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# Fitchburg Pioneers

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in Kansas



1854 to 1895

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*Henry A. Goodrich*

FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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# FITCHBURG PIONEERS ... IN KANSAS.



THEIR RECORD:  
SOCIAL, POLITICAL,  
EDUCATIONAL.

1854 to 1895.



HENRY A. GOODRICH.



"We go to rear a wall of men  
On freedom's southern line."  
—WHITTIER.



FITCHBURG:  
PRINTED BY THE SENTINEL PRINTING COMPANY.  
1897.

1857  
1855

## Call to Kansas

Geomen strong, hither throng,  
Nature's honest men!  
We will make the wilderness  
Bred and bloom again  
Bring the sickle, speed the plough,  
Turn the ready soil!  
Freedom is the noblest pay  
For the true man's toil.  
Ho, brothers! Come, brothers!  
Hasten all with me!  
We'll sing upon the Kansas plains  
A Song of Liberty!

One and all, hear our call  
Echo through the land!  
Aid us, with the willing heart  
And the strong right hand!  
Feed the weak, the Pilgrims struck  
On old Plymouth Rock!  
To the watchfires of the free  
Millions glad shall flock.  
Ho, brothers, come, brothers!  
Hasten all with me!  
We'll sing upon the Kansas plains  
The Song of Liberty!

Lucy Larcom.

1855.





## FITCHBURG PIONEERS IN KANSAS.

*A Paper read at a Meeting of the Society June 15, 1896.*

BY HENRY A. GOODRICH.

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By an act of congress approved March 6, 1820, a section of this country larger in extent than the original thirteen states was forever sealed to freedom. Slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, was by this act prohibited in all the territories north of 36° 30' north latitude. This vast extent of country lying midway between the Atlantic and Pacific, in the very heart of the United States, was to be forever free from the curse of unpaid toil. Slavery was then a recognized institution in states where it existed, and was fully protected by law. As legally interpreted, the black man had no rights which the white man was bound to respect. The religion of the slave states taught that slavery was a sacred institution of divine origin.

Alarmed at the rapid growth of the free North, the southern states became more and more aggressive, until at last it was proposed to annul the sacred compact which prohibited the extension of slavery. What was known as "the crowning act of infamy" was consummated by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, May 25, 1854. Charles Sumner, in the United States senate, denounced this act as a "crime against Kansas," and for his manly protest was murderously assaulted in the senate chamber.

Henceforth the dormant sentiment of the North was aroused to the highest pitch of indignation. In the great conflict which followed between freedom and slavery, the settlement of Kansas was the turning point. It was conceded by the highest authority that a nation half free and half slave could no longer remain tranquil.

In 1854 the slave power in this country had reached its highest limit. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise opened up our vast territories to the possible extension of slavery. Kansas was upon the border, and upon its actual settlers depended in a great measure the future of the nation. History records no grander opportunity for a great struggle between right and wrong than was here presented. In the events which led to this struggle, Worcester county bore a conspicuous part, and in actual results the pioneers from Fitchburg must ever be regarded as in the forefront of leaders.

“They crossed the prairies, as of old  
The pilgrims crossed the sea,  
To make the West, as they the East,  
The homestead of the free.”

In the spring of 1854, while the Compromise Act was before congress, public meetings were held in different parts of the state to protest against its repeal, and to consider the wisest means of averting such a calamity in the event of its passage. The first meeting, held in Boston February 23d of the same year, was composed of some of the most influential men in the state without distinction of party. This meeting resolved: “That the propositions now pending in congress for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise have justly filled our community with surprise and alarm, that we protest against such repeal, as a deliberate breach of plighted faith of the nation, as tending to weaken the claims of our common country upon the confidence and affection of its people.”

Similar meetings were subsequently held in different parts of the commonwealth, and in fact throughout the northern states, but all to no purpose save to rouse the people to a realizing sense of imminent danger.

On the 3d of May, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was signed by Franklin Pierce, then president of the United States, and henceforth "squatter sovereignty" was to control the future of a vast domain. When this news was flashed across the wires, bells were tolled in towns and cities for what was then considered the death-knell of freedom. But there yet remained some stout hearts who hoped for better things. Col. S. N. Wood, one of the earliest settlers in Kansas, has this to say of the brave men who sought to avert the calamity:

"The pilgrims of the Mayflower sought the wild shores of America, that they might be free to worship God in their own way; free to believe in religious matters whatever seemed right to their own conscience. They sought freedom for themselves, but the pioneers of Kansas heard the call, which in every age has thrilled the souls of men with heroic power.

"At this critical period, when the hosts of slavery and freedom were marshalling for this great and decisive encounter, in their inmost souls they heard the divine voice calling for defenders of liberty; and they obeyed the signal that pointed to Kansas as the great battle ground."

