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THE GETHSEMANE FACTOR: A HISTORICAL PORTRAIT
OF SAMUEL MEDARY OF OHIO AND AN ANALYSIS OF
THE RHETORICAL DILEMMA OF HIS CRISIS YEARS,
1861 - 1864.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1978

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1978
THE GETHSEMANE FACTOR: A HISTORICAL PORTRAIT OF
SAMUEL MEDARY OF OHIO AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE
RHETORICAL DILEMMA OF HIS CRISIS YEARS,
1861 - 1864
DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Tahlman Krumm, Jr., B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1978

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without complaint in order that I might finish what I had begun, go my unbounded love and gratitude. It is to them that I dedicate this work.
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PART I

In Defense of Historical Resurrection
CHAPTER I

The American Use of History

Americans have always used their history oddly. Perhaps to compensate for the lack of extended tradition, American history has been used with great zest as a source of myth and as a substitute for political theory. Through it, values, the meaning of the American experience, and charts for the future have all been sought...and found.

To that end, history has been conformed by some of its professionals to meet the needs of convenience and the demands of prejudice of whatever ilk. All too often history has been made fashionably relative.

No period in American history, moreover, has been so extensively reworked as the Civil War period.

This great break in the continuity of the American experience has generated more myth, has given rise to more perversions of the six essential uses of all history (that is: to instruct, explain, exhort, celebrate, judge and preserve), than any other.

This has come to be in part because the Civil War was so decidedly a break in America's tradition of unity. It was a historical happening that never nestled comfortably with the rest of the American myth.
Much of the written history of the Civil War is of heroes and villains whose characters and stripes vary according to the predispositions of the author.

In the case of the Civil War, observes Yale historian C. Vann Woodward, "Neither the North's image of the South's past nor the South's image of the North's past bears more than slight resemblance to the truth unearthed by historians after years of investigation. Yet each image persists fragmentarily in the public mind...." (1)

History has always been vulnerable to such perpetuated perversions. Some of the reasons for those perversions David Hackett Fischer has catalogued in his cynical book, Historians' Fallacies. (2) Some deserve special attention, particularly those Fischer calls the pragmatic, aesthetic and fortuitous fallacies.

Fischer describes the pragmatic fallacy as the selection of immediately and directly useful facts in the service of a social cause. It represents, argues Fischer, no more than an attempt to combine scholarship with a social manifesto. The result of such history is a functional fairy tale.

The aesthetic fallacy is a variation of degree, not of kind. Fischer suggests that historians guilty of aesthetically fallacious history are those who succumb to the need to produce beautiful history. They opt for beautiful facts to build their stories at the expense of those facts
that are functional to the empirical problem at hand.

Fortuitous fallacies are committed by those writing history who abdicate their responsibilities of rational selection and allow the task to be performed for them by time and accident.

All of Fischer's fallacies seem to have played a part in the non-history of Samuel A. Medary -- Ohio educator, journalist, politician and statesman -- a man who, during his lifetime, made a difference.

The facts of his life have for all intents and purposes been lifted from the national record with incredible precision, the surgical strokes of pragmatists, aesthetes, and later by scholars of fortuity.

The pragmatists and aesthetes have been concerned primarily with a tidy historical picture. The presence of Medary, a vocal Northerner in opposition to the Civil War, would clearly make that difficult. The scholars of fortuity simply haven't bothered to retrace old ground in search of history's untidy participants.

It cannot be known how many other Samuel Medarys there are waiting to reclaim their rightful places in the national memory. In all likelihood there are others.

But the fact of Samuel Medary and the fact that he virtually disappears from historical writings after 1870 should give pause to historians so eager lately to answer the new methodological call for total, cultural histories,
emotive histories, psychohistories and the like.

The arguments for these 'fresh' approaches are many, but all resemble in spirit and tenor the one made by professor James Carey, director of the Institute for Communications Research at the University of Illinois.

Writing for the first issue of *Journalism History*, Prof. Carey argued for a new historical approach because the old one, as he put it, "is exhausted; it has done its intellectual work. One more history written against the background of the whig interpretation would not be wrong -- just redundant. Much journalism history is now devoted to proving the indubitable...it is moribund and to pursue it further is to guarantee dead ends and the solemn reproduction of the achieved... We are suffering from what, in another context, Morris Janowitz has called the 'dead hand of competence.'" (3)

As attractive a proposition as that call for new directions might well be for some, it must still be remembered that there are many historians of various purposes and directions who remain, as Henry Steele Commager observes, "campfollowers of victorious armies. Knowing which side is going to win,... they instinctively ally themselves with the winning side; they look for explanations of what triumphed and ignore the evidence of the other side." (4)

What all this seems to suggest is that either before or while the history professionals move on to panoramic
themes, they ought to make sure that the parts of that panorama have been soundly treated, that there are no more Samuel Medarys left to salvage.
Notes to Chapter I


CHAPTER II
American Journalism History: The State of the Art

What is sometimes true of professionally-wrought history in-the-large is much oftener true of the history of journalism which can lay claim only here and there to a professional historian as the author of its past.

Again, Carey has argued that the encyclopedic tracings of the history of the press coupled with later interpretative studies have, together, done their work. (1) The Whigish judgments about inevitable progress and growth have all been made. What remains for journalism historians, Carey suggests, is little more than the task of reproving the proven.

To revitalize a moribund enterprise, Carey urges a quick and speedy end to redocumentation of journalism's record and the adoption of a new focus on what he called cultural history and others term emotive history. In either case, it involves the imaginative recreation of "the particular constellation of attitudes, emotions, motives and expectations that were experienced" (2) during an event or period of the past. To Carey, the objective of cultural history is the "recovery of past forms of imagination, of historical consciousness." (3) The cultural history of journalism ought to attempt, Carey concludes, "to capture
that reflexive process wherein modern consciousness has been created by the symbolic form known as the report and how in turn modern consciousness finds institutionalized expression as journalism." (4)

Carey's call for a new historical direction is a persuasive one, albeit, from many a historian's standpoint, a venture far too speculative to be made into legitimate history. It is one thing to weave an imaginative picture of the past and quite another to capture the qualities of living, feeling and acting in another time. Still, the proposed new direction has merit, even if it should fail, for any new perspective, however gained and however tentative, contributes to the refinement of man's knowledge of a vanished past. There is, in sum, nothing wrong in trying something new.

What is distressing about Carey's appeal, however, is his justification for it. Carey reasoned that "the dead hand of competence" had beset journalism history, that the factual foundation of the history of journalism is complete and, by implication, that the interpretative studies of that factual foundation are so incisive as to leave no room for more than a decorative "literary cupola" (5) here and a "vaulted arch" (6) there in future writing.

To claim that the dead hand of competence has beset any aspect of historical inquiry is patently naive. History deals in vanished probabilities. It is the end product of
a search through what remains of an unrecoverable past --
documents which are never complete and the accounts of
witnesses which are never perfect and seldom accurate. Be­
tween the search and the product lie the selecting and
verifying of all that a historian deems appropriate to his
task. It is a very subjective business. And in the end,
all that historians may claim is the probability of their
resurrected truths, truths that are judged to be probable
not by any ultimate standard but by how well they correspond
to verifiable externals and how well they cohere to an
established pattern.

The margin for error (and if not error, then inexact­
itude) is enormous. The more professional the historian,
of course, the more he tries to reduce that margin through
rigorous scholarship. But the actuality of past time and
the scholarly recreation of history never converge. That
is especially true of journalism history.

Until the 1940s and the first edition of Frank Luther
Mott's monumental American Journalism (7) and later Edwin
Emery's thematic The Press and America, (8) journalism
history could lay few claims to having been the result of
trained scholarship. The early histories of journalism
were written for the most part by journalists who brought
with them to the discipline little more than enthusiasm,
and sometimes not even that. Many brought with them to
their new work a kind of "city desk mentality" (9) that
was best equipped to focus not on the conceptual but rather on the ingredients of front page play. What was not readily accessible to them by way of background they borrowed from whatever secondary sources were at hand. Few stopped long enough to question the validity or veracity of their sources. And seldom did these journalists comme historians attend to the notion that written history can be as relatively wrong as right, or that the victorious usually write history, or that historians, too, have motives and are as capable of interested histories as disinterested ones. The net result was that some awfully bad history based upon equally bad history was written and then rewritten until the peculiar bends and twists of the original record became incontrovertible fact. While Mott and Emery had the professional background to write solid history (and for the most part they did), they, too, had to rely on earlier works to flesh out their exhaustive treatments of the sweep of American journalism. Neither man had the time or the available resources to explore the great sweep of journalism in America in the original. So, in their work as well as in the work of those who have followed them can be found traces of that old-time history fashioned by men of the city desk.

That city desk mentality may well explain how two men -- Wilbur F. Storey of the Chicago Times and Samuel A. Medary of the Columbus, Ohio, Crisis -- came to occupy the
places they have in the history of journalism.

Storey's tale is a very familiar one. As a Copperhead during the Civil War, as a Northerner with Southern sympathies, and as a big city editor, Storey was destined to attract attention. But he is remembered less for his unpopular stand on the war issue than for his self-serving excesses as a journalist. In fact, Storey's most recent biographer, Justin E. Walsh, goes further by calling them "incendiary excesses." (10) Still, he has been singled out by journalism historians to represent the Copperhead movement. By virtue of his character, comprised of all the ingredients of front page play, Storey imposed himself upon city desk historians and thereby assured himself a place in history, a place that has sustained itself over the years despite his editorials that "overflowed with personal hatred and malice," (11) despite news writing punctuated by a "steady barrage of the most scurrilous and vulgar epithets known to the English language," (12) and despite conduct that demonstrated time and again his incapacity for "both prudence and patriotism which should mark a man with his potential to influence opinion for good or ill in the midst of the greatest crisis his country had faced." (13)

Much of what journalism history documents of the Copperhead movement and of Civil War journalism's role in it is presented through the gloss of the Storey aberration.
Yet that same movement counted among its members men of stature and conviction, too, men like Samuel Medary.

Medary came to Ohio in the summer of 1825 as a young man, well-educated for his time and ambitious enough for any. In the course of his 40 years in Ohio he founded two newspapers, two special interest publications, served in both houses of the state legislature, rose to the top of the Ohio Democratic Party, was instrumental in the national party's nomination of James Buchanan for the presidency in 1856, and for that was appointed by Buchanan as governor of the Kansas and Minnesota territories.

In 1860, with war between the North and South imminent, Medary resigned his political post in bleeding Kansas to return to Columbus and journalism in the hope that his writing might somehow preserve the American union.

Forty-two days after South Carolina announced her secession from that union and just two months before the first shots of the war were fired on Fort Sumter, the first edition of The Crisis was published. (14)

Medary brought to that publication a vigorous belief in the peaceful settlement of the slavery and states' rights issues. He was quick to concede that North and South alike had made appalling mistakes in the months that led up to secession and fighting. He was most critical in his five-column, eight-page weekly of the South's rush to arms as an answer to the problems it faced. But he viewed
the North as carrying an equal measure of blame, first for temporizing in negotiations with the South, and then for electing Lincoln, a politician Medary saw as caring more for the future of the Republican Party than for the union. Medary also argued passionately that civil war was not the way to resolve the slavery issue in a country that could only function with the blessings of its people. What the war most certainly would do, Medary suggested, would be to cause inestimable anguish and suffering on both sides. He did not, in short, buy the Lincoln argument that the Union could not survive half slave and half free. It was a matter for each state to decide in its own way and for its own reasons, just as the original thirteen colonies had done, an argument not at all alien to the North during this most written about of American periods. Medary argued that neither Congress nor the Lincoln administration had the right to deny that authority to states that were constitutionally guaranteed sovereignty. In the language of reason and commitment Medary argued that point and for the preservation of civil liberties -- as he perceived those liberties -- until his death in November of 1864.

During those war days, The Crisis was accorded national acclaim as one of the most influential voices for those within the Copperhead movement across the East and Midwest who seemed to be standing voiceless on the wrong side of a great national issue. (15)
Like Storey, Medary was subjected to the threats of local, national and military authorities. Yet unlike Storey, Medary had to endure the threat of physical retribution (his editorial offices were twice sacked—once by the military and again later by a civilian mob). And unlike Storey, Medary was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of subversion for advocating draft resistance. And unlike Storey, Medary died and was promptly forgotten as a man who eloquently summed up the nature of his enduring commitment to peace in the March 11, 1863 edition of *The Crisis*:

> Of all disorders we despise those among neighbors the most—of all wars we hold those called civil wars in the greatest abhorrence, and during a life time, we have denounced them—abhorred them as a matter of principle, and as we loved country and the family of man, we have ever shrunk with loathing from the man who, in public or private position, dares so far forget God and humanity, as to advocate either local disorders or national bloodletting.

And in the June 1, 1864, edition of *The Crisis*, Medary wrote:

> Against all this we have wielded what force an independent press could bring to bear, not for ourselves and posterity alone, not for Democrats exclusively, but for all men, for every citizen, for mankind, for all must suffer alike in the end. If a man cannot read a paper in favor of peace, of law, of civil and just government, what can he read? Our whole labors have been devoted to the protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
Walsh, Storey's biographer, described Medary as a "political theoretician of the first rank" (16) whose greatest fear was that he might outlive constitutional liberty. He, of course, did not. He may have come closer to outliving his reputation, however. By 1870 few histories even mentioned the Medary name. As a non-victor in one of history's struggles, Medary was forced into historical exile while non-victor Wilbur F. Storey, endowed with a front page vocabulary and some very self-serving commitments, lived on.

Medary's neglect does a serious injustice to this particular brush stroke of journalism history which has yet to find itself overburdened with distinction. His neglect should also suggest the possibility that lurking elsewhere on musty pages of discarded histories are men like Medary equally deserving of a professional resurrection and review.

If it is the judgment of journalism historians that a move in the direction Carey has called for is appropriate, so be it. But as the profession moves forward, perhaps it should also move back to retrace old ground, to review and re-judge those who already occupy exalted places in the discipline's historical foundation, and to search anew for others who might be ready now to either join them or replace them.

The problem of journalism history today may well be less with Carey's dead hand of competence than with the
glove of city desk superficiality that has kept the scholarly hand from doing its proper work all these years.
Notes to Chapter II


2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 27.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

6. Ibid., p. 4.


11. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

12. Ibid., p. 172.

13. Ibid., p. 172.

14. The first issue of *The Crisis* was published Jan. 31, 1861.


CHAPTER III

On Dreams, the Media, and Eloquent Aberrations

But is the calling into question of a long-standing historical judgment on the merits of a single player on history's vast stage really sufficient justification for that player's resurrection?

Even if history were not, in part, an enterprise designed to illumine the complexity of events and trends that have led up to and shaped contemporary society; even if it were not, in part, aimed at capturing the flavors of an age nor giving recognition to the behavioral deflections that accompany every discernible historic pattern and trend, the answer would still be, in my judgment, an emphatic "Yes!"

Editor and publisher Norman Cousins penned an appeal of his own recently to historians, reminding them that history's movement within broad margins has been and ever shall be "connected to human desires," (1) and that dreams, not predictions, are man's great energizers.

"Those dreams," Cousins wrote, "may at times seem murky and beyond realization, but dreams must command the respect of historians. Dreams put human beings in motion." (2)
If history is to make room for dreams, if it is to discipline itself to judge greatness on the basis of quality of life as well as quality of outcomes, then Samuel Medary deserves a second consideration.

But the study of other than history is enhanced by a Medarian exhumation. In addition to being a problem of and for history, Medary and his life illustrate and lend substance to two significant issues in the study of communications phenomena, the first of which deals directly with the nature of the medium of the newspaper in 19th Century America.

It has become popular of late to view the media of mass communication as possessed of great influences as media, apart from the messages and the men that gave substance and shape to them. It is a valid view for this century, a media century of ever-increasing complexity, in which various mediums compete with one another and, in doing so, exhibit, each in its own way, peculiar media capabilities and propensities. Media consumers now may well pick and choose between and among media in an effort to satisfy at any given moment a particular need, a special interest, better met by one medium than another. Nevertheless, there have been other media times, simpler times, when the space between men, messages, and media was not nearly so great. In those not-so-distant other times the medium of print served as extensions of man, not in the McLuhanesque sense
of the term but as extensions of the cognitions and purposes of man.

America of the 19th Century was one such time, a time of personalized journalism. Newspapers then were in a literal sense extensions of the commitments of their editors and publishers. As such, the media were less important as messages themselves than as instruments of opinion and argumentation.

One key philosophical notion of that more optimistic age was that truth, as the argument went, would out, providing the marketplace of ideas remained open. Out of the swirl of competing ideas, attitudes, and values those that were right and true and just would ultimately be apprehended by rational men. For a man of commitment, then, the key to persuading others was to corner the market with sound argument; that is, he either might offer argument attractive to media owned by others, or he might become a media owner himself. As has been said, it was indeed a simpler time.

There likewise existed an interesting social contract, unwritten, unspoken, but nonetheless understood, between media managers and consumers. The understanding was that newspapers represented certain political, social, and economic interests and that the content of those papers would reflect those interests. So, newspapers, the discursive medium, argued their cases in the public forum, and as they argued they filtered the events, ideas, and
issues of their day, discarding those that somehow did not square with their respective causes. With few exceptions, the press as an institution reflected in its columns the "biased interpretations common to most news accounts of the day." (3)

Then, as now, media were readily accessible to an eager public. As an agenda-setting medium with the ability to focus on issues and ideas, in fact to argue forcefully for or against them, the press of mid-19th Century America did most certainly have an impact on its audiences, but that impact resulted not from the presentation of raw information. It was rather the result of pre-packaged opinion offered audiences who understood better than their modern counterparts exactly what it was the media was about. There was nothing fancy about those media arguments. Still to come were sophisticated make-up and layout techniques, visuals, and refined headlining. The press simply suspended in time and space arguments--from--commitment for all those interested in attending to them. But by freezing argument the press made ideas tangible, and that one capability made the press an influence to be reckoned with. It was, after all, the only media game in town.
America of the 1850s, however, became less and less amenable to argument in all its variety as events pushed the nation closer to civil war. Between 1861 and 1865 the public media forum for debate all but ceased to function. Into that ambience Samuel Medary intruded early in 1861.

Medary was neither new to Ohio nor to journalism. The Quaker educator had moved to Ohio from his native Pennsylvania in 1825 and in three short years had founded a newspaper in Bethel. On the masthead of The Ohio Sun Medary averred his paper would be forever "unawed by the influence of the rich, the great or the noble" and that "the people must be heard and their rights respected." (4) Beyond that commitment was a like commitment to Jacksonian democracy. The paper boosted the political fortunes of Andrew Jackson with such force that Democrats in Columbus took notice. In 1834, Medary was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives. The following year he was appointed to the Senate and re-appointed the year after that.

As his reputation grew, so did Medary rise within the party's ranks. He was named to every state delegation to the Democratic National Convention between 1844 and 1856. As a reward for his efforts on behalf of James Buchanan in that latter year, Medary was appointed governor of the Minnesota Territory and later of the Kansas Territory. In 1860, with pressures building between North and South, with Lincoln as the Republican presidential nominee on an
anti-slavery ticket, and with armed conflict imminent, Medary resigned his post in Kansas, a state which had already done its share of bleeding over slavery, and returned to Columbus to start a weekly newspaper, the expressed purpose of which was to be the preservation of the American Union.

Forty-two days after South Carolina announced her secession from that Union and just two months before the first shots of the war were fired on Fort Sumter, the maiden issue of The Crisis came off the press.

Medary had returned to Ohio carrying a legacy of Democratic commitment, a commitment to the party of Jefferson, and Stephen Douglas. The Democratic Party had established over the years a dismal record regarding Negro equality, so dismal in fact that the party out of power, the Republicans, had made that issue their own. Ohio, with a Negro population of less than two percent at the start of the war, had become a Republican state in Medary's absence. It was hardly the time to commence a persuasive campaign favoring states' rights, a peaceful settlement of the slavery question, and the preservation of civil and constitutional liberties. Nevertheless, that is exactly what Medary proposed in the first edition of The Crisis. In the lead article of that edition Medary pointed out the paper's purpose: "The Crisis will fully and thoroughly sift the great issues that hang like a cloud of night over
our common country... The Crisis will discuss the issues at great length and without gloves. I will speak freely of men and measures and call things by their right name." (5)

Medary's argument was that war could in no way resolve the issue of slavery in a country that could function only if it had the blessings of its people. What the war most certainly would do, Medary wrote, was to create debt, misery, and suffering for millions on both sides and that the ultimate victim of civil strife would be liberty itself. He viewed liberty as already having suffered a setback when the Lincoln administration denied to the states the right to determine whether they should be slave or free, a right extended by charter to the original thirteen states of the Union. Moreover, Lincoln had endorsed a military plan soon after the outset of fighting suspending the writ of habeas corpus in order to detain without charges those held to have provided aid and comfort to the enemy.

Even worse in Medary's view was the press censorship authority assumed by the military commanders of the Ohio Department. He decried such examples of the erosion of civil and constitutional liberties in issue after issue of *The Crisis*. "But we claim," he wrote, "the right to discuss public matters, and that freely, and unrestrained—we claim also the right to be a Democrat, as we understand the meaning of that word, and we claim the right as a
citizen and conductor of the public press, to give our interpretation of the law and the Constitution. In vindicating these rights for ourselves, we vindicate them for all others besides." (6)

In the end, after years of official abuse both psychic and physical and with the devastation of a protracted illness having taken its toll, Medary wrote a final rationale for The Crisis: "Against all this we have wielded what force an independent press could bring to bear, not for ourselves and posterity alone, not for Democrats exclusively, but for all men, for every citizen, for mankind, for all must suffer alike in the end. If a man cannot read a paper in favor of peace, of law, of civil and just government, what can he read? Our whole labors have been devoted to the protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." (7) Medary died in November of 1864 convinced that he had seen the death of American liberty.

To say that Medary's arguments did not fare well in the marketplace is to understate the case. He had, in this case, failed to alter outcomes. He had likewise failed to reach the minds of people whose cognitive maps had become too inclusive and resistant to countenance change. But he had started late.

Walter Lippmann has written of what Medary faced when he finally elected to introduce his arguments to the public. "The symbols of public opinion, in times of moderate
security, are subject to check and comparison and argument. They come and go, coalesce, and are forgotten, never organizing perfectly the emotion of the whole group. There is, after all, just one human activity left in which whole populations accomplish a sacred union. It occurs in those middle phases of a war when fear, pugnacity, and hatred have either secured the complete dominion of the spirit, either to crush every other instinct or to enlist it, and before weariness is felt." (8) Itself the product of fictions and facts, the Civil War touched some part of every Ohioan's life. Those fictions and facts, and the pain of their reality made Medary's arguments seem bland in comparison. And Medary's culture had long since done its selecting, arranging, and tracing, and had already gotten in the habit of behaving accordingly.

Still, Medary brought with him to the media the notion that the press had the power to restructure environmental maps. To borrow from Kenneth Boulding, Medary had sought through argument to strike at the nucleus of the prevailing image of those war years. It had been his hope that reaching that essence of image with sound argument would affect changes in his culture's behavior. He recognized that the press of his day was a discursive medium, a reflective medium, one suited to ideas. And he was optimistic that his ideas would compete favorably with others in the public forum. The outcome of Medary's campaign notwithstanding,
his approach is worthy of attention, for in four brief years he managed to provide ample evidence in microcosm of the sum and substance of 19th Century journalism in America. The medium was a channel through which men argued the issues of the day with one another.

To make the most of the press's potential to reach people and to persuade them, Medary filtered out all messages save those relating to the question of liberty. By amplifying that one issue at the expense of all others, Medary entered the marketplace of ideas using his medium at its best, as an instrument of focused debate on a large social scale. The judges were the general population.

Medary's opponent in Columbus was the Ohio State Journal.

The pattern of Medary's news presentation fit very comfortably into Waldo W. Braden and Earnest Brandenburg's definition of argumentation as "the process by which a communicator presents a probable truth or establishes the acceptability of a conclusion with the aim of securing belief or action. His materials -- reasons (premises) and supporting facts -- are used in this process of drawing conclusions." (9)

Medary's use of media, indeed the way it was generally used, went one step beyond a simple rhetorical situation involving a speaker and an audience. The Medary phenomenon involved a three-celled model -- an audience, the Ohio State Journal arguing one position, and Medary's Crisis the
other. The classic debate situation. Two opposing communicators and a common audience.

That Medary failed may reflect on his abilities as an effective debater, but more probably his failure speaks to circumstances to which Medary had come too late. In any event, in Medary's time, at least, the medium was the man and the man was the message.

As a man with a medium, a message, and an enormous commitment, Medary sought to move mountains.

In the Hofferian sense, Medary's means were words, reason, and his end a social movement, a focused collective behavior that would halt what he viewed as the disintegration of the American Union, and it is in the light of Eric Hoffer's wisdom that the Medary phenomenon can most fruitfully be examined. Within that Hofferian framework of words, men, believers and movements, the Medary life speaks most eloquently and, perhaps, more to the ages than to the narrow band of time during which he lived.

But true to the Medary pattern, the man's eloquence represents a deflection, an aberration, of the Hoffer model, a difference to be treated in the final chapter of this work and to be called the Gethsemane factor.
Notes to Chapter III


2. Ibid.


5. The Crisis, Jan. 31, 1861.

6. Ibid., June 1, 1864.

7. Ibid.


PART II

A Historical Portrait
CHAPTER IV

Veiled Beginnings

At the turn of the 19th century the newly born American nation was only just beginning the stretching and flexing of its body politic in preparation for an inevitable, though certainly uncharted, future.

In the century's first year that body politic had been energized over the passage earlier of the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798.

Ostensibly, the act had been an effort by President John Adams to keep fledgling America neutral in the mini-war between France and England. But the net result of the act was the silencing of press criticism of the Adams administration, criticism that admittedly had for seven years bordered on the scurrilous and irresponsible. During those seven years the press had been publishing under the assumption that the worst that could be imagined about public figures was news fit to print.

During the life of the act, from July of 1798 to March of 1801, 25 editors were called to the bar on charges of seditious libel. Not coincidentally, all those indicted were Jeffersonian Republicans who had been sharply critical of Adams' Federalist regime. Ten were convicted. Six
served prison sentences. The constitutionality of the act, despite the broad press freedom guaranteed in the national charter, was never challenged in court.

The American citizenry, more than a little distressed by what it viewed as an infringement of its constitutional rights, looked in 1800 to Thomas Jefferson as the harbinger of freedom from oppressive government.

Prior to his election, Jefferson, in a letter to one Gideon Granger of Connecticut, restated the essential points of his political creed with its emphasis on strong state governments and a subservient federal authority. Jefferson wrote: "The true theory of our Constitution is surely the wisest and best, that the states are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything regarding foreign nations." (1)

And in his inaugural address on March 4, 1801, Jefferson called for a restoration of harmony and affection to the nation's social intercourse. "And let us reflect," Jefferson said, "that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions." (2)

So stood Thomas Jefferson on that March day, a day that came exactly one week after the birth of a child to the Jacob Medary family of Montgomery Square, Montgomery
County, Pennsylvania, located west and slightly north of Philadelphia near Norristown.

Those self-same Jeffersonian precepts were to prove later to be most influential in the development of the political thinking of the Medary's new son.

While Samuel Medary's appearance on February 25, 1801, no doubt mattered greatly to a small circle of family and friends, mention of that arrival did not make the February 27 issue of the Norristown Herald and Weekly Advertiser, the county's principal paper.

