and remove all cause of discontent by satisfying the South she could remain honorably and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri [Compromise] agitation [1820]. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the questions at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

New Mexico
not Proviso
incendiary
9. The most
liant orator
tary of state
tion of slau-

s to be fol-
d upon my
ker of the

his House
legislation
w Mexico,
to abolish
degrada-
physical
ity, I will

; but jus-
controlled
y of our

tes, pur-
common
diments
lder and

! should
r incor-
House

1850.
n and
effort
or the

But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party [the South], for it can of itself do nothing—not even protect itself—but by the stronger. The North has only to will it to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled—to cease the agitation of the slave question, and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South, in substance, the power she possessed of protecting herself, before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government. There will be no difficulty in devising such a provision*—one that will protect the South, and which, at the same time, will improve and strengthen the government instead of impairing and weakening it.

But will the North agree to this? It is for her to answer the question. But, I will say, she cannot refuse if she has half the love of the Union which she professes to have, or without justly exposing herself to the charge that her love of power and aggrandizement is far greater than her love of the Union.

At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union rests on the North, and not the South. The South cannot save it by any act of hers, and the North may save it without any sacrifice whatever, unless to do justice, and to perform her duties under the Constitution, should be regarded by her as a sacrifice. . . .

If you, who represent the stronger portion, cannot agree to settle . . . [the question at issue] on the broad principle of justice and duty, say so; and let the states we both represent agree to separate and part in peace. If you are unwilling we should part in peace, tell us so; and we shall know what to do, when you reduce the question to submission or resistance.

If you remain silent, you will compel us to infer by your acts what you intend. In that case, California will become the test question. If you admit her, under all the difficulties that oppose her admission, you compel us to infer that you intend to exclude us from the whole of the acquired territories, with the intention of destroying, irretrievably, the equilibrium between the two sections. We would be blind not to perceive, in that case, that your real objects are power and aggrandizement, and infatuated not to act accordingly.

2. Daniel Webster Urges Concessions (1850)[†]

On the anvil of congressional debate was forged the great Compromise of 1850. California was admitted as a free state; the fate of slavery in the rest of the Mexican Cession territory was left to the inhabitants. The major sop to the South was the enactment of a more stringent Fugitive Slave Law. As a concession to the North, the slave trade was abolished in the District of Columbia; as a concession to the South, slavery in the District was retained. Texas received \$10 million for yielding a disputed chunk of its territory to New Mexico.

*Calhoun evidently had in mind two presidents: one Northern, one Southern, each with crippling veto power.
[†]*Congressional Globe*, 31st Congress, 1st session (March 7, 1850), pp. 276, 482-483.

The highest judicial tribunal in the land has decided that the blackamoors, called by the extreme of public courtesy the colored population, are not citizens of the United States. This decision must be followed by other decisions and regulations in the individual states themselves. Negro suffrage must, of course, be abolished everywhere.

Negro nuisances, in the shape of occupying promiscuous seats in our rail-cars and churches with those who are citizens, must be abated. Negro insolence and domineering arrogance must be rebuked; the whole tribe must be taught to fall back into their legitimate position in human society—the position that Divine Providence intended they should occupy. Not being citizens, they can claim none of the rights or privileges belonging to a citizen. They can neither vote, hold office, nor occupy any other position in society than an inferior and subordinate one—the only one for which they are fitted, the only one for which they have the natural qualifications which entitle them to enjoy or possess.

3. The North Breathes Defiance (1857)*

The antislavery North was shocked by the Dred Scott decision. If slavery could not be barred from the territories, then the constitutional basis of popular sovereignty was in doubt, and the already unpopular Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was a gigantic hoax. Especially galling was the presence of several slaveholders on the Supreme Court. Various Northern spokesmen denounced the decision as no more binding than that of a Southern debating society. Horace Greeley, editor of the influential New York Tribune, insisted that the Court's findings had no more "moral weight" than the judgment of "a Washington barroom." The rising politician Abraham Lincoln, referring to the "apparent partisan bias" and the numerous dissenting opinions of the Court, branded the decision "erroneous." Judging from the following reaction in a Boston religious journal, was the South justified in feeling that the North was determined to break up the Union?

Shall this decision be submitted to? It need not be. A most righteous decision of the Supreme Court (as we believe), regarding the rights of the Cherokee nation, was made of none effect by the state of Georgia, with the connivance of President Jackson.

The people are mightier than courts or Presidents. The acts of Congress, though declared void, are not repealed. The acts of the free states, though pronounced invalid, still exist. If the people will, they can be maintained and enforced.