In anticipation of the emergency so aptly described by Mr. Wood, the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society was early in the field. Eli Thayer, afterwards a member of congress from this district, was the acknowledged leader of this great enterprise. He first disclosed his plan at a large meeting in city hall, Worcester, March 11, 1854. Here he declared that the time had come to organize an opposition that would utterly defeat the schemes of selfish men who misrepresented the nation at Washington. The plan proposed was organized emigration, guided and guarded by a responsible business company, where capital should precede the emigrants and

prepare the way for their comfort and protection. A preliminary meeting was held in Worcester early in April, and a convention called at Worcester April 18, 1854, "of persons favorable to the establishment of a colony or colonies, of New England men in the territories of the West." There were present about fifty representatives from twenty towns, including a goodly number from Fitchburg. Mr. Thayer explained the plans and purposes of the proposed Emigrant Aid Society, and a committee was chosen to arrange for a second convention early in May. In the meantime a charter was obtained from the legislature and signed by the governor on the 26th of April. The second convention was held in Worcester May 9. John Milton Earle presided, and Edward Everett Hale, Eli Thayer and others addressed the meeting. In all these preliminary meetings representatives from Fitchburg took a prominent part.

In the *Worcester Spy*, commencing in April, 1854, appeared a series of letters headed "Nebraska and Kansas," dated Fitchburg, Mass., describing the country and situation of affairs. These letters continued several weeks, and were signed "One who has been there."

What was being done at the time, and what the feeling was in this locality, may be inferred from a communication which appeared in the *Fitchburg Sentinel* June 17 of the same year. After referring to the late convention at Worcester, and the objects and purposes of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society, the writer goes on to say that the plan by which the company propose to extend their aid, is to make arrangements so that whole companies may go together at very low rates, and be secure from imposition and fraud. Referring to the inducements to emigrants going West to settle in Kansas, aside from the grand object in question, he says: "From all accounts the soil is unequalled in fertility in the wide world; and

from the testimony of one of our own citizens the climate is very agreeable. And now the question comes: Shall Kansas become a free and prosperous state, or shall its virgin soil be polluted by the blighting, blasting curse of American slavery? The South have violated the solemn compact which forever excludes slavery in these territories. We know no 36° 30' now, nor ever will again. The question is now left to the settlers. It is of no use to wait for a repeal of the infamous Nebraska bill; before this can be effected, Kansas might be admitted as a slave state. If then we are to have a 'squatters' sovereignty,' let those squatters be New England men—in favor of New England customs and New England institutions." Such were the sentiments of the early pioneers from Fitchburg.

It was in July, 1854, that the first company of eastern emigrants started for Kansas. The pioneer body was one of the best representations of New England character. They were some thirty in number, under the guidance of Charles Branscomb. They located on the present site of Lawrence. Two weeks later a party of sixty to seventy joined them, with whom were Dr. Charles Robinson and S. C. Pomeroy. Dr. Robinson was at this time a practicing physician in Fitchburg, and had an office on Main street, in the Kinsman house, next to the Proctor house, recently demolished. He was a prominent citizen and a member of the school committee, was known as a radical reformer, and an enthusiast in whatever he undertook. In personal appearance he was tall, well proportioned and of commanding presence. He had previously been in California, was one of the early pioneers in that state, and while there was shot through the body when trying to vindicate the rights of the settlers to the land, and with Col. Fremont leading them against a monster monopoly, which was seeking to obtain and control all

of the public domain. After being shot he was placed on board a prison ship and there retained until the people had elected him to represent them in the California legislature.

Later, during the presidential campaign of 1856, Col. Fremont wrote a letter to Robinson, from which the following is an extract: "I had been thinking and speaking of you latterly. The Banks balloting in the house and your movements in Kansas had naturally carried my mind back to our one hundred and forty odd ballots in California. We were defeated then; but the contest was only an incident in the great struggle, and the victory was deferred, not lost. You have carried to another field the same principle, with courage and ability to maintain it; and I make you my sincere congratulations on your success, incomplete so far, but destined in the end to triumph absolutely." A short time before his death, Gen. Fremont said that Charles Robinson, more than any one man, kept California from being a slave state, and without his assistance we should not have secured that desirable result.

Eli Thayer, in his "Kansas Crusade," thus speaks of his first meeting with Dr. Robinson: "It was at one of the Chapman Hall meetings in Boston that I first saw Charles Robinson (afterwards governor of Kansas), and engaged him to act as agent of the Emigrant Aid Company. A wiser and more sagacious man for this work could not have been found in the borders of the nation. By nature and by training he was perfectly well equipped for the arduous work before him. He was willing, if there was need, to die for his principles. In addition to such brave devotion to duty, he had the clearest foresight and coolest, calmest judgment in determining the course of action best adapted to secure the rights of the free state settlers."