Among the stories given prominence in that issue was the one under a prominently placed headline which read: "Thomas Jefferson, Esq. has Elected (Sic) President of the U. States." (3)

The story which followed explained it all. "After thirty-five votes by states, is said that Maryland and Vermont (which had been heretofore divided) gave each a vote for Mr. Jefferson, making ten states, or more than the least constitutional majority." (4)

The story sanguinely continued: "Aaron Burr, Esq. will consequently be the Vice-President." (5)

Accounts of Medary's early years, like so much else of the distant past, are more whispers than clarion calls, a fact which lends further support to the anguished assertions of scholars and academicians such as Harold L. Nelson
of the University of Wisconsin that, at best, the work of history is not a wholly tidy operation.

"In history, it is widely agreed," says Nelson, "the end which is sought is short of absolute truth about the past. Conclusiveness, finality, certitude -- these are not likely to be in the historian's lexicon of what he can know about the past. There are many reasons for his eschewing a knowledge expressed in absolute terms, and not the least of these is that there is both too little and too much available to him -- too little record of some events to permit more than a sketchy account, too much record of others to enable him to grasp all its implications." (6) Such is the case with Medary.

An amalgam of various accounts of those early Medary years, however, suggest the Medary line was old America, dating back to the arrival of William Penn, and unalterably Quaker. (7)

There is also uniform agreement that the circumstances of the Jacob Medary family were both proper and modest.

Writes one chronicler of early 19th century Montgomery County: "His (Samuel's) father, Jacob Medary, was a farmer, in very moderate circumstances, who lived in Montgomery Township for a number of years." (8)

So moderate were those circumstances, in fact, that in April of 1820 the tenant farm worked by the Medary family and all the family possessions "were levied on by
Constable George Neavel upon a landlord's warrant issued by Esq. Giffin, to satisfy Ingels' (the landowner's) claim for a year's rent, $275, and also another execution for debt. The sale was stayed, upon an arrangement by which an assignment was made to Cadwaller Foulke and others." (9)

Medary's education, such as it was, appears to have been taken largely at the Quaker-run Free School of Montgomery Square, where teachers' salaries approached $160 a year and permitted the securing of "more competent teachers than other schools in the neighborhood." (10)

Medary seems to have learned his lessons well, for, as old friend William Chapin recalled, "when I first made his acquaintance about 1819-1820, he was teaching the school at Gwynedd meeting. He was fond of reading, and eagerly went through the newspapers at Edward Jenkins' store. The identity of the different writers awakened his curiosity, and aroused his desire to write, too. I encouraged him to try, and he did so, sending his first article to David Sower, at Norristown, for insertion in the Herald, over the signature 'Sylvanus.' Much to his gratification, and somewhat to his surprise, it was promptly printed, and he then wrote frequently, sometimes contributing poetry over the signature of 'Arion.'" (11)

About 1822, continues Chapin, "he left Gwynedd for the South, going to Montgomery County, Virginia. (12) There he married, and later determined to try his fortunes in the
West. On his way down the Ohio River, by advice of a fellow passenger on the steamboat, he determined to settle in Ohio" (13), where Medary "soon became conspicuous by his writing, and speaking at political meetings, strongly maintaining the Democratic cause, as represented by General Jackson." (14)
Notes to Chapter IV


3. Norristown Herald and Weekly Advertiser, February 27, 1801, p. 3.

4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 3.

6. This quotation was taken from an address by Dr. Nelson to the National Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism on August 27, 1963.

7. Much of the material dealing with Medary's early years has been drawn from the second edition of a local Pennsylvania history entitled Historical Collections Relating to Gwynedd written by Montgomery County resident Howard M. Jenkins and published by him in Philadelphia in 1897. A copy of the work, perhaps the only copy by now, is located in the stacks of the Montgomery County (PA) Historical Society in Norristown. Other helpful sources include a copy of a speech delivered by Medary W. Stark, great-grandson of Samuel Medary, before the fifth annual dinner meeting of the Ohio Journalism Hall of Fame on October 26, 1932, and an article on Medary submitted by its author, Lyder L. Unstad, to the Minnesota Historical Society for publication but never used by the society. Both the Stark speech and the unused Unstad article are on file in the Minnesota Historical Society archives in St. Paul, Minnesota.


9. Ibid., footnote 1, p. 432.

10. Ibid., p. 397.
11. Ibid., p. 432.

12. Gwynedd is the original Welsh name for what was to become Norristown and Montgomery County.


CHAPTER V

An Activist Unveiled: Early Ohio Years in Clermont County

Once within the boundaries of Ohio, a 22-year-old state within the American Union, the 24-year-old Medary becomes less enigmatic historically, though his private life, save for very small collections of personal correspondence held by the Ohio, Minnesota and Kansas historical societies, remains very much his own, a dimension shielded from public scrutiny even as Medary grew ever more a part of the public scene.

Nonetheless, the first few months on Ohio soil were far from auspicious ones for Medary and his wife of nearly two years, Eliza. (1)

Medary, as one account has it, was just "another lad who... arrived in Bethel in east central Clermont County penniless and found aid. The friendly folk of the village helped him open a school...." (2)

Those friendly folk lived in a community with a curious and interesting history of its own.

Bethel was founded in 1797 by one Obed Denham of New Jersey who had purchased sight unseen 1,500 acres of the Virginia Military District, and the Honorable Mr. Denham was
for his time far from circumspect on the issue of slavery, an issue that would divide two of its leading citizens as well as the entire State of Ohio sometime later.

In the deed, authored by Denham, that established Bethel, was the following language: "... two in-lots for the use of the Baptist Church, who do not hold slaves, nor commune at the Lord's table with those who do practice such tyranny over their fellow creatures...." (3)

Bethel was later to become an important station along the route of the Underground Railroad, a staging area, in fact, for movement of escaped slaves toward the Quaker settlements of Clinton County, and, from there, north.

It was in that not unfriendly ambience that Medary, teaching school once again, and his wife found themselves. Consistent with that friendliness, the Medarys found accommodations to tide them over with the Simpson family, a family of no particular note save that a Simpson daughter had married Jesse R. Grant and would soon give birth of a son, Ulysses S. (4)

While teaching school helped the Medarys make ends meet, the lure of the press, already a passion, was about to become irresistible.

Less than a year after arriving in Bethel, Medary penned a rationale for journalism entitled "Newspapers and Periodicals" which appeared in the local press of Clermont County. Using the pseudonym 'Rusticus,' Medary not only posited an
argument for what was to become his profession but also unveiled some of his substance in the process, substance suggesting Medary was a man of many interests, held great stock in fundamental principles, saw education as an essential human pursuit, and was an unqualified advocate of the American experiment, the nation's institutions and her people.

In that early article Medary wrote:

There is not a nation in the world that abounds with newspapers and periodicals equal to the United States. And the number, which is now immense, is rapidly increasing in every part of the Union. This speaks a strong language in favor of our free institutions. A nation become (sic) happy and virtuous in the same degree that knowledge and the sciences are disseminated: -- They are the only sure basis on which to found the great system of republicanism. A man may be considered a scholar and a deep theologian, and yet, his mind may be contracted and his views illiberal. He has pored (sic) over his musty volumes in his closet, and studied mankind centuries ago, when nations were governed by ignorance, and kings by superstition. He is unfit for present life; he lives among the ancients, or is entirely wrapped up in the prejudice of a party. The philosopher, the divine, and the man of science become useful in society, according as they possess general information of coexisting and passing events. They will discover that there is much to blame, and much to admire, in almost any community under heaven. Their views thereby become more liberal; their minds expand, and a just estimate is made of virtue and merit wherever it is found.

The narrow-minded may ask, how are we to become informed of the circumstances of the yesterdays and todays? An answer is at hand: read the newspapers, and you will not only be made acquainted with the less affairs of the world, but those also, that are of the most vital importance to nations and empires.

Every individual should be acquainted, at least, with the affairs of our own nation. The immortal framers of our inestimable constitution have granted to each a right and interest in the administration
of the general government. Each free citizen there­
fore holds an important station in society; at the
polls he yields up his right, in a measure, to indi­
viduals whom he entrusts with the best interests of
his country. Let us all then duly consider the
responsibility resting on us. How all important is
it that we should act conscientiously and with discre­
tion. And so to act we must be informed, and to be
informed we must read periodical journals. Still we
are liable to err in our choice and, in the height
of party feeling, to be led to unreasonable lengths,
but not so far as to endanger our government, for we
have the reform within our own hands, and the inde­
pendent part of a community will always retain it.
And so far they have in most cases proven the majority.

Our Constitution is a beacon light which may ever
direct us off the rocks and shoals of despotism. We
should therefore estimate its real worth, and make
ourselves perfectly acquainted with its leading
features, thereby comparing and cautiously matching,
the actions of our political characters and public
servants, that we may act with the greater circum­
spection. For our NEWSPAPER EDITORS are ever ready
to inform us of the passing events, as far as the
nature of their works and the public patronage extend.
Bethel, Dec. 1826

Rusticus (5)

There was little question of where Medary was heading,
and no single statement Medary would utter thereafter was to
so completely and thoroughly sum up his rationale for jour­
nalism and provide a glimpse of personal and political
philosophy than did this one.

By 1828, the lure of the press proved irresistible. In
that year Medary initiated, along with new-found friend and
patron Thomas Morris, later to become a U.S. Senator, a
newspaper at Bethel called The Ohio Sun.

The paper was in matters of design as new as was Medary
to the Bethel scene. It was a "folio of five columns to a
page, which measured thirteen and a half by twenty one and
a half inches, and up to that date was the largest paper ever printed in the county. This seemingly extraordinary size was looked upon by the wiseacres as a daring adventure, fraught with great risk and possible misfortune. But the man who established the Sun understood the wants of the people from having mingled with them, and his paper was a success from the very beginning." (6)

Medary had been from his political beginnings a committed Democrat and an enthusiastic supporter of Andrew Jackson. The Ohio Sun, in fact, was to commit itself early on to the promotion of Jackson's political fortunes. Newspapers of that day were typically for something or someone. Medary, in that regard at least, was typical.

Reflecting Jacksonian populism, the motto of The Ohio Sun read: "Unawed by the influence of the rich, the great or the noble, the people must be heard and their rights respected." (7)

A few months after the paper opened in Bethel, its offices were moved to Batavia, for what reason it is not known. And all the while Medary, no printer himself, "edited the paper, helped the printer, and attended to the delivery and mailing, and the affairs of the office generally." (8)

During the Medary years with the paper, the only change, in 1833, was in the name which became The Ohio Sun and Clermont Advertiser.
Unchanged was the paper's rabid support for President Jackson and his "administration through good and evil report." (9)

Also emerging during the paper's early years was a distinctive Medary style. "Mr. Medary, in his plain and resolute saxon language, soon showed that editorial ability which was the precursor to his subsequent career as the great editor of the West in another and more extended field of journalism, and the leading political manager of Ohio." (10)

The beginnings of Medary's political involvement can likewise be traced to those early Bethel and Batavia years, no doubt abetted by Medary's friendship with Thomas Morris.

Any number of accounts of early 19th century Bethel and Clermont County identify Morris as the area's "most exciting personage." (11)

Morris, quite naturally, gained monumental local reputation for advocating the removal of the seat of the federal government from Washington to Cincinnati, (12) but he also "gained widespread recognition for his fearless anti-slavery fight in the U.S. Senate when he engaged Henry Clay in the great debate on slavery agitation for which he was dubbed 'First Abolition Senator.'" (13)

Morris, in all, served fifteen years in the Ohio Legislature and six (1833-1839) in the U.S. Senate. He later parted company with the Democrats to become a leader of the new Liberty Party during the turbulent campaign of 1840,
and was its nominee for Vice President with James G. Birney who ran for president on the same ticket. Both men, incidentally, were nominated by a party convention which included the nation's first black delegates.

So strongly did Morris feel about the abolition of slavery and so vocal was he in defense of that position that Chief Justice Salmon Chase recalled following Morris's death that Morris "first led me to see the character of the slave-power as an aristocracy, and the need of an earnest organization to counteract its pretensions. He was far beyond the time he lived in." (14)

In light of Medary's ultimate stand on the question of slavery, it is difficult to understand the relationship between Medary and Morris, but a relationship there seemed to be, one no doubt that helped Medary secure, at least in the beginning, a number of public offices in the county, beginning with his appointment by the circuit court in 1831 for one year as school examiner for Clermont County. In that same year he was named County Auditor, a post he held for three and one-half years, through June of 1834.

In 1834, with the endorsement of the Democratic Party (and that meant Morris) Medary was sent to the Ohio House representing Clermont County and to the Ohio Senate in 1835 and once again in 1836. Those legislative years were not particularly significant ones in the history of Ohio, but Medary's service during them cemented a political base for
this man in his adopted state, and while political activity may have been routine, Medary did not let quiescence hold him back.

Between legislative sessions in Columbus, Medary provided further evidence of his diversity of interests and his faith in the power of the press by commencing publication in 1834 of the Ohio Farmer and Western Horticulturist, a semi-monthly paper devoted to agriculture.

At the end of what at best may have been a modestly successful first year, Medary wrote in his prospectus for the second:

Well aware of the peculiar difficulties attending the publication of an agricultural periodical, yet satisfied that nothing is of higher importance to the country, than that of the cultivation of the soil and the various subjects connected with it, the Editor of the Ohio Farmer is determined to persevere in his labors.

...During the short period of its publication it has received countenance and circulation fully equal to the anticipations of the Editor, and which he thinks a sufficient guaranty for its continuance, and to warrant a more general support.

The proper culture of the soil -- improving live stock -- diseases of animals -- the improvement in the culture of garden and field vegetables and mechanic arts, and agricultural and garden implements -- Domestic economy -- Botany -- Geology -- Natural History -- Chemistry, etc., etc., will all receive due attention, from both original communications, and extracts from the most approved works.

At the request of a number of Eastern correspondents, the Editor intends also, in the course of this volume to give, from time to time, a condensed view of the agricultural condition and resources of the great Mississippi Valley -- the points where emigration for the time being is the most tending -- the
prospects held out to emigrants -- the face and health of the country -- the prices of land -- the facilities of navigation and streams for milling and manufacturing purposes etc. etc. (15)

Two and one-half months later came a new announcement from the Ohio Farmer, however.

The Ohio Farmer will hereafter be issued from Columbus, Ohio, instead of Batavia, and this change will be an ample apology, we hope, for the delay in the publication of this number.

Issuing our paper hereafter from the centre of the state, in the rich and celebrated Valley of the Scioto -- celebrated not only for its rich and productive soil, but for its enterprize and advancement in agricultural improvements -- particularly in livestock, we hope to receive additional and, not only in correspondents to our columns, but in patronage also.

Being located too, upon the line of daily stages, we shall be able, without delay, to send our papers in all directions at the earliest period after publication.

Having many original articles on hand from our worthy correspondents, several of which we shall have to postpone until our next and future numbers, we shall, therefore, occupy as small space as possible on our change of location. (16)

It cannot be known whether Medary simply outgrew Clermont County or whether the need to nurture growing political opportunities demanded his presence increasingly in Columbus, but the separation was finalized between the two in 1836 when Medary sold the Ohio Sun to his brothers, Jacob and Asher. Two years later they, too, would sell the paper, this time out of the family, and move to Columbus to join their brother.
The rise of Medary's political fortunes seem to offer the best explanation, however, for already Medary had dined at the White House with President Andrew Jackson (17) and had held either elected or appointed public office for six years.

By the time of Medary's shift to a Columbus base in 1836, his private affairs had been broadened considerably, too, by the birth of six children. Another six were yet to come. (18)
Notes to Chapter V

1. The Medary family bible, extant and currently in the possession of a distant Medary relative, Mrs. Fred Johnston of Durango, Colorado, identifies Medary's wife as Eliza Scott of Plymouth, England. Her birth date: March 16, 1807. The family bible further notes the couple was married in the Washington, D.C., district of Georgetown on Oct. 1, 1823.


4. Much of this material was drawn from an address given by Medary W. Stark, great great grandson of Samuel Medary, at an Ohio Journalism Hall of Fame dinner on October 28, 1932. Material from his speech was taken from files and memorabilia still held by the family. A copy of the address is part of the Minnesota Historical Society archives.

5. Ibid., p. 2-3.


8. Everts, p. 156.

9. Ibid., p. 156.

10. Ibid., p. 156.


12. Ibid., p. 130.
13. Ibid., p. 130.


16. Ibid., Vol. 2, No. 6, March 16, 1835, p. 46.

17. The dinner with President Jackson was an especially fond memory of Florida Medary Nevins, Samuel Medary's seventh child. In Harold M. Jenkins book, Historical Collections Relating to Gwynedd Second edition (Philadelphia: 1897) p. 433, Mrs. Nevins recalled that her father and one Mr. Samuel Tilden "were both very young men during the administration of President Jackson, and that they met at his table at the White House, both being enthusiastic admirers, and in a manner proteges, of that remarkable man."

18. The issue of the size of the Medary family has, until now, been something of a puzzle. Biographical dictionaries and local histories credit Medary with as few as two children and as many as a dozen. The latter figure is the correct one. The Medary family bible, now in the possession of Mrs. Fred Johnston of Durango, Colorado, carries in Medary's own hand the list, with birth dates, as follows:

Eliza Virginia -- born August 12, 1824, in District of Columbia

Sarah Ann -- born August 30, 1826, Bethel, Ohio

Catherine -- born June 29, 1828, Bethel, Ohio

Louise -- born December 18, 1830, Batavia, Ohio

Missouri -- born August 22, 1833, Batavia, Ohio (she died in infancy)

Samuel Adams -- born June 12, 1836, Batavia, Ohio
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida Amelia</td>
<td>December 17, 1838</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Stewart</td>
<td>October 3, 1941</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wallace</td>
<td>November 3, 1843</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Henry</td>
<td>October 27, 1846</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>July 9, 1950</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>November 17, 1852</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI

The Columbus Era: Years of Influence

Personal and political opportunity seems to have occasioned Medary's move to Columbus, the small but growing 20-year-old capital of the state.

It was a small town on the verge of becoming a community of importance.

Already by 1836 economic life was developing some pace and intensity. As one traveler recalled it, Columbus was "kept in a state of constant and lively animation by endless trains of wagons, horses and horsemen, -- long-sprunged, four-horse stages rattling through at intervals -- and a great variety of traveling and pleasure taking vehicles."

(1)

Along with Medary's political fortunes, the trappings of state government were beginning to grow, too, with the recent construction of a number of public buildings, among them a penitentiary, the statehouse, state office building and the federal courthouse.

Columbus, as the state capital, represented the heart, soul and mind of Ohio politics; moving there made good sense for one with political aspirations.
Medary had them, just as he had solid connections in the city that promised to serve those aspirations well.

The most significant political beachhead for Medary, well established even before his move north from Clermont County, involved a newspaper, the **Hemisphere**, which had grown to prominence after combining with another paper, the **Ohio Monitor**, in 1835.

The **Hemisphere** was thoroughly Democratic, thoroughly partisan, thoroughly influential, and owned by none other than Jacob Medary, Samuel's brother.

Within a year after his move to Columbus in 1836, Medary had become editor and publisher of Jacob's paper and the name had been changed to the **Ohio Statesman**. In political circles especially, that name was soon to become one to be reckoned with.

"Of those whose reputations rest upon their newspaper careers," writes Ohio historian Eugene H. Roseboom, "the name of Samuel Medary undoubtedly should rank near the top. Editing the **Ohio Statesman** almost continuously from the close of Jackson's presidency to 1853 and again from 1855 to 1857, he seemed at times almost the dictator of the Democratic party in the state. For years most of the party organs at the various county seats looked to the **Statesman** for guidance on public questions. No Ohio Democrat... was so well known throughout the country in the pre-war generation." (2)
Such temporal beatification did not occur overnight. First Medary had to win his spurs in the political pits of Ohio, and win them he did as the indelible Medary stamp—the man's passion, personality, individuality and political viewpoints—evolved in the news columns and editorials of his paper, the Democratic party's paper, the Ohio Statesman.

Medary's Democratic spurs came at the expense of the other major national political party of the day, the Whig party.

To Medary and most Jacksonian populists of the decades between 1830 and 1850, the Whigs represented an unwholesome and dangerous presence on the American scene, standing as they did for a more centralized control of the nation's political and economic functions, a control somewhat removed from the people. To make matters worse, the Whig party seemed to be represented by men of the Eastern establishment, men of money, power and privilege, and men who favored the abolition of slavery.

As was to be Medary's custom in journalism, he began his editorship of The Statesman with an assessment of the political climate, a climate, also typically, Medary saw in 1837 as containing dangerous storm clouds scudding from the East across the nation's heartland, dark clouds bent upon undoing all the good accomplished during the infant years of the American experiment.
When we planted the standard of the STATESMAN at this place, early in the summer of '37, it was truly a dark hour of the democracy of this country. The combined power of the banks and federalism was publicly and insolently bidding defiance to the laws of the country--treating with contempt and insult every officer and department of the General and State Governments, which were not under their control, and, menial like, prompt in executing their tyrannical edicts. The people, alarmed at this monstrous state of affairs, and misled by the presses and orators in pay of this mercenary conspiracy against the democratic principles of our Government, were breaking by platoons, while the shouts of bank victories were wafted upon every breeze, and set to every note in the Whig gamut. To stem such a torrent, required no common nerve;--to meet it successfully, and to send back the angry waves with accumulated force on the enemy, in the short space of time that it actually took, was hoped for by but a few, and confidently believed by a still smaller portion.

Having the most unlimited confidence in the ability and patriotism of Martin Van Buren, the Statesman pledges its undivided energies to and in his re-election ... This policy of Mr. Van Buren (to keep government funds from the banks) must be carried out, if we wish domestic happiness in time of peace, or power over our own resources when needed...

...Van Buren, Shannon (Wilson Shannon, candidate for governor of Ohio) and the Pure Democratic Principles of a Jefferson and a Jackson, shall be our War Cry, until the beacon lights of victory are set up on every hill in our land, at the success of Equal Rights and Equal Principles in 1840.

Our government, save while under the two Adamses, has been administered by democratic men and democratic principles. We have advanced to greatness and prosperity, to the astonishment of the whole world, shall we, then, through factions and corrupt combinations, and corrupt institutions, suffer this fabrick of human wisdom to be trodden down and sacked by the spoiler's hand of ambition and anti-republican principles? (3)

Medary's reaction to the Whigs grew more and more visceral and unrestrained as time went on. In supporting
Shannon for the governorship in 1838, Medary cried out:

"Wilson Shannon, The People's Candidate!

Joseph Vance, The Bank's (Whig) candidate!

Freemen of Ohio, which will you support? Liberty and Slavery are set before you. Of which will you taste?" (4)

Labeling Whig maneuvering as manipulative and Whigs themselves as "viceregents" and "lord high admirals" of "federalism" and "Bankism," Medary warned Ohio voters to take heed:

People of Ohio, BRIBERY, MONEY, and false issues, and false doctrines are to deceive you and sack the citadel of your liberties.

Will you take warning from the dangers that surround you? Will you arouse as one man, and counteract these secret and mercenary attempts to trample upon your rights?...

Democrats of Ohio! be up and doing. You now have before you the plans of the enemy! Let honest indignation drive back those who would pollute the pure fountains of national virtue and glory!

You now have the keys to the false and scandalous charges, that federalism has been making on the Democratic party. It was their own likeness they were drawing, and knowing the abhorrence by which such conduct was always viewed, they charge it on their opponents. But the mask is off and the deformity exposed. (5)

Two incidents occurring early in the Medary editorship of The Statesman suggest the unmasked deformity of Whiggery both suffered from public disclosure and didn't take kindly to it.

About the time (1837) Medary assumed control of The Statesman, the Democrat-controlled legislature appointed him
as state printer, a lucrative patronage position that permitted The Statesman to eschew advertising and to concentrate on political reportage, or, perhaps better put, political editorializing. The pay-off as state printer between 1837 and 1840 was considerably more than the preceding state printer had received for a similar three years of work for the state. (6)

When the Whigs gained control of the Ohio legislature in 1840, they appointed a special Senate committee to look into Whig charges of profiteering and of having "appropriated to his own use as a perquisite the outside quires of each ream of paper purchased for the state." (7)

To their credit, the Whig Senators found in favor of Medary on both counts. As to the use of outside quires, the Committee reported, after a full investigation, that such quires"were not suitable for the public printing, nor for any other printing of an ordinary character, and that it had long been an established usage among printers to appropriate it to various subordinate and incidental uses about the office, and to consider it as one of the perquisites of their calling." (8)

The committee also found that Medary had done more printing work than his predecessor and, in fact, was probably due more money from the state, not less.
The Medary exoneration, however, did not lessen Whig dislike for him, though his integrity was never again to be challenged.

In the presidential campaign of that same year, 1840, with the Democrat Van Buren running against the Whig William Henry Harrison, the name of Samuel Medary came up rather often at Whig rallies. As one historical account has it:

John W. Bear, of Zanesville, had sprung into fame as the 'Buckeye Blacksmith.' He had great native power of oratory, and his fluency of speech was accentuated by eccentricity of person and attire. At the great Harrison ratification meeting, which was held in the rain in Broad Street (in Columbus) just west of High, Bear appeared clad in blacksmith clothes, with leathern apron and tongs, and his face begrimed as though he had just come from the forge. Recognized by some of the Whigs of Zanesville, he was called out for a speech... One of the local subjects of Whig attack was Sam Medary and his paper, the Ohio Statesman. ...As their chief opponent by reason of the great influence of his newspaper and his pugnacious editorials, Medary was especially obnoxious to Ohio Whigs. Responding to this sentiment, and doubtless under the instruction of party leaders, the 'Buckeye Blacksmith' devoted a great deal of time with evident pleasure to flaying Sam Medary, which he did with torrents of abuse and invective. As he afterwards told it: 'I had prepared a boy with blacksmith's tongs and a basin of water, some soap and a towel. When it was my turn to speak, I stepped forward with leather apron on, sleeves rolled up and tongs in hand, ready for business, amid the shouts of the multitude. When order was restored, I said: Gentlemen of the convention, I have a very dirty job to do, so I have my tongs with me, as you see. Medary's paper was lying on the stand. I lifted it up with the tongs, and read a short paragraph from it, let it fall and wiped by feet on it. Then I called for soap and water, washed the tongs and sent them to their owner, as I said, without defiling them with such a dirty thing as Sam Medary's paper. This caused the wildest excitement I ever saw.' (9)
The Medary name was clearly a Whig household word.

Still, what Medary received he returned in kind, and, in an article in June of 1840, he summed up his dislike and distrust of Harrison and the Whigs and spoke to the one overarching question, assiduously avoided in campaign rhetoric by Whigs and Democrats alike, that gnawed at the soul of the national body politic.

...and by the Union of Harrisonianism and Abolitionism, the whole train of 'mischief' and 'horrors' is brought upon the country by the triumph of the Abolitionists in the northern states. The triumph of the Democracy of the North, would break down the last barrier that protects the South in their constitutional rights, and the people of the North from the curse of a large increase of negro population, and the extension of their privileges to swear away our lives and degrade the laborer by competition, if they were not so lazy to work. The Democrats of the North are not advocates of slavery--they are opposed to the introduction of the black population among us, either as slaves or freemen. They are the advocates of the rights of the Southern people--the defenders of the Constitution and its guarantees to all sections of the Union. They denounce the mad schemes of the Abolitionists--hold up to scorn and derision the pandering of the Whigs for abolition votes. (10)

The dilemma for Medary and for most Americans living in the North was not slavery. As Medary pointed out, the Democrats were not advocates of slavery. The problem was that blacks were slaves. That dichotomy of thinking and feeling was older than the nation and would prove unbridgeable even in the aftermath of a devastating civil conflict.

