

THE ISSUE WAS KANSAS: THE PERSUASIVE  
CAMPAIGN OF THE NEW ENGLAND  
EMIGRANT AID COMPANY

by

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## Chapter I

### ORGANIZED EMIGRATION, A PROBLEM IN PERSUASION

On May 22, 1854, the House of Representatives passed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill by a vote of 113 to 100. In effect it opened Kansas and Nebraska to settlement as either free or slave territories depending upon the will of the people who would settle there. As the bill was being debated during the first five months of that year, New Englanders became increasingly irate and vociferous. Because the bill entailed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, they were convinced that a breach of the public faith was about to be made. They had found a common cause and a common enemy in the contest with "slave power" for the territories of the west.

At home they suspected that they had been sold out. Newspaper editors attacked the "Nebrascals" who had, they felt, conspired with the "oligarchy of slave-holders" to help the bill become law. Among these "Northern men with Southern views" were President Franklin Pierce from New Hampshire, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, a native of Vermont, Senator Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, and other "doughfaces."

Protest and demonstration were widespread modes of expression in this "Era of Reform" characterized by Henry Steele

Commager as "a day of infinite hope and infinite discontent."<sup>1</sup>

Numerous local meetings were called to phrase the discontent with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in the form of resolutions to be sent to senators and representatives. These "Anti-Nebraska Rallies" featured prominent speakers from the areas of education and politics and were often held in municipal buildings. The clergy, and particularly the more active and liberal Unitarians, added their pulpits and voices to the cause. The principal target of this outcry was the repeal of the compromise measures of 1820. These were portrayed as articles of faith, a solemn bargain between slave and free interests, that would allow slavery in Missouri but would forever confine slavery below the parallel of the southern boundary of that state ( $36^{\circ} 30'$ ) in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase. If the slave system was to be allowed above this line, it was feared, "slave power" would be perpetuated in a politically and economically advantageous position.

In his book, Civil War in the Making, 1815-1860, Avery O. Craven has labeled this period "the first cold war" and carried the basis for Northern fear of "slave power" and Southern fear of the North beyond politics and economics:

A region producing raw materials and one engaged in industry may be complements as well as rivals. Slavery, however, was a different matter. It represented two entirely

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Steele Commager, The Era of Reform, 1830-1860 (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1960), p. 1.

different understandings of the demands of Christianity, of democracy, and of progress. It had to do with things which cannot be compromised. It was not only an integral part of Southern social and economic life, but what was far more important, it symbolized the fact that South and North were moving in absolutely opposite directions. The one was holding firmly to the values of the past; the other was rushing madly into the Modern World.

Now the tragedy in this situation lay in the fact that, in the normal struggle for power in a government ruled by majorities, sectional interests became gradually tangled with basic differences and values. Conflicts were thereby lifted to the level of ideologies and civilizations.<sup>2</sup>

It was from this ideological conflict, based upon those "things which cannot be compromised," that the New England Emigrant Aid Company drew its strongest appeals in the contest for Kansas.

Commager has also characterized this period as being visionary: "a day when almost any man you met might draw a plan for a new society or a new government from his pocket." One such man was Eli Thayer, an educator from Worcester, Massachusetts. But nine years out of Brown University, he was founder and headmaster of the Oread Collegiate Institute, a successful school for women. His new scheme was organized emigration to Kansas.

During the months of March and April, 1854, while popular discontent over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill grew, Thayer and his "man Friday," the Reverend Edward Everett Hale, laid the groundwork for the New England Emigrant Aid Company. On April 26 the

<sup>2</sup> Avery O. Craven, Civil War in the Making, 1815-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 100-101.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts granted the charter for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company (the name would be changed to "New England" within a year) calling for a stock subscription of \$5,000,000. It was a peculiar blend of profit motive and altruism. The company proposed to put 20,000 "right-minded" settlers in Kansas while returning a dividend to the investors. It adopted the principle of "popular sovereignty" in an attempt to beat "slave power" at its own game. This would allow the company to operate in an "anti-slavery" or "free-state" capacity without the stigmatic label of "abolitionist." This ideological blend, as will be demonstrated, resulted in persuasion well adapted for a particular constituency.

Further respectability came to the company when Amos A. Lawrence became treasurer in June of 1854. As a member of a prominent family, a Harvard graduate, and a business colleague of other New England industrialists through his textile manufacturing interests, Lawrence brought a prestigious name to the cause. Equally important, he brought money. Personal financial assets of well over \$600,000. and his tendency to donate to causes were instrumental in keeping the company from financial collapse during the early months of its existence. His presence and influence also helped encourage other "investors" to buy stock in the venture, although, in some personal letters, he warned friends that this was a most speculative

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risk in a worthy cause.

With the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the company moved rapidly. Dr. Charles Robinson, a relative of Amos A. Lawrence by marriage and later the first govenor of the State of Kansas, and Charles Branscomb were sent to Kansas to locate possible townsites during the month of June. In July they returned to New England where Robinson set about preparing materials to be published by the company, and Branscomb was put in charge of the first party of emigrants.

On July 17 this party left Boston bound for Kansas Territory. Within a few weeks Branscomb had led them to a townsite six miles above the junction of the Kansas and Wakarusa Rivers and they were camped on "Buckbone Ridge," which they renamed "Mount Oread" after Thayer's Oread Collegiate Institute. As they set about the process of building the town of Lawrence, they were to be joined by nearly six hundred more emigrants within the next year.<sup>4</sup> The communities of Manhattan and Topeka were similarly under construction.

This type of emigration represented a sharp departure from the usual type of western expansion. As Malin has pointed out, most

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<sup>3</sup> Amos A. Lawrence Letters.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace E. Miller, The Peopling of Kansas (Columbus, Ohio: Fred P. Heer, 1906), pp. 47-48.

territories were peopled by settlers from nearby states.<sup>5</sup>

### The Problem

What would bring settlers from such a distance?

To answer this, and to understand how the issue of Kansas functioned in the context of pre-Civil War New England, will require answers to a series of subordinate questions.

First, the emigration company itself must be examined. What type of men formed this company? What common ideology united them in this cause? What was the basis for the factions within the company? How did the men of the company go about the tasks of recruiting emigrants and raising money? More generally, how did the company work as a social movement in its particular context?

Second, questions concerning the constituency of this company must be considered: What types of people were they? What motives moved them to affiliate with this company? Why did so many of them, over half in fact, return to New England so soon after embarking on their mission? Were these people representative of the context from which they came?

The answers to these questions will provide information on two levels: a discovery of the elements which contributed to the

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<sup>5</sup>

Cited in Roy F. Nichols, "Kansas Historiography: The Technique of Cultural Analysis," American Quarterly, IX (Spring, 1957), 87.

persuasion of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, and insight into the functioning of a social movement within its time. In evaluating the persuasion of this company, the critical focus will be on effects. How well did the company achieve its stated objectives? What secondary or unstated objectives were achieved? What long range effects did the persuasion have? Did it contribute to the coming national crisis?

Although certainly not all of the effects of the company can be traced specifically to its propaganda, much can be. The focus of this study will be the rhetorical or persuasive dimensions. The company, as will be demonstrated during the study, functioned largely as an organization which distributed materials on the Kansas issue, supplied speakers to various local organizations, and organized and recruited both stockholders and emigrants. Such activities are clearly within the province of persuasion. Leland M. Griffin, in a pioneering article entitled "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," dealt with the persuasive dimensions of such events and included the following rationale for "effects" oriented criticism in this type of study: "A first and obvious principle is that the critic must judge the effectiveness of the discourse, individual as well as collective acts of utterance, in terms of the ends projected by the speakers and writers. He will not need to be cautioned against the error of assuming a necessary identity between

ends publicly announced and those privately maintained."<sup>6</sup>

Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, rhetorical scholars and authors of the book, Speech Criticism, which derived much of its strength from the application of principles of classical rhetoric to speech criticism, also considered the effect upon social groups as significant to the speech critic. After touching upon such effects as "surface response" and "substantial responses deriving from possible changes in attitude and belief," they pose the final question of "long-range effects upon the social group" by asking: "Over a period of years, did a particular speech or series of speeches exercise a discernible and significant influence on the course of events?"<sup>7</sup>

In summary, the problem will involve a consideration of the effects of the New England Emigrant Aid Company's persuasive campaign designed, at least ostensibly, to keep Kansas a free territory. Subordinate to this goal will be a consideration of the functioning of the company in the context of New England in 1854, 1855, and 1856.

<sup>6</sup> Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. XXXVIII (April, 1952), 187.

<sup>7</sup> Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: The Ronald Press, 1949), pp. 455-458.

## Methodology

The study of social movements in general, as Cameron has suggested, demands an interdisciplinary approach.<sup>8</sup> In noting that scholars from various areas may make unique contributions to the understanding of social movements, Cameron assigned the evaluation of "crowd behavior, symbolic interaction" and "phenomena of persuasion" to the social psychologist.<sup>9</sup> It might as aptly be assigned to the rhetorical scholar, if we understand rhetoric to be, as Aristotle claimed, "The faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, the rhetorical scholar must immediately cope with a general lack of methodology when he begins a study of the rhetoric of a movement. In considering Leland Griffin's suggestion that a movement should be considered in terms of the rhetorical theory dominant at the time of the movement, Edwin Black commented: "There is as yet no cogent and reasonably uniform methodology for a movement study beyond Griffin's suggestion of historical relativism, and it

<sup>8</sup>

Wm. Bruce Cameron, Modern Social Movements (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 171.

<sup>9</sup>

Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>10</sup>

Lane Cooper, translator, The Rhetoric of Aristotle (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 7.

is exactly in the area of methodology that Griffin seems least satisfactory."<sup>11</sup> One possible reason for the unsatisfactory nature of this approach is a lack of theory concerning group interaction which could be considered indigenous to periods such as the one which will be considered in this study. This study may, therefore, serve the additional role of exploring possible approaches to the study of persuasion in a historical movement.

From the intersection of disciplinary lines suggested by Cameron the methodology for this study will be drawn. Three sources of evaluation and structure will be primary: Lloyd Bitzer's perception of the "rhetorical situation,"<sup>12</sup> Hans Toch's book The Social Psychology of Social Movements,<sup>13</sup> and Herbert W. Simons' "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (January, 1968), 1-14.

<sup>13</sup> Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

<sup>14</sup> Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movement," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. LVI (February, 1970), 1-11.

The first two chapters of this study will deal with the "rhetorical situation," using Bitzer's definition, "a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations and an exigence which strongly invites utterance," as a guide to the type of considerations which will be primary.<sup>15</sup> Bitzer has further suggested that a time sequence is involved as "situations grow and come to maturity."<sup>16</sup> Such a situation and a sequence occurred as Congress debated the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The elements of the debate supplied a series of self-regenerating exigencies, each demanding response. These culminated in the formation of the New England Emigrant Aid Company immediately after the passage of the Bill. The company itself, during the period from 1854 to 1856, initiated a second sequence of exigencies which culminated in the national crisis over "Bleeding Kansas" in the Spring of 1856.

Chapters three, four and five examine the ideology and product of the company, seeking to evaluate in detail the response which the company made. At this point, the Toch book is of much greater value than the simple demand of Bitzer for a "fitting response."<sup>17</sup> The "four-step road to appeals" suggested by Toch

<sup>15</sup> Bitzer, pp. 1-4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> Bitzer, pp. 10-11.

addresses itself to the questions, "How do beliefs become appeals?" and "What type of sequence culminates in the adoption of beliefs?" In it the first two steps are close to Bitzer, but steps three and four adapt well to the evaluation of a movement:

The first step is the posing of a problem situation for a group of persons. Typically, this would occur when society fails to provide adequately for their needs or aspirations.

Such problem situations give rise to problems (Step 2) if they register psychological impact--that is, create some degree of unhappiness.

Although many people who feel they have a problem will lapse into apathy, resignation, and despair, others will search for plausible solutions. They will view available diagnoses and prescriptions with increasing sympathy. The advent of this susceptibility is step 3 of our sequence.

Susceptibility is selective, but not deterministic. It increases the probability that certain beliefs will be found appealing. Should the person (in this condition) encounter a social movement advocating such beliefs, the final step in our sequence occurs. This final step--the intersection of beliefs and susceptibilities--marks the point at which non-affiliates become members.<sup>18</sup>

Toch proceeds to deal directly with this "intersection of beliefs and susceptibilities." Included are such considerations as "the perception of conspiracies" and "gains to be made through community effort." These deal with phenomena characteristic of the New England Emigrant Aid Company propaganda. The company itself

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<sup>18</sup> Toch, pp. 26-27.

fits Toch's definition of a "latent social movement" very well:

Latent social movements are business enterprises with latent appeals. The relationship between such a business and its clients includes all the elements of a transaction between a social movement and its members. The ostensible purpose of the relationship is the rendering of a routine service in exchange for profit. This, however, is a fiction which hides the fact that solutions to basic social problems are promised.<sup>19</sup>

The definition of a social movement to be used in this study is the rather general one suggested by Toch: "A social movement is an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem that they feel they have in common."<sup>20</sup>

The Emigrant Aid Company was not only one form of reaction to an exigence, it was an agency with a product to sell as has been suggested in the use of Toch's classification as a "latent social movement." As such a persuasive agency, it faced a series of rhetorical problems.

The first, a problem of image, was complicated by the wide public rejection of the Abolitionist campaign which had centered around William Lloyd Garrison in New England. In seeking ideological differentiation from the Abolitionists the Emigrant Aid Company located not only a series of unifying ideas, but also a course of

<sup>19</sup> Toch, pp. 90-91.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

action. Carl Friedrich has explained this function in his observation that ideologies "typically contain a program and a strategy for its realization, and their essential function is to unite organizations which are built around them."<sup>21</sup> At this point Simons' observation that "the product of any movement is its ideology" deserves consideration.<sup>22</sup> Ideological placement, the substance of chapters three and four, is primary to the understanding of the persuasion of the company. In it the image of the company is cast and the breadth of the company appeal is suggested.

The second rhetorical problem was one of developing and marketing a product. Here the company may seem to be somewhat less than successful for reasons which will be considered in chapter six, "The Eden of the West."

The third rhetorical problem has been suggested by Simons as the need to "attract, maintain, and mold workers (i.e., followers) into an efficiently organized unit."<sup>23</sup> Within this general heading Simons has included the establishment of a 'hierarchy of authority'

<sup>21</sup> Carl Joachim Friedrich, Man and His Government, An Empirical Theory of Politics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 89.

<sup>22</sup> Simons, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

and the "division of labor," which includes such tasks as fund raising, publication and distribution of literature, and organization of local affiliates.<sup>24</sup> This problem will be considered in chapters seven and eight.

The fourth rhetorical problem was the actual public presentation of the company's program. In part, the results of this presentation must await the final chapter which will deal with "effects." However, public presentation was an integral part of the first three problems, the development of company image, the presentation of product, and the solicitation of membership and support.

The final rhetorical problem which will be considered was the tendency toward company factioning. This is inherent in an organization with diversity of leadership, as Simons has indicated: "There may well be cleavage among those vested with positions of legitimate authority, those charismatic figures who have personal followings, those who have special competencies, and those who have private sources of funds or influence outside the movement. Much of the leader's persuasive skill is exhibited in private interactions with other leaders."<sup>25</sup> Chapter nine will deal with this problem in the leadership of the Emigrant Aid Company.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

These five problems are largely derived from the Simons article. From the solutions which the company found for some of them, and the lack of solutions for others, a profile of the persuasive strengths and weakness of the company will be made evident. The "fittingness" of the response will be tested.

### Sources

Primary sources, applicable to the New England Emigrant Aid Company and the individuals involved, have been explored. Of principle value to this study were the following:

1) "Eli Thayer Papers": Letters, Manuscripts, papers, and a diary of Eli Thayer, founder of the company. This extensive collection is preserved in the archives of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. In the seven large scrapbooks and four letterboxes which comprise this collection are many documents significant to this study. Up until now very little seems to have been done with this material in regard to the Kansas issue which was so dominant in the decade prior to the Civil War. Since Thayer tended to operate independent of company control at times, these documents sometimes give a point of view which is quite different from the more widely used materials dealing with the Emigrant Aid Company.

2) "Lawrence Letters": Letters written by Amos A. Lawrence as treasurer of the company. These are found in a single volume and are a frequently quoted source. They are preserved

by the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

3) "Lawrence Papers": Letters received by Lawrence along with occasional manuscripts, and papers. These are preserved in letterboxes at the Massachusetts Historical Society. The individual boxes dated 1854, 1855, and 1856 were widely used in this study. In many cases the material in this collection complimented the letters in Topeka, since it contained the letters which Lawrence was answering.

4) "New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers": This collection of incidental papers, workbooks, ledgers, publications and letters is preserved by the Kansas State Historical Society and is available on nine rolls of microfilm. It is extensive, but not all usable, since it deals with the actions of the company up until 1907 when it officially ceased operations. Still it must be considered a primary source.

5) "Webb Scrapbooks": A series of seventeen scrapbooks compiled by Thomas Webb, company secretary, from newspapers of the era. There is a great amount of usable material in these books which are preserved by the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

6) Newspaper articles, pamphlets, letters, and books to be found in the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts; The Connecticut State Historical Society, Hartford

Connecticut; The New Hampshire State Historical Society, Concord, New Hampshire; The New London County Historical Society, New London, Connecticut; and the Kansas Collection of the University of Kansas Libraries in the Spencer Library.

Various local, regional and national histories will be used to describe the context and to aid in the evaluation of the effects of the company in the contest for Kansas. Particular attention will be given to those beliefs and values which did, when developed, contribute to the persuasion of the New England Emigrant Aid Company.

There is no shortage of primary or secondary materials for this study. In fact, there is far more than is really needed and the temptation to include "just one more" choice item requires frequent control. Perhaps Thomas C. Upham of Bowdoin College expressed the sense of history which impelled people who were involved in the company to save this type of material when he wrote in a letter to Amos A. Lawrence: "I look upon them / letters concerning the work of the company / as letters of permanent historic interest. Allow me to express a hope, that you will preserve all papers of this kind, as they will undoubtedly be sought after some future day

as throwing light upon events of exceeding interest and importance."

(Underlining in original.)<sup>26</sup> Evidently his appeal was heeded.

### Related Studies

The era of the 1850's has been the subject of numerous studies and books. Stephen A. Douglas, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, and Horace Greeley are but a few of the prominent figures of the time who played a role in the story of the Kansas controversy in New England. To varying degrees they affected and were affected by the Emigrant Aid movement. Evaluation of such figures is too widespread to be enumerated here.

The company itself, however, has not been the subject of widespread study. Although emigrant companies of this type are frequently mentioned in histories, their functions and methods of operation generally receive little attention.

Samuel A. Johnson is foremost in the study of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. His Master's Thesis, "A Critical Study of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," written at the University of Kansas in 1928, opens a spectrum of questions about the company and provides a basic chronology and bibliography

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas C. Upham to Amos A. Lawrence, February 25, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers (Archives of Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts), Hereafter cited as Lawrence Papers.

which are of considerable value to this study. In his doctoral dissertation, "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," he provided the basis for his centennial (1954) book, The Battle Cry of Freedom.<sup>27</sup> In this book, the primary considerations are (1) the chronological history of the company, (2) the key figures within the company, both in New England and in the west, and (3) the impact of the company on the developing State of Kansas. Johnson's focus upon western development will provide the basis upon which this study will most markedly deviate from his work. The primary focus of this work will be the scene of the persuasive campaign, the New England states. A second point of deviation will be the focus on the persuasion of the company rather than the chronology and political impact so important to Johnson. It is anticipated that the two studies will complement each other.

#### Rationale for the Study

The critic may fairly ask, at this point, why should the New England Emigrant Aid Company be the subject of rhetorical analysis? It may first be inferred, from the number of studies dealing with movements and their persuasive efforts, that companies

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<sup>27</sup> Samuel A. Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1954).

such as the New England Emigrant Aid Company are indeed appropriate  
subjects in the general area of rhetoric.<sup>28</sup>

Although Bettinghaus has defined "persuasive communications" in terms of the individual persuader as "a conscious attempt by one individual to change the behavior of another individual or group of individuals through the transmission of some message,"<sup>29</sup> the role of "initiating sets," which he described later in the book, gives an indication of the importance of group action to many persuasive transactions:

Very few social changes were begun and carried to completion by a single individual. Generally the idea that is advanced by a single individual must be accepted by many other people before the social change can be expected to take place. In looking for examples of induced social change, researchers have noted that the early period is characterized by the formation of a number of small groups of individuals who are in agreement with the aims of the proposed change and who can be used to contact other individuals and groups. These small groups of people have been called "initiating sets" and

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<sup>28</sup> For instance: Joseph C. Mele, "A Description and Analysis of the Speaking in the Louisiana Anti-Lottery Movement," Louisiana State University, 1960; Edelwinna C. Legaspi, "The Rhetoric of the Anti-Imperialist Movement, 1898-1900, with Special Emphasis on the Role of the Anti-Imperialist League," Cornell University, 1967.

<sup>29</sup> Erwin P. Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communication, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), p. 13.

it is their role in social action campaigns to begin communication with other relevant individuals.<sup>30</sup>

The founding and initial structuring of the New England Emigrant Aid Company is illustrative of this. It might be well to note that this company was not the only one which came into existence for the purpose of organizing emigration to Kansas. Since the roles of propaganda agent and solicitor of support were primary in these groups, as they may be in other latent social movements, studying the persuasion of such a group seems apropos.

Indeed, in studying the context, sequence, and inter-related structures of such a group, four of the faults which Nichols has found that historians affix to "historio-rhetorical" studies may be avoided:

First, the historians claim that we do not sufficiently exploit historical and biographical materials, designed to identify the figures we work with as public figures.

Second, they claim that although we struggle with a sense of the times, we do this in no systematic way.

Third, they claim that our tendency is to present the times in isolation and the figure in isolation without the structure of give and take between the two.

Fourth, they argue that we tend to treat the speaker as static by labeling processes that do not make possible the notion of emergence and change.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>31</sup> Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 26.

Why select the New England Emigrant Aid Company? The reasons may generally be grouped under the headings of "practical" and "philosophical."

Pragmatically speaking, the ability to fix dates of inception, changes of philosophy, and the completion or abandonment of goals allow a limitation of the study to workable dimensions. The available primary materials give promise that, within these workable dimensions, some depth of information may be gained and some tenable conclusions drawn.

Philosophically speaking, the study should offer benefits in several areas of study. The historian will find a dimension added to the understanding of pre-Civil War New England and a period in which a step toward that war was taken. The political scientist may find added understanding of the political phenomenon of the "solid south" as a reaction to companies such as this one. The student of human behavior, and persuasion in particular, will find various theories of group action tested and a total persuasive social movement examined with strengths and weaknesses traced.

Personally, as a native Kansan who was raised in New England, I find the whole movement and the presentation of Kansas (and the Kansas Issue, which was quite a different thing) entirely fascinating.

## Chapter II

### THE "NEBRASKA" CRISIS

When the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was reported by Stephen A. Douglas, the chairman of the Committee on Territories, a "hell of a storm" (as Douglas himself had predicted) broke loose. Before the storm had been resolved it had been labeled simply "Nebraska" by most New Englanders and the many who opposed the bill held "anti-Nebraska rallies" at which angry resolutions were drafted to be sent to Washington. The problem, which became so intense during the first half of 1854, could be traced back to the first importation of Negro slaves, to the divergent cultures of the New England Puritan and the Virginia Cavalier, and to the ambiguity of the Constitution.

To examine the context from which the New England Emigrant Aid Company emerged, a brief historical overview, a description of the intensity and scope of the "anti-Nebraska rallies," and a consideration of the intensity of feeling in Boston during the month of May, 1854, are vital. Bitzer's observation that "any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency"<sup>1</sup> fits the emerging situation in May, 1854, very well. The goals of this chapter may therefore be restated as the examination of an imperfection, in this

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Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," p. 6.

case the disagreement about the slave system and the wisdom of allowing it to spread, and a situation of urgency enhanced by certain external events in Boston at the time of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.

#### Historical Basis

At first the spread of the slave system seemed clearly controlled. The Ordinance of 1787 forbade the further introduction of slavery into the Old Northwest (basically those lands north of the Ohio River).<sup>2</sup> Since other lands in the southwest were not within the immediate sphere of United States control, there seemed to be no problem. However, with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 Congressional action was less decisive. In March of 1804 Congress passed an act which prohibited the extension of slavery into the new territory, but added the proviso: "except by a citizen of the United States, removing into said territory for actual settlement, and being at the time of such removal bona fide owner of such slave or slaves." The door had been set ajar; Stephen A. Douglas' "popular sovereignty" philosophy would become the eventual extension of this idea.

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<sup>2</sup>For further discussion of this Ordinance see: Eugene H. Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery (Urbana, Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1967), pp. 7-29.

The acquisition of land through the Louisiana Purchase and the later annexation of Texas provided the prize for which the North and South would vie. The "law of parallels," a prevalent notion that institutions, such as slavery, would naturally flow westward as territories were opened (moving along latitudes in a westerly direction) provided the method for the wide expansion of what Northerners soon began to perceive as a "Slave Power."

The first period of crisis came in 1820 with the measures surrounding the admission of Missouri as a slave state. Most Emigrant Aid Company propaganda traced the problem which culminated in the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill to that date. Writing in the May, 1854, issue of the New Englander, Yale Professor Alexander Twining, who later became affiliated with the Emigrant Aid Company, noted:

Until the occasion above mentioned [the compromise of 1820] we are not apprised of any division and trial of strength, according to the strict geographic lines of slave and free labor. The introduction of Missouri formed therefore in the minds of many, a new feature of national history---a primal instance in which the element antagonistic to liberty broke through the dykes and mounds to which it had been trusted for its restraint.<sup>3</sup>

Still the lines of North and South were not boldly drawn. An agreement to limit slavery to areas south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  (the southern boundary of

<sup>3</sup>Alexander C. Twining, "The Nebraska Bill and Its Results," New Englander, (May, 1854), p. 3.

Missouri) in the territories yet to be opened made the compromise more palatable and, in northern minds at least, seemed to negate the "law of parallels as it might otherwise apply to the land west of the new slave state of Missouri.

Thirty-four years later this land west of Missouri became much more coveted. The reasons, as Paul Gates has suggested in his book, Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts over Kansas Land Policy, went far beyond an altruistic concern for the slave. Among them were "the pleasures of distributing a rapidly multiplying number of offices paying generous salaries and profitable fees, the desire to control public offices such as territorial and educational institutions, a general hunger for lucrative mailing, trucking, Indian, and army procurement contracts, and the granting of lands and loans to railroads."<sup>4</sup> To this list Gates added one more element, and a key one in the appeal of the Emigrant Aid Company, "the search for land and the means to make it valuable."<sup>5</sup>

The issue of slavery, although it had been pressed vigorously by the Abolitionists, was not generally a strong one in the North. In his speech at an "anti-Nebraska rally" in New Haven,

<sup>4</sup> Paul Wallace Gates, Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Connecticut, on March 8, 1854, James F. Babcock gave an indication of the longevity of the slavery issue when he read from the preamble of "The Constitution of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and for the Relief of Persons unlawfully holden in bondage," dated August 16, 1790:

Impressed with a sense of the inestimable worth and value of the excellent constitution, laws, and government of this State, and the United States of America, and anxiously desirous that every description of man who have obtained residence among us, of whatever clime or color, should quietly enjoy the freedom and happiness which the Father of the human race has kindly allotted us, and having, with grief and abhorrence, long beheld a considerable number of our fellow men groaning under the iron hand of slavery. . . . the subscribers have associated themselves . . .<sup>6</sup>

The list of signers cited by Mr. Babcock was long and distinguished and included David Daggett, Elizer Goodrich, father of Professor Chauncey Goodrich, Jonathan Edwards, son of the theologian, and Ezra Styles, President of Yale College.