At a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Mr. Amos A. Lawrence of Boston, one of the greatest benefactors of Kansas, gave an address, from which the following is taken:

"When Eli Thayer obtained the charter of the New England Emigrant Aid Society, and began to preach the Kansas Crusade, the organization was completed here in Boston, and Dr. Robinson of Fitchburg was chosen to be the territorial agent. Charles H. Branscomb took charge of the emigrant parties, and S. C. Pomeroy was financial agent.

"The enthusiasm increased; parties were formed all over the Northern states. The Emigrant Aid Company undertook to give character and direction to the whole. This society was to be loyal to the government under all circumstances; it was to support the party of law and order, and it was to make Kansas a free state by *bona fide* settlement, if at all. Charles Robinson had the requisite qualities to direct the movement. He had had great experience in the troubles in California. He was cool, judicious, and entirely devoid of fear, and in every respect worthy the confidence reposed in him by the settlers and the society. He was obliged to submit to great hardship and injustice, chiefly through the imbecility of the United States government agents. He was imprisoned, his house was burned, and his life often threatened; yet he never bore arms, nor omitted to do whatever he thought to be his duty. He sternly held the people to their loyalty to the government, against the arguments and example of the 'higher law' men, who were always armed, who were not real settlers, and who were bent on bringing about a border war, which they hoped would extend to the older states. The policy of the New England Society, carried out by Robinson and those who acted with him in Kansas, was finally successful and triumphant."

Mrs. Sara T. L. Robinson, wife of Dr. Robinson, was a woman of refinement and culture. She was a daughter of Hon. Myron Lawrence, an eminent lawyer and prominent citizen of Belchertown, Mass. She was married and first came to Fitchburg to reside in 1851. She was among the first of New England women in Kansas to endure the privations and hardships of pioneer life, even to imprisonment with her husband. While in prison-camp she wrote a book, published in 1856, entitled "Kansas, its Interior and Exterior Life." In the preface she says:



"Its pages were penned during a three-months residence of the authoress in the United States camp at Lecompton with her husband, one of the state prisoners. If the bitterness against the 'powers that be' betrays itself, let the continual clanking of sabres and the deafening sound of heavy artillery in the daily drills, the outrages hourly committed upon peaceable and unarmed men, the news of some friend made prisoner, or butchered with a malignity more than human, the devastation of burning homes, be placed in the balance against a severe judgment. 'God give us men. A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands; men whom the lust of office does not kill; men whom the spoils of office cannot buy.'"

In the introduction she describes her early New England home in a prosperous country town, situated upon an elevation commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country in all directions. Then follows a description of a settlement in Kansas:

"The prairie for miles, with its gentle undulating rolls, lies before the eye; trees are scattered here and there like old orchards, and cattle in large numbers are grazing on the hillsides and in the valley, giving to all the look of cultivation and home life. It is, indeed, difficult to realize that for thousands of years this country has been a waste, uncultivated and solitary, and that months only have elapsed since the white settlers have sought here a home."

The first few years were indeed perilous times for the free-state settlers. Mrs. Robinson, in the closing chapter of her book, made an eloquent appeal to the American people, no less than a clear, prophetic vision of what has since transpired, as the following brief extracts will show:

"We have fallen upon evil times in our country's history when it is treason to think, to speak a word against the evil of slavery, or in favor of free labor. But in this reign of misrule the president and his advisers have failed to note the true effect. The fires of liberty have been rekindled in the hearts of our people, and burn in yet brighter flame under midnight skies illuminated by their own burning dwellings.

"That a people are down-trodden is not evidence that they are subdued. The crushed energies are gathering strength; and like a strong man resting from the heats and toils of the day, the people of Kansas



will arise to do battle for liberty; and when the mighty shouts for freedom shall ascend over her hills and prairies, slavery will shrink back abashed. Lawrence, the city where the plunderer feasted at the hospitable table, and Judas-like, went out to betray it, will come forth from its early burial clothed with yet more exceeding beauty. Out of its charred and blood-stained ruins will spring the high walls and strong parapets of freedom. The sad tragedies in Kansas will be avenged when freedom of speech, of the press, and of the person, are made sure by the downfall of those now in power, and when the song of the reaper is heard again on the prairies, and, instead of the clanking of arms, we see the gleam of the plowshare in her peaceful valleys."

Heroic woman! She rightly interpreted "the irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces."

It is forty years since this stirring appeal was written, and Mrs. Robinson is still living in Kansas, actively interested in literary work and historical reminiscences. To her the writer of this paper is greatly indebted for much valuable information.