Ohio's approach to the question of the negro in its society is fairly representative of the heartland experience.
The Ohio seed had been planted in the fertile soil of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, an enactment that prohibited the introduction of slavery anywhere within the great north central land mass.

Ohio entered the Union in 1803, and in doing so dutifully banned slavery, but also excluded the state's 337 negroes from any participation in the affairs of the state. (11)

Further restraints on negro pursuit of life, liberty and happiness followed soon after statehood with the enactment between 1803 and 1807 of a series of Black Laws that, for the most part, remained on the books until after the Civil War. Among those Black Laws were prohibitions against negro settlement in Ohio without documentation of free status, against service in the state militia, and against jury service. Other Black Laws required negro settlers to post a $500 bond within twenty days after moving into Ohio to guarantee both good behavior and a means of support. Education of a public kind was, for most of Ohio, for whites only.

Throughout this period white opinion of the negro presence remained uncompromising. In 1827, the Ohio State Journal wrote:

The character of the negroes, as observed in all our villages generally, presents one uniform standard, that of being an idle, intemperate and dissolute race, alike a burden on the resources of our state and to
the energies of the laboring classes of our citizens.

... we will never consent to see the two races placed on an equal footing of perfect equality with each other, to see the free blacks or their descendents visit in our homes, form part of our social acquaintances, marry into our families, or participate in public honors or employments. (12)

The appearance of Abolitionists on the Ohio scene, the rise of the Free Soilers, and divisions within Democratic party ranks generated considerable pressure between 1830 and 1850 to repeal the Black Laws. To be sure, some of those legal restraints were removed; others modified. But Negro participation in society remained minimal, peripheral, incidental.

Medary's Statesman in 1849, on the eve of the state's second constitutional convention, reprinted an article from the Clark County Democrat suggesting that while things had changed, and while pressure to change them further persisted, the general situation had remained fundamentally the same.

We regret that a disposition exists on the part of our Democratic friends in some parts of the State to make a fuss about the repeal of the so-called Black Laws of Ohio. We are as fully aware as they possibly can be that it is an unpopular movement, and that the actions of the Democrats on this question was wholly unexpected... The Democratic party has always stood opposed to placing the black man upon an equality with the white... We are decidedly opposed to repeal at this time. (13)

Earlier Medary himself had written about the movement spearheaded by a small and vocal minority to extend to
Ohio's blacks the rights and privileges of the general populace.

The House (Ohio House of Representatives) was occupied... on the subject of abolitionism and negro petitions. This exciting question of turning the whole slave population of the South loose upon us, to fill up our villages, and drive out, as well as impoverish, the laboring classes of our population, by the cheaper and more subservient labor of the colored races, is assuming such a form of magnitude, by becoming one of the prime articles in the Whig creed of politics, that it is likely to swallow up everything else in the party squabbles of the future. It is useless to blink this question any longer. It is folly to involve in the discussion the abstract right of the blackman. The real and undisputed question is now open to us, whether the rights of our yet free white population, who sustain the prosperity of the State by industry and virtue, are to be sacrificed by the 'philanthropic' labors of Whig politicians, by encouraging negro emancipation to our State—mix up the different races of men in all the labor and occupations of life,—bring about a state of things that may, it is true, be of some value to the rich and ostentatious, by creating a population for their exclusive use; but it must be total destruction to the free white laborer and reputable mechanic. While the question of abolition and the extension of the rights of the colored population to nearer approaches to that of white man was left to the discussion of 'philanthropic' societies, it was one of abstract rights merely; but when a great party base their political standing, action, and articles of faith upon the inducements held out to negro emigration by advancing their political privileges, it is time that every lover of the peace, prosperity and salvation of our country, should stand forth the bold and open champion of our ancient principles... (14)

The ancient principles of racial inequality were, to Medary, inviolate, but the man's dimensionality extended far beyond this one issue and in those other reaches of the Medary personality and commitment ancient principles were somewhat less sacrosanct. Among them lay the issue of
Ohio's constitution. Medary wanted a new one, and on May 5, 1849, he turned again to journalism in an effort to get what he wanted.

It was on that day that he commenced publication of The New Constitution, an octave-sized weekly designed to serve as a forum for arguments favoring a constitutional convention.

And why? Medary wrote:

The present Constitution went into operation, without being submitted to the people, but that was under peculiar circumstances, which do not now exist. In this progressive age, such a thing would not be tolerated, and he who would advocate such a course now, would dig his political grave so deep, that a resurrection would be impossible.

The time for change is peculiarly a favorable one. The Convention will have all the new Constitution's lately formed, or amended before them, with the proceedings and debates of the different conventions as a guide...

With a Constitution suited to her wants, and to the intelligence of her people, the destiny of Ohio, is onward -- UPWARD. (15)

He further counseled his readers not to fear change.

The fear of breaking in upon established customs, which pervades a certain class of our citizens, though very correct, when exercised to moderate degree, yet when carried to the length it is by those who oppose a new constitution on the grounds that the present one is the work of our fathers, and should not be altered, amended or set aside in favor of one more adapted to the spirit of the age, subjects the principle, or rather those who use such arguments, to ridicule. (16)

Medary's arguments for a new constitution were fundamental and sound. The Constitution of 1802 had been
hastily and loosely drawn. Moreover, the state's judicial system was in desperate need of an overhaul. (17) Medary was also anxious to see the sessions of the General Assembly held biennially instead of annually, wanted all matters regarding an increase in the size of the state debt put to a vote of the people, and urged the popular election of all state officers, including judges.

The New Constitution was to serve those and other contemporary needs and interests and Medary's stature, already imposing, grew in the process.

Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, who together authored an imposing five-volume history of Ohio, assign to Medary much of the credit for the new constitution of 1851, labeling him as "the most ardent and effective advocate" (18) for revision and The New Constitution as the agency exercising the greatest influence across the state on behalf of that revision.

To that end, they wrote, "he (Medary) even laid aside for the time being the discussion of partisan issues and became the virtual leader of the newspaper propaganda throughout the state. No other man did so much to arouse public interest and insure the triumph of the cause....(19)

He was, indeed, the "stormy petrel of the agitation for a new constitution" (20) for the state, and the results of that agitation were impressive.
After nearly a year of debate, the new constitution, incorporating most every Medary suggestion, went to the people for a special election vote in June of 1851. Voting for adoption were 125,564 Ohioans: voting against, 109,276. (21) And every word—two volumes and 2,000 pages worth—of the constitutional debates was published by Medary acting as designated printer and publisher for the constitutional convention.

During the convention, hundreds of petitions were considered dealing with the enhancement of Negro rights. Not one passed. The general feeling was tersely expressed by a representative to the convention from Ross County.

The gentleman says that at the time of the Revolution there was less prejudice against the black race than there is at present. That is undoubtedly true; and it is also time that the prejudice, if you will so call it, has increased at each successive period of time, and the irresistible inference from such a state of facts is, that the longer the two races occupy the same soil, the greater will be their repulsion and the stronger the prejudice. (22)

By the time of the vote on the new constitution Medary had already earned and won his political spurs. By 1851, he had attended two national Democratic conventions as a delegate. As a first-time member of the Democratic delegation from Ohio in 1844 he swung the convention in favor of James Knox Polk by reading a letter from Andrew Jackson urging support for the North Carolinian.
Still ahead for Medary were the national conventions of 1852 and 1856. In the latter years, he would deliver the nominating speech for James Buchanan, a favor that would not go unrewarded.

Medary also attended every Democratic state convention between 1844 and 1862, and, though his political star had dropped below the horizon by then, he nonetheless chaired the convention in that latter year.

He was offered to the Franklin Pierce Administration as a candidate for postmaster general, was named ambassador to Chile in 1853, a post he resigned to run for the U.S. Senate from Ohio in that same year. His efforts to gain the endorsement of the state's Democratic caucus fell short, largely because of his support of Stephen Douglas and Douglas's Nebraska bill, aimed at restoring popular sovereignty in the territories. Fearing a disruption of sectional peace, Ohio Democrats chose instead an unknown, George E. Pugh, who had had the good sense not to align himself with anybody or anything. Medary was made of different stuff.

Despite a series of political disappointments, the early 1850s were unusually active and fruitful ones for Medary.

In 1853, he sold The Statesman and retired to the less vexing and more profitable corporate world. His business
involvements were extensive. He was an incorporator and a
director of four railroads -- The Franklin & Ohio River
Company, which was to build a trunk line from Columbus
south; the Columbus and Xenia; the Columbus and Lake Erie
Company, which was reorganized under the charter of the
Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Company; and the Central
Ohio Company, which was authorized to build a line from
Columbus through Newark and Zanesville to the Ohio River.

Medary was also an incorporator of the Columbus Gas
Light & Coke Company, the city's first utility.

His interests in agriculture were not diminished by
the years of political wear and tear either. He represented
Franklin County as vice chairman of a state agricultural
convention held in Columbus in 1845, a convention that re­
sulted, with legislative backing, in the state's first
Board of Agriculture. Medary was both a board member and
its secretary. In like manner, he helped organize the
Columbus Horticultural Society, the Franklin County Agri­
cultural Society, and the Ohio State Fair.

He also served on local boards involved with sanitation
and mental health, and was one of those named by the Ohio
General Assembly to direct and oversee the building of a
new state capitol. (23)

Samuel Medary never stood still.

The remnants of the Medary era provide no clue as to
why he left the Statesman, sold it, in 1853. Nor do those
remnants offer an explanation of why he repurchased it in 1855. Perhaps the private life was, for this political man, less than fulfilling, the family home at 70 N. Front Street too removed from the fray. Perhaps! But a more likely explanation is that Medary saw the fiber of his party and his country threatened again (forever, it must have seemed) by racial and sectional issues.

By way of background, Medary had witnessed, of course, beginning as early as 1830, the hardening of sectional differences across the land over the slavery question.

Northern evangelists, abolitionists and free-soilers were crusading with intensity for human freedom. Southerners were, for their part, declaring slavery an economic good, a question properly addressed by the states and not by the central government, and talk of secession could be heard at every southern caucus in Washington.

In 1820 the Missouri Compromise had banned slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of the parallel 36 degrees 30 minutes, north, that is, of Missouri. Kansas was west of Missouri. The Wilmot Proviso banning slavery from all territories acquired from Mexico had been passed by the House but defeated in the Senate. Increasingly the question was being asked, "Does the Constitution permit Congress to exclude or regulate slavery in the national territories?"

To be sure, Congress had done so. The southern argument was that it should not have.
Divided Democrats in 1848 lost the presidential election to the last of the Whig presidents, Zachary Taylor.

Efforts at compromise, as remote as that possibility seemed, centered on the proposition of Lewis Cass of Michigan and Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. Their solution was to refer the question to popular sovereignty, to allow settlers to fill the national voids on the frontier with or without slaves but without federal interference. When the time came to admit portions of the American frontier into statehood, Cass and Douglas argued, the people would then determine the nature of their own state.

The Compromise of 1850 drew upon the Cass-Douglas approach by admitting California as a free state and that New Mexico and Utah be organized as territories without constraint on the question of slavery. To the relief of a weary Congress, if not a weary nation, Millard Fillmore signed the compromise into law.

However, phoenix-like out of compromise rose new tensions with passage of a new Fugitive Slave Law rendering subject to recapture tens of thousands of escaped slaves living in the north.

In 1854, the issue of slavery in the territories reopened the national wound and reopened it so deeply that only the bandages of war, ironically, could stop the bleeding.
Kansas and Nebraska were throughout this period drawing settlers. Both areas under the Missouri Compromise were closed to slavery, a fact that enraged Missourians whose slaves fled to Kansas.

Re-enter Senator Douglas of Illinois with the Kansas-Nebraska bill, a reworked version of the earlier Cass-Douglas Compromise.

The bill, recognizing that legislation organizing the Utah and New Mexico territories was silent on slavery, called for the organization of two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska, and permitted slavery in both until such time as the residents of both, in preparation for statehood, should ultimately decide whether to perpetuate or terminate the peculiar institution.

The bill was to be the first major ravel in the cloak of the Democratic party. The free-soilers, growing now in number, denounced the plan that would open virgin American land to slavery. The issue had become, simply, slavery. The Whigs, ambivalent on the question, folded their tents as a force in American politics. Members of the young, idealistic Republican party pitched their's, and began to attract crowds of electorate, nearly enough in fact to defeat Democrat James Buchanan in 1856.

The gathering national storm clouds, however, were matched by those in Ohio, itself now reeling politically and deeply divided.
Douglas' work, the Kansas-Nebraska bill, had survived a tough and bitter fight in Congress and had been signed into law by Pierce. With its passage came a "wave of indignation," (24) in the North, led by anti-slavery leaders Salmon P. Chase and Joshua Giddings.

Out of that wave of indignation came the call, issued by the state's three leading Whig papers, for a state convention of all those who stood in opposition to the extension of slavery.

The convention, on July 13, 1854, of so-called anti-Nebraska men, Whigs, Know Nothings, Free Soilers and anti-slavery Democrats, marked the "beginning of a great reorganization of parties" (25) within the state. The two candidates for state office and the entire Congressional slate from the new party, in just one year to be called the Republican party, were swept into office in the off-year election of 1855. Swept out were the Democrats, divided over slavery, who until the year before had known little but uninterrupted success in Ohio for almost 30 years.

In 1855, Chase was elected governor, assuming a long life for the new Republican party, and Ohio once again had become a two-party state, Republicans and Democrats. The old political issues, too, of "banking and currency and economic radicalism had been largely displaced in the
public mind by sectionalism... From 1856 to 1860 the Demo­
crats regarded themselves as the defenders of the Union and
white supremacy against Republican sectionalism and race
equality. On their part, the Republicans declaimed against
southern control of the government and the dangers of
slavery extension. Neither party paid much attention to
state matters, though banking, taxation, transportation and
other economic problems were of more direct significance to
most Ohioans than events in Kansas, the fate of Dred Scott
or the exploits of John Brown. Then, as today, politicians
appealed to the emotions, sectionalism and race prejudice,
inflamed the voting masses, and the Civil War became in­
evitable." (26)

Medary, having sold the Statesman in 1853, had been for
two years without his voice and had opted for same to pursue
a number of private interests. But he had not been far
from party politics and certainly not far from the minds
and hearts of the Democratic rank and file. At the Demo­
cratic state convention in 1855, as the party made efforts
to overcome their losses by selecting Gov. William Medill
to run for another term, sixty-nine delegates split and voted
for Medary for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. (27)

Soon thereafter, Medary bought again, and for the last
time, the Statesman in an effort to reunite the various
factions of his fractured party.
In one of his first editorials in the re-acquired Statesman, Medary wrote:

Our struggle now will be, to keep afloat -- to rouse up, as far as we can, the Democratic element of this state -- to harmonize and organize the Democratic vote -- to instill hope in the hearts of the true believers -- and thus make our triumphs not mere triumphs of men, but, with men of principles. (28)

But there was in Medary's remarks a plaintive tone suggesting the death of good and decent times. He continued:

I am free to admit, and 'the truth of history' perhaps demands the admission, that I find the public mind very differently constituted from what it was when I retired from the editorial chair some two years ago.

I freely admit that there is indifference, dissatisfaction and disorganization, to some considerable extent, in the old Democratic ranks.

... But I shall try to meet every question, in as broad and comprehensive a view as possible; condemn the wrong and defend the right; and, if possible, bring those of similar views and sentiments into a united and triumphant organization. (29)

Democratic losses, however, continued. Their state convention in 1856, the presidential election year, went on record as favoring popular sovereignty for the territories despite opposition from some members. Still to be resolved was the question of whom the Ohio party would support for president. Douglas and Buchanan were to be considered, the party having long since decided to dump Pierce. On the 16th ballot Buchanan carried a sufficient number of votes for the nomination. On the 17th it was made unanimous.
The choice was a sound political one. "Buchanan was undoubtedly the best choice for the Ohio Democracy. His age and conservatism appealed to the old Whigs, now so necessary to Democratic victory, while his record was less offensive to antislavery men than that of Pierce or Douglas. The Republicans generally agreed that he was the most difficult Democrat to defeat." (30)

Later, at the National convention, Medary, serving as temporary chairman, would nominate Buchanan despite his (Medary's) fondness for and historic alliance with Douglas. The Democratic presidential campaign, exhaustively reported in Medary's Statesman, focused on the Republican stigma of radicalism, branding members of the party as "abolition fanatics, disunionists, and believers in negro equality, and charging that they had kindled the fires of fanaticism in Kansas and that civil war had resulted in that territory. A like fate was in store for the nation if they triumphed. Only the election of Buchanan, a conservative, pledged to a fair execution of popular sovereignty in Kansas, could save the Union." (31)

Republicans campaigned just as emotionally, charging Democrats with the vilest of proslavery aggressions.

Buchanan, of course, won the election of the fall of 1856 and soon after, as a reward for placing Buchanan's name in nomination and for his support thereafter, Medary was named governor of the Minnesota Territory, then
Columbus postmaster, and finally governor of Kansas Territory. Soon after his appointment as governor of Minnesota, Medary sold the Statesman and with that sale and the paper's subsequent changes went Medary's compelling influence over Ohio Democrats.

After the departure of Medary, though most assuredly not because of it, the Democratic party continued its slide toward post-war oblivion in Ohio. Still the issue was slavery, and still events outpaced Democratic adjustments to them. First came the U. S. Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision in 1857 that set aside most of the legal obstacles to slavery in the territories. (32) Then the issue of a constitution for Kansas arose. Democrats re-divided in Ohio over that. A Kansas constitutional convention, meeting in Lecompton in the latter part of 1857 and controlled by pro-slavery elements as a result of a most unorthodox election, balked at presenting a constitutional proposal for a popular vote. Instead, the convention agreed to place on the ballot only the issue of slavery. The proposition was phrased in such a way that even if the vote were to be against slavery those already holding slaves in the state would be allowed to keep them. At the election, slavery was adopted for Kansas. Antislavery men in protest had boycotted the election.

Both Buchanan and Medary favored the Lecompton Constitution.
Medary, in fact, like it or not, was bound to the Buchanan position by ties of office. (33)

And the long slide continued.

The course of party history in the United States in the closing years of the decade largely centers around the factionalism of the Democratic party. The question of the admission of Kansas as a slave state with a constitution adopted as the result of an unfair election in which free state voters took no part was the rock on which the Democratic party split. The Buchanan administration, with the support of Southern Democrats and a few conservative Northerners favored this Lecompton Constitution, while the followers of Stephen A. Douglas, the author of the original Kansas-Nebraska Act, opposed it and demanded a fair election in Kansas on the slavery question. In the end, a compromise measure, the English Bill, was passed by Congress to provide for another vote on the Lecompton Constitution. This vote resulted in its rejection, but the bad feelings between the Douglas, or anti-Lecompton, democrats and the Southern wing remained and led to the party split of 1860. (34)

Lincoln won that election and the nation broke in two before he even took office.
Notes to Chapter VI


3. The Ohio Statesman, March 19, 1839, p. 3.

4. Ibid., August 7, 1838, pp. 2-3.

5. Ibid.


8. Ibid., p. 11.


10. The Ohio Statesman, June 16, 1840, p. 3.


12. The Ohio State Journal, December 22, 1827.

13. The Ohio Statesman, March 5, 1849.


17. Roseboom and Weisenburger note that between 1802 and 1851 four judges were responsible for holding
17. (cont'd.)
court in all of the counties, which in 1849
to 1849
numbered 85. See their History of Ohio, pp. 163-
164, for further discussion.

18. Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, History of Ohio
(New York: American Historical Association,
1912), Vol. IV, p. 98.

19. Ibid., p. 98.

20. Charles B. Galbreath, History of Ohio (New York:
American Historical Association, 1928) Vol. II,
p. 43.


22. Frank V. Quillin, The Color Line in Ohio: A History
of Race Prejudice in a Typical Northern State
(New York: Negro Universities Press, 1913),
p. 60.

23. For a discussion of Medary's private interests, see
Hooper, pp. 15-16.


25. Ibid., p. 169.


27. Eugene H. Roseboom, The Civil War Era: 1850-1873,
volume four of a six-volume history of The State
of Ohio published in 1944 in Columbus by The
Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society.
The information was drawn from p. 308 of the
Roseboom text.


29. Ibid.


31. Ibid., p. 319.

32. For more on the Dred Scott decision, see Henry F.
Bedford's The Union Divides: Politics and Slavery,


34. Ibid., pp. 174-175.
CHAPTER VII

The Minnesota Experience

When the State of Wisconsin was admitted to the Union in 1848, a great wilderness triangle of land between the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers that had been a part of the Wisconsin territory was left without any organized government for its fewer than 10,000 known inhabitants. (1)

Not to be abandoned, however, was North Star stater Henry Hastings Sibley. Sibley, a kind of self-proclaimed advocate for the future of the area, journeyed to Washington, convinced Senator Stephen A. Douglas of the merit in declaring Minnesota an official U.S. territory, made effective overtures to the Congressional Committee on Elections, and early in 1849 sat in the gallery as Congress made it all official.

By 1857, growth in the Minnesota Territory was evident, with well over 100,000 people living within its boundaries. Accordingly, Congress passed enabling legislation defining the soon-to-be-a-state's boundaries and empowering the people of the territory to draw up a constitution and elect officials.
All that remained was to appoint a territorial governor to oversee the period of organization in preparation for statehood, and political patronage was to take care of that. President Buchanan, inaugurated in March of 1857, wasted little time in dispensing his first favor to the man who had used his influence so effectively in winning the nomination for Buchanan at the Democratic National Convention in 1856. That man was none other than Samuel Medary.

As Medary left for Washington and the Buchanan nomination, the *Columbus Gazette* observed: "The 'Old Wheel-Horse' left on Wednesday for head-quarters. If he don't keep his brethren in respectable condition, and good temper, we shall hereafter have no faith in the prayers of the righteous. We hope the 'Old Wheel-Horse' may get into high oats -- he deserves some good fodder." (2)

The fodder was not long in coming. A few days after the inauguration news reached Columbus that Medary had received the Minnesota appointment.

In general, the news of Medary's new assignment was well received.

The *Daily Cleveland Herald* wrote: "The appointment of Col. Medary to the Governorship of Minnesota affords much satisfaction to his political and numerous personal friends. The 'Old Wheel-Horse of the Ohio Democracy' can illy be spared by his party in this state. He will make a good Governor of that flourishing Territory." (3)
The Stark County Democrat applauded the news as well. "It affords us pleasure to be able to announce that Col. Samuel Medary has been appointed Governor of the Territory of Minnesota. The only regret we have is that the Democracy of Ohio will lose the valuable services of the gallant Colonel. The appointment of Col. Medary by President Buchanan, will be acceptable to the Democracy everywhere, and we doubt not popular with the Minnesotans." (4)

Medary's own paper, The Ohio Statesman, though silent on the loss of its owner and editor, reprinted an article out of the Richland County Shield and Banner which spared little in its praise of Buchanan's choice. "The Democracy throughout Ohio, while they will regret the loss of the experienced counsel and valiant service of Col. Medary the old wheel horse, they will be much gratified to learn that the President has honored him with the appointment of Governor of Minnesota. He will carry with him to that beautiful territory the well-wishes of thousands of warm hearts in Ohio that have beaten in unison with his own in the great cause of Democracy." (5)

And in the same issue and on the same page of the Statesman was reproduced an even more lavish encomium from the Cincinnati Enquirer: "The appointment of Colonel Medary to the post of Governor of Minnesota, while gratifying to his friends as a compliment, involves a great loss to the Democracy of Ohio, who can ill spare so faithful and
efficient a leader and gallant a champion. What is Ohio's loss, however, will be Minnesota's gain; and we congratulate this new and growing region of the Northwest of their good fortune in securing for Governor a man of sturdy honesty, fine intelligence, patriotic spirit and courageous heart of Sam Medary."

The Cincinnati Enquirer's praise prompted an interesting rejoinder from its local rival, the Cincinnati Daily Commercial. The Commercial opined:

Col. Medary, or — as he has sometimes been called -- Citizen Sammedary, long known as the wheel-horse of the Democracy of Ohio -- the individual who, a few months since, committed the heroic act of pledging this state to James Buchanan by a majority of twenty-five thousands -- who was an aspirant to the dignified and important cabinet office of Postmaster General, under the new administration, has fallen 'a bear or two' and accepted the somewhat less brilliant position of Governor of Minnesota. Here is a coming down, my fellow citizen! If he who gave away the state so generously can get nothing better than the paltry Governorship of a territory -- without a cent of outfit, it is to be presumed -- what place in the gift of the President is significant enough for one who had his doubts whether the Buckeye dominion could be got for Mr. Buchanan, on any terms? When we remember that it was the delicate and arduous task of regulating our diplomatic relations with the important power -- Peru -- which, under the last administration, was especially given in charge to the wheel-horses and standard-bearers of Ohio, we cannot but fear that at this rate of decrease, in the course of one or two terms to come, a suit of the President's old clothes, rotated out by his election to office, will be thought as sufficient reward for the highest services and the most untiring devotion.

The Cincinnati Enquirer speaks quite elaborately in praise of the talents and virtues of our 'first citizen,' and lovingly expiates upon his fitness for territo-gubernatorial labors and responsibilities...
we should not have mentioned this subject did we not
most distinctly remember the large number of remarks
upon the same talents and virtues, the reverse of
complimentary, in which, often within a few years,
the editors of the Enquirer have indulged. If we are
to believe what that journal has said, there are few
individuals of the human race more flagrantly dis­
honest, habitually mendacious, or notoriously illit­
erate, than the editor of the Ohio Statesman. This,
however, is its own affair. (6)

At home in Columbus, the friendly and unfriendly press
alike celebrated the Medary appointment.

Wrote the Daily Ohio State Journal, a Whig paper
usually in opposition to Medary:

We congratulate Col. Medary upon his official
honors, which we believe he will wear gracefully and
well. No one has better deserved office of his
party than the 'old wheel-horse' of the Statesman.
No man has warmer friends, and we may add, more
bitter enemies, but his friends largely predominate.
While we congratulate him upon the acquisition of
this distinguished honor, we shall be sorry to lose
him as an editorial opponent, and still more as a
citizen and friend. Success to him. (7)

Elaborating a bit more was the Columbus Gazette.

The appointment of this gentleman to fill the
honorable position of Governor of Minnesota has
given the most lively satisfaction to the people
of this city. For a quarter of a century he has,
through sunshine and storm, fought gallantly the
battles of his party, and wherever the blows fell
thickest there was he sure to be found. Even his
most bitter political opponents, among his neighbors,
who for many years have looked upon him as an adver­sary, express their approval of the appointment in
the warmest terms.

The new governor will leave for the scene of his
future labors about the 1st of April, and will enter
at once upon the discharge of his duties. His salary
as Governor and ex officio Superintendent of Indian
Affairs, will amount to $3,500 per annum, besides
which, he will receive a percentage for the disburse­
ment of the Indian fund. We congratulate the Old
Wheel Horse on getting into such excellent pasturage, but we would advice (sic) him not to put on airs on account of his new title, for, to our certain knowledge, some mighty small men get to be governors about these days. (8)

With that fanfare, Medary left Columbus for Minnesota, arriving on April 22 "by lumber wagon from Red Wing." (9)

Medary's principal function, of course, was to preside over the drafting of a constitution for the territory, and that he did, apparently without incident of note. (10)

What problems there were with the Medary tenure as territorial governor could be found in Washington, and presaged the issue that very shortly would occupy every bit of the intellectual and emotional energy Samuel Medary could muster right up to the moment of his death.