In spite of the existence of such organizations and the membership of such notables, the slavery question was still not the source of widespread and passionate argument. Many subscribed to the philosophy of Amos Lawrence (the father of Amos A. Lawrence who became treasurer of the Emigrant Aid

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Anti-Nebraska Rally, New Haven, Connecticut, March 8 and 10, 1854, pamphlet, no author or publisher given. Connecticut State Historical Society Archives, p. 6.

Company). Although he admitted to paying the "customary fee"

toward the freedom of a family in slavery,<sup>7</sup> he wrote to a friend in South Carolina:

We have hot heads, and so have you: but I think your people misjudge, when they think of setting up an independent government. Politicians, like horse jockeys, strive to cover up wind broken constitutions, as though in full health; but hard driving reveals the defect, and, within thirty years /from 1852/, the old Slave States will feel compelled to send their chattels away to save themselves from bankruptcy and starvation. I have never countenanced these abolition movements at the North; and have lately lent a hand to the cause of Colonization, which is destined to make a greater change in the condition of the blacks than any event since the Christian era.<sup>8</sup>

The "colonization" scheme mentioned by Lawrence was a frequent response to the slave system by Northerners who did not wish to take the long step into abolitionism. Historian J. C. Furnas has described it as a "well-meaning half measure appealing to the uneasy consciences of both North and South."<sup>9</sup> It was a kind of organized and subsidized emigration which proposed to move emancipated and freeborn Negroes to Africa and founded Liberia in

<sup>7</sup> William R. Lawrence, editor, Extracts from the Diary and Correspondence of the Late Amos Lawrence: with a Brief Account of Some Incidents in his Life (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1859), p. 334.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>9</sup> J. C. Furnas, The Americans: A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), p. 317.

1822 as a place where these people might find a haven. Although the movement was in existence until the Civil War, the total number of Negroes actually sent to Africa was only a little over eleven thousand.<sup>10</sup> The idea of returning freed and freeborn blacks to Africa played a minor part in the ideology of the Emigrant Aid Company.

More grating than the moral issue of slavery, to many Northerners, was the political representation which the slave system brought to the whites who lived in slave states. Thaddeus Stevens, Vermont-born Senator from Pennsylvania, argued that having "five slaves being counted equal to three white freemen" was unfair to the free states. First, it allowed property to be counted as persons. Second, it was not representative. As Stevens explained "There are twenty-five gentlemen on this /Senate/ floor, who are virtually the representatives of slaves alone, not having one free constituent. This is an outrage on every representative principle, which supposes that representatives have constituents whose will they are bound to obey and whose interests they protect."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 318-319.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Morris, Masterpieces of Eloquence and the World's Great Orators (no publisher or place given, 1903), p. 131.

Furthermore, the solidarity of the Southern political contingent was becoming evident to the North. Stevens, in the speech just quoted, assigned the success of the South to unity of purpose in the Compromise of 1850:

Least of all would I reproach the South. I honor her courage and fidelity. Even in a bad cause, a wicked cause, she shows a united front. All her sons are faithful to the cause of human bondage, because it is their cause.<sup>12</sup>

Stevens continued with a comparison:

But the North---the poor, timid, mercenary, driveling North---has no such united defenders of her cause, although it is the cause of human liberty. None of the bright lights of the nation shine upon her section. Even her own great men have turned her accusers. She is the victim of low ambition---an ambition which prefers self to country, personal aggrandizement to the high cause of human liberty. She is offered up a sacrifice<sup>13</sup> to propitiate Southern tyranny; to conciliate treason.

How deeply such self-evaluation went can only be speculated. The increasing role of the more conservative business community of the North in protest of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill may have signalled an increasing willingness for men of the free states to actively unite in opposition to the solidarity of the slave interests. The New England Emigrant Aid Company, as will be demonstrated, sprang from this move toward unification. It was a move to

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

confront an organized power with organized power. The stakes were to be political and economic domination of both the new territories and the nation.

### "Nebraska Rallies" and the Birth of an Idea

Throughout the early months of 1854 and into the summer the storm predicted by Douglas swept New England. The first responses to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill were vocal. "Angry mass meetings in city after city decried its passage," wrote Richard Sewell in his recent biography of New Hampshire Senator John P. Hale, "clergymen denounced it from the pulpit, workers and professional men signed and circulated petitions in protest, and the northern press attacked it with an energy for which the history of American journalism had no parallel."<sup>14</sup>

The New London Weekly Chronicle of New London, Connecticut, echoed the popular feelings at the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, a step necessary for the implementation of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill: "If slavery and its advocates expect that they can play fast and loose in this matter they may possibly find themselves mistaken."<sup>15</sup> The same article continued by linking the

<sup>14</sup> Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> The New London Weekly Chronicle, New London, Connecticut, February 9, 1854, p. 1.

Northern turncoat to the false chivalry alleged of the South: "The Southern politicians have played at this game and hitherto found fools and cravens enough at the North till 'chivalry' really expects to continue it. We trust the North will let them know that the time has gone by." (Underlining in original)<sup>16</sup>

Petitions, drafted at various "Nebraska Rallies," reached the Senate as early as February 13, 1854, when Senator Edward Everett presented a petition signed by more than fourteen hundred citizens of Worcester, Massachusetts. Others, including Senators Sumner, Seward, Clayton, Foot, Chase, and Brodhead presented similar petitions. So did the Society of Friends in Massachusetts.<sup>17</sup>

No longer was the slavery issue the peculiar province of Garrison and his fringe group. "In all the numerous mass-meetings and conventions," commented Eli Thayer, "the orators were mostly conservative men who had never felt the emasculating power of sentimental ideas upon the slavery question. They were sturdy patriots, however, as were also their audiences."<sup>18</sup> Close to

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The New London Weekly Chronicle, New London, Connecticut, February 16, 1854, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Eli Thayer, The Kansas Crusade (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1889), p. 4.

five thousand of these men braved a fierce snowstorm to attend a rally at Faneuil Hall in Boston on the afternoon of February 23, 1854. Among those presiding were the present and past mayors of Boston and surrounding communities. Two resolutions were drafted which typify the messages sent to Washington:

That the propositions now pending in Congress for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise have justly filled our community with surprise and alarm.

That we protest against such repeal as a deliberate breach of plighted faith of the nation, as tending to weaken the claim of our common country upon the confidence and affection of its people.<sup>19</sup>

Another group of Northern people ready to let the South, and more particularly the pro-slavery elements in Congress, know their feelings was the New England clergy. Some three-thousand fifty united to protest the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The document that they sent to the Senate provided the Emigrant Aid Company with a valuable mailing list before the year was out.

Early March saw a second round of rallies. New London, Connecticut, which had its first rally "by order of more than three hundred citizens" on February 24, had a second one on March 3. New Haven, Connecticut, staged a three-day rally from March 8 to March 10 and Worcester, Massachusetts, had one on March 11.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

It was this March 11 rally that the idea of organized emigration first appeared. One of the speakers, Eli Thayer, a successful local educator and member of the state legislature, concluded his remarks:

It is now time to think of what is to be done in the event of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Now is the time to organize an opposition that will utterly defeat the schemes of the selfish men who misrepresent the nation at Washington. Let every effort be made, and every appliance be brought to bear, to fill up that vast and fertile territory with free men, ---with men who hate slavery, and will drive the hideous thing from the broad and beautiful plains where they go to raise their free homes. (Cheers)<sup>20</sup>

In recalling this event, Thayer credited the favorable response of the audience in Worcester with encouraging him to continue the idea which culminated in the Emigrant Aid Company when he wrote: "If, instead of this impetuous, spontaneous, and enthusiastic response, there had only been a moderate approbation of the plan, you would never have heard of the Emigrant Aid Company. The citizens of Worcester were sponsors at its baptism,<sup>21</sup> and upon their judgment I implicitly relied and was not deceived."

Edward Everett Hale, a young Unitarian clergyman of Worcester, was eager to join the crusade. Nine years before he had written an essay entitled "How to Conquer Texas before Texas

<sup>20</sup> Manuscript, New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas (hereafter cited as Emigrant Aid Company Papers).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

"Conquors Us" in which he had advocated the emigration of free men into opening territories as a method of determining the development of these lands. In 1852 he had given a sermon which expressed the view that the cure to social ills lay in finding the right place for people.<sup>22</sup> Emigration had become one of his pet themes and the idea of Thayer was compatible with his personal philosophy.<sup>23</sup> He enlisted as Thayer's "man Friday," although, from his account, the initial prospect for success seemed highly doubtful.

The first thing Thayer needed was a charter for his "company." Although "not a single person in the judiciary committee believed his plan in the least practical"<sup>24</sup> Thayer persevered. On April 26 the legislature granted him, and a following largely composed of political friends, the initial charter for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company. It is noteworthy that these charter members, aside from Thayer, did not include the leaders who joined the movement during the first few weeks in June. These other signers were apparently friends or in the process of carrying out political

<sup>22</sup> Christian Duty to Emigrants: A Sermon delivered before the Boston Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, May 9, 1852 by Edward E. Hale (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1852).

<sup>23</sup> See essay entitled "The Gospel of Freedom extended by the Organization of Emigration" by Edward E. Hale, no date or publisher, Eli Thayer Papers, Brown University Archives, Providence, Rhode Island.

<sup>24</sup> Hale manuscript, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

bargains.

After a week of hard organizational work, the first recruiting meeting was held in the town hall in Worcester on the morning of May 4, 1854. It was, as Hale recalled, "of a character more practical than most of the conventions which met there."<sup>25</sup> The audience was small, between one and two hundred, and appears to have been selected from persons who had expressed a personal interest in going to Kansas.<sup>26</sup> Thayer was unable to speak at the meeting and asked Hale to take his place. It was assumed that the strain of the past two months had affected Thayer's health. The occasion was decidedly reserved in approach. "There was no 'buncombe' or 'popcock' in what I said," recalled Hale. "I was there to explain to them the practical method of going to Kansas, and, as well as I knew how, I did so. These men asked questions and I gave them the best answers that I could."<sup>27</sup>

This meeting was particularly instrumental in setting up the Emigrant Aid Company campaign. The clientele had apparently been wisely selected. The participants went from the meeting

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

united in purpose and ideology. "From this moment forward, all of us who could speak were engaged in addressing public assemblies and all who could write were writing for the press. . . There were few persons there whom I had ever seen before; but I made some friends there who have been my friends to this day."<sup>28</sup> These reports by Hale indicated that a cohesive group was emerging. As Toch observed, in describing the passage from "predisposition to susceptibility": "For a person to be lead to join a movement, he must not only sense a problem, but must also 1) feel that something can be done about it and 2) want to do something about it himself."<sup>29</sup> Such a step had been made.

The rallies continued on through the summer of 1854 and added to the emotional context in which the newly formed company operated. They kept the problem of Kansas and the "Slave Power" clearly in view. The company supplied an answer.

### Boston in May, 1854

Six days after the organizational meeting had been held in Worcester, Thayer hired Chapman Hall in Boston and moved

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 11.

the center of company activities there. As a city of about one-hundred thirty thousand, seat of the Massachusetts state legislature, and dominant literary and cultural center, Boston was the logical choice for a "geo-political" center for the company's campaign.<sup>30</sup>

Martin Green, English scholar and cultural historian, has remarked that Boston was a cultural and literary center which encouraged publication and found strength in "contemporaneity"<sup>31</sup> rather than "continuity or tradition." As such, it was a congenial setting for a company engaged in the innovative activity of competing for the western territories through a campaign of publication, speech making, and organized emigration.

Added to this were the people of the area. Parrington, in his portrait of Oliver Wendell Holmes as the "Authentic Brahmin," illustrated some of the points of view which were to become staples in the Emigrant Aid Company's ideology. Primary was Holmes' stress on rationality, in which he "reflected the negative qualities of Unitarianism, rather than the positive, the free mind rather than

<sup>30</sup> According to Hitler: "The geo-political importance of the center of a movement cannot be overrated. Only the presence of such a center and of a place, bathed in the magic of a Mecca or a Rome, can at length give a movement that force which is rooted in the inner unity and in the recognition of a hand that represents this unity." Cited in Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 165.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Green, The Problem of Boston: Some Readings in Cultural History (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966), p. 27.

the tender conscience."<sup>32</sup> Holmes' preference for such men as Everett, Webster, Bryant, and Whittier, rather than Garrison, Phillips, Parker, Thoreau, and Greeley, was a second feature of this ideology. Parrington's summary of the men whom Holmes admired would fit as well the constituency sought by the Emigrant Aid Company: "Social strata being determined by economics, the agitator is little better than a firebrand. . . . His Holmes heroes were respectable souls rather than militant."<sup>33</sup>

Another feature of the New England mind was what Merle Curti has called "the cult of self-improvement." Elihu Burritt, a Worcester blacksmith, and one of the minor figures in the Emigrant Aid Company, was an example of this. Over his forge he taught himself Latin and Greek and earned the title "the learned blacksmith."<sup>34</sup> This philosophy held that a man could, through work and steady perseverance, advance himself. Indeed, this was seen as a worthy goal. Boston was a center of this cult with "other cities not far behind." The impact of this philosophy has been summarized by Curti: "In every city and in thousands of towns and

<sup>32</sup> Vernon Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, Volume II (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927), p. 458.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943), pp. 356-357.

villages lectures, lyceum discussions and debates, evening schools, libraries, manuals on self-culture all testified to the popularity of the idea. Except in the Old South the cult of self-improvement took  
<sup>35</sup>  
the country by storm."

Here was a structure and an audience ready-made for a company which would promote a self-advancing scheme. As the Emigrant Aid Company went into action they often used lyceum facilities and operated through people influential on local lyceum committees. Boston was an ideal hub for such operations in New England.

With this brief view of Boston as a center for a social movement an accompanying view of the time, May, 1854, is also important. During the first three weeks of the month things were quiet. Company activities moved in an orderly fashion. Thayer hired a physician of limited success, Dr. Thomas Webb, to begin the process of soliciting stock subscriptions. Thayer went about the process of acquainting influential citizens with his plan. His activities of this period have been described by E. S. Hunt in his book of "reminiscences": "Mr. Thayer hired a hall in Boston and spoke day and evening in favor of his enterprise. One day he would

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<sup>35</sup>  
Ibid., p. 357.

meet a party of clergymen in Theodore Parker's study; on the next, one in Dr. Lothrop's, and with the help of the Boston press, there began to be some interest in the plan to save Kansas."<sup>36</sup>

The stock subscription campaign moved slowly. On May 26 Webb wrote to Thayer of this problem and of the lack of financial support by those who had subscribed to the original application for a charter. "Everything remains in status quo, and a 'masterly inactivity' seems to have possession of the Corporators," commented Webb. He closed with the observation that "the corporators must give the first impetus by subscribing themselves."<sup>37</sup>

There are several possible reasons for Webb's frustration. Foremost was Webb's mistaken idea that the original signers would be the nucleus of the company subscribers. Actually most of them feared the financial entanglement which might result from association with a stock company of this sort.<sup>38</sup> Others were in Congress or were rapidly becoming nationally prominent and wished to avoid an alliance.<sup>39</sup> It seems likely that, in signing the original

<sup>36</sup> E. S. Hunt, Weymouth Ways and Weymouth People (Boston: "Private Printing," 1907), pp. 126-127.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Webb to Eli Thayer, May 26, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel A. Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

incorporation papers, they were merely playing a brief role in which they could express displeasure at the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and approval of an action being taken against that bill.

Two other reasons may also be important in explaining the inactivity of the company during the last week of May. First, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, after passing Congress on May 22, now awaited only the signature of President Pierce. On May 20 John Z. Goodrich of Massachusetts summed up the case in opposition to the passage of the bill in a speech that was both an argument and a warning of rising Northern antagonism toward the "public and political men of the South" who "regard compromises as mere temporary expedients to spread slavery further and wider over the territories of the Union. . ." Now the North could only await the inevitable signature of Franklin Pierce.<sup>40</sup>

During the eight days while the bill awaited Pierce's attention, Boston was rocked by what Theodore Parker would later call "the wicked week of 1854" and characterize as one in which "Massachusetts was one of the inferior counties of Virginia and Boston but a suburb of Alexandria."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Speech of Hon. John Z. Goodrich, of Mass. delivered in the House of Representatives, May 20, 1854 (Washington: Congressional Globe, 1854), p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Benjamin Quarles, Black Abolitionists (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 208.

On May 24 the fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, was seized in Boston. This was the third in a series of fugitive slave cases which brought Boston a tangible manifestation of the "Slave Power." The first two cases had occurred in 1851 when, on February 15, "Shadrack" (Fred Wilkins) was captured. Before any action could be taken he was spirited away to Canada by a group of black abolitionists who had kidnapped him. About two months later, April 12, Thomas Sims was moved "with an armed escort of one hundred or more city police" through the streets of Boston to a ship waiting to return him to the South. The would-be abductors who had gathered were thoroughly foiled. In fact, Wendell Phillips hinted, they were asleep in Faneuil Hall during the early morning hours when the fugitive was moved to  
42 the ship.

With public discontent already running high, the Burns case attracted wide coverage in the press and a battle appeared to be in the offing. Each side had "won" once in the prior two cases; each was determined not to lose this time. Federal military units were moved in and auxiliary forces hired. Some of these auxiliaries were composed of Irish immigrants whose presence added "Popery" to the charge of "Slave Power." Broadsides appeared, such as the one which proclaimed:

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<sup>42</sup> Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures, and Letters (Boston: James Redpath, Publisher, 1863), p. 56.

**AMERICANS TO THE RESCUE!  
AMERICANS! SONS OF THE REVOLUTION!!**

A body of seventy-five Irishmen, known as the  
**"Columbian Artillery"**

have volunteered their services to shoot down  
 citizens of Boston! and are now under arms to defend  
 Virginia in kidnapping a Citizen of Massachusetts!

Americans! These Irishmen have called us  
**"Cowards and Sons of Cowards!"**

Shall we submit to have our citizens shot      <sup>43</sup>  
 down by a set of Vagabond Irishmen?

The conflicting issues of Popery and the use of emigrants in the  
 development of the west would confront the Emigrant Aid Company  
 during its campaign.

Mobs numbering from thirty to fifty thousand collected in  
 Boston as the Burns case was heard and Burns was found to be the  
 property of one Colonel Suttle of Virginia. One man was killed in  
 a mob attempt to storm the jail and free the slave. "On the day Burns  
 was sent out of Boston, the town was full of people who had come from  
 all parts of New England," wrote E. S. Hunt who was present.      <sup>44</sup>

Twenty-two companies of soldiers lined the streets as the military  
 procession of Marines and one-hundred twenty-five police led the

<sup>43</sup> Oscar Hamblin, Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865  
 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1941), p. 206.

<sup>44</sup> Hunt, Weymouth Ways and Weymouth People, pp. 113-114.

fugitive through downtown Boston. Stores were garlanded in black.

Hunt recalled: "The procession was witnessed by 50,000 people, who hissed and groaned as it passed by. The fugitive was marched to the end of Long Wharf, and was soon on his way to Virginia. I was standing on State Street as Burns was taken off, and shall never forget the wild excitement of those times."<sup>45</sup>

Thus concluded an event which became known as "the rendition of Burns." It served to polarize public sentiment in a manner which served the Emigrant Aid Company in two ways. First, the conservative elements became involved in distinctly antislavery activity. Second, the public sentiment which had been exhibited in the "anti-Nebraska rallies" reached a new intensity. An emotional multiplier was in operation. The anti-Nebraska crusade had contributed to public feeling about the Burns case and the Burns case intensified hostility toward the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Both of these elements were mentioned by R. H. Dana who represented all three of the fugitive slaves in their legal hearings:

May 26, Friday. -- Tonight a great meeting is to be held at Faneuil Hall. There is some strong feeling in favor of a rescue, and some of the abolitionists talk quite freely about it. But the most remarkable exhibition is from the Whigs, the Hunker Whigs, the Compromise men of 1850. Men who would

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

not speak to me in 1850 and 1851, and who enrolled themselves as special police in the Sims affair stop me in the street and talk treason. This is owing to the Nebraska Bill. I cannot respect their feelings at all except as a return to sanity.<sup>46</sup>

The Hartford, Connecticut, Daily Times of May 29, 1854, reported the events in the Burns case and concluded that the general change in public philosophy was a direct result of the Kansas-Nebraska controversy. In their report the general impact of the situation throughout New England became evident:

We have feared from the day that Toombs and Stevens, assisted by Senator Douglas, threw the great question of slavery agitation into Congress, by proposing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, that such scenes would be witnessed-- that the public mind, which had become quiet under the Compromise of 1850, would again become excited, and that if the fugitive slave law should hereafter be enforced to any considerable extent, it must be by aid of ball cartridges and bayonets.

To us such a view of the case is certainly unpleasant, but it is irresistible. The recent act of Congress is calculated to swell the ranks of the Abolition party at the North and to make it more powerful than ever before.<sup>47</sup>

At the end of this article, several recent dispatches from Boston were added. From them the temper of New England, as well as the ease with which numbers of people could go to Boston from

<sup>46</sup> Henry Steele Commager and Allen Nevins, eds., The Heritage of America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), p. 495.

<sup>47</sup> The Daily Times, Hartford, Connecticut, May 29, 1854, p. 1.

nearby communities, may be inferred. They concluded: "Large delegations are expected from Worcester, New Bedford, and other places tomorrow. One thousand pistols, principally revolvers, are said to have been sold by dealers on Saturday."<sup>48</sup>

The events in Boston reverberated throughout New England. The alignment of philosophies expressed there was echoed by journalists and speakers in various communities. Thus, by the end of May, 1854, the elements which Bitzer has stated "comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation" were to be found in New England.<sup>49</sup> The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill created the most flagrant "imperfection" in the popular mind and the element of "urgency," impelled by the frustrations of the Burns case, became evident as people sought some means of controlling the destiny of the newly opened territory. This stage of development in a movement is well described by Toch in the second step of his paradigm: "Such problem situations give rise to problems if they register psychological impact--that is, if they create some degree of unhappiness. Although many persons who feel they have a problem

<sup>48</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. I (January, 1968), pp. 6-8.

will lapse into apathy, resignation, and despair, others will begin to search for plausible solutions."<sup>50</sup> Such a search for solutions was the state of events throughout New England at the end of May, 1854.

Bitzer has also required that two other factors be considered. The first, "audience" has already been dealt with in a broad sense. All New Englanders were potential audience members for the Emigrant Aid Company (except perhaps the Abolitionists and the "doughfaces," the Northern politicians with Southern views). The audience which had collected at Faneuil Hall to consider the Burns affair was reported to be the largest ever to gather there.<sup>51</sup> This was symptomatic of the widespread antagonism to "Slave Power" which had become evident in the streets of Boston as the case came to a climax. As Toch has suggested, some people did lapse into apathy. Others gave up in despair or subordinated this problem to others that they found personally more pressing. But many listened to the scheme of the Emigrant Aid Company in their search for "plausible solutions." They provided the second element of the rhetorical situation, the audience.

<sup>50</sup> Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements, pp. 26-27.

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence Lader, The Bold Brahmins (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1961), p. 205.

The final element, "constraints," are to be found in the latitudes of action permitted in value structures such as that held by the "Authentic Brahmin." The stress on rational demonstration and hostility toward emotionalism set the tone of the company's persuasion. The ideology was dictated by the desire to operate within legal bounds and with respect for national integrity. Also to be considered under the heading of "constraints" are those which the speaker brings with him for, as Bitzer has noted, "when the orator enters the situation, his discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints--for example his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style."<sup>52</sup>

In the next chapter this element will be explored along with the nature of the company which these men controlled. The company itself, as will be demonstrated, acted as an entity in providing some constraints of its own.

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<sup>52</sup> Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," p. 8.

## Chapter III

### COMPANY FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP

Prior to June of 1854 Thayer had, by his own estimation, "made about fifty speeches in Boston and elsewhere and had secured in Boston subscriptions to the stock. . . of \$35,000. . ." <sup>1</sup> But until Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill the plan for the Emigrant Aid Company was not viable, for the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were not actually open to settlement. The bill was signed on May 30; June arrived with New Englanders ready to take some decisive actions.

Thayer left his Boston rallies to go to New York and seek the aid of Horace Greeley's newspaper and the financial support of New Yorkers while men enthusiastic for Thayer's plan continued to hold meetings in Boston. On June 12, 1854, a temporary draft of Articles of Agreement was adopted and the company got down to the work of seeking money and emigrants. The capitalization of the company, under these articles, was set at \$200,000, a sharp reduction from Thayer's original proposals of first \$10,000,000 and

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<sup>1</sup> Eli Thayer to William Lawrence, March 22, 1888, Eli Thayer Papers.

later \$5,000,000. However, these earlier figures had served a useful propaganda value in the South as well as the North. The arrival of monied interests in the North into the contest for Kansas did, as Hale later claimed it was intended to, result in "every paper in Missouri and farther South. . . .announcing that we had five millions at our command."<sup>2</sup> Hale continued: "This announcement answered our purpose as well as if it had been true."<sup>3</sup> The bluff, whether intentional or not, proved to be an effective catalyst in the "troubles in Kansas" two years later.<sup>4</sup>

Among the new associates of the Emigrant Aid Company was Amos A. Lawrence whose attention had been focused on the company by one Patrick Jackson, a Boston merchant.<sup>5</sup> Although Jackson's interest in the company proved to be temporary, Lawrence stayed on to become treasurer and, as Samuel Johnson has noted, "the chief pecuniary support and conservative balance wheel of the

<sup>2</sup> Edward Everett Hale, Memories of a Hundred Years (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See testimony in Howard Committee Report (Washington: Cornelius Wendell, 1856), pp. 897-898.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Jackson to Amos A. Lawrence, June 10, 1854, Lawrence Papers.

<sup>6</sup>

New England Emigrant Aid Company."

The leadership of Thayer and Lawrence dominated the company for the next two years. Each man attracted a different constituency and based his power upon a different source. William Bruce Cameron has cited Max Weber's three sources of leadership as "rational," "traditional," and "charismatic." Following this division, Thayer was primarily "charismatic," and Lawrence "traditional." Before further exploring the formation of the company, a brief sketch of these two leaders is in order.

### Eli Thayer

Definitive descriptions of "charisma" are rare. Erwin Bettinghaus, in his book *Persuasive Communication*, has speculated that "it is the possession of many of the dimensions of credibility by a single individual. . . to a greater extent than is usual for the persuasive communicator."<sup>7</sup> An exploration of the attributes which contributed to the credibility of Eli Thayer will be helpful in evaluating the source of his leadership and the value structure which he supported.

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<sup>6</sup> Samuel Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Erwin Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communications (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), p. 117.

Thayer's reputation as a self-made man was visible manifestation of the gains to be made in the "cult of self-improvement" which was mentioned in the last chapter. Thayer had put himself through Brown University by teaching intermittently and doing odd jobs during the semesters when he was enrolled. As a student he was made Phi Beta Kappa in 1843 and appeared as one of the class orators in a "Senior Exhibition" on November 30, 1844, with the topic of "The Restless Spirit of Society."<sup>8</sup>

Upon graduation from Brown in 1845 at the age of twenty-six, he became a teacher and real estate speculator in the Worcester area. Both enterprises brought rapid success. Within two years he was made principal of the Manual Labor High School in Worcester.

His property developed rapidly and paid "substantial profits."<sup>9</sup> In 1848 he began construction of a stone building which he had designed himself along the lines of an ancient castle. This structure, located on Goat Hill in Worcester, became a collegiate institution for young women called "Oread Institute." Kenneth Davis has explained the name: "Oread in Classical mythology is a mountain nymph; Thayer got the name from a line in Virgil."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Program, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Davis, Eli Thayer and the Kansas Crusade (Worcester: Random Readings in Worcester History, 1963), p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Not only was the Oread Institute successful, but it was highly innovative. "Years before Smith or Vassar or Wellesley had opened their doors--years before any college in America save Oberlin had opened its doors to women--the Oread Institute with its faculty of twelve, was giving to young ladies, most of them boarding students, a four-year college course modelled closely on the Brown curriculum," Davis has pointed out. "This was, of course, revolutionary. It was also, for Thayer, highly profitable."<sup>11</sup> Using this success as a springboard, Thayer moved into politics where he soon became a member of the Worcester school board, an alderman, and in 1854 was elected to the Massachusetts legislature.