Among the emigrants to Kansas there were some forty to fifty from Fitchburg. It is perfectly safe to say that the same number of people cannot be found in all its records who have had more to do with shaping the social, political and educational character of Kansas than the pioneers from Fitchburg. Among the early residents, besides Dr. and Mrs. Robinson, were the Lowes, Farnsworths, Hunts, Kimballs, Earls, Farwell, Marshall, Trask, Browning, Snow and others—familiar names in Fitchburg directories.

The first territorial elections were bogus affairs. They were mainly controlled by armed men, known as border ruffians, who rode into the territory, took possession of the ballot boxes, made their returns and then went back to Missouri. March 30, 1855, Gov. Reeder ordered an election for members of the first territorial legislature. This was regarded as an important election. The number of votes cast was more than twice the entire population.

In Lawrence the number of votes returned was 1034, while the number of legal voters was only 369. The legal voters were mostly free-state men, and yet the pro-slavery candidates were declared elected by a majority larger than the whole number recorded on the voting list. These facts are taken from the report of the congressional committee on Kansas affairs made in 1856.

On the list of voters in Lawrence at this time were several pioneers from Fitchburg, among them George W. Hunt, Samuel Kimball, Daniel Lowe, B. G. Livingston, William Marshall, Samuel Merrill and Charles Robinson.

At the next election, December 15, 1855, when the vote was taken on the adoption of a constitution, three more Fitchburg names, in addition to those above mentioned, appear on the list: George F. Earl, Fred Kimball and C. P. Farnsworth. George F. Earl went from Fitchburg to Kansas in August, 1854, and was prominent in the early pioneer struggles. He was one of the election officers, and took an active part in the free-state movement. In a recent letter from A. D. Searl, who went out with Earl, and was his life-long friend, he writes in substance as follows:

"I first met George F. Earl August 29, 1854. He, like myself, was on his way from Massachusetts to Kansas, and being on the same mission we became warm friends on short acquaintance. We were almost constant companions from this time until the close of the rebellion. Were members of the first military company organized in the territory for protection against invasion. This organization was kept up until 1861, when nearly all the members enlisted in the United States service. Thirty of them afterwards received commissions from the government, and served as officers during the great rebellion. No officer in the command was more respected or more faithful to his duty than Capt. George F. Earl. No braver or more trusty man figured in the late war, or through the Kansas conflict. He knew no such thing as fear, and was always ready to perform his duty, however difficult or dangerous. He was a great favorite of Gov. Robinson, and when the governor required a trusty and reliable man for an emergency, he selected Capt.

Earl. Under direction of Col. Samuel Walker, he drove the team that conveyed Gov. Geary out of the territory between two days, to save his life from the border ruffians. He was at one time sheriff of Douglass county, and performed the duties of that office with great credit. He was afterwards in the United States signal service, and lost his life while in the service."

Mr. Searl was personally acquainted with most of the early pioneers from Fitchburg, and says all of them performed well their part in making Kansas a free state.

Frederick Kimball was a victim of border ruffianism; he with Joseph Lowe and Josiah C. Trask lost their lives at the time of the infamous Quantrell raid, August 21, 1863, a full account of which is given in Willis's "War of the Rebellion." Kimball was one of the three brothers, formerly employed by the Putnam Machine Company, who went from Fitchburg with their families, and were all most worthy and respectable people—just the material for pioneers in a great cause.

Josiah C. Trask, a pupil in the Fitchburg high school in 1853, was one of the early pioneers. As editor of a paper, he was a bright and breezy writer, and an active worker in the free-state movement. Rhoda Jeanette, wife of J. C. Trask, died at Topeka June 5, 1890. George W. Hunt and family were also among the earliest settlers. Mr. Hunt went to Kansas in the summer of 1854, returning to Fitchburg late in the autumn of the same year, and in the spring of 1855 conducted a party under the auspices of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. He, with another contractor, built the large Free State Hotel, which afterwards was destroyed by ruthless invaders. In 1855 he was appointed commissary general of the first division of Kansas volunteers. In the spring of 1856 he again returned to Massachusetts, and in April conducted another party to Kansas, including some of his own family.

When Lawrence was sacked and pillaged, May 21, 1856, and Dr. Robinson's house was burned, Mr. Hunt very kindly offered Dr. and Mrs. Robinson a part of his house for a temporary home. He died at Lawrence, March 25, 1870. Mrs. Hunt lived to be eighty-three years of age and died April 11 of the present year. She leaves a numerous family of children and grandchildren, now residing in Lawrence and vicinity. Emily J., eldest daughter of George W. Hunt, went with Dr. Robinson and wife in the spring of 1855 and married Hon. Joel Grover. Mr. Grover was intimately associated with "Old John Brown" of Harper's Ferry fame in the early struggles in Kansas.