Over the summer of 1857 Medary had guided the constitutional process ably and by fall a constitution had been ratified and a legislature and governor, Sibley, elected.

In an address to a joint session of the newly-formed House and Senate of Minnesota, Territorial Governor Medary outlined the accomplishments of the preceding nine months and singled out what he considered to be some important issues facing the state and the nation.

The Constitution adopted by the people of our Territory with such distinguished unanimity, is so distinct in its grants and limitations of power that there need be no difficulty in following its true intent and meaning. Securing the fullest liberty of conscience, of speech, and of the press, its republican character is indisputable. The work of actual residents, uninfluenced by outside
interference, the people of Minnesota can repose upon it as their own creation; .... (11)

Outlining what the state needed yet to do, Medary continued:

A thorough reorganization of the militia system is essential to the dignity and authority of the State. The existing regulations are wholly inadequate, and a frontier state particularly needs a military organization of undoubted efficiency. While the preservation of peace should be the first object of government, and the employment of force the last possible resort, all experience teaches that complete and active preparation for the latter, is the best security for the maintenance of the former. (12)

Lastly, Medary proffered his sentiments regarding the growing rift between the nation's sections.

Notwithstanding the excitement which has recently disturbed the nation, in relations to powers of the general government over the territories, let us hope that the question may soon find a satisfactory solution. The future peace and harmony of State and Territories can be best secured by each acting upon its proper sphere. A people accustomed to regulate and control their own social and political relations, will not long remain in disorder, when left to devise their own means of safety. (13)

That final sentiment reflected both Medary's posture on states' rights and slavery and spoke to a snag that had developed over the closing months of 1857 regarding Congress' delay in passing the Bill of Admission for Minnesota, even though the state had both a legislature and governor in place and conducting business.

The problem was that since the early days of the Union the routine had been for Congress to admit slave and free
states alternately in order to maintain a balance between North and South.

Minnesota stood ready for admission as a free state, but California had been the last state admitted in 1850, also as a free state.

Fearing imbalance, Southern Congressmen stalled the Bill of Admission for Minnesota. Typical of Southern feeling were the opinions of a Missouri Congressman by the name of Anderson who warned Congress: "The whole of the Territories of this Union are rapidly filling up with foreigners. The great body of them are opposed to slavery. Mark my word: if you (admit Minnesota) another slave state will never be formed out of the Territories of the Union. They are the enemies of the South and its institutions." (14)

Maneuver followed maneuver until Minnesota finally had the votes for passage in May of 1858. Two years later the prophecy of Anderson took shape with the election of Lincoln as president largely as a result of the votes from the new states of the northwest.

But Medary's performance in Minnesota had not gone unnoticed. Among those who noticed was Edwin M. Stanton, a long-time Buchanan ally and soon to be U.S. attorney general. Stanton wrote Medary on Dec. 31, 1857, and assessed Medary's governorship as gratifying. The Medary administration, Stanton wrote, "forms a striking contrast to the failure of other territorial governors whose task was no more difficult
than yours. High sounding pretensions have failed while you have succeeded." (15)

And on April 7, 1858, one month before Minnesota would officially be awarded statehood and Medary would dismantle the Territorial government, President Buchanan himself wrote the Old Wheel-Horse.

My Dear Sir,

Ever since the delivery of a certain speech, by a certain temporary presiding officer, of a certain national convention, I have had a great confidence in the tact, judgment, and sagacity, of a certain Samuel Medary of Ohio -- If you know that gentleman I will thank you to ask him to let me know through the mail what he thinks of the probability of the passage of the Senate Kansas Bill.

With Great Regard
I am your friend
James M. Buchanan

P.S. Let me hear from you.
JMB. (16)

There is no extant evidence of a reply, but the Medary-Buchanan association certainly could not have suffered because of one. On Nov. 19, 1858, Buchanan appointed Medary as Territorial Governor of Kansas.

In the interim, Medary was made comfortable back in Columbus with an appointment as the city's postmaster, an appointment, incidentally and quite obviously, that prompted the removal from that office of fellow Democrat Thomas Miller. It was also an appointment Buchanan took some delight in making.

Miller, well established in local Democratic ranks, was a close personal friend of Samuel S. Cox (17), in 1858
serving his first term in Congress from Columbus. Though a freshman, Cox had been extraordinarily vocal in support of Stephen Douglas, himself forever maneuvering in hope of the nation's highest office, and Cox had been just as vocal in his criticism of Buchanan's support of the controversial Lecompton Constitution for Kansas that would legitimize slavery in that territory. That particular issue had already divided the Democratic party, and when Medary left Minnesota the Buchanan administration seized the opportunity to punish Cox by withdrawing a close friend from the patronage trough. (18)

The removal of Miller and appointment of Medary did not go without notice or criticism.

Declared the Columbus Gazette:

Seldom has a telegraphic despatch created a greater sensation among politicians than the one received on Wednesday morning last announcing the fact the Postmaster Miller has been removed, and that Ex-Governor Medary has been appointed in his stead. Astonishment and indignation was pictured upon the countenances of all the leading Democrats, and crocodile tears fell from the eyelids and noses of the hypocritical Black Republicans who 'mourned as the wang doodle mourneth for its first born.' The causes of Mr. Miller's removal, we believe to be this: He was known to be a leading and influential friend of Mr. Douglas, and as it was well known that he held a mortgage upon the Statesman office, it was represented at Washington that he was the prime mover and instigator in causing the Statesman, the leading Democratic paper in the State, to take the Douglas track upon the Kansas question... It is well understood that Postmaster Medary will once more take charge of the Statesman, and support with all his well known tact and energy the course of the Administration upon the Kansas question. (19)
Little did the editors of the Gazette know just how much of the fabled Medary energy would be expended "upon the Kansas question" on behalf of the Buchanan administration.
Notes to Chapter VII

1. Much of the material dealing with the early history of Minnesota was drawn from the text of John Szarkowski's *The Face of Minnesota* published by the North Central Publishing Co. of St. Paul and copyrighted by the University of Minnesota in 1958.

2. The *Columbus Gazette*, March 6, 1857, p. 2.


5. The *Ohio Statesman*, March 26, 1857, p. 2.


8. The *Columbus Gazette*, March 20, 1857, p. 3.


10. Ibid., pp. 394-395.


12. Ibid., p. 6.


15. The letter is part of the Medary collection in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul.

16. The letter from President Buchanan to Medary is also located in the Medary collection at St. Paul.

17. Both Miller and Cox, interestingly, were more than acquainted with Medary. They had done business with him. Medary had sold Cox the *Statesman* in 1853, bought it back in 1855. Then was to sell
17. (cont'd.)

it, for the last time, to Miller in 1857 when he, Medary, was named governor of the Kansas Territory.


19. The Columbus Gazette, February 19, 1858, p. 3.
CHAPTER VIII

From Crisis to Crisis: The Kansas Years and a Return

Though he had never seen this strange, troubled section of the American frontier, Medary was far from ignorant of the Kansas dilemma, a dilemma, in fact and deed, that had reached into every nook and cranny of the Union and had torn asunder the fabric of the Democratic party, his party, at both the national and state levels.

Medary himself must have felt divided, too, over the Kansas question as a former supporter of Douglas on the one hand and as a Buchanan man now on the other, a man about to enter the Kansas fray.

He carried with him to Lecompton in December of 1858, however, a firm belief in and commitment to popular sovereignty, a position very much consistent with his conservative views on government.

As early as 1855 Medary had outlined his position on the Kansas problem. Reacting to an article from the Kansas Herald that had been reprinted in the Ohio State Journal announcing the success of pro-slavery elements in a spring election, Medary wrote:
Our very interesting neighbors of the Journal parade the above in their paper as the evidence of the fate of freedom in Kansas Territory. Now we do not pretend to know the full extent of and meaning of this vote in Kansas Territory, but as 'popular sovereignty' reigns in that free country, we suppose the people voted for just such candidates as they pleased, just the same as they do in Ohio. If, however, Kansas is destined to be settled by so overwhelming a body of men who want slavery, all the laws of Congress that could ever be passed could not prevent slavery being introduced there. We have no Kings, Emperors or standing armies in this country to force obedience, and compel men to vote as the dictator pleases.... (1)

Responding to the Know Nothing movement, a secret society that sought to illumine the evils of unrestricted immigration to the United States and an alleged Roman Catholic conspiracy to dominate the Union, Medary continued with a very revealing, very Democratic argument:

We can say, as a German anti-slavery friend of ours said, in regard to the 'disenfranchisement' of his countrymen by Know Nothingism, that he was opposed to slavery, and especially to 'Dutch Slavery.' We are opposed to slavery, and especially to white slavery. Let us first thoroughly test whether white men are really capable of being freemen, and then it will be time enough to look after the colored race... Better is he a poor, innocent, quiet slave, feeding unmolested and unambitious at his master's store house, than is the condition of the emigrant of our own blood and race who meets on landing among us, insults, contumely, broken heart and black eyes, and left only with the semblance of a human, but none of the great realities of a freeman, for which his soul so warmly panted ere his arrival among us.

Let the slave question await the outcome of this one. One great question at a time is enough, and let us settle the greatest first. (2)

The ink was barely dry on his November appointment as governor of Kansas before reaction to it came pouring in.
From the Western Reserve came this:

Washington dispatches state that Col. Samuel Medary has been offered the Governorship of Kansas, ... If it pays better than the Columbus Post Office, the office of Governor will not be likely to go begging.

The 'Old Wheelhorse of the Ohio Democracy,' a warm working Douglasite up to the nomination of the Cincinnati Convention, evinces a determination to stand squarely up to the Buchanan rack, as least as long as the fodder lasts. He has fed at the public crib in some way for about a quarter of a century, and the Governorship of Kansas will be the third stall the 'Old Wheelhorse' has occupied since Buchanan began to pet official favorites. The first was the full rochet one of Governor of Minnesota with its feed trough full of government land speculations; and the next the Columbus Post Office worth several millions a year.

Kansas is famous as the political grave-yard of Democratic Governors, and it is barely possible that the 'Old Wheelhorse' may shie at the sight of the headstones inscribed with Reeder, Shannon, Geary, Walker, Stanton and Denver. (3)

Somewhat more gentle were the remarks of Medary's opposition in Columbus, the Ohio State Journal:

The telegraph reports from Washington that the Hon. Samuel Medary has accepted the appointment of Governor of Kansas Territory, tendered him by the President in consideration of his distinguished ability, eminent services, etc., etc., but more particularly on account of his experience and success in ushering the Minnesota bantling into the Union, with a general outfit of bogus officers; a feat, which, unfortunately for the Administration, has been rather bunglingly managed in Kansas. If the eligibility of the appointment is to be judged by the services required, this is one eminently fit to be made. By his services in the Minnesota parturition, Col. Medary is not only entitled to the entire confidence of the President, but has fairly earned the office of Administration Midwife to all the foetal states. Nor need there be any fear in this case that the benevolent purposes of the President will be thwarted by any conscientious scruples, or
abstractions about the wishes or rights of the people of the Territory. That enlarged patriotism which could extend the blessings of government whiskey and universal suffrage to the savage native Americans of Minnesota to secure Democratic acceptancy, will not be remarkably scrupulous when Democratic principles are at stake. The right man is now undoubtedly in the right place. But the friends of the ex-governor have serious cause to fear that, eminent as his services may be to the Government, the sacrifices of his personal interests on the altar of his country, which the Colonel's patriotic impulses induce him to make so freely, is greater than the nation has a right to expect. The position of Governor of Kansas is what... might be described as honorable but not remunerative. (4)

The tortured history of the Kansas Territory demands far more space than can properly be accorded it here. Suffice it to say that since passage of the legislation creating the Kansas Territory on July 7, 1854, nine men had served as chief territorial officer, five as governor and four as acting governor. Medary was to be the sixth and final governor of the territory.

Also during the years between 1854 and Medary's arrival in Kansas in 1858, three separate constitutions had been drawn up during confusing, competitive and often contradictory efforts to qualify for statehood.

The first, the Topeka Constitution, was passed by territorial voters by a four-to-one margin in 1856. It banned Negro suffrage and slavery. The infamous Lecompton Constitution of 1857 permitted slavery, was adopted in a fraudulent election, but stood no chance of congressional
approval. The Leavenworth Constitution of 1858, a document allowing Negro suffrage, was defeated at the polls.

All that had been set aside by the time Medary arrived to assume his duties as territorial governor. It was to be his task to organize the march toward statehood all over again.

Also by the time of Medary's arrival the great, impassioned migrations of the committed from the South and the East's New England Emigrant Society had diminished to a trickle. The free state interests were in the clear majority and controlled the territorial legislature. Of the total population of Kansas in 1859, just 816 were Negroes. (5)

But before the question of statehood could be addressed, Medary had to contend with continuing bloodshed in south-eastern Kansas. None other than John Brown and Captain James Montgomery led repeated forays into the slaveholding sections of that region to relieve slaveholders of their human property.

Not long after unpacking, Medary received a letter from some of his distressed citizens.

"In the name of high heaven we ask, are there no means in the power of the government to effectually check the outrages of the banditti," wrote a committee of citizens from Paola and Lykins counties. (6)

The day that letter was received Dec. 28, 1858, Medary, recognizing that an underpaid, ill-equipped militia was
helpless in the face of the sophisticated guerilla raids of Brown and Montgomery, dispatched a telegram to Buchanan asking for weaponry to combat the organized banditti now "murdering, robbing and driving off the peaceable citizens who cannot possibly defend themselves, their families and property unless they are supplied with arms." (7)

A month later Medary wrote Buchanan from Lawrence once more to appeal for aid. "I feel a deep and melancholy sympathy for the suffering people in that region (South Kansas)... The United States Marshall has not a cent of money, and his posses are out every day and night, with scarcely the means of subsisting from one meal to the next. They write a most gloomy picture in this behalf, and I fear they will actually suffer. They so wrote. I hope I may hear in a day or two a more cheerful account. When supplied with arms, they can extend their range and obtain supplies, perhaps, on credit." (8)

Not long thereafter Medary and the state militia received 600 rifle muskets and 20,000 rounds of ammunition. (9) Nonetheless the raiding would continue in the South, albeit with greatly diminished intensity and regularity, until long after the close of the Civil War. Still, the militia had become somewhat more than a symbolic presence. More importantly, however, the free-status belt sway over the future of Kansas and John Brown had a rendezvous with
destiny in the East. A tolerable disquiet prevailed over Kansas.

The principal order of business then for Medary was to establish and install the necessary machinery of state government.

By way of reinforcement, Medary reminded the territorial legislature of that in his first address before the Council. In his address, Medary stressed that:

Where the freedom of the press, of speech and of conscience is unquestioned, differences of opinion must necessarily exist. When that freedom, unchecked by honest judgment and just desires, is permitted to run not, violate laws and constitutions, it becomes a curse rather than a blessing to the people... Written constitutions and written laws are based upon the virtue and intelligence of those from whom they emanate, and are a daguerrotype of the mind which constitutes the government. The future will know us by our laws, for upon them our character, as a people, must be indelibly stamped... To the patriotic lover of the Union, it is just cause of alarm and deep regret to witness... a growing disposition to overawe the voter, corrupt the ballot box, and to secure power by fraud and disobedience to the plainest letter of the law and the dictates of honesty. Against all such practices the sound, conservative men of the nation should set their faces, before the increasing evil attains a magnitude beyond their control, ...

But when the majority mistakes the spoils of official station, regulated by law, for the spoilation of the rights and property of the minority, our vaunted freedoms and justness of government become the objects of ridicule, and furnish the strongest argument against our governmental policy. No one has reason, nor right to complain of the successful party distributing the posts of favor among its political friends; but there the power of the law ends; all beyond that is criminal, and the individual amenable to the laws. (10)

Medary also called in his address for an end to the violence in the south of Kansas and urged elected
representatives to set aside the ravages of interference from outside forces on issues both large and small. It was time, he said, to devote their energies to Kansas. "She has a character of her own to make." (11)

Reaction to what amounted to Medary's inaugural speech was generally favorable. The Kansas National Democrat editorialized: "A perusal of the message cannot fail to convince every honest settler in Kansas that the executive department in this Territory is in the hands of one eminently qualified to discharge its important duties." (12) The Lawrence Republican likewise raved; calling Medary's address "the most readable and dignified of any of the numerous messages which the numerous governors of Kansas have profused." (13)

What was clear to both Medary and the Territorial legislature was that none of the three extant constitutions drafted for Kansas would clear the final and most significant hurdle, Congress, and that a new constitutional convention was in order.

The day Medary addressed the Kansas Territorial legislature, Jan. 3, 1859, that body passed a bill providing for the formation of a constitution and state government. Medary signed the bill into law in February and in March the voters of Kansas endorsed the convening of a fourth constitutional convention by a margin of five to one. On June 7, 1859, as required under the bill, an election was
held for delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Four­teen of the fifty-two delegates elected were originally from Ohio. Forty-two of the fifty-two were from the North. (14)

On July 5th the Convention began its work at Wyandotte and, using as its model the Ohio Constitution, a constitu­tion that did not extend to the Negroes of the area the right to vote, completed its work on July 29th. Ratifica­tion came on November 8, and on December 6, 1859, an elec­tion was held to determine who would serve as officers in the new State-to-be. Medary stood for governor on the Democratic ticket opposing Republican Charles Robinson.

Word of the Medary candidacy was received in bi­partisan fashion by the Kansas press.

The Democratic papers rallied unanimously and enthu­siasmatically behind Medary. Support also came from the Democratic press in the East. The Philadelphia Pennsylvan­ian editorialized: "Gov. Medary has spent his days in fighting for the principles of the Democratic party, and, while in Ohio, was denominated the 'Wheelhorse of Demo­cracy.' He is just the man to lead the party on to victory at the first election in a young and flourishing state." (15)

The Lawrence Republican, though favoring Robinson, did concede a personal regard for Medary. "It is always pleasant to talk about a man whom one personally respects, and such a man is the Democratic nominee for Governor. It is always
unpleasant to speak of a man whose personal character is respectable, but where political principles are vicious and subversive of good government, and such a man is Samuel Medary." (16)

Medary lost the election by a scant 2,000 votes.

All that remained was for Congress to pass enabling legislation accepting Kansas into the Union under the Wyandotte Constitution. The matter was first taken up in Washington in 1860 and was passed by the House. The Senate, however, still dominated by pro-slavery elements, defeated the legislation. The elections of that same year refashioned the Senate and on the 29th of January, 1861, lame-duck Buchanan signed the Kansas statehood bill into law.

By that time Medary had already left Kansas, having resigned on Dec. 17, 1860. The election of Lincoln, the political disintegration of the Democratic party and the savagery of the fighting in Kansas had suggested to the Old Wheelhorse that there was another job yet to undertake.

The evidence suggests that Medary, indeed, had tired of political life early on during his stay in Kansas.

On Feb. 23, 1859, just three months after coming to Kansas, Medary wrote Secretary of State Lewis Cass, former U.S. Senator from Michigan, asking for a leave of absence.

"As peace is restored in Kansas, and I hope forever, I would like to visit my family in Ohio some time between this and the middle of April next." (17)
same letter also thanked Cass and Buchanan for providing the arms and munitions to restore "order in this long-distracted Territory. The means used to accomplish this desirable end may be less approved of than the end itself. But extraordinary diseases sometimes require extraordinary medicine to cure them." (18)

After a short visit home Medary again wrote Cass, this time on Sept. 10, 1860, three months before his resignation, asking for another leave to visit the U.S. fair at Cincinnati and the Ohio State Fair at Dayton. (19)

The sheer weight of realities in the making no doubt made a trip home seem altogether blissful, for while strife had subsided in the south of Kansas and the State of Kansas was all but a fact, the great acid issue of slavery continued to eat at the fabric of Kansas society. It was one issue Medary could neither outdistance nor ignore. During his two years in the Kansas Territory, few things commanded more press attention than did slavery.

Typical of the treatment of the slavery question by the Democratic press of Kansas was the running editorial comment given by the Kansas National Democrat.

If we believed that Negro slavery was wrong, or in other words, that he is the equal of the white man, we would day and night advocate the propriety and justice of admitting him to the right to make and administer the laws, which is the very essence of political freedom, and the only kind of freedom worth contending for...
We cannot, and we never will wrong ourselves and injure and delude the poor nigger by advocating a policy that would ruin our government, as it has done Mexico, and all others that have dared to violate the laws of God, in relation to the black and white races of man.

More than two thousand years ago, we read of slavery existing; it exists now, and we have no doubt it will continue to exist as long as the world lasts, and until there is not a single Negro on the face of the earth.

There were 13 independent sovereign states that made the Constitution, 12 of them were slave states, and the remaining one, Massachusetts, had abolished slavery but was extensively involved in the slave trade. (20)

And on sovereignty, an allied issue, the Kansas National Democrat argued:

Sovereignty is the highest power known in any system of government; it is that high political power which can control all other political powers. Therefore it cannot have a superior, or any equal. Hence we perceive that the highest political power of a government or a confederacy of States, is what is called the sovereign power. In our confederacy the sovereign power resides in the States. It cannot have a rival; nor can it be limited or delegated, as limitations show the existence of a controlling power. Thus recognizing two sovereign powers in the same government, which is so manifestly absurd as not to require further comment. (21)

The Lawrence Republican likewise occupied itself with the other side of the question.

Slavery is either right or wrong, a crime or a virtue. By necessity it can occupy no neutral ground... To be let alone will not content it--it will not let alone.

Moreover, believing, as the Christian world does, that human bondage is not only not a virtue, but a crime of the vilest and most disastrous consequences, the enlightened conscience of mankind cannot, dare not, cease uttering its reiterated denunciations
and remonstrances against the perpetuity, the existence of the crime.

The more sensitive the conscience the more lofty the regard for human rights, the keener the perception of the divine mandate set forth in the sublime simplicity of the Golden Rule...

Slavery is an offense possessing features peculiarly its own. Like polygamy, which crime it embodies, it is an offense against society, distinctly marked. (22)

Later, the paper fell back on Jefferson as prophet by quoting from a Jefferson letter, ostensibly dated April 13, 1820, and ostensibly dispatched to a Mr. Short.

There is one question in American politics above all others which must and will be determined before all others. Human chattelism does and will obtrude itself into all our civil debates until the right or wrong of the thing is settled.

I have been among the most sanguine in believing that our Union should be of long duration. I now doubt it much, and see that event (dissolution) at no great distance, and the direct consequence of this (geographical) question...

My only comfort and confidence is that I shall not live to see this; and I envy not the present generation the glory of throwing away the fruits of their fathers' sacrifice of life and fortune, and thus render disparate the experiment which was to decide ultimately whether man is capable of self-government. (23)

The battle lines, in Kansas as elsewhere, were clearly drawn. Slavery was not to be let alone, at least not by Free Staters and Republicans in the Kansas Territorial Legislature who sought to test those lines in January of 1860 by passing, as a territorial assembly, a bill declaring slavery and involuntary servitude illegal, save as a
punishment for a crime. On Feb. 20, 1860, Medary responded with a veto and an accompanying veto message.

The text of that message represents the most complete statement ever issued by Medary on the question of slavery and states' rights. As printed in the Journal of the Territorial Council for 1860 and later reprinted in its entirety in *The Crisis*, the seminal response read:

To the Honorable, the House of Representatives:

Gentlemen:—I have received the Bill entitled 'An Act to Prohibit Slavery in Kansas,' and not satisfied that it accomplishes what its title imports I return it, with reasons.

This Bill appears to be more political than practical--more for the purpose of obtaining men's opinions than for any benefit or injury it can be to any one. I am the more fully convinced of this, from the articles which have appeared in the organs of the Republican party in this Territory, which it is proper to presume, speak by authority of those they represent. Two of the papers before me, call upon you to pass this Bill, to see what I may say, and compel me to act in the premises. The Republican, of this place is very emphatic, and the Champion, of Atchison City, edited by the Secretary of the Wyandott Constitutional Convention, 'dares' you repeatedly to fail in sending this Bill to me to get my action upon it for political purposes.

The Republican says:

'We want to test Governor Medary.'

The Champion says:

'If Medary will take the responsibility of vetoing it, pass it over his head and then let them bring the subject before the courts, and have Judge Taney make another advance in his theories, respecting the Constitution. We shall see, then, what these Democrats, who howl about 'as-good-free-states-men-as-you-are' will do when called upon to act. And we shall see whether there is anything in their
'We repeat it, let the Republicans pass the Bill abolishing slavery at the very earliest day. Make it as simple as possible; put into it no outside propositions that they may excuse themselves on; simply abolish the thing and bring these Democrats to the test. It is the first, the most important, the all absorbing duty which devolves upon the Republicans in the Legislature, and if they dare neglect it, if they dare let this opportunity pass by unimproved, the people of Kansas, and the presses of the Territory, will hold each and every one of them of a strict accountability for his action. 'It were better that a mill-stone be hanged about his neck, and he be drowned in the midst of the sea,' than that he should fail or refuse to pass an act which the whole people demand.'

Always willing to accommodate political opponents, as well as friends with my views on politics or any other subject, I accept the invitation with pleasure, and offer this as an apology for the extent I may go in satisfying as generous a demand.

I do not consider any man worthy of public position, or the name of statesman, who is not ready and willing, at all times, when asked, to express his views honestly, and without fear, on all that concerns the public welfare. Opinions given, because they are opinions of somebody else, or to suit the public taste, for selfish and ambitious purposes are not opinions deserving the dignity of the name. They are time-serving expressions, degrading to their author, which tend to demoralize the public mind. They are the arts of the demagogue, not the arguments of the statesman. From all such may our country be delivered.

To arrive at 'first principles,' it is often necessary to go back to first history. Light thus brought, from the pure fountains of patriotism, may illume the darkness of the present hour. No doubt many persons of the present day are led to believe that the subject of negro slavery has been brought into American party politics, for the first time, during the last few years. Such is not the fact. If not as dangerously, it has as intensely raged at certain periods before as now. It is no new thing for men seeking political positions to seize upon this topic to subserve their ambition. It is fruitful of that

professions of 'squatter sovereignty.'
kind of excitement, which answers a desirable purpose on the eve of an election; and, most unfortunately for our country, we are not wanting in aspirants to public favor who are ready to seize upon it, reckless of consequences, as of truth and fair dealing. Like charity, it is made to cover a multitude of sins, and many a corrupt and ignorant man has raised himself into office by this intensified lever. There are lawyers who never fail to argue the weak point in their case. There are many politicians who are perfectly familiar and thoroughly posted on all abstruse questions of Constitutional law. Questions, which the wisest, the greatest and the most learned approach with diffidence and doubt, and whose conclusions are arrived at only after the most labored investigation, these men know all about. They knew it from their cradles—they sucked the 'honey dew' of legal lore from their mother's breasts. To the preacher without piety and the lawyer without briefs, the question of negro slavery in the United States is perfectly clear. It is the manna which feeds them, and they have reason to be thankful for this their great blessing. To hear their displays, one might suppose that a new dispensation had just dawned upon the world, and that our fathers were not only heathens, but lost to all hope of Christian salvation.

Is it from patriotism and piety? Is it from love of man and man's salvation, that this babel has arisen? No, not a very large amount of either. It is political. Politics has got into the church, and the church into politics—and the acid and the alkali has effervesced. That is what is the matter. Steady hands, sound heads and warm hearts, and we shall all be right again. The truth of history will put us right as to the past and present, and the force of unyielding circumstances will put us right in the future. From these two causes, unpalatable as they may be to thousands, there is no escape. The doom of the unwilling is already paling in the distance.