As a self-made man, Thayer was very critical of philanthropy. This was reflected in his approach to emigration as a profit making scheme. His statement in the 1854 Oread Institute catalog might mystify a modern collegiate development officer but it was consistent with Thayer's philosophy throughout the Emigrant Aid Company's campaign:

Individual effort originated, and has thus far sustained the Institution. It has received no endowments from private munificence or public bounty, except good wishes and liberal patronage. This is all the endowment it will receive in the future. Whatever may be the result, it must stand on its own

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

merits, and the will of the people. We hope that its patronage will never be promoted by any feeling of compassion or condescension. We sell education at cost. If our merchandise is not worth our price or if we have brought our wares to a market for which there is no demand, we ask no one to share our loss.<sup>12</sup>

A second element which contributed to Thayer's charisma was his air of sagacity. This was in harmony with the general temper of the times and related to the rationalistic urge of the Unitarians. Thayer's diary revealed that he sustained a continuing interest in self-education. While he vacationed in New Hampshire in August of 1853 he claimed to be devoting "two hours to Hebrew, two to Greek, two to Gibbon, and more or less to general education each day."<sup>13</sup> Later during the same vacation he reported reading "The Aids which pulpit eloquence derives from models and from occasions," a tract read before the "Porter Rhetorical Society." Thayer found the ideas in it "commonplace" but thought he should read some of the suggested models anyway.<sup>14</sup> On the platform, Thayer's austere appearance complemented his rationalistic approach. He has been

<sup>12</sup> "Oread Institute Catalog," 1854, pp. 20-21, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Diary entry dated August 18, 1853, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Diary entry dated August 30, 1853, Eli Thayer Papers.

described as having "the face of a king's counsellor, or a Spanish inquisitor."<sup>15</sup> His long face, accentuated by a flowing black beard and lengthened by a tendency toward baldness was described by one listener as the "broad calm brow of Mr. Thayer."<sup>16</sup>

Thayer's disdain for emotional appeal reached a climax in his attack upon the Abolitionists. He labeled Garrison's arguments "vituperative fulminations," and the Abolitionists themselves were described by Thayer as men who "allow their sentimental intoxication to develop into emotional insanity or chronic monomania."<sup>17</sup> Only Theodore Parker was spared, and on a basis compatible with Thayer's rationalistic approach: "In intellectual power, in breadth of view, and in logical argument, Mr. Parker has no rival among the radical Abolitionists."<sup>18</sup> However, this praise was tempered by the context of the argument. Even Parker, Thayer asserted, had no plan for saving Kansas. But Thayer did.

Throughout his career, Thayer was completely self-assured. This self-confidence is the final element which will be

<sup>15</sup> Davis, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> "The Kanza Question," (Handbill), Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Eli Thayer, The Kansas Crusade (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1889), p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

considered as contributory to Thayer's credibility. He was convinced that his plan was the plan which was to save Kansas. In his later years much of his correspondence was devoted to demonstrating that he was the primary figure in saving Kansas. One critic of Thayer's book, The Kansas Crusade, charged him with "stupendous egotism." In a letter to Franklin P. Rice, who later prepared but did not publish a biography of Thayer, the following answer to the charge of egotism is found:

He ridicules my "Stupendous Egotism," as if it were possible for a man to write the history he has made without any reference to himself. . . Does the silly scribe of the Union /Christian Union, January 30, 1890/ suppose that a man without perfect confidence in his own judgment could have saved Kansas and destroyed slavery? This confidence is what he calls "egotism."<sup>19</sup>

The sources of the credibility of Eli Thayer, of his charismatic leadership, were to be found in the various elements of "self-made man" image, his rationalistic appeal based upon a passion for logic and a sound educational background, his ability as a speaker, and his self-assurance. Two brief quotations sum up the man and give somewhat contrasting views of his appeal. The first, written by an unknown author, is found at the beginning of a short

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<sup>19</sup> Eli Thayer to Franklin P. Rice, February 3, 1890,  
Eli Thayer Papers.

book entitled Six Speeches with a Sketch of the Life of Hon. Eli Thayer:

"Welcome evermore to gods and men," says Emerson, "is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire."

He who shows what he can do without our help, is exactly the man whose help we cannot do without. . . . When the virgin soil of Kansas was given over to the foul embrace of slavery, . . . one man. . . applied his quick brain to the problem and his stout heart to the work, --and the thing despaired was done! That man was ELI THAYER of Massachusetts.

After working with Thayer for two years on the company campaign, Amos A. Lawrence commented tersely on the back of a newspaper clipping about Thayer: "Thayer is a windy man but full of schemes and active in carrying them out."<sup>21</sup>

#### Amos A. Lawrence

As "windy" as Thayer appears to have been, Lawrence was just as quiet. Whereas Thayer sought audiences, Lawrence generally avoided them. The source of his leadership was "tradition." The Lawrence family had long been prominent in Boston,

<sup>20</sup> Six Speeches with a Life of Hon. Eli Thayer (Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1860), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Newspaper clipping dated February 6, 1856, Lawrence Papers.

and in the industrial community of New England. Their business was textiles, their avocation philanthropy.

In the preface to a biography of Amos A. Lawrence's father this philanthropic penchant was well described: "His wealth was freely used for the benefit of others, and for the advancement of all those objects which tended to promote the welfare of his fellow-man."<sup>22</sup>

Among those good objects were such institutions as Williams College, Amherst College, Kenyon College, Wabash College and Bangor Theological Seminary. His wife contributed to Bowdoin College.

Amos A. Lawrence followed his parents' example. His correspondence at the time of the founding of the New England Emigrant Aid Company reveals that he was, at the same time, involved in the establishment of a college at Appleton, Wisconsin. This college was named, quite appropriately, Lawrence College. Later he played a role in the founding of a college in Lawrence, Kansas.<sup>23</sup>

Both Amos A. Lawrence and his father had given financial aid to the colonization movement and viewed this as the most appropriate method of dealing with slavery. Lawrence's letter to R. C. Winthrop, Senator from Massachusetts, revealed the depth

<sup>22</sup> William Lawrence, editor, Extracts from the Diary and Correspondence of the Late Amos Lawrence, p. viii.

<sup>23</sup> See various letters dated 1847 to 1856. Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

of his commitment to colonization as well as to education:

Having something to do with the proposed establishment of a college in Liberia, I have looked upon this movement / toward federal funding of colonization/ as one of the greatest importance not only to the whole of that vast country, but to ourselves. . . Regarded as a missionary scheme merely its good influence must be incalculable. It in /sic/ appear to be a project wh. must be popular at the South, because it will relieve them of a great number of free blacks; and also at the North because it is the surest and quickest method of putting an end to the slave trade, and of civilizing and Christianizing Africa.<sup>24</sup>

Placement of Lawrence in the sphere of "traditional leader" is not as clearcut as was the placement of Thayer as "charismatic." Still Lawrence does appear to fit the elements of this category as described by Max Weber. "The object of the obedience is the personal authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status," wrote Weber, "The organized group exercising authority is, in the simplest case, primarily based on relations of personal loyalty, cultivated through a common process of education. The person exercising authority is not a 'superior,' but a personal 'chief.' "<sup>25</sup>

Lawrence was a man of wealth and influence. His "traditional status" placed him in a circle of acquaintances who

<sup>24</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to R. C. Winthrop, August 20, 1850, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization translated by Henderson and Parsons (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1947), p. 341.

represented the economically and politically dominant figures in New England. His letter to Franklin Pierce, dated November 11, 1852, referred to Pierce's election to the Presidency earlier that month and illustrated Lawrence's personal influence:

It has occurred to me that I may be able to render you some service (pecuniary or otherwise) between this and next March or afterwards: and I write to say that it would afford me pleasure, if it shd be so, to be called upon for anything in my power wh. will promote yr comfort or convenience or that of yr family.

Knowing the experience of several of those eminent men who have filled the office to wh you have been elected, it is not unreasonable that yours may be similar in some respects, and therefore I have thought that the offer may be acceptable to you: and not being an aspirant for any official /underlining Lawrence's/ favors for myself or friends, I have less doubt about making it than I sh'd otherwise have. . .

P. S. Yr verbal answer will be sufficient. . .<sup>26</sup>

A brief handwritten statement by Lawrence, dated December 16, 1854, began: "this is about the condition of my affairs," and concluded by listing an estate of \$642,000 with \$53,000 in an unspecified category entitled "my own." His manufacturing and real estate interests alone were in excess of \$300,000 at this time.<sup>27</sup> He had money with which to back his obligations and convictions.

<sup>26</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Franklin Pierce, November 12, 1852, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>27</sup> Financial statement, Ibid.

As a public figure, Lawrence was reticent and retiring, although his reputation as philanthropist and businessman was well known. His papers include some brief manuscripts for speeches, some as short as a few sentences in the form of a toast written on the back of a menu. But a comment was frequently added to these speeches to indicate that they were not given. Such phrases as "my speech, which I concluded not to speak," on a manuscript dated July, 1854, and "Speech which I did not make," on one dated October 17, 1856, may be taken as indication of the hesitancy with which he approached speaking situations. On the 1856 speech he added the note: "Gov. Robinson wished me to introduce him to the audience but could not find me in time. Supposing I might be called on unexpectedly after I reached the hall, I wrote down my speech.

<sup>28</sup>  
It was an immense audience."

This habit of preparing speeches to meet the possibility of a speaking situation may explain the number of undelivered speeches among Lawrence's papers. It also illustrated the stiff, formal approach of Lawrence's style. The introduction to a "Rough Draft in case I accepted the Nomination for Gov'r, Aug. 1856" was a case in point:

<sup>28</sup> Manuscript, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

Gentlemen. I accept yr. nomination. The confidence wh. you have reposed in me in making it is so complete and so unexpected that it commands my gratitude.

You have not mistaken the sentiments wh. I cherish, and wh. form the basis of the American party. In them I was educated and in them I educate my children.<sup>29</sup>

Within Lawrence's correspondence are frequent invitations to join various committees and causes. Often the request was made for Lawrence to appear on the platform, perhaps as a "vice-president." The notation by Lawrence was frequently the terse "declined the honor."

The source of his power as a persuader and a leader lay in his name and the sphere of his personal influence. "I feel very grateful, that your heart and labors are enlisted in this great effort," wrote Thomas C. Upham of Bowdoin College in regard to Lawrence's participation in the Emigrant Aid Company, "and can assure you, that the knowledge of this fact is a great encouragement to many others."<sup>30</sup> D. R. Ogden of New York City, in a letter which chastized Lawrence for his affiliation with Millard Fillmore, began with these general comments:

<sup>29</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>  
Thomas C. Upham to Amos A. Lawrence, September 19, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

I have for a long time felt a great interest in the settlement of the Kansas question and the rise of your name in connection with the Emigrant Aid Society /sic/ went very far in enlisting my sympathies and my purse in that direction. I, in common with thousands of other business men, who are not brawling politicians, have long looked upon you and your family as Giants in the right and cannot be made to believe that you will knowingly consent to compromise your high and honorable position.<sup>31</sup>

Although Lawrence had toyed with the idea of running for governor of Massachusetts, he never seriously sought political power. In fact, as was revealed in a letter to Millard Fillmore, he looked upon the world of "brawling politicians," mentioned by Ogden, as a very undesirable place for a conservative, respectable businessman. "My aversion to office is my principal qualification as a candidate," he wrote, "and makes me sought for by those who would otherwise not think of me."<sup>32</sup> This lack of political ambition was important to his role in the Emigrant Aid Company, he felt. It kept him from being condemned for using the company as a platform for political gain. This, as will be developed in a later chapter, became one of the arguments used against company speakers. In 1855 William I. Bowditch asked Lawrence for permission to nominate him as a town representative from Brookline. Lawrence prepared a draft of his

<sup>31</sup> D. R. Ogden to Amos A. Lawrence, August 23, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Millard Fillmore, August 30, 1856, Lawrence Letters.

response refusing the nomination which contained the following:

I have never been a candidate for public office. . . . having a large stake in the movement here which is destined to make a Free State of Kanzas, and so to check forever the progress of slavery in that direction, it is important that I should not get into politics, or, if I do, that I should represent the "old hunker" interest to which this /Republican/ organization is indebted and upon which it must rely for material aid.<sup>33</sup>

Samuel Johnson's conclusion that Lawrence was "utterly devoid of political ambitions" was well founded. The additional comment that Lawrence "finally accepted the /Know-Nothing/ nomination when he knew that success was impossible, in hope of rallying conservative sentiment against sectional parties"<sup>34</sup> is consistent with Lawrence's willingness to work for the conservative principles to which he was devoted.

Lawrence then, in contrast to Thayer, was a man of established wealth, not politically ambitious, not aggressive in seeking an audience, but with impressive "connections." Philanthropy was a way of life to him and his family, again a distinct contrast to Thayer. His religious affiliations reflected his conservatism and his willingness to work for causes. Although he was an Episcopalian, he was named as trustee, on July 2, 1855, to the "Union of Churches

<sup>33</sup> Manuscript, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 14.

in a Spirit of Charity" for the construction of a church in Brookline-  
Longwood.<sup>35</sup>

Eli Thayer and Amos A. Lawrence emerged as the dominant leaders of the Emigrant Aid Company from 1854 to 1856. It seems ironic that Thayer, the innovative educator, had built his philosophy around a deep faith in the ability of free economic competition to refine institutions, while businessman Lawrence operated on an altruistic basis. Such a division of philosophies would, within the first few weeks after the organization of the company, lead to factions within the organization as each of these men interpreted and used the company in ways consistent with his own philosophy.

### Company Formation

Even within the formative days of the company the idea of mixing philanthropy with business was not met with strong enthusiasm among the men who were putting up the bulk of the financial backing. Their attitudes were exemplified in a letter to Samuel G. Howe, one of the incorporators of the Emigrant Aid Company, in which an order for twenty-five shares of stock was made with the following comment:

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<sup>35</sup> Notice, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

I deem the organization of this Association of the utmost importance, in order that it may not be placed in the hands of those who consider it a mere scheme for money making. Tho' I trust at the same time that judgment will be exercised to render the movement as profitable as is consistent with a just regard for the main object of our enterprise.<sup>36</sup>

Thayer's argument, upon his return from New York, that much stock had already been subscribed, may have been instrumental in keeping the company intact as a business. After all, as he argued some years later, "Why is it worse for a company to make money by extending Christianity than by making cotton cloth?"<sup>37</sup>

Still the financiers in Boston did not wish to split the company, although Thayer offered to withdraw from it in a letter to Lawrence dated July 17, 1854.<sup>38</sup> As Lawrence himself noted, in a letter to Moses Grinnell in New York: "He /Thayer/ is universally esteemed: he has a handsome property for that place /Worcester/ (say \$70 or \$80m) earned by his own industry and energy. He is the life of the movement, and the very man to carry it forward."<sup>39</sup> So, in spite of the internal problems, the company

<sup>36</sup> James W. Stone to Dr. Samuel G. Howe, June 5, 1854, Samuel G. Howe Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>37</sup> Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 60.

<sup>38</sup> Eli Thayer to Amos A. Lawrence, July 17, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Moses Grinnell, June 21, 1854, Lawrence Letters.

began its work.

During the month of June two men were dispatched to Kansas from Massachusetts to seek likely townsites. Those men were Dr. Charles Robinson of Fitchburg, a relative of Amos A. Lawrence by marriage and a man who had taken part in the squatter rebellion in Sacramento, California, a few years before, and Charles Branscomb, a lawyer from Holyoke. At the same time, Lawrence contacted his acquaintances in Appleton, Wisconsin, and secured the aid of James Blood who also left for Kansas Territory to scout the area for townsites. Robinson and Branscomb stayed with the company to become two of their principal agents, but Blood, although he was a valuable man and sent back a great deal of information, was never retained formally by the company. In fact, according to the letters which he wrote to Lawrence as treasurer, the company failed to pay him for his services.<sup>40</sup>

While these three men prepared the way in Kansas, the company went about the business of recruiting emigrants and selling stock. These two endeavors were to be the focus of the company persuasion. Each of them deserves a brief examination in order to discover what, exactly, the Emigrant Aid Company proposed to do.

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See letters from James Blood to Amos A. Lawrence, August 10, and August 16, 1854, and February 10, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

Edward Everett Hale has described the company as "the beginning of 'personally conducted' parties, such as Cooks take all over the world today."<sup>41</sup> As far as its method of organizing parties, making travel arrangements, and providing a conductor was applied to emigration, Hale's analogy seems accurate. The "aid" rendered the traveler was to be a result of several factors.

First, the company itself was to play the role of the pioneer. This was what Robinson, Branscomb, and Blood were doing in Kansas, but required that some larger pioneer party prepare the way also. As the "pioneer," the company was to make ready a society into which the emigrant could enter upon his arrival in the territory. Schools, churches, and mills, were to be provided by the company.

Second, the company made travel arrangements for the emigrant and, by dealing with rail and boat lines, secured a reduced rate of fare. The price of a trip from New England to Kansas was generally about twenty-five dollars. The saving to the traveler has been figured at about ten dollars per trip. The company continued in this activity for several years after 1856.

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<sup>41</sup> Hale, Memories of a Hundred Years, p. 157.

Third, the company proposed to own hotels, riverboats, and other equipment to supply the traveler with the facilities needed, particularly in Kansas City, on the Kansas River, and in the territory itself. This was rather piecemeal. The company did own a hotel in Kansas City and financed the construction of the Free State Hotel in Lawrence which was destroyed in the "sack of Lawrence" in 1856.<sup>42</sup> The company also negotiated for a riverboat with which to travel between Lawrence and Kansas City although the deal does not seem to have been ever completed. Here was a place where the ambitions of the company may have outstripped the actual funds available.

The available money was to come from the sale of stock. The price was fixed at twenty dollars a share, although Thayer favored a lower price of five or ten dollars a share as a means of attracting more small investors. As conceived by Thayer, the stock would pay a dividend when the object of setting up a stable, free society in Kansas was realized. This dividend would be the

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"Both these hotels, from a financial point of view, proved unprofitable adventures. The Free State hotel was disastrous. The only compensation was through the publicity that the outrage gave and the public sympathy awakened." So wrote Col. S. W. Eldridge, Recollections of Early Days in Kansas (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), p. 202. It is interesting to note that Eldridge rebuilt the hotel under the name of the "Eldridge House" and that the hotel currently bearing that name and standing on the same site is, at the time of the writing of this study, being closed because of financial difficulties.

result of the increase in value of lands and facilities held in Kansas by the company. Such items as house lots in Lawrence, a mill in Wabaunsee, and a hotel in Kansas City could be sold at a profit, Thayer felt, as a result of the increase in value of the general area as it increased in population and commerce. After a dividend had been paid, the company could reinvest the principal in another area where emigration could be successfully employed and the cycle of development started all over again.

Since the company was to be an agency for supplying transportation, no-one was to be refused the use of company services if he had the money. Furthermore, no-one was to be granted free passage except for those persons who served as the conductors for the various parties. Indeed many persons did travel with the company for the sake of economy or convenience rather than any altruistic motive. However, some local organizations did sponsor emigrants through donations and Amos A. Lawrence himself was charged by Thayer with supplying the fare to send John Brown in 1855.<sup>43</sup>

The company also adopted a non-violent posture. But the officers of it, taking action on their own, sent rifles to the emigrants in 1856. As professor Malin has so aptly noted, these "unofficial"

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Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, pp. 190-191.

acts cannot be divorced from the general policy of the company as neatly as the company would like.<sup>44</sup> The role of the company in provoking the conflict which occurred in Kansas in 1856 will be considered under the heading of "effects" in the final chapter of this study. Sufficient, at this time, will be notice that the company was the unofficial basis for the supplying of weapons and the organization of militia among the free-state settlers of Kansas.

The original name of the company, "The Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company," was changed in February, 1855, to "The New England Emigrant Aid Company." At times the final word of the title was changed from "Company" to "Society." This was most likely to occur among those newspapermen, authors, or other persons who viewed the company as an agency for sustaining free-state ideology rather than a business. Officially it was always a "company." Malin has concurred with men like Thayer in viewing the company as "without a doubt a business corporation interested in attracting capital and making dividends."<sup>45</sup> The basis of the company appeal lay in the Northern alarm at the South and its

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<sup>44</sup> James C. Malin, "The Pro-Slavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. X (December, 1923), p. 290.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

"peculiar institution," for, as Malin concluded, "It was a scheme for capitalizing the antislavery proclivities of the northern people at \$5,000,000."<sup>46</sup>

In review, the company may be seen as a rather broad reaction to the general dissatisfaction with the "Slave Power" and the Kansas-Nebraska Bill which seemed to support the extension of that power. Within the scope of the company were many facets and interpretations of the company's role. It was to be a method of transporting free men and voters to the territory. It would allow the investment of money and the reaping of profit from the process. Thayer felt that he had converted the repeal of the Missouri Compromise to the advantage of the free states. In a letter to Franklin P. Rice he wrote: "I said hundreds of times in my speeches while raising Kansas Colonies in 1854, 55 and 56 that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise had made it possible to make Kansas a free state. Had that Compromise not been repealed Kansas would inevitably have been settled by proslavery men and would have become a slave state."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>  
Eli Thayer to Franklin P. Rice, January 23, 1890, Eli Thayer Papers.

For the men of prominence and money who rallied behind Lawrence the chance to use their funds in a manner designed to express their feelings about the extension of slavery may have been more important than the actual promise of profits. The structure of the company had the advantages of being a legal business organization. The ideological appeal of such an approach, whether it paid profits or not, will be considered in the next two chapters.

## Chapter IV

### THE ADAPTA TION OF ESTABLISHED IDEOLOGY

The agitation which had swept New England during the early months of 1854 did not fade away with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Such organizations as the Friends of Freedom in Boston kept the issue of "Slave Power" domination prominent by sponsoring lectures upon the subject. Rallies in protest of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill continued through the summer of 1854. New England business interests often supported these activities as happened when the Cocheco Railroad and the steamboats on Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire offered half-price rates to those interested in attending the "People's Mass Meeting at Wolfborough."<sup>1</sup>

Politically a "fusion" of anti-slavery parties, described by Moses Kimball as a method of "standing firmly upon an Anti-Slavery and, what is the same thing, an Anti-Administration platform,"<sup>2</sup> gained strength. In Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont the excitement over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was the controlling factor

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<sup>1</sup> The Exeter News-Letter, Exeter, New Hampshire, August 28, 1854, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Moses Kimball to George Bliss, September 17, 1855, Bliss Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

in elections during the late summer and fall. The report of the Vermont elections, for instance, named the successful candidates according to the issue: "In the election in Vermont, last week, for State officers and Members of Congress, the Anti-Nebraska ticket was triumphantly elected."<sup>3</sup> Northern politics were beginning to reflect the polarized purpose that would provide a basis for such organizations as the Emigrant Aid Company.

The broad block of feelings that emerged during the summer following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill included beliefs and motives that would be valuable to such men as Eli Thayer in their campaigns for organized emigration. Such other phenomena as "Know-Nothingism" and the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin during the years just prior to 1854 had suggested some of the themes that were to become important in the ideological placement of the company.

An ideology, according to Hans Toch, is dependent upon "underlying themes" or "certain beliefs central to the premises of a movement."<sup>4</sup> These are found in the perceptions of the advocates of a movement and do not require a rational basis for their placement,

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<sup>3</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, September 13, 1854, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 23.

for, as Toch observed, "The ultimate test of how central a belief is, is not its position in the logical structure or its objective importance, but the way it is perceived by the follower."<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, two different perceptions will be explored. The first will be Northern perception of the Southern "Slave Power" and the second Northern perception of itself. At times these two lines of perception overlap or adopt a cause and effect relationship. The speech by Thaddeus Stevens, cited in Chapter one, presented a case in which this cause and effect relationship was demonstrated with the South represented as organized manipulator, the North as willing dupe.<sup>6</sup> These were to be dominant themes in the propaganda of the company speakers and writers.

### The Opponent

"Slave Power," to the Northern mind, was a conspiratorial political power block built around the slave holding Southern aristocracy. Toch's observation that an ideology based upon the perception of conspiracy can provide "a concrete target for tensions"

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Morris, Masterpieces of Eloquence, pp. 129-131.

and at the same time "simplify the believer's system of reasoning and his conception of social causation" is well focused upon the strength of this theme. It made enemies easy to identify and statements such as this one easy to assimilate:

The ultra pro-slavery propagandists of the South uniformly resent all opposition to their projects as a personal affront. They no more recognize the right of a Northern man to hold and express opinions on slavery different from theirs, than they do the right of a slave on their plantations to resist their commands. They are intolerant, domineering and insolent, not occasionally nor by accident, ---but habitually and on principle. It is their way of advancing their sentiments and pushing their projects. It is simply bringing the habits of the plantation into the Senate Chamber.<sup>7</sup>

The North, meanwhile, was presented as weak, divided, and prone to select leadership which would not stand up to the unified South. The New London, Connecticut, Weekly Chronicle presented an image of the North as "distracted in council, and divided in sentiment and feeling on measures of policy."<sup>8</sup> Northerners were vulnerable because "they do not act with the unanimity which always obtains at the South upon any sectional question; they are misled by the wily arts and specious pretenses of politicians."<sup>9</sup> Professor

<sup>7</sup> New York Daily Times, March 6, 1854, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> The New-London Weekly Chronicle, March 2, 1854, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Thatcher of Yale, in a speech at the Anti-Nebraska Rally in New Haven during March of 1854, explored the possible reasons for the lack of loyalty on the part of the Northern politicians. His argument, as did the New York Times article previously cited, equated the Northern politician to a slave:

Why is it that Northern men are so divided and so false and recreant to their own constituents? They know that whether they go for the north or not, they can get northern votes, ---but if they don't go for southern slavery, they will be sure not to get southern support. They know that when southerners buy men, whether white politicians or negro servants, they pay their price according to agreement. They know that thirty pieces of silver will be counted out and paid over.<sup>10</sup>

It is quite possible that the appeal to conspiracy beliefs which seemed so strong in the North was actually the result of personal feelings of inadequacy or guilt by many Northerners. Toch supplied the key to such a possibility when he wrote "Conspiracy beliefs respond to a real need only for persons who cannot preserve their self-esteem unless they conceive of themselves as victims of a plot."<sup>11</sup> Certainly self-abasement is clear in Stevens' condemnation of the "poor, timid, driveling North. . .the victim of low ambition."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Anti-Nebraska Rally, March 8 and 10, 1854, New Haven, Connecticut.

<sup>11</sup> Toch, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Morris, p. 131.

In adapting this portion of the existing ideology the Emigrant Aid Company presented itself as an organized body, operating within the law, to counteract the conspiracy of slave-holder and Yankee turn-coat politician. It proposed to meet an organized force with organized opposition. It capitalized on the "free-state" disposition of the North as evidenced in the elections of 1854.

The primary tool of the "Slave Power" was seen as the creation of "compromises." The very word "compromise" picked up unpleasant connotations when, with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the way was paved for the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. "I look on that compromise as a contract," said Congressman Meacham of Vermont of the Missouri Compromise, "as a thing done for a consideration, and that the parties to that contract are bound to honor and execute it in good faith."<sup>13</sup> The violation of this faith made the compromise measures appear to have been a ploy.

William Lloyd Garrison's phrase "No compromise with slavery" echoed the antagonism toward compromises.<sup>14</sup> So did

<sup>13</sup> Charles Robinson, The Kansas Conflict (Lawrence, Kansas: Journal Publishing Company, 1898), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Ernest J. Wrage and Barnet Bakerville, American Forum (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 169.