Is it said that this is revolutionary counsel? We answer, it is the Southern judges of the Supreme Court who are the authors of revolution. They have enacted a principle contrary to the most plain and obvious sense of the Constitution they pretend to interpret. . . . The most explicit allusion to slaves, in that instrument, describes them as held to service in the states "under the laws thereof," plainly deriving the rights of the master from local, not from common law.

The decision is also opposed to the unanimous judgment of the statesmen and jurists by whom the Constitution was formed, and to the amplest recorded

**Christian Watchman and Reflector* (Boston), in *The Liberator* (Boston), March 27, 1857.

testimony as to their intentions. It is a doctrine not twenty years old, which those judges, conspiring with the most desperate school of Southern politicians, the men who have been for the space of a generation plotting against the Union, have dared to foist upon the Constitution. It is a sacrilege, against which the blood of our fathers cries from the ground. No man who has in his veins a drop kindred to the blood that bought our liberties can actively submit to their decree.

But if the free states will sit down in the dust, without an effort to vindicate their sovereign rights, if the majority of the people are so fallen away from the spirit of their fathers as to yield their birthright without a struggle, then it becomes the solemn duty of every conscientious freeman to regard the Union of these states as stripped henceforth of all title to his willing allegiance. If the Constitution is a charter to protect slavery, everywhere, then it is a sin against God and man to swear allegiance to it. Every man will be forced to choose between disunion and the guilt of an accomplice in the crime of slavery. May God avert such an alternative!

D. The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

1. Stephen Douglas Opposes Black Citizenship (1858)*

With the Illinois senatorship at stake, "Honest Abe" Lincoln boldly challenged Senator Douglas—the "Little Giant"—to a series of joint debates, presumably on current issues. He lost the ensuing election but placed his feet squarely on the path to the White House. The first forensic encounter occurred at Ottawa, Illinois, where the gladiators exchanged the following verbal blows before some twelve thousand partisans. How did Douglas's remarks on this occasion both please and offend the South?

We are told by Lincoln that he is utterly opposed to the Dred Scott decision, and will not submit to it, for the reason that he says it deprives the Negro of the rights and privileges of citizenship. (Laughter and applause.) That is the first and main reason which he assigns for his warfare on the Supreme Court of the United States and its decision.

I ask you, are you in favor of conferring upon the Negro the rights and privileges of citizenship? ("No, no.") Do you desire to strike out of our state constitution that clause which keeps slaves and free Negroes out of the state, and allow the free Negroes to flow in ("Never.") and cover your prairies with black settlements? Do you desire to turn this beautiful state into a free Negro colony ("No, no.") in order that when Missouri abolishes slavery she can send one hundred thousand emancipated slaves into Illinois, to become citizens and voters, on an equality with yourselves? ("Never," "No.")

If you desire Negro citizenship, if you desire to allow them to come into the state and settle with the white man, if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and to adjudge

*R. P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), vol. 3, pp. 9–11.

irer wrote as follows

Disunion more than
t has rallied to that
evived, with tenfold
re most determined
m of a Confederacy
itizens cruelly mur-
i the people of the

der, and treason—
his trial. Before his
ing address to the
itinated to disavow
th. But in a reveal-
s, the unrepentant
ged away but with
t and the events at

ng admitted,—the
ade a clean thing
there took slaves
t the country, and
again, on a larger
or the destruction
irrection.
er such a penalty
een fairly proved
ie witnesses who
the powerful, the
er father, mother,
d sacrificed what
nan in this court
it.

of God. I see a
New Testament
ould do to me,

Martyr of Virginia

I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done—as I have always freely admitted I have done—in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments,—I submit;—I submit; so let it be done!

Let me say one word further.

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

Let me say, also, a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

Now I have done.

3. Horace Greeley Hails a Martyr (1859)*

Reactions in the North to Brown's incredible raid ranged from execration to adulation. The most devoted abolitionists, who believed that slavery was so black a crime as to justify violence, defended Brown. The orator Wendell Phillips cried (amid cheers), "John Brown has twice as much right to hang Governor Wise as Governor Wise has to hang him." Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau publicly likened the execution to the crucifixion of Jesus. Eccentric Horace Greeley, the influential antislavery editor of the New York Tribune, was denounced by Southerners for having given editorial aid and comfort to John Brown. Greeley replied as follows in an editorial that no doubt reflected the views of countless moderate antislavery people, who deplored the method while applauding the goal. How effectively did Greeley make the point that Brown's crime was no ordinary felony, and to what extent was he anti-Brown?