Let us look this whole question right in the face, like men and brethren and see what it is. The African was brought into the colonies long before self-government or popular sovereignty was thought of in this country, and held, in what is termed slavery. Long before that, the Spaniards had made numerous, but unsuccessful attempts to reduce the native Indians to slavery. But of all races of men, the North American Indian is the most obstinate in his resolution against manual labor. The result is, that he has fled before
the advance of civilization as though it were a pestilence, and his wild race must soon become extinct. When the command was given that man should 'eat his bread by the sweat of his brow,' the idle races were doomed, whenever coming in contact with the working races. So it has been in all time past—so it will be in all time to come—ignorance, fanaticism, babelism to the contrary notwithstanding.

But the black man, unlike the red man, was found patient of labor, and suited to the climate of his new home. Ignorant, debased, the slave of petty tyrants in his native land, he was incapable of taking care of himself, and if left alone, his career would have been brief; but with a master to look to his wants and teach him the use of implements of civilization, he became useful and greatly benefitted by the change. Whatever may be said of the inhumanity of bringing him to our shores, his relative condition to the white man was inevitable. Hence commenced what is termed negro slavery in this country. It was not a condition brought about by one nation subjecting another to the condition of slavery, of equal birth, education and moral and social advancement with themselves—it had nothing of this whatever in its character or origin, so far as the people of the colonies were concerned. They were brought to our shores by the old England and New England Merchantmen, as a matter of commercial speculation—as the coolie trade is now carried on in the face of the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, and within the very echoes of the howling of abolition rage on both shores of the Atlantic. But as there is no political capital to be made out of this by the abolitionists, to rend assunder these States, they sit as mute under these coolie speculations though transpiring before their eyes, as though they did not exist, showing the hypocrisy of their morals and the baseness of their politics.

Two things are worthy of remark here: First, Such was the extent to which the old and New England Merchants imported Africans into the Southern plantations, that the public mind was first aroused there in hostility to it, and many of the steadiest opponents of what was then, as now, called the slave trade, were Southern planters; and they never ceased their opposition until the trade was terminated. Second, it is the descendants of these very merchant negro-traders and importers of old and New England, who are now rousing the sectional animosities of our people, and are ready to drench the country in blood and human carnage, because of that relative condition of the African in our country, of
which they are the authors and projectors.

Their fathers in the beginning made their wealth by stealing negroes from Africa, and importing them into the Southern plantations--their descendents still imbued with the philanthropic enterprise, are now stealing them from these Southern plantations, and at sixty dollars a head, very nearly the old price, and running them into Canada, with the offices of the country in reserve for those who foot the bills, and give brains and character to this second great negro enterprise.

During the war of the Revolution, negro slavery pervaded the whole of the Colonies. General Washington carried with him his negro servants whereever he went. In that era of patriotism and love of freedom, there were no political abolitionists to entice away negroes from their masters. In that day the isms of the present hour had no existence--no free-loveism to demoralize the white population, nor abolitionism to disturb the harmony of the relations existing between the white and black races. The stars and stripes floated in proud triumph, from one extreme of the thirteen late revolting Colonies to the other, around which the brave hearts of our country rallied as one in soul, one in purpose. By this union of sound hearts and enlarged understandings, the revolt from the British crown was successful--and by the same spirit of union, harmony and concession, the government known as the 'United States' of America was established--a government, which, for the liberal principles, the freedom of man, its generous and humane laws, its enlightened march in the race of nations, its power and its glory in the affairs of the world has no equal, no competitor, no rival in the pages of history. The great Ruler of all things, seemed to have furnished men and minds equal to the occasion. Every obstacle was fairly and boldly met, every difficulty manfully surmounted. The States or Colonies, when free from British bondage, were each independent of the other--nations of themselves, unrestricted and sovereign. Hence, in providing a general government for the whole, for wise and economical purposes--where all could be represented on an equal footing, as sovereign States and not as dependent Colonies; was the work of great caution, of hours and days of the most solemn deliberation. The pulse of the embryo nation beat high and quick with alternate hopes and fears. The patriot just out of the heat and blood of battle, was a powerful and obstinate foe--the
weather-beaten soldier, whose wounds were still bleeding, still unhealed—lay restless, in their fitful dreams of the terrible but glorious past, to learn tidings of the labors of the convention of these States. The prophecies of Kings, of Emperors, and their paid followers, that on this rock we were to be wrecked, rung in the ears of our statesmen and political philosophers (for we had philosophers in those days) and prognostics of failure by the Tories in our midst, who hated 'Washington and his rebels' as intensely during the war of the Revolution, as some men profess to hate the Democrats of the present day, and it is feared for the same reason, were met at every street corner and cross road.

What made the scene more trying, was that the Convention had not only to agree among themselves, but their labors had to be submitted to each State for its separate and individual sanction. The failure of any considerable portion of them to sanction the work of the Convention, would be a failure of the whole, and what we had gained by blood and treasure, would have been lost by disagreement—even a single State, of the smallest area, to have remained out of the Union, would have given vast trouble, and probably led to an attempt to force her into the Union; thus commencing our career with oppression if successful, or civil war and ruinous commotions, such as might had led to a despotic form of government, if unsuccessful. At best a canker worm would have been planted in the heart of the Tree of Liberty, which sooner or later would have eaten it to decay, and prostrated it before the storms of faction.

But happily for us—happily for the world at large and the hopes of mankind everywhere, the prophecies of Despots without and the jeers of traitors within, the work of our noble fathers was a complete success, and the enemies of free government were completely at bay. Foiled in their hopes, disconcerted in their plans, crowns and imperial robes have covered uneasy occupants ever since, and the oppressed have taken fresh courage and are hourly demanding concessions from their oppressors. We preach by example—we subdue by kindness and friendly relations—we convince by honest purposes and fair dealing, and what was once an experiment is now a matter of blazoned success on the pages of history, bedecked in jewels and written in letters of gold. Monuments of marble and granite are being reared to the memories of the founders of our glory, and the richest fields of oratory sought, to impress the hearts of our
generation with the greatness of their deeds.

At last we have a Union of the States, under one General Government. The powers to be exercised were defined in a written Constitution. All others were reserved to the States and the people. Then came the great contest, to fix, as a rule of action, what those powers were. Those who had opposed the Revolution—whose hearts still clung to the mother country; and all those who doubted the capability of the people for self-government; who opposed the extension of suffrage to white men—for no one then thought of claiming such right for the Negro—rallied to the side of a strong government, and a most liberal construction. This party was led by men who had done good service in the Revolution—men of powerful intellects—and they collected followers from all classes and factions of those who derided a more strict construction of the provisions of the Constitution, and freer thought and action. The strict constructionists embodied the living mass of the actors in and defenders of the separation from Great Britain. They cordially despised all despotic forms of Government, and, from recent causes, especially the King and Government of England. They opposed despotism both over the body and the mind, and were literally denounced as irreligious by the then strong church party, which, naturally enough, united with the strong governmental party.

One party (the Democratic) dreaded the power of the Government; the other (the Federal) that of the people.

The strong government, and the strong churchmen, placed at their head John Adams, of Massachusetts. Their opponents selected as their standard bearer, Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia. The issue was fairly joined; and on the result hung the fate of a new world and the material and human progress of an extraordinary people.

Mr. Adams had succeeded General Washington, and, during the four years of his administration, the practical effect of the 'general welfare' doctrine—an expression in the Constitution from which the most unlimited power was endeavored to be drawn—startled the revolutionary spirit, still fresh and vigorous, and Mr. Jefferson, the great champion of State Rights, of strict construction, and the rights of man, was elected and inaugurated on the fourth of March, 1801. The first great crisis, under the Constitution, was
passed, and the Government took a new tack; and the
great Democratic organization was thoroughly estab-
lished and its principles well defined and imprinted
on the laws of the Nation. It was then, as now,
thoroughly national--disregarding all sectional issues
as an invasion of State Rights, and all intermedlings
with what the Constitution had expressly reserved to
the States themselves and the people.

Here originated that very agitation of which we
are now in the last throes--the origin of the very
Bill now before me, and the occasion of this very
paper. The seeds then sown have grown to full maturity.
The fruit is fully ripe, and the political reapers are
in the field with sickles well sharpened, and with much
greater ardor than they ever labored to garner wheat
from the sunburned soil of honest industry.

In forming the Constitution, our ever to be
venerated fathers saw and felt the difficulties that
surrounded them on this very question of Negro Slavery.
While in the numerical aggregate the negro was counted
in the column of humanity--in all that concerned
political rights they were excluded. While treated
with delicacy and humane care, as of the human family,
they were not recognized as a part of our political
franchisement. They were clothed, and fed, and housed,
and furnished medical aid in times of sickness, and for
this they owed their protectors, for such they were in
reality, 'service or labor.' To this extent the Con-
stitution recognized them and no further. All else was
left to the action of the free and sovereign States to
take care of and regulate in their own way. As Slavery
then existed in all the States by positive law or by
sufferance, even in the land of William Penn, no re-
striction or requirement whatever, was made in regard
to their action on the subject. Such States as chose
to abolish it had a right to do so or not, as might
suit them best. The restriction, under the Act of 1787,
in regard to the Northwest Territory, remained as it
was created, by the Congress of the Confederation; yet
Slavery existed, in portions of that Territory, from
the passage of that Act, until abolished by the organ-
ization of States over it; and, during the existence
of the Territory of Indiana, after Ohio had been ad-
mitted into the Union, Territorial laws were passed
regulating the condition of master and slave, one, at
least, of which was approved by General Wm. H. Harrison,
(afterward elected President of the United States)
while Governor of said Territory. But the Constitution
of the United States was silent on the subject of Slavery, and remains so to this day.

Such was the state of things when Mr. Jefferson was inaugurated President. Mr. Jefferson was not only a Statesman of enlarged views, and deeply imbued with what was then termed radical Democratic views, but a philosopher—deep read, and with a mind that looked far into the future of his country. He had the vision of a Prophet, and guided the present to meet the events of the future. He won more in the Cabinet by his eye, surveying destiny, than heroes won in the field. While he laid down the principles upon which was established the Democratic party of the States, he marked out a pathway over the unexplored and eternally snow-capped mountains of the then far, far West, for his countrymen to follow, and planted the flag of his Nation on the shores of the Pacific. It was a mighty thought, incomprehensible to thousands who jeered at his wisdom and laughed scornfully at his followers. They saw nothing in all this but the 'extension of the slave power.'

The purchase of the Territory of Louisiana by Mr. Jefferson was the great act of his life, so far as the future of his country was concerned. In his election he had defeated the New England 'Federalists,' the party designation given to John Adams and the strong government men, and ranking with discomfiture, they seized the occasion of the Louisiana purchase to sound the tocsin of alarm, and raise political rebellion against his administration. And what so potent an instrument as the cry of 'slavery extension' --the danger to the Northern States from the growth and power of the Slave States.

Yet the dreaded slave power, which, we are told, has so long ruled this country, has actually become a minority of States as well as of voters. Freedom has had no check, no restraint, no curtailment of its authority, but made regular and onward progress, and has spread from the western banks of the Mississippi to the shores of the Pacific. 'The slave power' has neither checked its growth nor restricted its strength, but aided both. Freedom is not confined to States nor localities, but wherever our flag is planted and our laws penetrate, there it abides. Freedom is not confined to abolition societies and anti-slavery organizations, but is co-existent with our country's boundaries. So long as the guarantees of the
Constitution are observed, the States do not require a balance of power of local institutions to protect each other's interests. The idea of its necessity presupposes a wrong from a coordinate State—an attempted interference that has treason lurking under its cover, and cannot be too severely denounced. Confusion and error must ever follow such a necessity.

So bitter were the denunciations hurled against Mr. Jefferson, so unmitigated were the representations of his 'wicked and infidel acts,' (for there were Christian politicians, also, in those days,) that some of the leading Federalists declared the Union dissolved by this 'unconstitutional act,'—there being 'constitutional expounders' then, as now. But Mr. Jefferson heeded not this Northern storm of indignation, which spent itself finally, in the treasonable 'Hartford Convention.'

When Mr. Jefferson entered upon the duties of President, he found the mouth of the Mississippi blocked up by the occupancy of a foreign power. The settlers along both banks of the Ohio had no market, at that day, except by floating down that stream into the Mississippi and to New Orleans, then a French town, and all the country west of the Mississippi in the possession of Europeans. Mr. Adams had been charged with being inimical to the country west of the Alleghany Mountains from his bartering the trade of the Mississippi for the privilege of fishing for cod at Newfoundland. Mr. Jefferson, on the other hand, having always shown a lively interest in the West, entered at once on a treaty with France for all her possessions, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the head waters of the Mississippi, and spreading west indefinitely, covering whatever land and water belonged to France. This was, by the laws of France, all slave Territory, and, by the treaty, slavery was secured to the people thus transferred to the Government of the United States. And this was the exciting cause of New England and Federal opposition. Here opposition to any more slave Territory took its rise, and anti-slavery politics assumed shape and form. The New England pulpits rang the changes, and New England politicians reaped the benefits of Sabbath electioneering. Negro Slavery, that was not fully expelled from the North by sale to the Southern planters, became all at once a great moral sin and an enormous political evil. Mr. Jefferson was ridiculed in doggerel, and the 'Dusky Sal' rhymes may yet be found on the dusty shelves of these political
puritans. But the people had caught the spirit of their great President leader, and were not to be prayed nor preached into the ranks of the Boston dynasty; and Mr. Jefferson was re-elected president by what might be called acclamation—the cry of 'slavery,' 'slave-holder,' 'slavery extensionist' and 'infidel,' to the contrary notwithstanding. Then, as now, every man who supported Jefferson was irreligious, and their leader an enemy of the Bible, according to these political saints in sack-cloth.

But what a change has come over the spirit of their dreams! What a revolution has been wrought in the minds of the descendants of these ancient opposers of the Democratic party, without any reformation in their hearts. False at first, in charging Mr. Jefferson with base designs in his purchase of the very Territory where we now are, the soil on which I am writing this history, that great Statesman and far-seeing philosopher, is now put forward as the founder and foster-father of the present abolition raid upon society. This latter assault is more detrimental to his fair fame than the first, for, of all men, he was the very last to encourage, by word or deed, anything which was in the least tinged with fanaticism or treason, sectionalism or unfaithfulness to the requirements of the Constitution and of law. He held dear to his heart every reserved right of the States and the people; and he in reality knew no obligation binding upon one State which he did not hold binding upon all.

But Mr. Jefferson, we are now told by these modern operators in political abolitionism, was not a friend of the system of Negro Slavery. Admit it, and what has it to do with the subject? Neither were his friends necessarily such. Must I be an enemy to my country to be opposed to the same system? Must I be sectional in my feelings and politics because I am opposed to Slavery? Must I carry on a war of slander and misrepresentation against fifteen States of this Union, because I have different views upon that question? Must I oppose the extension and progress of my country and the admission of new States into this already great and powerful Union, because I find Negro Slavery existing in them? If I cannot do these things, then Jefferson could not. If Jefferson could, then we can all do the same. But Mr. Jefferson was a statesman and not a penny-a-line politician; he was a philosopher and not a fanatic; he was a Democrat and not a 'Black Republican.' He, unquestionably, regretted that African Slavery had ever
been introduced into this country; yet he held slaves himself to the day of his death, and, in the spirit of that philanthropy for which he was so noted, he bequeathed them to his relatives to take care of when he could no longer do it. He was anti-slavery in his reasoning, yet added a larger area of slave Territory to the country over which he so ably and successfully presided, than all the slave Territory in the limits of the Union at the time. He regretted the existence of Slavery, also, for he was not ignorant of the uses bad men would make of it, to endanger the peace and permanency of the union of these States. It was felt by all the great Southern founders of our Republic, and Washington, truly the Father of his Country, raised his voice in prophetic warning as he retired forever from the scenes of public life.

Mr. Jefferson purchased the Louisiana country not because it was Slave Territory, but because it was necessary to the settlement of the then North and Southwest. He purchased it to open the way across the great unknown prairies and mountains to the shores of a new ocean. He mapped the destinies of his country as with the pencil of inspiration, and we are this far on the road, disputing whether we have the power, while in a Territorial condition, to wipe out some of his blunders!

This purchase of Territory from France, by Mr. Jefferson, of which Kansas is a part, produced the first great anti-slavery crisis. It was the first bold showing of that sectionalism, which has become a part of some men's political existence. But the successive triumphs of the Democratic party, under the lead of Jefferson and Madison, disheartened the New England leaders and those who followed them, and the question of Slavery was mainly sunk in those of a more national character and of higher political importance; until, like a dark storm cloud, it burst with sudden fury, again upon the country, on the petition for admission into the Union, by our neighbor Missouri. The dark embers which had slumbered in the breasts of the Northern Federalists for near twenty years, were ignited as with a torch, and the second storm broke over the heads of the people, threatening to swallow up the Nation and rend the Constitution, as though it were waste paper. Reckless of every tie which bound us together as one people, these mad fanatics rushed into the political arena with clothes borrowed from every shade of political faction, the better to play their part and deceive the public mind. Though now nearly thirty years
since these scenes transpired, they are fresh in the memories of thousands yet living.

Missouri presented her Constitution with a slave clause in it. She had a right to do it, yet the whole fanatical North, opposed to the Democratic party, threatened the Union with ruin and disruption, if the new State of Missouri was permitted, though sovereign like the rest, to do as she pleased! Congress must place upon her restrictions. The Representatives of other sovereign States assumed the ridiculous and degrading attitude of refusing to a sovereign State the advantage of the very same privilege which they themselves exercised, and which they had refused to yield up, when forming the Constitution under which the old and new States were guaranteed the same, and exactly equal powers and privileges.

After a struggle which came very near sundering the Union—that made patriots ponder in gloomy forebodings over the future—bringing from Mr. Jefferson, who was still a lingering witness on the shores of eternity, that celebrated expression of the 'fire bell at night,'--the State of Missouri was admitted; but with a compromise that Slavery should not exist North of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, in the Louisiana purchase. And this for another season drove the abolition forces once more into retirement, and peace again reigned over the union of the States; not because of the satisfaction of the Northern opposition to the admission of new States, as the Constitution declares, with all the rights and privileges of the old ones, but because the factious anti-slavery fever had exhausted itself, and the people convinced that the leaders had pressed the question, as in Mr. Jefferson's time, for sheer partizan and personal purposes. The eyes of their followers were opened to the fact that treason against the Union had more to do with the question than patriotism and love of the negro.

Discomfited, overwhelmed with defeat, the leaders again retired, abandoned their destructive anti-slavery and factious organization, and Missouri has, for nearly thirty years, pursued the even tenor of her way, as one of the sovereign States of the Union. The second great crisis, growing out of this Louisiana purchase, had passed, and the country rocked, as with an earthquake, settled down in calm repose on the negro question, pushing its destiny West, Northwest and Southwest with rapid strides.
This compromise act of 1820 was the first exercise of Congress over the subject of Slavery in the Territories, and was never wholly satisfactory to any great portion of the people. It was received by thousands as a compromise of doubtful powers; but as it only ran through a country wholly uninhabited by civilization, it was acquiesced in.

In the settlement of the country North of the State of Missouri, no question arose under it, as no one ever carried slaves there, and Iowa came into the Union without the agitation of the subject.

To show how little this line of 36 degrees and 30 minutes was considered of binding force on the question of slavery, on the annexation of Texas the Northern abolitionists again rushed into the political arena, and the cry of 'slavery extension' and the 'slave power,' was again rung on every change, and nothing prevented a purely sectional conflict, but from the fact of the Whig party, being national in its organization, and Mr. Clay being their candidate for the Presidency.

Texas laid South of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, and if the 'great compromise,' as it has since been called by its old enemies and new friends, means anything, it meant, if it did not say so, that Slavery should exist South of that line. The old abolition maps which were hung up in the Northern lecture rooms, were white North of Mason's and Dixon's line, North of the Ohio river, North of the State of Missouri, and North of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, while all the country South was painted black! Thus mingling the power of the States to do as they pleased with the subject of Slavery, with the power of Congress to regulate it where States did not exist.

Following the lead of Mr. Jefferson, in the purchase of Louisiana, a Democratic administration acquired Florida, annexed Texas and added California, with all the intermediate country, to the United States; and though most glorious and noble has been their work, they have fought every inch of ground with a most pertinacious enemy, with the cry of 'slave power' and 'slave extentionists,' 'dough face' and all the other epithets recorded in the abolition vocabulary. I confess the truth, we did all this; it is the work of our own hands; we take glory for the work, and after looking upon what we have done, we do not desire to
give back one acre, one rood, no, not one inch; and acquired by the treasure, the blood and the patriotism of all sections, it is not the part of Democrats now to join the enemy, and deprive any one of his full rights to its enjoyment.

That would be a most extraordinary expression of the popular will, which is given by one-half the people, after the other half is driven out or prevented coming in. Injustice nor absurdities have anything to do with the Democratic creed or with constitutional government.

After the acquisition of California and the contiguous Territory, Congress very clearly expressed the opinion of the nation, in the resolutions of 1850, as both parties adopted the substance of those resolutions, and no sectionalism entered into the campaign of '52. To fix upon a basis of Congressional action in regard to the local institutions of new Territories, was the cause of some excitement and much perplexity; but the resolutions of '50 fully conceded this right to the local authorities, and especially denied it to Congress. The storm soon blew over.

But the third great anti-slavery agitation was approaching, nevertheless. The Louisiana purchase by Mr. Jefferson, was fruitful soil for Northern fanaticism. The time had arrived when that portion of it lying West of Missouri, must be opened to the great tide of emigration constantly moving towards the setting sun. A Territorial government must be organized preparatory to civil society and a new State. The Northern abolition feeling had, by a long experience and repeated rebuffs in their political schemes, learned that they could gain greater strength by collateral questions or issues, than by an open exposure of their designs; hence they covered up their designs of open assault upon Slavery in the States, and brought their whole machinery of fanaticism to bear upon the Territories; and from being physicians who offered cures, became adept in preventives. They visited the healthy and administered for anticipated diseases. But our government being one of constitutional limitations and practical results, it required more than wild theories and impracticable humanitarian ideas, to keep it on the right track and within the range of its high object. It required statesmen to draft laws, and left the political fanatics to offer Provisos. The law was the substance, the proviso the coating—
the children and silly people not being inquisitive about the ingredients of a pill, provided it is coated with sugar.

All saw the difficulty which would arise, and the Democrats stepped forth to meet the question on constitutional grounds; the abolitionists to make political capital, as usual, and at the country's expense. Being perhaps the last chance to them, of testing the power of fanaticism over the Northern public mind, and the free States having grown in power and numbers, they hit upon the expediency of abolishing the Whig party, to clear their skirts of a Southern connection, and on its ruin establish a new and perfectly sectional party, under the most reputable name they could find, not in use as a party designation. The term 'Abolition' was odious and told too many tales. The word 'Democrat' was out of their reach and long since appropriated. They seized upon that of 'Republican,' as best suited to their purposes.

After a struggle in Congress, remarkable for its pertinacity on both sides, the Democratic party succeeded in organizing Territorial governments for all the country West of the Missouri river and of the State of Missouri, to the Rocky Mountains. In the act for organization, are these words:

'That the Constitution and all the laws of the United States, which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory of Kansas, as elsewhere within the United States, except the eighth section of the Act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union, approved March 6th, 1820, which, being inconsistent with the principles of non-intervention by Congress with Slavery in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this Act, not to legislate Slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.'

Is there anything in the language of this to startle one-half the Nation from its propriety--break up a great and gallant party like that of the Whig organization, and on its Northern wing form a
new and sectional one? Can any one find in this quo-
tation such startling doctrines that our staunch 
Union must rock to and fro with factions? Is it not 
simple and plain in language, and in accordance with 
the spirit of our institutions? It denies, utterly, 
the power of Congress to exercise jurisdiction over 
the local institutions of any organized government, 
or dictate what they shall be when asking admission 
on equal footing with all the other States. It is 
the true Jeffersonian interpretation of the Constitu-
tion, and utterly repudiates the strong government 
doctrines of the old John Adams school, which found 
power for the exercise of every extravagant measure 
that might suit their fancy or their interest. This 
extract says nothing, does nothing, but leaves the 
matter just where the Constitution leaves it. It 
grants no power, because it repudiates the idea that 
Congress had any power to grant or to withhold. You 
claim, under this declaration in the Organic Act, the 
right to prohibit Slavery in the Territory of Kansas. 
By so doing, you mistake both the words and the mean-
ing, and misconceive the true spirit of the text. 
Whatever power you possess over the question of Slavery, 
you would have possessed in as eminent a degree without 
as with this clause in the Organic Act, which we use 
and observe every day as our rule of action, not to 
find power to take away from any citizen his rights 
or his property, but to protect both. Every clause 
is full of this and nothing else. It creates executive 
officers as administrators of the law; it authorizes 
the election of a Legislature for the purpose of making 
laws; it establishes courts of justice to try all 
questions of controversy between citizen and citizen, 
from breaches of the peace to the rights of property. 
Each department has its legitimate sphere of duty, and 
the Legislature can no more adjudicate breaches of the 
peace or the rights of property, than the Courts can 
enact laws. You have vast powers of legislation, I 
admit, greater in a Territory, generally, than in a 
State. Your restrictions are very few, and your 
general powers are enormous; it is one cause of 
anxiety, most frequently for a change to a State, that 
the wild and reckless legislation of a Territory may 
be confined to the stricter rules of a State Constitu-
tion. In this I sympathize with the people. But why 
desire a State? Because you then act in a sovereign 
capacity; the sovereignty is expressed in a Constitution; 
by that sovereignty you regulate and restrict the acts 
of your public servants. Sovereignty implies the re-
striction of power as well as its exercise; its right
to act is inherent in itself; it knows no master and has no arbiter. This is the condition of a State, as opposed to a Territory; one is created, the other creates itself. The Legislature of a State can only exercise the functions granted; the Legislature of a Territory exercises such powers as are not prohibited. It can abolish all legal relations between man and wife; it can abolish all laws for the collection of debts; it can abolish the Sabbath day, or prohibit the holding of Sunday-schools; it can repeal all laws in relation to contracts between man and man; it can refuse to provide for the punishment of a crime or protection of virtue; and were it not for our courts of justice, which it cannot abolish, it might transfer one man's farm to the occupancy of another, as well as all other property, and nothing but its want of complete sovereignty checks its ability in the exercise of power. That it lacks; and that renders the Bill before me mischievous, in engendering litigation, which is the very worst species of legislation that can inflict a people. Sovereignty does not reside in Legislatures; it resides in the people; and their sovereign acts must precede legislative bodies. And here, I presume, is the rock on which you have split. If sovereignty resided in Legislatures, then, indeed, no one would dare to dispute your sovereign acts. But in this great essential you are deficient, and hence the embarrassment under which you labor in completing your round of 'all legislation.' You can pass laws regulating the condition of master and slave, or you can repeal such laws, or refuse to pass them, but you lack the sovereignty necessary to create a slave, or wrest him from his owner. That is an exercise of power which clear, undisputed sovereignty alone can exercise; and it must be done by the sovereign himself, in convention assembled. In that capacity you adopted a clause in your Constitution, at Wyandott, declaring that Slavery should never exist in the State of Kansas. No one is silly enough to dispute that right; and had you declared it should exist in the State of Kansas, the right was equally clear, and none ever disputed it but the old John Adams school of strong constructionists and illegitimate Republicanism, of royal and imperial dictation over the States, of intermeddling by constitutional constructions, and deranging the order of things generally. You might as well expect to preserve the lives and machinery of a railroad train, at forty miles speed, by running it off the track, as to preserve the Union of these Sovereign States outside of the true construction of the Constitution. We found,
in early times, New England threatening a dissolution of the Union because a true construction had been put upon this instrument, and to her own equal advantage. How much more likely then will others be to do the same thing from false constructions, made to work them an injury. It is folly to make a question out of an inevitable consequence.