Goodrich in Congress when he declared, "Sir, it is high time to be done with them /compromises/, if they are to be considered as binding in honor and good faith, no longer than that section of the country, which has received and appropriated its half of the consideration, finds it for its interest to come in and take the other half."<sup>15</sup>

The anger of the North, which spread to include those Northern politicians who like Daniel Webster had supported compromise measures, was crystallized by Goodrich in his charge that "the South regard compromises as mere temporary expedients to spread slavery further and wider over the Territories of the Union, and to strengthen its power in the Government, to be set aside when they can no longer be used for this purpose, or have become practically operative to defeat it."<sup>16</sup>

The Emigrant Aid Company proposed to take advantage of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and turn the tables on the South. It cast Massachusetts in the role of leader in this contest which was designed to rally men from all the free states. An unidentified author noted: "A standard was planted and it was the

<sup>15</sup> Speech of Hon. John Z. Goodrich, of Mass. delivered in the House of Representatives, May 20, 1854 (Washington: Congressional Globe Office, 1854), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

standard of the old Bay State. The great northwest tied to Massachusetts by a thousand dear associations needed no better banner.<sup>17</sup> The propaganda value of the involvement of Northern monied interests was used in this crusade. The challenge to the "conspiracy" in the South was secondary to the rallying value of this funding:

Meanwhile the press had everywhere given tidings than /sic/ an Emigrant Company with a capital of five million dollars had been incorporated in Massachusetts. The announcement aroused the anger of the southern conspirators: but, what was much more to the purpose, it quickened the zeal of all the northwest states. The great majority of the people of those states were determined that slavery should not exist in Kansas or Nebraska. The people of the west are "always hungering for the horizon" as Mr. Hoar says. To their hunger was now added the passionate determination to beat the south in a legitimate conflict. The announcement that five million dollars was to be spent in giving order to the emigration of freemen into Kansas, quickened the zeal for emigration of thousands upon thousands of men & women.<sup>18</sup>

In a speech of June of 1854, Amos Lawrence is reported to have echoed this idea of Massachusetts leadership by projecting that when the "advance guard of New England men" leave for Kansas "they will be joined on their route, through New York, Ohio, and other States, by numbers of enterprising young farmers and mechanics,

<sup>17</sup> "Unidentified History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," Emigrant Aid Company Papers, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

eager to subdue the wilderness, and make homes for themselves and their families."<sup>19</sup>

One paradox which confronted the propagandists of the company in the presentation of the "Slave Power" was the view of the Southerner as a man of arms, and a willing killer. In the killing of Elijah Lovejoy, in 1837, the prototype of the "Missouri Ruffian" was born. He represented the worst habits attributed to the Southern aristocrat embodied in a man who was often illiterate and generally brutal. Easterners did not generally view the frontiersman as a high species of humanity. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale and uncle of Theodore Dwight who was active in the campaign to send settlers to Kansas, wrote of the image of the frontiersman in an article entitled "The Menace of the West": "All countries contain restless inhabitants. . . who think that every change from good order and established society will be beneficial to themselves, who have nothing to lose and therefore expect to be gainers by every scramble, and who, of course, spend life in disturbing others with the hope of gaining something for themselves."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Manuscript, Lawrence Papers.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Crowe, ed., A Documentary History of American Thought and Society (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965), pp. 80-81.

Add to this the "Slave Power" tradition of "chivalry" described by J. C. Furnas as an offspring of the novels of Sir Walter Scott with peculiar appeal to the mind of the "Southrons" which resulted in a tradition of men-at-arms similar to knighthood.<sup>21</sup> The result of this combination yielded a fine target for the Northern propagandists. Unfortunately, for the organizers of emigration, it also gave promise of a hostile reception for the New England farmer or tradesman seeking a new home in the "Eden of the West."

This was particularly aggravated by the non-violent posture of the company. Charles Robinson, the primary agent of the company in Kansas, remarked on this difference of attitude between North and South. He attributed it to the need of the slave-holders for a physical means to hold persons in bondage. Many of the New England settlers, on the other hand, had no tradition of arms and some "had even come to look upon war as a relic of barbarism."<sup>22</sup> Little wonder that various propaganda publications, published or circulated by the Emigrant Aid Company, stressed violence. The title page of one will give an idea of the phrasing of such reports:

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<sup>21</sup> Furnas, The Americans, pp. 409-410.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Robinson, The Kansas Conflict, p. 26.

The Reign of Terror in Kanzas: As Encouraged  
by President Pierce, and Carried Out by the  
Southern Slave Power:

by Which

Men Have Been Murdered and Scalped!  
Women Dragged from their Homes and Violated!  
Printing Officers and Private Houses Burned!  
Ministers of the Gospel tarred and feathered!  
Citizens robbed and Driven from their Homes!

AND OTHER ENORMITIES INFILCTED ON THE  
FREE SETTLERS BY BORDER RUFFIANS<sup>23</sup>

The thirty-four pages of sordid incidents which followed were reported to have been "related by eye witnesses of the events."

The title page just cited is a fine "catch-all" of Northern ideology. Of particular note are the presence of the "Slave Power" in conjunction with the Northern politician (President Pierce of New Hampshire), the attack on a printing office (an echo of the killing of Lovejoy in 1837), the involvement of clergy (a primary line of support for the Emigrant Aid Company), and the spelling of Kanzas. The use of the letter "Z" was the invention of Edward E. Hale, chief propagandist of the Emigrant Aid Company. For the first year of the crusade, Hale fought a loosing battle to change the spelling of the name of the state to conform better with the pronunciation.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The Reign of Terror in Kanzas (Boston: Charles W. Briggs, 1856).

<sup>24</sup> Edward E. Hale, Jr., The Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917), p. 260.

To conclude that Hale compiled the Reign of Terror is unfounded, but it seems likely, from this spelling, that whoever did was influenced quite strongly by Hale's argument for the "Z."

### Self evaluation

The second ideological theme utilized by the company was aligned to the Northern perception of itself. More particularly it centered upon New England. In his oration before the New England Society of New York in 1855, Oliver Wendell Holmes divided the country into three distinct areas, the East, the South, and the West, along "natural lines of cleavage, like the invisible seams which run through the different planes of a crystal." These, Holmes concluded, involve "geographic unity, and similar modes of life, and congenial beliefs, and long companionship in trial and prosperity, and

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recollections belonging to a common descent." All these combined to make New Englanders view their own culture as separate and unique, "a natural family, a subnationality, self-formed in the heart of the larger community to which it belongs."<sup>26</sup> After a lengthy description of the natural thrift, love of law, and independent spirit

<sup>25</sup> Cephas Brainerd and Eveline Brainerd, eds., The New England Society Orations, Vol. II (New York: The Century Co., 1901), pp. 272-273.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

of the New Englander Holmes affixed the common thread of ancestry in the claim of descent "from the Pilgrims of Plymouth." The "Song of the Kansas Emigrant," written by John Greenleaf Whittier for the Emigrant Aid Company (and sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" at various railroad stations departures, beginning with the departure of the second party to Lawrence on August 29, 1854) reflected this reverence for ancestry:

We cross the prairies as of old  
The Pilgrims crossed the sea,  
To make the West, as they the East,  
The homestead of the free.<sup>27</sup>

New Englanders also had a deep faith in the capital-labor business system of the Northeast. The system was attacked, particularly by the South, for exploiting the laborer but was defended in the Northeast as efficient. Since, in the spirit of Adam Smith, a great deal of faith was placed in the ability of free competition to winnow out the weak and unfit, this more efficient system was presented as the best way of developing the West. The slave based system of economy was represented in various speeches and publications as "stolid, dull," and inefficient. The Dover, New

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<sup>27</sup> "Song of the Kansas Emigrant" (Card), American Antiquarian Society Archives, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Hampshire, Morning Star, in reporting the efforts of the Emigrant Aid Company, praised the company as an agency by which Kansas, and "all the region around it will be rescued from the pestilential influence of that system of oppression which has already nearly desolated the fairest portion of our present States."<sup>28</sup> From this belief in the superiority of the Northern system was to come proposals by some of the more extreme of the Emigrant Aid speakers that, with Kansas safely free, the company could expand its operations into such states as Virginia and even Georgia with the purpose of undermining the slave system and gaining economic and political control of the South. Elihu Burritt, Worcester's "learned blacksmith," even devised an elaborate plan for moving foreign emigrants into Georgia and setting the wheels of "free labor" into motion.<sup>29</sup> Such schemes were a logical extension of the Northern belief in the superiority of their economic system but never received serious consideration by the controlling interests of the Emigrant Aid Company.

The final aspect of ideology which arose in the North and contributed to the Kansas crusade is found in the perception of

<sup>28</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II; p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Letters from Elihu Burritt to Lawrence labeled by Lawrence "schemes," Lawrence Papers.

a moral rebirth. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was good, argued Moses Kimball at one Emigrant Aid Company rally in September of 1854:

He /Kimball/ said he believed in fore-ordination, and that this passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was fore-ordained by God for good results. It was a blessed thing for it woke up the north, and set the people of the country to work in the right way, and earnestly to accomplish the great and good ends of spreading freedom and exterminating slavery.--- It had learned us no more to send doughfaces to Congress, and it had given birth to this noble idea of using the political-moral instrument of emigration, not only to overthrow what our doughfaces had proposed, and secure all the territories of the nation to liberty, but, beyond that, to invade the very slave states themselves, and by peopling their unoccupied land with freemen and cultivating thereby free labor, drive slavery off gradually into the very gulf of Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

Thus the campaign was represented as Divinely inspired. This presented a rallying point that was to be well used by the clergy, was consistent with the non-violent posture of the company and the North, and allowed ministers to make such statements as "The hand of the Lord is in this free emigration. He will direct it as clearly as he did an emigration from Egypt to Palestine."<sup>31</sup>

Further signs of a Divine plan were cited in the following editorial which focused clearly upon the settlement of Kansas:

<sup>30</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 124.

<sup>31</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, August 16, 1854, p. 1.

Providence seems to favor the plan of emigration to Kansas, as various railroads from the East lead to Chicago, and now one is completed from Chicago to Alton, near St. Louis, and the Missouri river, thence by steamboat west to Kansas. Thus is the way ready for emigration to Kansas before it is to Nebraska. Let the surplus population in the Eastern cities make a rush to settle Kansas, and that in communities, so that schools and meetings may be enjoyed.<sup>32</sup>

The adoption of such a set of morally "right" and apparently "fore-ordained" beliefs was not necessarily the result of wide spread and deep seated religious convictions by the New England constituency of the Emigrant Aid Company. It was the location of a viable set of beliefs from an acceptable source. In regard to this type of "conversion" Toch has noted: "For a person who is 'shopping' for beliefs, the closest thing to conversion is the discovery of an attractive item on the ideological counter. It is the experience of considering an appealing set of beliefs, and the

<sup>33</sup> decision to adopt it." Thus the Emigrant Aid Company could retain a non-sectarian stance while allowing those clergy and followers who wished to make their stand a moral one the option to do so. For those who did not see the issue as a religious or moral one Reverend Edward Everett Hale gave assurance that the company

<sup>32</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, September 13, 1854, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Toch, p. 122.

was not seeking to make Kansas a Unitarian stronghold.<sup>34</sup>

It was from this variety of themes that the Emigrant Aid Company was able to select the appeals which it used in its rallies and propaganda. The approach was rather in the nature of a "cafeteria" with the potential constituent allowed to select from among a wide variety of appeals. At times a problem of contradiction occurred. One example already mentioned was the appeal for settlement and the founding of homes on the basis of a dangerous and destructive enemy in the area. Two other contradictions also were to play roles in the company's message. The first was the question of "nativism" which, because emigrants were often known to be Roman Catholic, was often phrased as a question of "popery." After attending a rally at which Eli Thayer was a principal speaker one newspaper editor (writing in a Baptist newspaper) remarked: "We have as many fears from the influence of popery as slavery in our country, we cannot forbear to wish and hope that the territory and future State of Kansas will not be given to the pope to keep it out of the hands of slaveholders."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Undated memorandum from Hale, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>35</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, November 1, 1854, p. 1.

This was all part of a running battle that had been under way for some time. The "Know-Nothing Party," with its emphasis on nativism, was but one manifestation of this ideology.<sup>36</sup> In a sermon which he had preached two years before the Kansas issue had been created, Edward E. Hale advocated the use of the territories of the west as a haven for the European immigrant. In doing so he curtailed the argument of popery with the assertion that the Roman Catholic Church would be unable to maintain a hold on its members in such an underdeveloped area. "Why, poor Pius the Ninth, the Pope himself, is as much afraid of you. . . .," argued Hale in this sermon, "for he knows. . . .that, of every hundred men now living who have left Catholic provinces in Europe within ten years past for America, you can only find fifty in his congregations, now they are here. The other fifty are, ---God knows where; but the Pope does not."<sup>37</sup>

Other speakers handled the question of nativism differently. Amos Lawrence, in the script of a speech which he "concluded not to speak," wrote in July of 1854 that "so far as is known to the

<sup>36</sup> See J. C. Furnas, The Americans, pp. 523-528, for a detailed examination of the relationship between Know-Nothingism and anti-popery.

<sup>37</sup> Christian Duty to Emigrants: A Sermon delivered before The Boston Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, May 9, 1852, by Edward E. Hale (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1852), pp. 20-21.

Trustees, none but Americans have gone out from here, thus far.

Neither is it the intention to encourage foreign emigration in those

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territories at present." Lawrence did foresee the possibility of

introducing emigration from abroad "after the basis of a society has

been formed and New England Institutions established" but suggested

that even then it should be limited to emigrants of "the right stamp."<sup>39</sup>

Lawrence's position changed only slightly in the speech which he did

make at Lawrence, Massachusetts, during October of 1854: "When

the plan was first devised of making Kansas and Nebraska free states

by emigration from New England it was supposed that none but the

self-sacrificing and ardent lovers of freedom would be induced to go

out as the first settlers. Therefore it was decided to offer inducements

<sup>40</sup> to foreign emigrants, if our own people held back." This type of

inducement would not be necessary, Lawrence concluded, for the

lands of Kansas were found to be so promising that there was no

need or time for the importing of settlers.

Eli Thayer, on the other hand, was a strong advocate of  
the use of foreign emigrants. His early speeches and written

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

descriptions of the proposed company made this very clear, although Lawrence seemed to ignore them in his statements. Thayer viewed the hundreds of thousands of foreign emigrants arriving yearly as a pool of prospective emigrants ready to be tapped at any time. The newspaper report of a speech by Thayer in November of 1854 summarized his argument as follows: "One of the principal objects of the association was to promote a better class of emigration from the countries of northern Europe, for the purpose of constituting free States; for the men of those countries were cordial haters of slavery, and could be entrusted with the care of its subjection and repulsion."<sup>41</sup> Thayer's selection of the countries of northern Europe was consistent with his belief in the inherent superiority of the Saxon race.<sup>42</sup>

The company, in its policies, was open to foreign emigration. The Trustees were in contact with "Mr. Eleazer Jones of the Cambrian Emigration Office, Liverpool, England" and received correspondence from him "respecting including a large number of

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<sup>41</sup> The Daily Patriot, November 18, 1854, see Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II, p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> This theme will be developed in detail when Thayer's racial views are considered under the heading "A View of African Slavery."

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persons to emigrate from Wales and settle in Kanzas." They also authorized the publication of the brochure "The Plans and Purposes of the Emigrant Aid Company" in a German translation. The minutes of the Trustees meeting of September 30, 1854, noted the following correspondence: "A Letter from John Douglas & Co. dated Emigration and General Shipping Offices, Glasgow, Sept. 13th, announcing their intention to establish agencies in some of the principal cities of Europe for the sale of Emigration Tickets, and for the aiding, forwarding, and inducing intelligent and industrious men to settle in Nebraska and Kanzas."<sup>44</sup>

Nativism did not play a major part in the company propaganda and a rather ambiguous position was maintained. It did at times give rise to embarrassing questions, particularly from those who linked it with the popery fears. The answers to these questions seem to have been adapted to the particular audience although Thayer maintained a generally straightforward position in favor of the encouragement of European participants in the Kansas crusade.

A second contradiction occurred in the handling of the issue of abolitionism. In a particular sense this issue also dealt

<sup>43</sup> Minutes of the Trustees seventh meeting, September 16, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>44</sup> Minutes of the Trustees ninth meeting, September 30, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

with the question of nativism, since "Africans" were involved. The company represented itself as strictly non-abolitionist, but adapted many of its appeals from the work of the abolitionist persuaders. This caused an ideological realignment and redefinition which will be the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter V

### AN ALTERNATIVE TO ABOLITIONISM

Although Abolitionists had been tarred and feathered in the streets of Boston, their message had been heard. The stereotypes which they had encouraged, amplified by such phenomena as Uncle Tom's Cabin, had made the Kansas-Nebraska Bill seem all the more pernicious to the Northern mind.

Still, the Abolitionist was dangerous. He advocated disunion, disrespect for law, and even rights for the liberated black man. His disunionist tendencies were particularly unfortunate in the minds of many Northerners. Eli Thayer questioned the workability of such an approach to the slavery question: "Garrison's method of casting out a devil by splitting the patient in two lengthwise they [Northerners] did not approve, for two reasons: 1st. Because the patient would die; 2nd. Because the devil would live."<sup>1</sup>

It was upon the accumulation of emotional appeal, stereotypes, and arguments that the Abolitionists had been cultivating for several decades that the Emigrant Aid Company found the emotional undercurrent for its propaganda. One distinction was clearly

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<sup>1</sup> Eli Thayer, The Kansas Crusade (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1889), p. 140.

drawn however. The company operated within the law and the union. Because it operated within the law, it sought to control the spread of slavery, not to eliminate the institution where it legally existed. Amos A. Lawrence, in a letter to Charles D. Robinson of Green Bay, Wisconsin, made the distinction clear: "Here we define an 'Abolitionist' to be one who will sanction the interference with slavery, in the slave states, by inhabitants of the free states. Considering it a sin and a crime to hold slaves, all men who are guilty of it are to be treated as moral delinquents: and they hold that no law or constitution can bind them to disobey this 'Higher Law' of humanity . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Both Lawrence and William Lloyd Garrison agreed, in separate writings, that few, if any, of the Kansas emigrants who traveled to Kansas with the Emigrant Aid Company were Abolitionists. In fact, the scheme of the company, as Lawrence wrote in the letter previously cited, was "denounced by the 'Abolitionist' newspaper as visionary, or something worse."

The company speakers offered the defense that the concrete actions of the company were far more productive than the impassioned

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<sup>2</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Charles D. Robinson, August 18, 1855, Lawrence Letters.

harangues of the Abolitionists. Thayer attacked the Abolitionist approach some years later as follows:

With all their keenness of vision, the Abolitionists never saw anything as it was. With all their eloquence they never advocated any cause to a successful issue. With all their prophetic power and practice they never predicted any event which came to pass. With all their love of freedom, they constantly increased the burdens of their slaves. Demanding immediate emancipation, they strove to retard the overthrow of slavery. Contending for the dissolution of the Union as the only means of destroying Slavery, they saw Slavery destroyed not only without their aid, but against their protest, while the Union was preserved and made permanent and harmonious. Incessantly denouncing the clergy and churches of the Northern States as the upholders of Slavery, they lived to see them among the foremost leaders in its destruction by the methods of the Emigrant Aid Company,<sup>3</sup> which the Abolitionists hated, ridiculed and opposed.

During the 1850's the Abolitionists, because of their extreme views, often found it difficult to secure a hearing. An 1857 editorial in the Boston Daily Evening Traveller characterized the hard core Garrisonians as "strong-minded women, and the professional humanitarians who earn their daily bread by injuring the noble cause they propose to serve."<sup>4</sup> In his biography of Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas Knox remarked that in the 1850's "So bitter was the hate for the Abolitionists, that at one time it was impossible to obtain a hall

<sup>3</sup> Eli Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Company (Worcester, Massachusetts: Franklin P. Rice, Publisher, 1887), pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Eli Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 152.

in New York or Brooklyn wherein Wendell Phillips might speak."<sup>5</sup>

It was as a result of the need for speaking out against the "Slave Power" that an agency more moderate in its approach found a ready audience which could not be served by the more militant Abolitionists. The Emigrant Aid Company exploited this audience need very well. The company persuasion was couched in a calm, "rational" tone, well designed to contrast with the Garrisonians.

Still the moral issue remained implicit in the campaign of the Emigrant Aid Company. The Congregational Journal of November 23, 1854, in reporting a rally at which Eli Thayer was the principle speaker, wrote: "This movement we regard as one of the noblest of the age. Its practicality is at once obvious to every man, whatever may be his political sentiments and bias. It has a strange blending of the present humane and benevolent intention with the remote political end; yet the alliance is harmonious, beautiful and inspiring."<sup>6</sup>

Some Emigrant Aid Company speakers represented the Abolitionists as merely misinformed zealots, others as deliberately

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Knox, Life and Work of Henry Ward Beecher (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1887), p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II, p. 20.

dangerous. Among those who were willing to give some credit to the Abolitionists was Alexander Twining of New Haven who wrote, in May of 1854, of the American Anti-Slavery Society: "It should, doubtless, be admitted, in relation to the great truths and measures put forth by this moral organization, however weakened and encumbered by their frequently untenable forms, that they point and tend to a great final consummation, where their effects will be realized, in unison with the appeals to God made from time immemorial by the oppressed."<sup>7</sup> As to the effects of this society in 1854, Twining sounded much like Thayer did some years later in reference to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill: "Still, it is evident from this brief review of the facts, that this organization, however broad its plan, has supplied nothing adequate, in its results so far, to meet the scope of our enquiry."<sup>8</sup>

Thayer was much less kind to the Abolitionists and even cast them into a role as co-conspirator (although perhaps unwittingly) with the "Slave Power." His memoranda of corrections for an unspecified publication by Hale made this point clear:

This Garrison & Phillips antislavery was only ideal and sentimental. It did nothing but harm. It was Calhoun's most important agency in uniting the Southern states for the defense

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Twining, "The Nebraska Bill, and It's Results," New Englander (May, 1854), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

and retension [sic] of slavery. It stopped the forming of free states in the South & drove all antislavery men from that section. From the Nat. Turner massacre [sic] to the death of Lovejoy it was the direct cause of every proslavery mob and proslavery outrage in the country. In 1854 it had succeeded in making slavery supreme in control of the government, with the assurance also that this control would be perpetuated.<sup>9</sup>

The Emigrant Aid Company, according to Thayer, was actually a remedy to the problems brought about by this misplaced idealism. He made the role clear by continuing:

At this most critical period in our history the plan of organized emigration developed. This plan had no idealism & no sentimentalism. It was purely business antislavery. (Underlining mine.)<sup>10</sup>

Thayer even went to the point of suggesting that the Abolitionists wanted Kansas to enter the Union as a slave state because of the pressures that such an entry would bring on the stability of the Union.<sup>11</sup> It was a means to the dissolution of the Union, a goal which the Abolitionists had espoused and one, which, as has been demonstrated, was important to the Emigrant Aid Company propagandists.

The label of "Abolitionist" was one which the more conservative patrons of the Emigrant Aid Company wished to avoid.

<sup>9</sup> Undated manuscript, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See Thayer's manuscript of criticism of E. E. Hale's State of Massachusetts in Eli Thayer Papers, also incidental comments in various letters, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

The name had received too much unfavorable usage. Now the Southern interests applied it to the very people who felt that they had found the logical alternative to Abolitionism. To the Southern mind, any person who opposed slavery or its extension was an Abolitionist. This very fact may have discouraged some members of the Emigrant Aid Company. John Carter Brown, the President of the Emigrant Aid Company, in 1854, mentioned such a label with alarm in his letters to Amos A. Lawrence.

Such alarm did not persist, however. By 1856 the company was secure enough to tolerate the label and, in fact, some members even began to adopt it with some redefinition. A letter from John Carter Brown illustrated this redefinition:

Of the term "abolitionist" I am not ashamed tho I do not belong to the present party calling themselves by that name. I am rather what is called a free-soiler--opposed to slavery extension and the assumptions and aggressions of the slave power, which has now got complete possession of the Federal Gov't. and lords it over the No. . . .

Washington was an Abolitionist in Word and Deed--so was Jefferson and Franklin and little did they think that "the Nigger Interest" would soon ride roughshod over all the States. (Underlining Brown's.)<sup>12</sup>

This distinction between opposition to the "Slave Power" and Abolitionism was quite clear in the popular mind. This can be

<sup>12</sup>

Letter from John Carter Brown to Amos A. Lawrence, May 12, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

seen by the newspaper articles of the times which clearly make the distinction. The New-London Weekly Chronicle, for instance, made the distinction clear, while also mentioning the use of the term "Abolitionist" as a method of labeling. It is also interesting to note the interlinking of this with other objects of the Northern ideology:

"They [the local citizenry] will hardly be deterred from expressing the legitimate feeling of freedom in regard to Negro Slavery, by blackguard taunts of 'Abolitionism' put forth by starveling itinerants, preaching Piercism for (poor) pay and (very poor) provant. The citizens of New London are not Abolitionists (some of them will hardly be charged with it), but they are opposed to permitting the republic to become overpowered and out-voted by an 'oligarchy of slave holders,' as it soon will be. . ." <sup>13</sup> The article, which preceeded by three months the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, caught very well the public attitudes toward Abolitionism and toward slave power. The use of these attitudes in the organization of emigration as a response to the bill was the particular province of the Emigrant Aid Company.

Since the placement of the company in relationship to Abolitionism is basic to an understanding of the ideology it advanced,

<sup>13</sup> The New-London Weekly Chronicle, New London, Connecticut, March 2, 1854, p. 1.

a review is in order. The basic argument will be made that the New England Emigrant Aid Company represented a viable alternative to abolitionism in a period of crisis which demanded response, or as Bitzer termed it, an "exigence."

Whereas Abolitionism was unpatriotic and disunionist, the company claimed to be in the best interests of the Union. Certainly this would have broad appeal to the conservative elements within New England. Whereas Abolitionism was, whether accidentally or deliberately, a part of the conspiracy against the free states the company functioned to oppose the conspiracy using the very tool devised by that conspiracy, popular sovereignty. The irony of "turning the tables" may have added to the appeal of this approach. Whereas the Abolitionists were "sentimental" or "idealistic" the company was practical and "businesslike." The company, unlike the Abolitionists, presented a clear-cut program. Furthermore it was backed by the New England business community. The propaganda value of this alliance had two distinct facets. It was a rallying point for those people who placed faith in the Northern business community and the judgment of such men as Lawrence and at the same time confronted those groups who favored the extension of slavery into Kansas with an organized and funded counterforce.

To maintain the contrast to Abolitionism, the speakers of the New England Emigrant Aid Company used an information-like

approach in most of their public appearances. Thayer's "broad calm brow" has been considered in an earlier chapter. Charles Branscomb, one of the least effective of the company speakers, was faulted primarily for his over-emotional approach which contrasted too strongly with the calm, rational image being cultivated by the company. He appeared with Thayer at one rally where this distinction brought the following comment in the press:

The first speaker was Mr. Branscomb of Holyoke, Mass., an agent of the Emigrant Aid Company. He commenced his address by a somewhat intemperate arraignment of the motives of Messrs. Douglas, Cass, Badger, Toucey, Broadhead and others in urging the Kansas-Nebraska bill to its passage--- characterizing them as selfish beyond all precedent---charging that these men had earned the indelible scorn of a public abhorrence---that they had the mark of Cain on their foreheads--- that they deserved to be driven from public life . . . .