Rufus G. Farnsworth went to Kansas in 1857, but came back to Fitchburg during the war and enlisted in the Fifty-seventh regiment. Charles W. Hunt went out in 1856 and took an active part as a young pioneer. He and his brother, George A., were often called to assist in the defence of their homes and their own lives. One sister, Hattie E., was born in Fitchburg January 9, 1847, married a Massachusetts man, and now resides in Kansas City. Another sister, Caroline M., born in Fitchburg in 1851, was a student of the Kansas state university, died October 6, 1871. Augusta Hunt married Joseph A. Cramer, a prominent man in state affairs, who died in 1871. She afterwards married George B. Hall, and is still living in Kansas. The Hunt family were the most numerous of any of the pioneer families from Fitchburg. Like the Kimballs, Earls and others, they were distinguished for bravery and good citizenship.

Dea. John T. Farwell, for many years town clerk of Fitchburg, was conducting agent of a party sent out by the New England Emigrant Aid Company, March 20, 1855. There were one hundred and forty-four in this party, among the number Willard H. Lowe, who returned to Fitchburg and died here January 10, 1886.

Charles N. Wilson, brother of the late Joseph S. Wilson, went from here in 1856, preempted a claim in Leavenworth, but afterwards returned to Fitchburg, and died here in 1886, the same year as Mr. Lowe.

Besides those already mentioned, there were among the early pioneers from Fitchburg, Albert H. Andrews, Henry Bacon, Mrs. Earl, Hattie Earl, John W. Grew and wife, Mrs. Abbie Gay, Miss E. M. Gay, Frank Kimball, Mr. Ingersoll and wife, William Ingersoll, Mrs. J. G. Sands, Henry Sawin, Lucien W. Wallace and Ira S. Younglove. Mrs. Grew's maiden name was Mary Earl.

Lucien W. Wallace was a son of Waldo Wallace, who formerly kept a large hardware and grocery store, corner of Main and Laurel streets. He went from here to Lawrence, Kansas, in September, 1858, from there to Pike's Peak in May, 1859, returned to Lawrence in October of the same year, and to Fitchburg in August, 1860, died in Portland, Ore., August 2, 1892.

In June, 1856, Albert H. Andrews of this city organized a company of sixty men in Chicago to go to Kansas. While on the way up the Missouri river they were intercepted by Missourians, who would not allow them to disembark or peaceably enter the territory. Thinking discretion the better part of valor, they returned to Illinois and finally went overland by way of Keokuk, Iowa.

Through the influence of Gen. J. H. Lane, one of the first United States senators from Kansas, Maj. Andrews was afterwards commissioned in the Nineteenth U. S. Infantry. He served ten years in the regular army, and is now an inspector in the Boston custom house, which office he has held the past eighteen years.

Henry Bacon, brother of the veteran railroad engineer, Joseph E. Bacon, went out about the same time. He never returned, but, like many other young men full of heroism and courage, died for Kansas.

At one time there were three deacons from Fitchburg among the pioneers—Dea. Farwell, Dea. Lowe and Dea. Marshall. Dea. Farwell, at home, was a constant attendant at church, and was very fond of music. In a letter to his son, John A. Farwell, dated May 12, 1855, after giving some account of his pioneer life, he writes as follows:

"Last Sabbath we had public worship in a hall of the Emigrant Aid Company, and it was quite like a meeting at the East, compared with former accommodations. There were no windows in the building, and a dry goods box for a pulpit, and black walnut rough plank for seats. We had a choir of about fifteen, with the addition of a melodeon, and a very passable performance on the same, which was quite an addition to the exercises. There is some musical talent showing itself already, but it needs considerable cultivation. There appears to be a lack of female voices, but presume there will be addition as the city increases.

"I presume that in a few years we shall have quite intelligent and interesting congregations, that will not be inferior to many in New England. I have become acquainted with quite a number of people who came from Worcester and other towns of good old Worcester county, and find them to be enterprising and energetic persons, and presume most of them will make first-rate free-state men, and will do everything possible to keep out the abominable system of slavery from the territory."

Dea. Lowe and Dea. Marshall, as we have seen, took part in the early elections as legal voters, but neither of the deacons remained permanently in the state. Under date of March 22, 1855, Mr. Marshall wrote a long letter to his son, then fifteen years of age, giving an interesting account of his journey to Kansas, and his early experience there. Among other incidents he relates that he attended the first wedding that ever occurred in Lawrence. Through the kindness of his son, Prof. W. I. Marshall, now of Chicago, we have a copy of this letter.

Mrs. L. M. Buck, now doing business at 304½ Main street in this city, spent two years in Kansas, and is



quite familiar with the social and political features of the state, as they appeared twenty years ago.