But you say that the Act also repealed the 'Compromise Act of 1820.' That compromise was a nullity when adopted. It was outside of Constitutional power when made. It was a compromise with error, done to save the Union for the time being, from the assaults of fanaticism. It admitted Missouri, without restrictions on her sovereign rights, but placed the restrictions, if of any binding force, upon others not a party to the compromise—those who might grow up and become sovereign with restrictions(?) It never was satisfactory to a great portion of the people. It was virtually ignored by the resolutions of 1850, with Mr. Clay's advocacy and advice—it was declared inoperative by the Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854, and totally washed out in the Dred Scott Decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. It was the declaration of the Kansas Nebraska Act, that the line of 36 degrees and 30 minutes was 'inoperative' that gave that Act its greatest importance. It corrected errors of the past and opened up the future to the true doctrine of Congress in regard to the Territories.

The ancient enemy of the Democracy was terribly shocked, or pretended to be, at this act, and, to make an issue, they met at Philadelphia, in a convention represented by one half the States, and fell back on the doctrine of power in the General Government. The members that composed the treasonable Hartford Convention could not have done worse in the way of royal assumptions, and Congressional specifics, to cure evils of which they seemed to know little, and, perhaps, cared less. They

'Resolved, That the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power over the Territories of the United States for their government, and that in the exercise of this power, it is both the right and duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories, those twin relics of barbarism--polygamy and slavery.'
This is a most extraordinary resolve, and if believed in by the political majority in your House, I cannot see how, without stultification, you assumed the right to exercise this sovereign power in a Territory! But this is not for me to be the judge. It is to be hoped that no one believes in this resolution now, if they ever did. What sovereignty does Congress possess over Slavery or anything else, in the Territories or in the States? Congress possesses no sovereignty, exercises no sovereign power. Its powers are all delegated—all clearly written and defined. Congress is much more a subject than a sovereign. It was created by sovereign States for specific purposes. Sovereignty in this country, is in the people, and is exercised by States or the people of the States. It is a monstrous stretch, even of the 'general welfare' doctrine, to claim that Congress is sovereign for any purpose. It has not one particle of the element of sovereignty in its organization, as extensive as its granted powers may be. It is neither sovereign 'by the grace of God,' nor by the grace of the people. Even what may be called inherent powers are not sovereign powers, but arise from necessity, and are restricted to that necessity.

Neither are Territories sovereign, because sovereignty can only exist in the States and in the people. And until the people of a Territory exercise the rights of sovereignty, in the only way possible, that of a co-equal State, the sovereignty is quiescent, inactive and powerless.

The Bill before me, therefore, loses its operative force, because it emanated from a body that has not the essentials necessary to carry it into effect. My approval would not add one feather to its weight, for I am as deficient in sovereignty, either in my own person or in my representative capacity, as yourselves. And not willing to place myself before the world with false assumptions of power. I feel grateful for the opportunity given me to place my opinions upon paper, against my approval of this Bill.

It was the dispute about whether the general government possessed the attributes of sovereignty, that led to the original division of the people with the Democratic and Federal parties. The Federal party saw plainly that they stood in need of something more than the letter of the Constitution, to sustain their monarchial advances, and hence they sought, very
naturally, for sovereignty in the government, that they were weilding themselves, instead of in the States and the people thereof. They well knew, if they could locate sovereignty in the government, their political fortunes were made, and by its exercise they could push their dangerous theories to an unlimited extent. The British Constitution, if such it can be called, was their model; and they had the same contemptuous feeling for a pure, simple and impartial Democratic construction of our system of government then, as their successors exhibit today. Guided by no rule but that of seeking after power, it was not unusual, then as now, for them to fly from the extreme doctrines of a consolidated government, to the wild and heretical theories of the anarchist. While gathering head on their strong government doctrines they lose strength; but in rushing back into wild and impracticable theories, they carry off many Democrats into their ranks, who, for the time being, persuade themselves that their old political enemies have come to them, and their friends have deserted them.

Failing to succeed in establishing sovereignty in Congress, they rush upon the still more extravagant idea of exercising it in the Legislatures of the Territories, before the people of the Territories have exercised it themselves. Always on extremes, never right, new party designations are continually sought, the better to hide the confusion of sentiment. New leaders are put up, and the latest arrival from the Democratic party into their heterogenous household, is considered the lost sheep over which to hold their pious orgies, and put at the head of their political church.

Sovereignty, then, being neither in Congress, where it was never put nor intended to be, nor in the Legislature of a Territory, where it has never been exercised by the constituents, is the reason why owners of slaves as well as owners of everything else, can go into Territories, and remain, or go out again without losing their right of ownership, as they would do by going into a State where sovereignty had been exercised, and any particular species of property or ownership had been prohibited.

A man crossing a State line into a Territory does not lose his sovereignty, unless he loses his senses first. He is just as much a sovereign afterwards as before, but as he has not exercised, nor
imprinted it upon the organization of his new home, it is in reserve, to be used in the mode prescribed by the Constitution of the Union, and the laws passed in accordance with that Constitution. If the people of a Territory possessed sovereignty outside of the Constitution of the Union, then Territories would indeed be as foreign powers to the States, could enter into alliances with other foreign powers, and establish independent governments for themselves, which could only be regained by conquest.

Courts of justice do not sit to adjudicate sovereignty, but to protect it from encroachment by Legislative bodies, who not unfrequently attempt to seize upon it by enacting laws that sovereignty had reserved to itself in written Constitutions. Courts pronounce such enactments 'unconstitutional,' and void for want of power in the Legislative Department. Hence the declaration in the Organic Act 'subject to the Constitution of the United States.' This declaration clearly defines that Congress contemplated no authoritative grant to the Legislature, not subject to the Constitution of the United States. Congress may direct, regulate or define the powers of the Constitution of the United States, so as to make them operative on a new Territory, but they can add nothing to, nor take anything from those powers. Hence Congress has in various ways established governments for Territories, by extending Executive, Legislative or Judicial authority over them, to subserv the purposes of civil society and of government, antecedent to the exercise of sovereignty, in due form, by the inhabitants thereof. There is no doubt that Congress has the right to judge of the form and manner of the exercise of such government, which may differ in many essentials, as we have seen in the past history of the country, and may see in the future, if our acquisitions continue, but in all and every instance subject to the Constitution of the United States.

There is a misapprehension of terms, in saying that the Constitution of the United States carries slavery into Territories, or any kind of property. The Constitution only protects property when carried there, and all contracts, obligations and agreements between man and man. It is not a respecter of persons or property, but operates with equal force upon all, and in the absence of the exercise of sovereignty in such Territory, it is authoritative in the protection of all. A Constitution is protective, not creative. A
Territorial Legislature might refuse to pass laws to punish horsethieves, yet my horse is as much mine as before, and would still be mine if stolen, and I would have a right to sell him, if I could get a purchaser.

The Constitution of the United States extends over all the persons and property of the country and far out into the sea. It knows no distinctions and cannot know any. Sorghum, quite a new thing in Kansas, and unknown to the country when the Constitution was adopted, is just as much property as Indian Corn. It is most remarkable that it never suggested itself to any one to pass a local law declaring Sorghum property, and securing it to the possession of the holder, so as to make it theft to steal it.

The whole question is simply this: In the States the people have exercised the sovereignty that is in them, and expressed it in a Constitution. The States and the people of the States, in their separate and distinct organizations, created a general government, to which they imparted very extensive powers, as a protection for the whole, giving strength in time of war, and economy in time of peace; while Territories, neither being governed by a sovereign, nor having exercised the sovereignty which is in them, are very much like a boy between eighteen and twenty-one years of age. He is mustered into the militia on the one hand like a man, and yet is under the control of a parent on the other. His time is employed in answering the commands of both, yet in no period of his life does he care less for either, provided he can have his own way, and he takes it very often to the annoyance of both. At twenty-one, he feels the responsibility of taking care of himself.

Hundreds, and I may say thousands, for these and other reasons will not live under the restrictions of a State Constitution, but will follow the Territories as long as there are any to follow.

The Bill before me, which is in these words:

'Sec. 1. That Slavery or involuntary servitude, except for the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, is and shall be forever prohibited in this Territory.

'Sec. 2. This Act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.'
--would indicate that you are sensible of the doubtful powers you were exercising, for you unite no penalty to its provisions. You merely enact into a law, the provisions in the Wyandott Constitution. It is merely declaratory. You give no notice to the owner of the slave--you take 'snap judgment' on him; but are careful to impose no penalty if he should laugh at your sudden interference, and pursue the even tenor of his way. The very delicacy with which you touch the subject, shows the doubts you hold as to the propriety of your act, and leads to the conclusion that it is largely mixed up with party politics. To meet all these phases of the subject, I hastily prepared this paper, so that it might be satisfactory as possible, and leave nothing in doubt as to my views, in returning the Bill. Brief as my time has been, and absent from any library or books for reference, I have been compelled to rely upon memory for facts and dates, but am persuaded that they are, in the main, correct. (24)

The veto was overridden soon thereafter and the bill was eventually declared unconstitutional in the courts.

Again, reaction was predictable. Blared the Lawrence Republican:

Gov. Medary has given his interpretation of what constitutes Free-Station and Squatter Sovereignty, by vetoing the bill prohibiting slavery in Kansas. The bill was purposely so drawn that he could find no fault with it except for the sole reason that it prohibited slavery. He has done so, and has stepped in and attempted to thwart the popular will in favor or freedom, by his veto in favor of slavery.

In view of his message there are no such things as free Territories in the United States... Slavery is national and freedom is sectional. Such is the logical tenor of this message, though hidden under a mass of loose and irrelevant verbiage. (25)

The Kansas National Democrat praised the veto message and commended it to the paper's readers by reprinting the entire text. Later it paraded before Kansans the reaction
to the Medary veto in the South by reprinting an article from the *Mobile Register*:

> The Governor, 'old Sam Medary,' as he was popularly called in Ohio -- Medary, late Governor of Minnesota, now Gov. Medary of Kansas, buried the bill...

> The act of Gov. Medary should not be forgotten in the South. He is one of those gallant band of Northern Democrats, who have always stood by our Constitutional rights in a region where it costs something to maintain such a position. (26)

The costs were indeed high. Worn and worried, not comforted as Jefferson had been by the prospects of an escape from a national crisis by virtue of a timely death, Medary returned home to do what he could to keep the American Union together, through the publication of a newspaper called, appropriately, *The Crisis*. 
Notes to Chapter VIII

1. The Ohio Statesman, April 13, 1855, p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. Cleveland Morning Leader, November 15, 1858, p. 2.
7. Ibid., pp. 565-566.
8. Ibid., p. 600.
9. Ibid., pp. 570-571.
10. Ibid., p. 571.
11. Ibid., p. 571.
14. Information on the composition of delegates to the Constitutional Convention at Wyandotte was taken from William Elsey Connelley's Kansas Territorial Governors (Topeka: Crane & Company, Publishers, 1900).
16. Lawrence Republican, November 24, 1859, p. 2.
17. Adams, p. 616.
18. Ibid., p. 616.
19. Ibid., p. 617.
CHAPTER IX

The Crisis Years, 1861-1864

Considering the rather anxious history of Kansas, reaction to Medary's resignation as territorial governor was uniformly generous.

As might be expected, the Democratic press "regretted deeply" the Medary decision to leave Kansas. Curiously, however, so, too, did the Republican press.

The Lawrence Republican wrote:

We part with Gov. Medary with regret. His politics differ from ours, but it has, nevertheless, been our good fortune to sustain nearly every prominent act of his administration, and that, too, fit times, against the violent men of his own party. He has been uniformly prudent and conciliatory; has sought rather to guide popular sentiment, than to despotically defy it; has been as much of a Free State man as he could be and hold office under Buchanan; and by his wisdom... has on more than one occasion averted threatened turmoil and conflict. We are glad to avow the belief that, despite his being an old and zealous partisan, he has sought, primarily, as he himself says, the permanent good of the Territory. (1)

On that same day, Dec. 20, 1860, Medary in an open letter to the people of Kansas printed in the Kansas National Democrat, explained why the good of the territory was no longer uppermost in his mind. His letter read in part:
Offices were not made for legal plunder, nor our government for pecuniary gain. They were made by the people for their own benefit and better preservation of life and property, and when converted into a scourge of the makers, it is treason against the original purpose, and dissatisfaction and disorder must be the sad consequences.

All good men, therefore, in public position, listen to the peoples' complaints, and if in accordance with law and justice mitigate the evils complained of, and thus restore harmony in the body politic and confidence in the administrators of the law.

Most unfortunately, this beautiful region of clear skies and rich verdure, has been christened in outlawry and over-run by murderers, thieves and outcasts from every region, attracted by the confusion of forced settlement, and most outward meddling from abroad. (2)

As for the restoration of peace in a troubled land, Medary continued:

Editors, politicians, and divines, should write, speak, and pray for the one great, and necessary purpose--perfect peace and a strict observance of the laws, both human and divine.

When the evil-doer is covered with the mantle of party politics, and wrested from the hands of justice as a partisan measure, the axe is laid at the root of our free institutions, and the cruelest of despotisms will rise up, a monument of infamy, to mark their place. Portentous clouds already thicken around the horizon of this most glorious Republic.

Falsehood has done its work--falsehood spread broadcast in every conceivable shape, until truth was ashamed to appear in public... Let the truth, and nothing but the truth, be plainly and emphatically spoken.... (3)

The falsehood of Republicanism, as Medary saw it, was moving the country inexorably toward disunion.

I have had gloomy forebodings for the last three years, that a crisis was approaching that would require
all the cool patriotism of the country to pass in safety.

It is a matter of public notoriety that I have been connected with the newspaper press for a great number of years—commencing in the summer of 1828 and ending in the summer of 1857, with a few short intervals. Having taken an active part in all the highly exciting political discussions of so long a period, I feel it a duty I owe my country and myself, that I should not be a silent spectator of the most dangerous controversy that ever impended over the American people. Like a ship at sea foundering in a storm, the sailors in wild confusion, without compass or commander.

Our country just now is of more value than party, of higher interest than aspiring men, and it will take the combined efforts of the wise, the good and the patriotic, to wrest the Constitution and the Union, given to us as our inheritance, from the dangers which threaten on every side. (4)

On the same day, Dec. 20, half a continent to the east and just a bit south of Kansas, the danger Medary spoke of ceased to be a threat. It became a reality when the secessionist convention called by the South Carolina legislature declared "that the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other states under the name of the United States of America is hereby dissolved." (5)

One week later, again in an open letter to Kansans, Medary announced the coming of The Crisis:

My connection of 30 years with politics and the press, gives me some claims upon the people for at least a candid hearing.

To my friends in Ohio, I once more appeal. I have often done so, but never in vain. In this terrible crisis in our affairs, will you not stand by me in this last appeal which, in the nature of things, I can never make again. God has spared my
life to witness this mournful and gloomy scene—to witness the destroying angel passing almost unheeded over our fair land, crushing the hopes of millions in its dread flight.

When a great country and the fate of a mighty people are at stake, it is no time to retreat to our closets to pick words of delicate meaning, or to hunt phrases to sit like music on the ear of love.

He who would not assist in saving us from the impending wreck, would not defend his wife and children from the fatal dagger raised to strike before his eyes. (6)

Forty-two days after South Carolina announced her secession from the Union and just two months before the first shots of the war were fired on Fort Sumter, the first edition of The Crisis was published. (7)

As promised, Medary neither picked words of delicate meaning nor hunted the lyrical phrase. On page one of the premier issue of The Crisis the 'Old Wheelhorse,' once again back in editorial harness, traced the history of America's agony as he knew that history:

When I announced to my friends more than two months ago that I believed our country was on the eve of a dissolution, and that I felt it as a duty pressing upon me that I should go back to Ohio, my 'old stamping ground,' and embark in a paper in anticipation of such a threatened catastrophe, I am well aware that many supposed that I was partially out of my senses.

But I had watched with anxious care the working of our politics for over thirty years, and I felt convinced that the crisis was approaching with rapid strides, that so many had feared from our earliest history. In the nature of God's philosophy our hour of evil was approaching. You cannot plant corn and reap wheat -- you cannot sow tares and reap corn. As ye plant so shall ye water and bring forth, each after its kind.
...While we differed as national men, we differed about national questions, proposed for the general good, but when we arrayed citizens against citizens on sectional issues, we engendered strifes and hatreds, which have all the bitter and relentless spirit that arises in a war of races. We oppose men not face to face... but give loose rein to tongue and imagination, because the party attacked is not near to contradict or explain, or make personal defense of any kind. Hence the character of the political speeches that we have heard around us for years... Slander and defamation ran riot over the land. (8)

And Medary went further:

**Has the South any Reason to Complain?** Yes, we think it has, and it is our duty to state it. We have promised to speak plainly and we shall most assuredly do so...

Nothing could suit them (the abolitionists) -- ... They finally succeeded after years of labor in getting agitation to their hearts' content. Now what have they gained by it? They have, they will tell us, gained office, but what is office compared with country? What is official honor, with private dishonor as an off-set?

Had these northern agitators been satisfied with any phase of the question offered them by the south, then the south might have had less cause of complaint.

But the idea of 'a cordon of free States' to surround the slave States got so interwoven with their idea of political ascendancy that they made it a boast in all their discussions, and nothing else would satisfy them. The Boa Constrictor would not swallow the southern States whole and at one effort, but they must first squeeze the victim so as to break his bones, and prepare him for an easier meal.

This being the avowal publicly, and success following the public declaration, what was to be expected but that the victim (the slave states) would take the alarm and prepare for the attack. Any man of sense might have expected it.

**Has the South Done no Wrong?** This is the question we are asked by the Republican daily? We answer, most assuredly, they are doing many things wrong; in
our opinion. From our standpoint we view the action of South Carolina as very wrong in her hasty secession from the Union. We think she was still more wrong in her hostile acts since, and had it not been for an amount of most praiseworthy prudence and forbearance, we should now be in the midst of a civil war. The President had shown, most assuredly, no bearing against the full and just rights of the South, and it was trifling with his (i.e., Buchanan's) previous position and friendship to push matters to extremes, as a test of his friendship...

In all these, South Carolina was not only wrong, very wrong, but exhibited a want of tact and foresight that does not foreshadow a lasting unity among themselves, if no coercive measures are used by equally foolish, short-sighted, and mad men in the North. If South Carolina can force coercive acts from the North, she knows that her fortune is made by being backed by a united South, and that the effort of the North must, in the end, be a failure, for it would keep Southern councils as a unit.

But we are not here in Ohio dealing with South Carolina... but we have to deal here at home and in the North, with a much more dangerous element, and one that if not checked in its folly and evil purposes, will be more fatal to us than any action of the South can ever be, and hence we shall mainly deal with it.

Neither the financial condition of the General Government, nor of the States, is in a condition to support armies, which such a conflict would require; and without money or credit, the necessary direct taxes upon the people would cause universal bankruptcy, if not general rebellion against the oppression.

...And instead of ballots to vote, they desire to send us tax-lists to fill their (i.e., office-holding politicians) coffers as a means of carrying on this unnatural war, and fratricidal strife. With the dagger in one hand and the tax roll in the other, we shall exhibit the 'freedom of man' in a most interesting attitude for historians to record.

...If we of the border States, or of other States, are held up as traitors for this (attempt to keep up peace and mutual understanding), and threatened with dire punishment of Military law, we only have to say that we are scholars as our fathers taught us, and
model after the greatest patriots and best and wisest men that ever lived. That is all. (9)

The election of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican party had only served to compound an already massive problem, argued Medary.

The Republican party, and I say it in all candor and as a truth, as an organization, is inadequate to restore order, retain its own strength or act in harmony on any great measure of national health, and the restoration of the government. The party has within its organization, an element, much larger than the conservative men in it suppose, that is resolved on revolution and vengeance. Fanatical, mischievous, reckless, with a secret organization of its own, feeling its strength and importance for evil, it will be wholly uncontrollable, and will follow the bent of its own inclinations. It places its own perverted conscience, 'seared as with a hot iron,' above law; and platforms above constitutions. It has no object in its existence but that of disorder, and no higher aims than those of exercising God's vengeance as they understood it... It is no longer a question of men, but one of country. Not one of political strife, but of war or peace. -- Peace on honorable terms, or war as a last necessity -- a war which, if once begun, no man can estimate either its duration or violence. (10)

What then was the answer? "The errors of the past," he wrote, "will hardly be acknowledged by their authors, but this is a government of the people, and it is they who have got to take the country in their own hands and save it from the impending ruin, if it is saved at all. And it can only be done by that old Democratic and constitutional party forming a nucleus around which the patriotic can rally." (11)

But Ohio and especially its people were the key. The purpose of The Crisis was to persuade its citizens of that,
to convince them that peace, understanding and resolution of divisive sectional differences was possible without the savagery of civil war.

Medary did not bring with him to the editorship of The Crisis an unflagging commitment to pacifism characteristic of those reared in the Quaker faith. The best case that can be made for him is that he was a selective objector to war. He had, after all, supported wholeheartedly the Polk administration's war against Mexico in the 1840s and had directed the use of the military against "banditti" in southern Kansas.

Medary did bring to that publication, however, the fervent hope, if not belief, that war and disunion could be averted, a position still desperately clung to by the Douglas Wing of the Democratic party.

After the outbreak of fighting, the Democrats were to fragment still further over the war issue. Many aligned themselves with the coalition Union party during the war years. Those who did not shift allegiance came to be known by friends as Peace Democrats.

Others of different persuasions branded them Copperheads, a pejorative reference to the venomous snake found in the southern United States that is said, apocryphally perhaps, to strike without reason or warning.

What Medary and the Copperheads believed, what they stood for in those early war years, can be found in Medary's
front-page writings of that first issue of The Crisis on January 31, 1861. Bringing to his writings his reputation as a journalist, politician and man of honor, Medary, assuming the leadership of the dissident Peace Democrats along with Clement L. Vallandigham of Dayton, publisher of The Empire, explained what The Crisis was to be about.

The Crisis will fully and thoroughly sift the great issues that hang like a cloud of night over our common country, and if our nationality, as it is, cannot be preserved whole and undivided, the still greater question will arise, more perplexing as it is more gloomy, what are to be the conditions of our dissolution and our disgrace?

These are momentous questions, yet they are crowding hard upon us, and we have got to look at them in the face, as unpalatable as they may be.

I have not much faith in seeing those who brought this fearful crisis upon our country show patriotism and manliness enough to confess their errors, rectify their mistakes, and restore the country to the safe and healthy condition in which they found it, but I shall never lose confidence in the mass of the people, nor distrust their right intentions until all hope is lost, and we are smitten down by the parricidal hand. (12)

Arguing that sectionalism, selfishness and ambition had no place in the rhetoric of the imminent struggle, Medary explained that he was leaving one kind of public involvement for another in search of "no higher honor than those which conferred upon our race peace, prosperity and constitutional liberty." (13) That theme of constitutional liberty was to occupy ever-increasing space on the pages of The Crisis as the war wore on and peaceful settlement became more and more remote.
Medary did not dodge the slavery question in that first edition of The Crisis, either. How should it be resolved?

Better, far better, that each state, for the time being, should fall back upon its own sovereignty and territorial boundaries so that in time the question not only of the slave in the South, but of the free negro in the North may be settled in peace. (14)

Medary closed his first issue with the pledge:

The Crisis will discuss the issues at great length and without gloves. I will speak freely of men and of measures and call things by their right name. (15)

Medary and the Peace Democrats were in concert in opposition to the Republicans under Lincoln and the Union coalition. What they sought was peace, then compromise, a restoration of the Union as it had been, and always the preservation of civil and constitutional liberties.

Initially, Medary did not seem to take the Lincoln presidency seriously, dismissing it as a chance political aberration and the man himself as rather bland and ineffectual.

Reporting on Lincoln's inaugural address sometime after the fact, Medary wrote:

...Without approaching a new idea or a manly burst of feeling on so terrible an occasion, the message is a mere re-hash of what was a float in the Republican papers before... So far, we admit the boldness of the message -- done, too, without any more evident compunctions of conscience, than had been ordering that number of rails split. It is well perhaps that we have a President that does not appear to have any feeling in the matter, but rather considers the whole affair a good joke.
That the States are the creatures of the general Government as Mr. Lincoln blandly informs us, is a step forward in the old Federal doctrine, and as new as startling to Democratic ears. It is neither true in fact nor in history... There never was a Democrat, who was not a State-rights man, there never was a true State-rights man who was not a Democrat. Had State-rights been swallowed up by the Alien and Sedition laws, as seemed to be the desire in the 'reign of old Adams,' we long since would have approached a limited monarchy and had our jails kept full of 'sedulous' politicians .... (16)

Later he was to rail at the tall political accident from Illinois.

Mr. Lincoln was elected President by only a little over one third of the votes of the people of the United States, and became President merely by the forms of the Constitution, and not by public opinion. A portion of the Southern States, believing the country disgraced by the election of such a man, and their local and State interests sacrificed and their rights of property endangered, seceded from the Union as formed under the United States Constitution. For this breach of compact, Mr. Lincoln called out immense armies and plunged the country into an immense civil war, such as the world never before witnessed -- drenching the peaceful fields with human blood, involving the people in debts untold and incalculable -- disturbing the interests of the civilized world -- ending in foreign wars and in monarchical governments on every border, and forcing upon the country a Despotism of the grossest character. All this Mr. Lincoln has done, when only elected under the forms of law and against a majority of the voters of the free people of the States.

Mr. Vallandigham, unlike Mr. Lincoln, approaches the executive chair of Ohio, with peace and order on his banners; industry and prosperity are the companions of his principles; pledged to carry on the government of the State on the benign platform of the Constitution, guaranteeing to every man, friend or foe, legal protection and individual freedom. He seeks his election upon the free and unbiased suffrages of the intelligent people of his State -- ... and only prevented from meeting them face to face... by the vile act of dispotism that would disgrace the most barbarous,
ignorant and wicked government that ever cursed humanity or the earth.

That Mr. Vallandigham took an early position against precipitating the country into a bloody strife to settle our political differences... is all true... His consistency in this matter his friends do not pretend to deny;... A people who proclaim their readiness to fight any body, at any time and all the time, just to show that they are bullies, only bring down upon themselves the enmity and contempt of all nations.

Against such conduct and such a war or wars Mr. Vallandigham took an early stand and position as a statesman; and for this he brought upon his head the bullying propensities of the whole pack of new comers into power under Mr. Lincoln. This is the height of his offending; and for this manly, noble position the good people have made him their leader. (17)

Medary took great pains to explain repeatedly his position on major issues in the early editions of The Crisis. Medary was quick to concede that both the North and South had made some appalling mistakes in the months that led up to secession and fighting. He was critical in his five column, eight-page weekly of the South's rush to arms as an answer to the problems it faced. But he viewed the North as carrying an equal measure of blame, first for temporizing in negotiations with the South, and then for electing Lincoln, a man Medary saw as caring more for the future of the Republican Party than the Union. Medary likewise argued that war in a country that could only function if it had the blessings of its people could in no way resolve the issue of slavery. What the war most
certainly would do, Medary suggested, was to create debt, misery and suffering for millions on both sides.