There was a sophomoric eloquence about Mr. Branscomb's opening passages, and a stilted description of poetry intermixed, which made his arguments in favor of the spread of slavery being the grand object of the Nebraska bill, and its introduction into Kansas the special one, very amusing, very silly and very effete.<sup>14</sup>

After exploring some of Branscomb's statements, the reporter advised: "If the Society has a wish to extend its efficiency, it should instruct Mr. Branscomb to be a little more guarded in his notions of consistency."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Article marked: The Daily Patriot, November 18, 1854, Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

By comparison, Thayer's speech at the same rally was more in keeping with the approach typical of the company. Instead of an attack on some adversary, Thayer dealt with "the full history of the plans adopted by the Emigrant Aid Company, for the free settlement of the new territory."<sup>16</sup> Most of the speech was devoted to a description of the company with projections of the profit-making ability of the business facet of it. Only brief reference was given to the friends of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill who had been Branscomb's major target. In this regard Thayer used his rather caustic sarcasm and, in reference to the use of the "popular sovereignty" method by the Emigrant Aid Company, projected that "they [pro-Nebraska Bill men] would probably claim the credit for making Kansas a free state." However, he concluded, "Satan might as well claim to be the author of redemption on the ground that he was author of the fall."<sup>17</sup>

The reporter at another rally gave a picture of Eli Thayer on the platform which illustrated the distinct contrast between Thayer's style and the tirade of the less moderate Abolitionists:

Mr. Thayer is full of the subject, understands it thoroughly, looks at it practically, treats it commercially, and made one of the most convincing statements as to the great moral and political results of the carrying out of this idea of

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

organized emigration in behalf of freedom, that we have ever listened to upon any subject, practical or theoretical. Mr. Thayer is no orator, but we rarely listened to a more eloquent speech than his. It was the eloquence of earnestness exhibiting the truth on a great subject which he had thoroughly studied and completely comprehended.<sup>18</sup>

The final area of contrast between the Abolitionists and the Emigrant Aid Company was in their perception of the Negro slave, or "African" as he was more frequently called. The roots of this ideological split were to be found in such things as the "colonization" movement, decried by William Lloyd Garrison because it treated the institution of slavery as "a misfortune" and not "an individual crime," therefore making no "direct, pungent, earnest appeal to the consciences of men stealers."<sup>19</sup> The supporters of colonization schemes, noted Garrison, were clergy and "men of wealth and elevated station."<sup>20</sup>

In reducing slavery from an intense moral issue to a question of the general efficiency and desirability of slavery as a system, the Emigrant Aid Company took quite a different view of the black man from the Abolitionists.

<sup>18</sup> Article marked: Daily Republican, September 5, 1854, Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of his Life as Told by His Children, Vol. I (New-York: The Century Company, 1885), p. 292.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## A View of the African Slave

The most striking difference between the ideology of the Emigrant Aid Company speakers and that of the more extreme Abolitionists was the perception of the Negro. Such Abolitionists as William Lloyd Garrison viewed the whole problem of the Negro as a humanitarian one, and Garrison even wrote in his "Sonnet On Completing My Thirty-Fifth Year": "O! not for Afric's sons alone I plead, Or her descendants; but for all who sigh in servile chains,  
 whate'er their caste or creed."<sup>21</sup> The question of morality was the primary one to Garrison and his followers.

The Emigrant Aid Company, with faith that only systems fit to survive will do so, argued the question of the black man as primarily a practical one. Lawrence and other company leaders had long subscribed to the colonization method of removing the "alien" black population and returning them to their source. Many of the company speakers even adopted some of the South's "positive good" philosophy and suggested that blacks were being returned to Africa morally and educationally better than they were when they were enslaved and shipped to America. Eli Thayer, for instance, in a

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<sup>21</sup> William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children, Vol. II (New York: The Century Company, 1885), p. 433.

letter to Barton Wise, the editor of the Richmond Times described the tribal warfare of Africa and concluded: "In their free state in Africa they were more beasts than human. So slavery was a vast improvement on their African condition, whatever it was."<sup>22</sup>

Three factors are of importance in assessing the disposition of the Emigrant Aid Company's audiences upon the Negro question. First was the date of the company's major campaign, 1854-1856. This followed by two years the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin with its attendant emotional stir, reinforcement of attitudes about the inherent nature of the races, and its broad circulation.<sup>23</sup> Second was the background of the audience of the Old Northwest, a primary source of emigrants.<sup>24</sup> Third was the nature of the audience of the industrial east and its perception of the distinction between a slave and a free laborer. The persuasion which resulted drew upon feelings of Anglo-Saxon superiority and opposed the introduction of Negroes, free or slave, into Kansas Territory on the grounds of economic efficiency.

<sup>22</sup> Eli Thayer to Barton Wise, February 25, 1897, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>23</sup> J. C. Furnas, Goodbye to Uncle Tom (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1955), passim.

<sup>24</sup> James C. Malin, The Nebraska Question, 1852-1854 (Ann Arbor, Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1953), p. 393. Also see Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery.

In his analysis of "the myths pertaining to the American Negro," J. C. Furnas concluded: "With appalling generosity Mrs. Stowe stuffed Uncle Tom with sweeping statements about an 'African race' that can never have existed in comparison with an 'Anglo-Saxon race' that never did either."<sup>25</sup> The effect of such a comparison was to reduce, as Furnas has asserted, the issue to the level of "the SPCA rather than the Declaration of Independence."<sup>26</sup>

Within the book itself, the racial comparisons were common and often functioned as an aid to the development of probable actions on the part of characters. For instance, Mrs. Stowe explained Uncle Tom's admiration of a mansion in New Orleans: "The negro, it must be remembered, is an exotic of the most gorgeous and superb countries of the world, and he has deep in his heart a passion for all that is splendid, rich, and fanciful; a passion which, rudely indulged by an untrained taste, draws on them the ridicule of the colder and more correct white race."<sup>27</sup> The two poles of racial sophistication were described in terms of Eva and Topsy, two girls in Uncle Tom's Cabin:

<sup>25</sup> Furnas, p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 157.

There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child, with her golden hair, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow, and princelike movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet accute neighbor. They stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, ignorance, toil, and vice!<sup>28</sup>

The basis for the superiority of Anglo-Saxons was located in the vigor attributed to them and to their aggressive love of liberty. In Uncle Tom's Cabin, and in a later speech by Eli Thayer, this theme was dominant. Mrs. Stowe has one of her characters speak of slave uprisings in Haiti as follows:

There is a pretty fair infusion of Anglo-Saxon blood among our slaves now . . . There are plenty among them who have only enough of the African to give a sort of tropical warmth and fervor to our calculating firmness and foresight. If ever San Domingo hour /revolt/ comes, Anglo-Saxon blood will lead on the day. Sons of white fathers, with all our haughty feelings burning in their veins, will not always be bought and sold and traded. They will rise, and raise with them their mother's race.<sup>29</sup>

The parallel with Eli Thayer's manuscript is clear. A portion of the introduction and conclusion give the flavor:

The Latin races claim that their founders were nursed by a wolf. The Saxons have a higher origin. Their founder was nursed by a polar bear. Deep in the nature of this race is found that untamable ferocity, which fears nothing, but can endure everything . . . This sublime endurance, this proud defiance, this unvarying courage, all based on a sort of savage ferocity,

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

give assurances that the Saxons will make law and languages for the world. . . It /the Saxon spirit/ fills histories. It makes libraries. It remodels nations. It will govern the world.<sup>30</sup>

This speech of Thayer, somewhat out of character with his rationalistic approach in the sections quoted here, was built on a series of examples of famous men including Cromwell, Milton, and Wellington.

It appears to have been delivered after the Civil War.<sup>31</sup> The ideas and arguments in it were consonant with the 1850's, however, and provided a basis for some of the New England Emigrant Aid Company's claim that they would be able to populate Kansas with a people of vigor and ambition far superior to that of the "Africanized" South.

A second characteristic of the audience addressed by the company propagandists was the large mass of people residing in the Old Northwest territory. Their very heritage rendered many of them agreeable to a propaganda based upon claims of racial superiority. Malin has written: "In the free states, with few exceptions, the free negro did not exercise the civil rights of the free white man, and in states bordering the Ohio River on the north /the Old Northwest territory/ free negroes were not wanted. The original

<sup>30</sup> Undated manuscript, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>31</sup> In an unpublished biography of Eli Thayer, Franklin Rice dated this speech at 1886 but gave no reason for doing so. See manuscript by Franklin P. Rice, Life of Eli Thayer, American Antiquarian Society Archives, Worcester, Massachusetts.

institutions of those states had been formed by the small farmer element from the slave states who were predominantly antislavery

and antinegro."<sup>32</sup> The expression of these attitudes was made clear in various "Black Laws" enacted in these states. Illinois, for instance, enacted legislation in 1813 which required "justices of the peace to order every incoming free Negro or mulatto to leave

the territory."<sup>33</sup> The method of enforcing this law was the same as that so often portrayed by Abolitionist speakers in their descriptions of the abuses of the plantation, the whip: "Failure to comply with the order subjected the offender to a whipping of 39 lashes, repeated

every fifteen days until he left."<sup>34</sup> Ohio and Indiana also had enacted legislation to restrict the entry of free Negroes. In 1855 it was estimated that 83 percent of the population which had moved to Kansas came from the Old Northwest and the states of Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri.<sup>35</sup> If the New England Emigrant Aid Company intended to have an impact on the new territory and its institutions, its anti-

<sup>32</sup> James C. Malin, The Nebraska Question, 1852-1854, p. 393.

<sup>33</sup> Eugene H. Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery (Urbana, Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Furnas has described the use of flogging as a characteristic means of handling Negroes, not only as a plantation method, but as a general method of punishment. See Goodbye to Uncle Tom, p. 131, pp. 127-128.

<sup>35</sup> Berwanger, pp. 22-23.

slavery stance could not be a pro-black one.

The "free-state" oriented "Topeka Constitution," drafted at the end of 1855, was consistent with "Black Law" legislation in enfranchising "Every white male person, and every civilized male Indian who has adopted the habits of the white man."<sup>36</sup> Charles Robinson, the company's chief agent in Kansas, voted against the exclusion of Negroes. Stephen Douglas used this Kansas tendency toward Negro exclusion in his argument against Senator Seward of New York concerning the question of admitting Kansas under the "Topeka Constitution." Here Douglas used the Abolitionist arguments to attack the "free state" approach:

While the Senator from New York is portraying the beauties of negro freedom and equality, and demonstrating the propriety of sacrificing the political and constitutional rights of twenty millions of white people for the benefit of three millions of negroes, I would be glad if he would point out the advantages the negro will derive from the admission of Kansas with the Topeka constitution. That constitution provides that as long as Kansas shall be a State, as long as water runs and grass grows, no negro, free or slave, shall ever live under that constitution.<sup>37</sup>

Seward's reply was consistent with the stand also adopted by the Emigrant Aid Company: "He [Douglas] is wrong in his premises that I am desirous to admit Kansas for the benefit of the

<sup>36</sup> D. W. Wilder, The Annals of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: T. Dwight Thatcher, 1886), p. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Marion Mills Miller, editor, Great Debates in American History, Vol. IV (New York: Current Literature Publishing Company 1913), p. 332.

negro. It must be for the benefit of the white man."<sup>38</sup> In his letter to Barton Wise of Richmond, Eli Thayer adopted much the same stand:

My contest for the freedom of our country was not for any benefit that would come to the masses of negroes thereby, but it was for the highest interest of the white man. I saw that the Southern States were becoming Africanized by the protection of the negro which ownership secured. Negroes increased much more rapidly than the whites. The poor whites of the South were in a worse plight than the slaves. Slavery prevented any emigration, in the ordinary way, into the Slave States. So slavery, like protection and socialism, promotes the survival of the most unfit.<sup>39</sup>

### Slave Labor versus Free Labor

The industrial east had been developing a body of citizens who prided themselves on being freemen worth their hire. Some of this attitude came from the "cult of self improvement" mentioned earlier in this paper. Another source, which Boorstin has termed "the New England System of manufacturing," demanded men of "generalized intelligence, literacy, adaptability, and willingness to learn."<sup>40</sup> This system was to be the forerunner of the system in which men are adapted and trained to various jobs within the frame-

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>39</sup> Eli Thayer to Barton Wise, February 25, 1897, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans, The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 34.

work of mass production. Isolated skills were not as important as adaptability. The contrast between this system and a slave system was extreme, yet there was a unity between the free laborer and the slave brought about by the perception of a monied and powerful interest which controlled the destinies of each.<sup>41</sup> Defenders of slavery went so far as to argue that slavery was superior to free labor because the well-being of the slave was important to the slaveholder while the laborer could be easily replaced.<sup>42</sup> This presented a problem to the Emigrant Aid Company since it received much of its support from wealthy industrialists like Amos A. Lawrence.

An article reprinted in the Boston Advertiser during August of 1856 attempted to make the difference between the free laborer and the slave striking:

In the South the laboring class forms no great portion of the people; in the North it forms the great body of the people. In the South the laborers are slaves; in the North they govern. In the South labor is degraded and despised; in the North it is respectable and respected. African slavery therefore creates a difference between the North and South that reaches to the central cause of the working of society.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Eric L. McKittrick, ed., Slavery Defended: the Views of the Old South (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 45 and 171.

<sup>42</sup> Curti, The Growth of American Thought, p. 296.

<sup>43</sup> "Cecil," Kansas and the Constitution (Boston: Dambrell and Moore, 1856), p. 4.

It was a fertile field for propagandists for, as Craven has noted, "the only slaves known to the North were runaways or a fictitious one by the name of Uncle Tom." Very few Northern laboring men had traveled in the South.<sup>44</sup> Therefore the Emigrant Aid Company speakers could present the stereotype negro as one unwilling or unable to secure his own freedom, as the Anglo-Saxon would undoubtedly have done. This type of reticent and servile labor was actually a vague threat to the free laborer. The systems of free labor could not coexist with slave systems (see Thayer's letter to Wise quoted earlier in this chapter). The slave was generically a dangerous competitor in the labor market; to open Kansas to slavery would be to close it to free labor.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Avery O. Craven, Civil War in the Making (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), p. 112.

<sup>45</sup> Furnas in The Americans, A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914 (1969) has made similar observations and even linked "the Northern white lower orders . . . with the Southern poor white in categorical hatred of black skins." (p. 518) "Even so," Furnas concluded, "New England was readier than the rest of the country to attempt civilized race relations." (p. 519) The beginnings of school desegregation and the enfranchizement of Negroes was being initiated in various New England areas during the late 1840's and 1850's, although very few Negroes were involved. Some of these measures were, in themselves, eliciting an early form of "white backlash": "Thus communities urged to treat Negroes better might resist on the candid ground that to do so might attract Negroes from less enlightened places---and did New Haven or Boston want more of them than it already had?" (p. 520)

The charge that the Negro was wasteful and inefficient contrasted well with the free laborer's pride in his productivity. This theme was not a new one with the Emigrant Aid Company speakers; arguments favoring colonization had long included it. General John Dix, speaking in favor of colonization at Albany, New York, in 1830, asserted that "there is a difference of one third in the productiveness of free and slave labor in favor of the former."<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Dix continued, the use of Negro slaves was a wasteful practice by which "the gradual destruction of the powers of the soil" resulted. The basis for this second assertion may have been the result of the practice of making work, often involving the clearing of new lands, in order to keep the slave force occupied. This made a "wear-out-the land-and-clear-more" policy common in the South.<sup>47</sup> The first charge, increased productivity of free labor, also seems to have a basis in fact. Furnas has attributed this to the basic motivation of the slave which was "dully negative---to avoid punishment" and therefore less productive.<sup>48</sup> The presumption that this variation in productivity was a function of the condition of slavery rather than

<sup>46</sup> Mayo Hazeltine and others, editors, Masterpieces of Eloquence, Vol. XIII (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1905), p. 5411.

<sup>47</sup> Furnas, Goodbye to Uncle Tom, p. 115.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

inherent in the race of the laborer makes the arguments of the free-staters rather tenuous today.

Eli Thayer, in his first major speech as a member of Congress, summed up the charge against the efficiency of slave labor in purely economic terms in response to the idea that under conditions where slavery was used Yankees would be as prone to use slaves as anyone:

Why sir, we can buy a negro power in a steam-engine for ten dollars, and we can clothe and feed that power for one year for five dollars, are we the men to give \$1000 for an African slave, and \$150 a year to feed and clothe him?

No, sir. Setting aside the arguments about sentimentality and about philanthropy on this question, setting aside all poetry and fiction, he comes right down to the practical question---is it profitable? The Yankee replies, Not at all.<sup>49</sup>

Thayer's appeal to rationality, contrasted in the passage above with sentimentality and philanthropy (the tools of the Abolitionist speakers), provided the line of attack acceptable to many Northern elements who wished to oppose the "slave power" and at the same time avoid affiliation with Abolitionists and commitment to the well-being of the black man. A letter from one T. H. Cunningham of Boston to Edward Everett Hale, dated June 10, 1854, praised Thayer's scheme of organized emigration and then

<sup>49</sup> Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 284.

made the following statement regarding the perception of the negro slave. It serves well to summarize this placement of the Emigrant Aid Company as an alternative to Abolitionism and the company's view of the African slave:

But---I have no sympathy with abolitionism and don't want to see anybody who will talk about it. As an evil, I detest slavery, but what will you do with the blacks when it is abolished; they can't hold their own and if given a fair land would ruin it and relapse into African barbarism. I have the same antipathy, although not so great in degree, to a black man or woman, that I have to a monkey.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> T. H. Cunningham to Edward E. Hale, June 10, 1854,  
Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

## Chapter VI

### "THE EDEN OF THE WEST"

Since the persuasive stance of the New England Emigrant Aid Company was designed to appeal to the rational, and stressed the difference between this approach and the pathos of the Abolitionists, the company avoided aggressive "hard-sell" tactics. It used an approach styled as information. Anson Stone, assistant treasurer of the company, testifying before a Senatorial committee investigating the troubles in Kansas, claimed that the company speakers answered questions and provided informative pamphlets for potential emigrants but "never urge them to go."<sup>1</sup> This testimony is consistent with other descriptions of the company's rallies which will be considered in the next chapter.

This "information-like" approach did not preclude a most optimistic description of Kansas, however. Such descriptions of the frontier had a basis in earlier literature which had provided romantic notions to many New England readers.<sup>2</sup> The actual

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<sup>1</sup> (Howard Committee), Report of the Special Committee appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas (Washington: Cornelius Wendell, 1856), p. 886.

<sup>2</sup> See Vernon Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, Part II (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927), pp. 162-165, entitled "The Romantic Frontier."

conditions in Kansas Territory were made even more ambiguous by the image of "The Great American Desert," a label applied to the area west of Missouri which had been the first stage of the journey for travelers to California and Oregon during the decade prior to the opening of Kansas to settlement.

Now these lands themselves had become a prize worth fighting for as the barriers to emigration were removed with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. To a great degree this battle was symbolic, a test of political strength between free and slave societies, with Kansas a trophy which carried with it political rewards.

In waging this battle within the constraints of "popular sovereignty" it was necessary to interest people who would emigrate and cast the votes that would make Kansas a free or slave state. It was the stated goal of the Emigrant Aid Company to stimulate emigration of people of free-state background who could control these emerging institutions. To move people in sufficient numbers required a grassroots appeal that would induce the Yankee farmer or mechanic to lead the emigration from the Northeast and cast his lot in the new land.

Several factors, dominant in the life of New England farmers, dictated lines of appeal which could be used in company propaganda. The short growing seasons in Northern New England

has long been a problem.. So had the rocky, thin-soiled topography of much of the land; "boney" was a description often used by the Yankee farmers of the times and still heard today. Wood for fuel, fencing and building was essential to the Yankee farmer, as was a reliable supply of water. These first two items, growing seasons and rich soil, were strong selling points for the company. The second two items, wood and water, eventually provided major problems.

In her 1856 book, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life, Sara Robinson, wife of company agent Charles Robinson, described the Kansas winters in glowing terms:

The winters are usually very mild and open, with little snow, ---none falling in the night, save what the morrow's sun will quickly cause to disappear. So mild are they, that the cattle of the Indians, as those of the settlers in Western Missouri, feed the entire year in the prairies and river bottoms. The Indians say that, once in about seven years, Kansas sees a cold and severe winter, with snows of a foot in depth. Two weeks of cold weather is called a severe winter. Then the spring-like weather comes in February; the earth begins to grow warm, and her fertile bosom ready to receive the care of the husbandman.<sup>3</sup>

To a man who had to build his farm in the New England style of "continuous architecture" with house, barn and outbuildings all joined to facilitate winter farming, such prospects must have

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<sup>3</sup> Sara T. L. Robinson, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life (Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Company, 1856), p. 5.

sounded most appealing.. The prospects of feeding cattle "the entire year" without the tedium of laying in a barn-full of hay also could not be ignored. To a native of Northern Maine or Vermont, who had felt that harvesting a batch of peas on the Fourth of July was an accomplishment, planting in February added a good two months to the beginning of the growing season.

Summer in Kansas was equally encouraging with "copius" rain and days of deceptive heat:

The breezes of summer, however, are most delightful. With the sun the wind rises, and makes such a difference in the actual effect of the temperature upon one's senses, as to lead to doubts as to the correctness of thermometers in this country. The mornings and evenings are always cool and pleasant, and one experiences nothing here of those summer nights, so common even in New England, where, between weariness occasioned by intense heat, and mosquitoes, no refreshing sleep will come. Very seldom are the nights, in Kansas, that blankets are not found an essential comfort.<sup>4</sup>

Although today's reader may suspect Mrs. Robinson of mild exaggeration, her praise of Kansas climate was well supported by other company propagandists who had been to Kansas. Some even went on to praise the health-giving qualities of Kansas climate. Mrs. Robinson herself had the following praise for Kansas' health giving qualities (and her husband was a physician by profession): "There is something so invigorating in the atmosphere,

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<sup>4</sup>  
Ibid.

so bracing, and the lungs have such play and action in it, that vigor is increased where health was before enjoyed; and in many a case, where the pulse was faint and low, and the invalid looked out on life with little purpose and few aims, feeling that its limits were nearly reached, the roses of health have again bloomed, and the life-blood coursed joyously."<sup>5</sup> In a more clinical tone she concluded by endorsing Kansas' climate for particular maladies: "For consumptives there can be no better country than this."<sup>6</sup>

The lure of the new territory was strongly directed at the Yankee "mechanic" or craftsman as well as the farmer. Samuel Pomeroy, company agent, wrote in "Plan of the New England Emigrant Aid Company": "The Manufacturing of the East becoming a hard business, and the many young men who are desirous of locating upon the public lands, being anxious to settle there in companies, has led to the formation of this Society."<sup>7</sup> The philosophy that land-holding increased a person's stature and self-respect provided much impetus for the company's appeal to

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Pomeroy, "Plan of the New England Emigrant Aid Company" (manuscripts), Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

the tradesman.<sup>8</sup> The inducements to them were described by Pomeroy in much the same terms as the appeal to farmers: "The inducements held out are the richness of the Soil, as contrasted with the hard & rocky [sic] hills of New England, the more mild and geniel [sic] climate. . ." <sup>9</sup> To these features Pomeroy added others designed to appeal to emigrants from urban areas: "mills, churches, & free school houses" and a good commercial location "upon the great highway of the nation, to the Pacific Ocean."<sup>10</sup>

Eli Thayer amplified these advantages to the urban emigrant in a tract written early in the summer of 1854 entitled "Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company": "It [the company] opens to those who are in want in the Eastern States, a home and a competence, without the suffering hitherto incident to emigration, ---for the company is the pioneer, ---and provides before the settler arrives, the conveniences which he first requires. Such a removal of an overcrowded population is one of the greatest advantages to eastern cities." At this point Thayer departed into another facet of argumentation directed

<sup>8</sup> This theme was well developed in a tract urging greater availability of public lands and entitled "Vote Yourself a Farm." See Commanger, The Age of Reform, pp. 123-124.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Pomeroy, "Plan of the New England Emigrant Aid Company" (manuscripts), Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

toward the potential stockholders in the New England business community: "Again, the enterprise opens commercial advantages to the commercial states just in proportion to the population which it creates, of free men who furnish a market to our manufactures and imports." The argument continued to develop the importance of creating "communications" between Massachusetts with her

"ports and factories" and the new territory.<sup>11</sup> Thayer's mention of "those who are in want" was also an echo of the theme developed by Hale in a sermon preached in 1852 to a Boston society concerned with pauperism. In that sermon Hale implied that the solution to poverty lay in putting people where they could find useful work.

This could be done through subsidizing emigration.<sup>12</sup>

Eden lay but eight or ten days' travel to the west; all that was needed, according to an editorial in the Dover, New Hampshire, Morning Star of June 7, 1854, was "A plan for turning the current of emigration to the beautiful valleys of Kansas . . . which will impose a slavery restriction which Congress cannot repeal."<sup>13</sup> This was what the Emigrant Aid Company

<sup>11</sup> Eli Thayer, "Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company," Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Hale, Christian Duty to Emigrants.

<sup>13</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, June 7, 1854, p. 2.

proposed to do.

The portrayal of Kansas and the facilities awaiting the emigrant frequently failed to materialize when the first emigrants went to Kansas. The result of this disappointment damaged the credibility of the company as letters to newspapers complaining of the deception were printed, and disappointed emigrants returned to their native states. The first party arrived at the site of Lawrence about the beginning of August in 1854. Less than three weeks later The Boston Daily Bee printed the following letter:

I have spent about a week in Kansas, and am very glad to get away. I do not think much of the country, it is very hot, and wood and water are very scarce. I cannot advise any of my friends to become settlers there; and, to tell the truth, I have not much faith that the Emigrant Aid Company will ever go into operation.

The pioneer party are generally dissatisfied, and about half of them have already left / this estimate was supported by other letters written by such men as Dr. John Doy of the first party / , and more would leave, in my opinion, very soon, had they the means to get away.

The party have in my opinion been very much deceived by somebody . . .<sup>14</sup>

Two members of the "Kansas League" of Cincinnati toured Kansas and wrote, in 1855, that without much more effort on the part of the "Emigration Societies" they could see "no high

<sup>14</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 96.

promise for the future."<sup>15</sup> Much of the trouble, according to these gentlemen, was a lack of funds and people to actually carry out the goals of the company in Kansas.

Inexperience on the part of some of the company's agents was another problem which at times inflicted hardship on the emigrant. Some agents, like Robinson and Pomeroy seemed to be particularly capable. Others, hired to direct various parties en route, were not. William Haley of Alton, Illinois, who had helped the company in its formative period by suggesting agents and helping make arrangements for the parties who passed through Alton on their way to the steamboat connections on the Missouri River, wrote to Edward Everett Hale on March 9, 1855:

For Humanities sake do something to prevent the fleecing of your emigrants through the inexperience of their leaders  
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The agents of the E. A. Company have so far been green as grass and the emigrants have suffered accordingly. Poetry is a very good thing in its place but I assure you that by the time the Emigrants arrive here they have all got over their singing enthusiasm . . .<sup>16</sup>

Haley went on to cite lost railroad connections, needless hotel expenses and an unrequired detour of forty-six miles "to give the

<sup>15</sup> C. B. Boynton and T. B. Mason, Journey Through Kansas (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach, Keys and Co., 1855), p. 204.