Frank H. Snow, formerly principal of the Fitchburg high school, has been a resident of Kansas about thirty years. He first entered the state university of Lawrence as a professor of natural science, and is now chancellor of that great institution.

Anna Hayward, now Mrs. George H. Chapman, went out with Prof. Snow in September, 1866, and remained there about two years in the family of Gov. Robinson. She could hardly be called one of the pioneers, but during her brief residence in Kansas she heard much of its tragic history, and saw something of its wonderful development.

Leverett W. Spring, first pastor of the Rollstone church in this city, went to Kansas in 1876, and was five years pastor of the Plymouth church, Lawrence, one of the first, if not the oldest church in the state. He was afterwards five years professor of English literature in Kansas state university, and is now in the chair of English literature in Williams college, Williamstown, Mass.

Prof. Spring has written a very interesting book, entitled "Kansas," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, a copy of which may be found in our public library.

In 1856 William Phillips, special correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, published a book entitled the "Conquest of Kansas." This book is recognized as a fair and impartial history of the first two years' struggle between the free-state pioneers and the border ruffians. Phillips speaks in high praise of the courage and sagacity of Robinson and the free-state leaders. Of Mrs. Robinson he says: "While she is a quiet and unassuming lady, she is as resolute as she is high-minded and intelligent."

Andrew H. Reeder was appointed first territorial governor, but as a whole his administration of affairs did

not satisfy the slave power at Washington, and he was succeeded by Gov. Wilson Shannon. During Shannon's administration Col. E. V. Sumner was in command at Fort Leavenworth. It will be remembered that it was Col. Sumner for whom G. A. R. Post 19 of Fitchburg was named. Col. Sumner, although a free-state man, was too much of a soldier to take sides other than to obey orders. His correspondence with Dr. Robinson evinced great confidence in the doctor's influence, and this confidence was reciprocated. Sumner was afterwards a major-general in the Union army.

The first territorial legislature, elected as it was by armed emissaries from Missouri, adopted the Missouri code of laws entire. They enacted a slave code that went beyond the model. To aid a fugitive slave was instant death, while to express an opinion adverse to slavery was a felony with a penalty of five years' imprisonment! The whole thing was an outrage without a parallel. Worst of all, these outrages were sanctioned by the territorial officers and recognized by the administration at Washington. What else could be expected, with Jefferson Davis secretary of war?

Dr. Robinson was first elected provisional governor under the Topeka constitution, January 15, 1856, afterwards arrested by territorial authority and imprisoned at Leecompton. His friends were anxious to rescue him, but he told them under no circumstances to permit themselves to fire upon the army or the flag of our common country. Robinson was finally released from imprisonment on a \$5000 bond, and continued to act as provisional governor.

The free-state legislature met at Topeka on July 4, 1857, but was dispersed by United States troops. It came together again in 1858, when the governor advised the continuation of the organization, but did not approve



resistance to the federal authority. An adjournment was taken, and that was the end of the Topeka legislature.

Through all these discouragements the free-state men, following the advice of Robinson, did not lose heart. They ignored the bogus laws of the pro-slavery legislature and maintained a commonwealth within a commonwealth. They did not resist the laws, but protested against their enforcement. Their motto was, "Let us suffer wrong if we must, but let us do no wrong."

When the time came to repeal the slave code, there was no slavery in Kansas. Their course was a masterpiece of diplomatic generalship. Convention had followed convention, election after election was held, and constitution after constitution was framed.

There was the Pawnee legislature, the Topeka legislature, the Lecompton territorial government, and the Leavenworth state government, each by turns in full operation as far as they were allowed.

Speaking of the frequent elections at this time, a western orator once said: "My fellow-citizens, kind and benignant Nature always responds to the habits of men, and I now predict that the next generation in Kansas will be *born* with ballot boxes, so that they can vote whenever they take a notion."

Prof. Spring, in his volume entitled "Kansas," says the career of the free-state party under the lead of Gov. Robinson, who projected and inspired the whole tactical plan of its operations, has no parallel in American history.

The waves of political excitement began to roll high throughout the northern states during the four years from 1856 to 1860. In the presidential campaign of 1860 the slavery question was uppermost in every political discussion.

Several ineffectual attempts were made before the state was admitted into the Union. The final act saw

consummated January 29, 1861. While Kansas was trying to get into the Union, South Carolina and the rebellious states were trying to get out. Referring to these events, the *New York Tribune* of January 29, 1861, says: "The house, yesterday, passed the senate bill for the admission of Kansas, which thus becomes the thirty-fourth state of the Union and the nineteenth free state. The present generation is too near these events to see them in their true proportions; but in the future, in impartial history, the attempt to force slavery upon Kansas, and the violations of law and order, and of personal and political rights that were perpetrated in the attempt, will rank among the most outrageous and flagrant acts of tyranny in the annals of mankind."