John Brown knew no limitations in his warfare on slavery—why should slavery be lenient to John Brown, defeated and a captive?

War has its necessities, and they are sometimes terrible. We have not seen how slavery could spare the life of John Brown without virtually confessing the iniquity of its own existence. We believe Brown himself has uniformly taken this view of the

*New York Tribune, December 3, 1859.

matter, and discountenanced all appeals in his behalf for pardon or commutation, as well as everything savoring of irritation or menace. There are eras in which death is not merely heroic but beneficent and fruitful. Who shall say that this was not John Brown's fit time to die?

We are not those who say, "If slavery is wrong, then John Brown was wholly right." There are fit and unfit modes of combating a great evil; we think Brown at Harper's Ferry pursued the latter. . . . And, while we heartily wish every slave in the world would run away from his master tomorrow and never be retaken, we should not feel justified in entering a slave state to incite them to do so, even if we were sure to succeed in the enterprise. Of course, we regard Brown's raid as utterly mistaken and, in its direct consequences, pernicious.

But his are the errors of a fanatic, not the crimes of a felon. It were absurd to apply to him opprobrious epithets or wholesale denunciations. The essence of crime is the pursuit of selfish gratification in disregard of others' good; and that is the precise opposite of Old Brown's impulse and deed. He periled and sacrificed not merely his own life—that were, perhaps, a moderate stake—but the lives of his beloved sons, the earthly happiness of his family and theirs, to benefit a despised and downtrodden race—to deliver from bitter bondage and degradation those whom he had never seen.

Unwise, the world will pronounce him. Reckless of artificial yet palpable obligations he certainly was, but his very errors were heroic—the faults of a brave, impulsive, truthful nature, impatient of wrong, and only too conscious that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." Let whoever would first cast a stone ask himself whether his own noblest act was equal in grandeur and nobility to that for which John Brown pays the penalty of a death on the gallows.

And that death will serve to purge his memory of any stain which his errors might otherwise have cast upon it. Mankind are proverbially generous to those who have suffered all that can here be inflicted—who have passed beyond the portals of the life to come. John Brown dead will live in millions of hearts—will be discussed around the homely hearth of toil and dreamed of on the couch of poverty and trial. . . .

Admit that Brown took a wrong way to rid his country of the curse, his countrymen of the chains of bondage, what is the right way? And are we pursuing that way as grandly, unselfishly, as he pursued the wrong one? If not, is it not high time we were? Before censuring severely his errors, should we not abandon our own?

4. Lincoln Disowns Brown (1860)*

The South quickly seized upon the John Brown raid as a club with which to belabor the fast-growing Republican party, which allegedly had connived with the conspirators. Rough-beewn Abraham Lincoln, Republican presidential aspirant, came east from Illinois for his make-or-break speech before a sophisticated eastern audience at Cooper Union in New York City. During the course of his address, which was a smashing success, he dealt with the Brown raid. How convincingly did he meet the accusation of Republican complicity, and to what extent was he both pro-Brown and anti-Brown?

J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: The Century Co., 1894), vol. 5, pp. 314-319, *passim*.

was going to be paid soon and he would give me 5 dollars. I do not know what was running through his mind as he made no other remark. I ask for clothing for women and children, both boys and girls. Two little boys, one 3 years old, had his leg amputated above the knee the cause being his mother not being allowed to ride inside, became dizzy and dropped him. The other had his leg broken from the same cause. This hospital consists of all the lame, halt, and blind escaped from slavery. We have a man & woman here without any feet theirs being frozen so they had to be amputated. Almost all have scars of some description and many have very weak eyes. There were two very fine looking slaves arrived here from Louisiana, one of them had his master's name branded on his forehead, and with him he brought all the instruments of torture that he wore at different times during 39 years of very hard slavery. I will try to send you a Photograph of him he wore an iron collar with 3 prongs standing up so he could not lay down his head; then a contrivance to render one leg entirely stiff and a chain clanking behind him with a bar weighing 50 lbs. This he wore and worked all the time hard. At night they hung a little bell upon the prongs above his head so that if he hid in any bushes it would tinkle and tell his whereabouts. The baton that was used to whip them he also had. It is so constructed that a little child could whip them till the blood streamed down their backs. This system of proceeding has been stopped in New Orleans and may God grant that it may cease all over this boasted free land, but you may readily imagine what development such a system of treatment would bring them to. With *this* class of beings, those who wish to do good to the contrabands must labor. Their standard of morality is very low.