<sup>16</sup> William Haley to Edward E. Hale, March 9, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

levee-sharks of St. Louis a last chance at their pockets," all of which the pro-slavery people had ironically termed "Abolition philanthropy."<sup>17</sup>

The apparent magnitude of the deception of the New England Emigrant Aid Company was increased by the number of organizations which joined the general category of "Emigrant Aid Societies." Some of them were irresponsible, and even downright deceptive. A book by one of the settlers of the "Octagon Settlement Company" (so called because the plan of settlement involved the division of lands into pie-like farms with small communities at the hub of the eight-part divisions) summed up the unhappiness with this company in her book entitled: Went to Kansas; A Thrilling Account of an Ill-Fated Expedition to That Fairy Land, and Its Sad Results.<sup>18</sup> After a description of the journey to Kansas with the death of her husband and son while en route, Mrs. Colt described the whole settlement as a hoax. Her description of the death and burial of her father-in-law characterized the loneliness which a person from the urban east might feel: "But to think of death in Kansas, in that wild though beautiful country; to be laid away in a rough box, in a

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> (Mrs.) Miriam Davis Colt, Went to Kansas (Watertown, Massachusetts: L. Ingalls and Company, 1862).

grave marked only while the mound looks newly made; away from all kindred and friends who would drop on it a tear, or plant on it a flower, seems to me horrible in the extreme."<sup>19</sup>

These other emigration organizations also damaged the New England Emigrant Aid Company by appearing to exploit people. This, added to the knowledge that the New England Emigrant Aid Company was a stock company, cast the company in the role of exploiter. Although the company occasionally circulated warnings about these fraudulent organizations, credibility was still damaged.

The very same newspapers that published letters of discontent from Kansas emigrants also often supported the company by attempting to play these accounts down or by questioning the integrity of the writers. As a preface to a letter from a Mr. Loomer (dated October 13, 1854), which voiced the standard complaints of scarcity of timber and water and claimed that about one-third of the party of 200 which had journeyed west with him had elected not to stay in Kansas, the Boston Herald of November 10, 1854, commented:

The following letter has been handed us with the request that we should publish it in our columns. The writer, Mr. Charles Loomer, carpenter, of Lynn, Mass., who removed with his family to Kanzas, in September last, speaks rather discouragingly

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

of the prospects afforded in the new territory to emigrants whose energies and health are unequal to the labor of "roughing" their way for a few years; but we do not think he draws a very dark picture for such as have vigor of mind and body, and are made of "sterner stuff" than Mr. L.<sup>20</sup>

Even the Herald of Freedom, printed in Lawrence, Kansas, and often used as a source of information about Kansas through its wide circulation in the eastern states, printed a poem entitled "The Kansas Emigrant's Lament" which included the following lines:

I left my own New England,  
    The happiest and the best,  
With a burning Kansas fever  
    Raging in my breast.  
Oh that fair New England!  
    Oh that lovely home!  
If I live to reach you, surely  
    I never more will roam.

I came to Lawrence city,  
    A place of great renown,  
Alas! what disappointment  
    To find so small a town.  
The houses were unfinished,  
    The people had no floors,  
The windows had no glass in,  
    And sheets were used for doors.<sup>21</sup>

Fortunately, for the Emigrant Aid Company, the bulk of the free state settlers came from the territories north of the Ohio River. These people were less prone to disappointment with the

<sup>20</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> The Herald of Freedom, Lawrence, Kansas, October 13, 1855, p. 4.

"Eden of the West." Few of them returned to their native states. John Everett, who migrated to Kansas from Steuben, New York, in the spring of 1855 wrote in a letter to his father of the difference in emigrants. The Easterners, he observed, were mostly "village mechanics with ideas enthusiastically excited." Everett estimated that "one-half at least of the Eastern people return." The Westerners were different. They would "find much such a country as they left behind them, and settle right down, build their cabins, fence . . . They have a strong instinct against slavery, do not want it about them, but lack the strong moral sense of its injustice which we <sup>22</sup>  
Northeasterners feel." The company was realistic in its efforts to send enough settlers to spearhead the free-state movement without actually trying to populate the territory with a majority of New Englanders. For this reason, the loss of credibility which the company speakers suffered as a result of the overpraising of Kansas and the facilities developed by the company there, was not as damaging to the cause of the movement as it might have been. It was very damaging to the movement for recruits in New England however.

Russel Nye, in The Cultural Life of the New Nation, has remarked on the variety of perceptions of the West in the early days

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<sup>22</sup> "Letters of John and Sarah Everett, 1854-1864," The Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. VIII (1939), pp. 25-26.

of the expansion into it. These included "the West of crudeness and revolt, as a haven for the oppressed, as a great empire, as Eden," and finally "as the ideal agrarian society of the eighteenth century philosophers, a republic of simple, intelligent, virtuous yeomen"<sup>23</sup> Emigrant Aid Company propagandists stressed the most desirable aspects of these perceptions. Since the company, in effect, had a "product to sell" an optimistic approach was certainly dictated. That the company was not always able to maintain the product, as advertised, cannot be denied. The exploitation that occasionally resulted, with its attendant disenchantment, is an unfortunate by-product of a "latent social movement." As Toch has pointed out, this exploitation was not the purpose of the movement: "Exploitation is not usually the 'root' of social movements. Instead, it is merely a 'grafted limb,' which acquires life and meaning through the transaction between a nurturing problem situation and the solution it evokes."<sup>24</sup> The presentation of Kansas as Eden was but one strategy in the much deeper philosophical contest between North and South.

<sup>23</sup> Russel Blaine Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 121.

<sup>24</sup> Toch, p. 108.

## Chapter VII

### STRUCTURE AND FLOW OF INFORMATION

In the past two chapters the company speakers have been described as "information-like" in their approaches. There were two important reasons for this strategy. The first, contrast to the emotionalism of the Abolitionists, has already been discussed. In effect, the company assumed that there was a clearcut division between rational and emotional man and elected to appeal to the rational. In terms of Aristotle's modes of "artistic proof" they elected "logos," the appeal to reason, and credited Abolitionists with "pathos," the appeal to the emotions. Second, through the use of reason and knowledge, or expertise, the company also hoped to claim Aristotle's "ethos," or speaker credibility. This would be the result of the particular knowledge that the company brought to the crusade for Kansas. Since the company did have agents in Kansas, and maintained constant liaison with men like Charles Robinson and Samuel Pomeroy in the territory, it was accepted as the authority on Kansas in the New England states. As assistant treasurer, Anson Stone testified: "They [potential emigrants]<sup>1</sup> would naturally come to our office to enquire this [information about Kansas]<sup>1</sup>, because it is the office of the Kansas Emigrant Company."

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Committee Report, p. 886.

The company did not wait for interested people to inquire however. Using a wide variety of methods and channels for spreading information in Kansas, and exciting interest in migrating or at least in buying stock in the company, it took the message to the New England communities with such vigor that the Kansas issue became a dominant feature of sermons, newspaper reports and political campaigns within the next two years.

#### Printed Material

Almost with its inception the company was instrumental in publishing books and pamphlets about Kansas. Perceiving the demand for information about the newly opened territory, Edward Everett Hale began work on a general compendium of information about Kansas drawn largely from published reports of explorers who had traveled in the territory. On August 21, 1854, less than three months after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the publication of this book, Kanzas and Nebraska was completed.<sup>2</sup> Charles Robinson, who had been to Kansas twice, once in 1849 while journeying to California and again in June of 1854 as an

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Everett Hale, Kanzas and Nebraska (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1854). Various advertisements, such as the one to be found in Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 59, listed such sources as Lewis and Clark, Pike and Fremont and priced the Hale book at 75¢ in a muslin binding or 56¢ in paper binding.

unofficial agent of the Emigrant Aid Company, also was hard at work on a description of Kansas to be included in a pamphlet, Organization, Objects and Plan of Operations of the Emigrant Aid Company. This pamphlet, which was approved by the trustees of the Emigrant Aid Company at their meeting on August 7, 1854, superseded the first brochure published by the company, Nebraska and Kansas: Report of the Committee of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, with the Act of Incorporation and Other Documents.<sup>3</sup> The Organization, Objects, . . . received wide circulation and was soon in such demand that four editions were printed. In the minutes of the trustees meeting of August 12, 1854, the disposition of this first edition was described: "The Secretary states that a copy of the new Pamphlet had been mailed to every Newspaper in New England, and to the principal ones in the States of New-York and Pennsylvania; many have also been sent to individuals in various sections of the Union, so that an edition of fifteen hundred has been exhausted in one week."<sup>4</sup> Demand for

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<sup>3</sup> This, and all the other company pamphlets mentioned here, are to be found in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka. Several of them are also in Spencer Library at the University of Kansas.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the third meeting of the trustees, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

this pamphlet was so heavy that by September 30 "it was decided that Auxiliary Societies must pay for the Pamphlets ordered by them in quantities."<sup>5</sup>

The following March, Thomas Webb, company secretary, published his Information for Kansas Emigrants which became the principal company pamphlet. It remained in print for several years and went through a series of editions.<sup>6</sup>

As the situation in Kansas changed and the crisis which would lead to "war in Kansas" in 1856 became more and more imminent the temper of the company sponsored publication changed. At first it had appeared as information about Kansas, its topography, climate, natural resources and the routes by which it might be reached. In April of 1855 a pamphlet entitled Information for the People. Two Tracts for the Times was printed; the trustees authorized the publication of 3000 copies. The tone of this pamphlet was argumentative although, in structure, it was designed to let the reader draw a rational conclusion about the introduction of slavery in Kansas. In it two divergent views were printed: first

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the ninth meeting of the trustees, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson reports 17 editions from 1855-1857. See Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 335.

an essay entitled, "Negro Slavery No Evil," by Missourian B. F. Stringfellow, then an essay in answer to the first entitled, "Is It Expedient to Introduce Slavery into Kansas?" by Daniel R. Goodloe, a North Carolinian with strong anti-slavery convictions. Company Secretary, Thomas Webb, in the introduction to this pamphlet, urged "calm consideration" but prompted the reader: "Obtuse indeed must be the intellect, sadly blunted the moral feelings of him, who, after duly pondering what is set forth in the following pages, can for a moment vacillate in regard to his duty."<sup>7</sup>

In 1856 Sara T. D. Robinson wrote her book, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life. While she wrote, her husband Charles Robinson, chief agent of the company in Kansas, remained a prisoner of the federal troops at Lecompton. Detached objectivity no longer seemed the goal of the company writers. In her "Preface" Mrs. Robinson begged the readers' indulgence:

If a bitterness against the "powers that be" betrays itself, let the continual clanking of sabres, and the deafening sound of heavy artillery in the daily drills of the soldiery, aids in crushing freemen in Kansas, ---the outrages hourly committed upon peaceable and unarmed men, ---the daily news of some friend made prisoner, or butchered with a malignity more than human, ---the devastation of burned homes, by the connivance

<sup>7</sup> (Published by the N. E. Emigrant Aid Co. ), Information for the People. Two Tracts for the Times (Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, Printers, 1855).

of the Governor, under the eyes of the troops, and no power given to save an oppressed people, ---be placed in the balance against a severe judgment.<sup>8</sup>

This book has already been considered in its presentation of Kansas as "Eden" and the bulk of it was devoted to a description of the domestic and social life of the new territory (hence the title). But running through it was a series of accounts of inflammatory incidents which gave it strong emotional impact. The description of the murder of free-stater Barber is an example: "The deadly bullet of the foul creature, the tool of the administration, entered his back, and, saying 'O God! I am a murdered man!' he never spoke again."<sup>9</sup> Issac Goodnow, who traveled to Kansas with the company in March of 1855 and later was instrumental in the founding of Kansas State University, appraised the book as "a not unworthy rival of Uncle Tom's Cabin, /which/ did scarcely less in its sphere, to rouse the Northern heart, in the early days of the Kansas struggle."<sup>10</sup>

At first, authors submitted manuscripts and proposals for publication to the company for assistance in publication. The

<sup>8</sup> Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life (Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Company, 1856), p. iii.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in the "Introduction" to Charles Robinson, The Kansas Conflict (Lawrence, Kansas: Journal Publishing Company, 1898), p. xviii.

trustees meeting of April 7, 1855, noted the receipt of a letter dated "Washington, D. C., April 3d." from one C. C. Andrews "inclosing an article on 'Slavery in Kansas,' by him furnished to the New-Hampshire Patriot." This article may have been intended as a writing sample, for the minutes continued: "Mr. A. states that he is engaged in preparing a book on Kanzas to be called, 'Six Months in Kanzas' showing the manner of life there, and the resources of the Country. He would be glad to have the Company take the work and superintend its publication."<sup>11</sup>

Other companies, patterned after the New England Emigrant Aid Company, also sponsored publications.<sup>12</sup> By 1856 a wide variety of pamphlets and books were available. In these the tension and emotional power of "bleeding Kansas" began to take precedence. Two pamphlets of note were The Reign of Terror in Kanzas<sup>13</sup> and

<sup>11</sup> Fifth weekly meeting of the New England Emigrant Aid Company (which replaced the "Massachusetts" Emigrant Aid Company in February, 1855), Emigrant Aid Company Papers. The book referred to is not the same book as Six Months in Kansas by "A Lady" which was published in 1856 by Hanna Ropes who had been to Kansas as a nurse.

<sup>12</sup> Organizations in New York and Cincinnati each sponsored books about Kansas. See the Bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> The Reign of Terror in Kanzas . . . (As Related by Eye Witnesses of the Events) (Boston: Charles W. Briggs, 1856).

Border Ruffian Code. <sup>14</sup> The approach of The Reign of Terror in Kanzas, like that of the book Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, assumed that a detailed description of atrocities in Kansas, with the attendant creation of martyrs, would best intensify public sentiment. The pamphlet closed with a quotation from A. H. Stephens of Georgia "on the Passage of the Nebraska Bill": "Gentlemen, / addressing those in the North who had opposed the Bill/ we have got you in our power. You tried to drive us to the wall in 1850, but times are changed! You went a wooling, and have come home fleeced! Don't be so impudent as to complain. You will only be slapped in the face! Don't resist. You will only be lashed into obedience!" (Underlining in pamphlet.) <sup>15</sup>

The Border Ruffian Code, on the other hand, was strongly political in its content. At the outset, it described the laws enacted by the "bogus Territorial Legislature" which was "notoriously forced upon the people of that Territory / Kansas/, at the hands of

<sup>14</sup> The Border Ruffian Code in Kansas (New York: Tribune Office, n. d.). Although this pamphlet shows no publication date, it contains a series of letters, all dated in the middle of 1856. The only copy which this author has found is in the American collection at the library of The University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

<sup>15</sup> Reign of Terror, p. 34.

invading ruffians from Missouri, using the persuasive arguments of the Bowie-Knife and Revolver."<sup>16</sup> The second item in the pamphlet, headed "Toombs' Kansas Bill Dissected" discovered "a fraud unparalleled in the history of our country" in the attempt to have Kansas admitted under the "bogus" Laws. Finally, "Presidential Platforms for 1856" were printed with following comment: "What intelligent elector can fail to see that of the three the Republican Platform is the most truly democratic and American, in the best and most significant sense of those much abused terms?"<sup>17</sup>

The Kansas issue had matured and gained a far wider scope than the initial contest to settle the Territory. Other authors joined in. William Phillips' book, The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies was clearly inflammatory and contained many of the incidents also found in The Reign of Terror in Kanza<sup>18</sup> and Mrs. Robinson's book. G. Douglas Brewerton's The War in Kansas was written for commercial purposes. It was a detailed account of "a rough trip to the border, among new homes and a

<sup>16</sup> Border Ruffian Code, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> William Phillips, The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1856).

strange people." Although Brewerton seemed to be laboring hard at being humorous there are some interesting sketches of frontier conditions. The position of the author was made clear in the "Preface":

We are on neither side of this unhappy quarrel, between those who, united as they are by one common bond of national brotherhood, ought to be the best of friends. On the contrary, we have gazed upon the Kansas difficulties as the old lady did when she put her spectacles on to see her husband fight the bear. . . . she didn't kear a dern which licked so long as she seed thar fight.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, the company printed momentos, sheet music, and even handkerchiefs, with appropriate poems and songs. These were often distributed at railroad stations where parties were departing for Kansas. At least one of these songs was written in response to a contest sponsored by the company. The prize of fifty dollars appears to have been donated by Amos A. Lawrence.<sup>20</sup> Of the eighty-eight songs entered, the song "Call to Kansas" by Lucy Larcom, a student at Wheaton Female Seminary in Norton, Massachusetts was the winner. In her letter to John Greenleaf

<sup>19</sup> G. Douglas Brewerton, The War in Kansas (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), p. vi.

<sup>20</sup> At least the winner thanked Lawrence for the prize. This may have been as treasurer rather than donor but the tone of the letter sounds otherwise. See Lucy Larcom to Amos A. Lawrence, February 8, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

Whittier she suggested that her inspiration had been his earlier song, "The Kansas Emigrants."<sup>21</sup> Elaborately lettered sheet music was printed and the Executive Committee authorized a more unusual medium of publication:

The Secretary stated that application was made to him sometime since for permission to print on picket handkerchiefs-- the Kanza Prize Song, and such other songs, as may from time to time be issued, on the eve of the departure of our Parties; the same to be set to music expressly composed for the purpose. Believing that this would prove an additional means, (humble though it be,) of disseminating information and doing good, he had granted the permission. ---

A specimen of the work was exhibited.<sup>22</sup>

Songs, such as this one, were apparently widely used. The departure of a party of eighty emigrants from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, on April 10, 1855, was described: "Previous to the departure Miss Larcom's Prize Song and an original Song 'Stand By the Right,' by J. R. Orton were sung."<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Colt of the Octagon Settlement Company, recalled traveling up the Missouri River on a steamboat with the company emigrants singing "Miss Larcom's song."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Grace Shepard, "Letters from Lucy Larcom to the Poet Whittier," New England Quarterly, Vol. III (July, 1930), p. 502.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, April 21, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., April 14, 1855.

<sup>24</sup> Colt, Went to Kansas, pp. 32-33.

Some of the other songs entered in the contest may also have been used. Thomas H. Webb, company secretary, in announcing the winner of the contest, closed his notice with the following: "There were eighty-eight competitors; and as some of their productions are very acceptable, they will from time to time be published, as Successive Parties leave for the Territory."<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, at least two one page folders entitled Lays of the Emigrants were printed. One was specified to be sung by "the Second Party for Kanzas, on their departure from Boston, Tuesday, August 29th, 1854." The other was designed for use by the Spring parties of 1855.<sup>26</sup>

Company publication was varied and extensive, as has been demonstrated. It started with the inception of the company at the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and adopted an "information-like" image. As the crisis in Kansas, which was to reach an era of armed conflict in 1856, developed and became increasingly intense, the company publications became more and more emotional and other sources of publication joined in. The impact of the Kansas issue carried into published political propaganda and the

<sup>25</sup> Notice dated March 13, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>26</sup> Copies of each are in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society.

scope of the Kansas issue grew beyond the purview of the company. Similar sequences may be noted in other spheres of company influence.

### The Newspapers

In recalling one of the formative meetings which he and Thayer had organized during the month of May, 1854, Edward E. Hale concluded: "From this moment forward, all of us who could speak were engaged in addressing public assemblies and all of us who could write were writing for the press. I remember very well that I had the friendly cooperation of twelve leading newspapers in different parts of New England, the editors of which were glad to print anything which we could send them regarding Kansas."<sup>27</sup>

The public excitement over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had been mounting since the bill had been introduced by Senator Douglas in January of 1854, and with it a demand for news about Kansas. The company, which had sent men to scout the territory, hired agents to take settlers there, and collected information about the territory from a wide variety of sources, soon was able to claim expertise on the subject of Kansas. It issued authoritative reports and circulated "letters from Kansas."

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<sup>27</sup> Manuscript fragment, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

The company even entered the newspaper business by advancing funds to G. W. Brown to purchase the printing press to be used for the Herald of Freedom. Although this paper was published in Lawrence, Kansas, it was directed toward an Eastern readership. Johnson has observed

The paper was not held in very high esteem by Kansas settlers generally; Brown was too narrowly partisan and too violent and indiscreet in his writing. But it was the only territorial newspaper that circulated widely in the North and was quoted extensively in the Northern press. Outside Kansas, it was regarded as the voice of the Free State party. Thus it was a powerful propaganda agent in the hands of the Emigrant Aid Company.<sup>28</sup>

Letters from various potential emigrants show that it was used as an informative primer on Kansas by people who were planning to emigrate.<sup>29</sup> D. W. Seiders of Waldoboro, Maine, who was attempting to raise a colony of lumbermen for Kansas, remarked, in a letter to Thayer, that he was "vexed with Mr. Brown---he has not sent me the Herald of Freedom, though I wrote to him to send me three dozen copies six weeks ago."<sup>30</sup> Others did receive their copies of the "Herald" and circulated them among their friends.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, pp. 90-91.

<sup>29</sup> See letters from E. G. Winchester to E. E. Hale, January 22, 1855, and Wm. Chisholm (addressed "Dear Sir"), February 8, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>30</sup> D. W. Seiders to Eli Thayer, September 12, 1855, Eli Thayer Papers.

Mention of this process, and occasional comments like, "I received a few days since from you a copy of the Herald of Freedom, for which accept my thanks,"<sup>31</sup> are found in correspondence concerning the Emigrant Aid Company. The controlling power of the company is indicated in Lawrence' letter to company agent Pomeroy in Kansas to the effect that the press "belongs to the Emigrant Aid Company, and you are its keeper."<sup>32</sup>

Not all of the Northeastern press was favorable to the company however, G. W. Brown, in a letter to Eli Thayer, noted that some editors "know nothing about Kansas; and were it not for getting up an excitement, they care less."<sup>33</sup> Other papers were openly hostile to the company. In Dover, New Hampshire, two papers engaged in an editorial war during the summer and fall of 1854. In this local contest the role of the Emigrant Aid Company as a source of arguments eventually became essential for the pro-emigration paper. The Dover Gazette and Strafford Advertiser charged the company with being a political tool, with encouraging

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Upham to Amos Lawrence, September 19, 1855, Lawrence Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Cited in Johnson, p. 90.

<sup>33</sup> G. W. Brown to Eli Thayer, August 8, 1855, Eli Thayer Papers.

misuse of the pulpit (a charge which will be examined later in this study), and asserted that the Kansas issue was largely the manufacture of propagandists. On July 1, 1854, the Gazette reported that "in one day last week seven hundred Germans, new emigrants, passed through Cincinnati on their way to Kansas;" emigration like this would certainly be sufficient to control institutions in Kansas. "Yet," the editor of the Gazette continued, "in the face of facts like these, the abolition and whig demagogues are trying to make people believe that slavery will be established in those territories."<sup>34</sup> The editorial concluded with a condemnation of "these partizans /who/ are laboring solely to make political capital out of this question."<sup>35</sup>

A week later the Gazette devoted the first page to a publication of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in full and concluded that "No northern man can find reasonable pretext for opposing it, for it contains nothing objectionable, unless it be the principle of popular sovereignty which excluded slavery from California. The same principle will exclude it from Nebraska and Kansas."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The Dover Gazette and Strafford Advertizer, July 1, 1854, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., July 8, 1854, p. 3.

On September 9, 1854, the Gazette, in an editorial entitled, "BENEVOLENCE MISPLACED," made a direct attack on "a Society /which/ was organized in Massachusetts, ostensibly for the purpose of aiding emigrants who desire to remove to Kansas and Nebraska."<sup>37</sup> After mentioning the "\$5,000,000 to be appropriated to that benevolent work" the attack was made upon the leadership and goals of the movement:

The leaders of this movement have made a most infamous prostitution of really benevolent efforts to the aid of the federal party. So mean are the leaders in that party, that they cannot be trusted in any matter. . . . One of their meanest tricks is this play upon the benevolent feelings of the community to raise money for electioneering purposes. . . . /and quoting the New Haven Register/<sup>38</sup> The coon "is in the meal tub"--and make no mistake! and whoever contributes the "dollar" to its funds, is simply aiding a dishonest political organization--the more dangerous, because it is hypocritical.

It might be noted that the allusion made to the "coon" is in reference to the political image used by Whigs in the campaign of 1844. The lack of understanding of the functioning of the Emigrant Aid Company is found in reference to the "dollar" which was the membership dues for the Union Emigrant Society of Washington, D.C., with which the New England organization had refused to affiliate.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., September 9, 1854, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

Meanwhile the Dover Morning Star, which favored emigration as a method of determining the nature of institutions in Kansas, had been rather general in their statements. The editors found "the hand of God" at work in emigration and claimed that "What they need in Kansas /is/ just what is needed everywhere on earth; good men, good, laws, good institutions, good habits, good schools, pure churches, with all the attendants of a refined and Christian civilization."<sup>39</sup> Aside from a general call for some type of emigration in the issue of June 7, 1854, and a report of the meeting of the Emigrant Aid Company in the June 28, 1854, issue (which named the officers and restated claims that "trustees have advertised for proposals for carrying 20,000 to 150,000 persons from the Eastern States to Kansas this fall"<sup>40</sup>) very little was said about the peculiar blend of profit and philanthropy which was characteristic of the company propaganda appeals. It was not until Eli Thayer spoke in nearby Lowell, Massachusetts, on October 16, 1854, that the paper found the arguments it needed. The Morning Star of November 1, 1854, devoted half of the first page to a report of Thayer's speech. This was followed, in the

<sup>39</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, August 16, 1854, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., June 28, 1854, p. 3.

November 22, 1854, edition by a lengthy editorial which began

"Here is an opportunity to do good and grow rich at the same time."<sup>41</sup>

The Morning Star had, through the influence of Eli Thayer and the

Emigrant Aid Company, found the arguments with which to handle

the Gazette. Webb's Scrapbooks demonstrate that many other news-

papers also found their arguments in speeches by such men as

Thayer.<sup>42</sup>

As it was in the area of publication, the influence of the

company upon newspapers slipped as the issue of Kansas became

more widely known. By 1856 the company was serving as an

interpreter and critic of Kansas news. Amos A. Lawrence, in a

speech at Lynn, Massachusetts, during July of 1856 began: "I have

been requested to state how much reliance can be placed on the

information which is in the newspapers in regard to the transactions

in Kansas, and will do so with pleasure." What followed was an

evaluation of news sources. Some excerpts are in order:

In the 1st place no reliance at all can be placed upon the accounts which come by telegraph. As the agents of this corporation sympathize with the pro-slavery party, they send such news as their friends give them. . .

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., November 22, 1854 (see Webb Scrapbook, Vol. II, p. 19.)

<sup>42</sup> See Webb Scrapbooks which comprise some 17 volumes of newspaper clippings (both from New England and from other sources) about the Company and the Kansas issue.

As to letters, those which are published in the respectable newspapers not in the interest of the Administration, and which are ten days old, are pretty uniformly correct. In the winter 14 days should be allowed. . . Gov. Robinson's letters I have sometimes sent to the Boston Daily Advertiser and the information has been published. . .

The correspondent of the Administration has been and is now Mr. Atchison. He was the classmate and friend of Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War. . . . At home in Mississippi Mr. Davis has always been called by his own party a disunionist . . .<sup>43</sup>

In 1857, after Thayer and Lawrence had left the company, newspaper reports of the Kansas situation became particularly harmful to the process of encouraging emigration. William Lawrence, in a letter to newly elected Congressman Eli Thayer, asked for aid in controlling news: "Can you not use your influence with the New York editors to keep out every thing that tends to excite the fears of quiet emigrants?"<sup>44</sup> The press, which had been a source of power for the company when news from Kansas was scarce and the demand for that kind of news was rapidly increasing, had placed correspondents of their own in Kansas. The sensational nature of the news from Kansas had, by the middle of 1856, made it far too valuable as a commercial commodity to be left to a small emigration company.

<sup>43</sup> Manuscript, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>44</sup> William Lawrence to Eli Thayer, March 20, 1857,  
Eli Thayer Papers.

In his book, The Kansas Crusade, Thayer credited the press with giving the company "far-reaching power" through reports of the money being expended by the company in Kansas (which encouraged prospective emigrants) and through appeals to patriotism which resulted from the reports of "ovations which each colony received all the way from Boston to Chicago."<sup>45</sup> Thayer may have exaggerated the amount of power wielded by the company, but he was correct in his observations about the kinds of reports often found in the papers. Two other types of items were also frequently printed. One, detailed reports of speeches, has already been considered in its use by the Morning Star. Clement Webster, a Rhode Island newspaperman suggested the other when he wrote: "I think a series of letters from Kansas to influential papers in Boston, Portland, Providence, N. York, and other places would be of immense value this fall and winter."<sup>46</sup> The suggestion was really unnecessary; "letters from Kansas" had been solicited by the company and widely printed in Eastern newspapers since the first colony had reached Kansas in August of 1854.