He did not, in short, buy the Lincoln argument that the Union could not survive half slave and half free. The states themselves had the right to determine whether they were to be slave or free. The original 13 exercised that right, yet the abolitionists, Medary wrote, would deny it to the rest with the cooperation of Congress that likewise had no authority to exert sovereignty over the states. Medary's position was that the proper role of central government was one of subject, not sovereign.

Medary hit hard at that theme right up to his death in November of 1864. Of especial concern was the possible impact a newly freed black population might have on the economy and society of the North.

There are six million slaves in the United States to be turned loose in free states. Now what would be the poor white man's condition in this state with thousands of wooly heads to compete with and associate with? White men will have to leave Ohio and labor where niggers could not come. (18)

A year after the Emancipation Proclamation, Medary continued to attack both the legality of the move and the principle behind it.

...There can be no man worthy of his place in the conscious dignity of American citizenship, but revolts in his heart at the idea of a negro -- a negro slave, just betrayed or stolen from the care of his owner -- being his equal before the bar of the public opinion of the universe; being his equal in the dread responsibilities and honors of a soldier of the
Republic; being his equal in the regard of his government as to his treatment or his life. The assertion is made broadly -- because it is felt that there can be no man, worth being called a man, who dares acknowledge anything else in his own secret communion with himself. If it be 'treason' then, even on the sliding scale construction now in vogue, to dissent from the acts of 'the Government,' which adopted as its policy that which is abhorrent as well to nature as to law, it is a 'treason' which has its defenders in the hearts of the people of America.

Unfortunately for the foundation of this new-fangled comprehensive humanity, there are no citizens of the United States who are not citizens of the States. The States alone respectively declare who are their citizens; and the citizens of the several states alone compose the citizens of the United States. The General Government is no where invested with the right to declare any citizens at large. Those who the States declare to be citizens, are alone entitled to the privilege and immunities of citizens of the United States. The only power given to the General Government, in this relation, was to declare 'a uniform rule of naturalization.' There are no laws in the United States, or any of the States, for the naturalization of the negro. He can be made a citizen only by State action. Mr. Lincoln gets no authority for his extension of the dignity and immunities of the citizenship to any negroes, save of those States which have admitted them to citizenship.... (19)

While Medary's position might not stand the test of 20th Century reasoning, it was nonetheless still a position that found sympathy among a number of Ohioans, especially in southern and central Ohio where migration patterns and trade interests had engendered a southern tolerance, if not an affection.

For Medary, however, the greatest tragedy of all was war:

Of all disorders we despise those among neighbors the most - of all wars we hold those
called civil wars in the greatest abhorrence, and during a life time, we have denounced them - abhorred them as a matter of principle, and as we loved country and the family of man, we have ever shrunk with loathing from the man who, in public or private position, dares so far forget God and humanity, as to advocate either local disorders or national bloodletting. (20)

The Crisis soon after its issuance was accorded national acclaim as the loudest and most effective voice in behalf of the Copperhead movement. (21) The acclaim, of course, came from sympathizers. But Medary and his cause stood outside the mainstream of Ohio and national sentiment. To the Unionists, Republicans and Democrats alike, The Crisis and other papers like it, with their appeals for peace, negotiation and compromise, were serving no cause other than the enemy's. Tensions grew acute during the early phases of the war between Medary and the Unionists in Ohio, frustrated no doubt by the North's failures on the battlefield.

 Criticism was especially sharp in Columbus, the still tiny state capital of some 19,000 people.

Severest critic of The Crisis was the Ohio State Journal, also a Columbus paper, which served the Republican Party in the same capacity as Medary's Ohio Statesman had served the Democrats. Day after day, the Journal, reflecting the thinking of the state administration of Governor David Tod, condemned The Crisis for its opposition to the war effort. The criticism grew more strident through 1862 and early into 1863 as the armies of the North continued to
search for a major victory. Northern casualties were mounting. Especially hard hit were the Ohio contingents. At the battle of Shiloh alone more than 2,000 Ohioans were killed or wounded. (22) Ohio was, in fact, to give more soldiers and more generals to the fighting before war's end than any other state in the North.

Officials of the Tod administration began to speak more and more forcefully of The Crisis, declaring that it was becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between partisan criticism and treason within its pages. But civilian displeasure with dissent paled in comparison to military disapprobation of it. From the beginning of the war, military authorities in Washington had pressed hard for controls over the information flow from the nation's capital. Admittedly, at the outset of the fighting, the Union press, aggressive and far from careful in its writing, had done little to aid the military effort. The press had revealed vital military information pertaining to troop movements and casualties, had undermined confidence in the management of public affairs, and had given disproportionate attention to the ambitious among the officer corps and to the sensational in combat.

With the military tide running strongly against the North, demands for censorship soon gave way to authority to censor. On July 8, 1861, Commander of the Armies General Winfield Scott issued an order backed up by Secretary of
War Simon Cameron forbidding telegraph companies to send out over the wires any information of a military nature. (23) On August 2, 1861, General George B. McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac, offered the press a plan for voluntary censorship. The plan fell victim to abuse in less than a month. On October 22, Secretary of State Seward ordered institutional censorship of telegraphed messages out of Washington on both military and civilian matters. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in February of 1862 refined Steward's order with a second calling for a review of all press dispatches prior to transmission. About the same time, President Lincoln authorized army commanders to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, a protection against arbitrary arrest, whenever it served the national interest. Meanwhile, General William T. Sherman insisted upon and finally got the authority to accredit journalists at the front and to pull those accreditations if reporters proved unacceptable to commanding officers.

The process of erosion of civil and constitutional rights was under a full head of steam with the apparent blessings of the Lincoln administration which viewed the steady flow of unflattering news as a very serious matter. The influence of the press on the conduct of the war was clearly held to be pernicious. In a letter to his brother, General Sherman wrote:
To every army and almost every general a newspaper reporter goes along, filling up our transports, swelling our teams, reporting our progress, guessing at places, picking up drooping expressions, inciting jealousies and discontent, and doing infinite mischief. The press has killed [the reputations of] McClellan, Buell, Fitz-John Porter, Sumner, Franklin and Burnside. Add my name to the list and I am not ashamed of the association. (24)

Embarassment on the battlefield and in the newspaper was proving to be too much for the professional soldier to tolerate.

Increasingly, civilian and military authorities alike argued that opposition to the war in the North, especially in the Copperhead press, amounted to disloyalty at the very least. They also argued that the nation's body of laws speaking to the issue of press freedoms was woefully silent on the equally important issue of responsibilities. Energies soon turned to the establishment of a few. On July 17, 1862, an angry Congress passed the Treason Act which resembled in every way but name the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

The passage of that act was to have a profound effect on the life of Samuel A. Medary. One week after the passage of the act The Crisis ran its text, in full. Of special note is Section 2:

And be it further enacted, that if any person shall hereafter incite, set on foot, arouse or engage in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States, or the laws thereof, or shall engage in, or give aid and comfort thereof
to any such existing rebellion or insurrection, and be convicted thereof, such person shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years, by a fine not exceeding $10,000, and by the liberation of his slaves, if any he have. (25)

The Crisis did not offer editorial comment on the act's passage but did run beside the reprint of the text a communication from Lincoln to Congress praising the "fair construction" (26) of Section 2.

Little else was ever written by Medary about the Treason Act, which was strange since the focus of The Crisis had already shifted from the theme of peace to the theme of the erosion of personal freedoms. The Treason Act was to serve as a justification for a series of repressive military directives against the right of free expression, all of which were to be rather loosely based on the aid-and-comfort-to-the-enemy clause in the legislation. That clause, coupled with Congressional authorization for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the right to declare martial law and the right to subject those found guilty of disloyal practices to military rather than civilian justice represented a formidable obstacle to the continuation of active opposition to the war effort and administration policy.

By 1863, popular resentment of dissenters was no less acute than official resentment, and it had the advantage of not being hampered by legal niceties. In Ohio, at least
five newspapers in 1863 were attacked and to some degree or another destroyed by irate citizens. One of those newspapers was Medary's. On March 5, 1863, late in the evening, a mob of anywhere from 50 to 200, depending upon the source, "crept softly along the snow 'til they came to the office [at the corner of High and Gay streets]. They circled around the door with fixed bayonets and declared death on the man that interfered." (27) The bayonets suggest rightly that this mob was made up of soldiers, believed to be from nearby Camp Chase, though it was never proven. The Ohio Statesman wrote the following day that soldiers had "forcibly entered the editor's room of The Crisis and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on." (28) The damage was estimated at $800. Two weeks later a civilian contingent tried the same thing but was restrained by police and militia before any damage was done.

Two weeks after that, General Ambrose Burnside was given command of the Ohio Department which included the states of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois and Michigan. Burnside, headquartered at Cincinnati, was fresh from his defeat at Fredericksburg and bitter over the treatment he had been given by the press. On April 13, as one of his first official acts, Burnside issued Executive Order #38 in response to active opposition to the war he found in Ohio, especially in Dayton where Clement L. Vallandigham continued to speak and publish, and with increasing fervor,
on the national shame of war. Burnside's order read in part:

Hereafter, all persons found within our lines who commit acts for the benefit of the enemies of our country will be tried as spies and traitors and, if convicted, will suffer death.

The habit of declaring sympathy for the enemy will not be allowed in this department. Persons committing such offenses will be at once arrested with a view to being tried as above stated, or sent beyond our lines into the lines of their friends. It must be clearly understood that treason expressed or implied will not be tolerated in this department. (29)

On May 1 at a speech in Mount Vernon, Vallandigham called the Burnside directive "base usurpation of arbitrary power." (30) The speech was attended by two Burnside aides in civilian dress. On May 5, a company of soldiers under Burnside's command arrested Vallandigham at his Dayton home and escorted him to Cincinnati where he was to stand trial. The official record shows that charges brought against Vallandigham were for "public expression... of sympathy for those in arms against the government of the United States, and declaring disloyal sentiments and opinions, with the object and purpose of weakening the power of the government in its efforts to suppress an unlawful rebellion." (31) Vallandigham was convicted on May 16 by a military tribunal and sentenced to prison at Fort Warren in Boston for the duration of the war. Three days later, Lincoln countermanded the court's order and directed that Vallandigham be delivered into the hands of the Confederacy.
After Vallandigham's conviction, *The Crisis* would devote itself almost exclusively to the issues of the Constitution and individual liberties.

Even before the Vallandigham arrest and conviction, Medary and *The Crisis* had bemoaned the collapse of a civil and just government and the undermining of liberties guaranteed both in the nation's legal charter and by tradition. On May 2, 1861, Medary reported that Governor William Dennison had assumed unto himself the practice of reviewing wire service dispatches before allowing them to be transmitted. Then he editorialized:

> We are wholly unaware of the source where Gov. Dennison derives his authority for so extraordinary an act, an act of usurpation wholly without authority and inconsistent with the rights of citizens and the liberty of the press. We protest against the whole thing. The people want to know, ought to know, what is going on. Let Gov. Dennison and his staff, and the military, keep their own secrets... but let them not invade the rights of the press and the people. (32)

Medary, having already established the position of *The Crisis* on the issues, often opted not to editorialize on official acts and declarations he viewed as contrary to the rights of the citizenry. More often than not, he simply ran the texts, in full. On May 23, 1861, he ran without comment an act of the Ohio legislature forbidding "use of the telegraph lines... for the purpose of conveying any treasonable message or dispatch whatsoever." On June 20 he printed, again without comment, a story on the
arrest of Joseph Tucker, editor of the *St. Louis Journal*, on charges of aiding and comforting "divers evil disposed and traitorous bodies of men." In that same edition appeared an article on the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, an institution, Medary declared, that was fundamental to individual liberty.

Soon afterward, Medary responded to the growing pressures from authorities to tone down opposition to the cause of the North.

But we claim the right to discuss public matters, and that freely, and unrestrained - we claim also the right to be a Democrat, as we understand the meaning of that word, and we claim the right as a citizen and conductor of the public press, to give our interpretation of the law and the Constitution. In vindicating these rights for ourselves, we vindicate them for all others besides.

(33)

Three issues later Medary published an address of Daniel Webster's on free discussion and its virtues. On September 5, 1861, *The Crisis* devoted a goodly portion of page 6 to reprints of Section I of the Ohio Constitution and the First Amendment to the federal Constitution.

Such was the pattern as it developed in *The Crisis*. Reprinted on its pages were the great documents of the nation alongside stories from the Copperhead press around the country and reports of the latest efforts at silencing dissent by Ohio and federal authorities.

Medary's subtle challenges to those efforts might for want of better words be called the persuasive campaign of
juxtaposition. The editorial comments that appeared in the columns of The Crisis seemed both reasoned and restrained. But the contrast between the momentous documents of American history past and American history present said more to the readers of The Crisis than any amount of direct editorial comment ever could have. Still, the rights of citizens during wartime continued to be redefined by the government.

Ohio Peace Democrats viewed with such alarm many of those redefinitions that they called upon the state legislature to investigate. Of particular concern, they claimed, was the almost eager exercise of federally sanctioned authority to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. A special legislative committee convened in the early months of 1863 to focus on that issue.

Governor David Tod had precipitated the Peace Democrats' resolution that finally won approval in the legislature by his order for the arrest of former Congressman Edson B. Olds. Olds had campaigned actively across the state against enlistment in the Union army. The committee, comprised of two Peace Democrats and three Unionists, found during its investigation instances of eleven questionable arrests since the outbreak of fighting. In reporting its findings, the committee concluded that the nation's court system, at all levels, had no jurisdiction in cases involving opposition to the draft. No statutes could be found in force that spoke to the issue directly. The committee argued that the
state had two options. It could either "suffer its arm to be paralyzed with impunity by seditious and disloyal practices and speeches... or to curb those practices by military power." (34) So it was that the unofficial policy of Ohio was made official, aided by those who stood to lose the most. Unlawful restraints continued within Ohio's borders.

With lawful rights in limbo for those who stood on the wrong side of the war issue, citizens committed to the Union and the war, and they were the majority, often moved in ahead of the military to silence dissent. The Crisis was mobbed on March 5, 1863. In rapid succession, so too were the offices of the Mahoning Sentinel, the Fremont Messenger, the Ohio Eagle and the Dayton Empire, all of which prompted Medary to observe that the only protection for Peace Democrats any longer "was in their own keeping." (35) The crackdown on opinion not squaring with the Unionist view did not lessen during the summer and fall of 1863.

At the start of 1864, Medary, in an editorial, decried "the public abandonment of personal liberty and crouching even by implication to the most odious of all tyrants is a misfortune no time can cure, nor can any apology excuse the mistake." (36) Medary's view was a retrospective one, touched off by the events of the preceding eleven months, months that saw the issuance of Burnside's Executive Order #38, and the arrest, conviction and exile of Vallandigham. Recall that Medary had only briefly treated the Burnside decree in The
Crises. In the days and weeks following its announcement, he used much more in the way of editorial space to discuss an extension of the Burnside order that originated at the headquarters of General Milo Hascall, commander of the Indiana Department.

What had been only implied in the Burnside directive was explicitly stated in Hascall's General Order #9, which read in part:

The commanding general is charged with the duty of carrying into effect the provisions of General Order [sic] 38 recently issued by Major General Burnside. He purposes [sic] doing so... All newspapers or public speakers that council (sic) or encourage resistance to the Conscript Act, or any other laws of Congress passed as war measures, or that endeavor to bring war policy of the United States into disrepute, will be considered a violation of the order above alluded to and treated accordingly. (37)

There was no mistaking the dangers of such a policy to Medary and others like him. Medary accepted the challenge.

In the May 6, 1863, edition of The Crisis, Medary commented in his usual, restrained way.

We believe neither the Constitution of Ohio, nor of the United States, has been repealed or blotted out by any act of the people themselves. We have been led to these remarks on reading the following military order issued by Gen. Hascall of the Indiana Military Department. The fact whether free discussion of any man's war policy will bring it into disrepute or not, is not a question... to decide before the effect of such discussion is visible. More great and good measures of statesmen and more questions of philosophy have been sustained by free and full discussion than lost by it. We can only believe, with lights before us, and Order No. 9, that it is the fear that this
war policy, thus protected by military order, would not bear the test of free discussion.

Three weeks later, on May 27, Medary claimed in a brief story to have Lincoln administration documents to prove that Burnside's order had been issued without approval from Washington. In that same edition was an equally short piece from the South Bend, Indiana, Forum telling of a Hascall threat to halt publication of the paper unless it printed a retraction of its criticism of his Order #9.

Exchanges between The Crisis and the authorities in Ohio intensified during the latter part of 1862, through the Summer and Autumn of 1863 and continued into the Winter and Spring of 1864. Issue after issue of The Crisis hit hard at the attack on personal freedoms and the misconduct of the Lincoln administration in pursuing its own notion of peace with honor.

Little has been written of the events leading up to the arrest of Samuel Medary in May of his last year of life. Attacks by The Crisis on military and civilian authorities were no more strident than usual. The North had turned the corner on the war front. The Crisis had already proven itself to be incapable of turning the citizenry of Ohio around on the war question. But other matters prompted that federal grand jury in Cincinnati to indict Medary on conspiracy charges in May.
The first seems to have been that Ohio's draft quota for the year was high, 148,879 men in all. (38) With the North closer by the day to victory, the state was finding it difficult to recruit its fair share. The desertion rate was astronomical. Aggravating matters was The Crisis which continued to advocate draft resistance.

When the draft was officially ordered for Ohio in 1862, The Crisis ran an I-told-you-so editorial:

We are at last owning up that we have rushed into a real, terrible, if not endless war; and no man, high or low, rich or poor, need hope to escape its terrors and responsibilities. What many have looked upon as the 'dread command' has come. We do not look upon it in that light. It is twice as manly as setting the politicians to run down our young men (39) at $2 a head and an office.

We have but met the stern realities of war; it is at our very doors -- and we would have it so. Any one who spoke of peace and a settlement was a traitor and to be hung. And now when you have got just what you would have, it is too late to make wry faces at the first sip of the cup which is running over at the brim. (40)

The most important reason for indicting Medary, however, may be explained by what happened to the Copperhead movement in Ohio after its repudiation at the polls in the fall of 1863. In short, what happened was that a radical wing of the party went underground as realistic Peace Democrats began to look about for a more comfortable alignment. Vallandigham took the diehards with him and formed a militant organization known as the Sons of Liberty. Assuming all the trappings of a revolutionary group, the Sons of
Liberty began to talk seriously of armed rebellion within the borders of the state. (41) The plan was to raid prison camps at Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay and at Camp Chase near Columbus.

No evidence has ever been documented to suggest that Medary ever endorsed such a plan, or that he even knew about it. But he had for years been associated with Vallandigham, and that association in all likelihood resulted in his indictment on May 20. The charges were that Medary had conspired with subversives of the Union and had served as their spokesman.

In the May 25 edition of The Crisis, Medary wrote of his arrest:

We hope that our subscribers will not feel any alarm at the glorifying [sic] storm raised in the Republican press about our being arrested on last Friday... for conspiracy. We responded to the gentlemanly summons with all freedom, and was only surprised on arriving at Judge Leavitt's court-room that they all seemed more anxious to get rid of us than we did to part with them. ...As it was our first appearance under arrest we no doubt appeared a little awkward, but they showed us how to act and we went through successfully.

Medary was freed when Washington McLean, editor of the Cincinnati Enquirer, posted $3,000 bond for him.

The June 1 issue of The Crisis was filled with dispatches from sympathetic papers in the East. One such story came from the Syracuse, N.Y. Daily Courier and Union.

Gov. Samuel Medary, now under arrest, is one of the magnificent relics of that era of statesmen,
to whom is due the late grandeur of this Republic. Of course, he is out of place in a generation which bows to negro idolatry and to statesmen of the calibre of Lincoln, his cabinet, and his Summerized Senate. He imbibed the inspiration of his political life and creed from the living lips of the Jeffersons, the Madisons, the Jacksons, whose policy had preserved the country and conducted it on its unparalleled prosperity and greatness. Of course he was obnoxious to all that class of modern sages and patriots who scoff at state's rights as a snare and hold all those men who talk of Constitutions as traitors.

In an editorial in that same June 1 edition, Medary summed up his years of commitment:

Against all this we have wielded what force an independent press could bring to bear, not for ourselves and posterity alone, not for Democrats exclusively, but for all men, for every citizen, for mankind, for all must suffer alike in the end. If a man cannot read a paper in favor of peace, of law, of civil and just government, what can he read? Our whole labors have been devoted to the protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In late June, Medary's trial was continued until the fall. On November 7, 1864, he died suddenly, some say of fatigue, others of cancer. But he never stood trial for conspiracy.

Word of his death spread quickly and tributes were not long in finding their way into print.

Wrote the Republican Ohio State Journal:

It becomes our melancholy duty to announce the demise of our fellow-citizen Samuel Medary, Editor of 'The Crisis.' He expired at his residence in this city... last evening. Few men in our state were more generally known, or exerted a more extended influence than Mr. Medary... As a business man he was enterprising and untiring, carrying forward to success enterprises that persons of less sanguine temperament would recoil at undertaking;... His social attachments were
ardent and enduring. In politics we have known him for more than a quarter of a century as an open, decided, energetic and consistent opponent. During all that period we cannot now recall an instance in which, upon any question of public policy, our views have been coincident with his. (42)

The paper he founded in 1828, The Ohio Sun, noted of his life that "his greatest anxiety seemed to arise from the fear that he would outlive constitutional liberty." (43)

Said the Cincinnati Commercial: "He gave up to party what was meant for mankind. That was the sum of his faults." (44)

On November 8, the day following Medary's death, the journalists and editors of Columbus met at City Hall and adopted resolutions recognizing Medary as "one of the ablest and best, as he was one of the oldest and most distinguished, editors of the state"; "one whose native talent, incorruptible integrity and steady adherence to what he conceived to be correct political principles, were most effective in bringing the western press to its present high and noble position." (45)

On May 31, 1871, six years after the end of the Civil War and almost seven years without its founder, its Medary personality and passion spent, The Crisis went to press for the last time.

More than a century has passed since Samuel Medary was buried atop a graceful swell of ground that overlooks much of the rest of lush Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus, Ohio.
The monument that marks Medary's grave stands a lonely vigil there still, towering above the other granite testimonials to the departed. During the bleak winter months, two equally lonely, barren oaks stand guard to the south and east. To the southwest, a stately pine points skyward. To the north a small stand of oaks tries ineffectually to shield Medary's grave from chilling winds. In the swelter of the growing seasons, those same trees toss their leafy shadows toward the Medary family plot. But it is not until late in the day when it no longer matters that their cooling reaches touch the marker of one of Ohio's most prominent journalists and statesmen.

Around Medary are buried those who knew him best, understood him the most, but who regretfully kept what they knew and felt to themselves. (46) At the plot's center stands Medary's memorial, still pointing like the pine insistently upward. A once noble figure draped in sculptured sandstone robes has long since given way to time and the weather. The inscription at the granite base of the monument, words commissioned by those who weathered with Medary the Civil War years in Ohio, are now no more than illegible creases in stone, tiny fissures that detain only briefly the rush of rain from the top of the monument to its base. In better times, the inscription had read:
In commemoration of his Public Services, Private Virtues, Distinguished Ability, and Devotion to Principle, This Monument is erected by the Democracy of Ohio.
Notes to Chapter IX

1. Lawrence Republican, December 20, 1860, p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Ibid., p. 2.
7. The first issue of The Crisis is dated January 31, 1861.
10. Ibid., p. 3.
11. Ibid., p. 1.
12. The Crisis, January 31, 1861.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., July 11, 1861, p. 4.
17. Ibid., September 16, 1863.
18. Ibid., March 5, 1862.
19. Ibid., August 12, 1863.
20. Ibid., March 11, 1863.

23. Most of the information in the paper dealing with civilian and military efforts to censor the news industry was gleaned from Edwin H. Ford's *Selected Readings in the History of American Journalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1939.


26. Ibid.


30. Ibid., p. 162.

31. Ibid.


33. Ibid., August 6, 1861.

34. Porter, "Ohio Politics during the Civil War Period," p. 152.

35. Ibid., p. 154.


37. Ibid., May 6, 1863.

38. The draft quota figure was taken from Roseboom and Weisenburger's *A History of Ohio*, p. 196.
39. One of those young men was Samuel Medary's son, Charles, who entered service as an artillery officer and served in the Army until 1870. Though opposed to the war and the draft, Medary, perhaps because of Charles' service, was quick to praise the valiant fighting of Ohio's troops in the columns of *The Crisis*.


41. Information on the Sons of Liberty and the fragmentation of the Peace Democrats was also taken from Weisenburger's history.


43. Hooper, p. 33.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. One of the most striking things about the personal correspondence between Medary and his family is that it reveals so little. Of the 78 pieces of communication on file at the Ohio Historical Society, not one casts a significant light on the private dimensions of the man.
PART III

Summary and Conclusions

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CHAPTER X

In Retrospect

History, by definition, is a restorative enterprise. The historian's task is to take the materials available to him, the memoried glances and murmurs of past time, past men, past events, and to weave them into a new and meaningful whole, one that, though dealing with vanished moments, nonetheless resumes its life in the present for all those who populate the historian's todays and tomorrows.

History also involves judgment ultimately, an assessment of the weight and worth of a past revisited.

How, then, should Samuel Medary be judged?

A 1978 revision of the leading history of American journalism, written by Edwin and Michael Emery, devotes but a pair of lines to the Medary memory. (1) The Emerys regard Medary only as an illustration of what happened to Civil War editors who ran afoul of the Lincoln administration.

Eugene H. Roseboom, scholar and authority on Ohio history, is somewhat more generous. Roseboom places Medary squarely on center stage of an era of Ohio's great editors, as he called the Civil War period between 1850 and 1873.
It was, indeed, a time when an editor's personality and viewpoint gave tone to his newspaper's columns and stamped it with his individuality.