4. A Black Corporal Demands Equal Pay (1864)*

Despite their accomplishments, black soldiers chafed against the discriminatory practices of the Union army. Serving in segregated units under an all-white officer corps, black troops were paid barely half the salary of white recruits, putting undue hardship on the soldiers and their families. As the war wore on, African American soldiers pressed for their sacrifices to be recognized with fairer treatment and equal pay. The Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts regiments, by far the most vehement in their protests, refused to collect their salaries until their grievances were addressed. In a poignant letter, Corporal John H. B. Payne justifies his stance. How does he frame his demands? What reasons does he give for joining the Union cause?

I am not willing to fight for anything less than the white man fights for. If the white man cannot support his family on seven dollars per month, I cannot support mine on the same amount.

And I am not willing to fight for this Government for money alone. Give me my rights, the rights that this Government owes me, the same rights that the white man

*Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 208-210.

has. I would be willing to fight three years for this Government without one cent of the mighty dollar. Then I would have something to fight for. Now I am fighting for the rights of white men. White men have never given me the rights that they are bound to respect. God has not made one man better than another; therefore, one man's rights are no better than another's. They assert that because a large proportion of our race is in bondage we have a right to help free them. I want to know if it was not the white man that put them in bondage? How can they hold us responsible for their evils? And how can they expect that we should do more to blot it out than they are willing to do themselves? If every slave in the United States were emancipated at once, they would not be free yet. If the white man is not willing to respect my rights, I am not willing to respect his wrongs. Our rights have always been limited in the United States. It is true that in some places a colored man, if he can prove himself to be half-white, can vote. Vote for whom? The white man. What good do such rights ever do us—to be compelled always to be voting for the white man and never to be voted for?

Now, the white man declares that this is not our country, and that we have no right to it. They say that Africa is our country. I claim this as my native country—the country that gave me birth. I wish to know one thing, and that is this: Who is the most entitled to his rights in a country—a native of the country or the foreigner? This question can be very easily answered. Now there are foreigners who have flooded our shores. They bring nothing with them but antagonistic feelings to rule and order, and they are without the rudiments of education, and yet they can train their children to be law-abiding citizens. In their own country mis-rule reigns. Generally very poor, they have no leisure for the cultivation of their hearts' best feelings; for in their case, poverty degrades human nature. In this country their social influence is much greater than in their own. Here every avenue to distinction is open to them. . . .

The ignorant Irish can come to this country and have free access to all the rights. After they have gained their rights, they cannot appreciate them. They then want to bully the Government. They soon get tired of living under the laws of the country and commence to mutiny, riot, ransack cities, murder colored children, and burn down orphan asylums, as was done in New York.* Is the power to be given to such men to direct and govern the affairs of the Union, on which the weal or woe of the nation depends? This is productive of moral degradation and becomes one of the fruitful sources of evil in our land, from which we shall suffer most severely unless some plan is specially adopted to check its onward course. How can this nation ever expect to prosper? I wonder that God does not bring on them present deluge and disaster. I do not wonder at the conduct and disaster that transpired at Fort Pillow.† I wonder that we have not had more New York riots and Fort Pillow massacres.

*Opposition to the draft touched off a vicious riot in New York in 1863. For four days, a mostly Irish mob sacked Republican establishments and terrorized the city's black population, leaving scores dead or wounded.

†Until 1864, Southern armies refused to recognize African American troops as prisoners of war. When several dozen black soldiers were massacred upon surrendering at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, "Remember Fort Pillow" became a rallying cry for black regiments.

visiting leading cities in four states. Schurz had ranged far more widely over a longer period, from July to September 1865. But just as Schurz was predisposed to see defiance, Grant was predisposed to see compliance. Bear in mind also that Schurz was an idealist, strongly pro-black, and a leading Republican politician in close touch with the radicals. Grant was none of these. Which of their reports is more credible?

I am satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith. The questions which have heretofore divided the sentiment of the people of the two sections—slavery and state rights, or the right of a state to secede from the Union—they regard as having been settled forever by the highest tribunal—arms—that man can resort to. I was pleased to learn from the leading men whom I met that they not only accepted the decision arrived at as final, but, now that the smoke of battle has cleared away and time has been given for reflection, that this decision has been a fortunate one for the whole country, they receiving like benefits from it with those who opposed them in the field and in council.