<sup>45</sup> Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> Clement Webster to (Mr.) Wilcox, October 12, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

### The Company as a Speakers Bureau

In response to a letter from Amos A. Lawrence requesting that he write letters from Kansas which might be reprinted in the newspapers, company agent Pomeroy observed:

You speak of my writing something for the papers--  
There is upon me a perfect rush of business--day and night.  
And for the present I must write so hastily and carelessly,  
that it is not suitable to expose it. Beside Mr. Branscomb is  
with you now, who can speak. That's better. (Underlining  
Pomeroy's.)<sup>47</sup>

Pomeroy was right. Of the three primary methods used by the company to spread "information" about Kansas (publication and newspapers being the other two) the role of the company as a speaker's bureau had the greatest impact. Thayer estimated that he had spoken fifty times about the projected company before it even began its work in June of 1854.<sup>48</sup> Rallies, as has been demonstrated, were a popular mode of expression during 1854. The company had the personnel and the issue to use this mode to advantage.

Three distinct types of speakers were used by the company. Foremost were company officers in New England, primarily Eli

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Pomeroy to Amos A. Lawrence, September 22, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>48</sup> Thayer to William Lawrence, March 22, 1888, Eli Thayer Papers.

Thayer and Edward Everett Hale. At times company agents from Kansas, men like Charles Robinson, Samuel Pomeroy, and Charles Branscomb were used on the platform. Since their stay in New England was often short, the company was particularly active in securing audiences for them. This type of speaker, when available, epitomized the company expertise since they were "fresh from the territory." Finally, the company had a loose network of local "stump speakers." This group used company propaganda materials but generally worked independently of the company as far as setting up speaking engagements went. At most rallies which featured company officers or Kansas agents local speakers would be invited to share the platform.

Eli Thayer must be considered the leading speaker in the Emigrant Aid Company. He devoted himself largely to speaking, carried the message of the company throughout the New England states and even into New York and other free states, and was in demand as a speaker on Kansas. The minutes of company meetings give an indication of the scope of his activities. On December 23, 1854, for instance, long range plans were being made: "Mr. Thayer states that he contemplated devoting the months of February and March to the purpose of making more generally known the objects and plans of the company in relation to Kanza and other Territories by holding meetings and delivering public addresses throughout New

England and Western States."<sup>49</sup> As the tour grew closer, company teamwork became evident: "January 13, 1854 . . . It was decided that Mr. Whitman had better make the necessary arrangements for Mr. Thayer preparatory to and during his lecture Tour in New England, and that Mr. Branscomb should accompany him through the Western States."<sup>50</sup> Even while such plans were being made Thayer remained active on the platform. During the same trustees meeting where plans were being made for Thayer's upcoming tour the following letter was noted: "From Eli Thayer Esq., stating that he had formed a League in Woonsocket, R. I., lectured in Shrewsbury, Mass., and would be ready to go to Maine the last of next week or the first of /the/ week after to address meetings on the subject of securing Kanza to Freedom."<sup>51</sup> It was while on this trip that Thayer addressed the two houses of the Maine Legislature. Local societies also requested Thayer's services as a speaker. "I should prefer Mr. Eli Thayer as his name is better known and would call out a larger audience, I think . . ."

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees, December 23, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the trustees meeting, January 13, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

wrote J. O. Thayer of Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, who had been given a choice of speakers for a public lecture he was arranging.

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Outside of New England, Eli Thayer grew in reputation and associated with such men as Horace Greeley and Henry Ward Beecher. Beecher even invited Thayer to speak at the Plymouth Congregational Church. In a letter to his biographer, Franklin P. Rice, Thayer recalled the occasion.

Early in 1856 when I was in New York raising money for the Emigrant Aid Company Charles H. Branscomb accompanied me. I spoke one Friday evening at Henry Ward Beecher's vestry (Plymouth Church) occupying the entire evening. After I was through Mr. Beecher said that he thought it best to devote the next Friday evening meeting also to Kansas. This supposition was approved unanimously and I was invited to occupy their time in another address.

On the Sunday following Mr. Branscomb and myself attended Plymouth Church--After Mr. Beecher's sermon, he gave several notices for the week and among them the notice of the Kansas meeting for the next Friday evening. He gave the notice in exactly these words. "There will be another Kansas meeting next Friday evening. I cannot say now whether I shall be present or not. If I should be I should be only another John the Baptist in the presence of Eli Thayer, the Savior of Kansas." C. H. Branscomb remembers the above perfectly for he has several times spoken to me of the Beecher notice. . . .

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<sup>52</sup> J. O. Thayer to Charles Branscomb, October 13, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>53</sup> Eli Thayer to Franklin P. Rice, March 13, 1887, Eli Thayer Papers.

Beecher was present at the meeting and gave Thayer the following instructions, which may give insight into the type of material Thayer would occasionally work with: "Mr. Thayer, when you quote the border ruffians please do not use any circumlocutions or blanks, but let us have exactly their words."<sup>54</sup>

The effectiveness of Thayer's speaking was indicated by various letters which he received upon the publication of his book, The Kansas Crusade. "Your name was a household name all over New England, when I was a boy in North Brookfield [Massachusetts]," testified General Francis A. Walker, President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in a letter to Thayer.<sup>55</sup> The Honorable William M. Evarts recalled one of Thayer's efforts:

Eli Thayer is the only man who ever lifted me off my base by a speech. During the Kansas Contest he addressed a few New York Citizens in the house of George W. Blount. I was one of the number. After his speech I then and there gave the Emigrant Aid Company one thousand dollars which was one fourth of all I was worth. But it proved to be the best investment I ever made.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Undated note, Eli Thayer Papers. (Letterbook 5, page 463).

<sup>55</sup> Francis A. Walker to Eli Thayer, September 20, 1893, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>56</sup> William M. Evarts, undated, unaddressed note, Eli Thayer Papers (Vol. V, p. 460).

In the area of central Massachusetts and Providence, Rhode Island, Edward Everett Hale was another platform favorite. His mobility was probably limited by the need to maintain his pastorate in Worcester. Still, the audiences in nearby Providence valued his services so highly that when they invited Hale to speak at a "Citizen's Meeting" on November 26, 1855, they added the proviso: "We deem your presence essential and will select some other evening, if necessary."<sup>57</sup>

The program, which the committee in Providence was working on, was typical of the rallies and meetings which featured company speakers. Several local speakers had been asked to share the platform with Hale: "Drs. Wayland and Hall, and Mr. Davis will be asked to give short addresses, but the speech of the occasion will be your own."<sup>58</sup> This pattern was a common one. Most programs featured several local speakers, generally including at least one member of the clergy, along with the company speaker or speakers. The total program might have anywhere from four to seven or eight men on the platform.

<sup>57</sup> Samuel Wolcott to Edward E. Hale, November 12, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers. See also Henry Miles to Edward E. Hale, May 8, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers, which stated "From no one, we are sure, would remarks on Kansas be so acceptable as from yourself."

<sup>58</sup> Wolcott to Hale, November 2, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

An example of the types of speakers who participated in the speaking tours is found in a pair of letters from D. W. Seiders, of Waldoboro, Maine, to Eli Thayer. Seiders, who had been "burned out" of his law offices in Maine some time before had just returned from Hampden, Kansas Territory ("in the region of the Neosho"), to attempt to recruit a party of lumbermen for Kansas. He represented the expert who had been in the territory. His first letter, dated July 26, 1855, expressed "great pleasure, joy, I might say" at the prospect of a speaking tour which Thayer proposed to make in Maine. Because Seiders was "willing to do something for the welfare of Kansas, or rather the crippling of slavery" he offered to accompany Thayer on his "intended mission in Maine."<sup>59</sup>

The second letter from Seiders, dated September 12, 1855, called for Thayer to "go again into the Penobscot Valley" in order to assure success there in raising a colony for that fall. Seiders then described his own activity and the work of other speakers in the state, and some of the other issues and problems attendant to speaking on Kansas:

I shall lecture in Rockland next week on Kansas--I have made three stump speeches near home within a short time--

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<sup>59</sup>D. W. Seiders to Eli Thayer, July 26, 1855, Eli Thayer Papers.

one at Wiscasset--one at Edgecombe and one at Damariscotta--though of a political nature yet they were brim full of Kansas--I find that the damnable legislature /in reference to the "bogus" legislature held by pro-slavery interests/ in Kansas is having its effect here in intimidating to some extent, those who had been thinking of emigrating.

Again, our Stump orators throughout the land have been portraying the outrages in that Territory so vividly, that the chickenhearted in all the East, I fear, will abandon the idea of going.<sup>60</sup>

Three distinct types of speakers have been mentioned in these letters. Each filled a particular role during the campaign to raise a colony in Maine. Eli Thayer, who represented the company on the platform, was best known for his lucid descriptions of the functioning of the company. He made the plan of emigration seem feasible, both to the traveler and to the investor. Seiders had "been there." He described conditions in the territory, explained the functioning of the politics there, and worked with the purpose of taking men with him when he returned to the west. The emotional impact found its basis in the work of the third group, the local "stump orators."

At times these groups might overlap. When company agents returned from the territory they represented the company

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<sup>60</sup>D. W. Seiders to Eli Thayer, September 12, 1855,  
Eli Thayer Papers.

while also being "newly arrived from the territory." At other times, local men would return from the west, either to prepare to move their families or from a voyage of observation and would combine the role of local speaker and returning expert. Luke Lincoln was of this type as may be seen in the minutes of a trustees meeting:

Mr. Luke T. Lincoln; a member of the second Emigrant party was present and gave a very encouraging account of the present condition of Lawrence which city he left on the 13th ult.

As Mr. Lincoln contemplates remaining in this vicinity until the first Spring Party starts, he was recommended to avail himself of opportunities that may occur, by addresses, or otherwise, to spread information relative to the Territory.<sup>61</sup>

### Kansas Leagues and Auxiliaries

The opportunities that Mr. Lincoln, and others who spoke for the company, found available often occurred through the activities of local "Kansas Leagues." The company was active in forming such organizations. Eli Thayer, in his first major appearance in various locations, seemed to be particularly concerned with doing so. In Lowell, Massachusetts, on October 16,

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<sup>61</sup> Minutes of the trustees meeting, August 7, 1854,  
Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

1854 (at the same occasion so thoroughly reported by the Morning Star), Mr. Thayer reported the formation of a Kansas League. An early speaking tour through the northern New England states was made primarily for the purpose of creating such organizations. "Mr. Thayer is to write to Capron in relation to making a tour through Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire, with the view of organizing Auxiliary Emigrant Aid Associations," noted the minutes of a trustees meeting in early August of 1854.<sup>62</sup>

The model for such organizations was generally the "Worcester County Kansas League" which was formed in early July of 1854.<sup>63</sup> Company speakers often carried copies of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Worcester County organization to be used as a pattern for other newly formed leagues. In a circular dated July 11, 1854, an invitation was extended to citizens interested in affiliating with the Worcester County Kansas League or in forming a branch organization:

We invite you, therefore, to assist in the great enterprise in which we are engaged, by calling the attention of your fellow citizens to the objects of the League, as widely as you can, by a public meeting, or in whatever other way seems

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the trustees meeting, August 7, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>63</sup> See the article clipped from The Congregationalist, dated August 18, 1854, which closed by suggesting the use of the Worcester form as a guide for others. Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 96.

desirable. May it not be advantageous to establish a Branch Society in your own town, with the object of extending a knowledge of the Society's plan: of collecting the names of persons who wish to emigrate: and sustaining the interest which is generally roused at the present time? So soon as you think the people generally, are interested in the measure, will you canvass your town thoroughly for members to this organization?<sup>64</sup>

The leagues served two basic functions. They solicited funds and, as may be seen from the quotation, contacted potential emigrants. The public conversation which they aroused may be illustrative of C. Wright Mills' observation that "the most effective and immediate context of changing opinion is people talking informally with people."<sup>65</sup> The leagues sponsored formal programs which served as a basis for the informal persuasion which followed. In these programs it was often the league which would appeal to the company for a speaker, as the Providence committee did to Mr. Hale in the example which has been cited. At times the company would contact various leagues in an attempt to arrange speaking tours for particular speakers. This was true when Samuel Pomeroy returned from Kansas in the summer of 1855. "The Secretary reported that he addressed Letters to Wm. J.

<sup>64</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 60A.

<sup>65</sup> C. Wright Mills, Power, Politics and People (New York: Ballantine Books, 1939), p. 586.

Rotch of New Bedford, Seth Padelford, Esq. of Providence, and R. P. Waters Esq. of Salem as to the advisability of Mr. Pomeroy's visiting those places and addressing the citizens on the subject of Kanzas," noted the secretary in the minutes of an executive committee meeting. The results of the letters sent was also recorded. "The first named gentleman holds out no encouragement for the present; the second promises to write if he can get others interested; the third proposes a meeting at Salem on Monday evening next."<sup>66</sup> From this response some indication of the ability which the local leagues had to mesh the company rallies with local interests may be inferred. This probably accounted for the large audiences frequently reported by company speakers.<sup>67</sup>

As an instrument for soliciting emigrants the various leagues frequently appointed an officer entitled "Master of Emigration." Generally the flow of emigrants from any single community was slow. A few people at a time would join the

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the executive committee meeting, June 9, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>67</sup> An audience of one thousand was reported by the Dover, Morning Star in the report of Thayer's appearance at Lowell, Massachusetts in October 16, 1854. A New Haven, Connecticut departure rally reported "Every seat and standing place in the hall was filled and hundreds went away, unable to gain admission," See New York Daily Tribune, April 4, 1856. Speakers like Thayer generally reported a "good attendance" but were unspecific as to the approximate numbers addressed.

companies being formed to depart from Boston or some other center. The contact made was on a person to person level as indicated by this report on the method of company operation:

The companies /of emigrants/ generally comprised several individuals, or perhaps several families, from the same town. Wherever one or two people proposed to emigrate, they would be apt to ask that a speaker might be sent to them from the Emigrant Aid Company, or from some Kansas League. He carried with him his map, he explained the situation, he described the wonderful charms of the maiden territory, and of course he dwelt on the great political necessity of the hour. In such a meeting there would probably be one or two persons of intelligence who commanded the respect of their neighbors, and they would organize the party, so far as it had any organization.<sup>68</sup>

Such a party left Lowell, Massachusetts, about three weeks after Thayer had spoken there. The Boston Daily Evening Traveller reported, on November 6, 1854, "A Party for Kansas-- The Lowell Kansas League is to furnish at least six members of the next party for Kansas, who will join the party that is to start from this city at 2-1/2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. Those who compose this little party, says the Lowell Courier, are all persons of whom Lowell may well be proud."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Manuscript fragment by Edward E. Hale, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. II, p. 4.

A few of the leagues managed to form large parties which, in themselves, would make up a colony in Kansas. These parties would frequently organize and form a community which was transferred whole to the territory. The Hampden County Colony founded Burlington, Kansas, in this way and in 1856 the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony" founded Wabaunsee.<sup>70</sup>

In a Master's thesis entitled "The Connecticut Kansas Colony of 1856-1857," William A. Osmer has described the founding of the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony." Although Osmer did not mention the Emigrant Aid Company, the pattern and the keynote speaker of the formative meeting were familiar:

Whatever may have been their motives, it would have been quite evident to an observer at a meeting held at New Haven, Connecticut on the evening of February 17, 1856 that many people living in that area were much interested in Kansas. S. C. Pomeroy, later United States Senator from Kansas, was in the East during the winter of 1856, and on that particular evening had delivered an address on the subject of Kansas. He related information concerning the struggle then being waged in the territory, and set forth various advantages offered by the new country to prospective immigrants. Other speakers addressed the assembly, among them was Charles B. Lines. At the conclusion of his speech Mr. Lines stated his intention of forming a company to emigrate to Kansas.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 61.

<sup>71</sup> William A. Osmer, "The Connecticut Kansas Colony of 1856-1857," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Kansas State College, 1953), pp. 8-9.

Mr. Lines was a townsman of prominence. His ability as a temperance orator had helped him secure a position in the state legislature. In New Haven he was a cabinet maker and undertaker (although the relationship of these occupations has been left to the reader's speculation).<sup>72</sup> He took a primary role in leading the colony to Kansas as he had in stimulating interest in migrating.

As fund raising organizations the Kansas leagues were less successful. Amos A. Lawrence, in one of his infrequent speeches, appealed to local organizations to take on the role of fund collector:

A small sum of money collected in each town in N. England, a single cent for each inhabitant for two successive years will ensure complete success / of the goals of the company in establishing schools, churches and other institutions in Kansas/. But who is to do this work of collection? It will cost more than the whole sum raised. There is no way but by the voluntary formation of auxiliary societies, every one of which shall at once make its own collections, and forward them to the Trustees in Boston. This is the kind of aid that is wanted now, and all the eloquence, and all the expressions of sympathy will not supply its place.<sup>73</sup>

Some money was raised, but the local societies soon became reluctant to apply it to the needs of the company. A dilemma,

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>73</sup> Speech manuscript dated October, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

which will be considered as a source of factioning within the company, prevented success in this kind of an enterprise. The stock company was designed to be a profit making business, according to the descriptions of Eli Thayer. Why, then, should it receive charitable support? This position was made clear when L. B. Russell wrote to Edward E. Hale that "there is an objection to giving the money to us, as we are so often represented as a business company solely." (Underlining Russell's.)<sup>74</sup>

Of course the selling of stock should have been the answer, but as the situation in Kansas became more and more war-like the appeal of stock became less and less. Russell commented on this also: "The Kansas contributions for aid to the relief fund /as a result of the warlike conditions which were being reported in Kansas/ come in nobly, but the subscriptions to our Co. Stock, from that very cause, have nearly ceased."<sup>75</sup> The inability of people holding stock to redeem it for even a fraction of the original cost of twenty dollars a share further undermined the company's appeal as an investment. Stock began to look more and more like

<sup>74</sup> L. B. Russell to E. E. Hale, June 30, 1856, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

what it actually turned out to be, a contribution to a cause.<sup>76</sup>

As company finances became even more critical than usual the company policy of trying to sell stock after a rally also came under attack. The advise given by one Calvin Cutter in a letter to S. G. Howe may explain in part the reason why stock sales benefited little from the emotions aroused by the conflict in Kansas: "At the meeting, take up the subscription. Let every person be asked to subscribe at once--It is a mistake to put off the subscription for someone to get the next day while the time is taken up with rhetorical gaseous speeches."<sup>77</sup> This was good advice, but not always possible. In soliciting the services of Eli Thayer, J. O. Thayer imposed the following restriction: "I should prefer that nothing be solicited in the meeting but that he [Eli Thayer] should if he choose call on the people individually."<sup>78</sup> The reason for this request is that J. O. Thayer felt that, since he had been put in charge of a small fund with which to secure speakers, it would be unethical for him to secure a person who would seek

<sup>76</sup> See various letters to Lawrence in which he refused to buy back stock at even fifty percent of face value, Amos A. Lawrence Papers, and Amos A. Lawrence Letters.

<sup>77</sup> Calvin Cutter to S. G. Howe, May 31, 1856, S. G. Howe Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>78</sup> J. O. Thayer to C. Branscomb, October 30, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

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contributions.

Yet another reason for the difficulty of raising money on a local level may be inferred from a letter that Samuel Pomeroy wrote to Thomas Webb, company secretary, while on a speaking tour in Maine in January of 1856. The company had adopted a strictly non-partisan stance but local money was being applied to political goals with the elections of 1856 impending. Pomeroy, after a wry evaluation of the various political factions active in Maine and the desire of each to have Pomeroy "grind" their "dull axes," remarked of his speech in Augusta: "On the whole Doctor, you have sent me into a hard field. I could get money if I would do their party work. But I wont!!" He closed with reference to forthcoming speeches in Bangor and a request for Webb to "hold your temper when I come back without Money!" (Underlining 80 Pomeroy's.)

The Kansas leagues, along with the local churches (which will be considered in the next chapter), constituted the formal channels through which information about the company reached the various communities. They were widespread, numbering in excess of two dozen leagues which can be named today and many

79 Ibid.

80 S. C. Pomeroy to Thomas Webb, January 29, 1866,  
Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

others which may have been merely 'paper' organizations<sup>81</sup> The leagues provided a point of contact between the local interests and the company, a source of speakers and printed materials for the local organizations, a platform and a method of locating some emigrants and occasionally a little money to the company. They were efficient in spreading the word about Kansas, but because of the problems of inconsistency (which will be discussed as a source of factioning) were less efficient in securing the goals of the company.

#### Informal Channels

Although the informal channels operative within the membership are more difficult to trace, there is evidence that several different types of organizations functioned as agencies for transmission of information and influence. Among these were social organizations, business relationships, educational institutions, and family affiliations. People like Amos A. Lawrence, John Carter Brown, and Thomas Webb made wide use of such structures.

The Massachusetts Historical Society was an example of the type of social structure which provided a meeting place for

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<sup>81</sup> Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 60.

some of the company hierarchy. For a time Webb even maintained a company office there without the wholehearted consent of the members: "This evidently proved to be an annoyance to the sedate Bostonians who frequented that seat of erudition, for the officers of the Society bombarded Amos A. Lawrence for weeks on end to get rid of Dr. Webb, even threatening to throw him out bodily. They complained that their rooms were constantly filled with rough men who smoked tobacco and otherwise made themselves a

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nuisance."<sup>82</sup> An examination of the membership of the Society does reveal that many of those influential in the Emigrant Aid Company were made members at about the same time in the Massachusetts Historical Society. The most notable of these was John Carter Brown, the president of the Emigrant Aid Company who was elected to membership in the Historical Society on August 10, 1854.<sup>83</sup> The point of contact between the company and the Historical Society was probably Dr. Thomas Webb, who had been made a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society on September 28, 1848, and frequently was active on the "Scrutinizing

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82 Johnson, p. 111.

83 Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. II, 1835-1855 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1880), p. 582.

"Committee" which screened potential members.<sup>84</sup> Other men prominent in local activities of the Emigrant Aid Company included William Willis of Portland, Maine, who served as one of the directors of the company and was elected "Corresponding Member"<sup>85</sup> of the Historical Society on May 11, 1854.

The business relationship of Amos A. Lawrence and others in the New England industrial community provided a means by which Lawrence could solicit funds from various colleagues. His letters often included such appeals.<sup>86</sup> Some industries responded by offering merchandise instead of money as illustrated by this notation from the company minutes: "A proposition /was received/ of Gage Porter, and Co., Saw Manufacturers, Fisherville, N. H., to take Three Hundred Dollars of the Co., 's Stock and pay for the same in saws of their manufacture, at ten per ct. discount from their List Prices---also a similar proposition of L. D.

<sup>87</sup> Brown . . ." Such an offer was quite compatible with the company's goal of establishing saw-mills in Kansas to aid the incoming emigrants in securing lumber and to return a profit to the

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 569.

<sup>86</sup> Amos A. Lawrence Letters, passim.

<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the trustees meeting, February 23, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

company.

The educational institutions of Yale, in New Haven, Connecticut, Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, and Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Maine, were centers of Emigrant Aid Company activity. An active group of professors at each college solicited their colleagues support, carried the message to the community, and occasionally published articles and fliers in regard to Kansas or Emigrant Aid Company activities. Professor A. S. Packard and Thomas C. Upham at Bowdoin were apparently well acquainted with Amos A. Lawrence and carried on an active correspondence in regard to company activities there.<sup>88</sup> At Brown University, which was Thayer's alma mater, various faculty members rallied around John Carter Brown, a Providence businessman of considerable wealth who was a benefactor of the University. At Yale, there was a very active group which included Professor A. C. Twining, who had authored at least one article on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and Professor Benjamin Silliman. The Yale group was particularly successful. More than one third of the Connecticut Kansas Colony (also called the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony") of approximately seventy-five were reported to

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<sup>88</sup> Amos A. Lawrence Letters, passim.

be Yale graduates.<sup>89</sup> Yale students participated in fund drives to raise money for the purchase of Sharp's rifles to help arm the company against the forays of the Missouri ruffians.<sup>90</sup> Part of the fund was raised by Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn, New York, and each settler was sent forth with several sources of moral persuasion: a Bible, a hymn book, and a Sharp's rifle (which came to be known as a "Beecher's Bible").<sup>91</sup>

Family relationships also formed lines of communication within the company. One pivotal figure was Mrs. Charles Robinson. She was the daughter of the Honorable Myron Lawrence and therefore a relative of Amos A. Lawrence. On her mother's side of the family she was related to Timothy Dwight of Yale. Charles Robinson alluded to the relationship to Lawrence in a letter in which he claimed to have been the first to recommend the name of "Lawrence" for the new town being founded in Kansas: "I am very much attached to the name, for more reasons than one, as you may be aware."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Osmer, p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Robinson to Amos A. Lawrence, October 16, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

Much of this type of family communication also occurred among the emigrants and potential emigrant in the individual communities. Isaac Goodnow, who was instrumental in the founding of Manhattan and Kansas State University, gave up his teaching position in Rhode Island and emigrated in a party lead by Charles Robinson which left New England on March 6, 1855. His diary described the preparations for the trip, which included visiting relatives. Two brief entries give an indication of the nature of these family visits:

Thursday, February 15  
Dined at Aunt Denison's in Chicopa. Stirred them up for Kansas!

Tuesday, February 20  
Visited at home today. Kansas the all engrossing subject! (Underlining Goodnow's.)<sup>93</sup>

It seems reasonable to speculate that this type of persuasion was not uncommon.

The Emigrant Aid Company handled the problem of bringing its message to the New England communities with a diversified approach. The available media of publication, including books, pamphlets, and newspapers was widely used. It also took

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<sup>93</sup> Isaac Goodnow Diaries, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

advantage of the popularity of local rallies to provide speakers and at times arrange speaking engagements. A broad network of local auxiliaries, generally called "Kansas Leagues," served as the line of communication between the parent organization and the local partisans. The league was the primary source of emigrants and drew its persuasive power from the use of personal contact within the individual communities. As such, it was a manifestation of what has been called the "two-stage flow" of information. The company initiated materials which were passed to the various communities via the leagues. Opinion leaders within the leagues or within the community then confirmed it, added or amplified the motivational appeal, and played the central role of mediator between the company and its potential constituency.<sup>94</sup> A series of informal communication nets also existed within the company. Many of these, including social organization, business affiliations and educational institutions, were used primarily by the company hierarchy. Family affiliations existed on all levels and also functioned as an important source of communication and influence. As William Bruce Cameron has said, "Communication is essential

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<sup>94</sup> See Erwin P. Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communication, pp. 185-190.

if enough people are to share their similar dissatisfactions and find the numbers of kindred spirits to permit effective collective action."<sup>95</sup> The company was active in establishing this communication.

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William Bruce Cameron, Modern Social Movements,  
p. 11.

## Chapter VIII

### THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY

From the first settlement of these shores, from those early days of struggle and privation--through the trials of the Revolution--the clergy have been associated, not only with the piety and learning, but with the liberties of the country

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In the days of the Revolution, John Adams, yearning for independence, said--"Let the pulpits thunder against oppression."<sup>1</sup> And the pulpits thundered. The time has come for them to thunder again.<sup>1</sup>

So spoke Charles Sumner in the United States Senate on the occasion of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. He was not to be disappointed. A majority of the New England clergy had spoken out against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise when, on March 1, 1854, three thousand and fifty of them signed a protest addressed to the United States Congress.<sup>2</sup> Some of these same New England clergy became active advocates of organized emigration.