From the 7th of October, 1854, when Andrew H. Reeder was first appointed governor, to the admission of Kansas into the Union, there were ten different governors or acting governors in the territory. Their brief careers form an important part of the tragic history of the state while under territorial government.

Gov. Geary gives a graphic picture of the situation as he found it. "I reached Kansas," he says, "and entered upon the discharge of my official duties in the most gloomy hour of her history. Desolation and ruin reigned on every hand; homes and firesides were deserted; the smoke of burning dwellings darkened the atmosphere; women and children, driven from their habitations, wandered over the prairies and among the woodlands, or sought refuge and protection among the Indian tribes. Such, without exaggeration, was the condition of the territory at the period of my arrival."

When the time came to squarely elect a governor by the people there was no need of a political canvass. There was virtually but one man for the place, and that one was Charles Robinson, the man who had done more

than any other to make Kansas a free state, the man in whose courage and wisdom the people had trusted through all these turbulent years. The election occurred on the 6th of December, 1859, but owing to the delay in admitting Kansas as a state, the oath of office was not administered till February 9, 1861.

Thus it came about that the pioneers from Fitchburg furnished the first governor of the new state. While Fitchburg has furnished several members of congress, this is the first instance where one of her citizens ever rose to the position of governor of a state.

Gov. Robinson, as the war governor, proved an able executive. His appointments, both civil and military, were seldom subject to adverse criticism. In concluding his first message, he said: "While it is the duty of each loyal state to see that equal and exact justice is done to the citizens of every other state, it is equally its duty to sustain the chief executive of the nation in defending the government from foes, whether from within or without, and Kansas, though last and least of the states in the Union, will ever be ready to answer the call of her country."

He was probably the first executive to foreshadow the policy which the federal authorities ultimately adopted in reference to slavery. During his administration, Kansas is said to have furnished more men, according to her population, for the suppression of the rebellion than any other state in the Union. At the end of two years he retired from the office of governor, but his political career was not yet ended. He was afterwards several times a candidate for public office, was elected representative to the state legislature in 1872, and to the state senate in 1876 and 1877. Whatever may be said of his personal or political peculiarities, it was always conceded that he was a man of marked ability, of unblemished character and spotless life.

The pioneers from Fitchburg were not only leaders in the cause of freedom in Kansas, but were also leaders in the cause of popular education. Very early in the settlement there was a movement towards a college in Lawrence—first by the Presbyterians, then by the Episcopalians, and later by the Congregationalists. These efforts were all unsuccessful, and finally the Wyandotte constitution, adopted in July, 1859, provided that no religious sect or sects should ever control any part of the common school or university funds of the state. By the act of admission into the Union the Wyandotte constitution became the constitution of Kansas.

Gov. Robinson's interest in the establishment of a school for higher education was very early manifested. As agent of the Emigrant Aid Society he undertook the erection of a school building on the site of the present law building of the state university. The work was discontinued on account of a difficulty concerning the title. Soon after, Mr. Amos A. Lawrence, for whom the infant city was named, set apart a fund of \$10,000 for the establishment of a college in Lawrence. Robinson being a particular friend of Mr. Lawrence, was made one of the custodians of this fund. Later on there was a congressional endowment of 46,000 acres of land for the benefit of a state university. The location was to be settled by the legislature.

Lawrence had long been regarded the literary metropolis of the state, at least by her own citizens, and by their efforts and contributions, aided by the Amos Lawrence fund, the university was finally located there. Gov. and Mrs. Robinson were generous benefactors of the university from the start. Their interest in the institution was not confined to gifts of money or land. They gave it time and thought, as well as personal service. The governor was for many years a member of the board of

regents. When the first faculty was chosen he proposed the name and secured the election of a young man from Fitchburg as professor of natural science. Prof. Frank H. Snow entered upon his work in this department, and succeeded so well that he was afterwards promoted to the chancellorship, the highest place in the university. As before stated, Rev. L. W. Spring, formerly of Fitchburg, was five years Professor of English Literature in this institution.

From the date of its organization in 1864 to the present time the university has continued to grow and prosper. It is claimed that it made as much progress in twenty-five years as did Harvard college in the first two hundred years of its existence. The faculty now consists of fifty-three members, with about nine hundred students. The equipment consists of eight buildings, with an apparatus of instruction valued at \$150,000. The university is a part of the public school system of Kansas, and is at present maintained by an annual appropriation of \$100,000 for current expenses.

Under date of April 21, 1896, Prof. Snow writes: "Gov. Charles Robinson was always closely identified with this university, and may be considered, more than any other man, its founder. He gave a tract of land, consisting of fifty acres, which constitutes our campus. He continually aided the institution, not only when a member of its board of regents, but at all other times, in securing favorable legislation, and in his will he made the university the heir to all his property. It is estimated that at least \$150,000 will be realized from this bequest."