Four years of war, during which law was executed only at the point of the bayonet throughout the states in rebellion, have left the people possibly in a condition not to yield that ready obedience to civil authority the American people have generally been in the habit of yielding. This would render the presence of small garrisons throughout those states necessary until such time as labor returns to its proper channel, and civil authority is fully established. I did not meet anyone, either those holding places under the government or citizens of the Southern states, who think it practicable to withdraw the military from the South at present. The white and the black mutually require the protection of the general government.

There is such universal acquiescence in the authority of the general government throughout the portions of country visited by me that the mere presence of a military force, without regard to numbers, is sufficient to maintain order. . . .

My observations lead me to the conclusion that the citizens of the Southern states are anxious to return to self-government, within the Union, as soon as possible; that whilst reconstructing they want and require protection from the government; that they are in earnest in wishing to do what they think is required by the government, not humiliating to them as citizens, and that if such a course were pointed out they would pursue it in good faith.

4. *Emancipation Violence in Texas (c. 1865)**

In the following recollection by a former slave in Texas, what is revealed about the response of some slave owners to emancipation? What implications did such responses have for the future of the freed slaves? For federal policy during Reconstruction?

I heard about freedom in September and they were picking cotton and a white man rode up to master's house on a big, white horse and the houseboy told master a man wanted to see him and he hollered, "Light, stranger." It was a government man and he had the big book and a bunch of papers and said why hadn't master turned

*George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972), vol. 5, Texas Narratives, part 3, p. 78.

the niggers loose. Master said he was trying to get the crop out and he told master to have the slaves in. Uncle Steven blew the cow horn that they used to call to eat and all the niggers came running, because that horn meant, "Come to the big house, quick." The man read the paper telling us we were free, but master made us work several months after that. He said we would get 20 acres of land and a mule but we didn't get it.

Lots of niggers were killed after freedom, because the slaves in Harrison County were turned loose right at freedom and those in Rusk County weren't. But they heard about it and ran away to freedom in Harrison County and their owners had them bush-whacked, then shot down. You could see lots of niggers hanging from trees in Sabine bottom right after freedom, because they caught them swimming across Sabine River and shot them. There sure are going to be lots of souls crying against them in judgment!

5. Alfred Richardson Confronts the Ku Klux Klan in Reconstruction Era Georgia (1871)*

In 1871, a special congressional committee took testimony, in hearings conducted in both Washington and the South, about the mounting violence that was being visited upon the newly freed blacks, especially by the Ku Klux Klan. The extensive record of the committee's investigation provides grisly evidence of the dangerous situation in which black men and women found themselves in the post-Civil War South. The testimony excerpted below was given by Alfred Richardson, born a slave in Georgia in about 1837. He supported his wife and three children after emancipation by working as a carpenter. He was also politically active in the Republican party, an affiliation that brought down upon him the savage wrath of his white neighbors, virtually all of them Democrats. What does his testimony suggest about the political situation in the Reconstruction Era South? About the situation of black women? By what means did whites assert political and economic control over blacks? In the light of this testimony, how should the success or failure of Reconstruction policy be judged?

Washington, D.C., July 7, 1871

Alfred Richardson (colored) sworn and examined.

Question. Since you became a freeman have you voted?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. With what party have you voted?

Answer. The republican party.

Question. State to the committee whether you have been attacked in any way by anybody; if so, when and how. Tell us the whole story about it.

Answer. Yes, sir; I was attacked twice. The first time was just before last Christmas; I cannot recollect exactly what day.

Question. Tell us all the particulars.

Answer. There was a set of men came down to about a quarter of a mile of where I live. They were all disguised. They had taken out an old man by the name of

*Alfred Richardson, in *Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States; Georgia, Volume I*, pp. 1–2, 12–13. Report No. 41, Part 6, 42d Cong., 2d sess. Senate (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872).

states. With them the blacks would act in a body; and it is believed that in each of said states, except one, the two united would form a majority, control the states, and protect themselves. Now they are the victims of daily murder. They must suffer constant persecution, or be exiled. . . .

Another good reason is, it would insure the ascendancy of the Union [Republican] Party. "Do you avow the party purpose?" exclaims some horror-stricken demagogue. I do. For I believe, on my conscience, that on the continued ascendancy of that party depends the safety of this great nation.

If impartial suffrage is excluded in the rebel states, then every one of them is sure to send a solid rebel representative delegation to Congress, and cast a solid rebel electoral vote. They, with their kindred Copperheads of the North, would always elect the President and control Congress. While Slavery sat upon her defiant throne, and insulted and intimidated the trembling North, the South frequently divided on questions of policy between Whigs and Democrats, and gave victory alternately to the sections. Now, you must divide them between loyalists, without regard to color, and disloyalists, or you will be the perpetual vassals of the free-trade, irritated, revengeful South.