Roseboom goes further, however. Of all those whose reputations were made in newspapering, he wrote,

The name of Samuel Medary should rank near the top. Editing the Ohio Statesman almost continuously from the close of Jackson's presidency to 1853 and again from 1855 to 1857, he seemed at times almost the dictator of the Democratic party in the state. For years most of the party organs at the various county seats looked to the Statesman for guidance on public questions. No Ohio Democrat, except William Allen, was so well known throughout the country in the pre-war generation. But Medary's free use of personalities and his skill at invective aroused enmities in his own party and weakened his influence in the 1850s. The hostility of the Allen faction cost the veteran editor a seat in President Pierce's cabinet and contributed to his failure to win a United States Senatorship in 1854. On the other hand, no Ohioan was so favored by President Buchanan, Medary successively holding the governorship of the Minnesota Territory, the Columbus postmastership and the governorship of the Kansas Territory. (2)

"To him," Roseboom continues,

more than any other individual, was due the movement for a new constitution, and his influence was a potent factor in securing Democratic control of the convention of 1850-51 and the acceptance of the completed instrument by the voters.... But his merits have been largely lost sight of because of his violent partisanship and because of his bitter hostility to the Civil War expressed in the columns of his wartime paper, The Crisis. Even to the present day his name has remained under a cloud and his real contributions to Ohio history unjustly obscured by the smoke of sectional conflict. (3)

Ohio journalism practitioner and historian Osman Castle Hooper, writing a few years before Roseboom, assessed Medary
in terms of his final labor, The Crisis. Wrote Hooper:

The Crisis was a harp sadly out of tune with the war chorus of other local papers. But it was a harp of many strings: the love of parents for their children and wives for their husbands; the natural horror at the atrocities of battle and prison; the fear of financial burdens too heavy to be borne; the knowledge that some were profiteering and were certain to come out of the general wreck much richer than they were; the dread of an influx of negroes and their elevation by sentimentalists to a position of superiority; the danger that, do what the people might, the Union would be wrecked. (4)

And of the man himself, Hooper judged:

Samuel Medary... was one of the near-great of his generation. Like all editors, he was unfortunate in that he wrote his record in water and, in his later years, in a torrent that rushed madly against and finally overwhelmed him. (5)

Samuel Medary's contemporaries, those writing the histories, at least, saw things differently. They made quick and damning judgments. Few of the local histories written following the end of the Civil War even mention Medary, and those few that do mention the man do so only in passing, with reluctance. (6)

Medary's sentence to a lonely corner of the darkest recesses of this nation's history does seem unjust. He was, after all, a principal player on Ohio's stage during the state's formative years and through the state's rise as an important, pivotal entity within the national body politic. Medary had also overseen the birth of two other states which were later to play important roles as America marched on toward the 20th Century.
Yet, in many ways, Medary's obscurity was a predictable consequence of his life. To begin with, Samuel Medary was a Democrat. Still worse, he was a Democrat during the Civil War, making him a member of "one of the least understood political groups in American history," according to Eric J. Cardinal of Kent State University. (7)

Democrats, with Medary among them, were vilified as traitors by Republicans both during and after the war. And, says Cardinal, "subsequent historians have for the most part agreed with that verdict. Political partisanship, ideological conflicts, and wartime passions account for the original animus; it is less clear why scholars have tended to follow so closely the Republican lead." (8)

Cardinal suggests a partial explanation can be found among the heap of Democratic aspirations during that period, aspirations which:

always required an American Union that was politically static. Essentially Jeffersonian in outlook, they (Democrats) harkened back to a lost past, to a decentralized, agrarian, preindustrial America. As Clement L. Vallandigham, the most notorious of the 'Peace Democrats,' put it in the early days of the war, the role of the Democratic party was to save the country from destruction, 'to restore the Union, the Federal Union as it was forty years ago.' The dilemma of the Democrats was that the Civil War intensified processes already at work transforming the Federal Union they cherished into the centralized nation they feared. (9)

And so it was with Samuel Medary.
Few claims, now looking back, can be made for Medary's national greatness, though he was the personal friend of three presidents and countless other political stars of his time. Medary's poor sense of timing, his resistance to the inexorably changing American scene, and the frail results of his public advocacy of political and social issues already stooped with age all combined to keep him from that.

Nonetheless, he mattered greatly to Ohio and to journalism, in part because of the realities of his life and work and in part because of what that life and work represented in a broader historical context.

By way of a concession to the Emerys, Medary should be regarded, then, as illustrative and perhaps less a man of national greatness than of distinction. He is of historical worth, worth remembering in more than casual detail, precisely because he does so aptly serve as flesh-and-blood illustration of two major, enduring themes that have coursed through American life from this nation's very beginning. Those two themes are populism and racism. Medary was both their embodiment and their public advocate.

America's founding fathers were badly divided over the question of how to deal with the dynamic, enduring tension between political centralism and political separation.

Irving Kristol, Henry Luce, Professor of Urban Values at New York University, has argued persuasively that both
centralism and separatism are indispensable elements within a democratic system. The founding fathers agreed. Out of that agreement came both a democratic nation and a republican form of government. (10)

But the tensions between the two approaches to governance have persisted to the present. Who controls whom? Where does, or should, political power reside? With government? Or, the people? At home, or in distant places? And when conflict arises, given the dual nature of political authority in the United States, where ought final authority to rest?

Those questions are both far older than Medary and far more current. But for Medary, an unflinching populist, the answer was evident. Power belonged to the people. The state's role was as servant, not master.

Populist Medary drew his strength from precedent, from Thomas Jefferson who himself distrusted centralized power, and from Andrew Jackson, a populist, the first "people's president."

Indeed, in most every way Samuel Medary fits the classic populist mold, a mold that tended to view any power, any authority, as illegitimate unless subjected to the sovereignty of the public, the people, and that saw politics as a struggle between the many who are good and the few, special, powerful interests that are bad. (11)
Simon Lazarus in *The Genteel Populists* called the populist fear and suspicion that power and authority, whether in government or out, was being forever used to frustrate the popular will, the "mythology of conspiracy." (12)

Myth or not, Medary spent his political and journalistic years railing against the power of central government, against the economic and banking influences of New York and New England, influences he feared would change the very nature of his adopted state, Ohio.

Medary felt every bit as intensely about the abolitionist morality of New Englanders. As Medary viewed it, a principal cause of the Negro problem owed its origins to the descendants of the "merchant negro-traders and importers of old and New England, who are now rousing the sectional animosities of our people, and are ready to drench the country in blood and human carnage, because of that relative condition of the African in our country, of which they are the authors and projectors." (13)

For Samuel Medary, Republicans in league with eastern abolitionists presumed together to use the instrument of national government to decide a question for each of the nation's parts, the states. But, proclaimed Medary, "Congress possesses no sovereignty, exercises no sovereign power. Its powers are all delegated -- all clearly written and defined. Congress is much more a subject than a sovereign. It was
created by sovereign states for specific purposes. Sovereignty in this country, is the people, and is exercised by the States or the people of the States." (14)

As history amply demonstrates, that argument and others like it failed to carry the day, though in Ohio the people in more than one-third of the state's eighty-eight counties shared Medary's philosophy. (15)

Still, Medary, advocate of something akin to a sacred cause, failed to swing Ohio's majority in favor of "the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is."

The whys of that failure, one that must have hurt Medary deeply, also seem to lie in the populist tradition.

Lazarus points to a structural deficiency in most populist strategies for reform and change, calling it the illusory adventure of mass politics. At its heart, at the core of the populist strategy, is the overarching assumption that populism pays off at the polls where the public, at last, may act following a campaign designed to stir public interest and to persuade.

Such an approach, a strategy, says Lazarus, is destined to fall short because it fails to recognize that in a democratic system open to participation by all of society's elements, the most powerful elements are most likely to dominate.

Lazarus suggests that influence in a democracy is determined in three interconnected ways -- wealth,
organization, and persuasion. Those best able to mobilize
and deploy the ingredients of influence will be those most
likely to effect change in the political process.

Medary's only asset in 1861 was his persuasive ability. He assumed that a passionate voice could lead Ohio and the
nation away from war, away from a mistaken course, and back
to a fundamentally better time.

What Medary failed to assess accurately was the context
of his persuasive act. By the time Medary began arguing in
the public forum, the nation had already split asunder. The first shots of the war were soon to be fired, and the
fires of national loyalty, of national survival, of personal
survival, were already burning too brightly, crackling
loudly, lighting up the night.

By the time Medary had his persuasive campaign off the
ground, Ohioans, the vast majority at least, had too much
invested emotionally in the war to be swayed. Indeed Medary
was probably a decade or more too late. Perhaps even a half-
century. (16)

Medary's appeals for conciliation, for preservation of
the Union and for peace were all moot as he made them. Events had moved too swiftly. Even sympathetic Democrats
soon after the war began swung over to support the war
effort as a means of preserving the American Union, but not
as an endorsement of the abolition of slavery.
It is on the issue of slavery that Medary, again broadly, represents a persistent American theme. It is his racial stand, his commitment to white supremacy, that has most veiled his past.

But, more than one hundred years later, an addendum to that past, fashioned out of perspective, seems warranted.

Medary's racial posture, indeed the racism inherent in Democratic ideology, has made study of such men and times perhaps unattractive to modern scholars.

As Cardinal points out, "The Democratic view of a static American political order necessarily entailed... a defense of slavery. Even those Democrats who were opposed to the institution were willing to perpetuate it in order to avert, and later to end, Civil War." (17)

But Cardinal reminds us that men such as Medary were of their times not of ours and racism, certainly, "was not confined to the ranks of the Democracy in the mid-nineteenth century. Certainly at a time when Lincoln himself treated blacks as 'only his stepchildren,' the Democrats were not outside the American mainstream with their white supremacist beliefs." (18)

Medary held such views, to be sure, but so, too, did much of Ohio outside its northern tier of counties known as the Western Reserve. And a great deal of Northern concern centered on the fear that Republicanism would turn the Civil
War and its attendant political implications into an abolitionist crusade.

Ohio was particularly fertile ground for such concerns, especially among three distinct, populous groups within the state -- the Irish Americans, the Germans, and poor whites who had migrated into Ohio from the South.

Those three elements made up a significant portion of Ohio's Democratic party. Their concerns were over the possibility of the influx of cheap, available labor into the state, a concern flavored in many instances by historic prejudice against blacks and abolitionists. (19)

As late as 1862, one of Ohio's more notable Democratic congressman, S. S. Cox, who once purchased The Ohio Statesman from Medary, urged Congress to consider carefully what emancipation might do to Ohio, adding as Cox was sure it would to Ohio's population a class of people that was "vicious, indolent and improvident." (20)

Riots occurred in Toledo and Cincinnati in 1862 in protest over the prospect of cheap, black labor.

For many in Ohio the fear that economic security would be threatened by thousands upon thousands of freed slaves was both personal and intense. In 1862 and again the following year the Copperheads did well at the polls.

Moreover, despite considerable sympathy for abolition in Ohio, the state's Black Laws, adopted in 1803, remained
nearly intact and in force until well after the end of the Civil War.

In 1867 Ohioans were asked to endorse emancipation at the polls by extending the franchise to blacks. The vote was 216,987 for extension and 255,340 against. (21) What a majority of the citizens of Ohio refused to do themselves was ultimately accomplished through ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870.

The issue, as sketched by Martin Duberman, was this: the North could not escape its own ambivalence regarding the Negro question.

The Northern majority, unlike most of the abolitionists, did not believe in the equality of the races.... Doubt of the negro's capacity for citizenship continually blunted the edge of anti-slavery fervor. If God had intended the negro for some subordinate role in society, perhaps a kind of benevolent slavery was, after all, the most suitable arrangement.... And so the average Northerner, even after he had come actively to disapprove of slavery, continued to be hamstrung in his opposition to it by the competitive pull of other values.... Should the future of the superior race be endangered in order to improve the lot of a people seemingly marked by nature for a degraded station? (22)

For Medary and those of his time the problem was not with slavery but that blacks were slaves.
Theoretical Dimensions of the Medary Experience

Samuel Medary is history, or at least a part of it.

But the Medary experience extends beyond its purely historical context. It has a theoretical dimension as well, one that helps to explain the man, his work, and his failure.

Medary's final five years of life were devoted to the rhetoric of social protest, one of the oldest forms of protest known to man. (23)

His purpose, as he wrote the final chapter of his life, was to persuade Ohioans and all others who would listen to say "no" to civil war, to the Lincoln administration, to central government, to abolition and the Black Republicans, to all the forces he perceived were reweaving the fabric of the nation.

Words and reason had been the tools of his profession. They were also the tools of his last rhetorical enterprise. His style was agitation; his object, to midwife a mass movement.

He was, in sum, a man of words, the prototypical man of words in the Hofferian sense of that phrase.
Eric Hoffer is, of course, the octogenarian, philosopher-longshoreman author of *The True Believer,* (24) a tiny piece of writing which remains nearly thirty years after its publication one of the best, most insightful analyses ever of mass movements, their nature, and of the men who make them happen.

In many ways, Hoffer and Medary are spiritual kin. What they have in common are a strong populist sentiment, a thoroughly Rousseau-esque democratic proclivity, a self-taught wisdom, intense conviction, and the well-honed skills of observation of both men and events.

Hoffer and Medary, had they known one another, would most certainly have gotten along famously, if for no other reasons than that Hoffer was the sort of man Medary admired and Medary, during his lifetime, represented one of the classic actors in Hoffer's conception of the reform drama.

In *The True Believer,* Hoffer suggests that a generalized discontent and the prospect of dramatic change are the building blocks, the basic ingredients, of every mass movement. But that is not enough, says Hoffer. Mass movements do not arise out of "the blunders and abuses of those in power." (25) They do, however, take form as a result of the "deliberate work of men of words with a grievance." (26)

In 1860 Medary sensed conditions were right for a mass movement. He saw a general dissatisfaction abroad in the
land, injustice, unrest, and official resistance to certain strains of American political thought.

But as Hoffer points out, "mass movements do not usually arise until the prevailing order has been discredited." (27)

In the Hoffer scheme, that is the work of men of words, men like Samuel Medary. Indeed, says Hoffer, the process of discrediting, of undermining existing institutions, of familiarizing the masses with the idea of change, of developing the doctrines, dogma and slogans of change, of creating a "receptivity to a new faith, can be done only by men who are, first and foremost, talkers and writers and are recognized as such by all." (28)

Such men, Hoffer argues, till the soil of disaffection until the new fanaticism (Hoffer's second stage of a mass movement) makes its appearance.

And when the man of words has done his work well, Hoffer, borrowing from William Butler Yeats' *The Second Coming*, concludes:

> The best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity.  
> Surely some revelation is at hand, surely the Second Coming is at hand. (29)

Without having access to Hoffer's paradigm for mass commitment, Medary nonetheless sensed a similar sort of mission was his and he set about the business of manufacturing an alluring symbolic world embodying the needs, the
desires, of his public, his state, his nation, as he viewed those needs and desires.

And therein, Hoffer would have said, lay the sum and substance of the failure of Samuel Medary to make a difference in the course of the history of Ohio, and perhaps the nation, during the years of the Civil War.

In a conventional rhetorical sense, Medary failed to adopt an appropriate stance. Indeed, it is apparent Medary wholly misassessed his audience and his ambience.

Overwhelmed with and by his own personal convictions, Medary erred first by judging his audience not on their terms but on his. Medary clung to the romantic view that the American public of 1860 still believed as they had in 1830 and as he did as the war began. Medary felt the problem was simply that circumstances, external forces, had distracted them.

Medary also erred in not recognizing and coming to terms with the fact that his world and his view of it had already given way in the public mind to new ideas, new approaches, to a tomorrow. Yesterday, where Medary resided, no longer held great promise.

Medary further failed to recognize that he was soon to be in direct competition with the most powerful form of mass movement, the kind that grows out of a collective need to survive.
After secession and Sumter, the life of the nation, the survival of the American experiment, were clearly at stake. "Nationalism," says Hoffer, "is the most copious and durable source of mass enthusiasm," (30) and enthusiasm on a mass scale is essential to the rise and the success of any mass endeavor.

Hoffer does suggest that the most favorable milieu for the rise of a mass movement is one in which "a once compact corporate structure is, for one reason or another, in a state of disintegration." (31)

But Hoffer also observes that disruption of family, be it literal family or national family, automatically fosters a collective spirit and creates a responsiveness to the appeal of mass movements.

When Medary returned to Ohio in 1860, the American family had already been disrupted and a mass movement, a Union effort to preserve the nation, had begun.

The cohesion of the various parts of the body politic, once weakened by dissent and indecision, had been largely restored. There was a new and vigorous compact among men that neither Samuel Medary nor any other Copperhead could have broken.

All the elements were present for the success of the Lincolnian movement, if it may be called that. War's outbreak gave it an even greater advantage, for, as Hoffer
argues, "in time of crisis, when the nation's existence is threatened, and it tries to reinforce its unity and generate on its people a readiness for self-sacrifice, it almost always assumes in some degree the character of a mass movement." (32)

For individuals swept up in such a tide, Hoffer says, the only source of strength lies in being part of something greater than self, "of something mighty, glorious and indestructible faith here is primarily a process of identification; the process by which the individual ceases to be himself and becomes part of something eternal." (33)

For the movement of Lincoln, commitment to saving the American Union after secession and Sumter was the critical unifying element. The minds of men of the North closed quickly. Thoughts crystallized. And Johnny marched off to war.

The war of words Medary was only then prepared to launch had been lost before it had begun.

For Lincoln and Medary the issue was the same: save the American Union. The question was, which one?

As Jacques Ellul, French social philosopher and lawyer from the University of Bordeaux, points out, action makes propaganda's effect irreversible. (34) The North under Lincoln had made its appeal as the menacing shadows and chaotic images of war rushed over the American landscape.
The time was right for reassurance. Lincoln offered that.

Medary, on the other hand, could not. His messages were substantive but not reassuring. He invited a return to an earlier land and time, but no solutions. His offer was to restore a yesterday. Lincoln offered a tomorrow.

"Propaganda on its own," said Hoffer, "cannot force its way into unwilling minds; neither can it inculcate something wholly new; nor can it keep people persuaded once they have ceased to believe." (35)

Lincoln provided hope, one of the most potent of attractions to any mass movement, Hoffer judges, especially in "a society imbued with the idea of progress." (36)

Certainly, the American nation had been built on the promise and premise of progress.

For men to join movements and for movements to succeed, "an extravagant conception of the prospects and possibilities of the future" (37) are requisite, Hoffer suggests, adding that "where power is not joined with faith in the future, it is used mainly to ward off the new and preserve the status quo." (38)

Mr. Lincoln had that faith and preached hope. Mr. Medary did not have that faith. And the people made their choice.
The Gethsemane Factor

Hoffer regarded his men of words as rather curious.

While conceding that they were of diverse types and that men such as these were essential to any reform movement, Hoffer suggests that differences for the most part ended with type, and that a certain set of motivational components was common to them all.

"Whatever the type," Hoffer declares,

there is a deep-seated craving common to almost all men of words which determines their attitude to the prevailing order. It is a craving for recognition; a craving for a clearly marked status above the common run of humanity.... There is an apparent irremediable insecurity at the core of every intellectual, be he noncreative or creative. Even the most gifted and prolific seem to live a life of eternal self-doubting and have to prove their worth anew each day. (39)

Moreover, Hoffer continues, however much the "protesting man of words sees himself as champion of the downtrodden and injured, the grievance which animates him is, with very few exceptions, private and personal. His pity is usually hatched out of his hatred for the powers that be." (40)

Hoffer further suggests that the genuine man of words can live without faith in absolutes. He values, says Hoffer,
the search for truth as much as truth itself, the clash of thought, and the give-and-take of controversy. If he formulates a philosophy and a doctrine, they are more an exhibition of brilliance and an exercise in dialectics than a program of action and the tenets of faith. His vanity, it is true, often prompts him to defend his speculations with savagery and even venom; but his appeal is usually to reason and not to faith. (41)

And no matter how much they preach and glorify the united effort, Hoffer argues, they remain "essentially individualists. They believe in the possibility of individual happiness and the validity of individual opinion and initiative." (42)

Hoffer concludes, "It is only a few rare and exceptional men who have that kind of love toward mankind at large that makes them unable to endure patiently the general mass of evil and suffering, regardless of any relation it may have to their own lives." (43)

In many ways, Hoffer sees the man called Medary quite clearly. Medary was, to be sure, a true believer in individual happiness and the validity of individual opinion and initiative. He had his measure of vanity. His positions he defended with venom. His appeals were to reason. Samuel Medary was more than that, however.

There is no evidence to suggest that he was infected with a gnawing self-doubt. Indeed, from his first penned word in Ohio until his death, Samuel Medary held consistently
to a particular, identifiable political doctrine and faith. In that sense, his life was not without its absolutes.

Hoffer, by defining his men of words as he did, tends to regard them as misfits, too, as a part of the frustrated, anxious, dispossessed masses who gather as true believers before the altar of a cause.

And in doing that, Hoffer tends to reinforce the notion that many of history's ardent men were driven by deep-seated, private pathologies. Abolitionists have frequently been examined in that light.

In an essay on abolitionist motives and personalities, Martin Duberman departs from the popular by suggesting that the behavior of the committed, of the reformer, ought not to be regarded as arising solely out of the need to reduce tension. Behavior also, Duberman avers, arises out of a healthy willingness to hear tension in order to "persevere in pursuit of long-range ideals." (44)

Indeed, some men do become what they do out of a deliberate, conscious, rational commitment to certain ethical values.

As Duberman suggests as possible and Hoffer concedes might occur in rare instances, there are men of this earth of essentially noble character, men who experience privately and deeply an epiphany, a rushing together of cognitive fragments that others can never fully know of or understand.
Yet, in that deep place at the nexus of mind and soul, a truth is defined and a personal agenda is set. For such men, it is not, as the Gospel goes, the truth that makes such men free. Rather, it is the truth, their truth, that binds them to a course of action.

That special quality that sets some men apart has no name, no official label. Perhaps, for want of anything better, it should be called the Gethsemane factor in recognition of the quintessential model of that quality.

While not wishing to strain the metaphor, it does not seem unreasonable to submit that Samuel Medary was made in part of such stuff, noble stuff.

There have been hints through time of recognition of such a human dimension. Karl Jaspers, one who has done his share of reflection on the human condition, has written that human nobility, the nobility of human existence, is to be found in those who stand in "contradistinction to those who feel in themselves a mere vacancy, who recognize no cause for which to fight, who are in flight from themselves." (45)

Such men in the end, Jaspers suggests, experience the realization of a truth, even in failure, that all which "happens to him in the world cannot be anything more than he is himself." (46)

Put differently, there are occasions when some men are called from the tranquility of Galilee to the dangers of a
Jerusalem. Some of those called do not respond. Others, like Hoffer's fanatics harboring their private pathologies, answer the call for reasons unclear to them and others. Yet, still others respond who have wrestled with the issues, who have in a figurative sense prayed alone in the garden, and, in that loneliness, have come to a decision, have made a courageous choice, a personal commitment, because they believe. It is not so much a question of being right as it is a determination to be.

Medary himself suggests his call came during his Kansas years when, for the first time, he witnessed the pain and the suffering of a house divided.

I have had gloomy forebodings for the last three years, that a crisis was approaching that would require all the cool patriotism of the country to pass in safety.... I feel it a duty I owe my country and myself, that I should not be a silent spectator of the most dangerous controversy that ever impended over the American people.... (47)

It may have been no accident that Samuel Medary used the language he did to announce his decision to leave Kansas, to return to Ohio, and to take up the pen once more.

My connection of 30 years with politics and the press, gives me some claims upon the people for at least a candid hearing.

To my friends in Ohio, I once more appeal, I have often done so, but never in vain. In this terrible crisis in our affairs, will you not stand by me in this last appeal which, in the nature of things, I can never make again. God has spared my life to witness this mournful and gloomy scene -- to witness the destroying angel passing almost unheeded over our fair land, crushing the hopes of millions in its dread flight. (48)
With that, Samuel Medary went off to his Jerusalem. Perhaps it is in that light that he should be best remembered.

Endnote on Further Study

This study, in the main, has accomplished the central purposes for which it was designed; namely, to explore in all available and relevant ways the details, the scope, and the character of the Medary experience; to endow that experience with an added significance by placing it within a historic and theoretical perspective; and to spotlight certain elements of the Medary experience that tend to set it apart from others.

History's most immediate task is to save the facts of the past from oblivion. That has been done.

Beyond that, history, like every other discipline, recorrects ceaselessly. This study has helped to change somewhat the hues and textures of a narrow band of time within the American past. However, the process of recorrection inevitably raises new questions which are not an integral part of the original study design but which, nonetheless, suggest a need for further inquiry. This study has proven to be no exception in that regard.

One area of further study deals directly with Medary's own history. There remains a void in his past that the official record has been unable to fill. Why did Medary
leave Pennsylvania for Maryland? What did he do there? What were his involvements? How did he meet his wife-to-be Eliza Scott? Answers to these and similar questions could shed important light on those critical and formative Medary years between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, years for which we presently have neither detail nor explanation.

Of a considerably broader nature are three other issues that seem to warrant scholarly examination.

The first of these might well involve the exploration of linkage between populism, as defined and discussed earlier in this chapter, and the entire Copperhead movement between 1860 and 1865. Was populism as a political philosophy commonly held by other prominent Copperheads of the period, men such as Fernando Wood of New York, Wilbur Storey of Chicago, Marcus "Brick" Pomeroy of Wisconsin, and Clement Vallandigham of Ohio, to name just a few? Establishment of such a linkage could well serve to salvage the reputations of some of those players on history's stage and to endow their actions on that stage with a measure of legitimacy and sincerity they have not for some time enjoyed.

A second, related issue inviting further study might entail a broader look at populism itself just prior to and during the Civil War period, with special attention to how widespread this politico-personal philosophy was across the country and whether populism as a political motivation and
influence was confined primarily to those within the ranks of the Democratic party or whether significant traces of populist sentiment can be found within both the Union and Republican parties as well. The results of such a study might also lend themselves to modification of the historical hues and textures of mid-19th Century America.

And, finally, there is the Gethsemane factor, an element and a process of the human character, employed in this study as a means of explaining a fervent commitment. With further development of that theoretical proposition, evidence of that same factor might be sought in the lives of ardent men of whatever time and place, both to help explain the timelessness of deeply held and deeply-felt commitment, and, in some cases, to provide here and there for history's canvas the faint brush strokes of nobility sometimes withheld by its artists.
Notes to Chapter X


3. Ibid., pp. 199-200.


5. Ibid., p. 35.

6. Among the local histories that chose either to dismiss Medary completely or to grossly understate his contribution to Ohio are: Alfred E. Lee's History of the City of Columbus, Ohio (New York: Munsell & Co., 1892); the History of Franklin and Pickaway Counties, published by the Williams Brothers in Columbus in 1880; Opha Moore's History of Franklin County, Ohio (Topeka: Historical Publishing Company, 1930); William Alexander Taylor's Centennial History of Columbus and Franklin County (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909); and Daniel J. Ryan's A History of Ohio (Columbus: A. H. Smythe, 1888).


8. Ibid., p. 19.

9. Ibid., p. 20.

11. Lazarus, p. 146.

12. Ibid., p. 146.

13. The Medary quotation was drawn from his message to the Kansas Territorial Council vetoing its act to prohibit slavery in the territory. That message is included in its entirety in an earlier chapter of this dissertation.

14. Ibid.


18. Ibid., p. 21.


20. Ibid., p. 187.


25. Ibid., p. 119.

26. Ibid., p. 119.

27. Ibid., p. 119.

28. Ibid., p. 119.

29. Ibid., p. 128.


31. Ibid., p. 45.

32. Ibid., p. 58.

33. Ibid., p. 62.


35. Hoffer, p. 98.

36. Ibid., p. 23.

37. Ibid., p. 20.

38. Ibid., p. 18.


40. Ibid., p. 122.

41. Ibid., p. 128.

42. Ibid., p. 130.

43. Ibid., p. 122.


46. Ibid., p. 193.


Cleveland Morning Leader, November 15, 1858, p. 2.

Columbus Gazette, March 20, 1857, p. 3 and February 19, 1858, p. 3.


Daily Cleveland Herald, March 14, 1857, p. 2.


Lawrence Republican, January 6, 27, 1859, May 19, 1859, November 24, 1859 and December 20, 1860.


Norristown Herald and Weekly Advertiser, February 27, 1801.

Ohio Farmer and Western Horticulturist, Vol. 2, No. 1, Batavia: January 1, 1835.

Ohio State Journal, December 22, 1827, March 6, 1863 and November 8, 1864.

Ohio Statesman, March 19, 1839, June 16, 1840, March 5, 1849, February 22, 1855, April 13, 1855, March 26, 1857 and March 6, 1863.


Stark County Democrat, March 18, 1851.


The Crisis, January 31, 1861, May 2, 1861, July 23, 1862 and April 6, 1864.