Verily, the pioneers from Fitchburg have played an important part in the establishment and maintenance of this great institution of learning.

Gov. Robinson lived many years after the real heat and burden of the day were over. It is said of him that

he was always interesting and interested. The last years of his life were passed on his farm near Lawrence, where, with his entertaining and accomplished wife, he lived after the manner of a prosperous New England farmer till his death, which occurred August 17, 1894.

The *Lawrence Gazette* of August 23, 1894, had this to say of him: "No figure stands out so prominently on the pages of Kansas history as that of Charles Robinson, who through the struggle of the new territory, was true to the cause of freedom, conservative in council, radical in action, undaunted in his championship of right and his advocacy of a free state, fearless of peril to self, and yet through all loyal to the national flag."

His funeral was the largest ever seen in the city of his adoption. The attendance included nearly all the state officials and ex-governors. Rev. Dr. Howland, pastor of the Unitarian church in Lawrence, on whose roll of membership is the name of Charles Robinson, conducted the services and paid a touching tribute to his memory, of which the following is an extract: "One by one the pioneers of our beautiful commonwealth pass away. One by one the first actors in the Kansas conflict finish their work. We give back to the earth to-day our most eminent citizen. Forty years ago he began his work in Kansas. It is ended now, except as it lives in institutions and continues in the spirit and affection of the people."

In his later years Robinson became very much interested in historical matters. He was president of the State Historical Society previous to his resignation in the winter of 1881. In 1892, two years before his death, he published a work of nearly five hundred pages, entitled "The Kansas Conflict," in which the introductory writer says: "Any history of Kansas without Gov. Robinson as the prominent figure would be like the play of 'Hamlet' with *Hamlet* left out." He has an array of facts and



information that no other man has, without which any history of Kansas would be incomplete. In this work the closing chapter reads as follows: "Whatever may be the present or future of Kansas, she has done a work for the cause of freedom that is her crowning glory. She had an opportunity denied every other territory and state, and well did she improve it. The results of the territorial conflict are the inheritance of the state and Union, and the handful of pioneers who turned back the dark ways of tyranny from Kansas, and sent back slavery reeling in despair, 'to die amid its worshipers,' can well afford to rest from their labors, trusting to the present generation to see that no harm shall come to the heritage purchased by their labor and sufferings."

It is now thirty-five years since this gigantic struggle for freedom ended, and Kansas was admitted as a state. The political storm which was raging there from 1854 to 1860 extended throughout the whole country, and was only a prelude to the great war of the rebellion. The free-state pioneers, as we have seen, suffered hardships, imprisonment, and in many instances offered up their lives in the sacrifice. The pioneers from Fitchburg during this period were active, aggressive, patient and forbearing.

Gov. Robinson and his associates, aided by the patriotic impulses of Gov. Reeder, Gov. Geary, and some of the other territorial officers, contributed largely to the final solution of the unhappy controversy. After the state was admitted into the Union, and the South had taken up arms against the federal government, she furnished her full quota of men, and stood loyally by the flag.

During the eleven years, from the arrival of the first party of New England emigrants to the surrender of the last rebel in arms against the Union, there was in Kansas no absolute security against invasion and plunder. One hundred and eighty-three citizens of Lawrence were slain

in the Quantrell raid of 1863, including, as before mentioned, three pioneers from Fitchburg.

The close of the war found the state with a population but little in excess of what it contained when admitted to the Union. In 1861 it had 107,000 inhabitants, in 1865 only 140,000. After the war was over its rapid increase in population, wealth, internal improvements and educational facilities, was unparalleled. The census of 1890 shows a population of 1,423,000. When it is remembered that less than forty years previous this was a vast uncultivated territory, inhabited only by savages and untamed animals, this wonderful transformation seems almost like a fairy tale.

"The crime against Kansas," and the attempts to dissolve the Union by secession, might well be termed the confession of guilt and suicide of American slavery. The credit, however, of first securing freedom in the territory is due to the earnest men and women of New England, who, animated by firm and intelligent convictions and fearless devotion to a great cause, went there to make it their future home. Justice, though sometimes tardy in its work, will yet crown with highest honors the memory of these brave pioneers, who gave themselves and all they had to make their land in very deed "the homestead of the free."

In the great record of events, from the repeal of the Missouri Compromise to the close of the war of the Rebellion, the heroic deeds and eminent services of the free-state settlers fill a most conspicuous place. In the grand results which followed, and in view of the prominent part taken by her former residents, Fitchburg has abundant reason to feel proud of her pioneers in Kansas.

"Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,

The compact nucleus 'round which systems grow;

Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,

And whirls impregnate with the central glow."





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