For these, among other reasons, I am for Negro suffrage in every rebel state. If it be just, it should not be denied; if it be necessary, it should be adopted; if it be a punishment to traitors, they deserve it.

2. *Black and White Legislatures (c. 1876)**

Black suffrage was finally forced on the Southern whites by their new state constitutions and by the Fifteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution (1870). Tension grew worse as designing Northern "carpetbaggers" and Unionist Southern whites ("scalawags") moved in to exploit the inexperienced former slaves. J. W. Leigh, an English clergyman turned Georgia rice planter, recorded the following observations in a personal letter. What conditions were most galling to the former Confederates?

The fact is, the poor Negro has since the war been placed in an entirely false position, and is therefore not to be blamed for many of the absurdities he has committed, seeing that he has been urged on by Northern "carpetbaggers" and Southern "scalawags," who have used him as a tool to further their own nefarious ends.

The great mistake committed by the North was giving the Negroes the franchise so soon after their emancipation, when they were not the least prepared for it. In 1865 slavery was abolished, and no one even among the Southerners, I venture to say, would wish it back. In 1868 they [Negroes] were declared citizens of the United States, and in 1870 they had the right of voting given them, and at the same time persons concerned in the rebellion were excluded from public trusts by what was called the "iron-clad" oath. And as if this was not enough, last year [1875] the Civil Rights Bill was passed, by which Negroes were to be placed on a perfect equality with whites, who were to be compelled to travel in the same cars with them, and to send their children to the same schools.

The consequence of all this is that where there is a majority of Negroes, as is the case in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, these states

*Frances B. Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War* (London: R. Bentley and Sons, 1883), pp. 268–292 (Appendix).

are placed completely under Negro rule, and scenes occur in the state legislatures which baffle description.

I recollect at the beginning of 1870 being at Montgomery, the capital of Alabama, and paying a visit to the State House there, when a discussion was going on with respect to a large grant which was to be made for the building of the Alabama and Chattanooga Railway, the real object of which was to put money into the pockets of certain carpetbaggers, who, in order to gain their object, had bribed all the Negroes to vote for the passing of the bill.

The scene was an exciting one. Several Negro members were present, with their legs stuck up on the desks in front of them, and spitting all about them in free and independent fashion. One gentleman having spoken for some time against the bill, and having reiterated his condemnation of it as a fraudulent speculation, a stout Negro member from Mobile sprung up and said, "Mister Speaker, when yesterday I spoke, I was not allowed to go on because you said I spoke twice on the same subject. Now what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Dis Member is saying over and over again de same thing; why don't you tell him to sit down? for what is sauce for," etc. To which the Speaker said, "Sit down yourself, sir." Another member (a carpetbagger) jumped up and shook his fist in the speaking member's face, and told him he was a liar, and if he would come outside he would give him satisfaction.

This is nothing, however, to what has been going on in South Carolina this last session. Poor South Carolina, formerly the proudest state in America, boasting of her ancient families, remarkable for her wealth, culture, and refinement, now prostrate in the dust, ruled over by her former slaves, an old aristocratic society replaced by the most ignorant democracy that mankind ever saw invested with the functions of government. Of the 124 representatives, there are but 23 representatives of her old civilization, and these few can only look on at the squabbling crowd amongst whom they sit as silent enforced auditors. Of the 101 remaining, 94 are colored, and 7 their white allies. The few honest amongst them see plundering and corruption going on on all sides, and can do nothing. . . .

The Negroes have it all their own way, and rob and plunder as they please. The Governor of South Carolina lives in luxury, and treats his soldiers to champagne, while the miserable planters have to pay taxes amounting to half their income, and if they fail to pay, their property is confiscated.

Louisiana and Mississippi are not much better off. The former has a Negro barber for its Lieutenant-governor, and the latter has just selected a Negro steamboat porter as its United States Senator, filling the place once occupied by Jefferson Davis.

3. W. E. B. Du Bois Justifies Black Legislators (1910)*

W. E. B. Du Bois, a Massachusetts-born black of French Huguenot extraction, received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1895. Distinguished as a teacher, lecturer, historian, economist, sociologist, novelist, poet, and propagandist, he became a militant advocate of equal rights. A founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he served for twenty-four years as editor of

**American Historical Review* 15 (1910): 791-799, passim.