The role of the clergy, as a persuasive force, will be examined from three perspectives: first, an analysis of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Morning Star, Dover, New Hampshire, June 14, 1854, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Richard Denton, "The Unitarian Church and 'Kanza Territory,' 1854-1861," The Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXX (Autumn, 1964), p. 314. Also see Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 123 and The Morning Star of June 14, 1854, which announced a second meeting of those who had signed the protest, on page 5.

ideological elements which they found appropriate; second, an examination of the patterns of influence among that segment of the clerical community who became involved in this issue; and third, a consideration of the charges of "prostitution of the pulpit" and counter-argument of "social involvement."

### Ideological Appeal

Although other groups had found in the Emigrant Aid Company appeals based upon such things as the economic survival of the most fit system or political self-preservation, the clergy found the company to be an agency which offered to extend socially beneficial institutions into the new territory. A propaganda brochure entitled "Education, Temperance, Freedom, Religion in Kansas," printed by the company in July of 1855, lists those elements which the clergy found particularly appealing.

"Temperance" was a timely choice since the "Maine Law," a prohibitory anti-liquor measure, was widely discussed and debated throughout New England at the time. It had the general support of the clergy. In a book recalling the antislavery campaign in Maine, the Reverend Austin Willey showed the placement of this law in relation to slavery: "The Maine law had come into prominence together with freedom in nearly all the free states; and this contributed to the division of the old parties, inevitable moral gravitation

toward union of liquor and slavery, and temperance and liberty."<sup>3</sup>

The same judgment was made by Professor A. S. Packard of Bowdoin College in a letter to Amos A. Lawrence: "In the absence of the old grounds of political division, we had among us the question of a prohibitory law against the sale of intoxicating drinks--and the Nebraska or slavery question--and all who were not true on these two points have been thrust aside sans ceremonie."<sup>4</sup>

The company proved to be an instrument by which this law could be moved west. In the minutes of a trustees meeting is found: "The secretary reported having written since the last meeting to Dr. Robinson, advising among other things if practicable, to enforce the Maine Law at the settlement."<sup>5</sup> About a month later a letter was received from Charles Robinson on "the enforcement of the Maine Liquor Law."<sup>6</sup> The effect of such actions may be seen in a letter from one Samuel K. Towle to Isaac Goodnow, who was a clergyman as well as being a teacher, "I am a native

<sup>3</sup>

Austin Willey, The History of the Antislavery Cause in State and Nation (Portland, Maine: Brown Thurston and Hoyt, Fogg and Donham, 1886), p. 422.

<sup>4</sup>

A. S. Packard to Amos A. Lawrence, September 12, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>5</sup>

Minutes of the trustees meeting, October 21, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>6</sup>

Ibid., November 22, 1854.

of Maine and have seen enough of the workings of the Maine Law to convince me that it ought to go to Kansas sure. Freedom and the Maine Law go naturally hand in hand and I think are part of Christianity."<sup>7</sup> This letter was written in response to an article which Goodnow had published in Zion's Herald earlier that month. Whittier's song, "The Kanza Emigrants," expressed many of the hopes of the clergy. One verse, for instance, proclaimed:

Upbearing, like the Ark of old,  
The Bible in our van,  
We go to test the truth of God  
Against the fraud of man.<sup>8</sup>

The extension of religious institutions was another basis for participation on the part of the clergy. Again, they were not disappointed.

The Unitarian Church was particularly active in seeking to extend its influence into Kansas. One basis for this aggressiveness may be inferred from a statement made by Samuel K. Lothrop, pastor of the Brattle Street Unitarian Church in Boston and an active supporter of the Emigrant Aid Company: "We hear of the Romish, of the Greek, of the Gallican, of the English Church. There is yet to be an American Church . . ."<sup>9</sup> Even before the passage

<sup>7</sup> Samuel K. Towle to Isaac Goodnow, January 30, 1855, Goodnow Correspondence, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>8</sup> See Lays of the Emigrants, folder in the collection at the Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>9</sup> Denton, p. 308.

of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill Edward E. Hale had been in contact with other clergymen in regard to the extension of Unitarian influence into Kansas.<sup>10</sup> He, and others like him, worked so actively that eventually he was forced to defend the Emigrant Aid Company by asserting that it was not merely an agency for the extension of Unitarianism.

The Unitarians involved in Emigrant Aid Company activities were not always transcendentalists. Lothrop, as Denton has stated, "is remembered for his antagonism to the Rev. Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson."<sup>11</sup> The view of race developed by Lothrop was compatible with the general view of the African followed by the Emigrant Aid Company officials, particularly Thayer. In seeking a basis for his "American Church" Lothrop noted: "The whole atmosphere of our American society and our American life is one of individual and independent thought, securing to each man (each man, I mean, of a white skin) the largest freedom."<sup>12</sup> Feelings toward the hard core Abolitionists were likewise rather

<sup>10</sup> Edward E. Hale letterbox, Kansas State Historical Society. Also see letters from W. D. Haley dated April 27, 1854, June 7, 1854 and June 21, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Denton, p. 308.

<sup>12</sup> Denton, p. 308.

hostile on the part of many of the more reserved Unitarians.

Although the right of free speech was kept sacred, the Abolitionists were rebuked for going outside the law to effect change.<sup>13</sup>

Education was generally linked with religion as a worthy institution to be carried to the plains. In a speech in Lawrence, Kansas, which was well reported in the Eastern press, Samuel Pomeroy said, "We come here with the Bible in one hand and the spelling-book in the other, with the high purpose of laying the one upon the alter of a free church and the other upon the desk of a free school."<sup>14</sup> One of the early projects which interested various officers of the Emigrant Aid Company was the establishment of a college in Lawrence, Kansas. Amos A. Lawrence, who had been instrumental in financing other colleges, took a primary interest in this project.<sup>15</sup> Although Lawrence's motive in this enterprise was not to solicit support from the clergy, this certainly lent credibility to the company's stated purpose of moving various useful institutions to Kansas.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>14</sup> Clipping from the Springfield, Massachusetts, Weekly Republican, November 18, 1854. See Webb Scrapbook, Vol. II, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, November 21, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Letters.

The ideology of the Emigrant Aid Company encompassed those items dear to many of the New England clergy and, in doing so, secured the support of the pulpit in many New England communities. The basic line of appeal to the clergy was the promise of transporting social ideas and institutions to the territory. Chief among these were temperance, the establishment of churches (particularly Unitarian Churches), and the promise of educational opportunity for the settlers.

#### Patterns of Influence

It has already been suggested that the Reverend Edward E. Hale was a primary force in the involvement of New England clergy. The scope of his influence may be seen in the letters which he received regarding the work of the company in various parts of New England. A letter from the Reverend Will O. White of Keene, New Hampshire, gave Hale a synopsis of the possible help which could be mustered in that state. While bemoaning the small number of Unitarians in New Hampshire, White recommended direct contact with various clergy and New Hampshire newspapers. The nature of his work may be seen in the following paragraph from his letter: "I have spoken to a Baptist minister who says that he will write something for the 'Watchman and Reflector' published in Boston . . . I will see Dr. Barstow [a prominent Keene minister]

and school board member<sup>16</sup> 7 today and try to induce him to write for the Congregational Journal published in Concord, N. H. I will see that something goes into our paper here in Keene."<sup>17</sup>

The list of over three thousand clergy who had signed the protest of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise provided a fine mailing list for company propaganda. The minutes of a trustees meeting report "Mr. Lawrence submitted the Draught of a letter to the Clergymen of New-England who signed the remonstrance to Congress against the repeal of the Compromise Act, soliciting their aid in behalf of the Company's objects."<sup>18</sup> The following summer another circular was prepared. This time the names of various clergymen endorsing the company's action were affixed. Included were Calvin Stowe, the husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lyman Beecher, and of course Hale. On July 9, 1855, envelopes were ordered and the circulars, entitled "Education, Temperance, Freedom, Religion in Kansas," were

<sup>16</sup> S. G. Griffin, A History of the Town of Keene (Keene, New Hampshire: Sentinel Printing Company, 1904), p. 377.

<sup>17</sup> Will O. White to Edward E. Hale, July 12, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the trustees meeting, September 23, 1854, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

placed in the hands of ministers of various denominations. Each was instructed to mail his circulars to a list of colleagues in his own denomination. The object of the company was to secure the purchase of one share of stock by each clergyman (or by each congregation in the name of the clergyman). This would entitle the shareholder to a life-membership in the company and the right to attend the annual stockholder's meetings.

Eli Thayer has compared the organization of the clergy to the Kansas leagues in his book The Kansas Crusade.<sup>19</sup> The comparison seems to be a fair one. The message was taken to many communities through the pulpit. At least one parishoner responded with money upon which he had written the following: "No slavery in Kansas or Nebraska! Down with the slavery extensionists and doughfaces! Hurrah for free schools, free labor, free men, and free soil!"<sup>20</sup>

#### Prostitution of the Pulpit or Social Involvement?

Hardly had the protest of the clergy been registered in the United States Senate by Edward Everett than Stephen A. Douglas

<sup>19</sup> Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> Written on the back of a one-dollar bill donated at the Milford, New Hampshire Congregational Church. Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

was upon it with an attack that reverberated in the Northern press.

He charged that it was an "atrocious falsehood and an atrocious calumny against this Senate," that it "desecrated the pulpit," and "prostituted the sacred desk to the miserable and corrupting

influence of party politics."<sup>21</sup> The New England clergy answered

with a poem entitled "The Coming Crisis" printed in the April 3,

1854, Christian Register, a Unitarian paper published in Boston:

Hark! In the Horologue of Time  
 God strikes the awful hour!  
 Zion must now stand face to face  
 With Moloch's threat'ning power;  
 The subtle web of Compromise  
 Her hand and foot that bound,  
 Breaks clean away--and now her feet  
 Take hold on solid ground!<sup>22</sup>

The New England clergy would not be easily cowed back to their pulpits. James Freeman Clarke, in his Autobiography and Correspondence, remarked on the flexibility of the services which he conducted in Boston:

If Mr. Polk, or Mr. Pierce, or Mr. Buchanan had committed the nation to some new imbecility or infamy, the Wednesday meeting took cognizance of it, in discussion or perhaps in action. The Wednesday evening meeting was not so transcendental but that it could send rifles to Kansas; it was

<sup>21</sup> Denton, pp. 314-315.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 316.

not so practical but that it could discuss freewill and fore-knowledge . . .

The determination to "do something about it," which, from the nature of the case, is inherent in all Unitarian consultations, showed itself of necessity in these meetings.<sup>23</sup>

The description of the type of interaction at the Wednesday meetings shows the potential for interpersonal persuasion in this context: "All is informal conversation; we have no speechmaking, we sit in a circle, and no one rises to speak. The meetings have educated the church to thought and its expression."<sup>24</sup>

The Sunday services were another story. The subject of social reform was widely used but the ministers did not always confine themselves to calm, "rational" explication of social phenomena:

Mr. Young, the Unitarian clergyman of this village [Burlington, Vermont], gave the Fugitive Slave Law some tremendously hard hits yesterday. He was in Boston during the Burns excitement and returned to his people full of the true Ethan Allen spirit . . . It is not the first time this clergyman has thundered his anathemas from the pulpit against the monstrous evils of human bondage. A few of his hearings wince, but that does not keep him from crying aloud.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Edward E. Hale, Editor, James Freeman Clarke, Autobiography Diary and Correspondence (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892), pp. 202-203.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>25</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 12.

Although this speaker was dealing with the Fugitive Slave Law, the same approach appears to have been used on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. "Some of the clergy have taken the field against the Nebraska bill, and are fulminating their anathemas against it from the pulpit with papistical zeal and arrogance," declared the Dover Gazette in June of 1854. The article continued with a statement strongly reminiscent of Stephen A. Douglas' attack: "Let those clergymen, who persist in preaching politics on the sabbath, preach it to whig and abolitionist congregations if such is their desire. If they have the right to preach whiggery and abolitionism, the Democracy have the correlative right to refuse to hear them, and to pay their money to such clergymen who preach the Gospel of Jesus unadulterated with party politics." (Underlining the Gazette's).<sup>26</sup>

In a sense the religious stance of the liberal element of the Northern clergy, and its contrast to the religious institutions of the South, were a microcosm of the greater conflict in sectional ideology. This tenet is the argument of Russel B. Nye in his book, The Cultural Life of the New Nation. After pointing to the ironic element within the situation in the 1850's, that "Southern Protestantism

<sup>26</sup> The Dover Gazette and Strafford Advertizer, Dover, New Hampshire, June 17, 1854, p. 3.

was far closer in creed and temper to the ideals of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of 1650 than it was to Jefferson's Virginia of 1750," Nye remarked of the educational influences: "By the time the Unitarians had captured most of New England, in the South all the seminaries and universities (with the possible exception of the University of Virginia) were in the hands of evangelical faculties."<sup>27</sup> The ideological split which resulted found the Northern theology particularly receptive to social change for it led to a perception of man and God which was based in the individual:

In moving thus toward theological individualism, New England pointed toward Emerson, Beecher, and Finney as clearly as it did toward Garrison, Horace Mann, Dorothea Dix, William Ladd, and the great group of reformers who crusaded (from religious motives) for human, individual rights. The South, faced with the necessity of defending the status quo, was forced to reject the individualistic implications of the whole Romantic movement; indeed, it found it necessary to use its theology as an instrument to protect its vital, central institution.<sup>28</sup>

Social concern was legitimate concern for many of the New England clergy. The pulpit could be used for other types of persuasion than the strict preaching of the "Gospel of Jesus." Emigration to Kansas, as a method of extending useful social

<sup>27</sup> Russel Blaine Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 233.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

institutions (beyond simple religious proselyting) was not, by these standards, prostitution of the pulpit.

Such a liberal view of religion brought forth a different type of religious or ideological spokesman: "The South could not risk a Thoreau. Instead of Emerson, the religious liberal, it produced Calhoun, the political conservative; instead of Brook Farmers, it yielded fire-eaters."<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusion

In many senses the clergy represented the New England Emigrant Aid Company in microcosm. The ideological commitment to extend New England customs, including education, religion, and a rather topical zeal for temperance, was the same commitment the company had made to the emigrants it proposed to aid. Structurally, the clergy operated in local areas under the influence of certain key clergy in a manner very similar to the Kansas leagues. The clergy did fight the unique battle of defending their right to speak from the sanctuary of the pulpit on these issues, but in doing so the sectional differences in philosophy became distinct.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 233-234.

The clergy fought with a fervor beyond that of the "information-like" company speakers. They stimulated the spirit of competition:

We are all awake to the struggle in Kansas. We say, Go on with your work of emigration. Be not weary in well-doing." Let us pour such an anti-slavery element into that swelling population, that whatever political success slavery may obtain there, the very atmosphere shall be pestilential to it; yea, that it shall feel as it grows up, a fire burning in its very vitals, and destined speedily to consume it.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> W. C. Jackson to Reverend J. S. Clark, D. D., September 12, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

## Chapter IX

### FAC TIONING

The Emigrant Aid Company, from the very outset, had been interpreted in different ways by the various members of the company leadership. Toch observed that:

Although a common basis for the perception of social movements is created by the problems that members have in common, and by information about the movement that is available to all, it is still a fact that each person joins a somewhat different social movement. Every person's perception of the appeals of his movement is partly a reflection of his private concerns and interests. Every member's views are colored by his unique past experiences. These personal images of social movements can produce differences between conceptions and preconceptions in subsequent perceptual encounters.<sup>1</sup>

The "personal images" mentioned by Toch may be reduced to two basic points of view among the leadership of the company. Since these points of view followed geographic lines to a great extent they will be labeled according to their primary location.

#### The Worcester Group

There is no question that Eli Thayer, with the help of Edward E. Hale, laid the groundwork for the Emigrant Aid Company.

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<sup>1</sup>

Toch, Social Psychology of Social Movements, p. 161.

The basic ideology was his and included, as has been discussed, the selling of stock on the basis of profit motive, the organization of emigration as a means to corporate profits, and the expansion of institutions acceptable to New Englanders and Anglo-Saxons as a motive for popular support. It also promised the prospective settler a home with the same conveniences and institutions as the one he had left.

Thayer and Hale were joined by others in the Worcester area in a group that was young, vigorous, and quite sold on the idea of self-improvement through rigorous effort. They had great faith in man's ability to improve himself. New Englanders like inventor, Eli Whitney and Worcester's "learned blacksmith," Elihu Burritt, were prominent living examples of the resourcefulness of man. Amos A. Lawrence characterized the vigor of this group in a letter to Edward E. Hale which, after some discussion of the differences in philosophy between the people in Worcester and those in Boston, concluded: "You shall be the 'Young America'  
and we shall be the 'old fogey.' "<sup>2</sup>

The Worcester group, behind the leadership of Thayer, placed implicit faith in the ability of economic competition to

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<sup>2</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Edward E. Hale, February 25, 1855, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

secure desirable institutions. It also viewed the company as a long term organization with potential for operations in places other than Kansas. It was far less concerned with the use of native New Englanders as emigrants and actually favored soliciting foreign settlers.

Within the Worcester group the ablest speakers--Thayer and Hale--were found. And, as has already been mentioned, Thayer was by far the most mobile of the company leadership. This meant that the public image of the company was the image developed by the Worcester group.

#### The Boston Group

Money and influence were the dominant characteristics of the Boston group. Such prominent local figures as Amos A. Lawrence (company treasurer), J. M. S. Williams (company trustee), and John Carter Brown of Providence (company president) were within this group. They were major stockholders and prominent in business. Politically, they appear to have been relatively inactive but quite influential as confidants and financial supporters.

They viewed the company as a limited operation. In a letter to Moses Grinnell of New York, urging him to join the company as a trustee, Lawrence described the company and the

role the Boston group intended to play in it: "We are not aspirants for offices, nor honors: we are not politicians, or partisans, and therefore can act effectively, when others cannot. Here is a plan which is simple: which does not involve personal or pecuniary risk: which can soon be executed and the association dissolved."<sup>3</sup>

As early as September 2, 1854, Lawrence expressed satisfaction with the work of the company in a letter to J. M. S. Williams, who

had been rather pessimistic about the prospect of stock sales:

"Whatever may be the fate of the Immigrant Aid Company under its present organization, it will have done a good and great work."<sup>4</sup>

In a letter to James Blood, who had been briefly hired by the company

to hold scout Kansas Territory for townsites, Lawrence cited the

following reason for the company's failure to pay Blood: "You must

bear in mind that it /the company/ is a public, patriotic, benevolent

object, and in having anything to do with it, as with similar

associations, you must expect to work hard, pay largely (if you are

rich) and receive nothing in return but a little glory, a great deal of

abuse, and the satisfaction of having done your duty, and served

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<sup>3</sup>

Amos A. Lawrence to Moses Grinnell, June 21, 1854,  
Lawrence Letters.

<sup>4</sup>

Amos A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, September 2, 1854, Lawrence Letters.

your country and your race."<sup>5</sup> This definition of the company is far different from the business for profit approach of the Worcester group.

A comparatively small number of wealthy men dominated the financial end of the company, and although it was nearly always 'in the red,' they used this domination as a source of control. Cameron, in evaluating this kind of financial support for a movement, made two observations which bear directly on the problem which evolved for the Emigrant Aid Company. First, he noted that this means of funding is very tempting for the leader pressed for funds. Thus, in moving his operations to Boston and seeking the support of monied interests, Thayer must be counted as responsible for the factioning that resulted. Second, Cameron has noted that "some men try to buy control of a movement."<sup>6</sup> That is exactly what the Boston group did.

### The Widening Gap

Within four months after the company began operations there was an attempt by the Boston group to control Thayer. An

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<sup>5</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to James Blood, February 16, 1855, Lawrence Letters.

<sup>6</sup> Cameron, Modern Social Movements, p. 104.

exchange of letters occurred between Lawrence and a friend in Nashua, New Hampshire, one Pliny Lawton. The letter from Lawrence to Lawton, marked "confidential," showed not only the method to be used to control Thayer but a view of Thayer's conception of the company:

Boston, Oct. 26, 1854

My Dear Sir:

A meeting to form an Auxiliary Emigrant Aid Society will be held in Nashua on Friday evening. I am interested in the parent society, and am one of the Trustees to manage its affairs. Mr. Eli Thayer is also one. He lectured at Lawrence / Massachusetts/ on Monday night, and /I/ went to hear him: but his views are very different from mine, and he states them as though they were a part of the plan of the Society: and I requested him not to do so: but if he promulgated them at all, to say that they are his own.

1. He says the stock will pay largely: which is possible, but not probable.

2. He proposes to make free states from Missouri to the Pacific, and south to the Gulf of Mexico, immediately (five years) and then operate in the slave states themselves, and free them before many years.

Will you oblige me by writing me whether he still lectures thus? Also will you ask him in public, or request some one to ask him, whether the Constitution of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society sets forth such plans?

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<sup>7</sup> Amos A. Lawrence to Pliny Lawton, October 26, 1854,  
Lawrence Letters.

Pliny Lawton went and reported back to Lawrence. He arranged to have one Dr. Spaulding, "a conservative prudent man," ask the questions which Lawrence had desired. However, the meeting adjourned before Spaulding could ask his questions. When it met again, several days later, E. B. Whitman, company stock subscription agent, was on the platform. He answered the questions by asserting that these were Thayer's interpretations and that the stock would certainly pay off.<sup>8</sup> During the meeting at which Thayer spoke Lawton heard much to report back. Thayer claimed, according to Lawton, that once Kansas was free, "we propose to free Missouri--Virginia or make free states where we can encourage emigration . . . at the rate of a state a year."<sup>9</sup> Thayer reportedly estimated stock dividends of over twenty-five percent.<sup>10</sup>

Such enthusiastic salesmanship on the part of Thayer prompted J. M. S. Williams to write, in August of 1855, asking Thayer to speak in the Boston area:

It has often been said that in your public addresses-- your sanguine feelings has /sic/ given such strength to your remarks as to mislead your audiences, and for this

<sup>8</sup> Pliny Lawton to Amos A. Lawrence, November 3, 1854, Lawrence Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

reason I think it very desirable that you should make a speech here where the Exec utive Com mittee can hear it and judge for themselves, in carrying out our object now, we need the united efforts of all--no mistrust of either towards, or in another, but mutual confidence and labor.<sup>11</sup>

This conciliatory tone did not carry throughout Williams' letter.

In the final paragraph he charged Thayer with failure to participate in the financing of the company: "I want something to help make up your subscription, your labors are not fully appreciated, but if you would pay in money to the cause then all could be sure that you meant something."<sup>12</sup> This sentence was heavily underlined by Williams. Some unknown person added the comment on the bottom of the letter "This last made Mr. Thayer mad, and he talked to J. M. S. W."<sup>13</sup> (Underlining in the original.)

Funding was indeed a source of friction between the two groups. It had its inception in the founding of the company. The idea of a stock subscription method of finance had never appealed to Amos A. Lawrence. During June of 1854 he drafted a constitution for the "Emigrant Aid Society" which was rejected because, as Lawrence noted on the back, "The persons interested thought

<sup>11</sup> J. M. S. Williams to Eli Thayer, August 2, 1855,  
Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

that a stock co. wd. be preferable."<sup>14</sup> The use of the word "Society" rather than "Company" is indicative of the intent of Lawrence. Frequently the company was referred to as the "Emigrant Aid Society" in the press and in history books which have since been printed, an error which signaled the extent of the influence of the Boston group.

It was ironic that Lawrence, who had so strongly opposed the use of a stock subscription, was made treasurer of the company and made primarily responsible for the financial operations of the company. His proposed but rejected constitution suggested, "Any person may become a member by signing his name to this constitution and paying for the use of the Society the sum of X dollar(s) and shall continue to be a member so long as he shall pay such sum annually."<sup>15</sup> Less than a year later Lawrence was receiving bills, which he felt forced to pay from his own pocket, and letters from stock holders seeking to redeem at least part of their investment. Money collected in the Worcester area was being withheld for use there and this added to Lawrence' dis-

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<sup>14</sup> Draft entitled "Constitution . . . . Emigrant Aid Society," Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

pleasure.<sup>16</sup> In letters to friends he frequently voiced the feeling that a philanthropic means of collection should have been initiated. His initial beliefs were completely vindicated and he periodically made a half-hearted move at resignation from the company.

Funding problems irritated Thayer as well. He felt that the conservative interim agreement, adopted in June of 1854, by which the company solicited two-hundred thousand dollars worth of stock and through which individual liability was kept minimal,

<sup>17</sup> conveyed a lack of confidence to the potential stock subscriber.

In a letter to Lawrence's son William some years later Thayer recalled the adoption of the interim agreement, under which the company functioned from June, 1854, until February, 1855, and the reduction in the amount of the stock subscription:

Near the end of May I went to New York City and there secured the cooperation of Horace Greeley and the Tribune and the pledge of subscription to the stock of over \$100,000 making in all / \$35,000 had previously been secured in Boston/ more money subscribed than the New England E. A. Co. ever used. All this work was hit by a false danger signal

<sup>16</sup> Much of this involved the money raised in Worcester to help finance the purchase of the printing press for the Herald of Freedom. Thayer was supposed to put up \$1000 in this cause but ended up supplying only \$200 and drawing the rest from the subscriptions there. Lawrence, in a bitter letter to Hale, declared "I might as well have used the Boston subscriptions to pay my own or my friends' debts." See Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> Eli Thayer to William Lawrence, March 22, 1888, Eli Thayer Papers.

raised by some one in Boston. Had it not / been for this we would have / had in all probability more than one million dollars subscribed within another month. Had we continued under the old Charter our contest in Kansas could easily have been ended in 1855.<sup>18</sup>

At this point Thayer went back to a restatement of his feelings about the role of the company in states other than Kansas and the lack of strength inherent in philanthropy:

Then we could have invested in Eastern Virginia, and while securing large dividends for the Company, we could have made that state as secure for the Union as Massachusetts was. The one grand mistake at this time was relinquishing the old charter and adopting a charitable method instead of a dividend paying method.<sup>19</sup>

Actually, the "dividend paying method" had not been abandoned but had been curtailed, in its scope, by the smaller subscription allowed in the agreement adopted in June of 1854. From this point on Thayer had worked to inflate popular interest in the stock while Lawrence had labored unwillingly under the system.

The press apparently reported the controversy over the adoption of a charter and served notice of the demise of the infant company. The Providence Journal of June 16, 1854,

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. For another description of the same incident see Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, pp. 52-59.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

published the following retraction:

There could not have well been a greater mistake than the line which appeared in our paper yesterday, to the effect that the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Association, in consequence of some defect in the charter, had "deceased." The society has decided, in consequence of this defect, not to organize under the charter, but will not delay its organization to wait for an amendment. It will commence at once, as a joint stock association, and will reorganize under the charter after the necessary amendment has been obtained.<sup>20</sup>

From this quotation, the reasons for the sustained battle between the factions gain another dimension. The company was still ambiguous in the argument of "stock" versus "philanthropy." For a period of nearly nine months it remained so and during these nine months the factions became clearly divided.

#### Non-Communication

Simons has pointed out that one important persuasive task for the leaders of a social movement is the persuasion of others within the group. This was a major failing of the New England Emigrant Aid Company leadership. It could be argued that two distinct companies were evolving. Hale, in a letter to Lawrence, noted the lack of communication between the two in regard to the mistaken publication of a circular by the Worcester group:

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<sup>20</sup> Webb Scrapbooks, Vol. I, p. 20.

Pray understand this, that we are eager to avail ourselves of directions from the Company, and try to get them. We hail a word from Dr. Webb--as an English Soldier does a great coat from Lord Raglan. Had he given any answer to our requests for information, we should never have published a mistaken circular. . . .

Mr. Rice complains of the same difficulty as embarrassing the financial affairs . . .

It is of course impossible that our little brook should quarrel with your great canal. We shall not ever embarrass you, if we can only get light from any source short of angry squibs in the newspapers.<sup>21</sup>

The letters from various members of the Boston group, such as Williams' letter to Thayer which was discussed earlier in this chapter, show that there was contact between the two groups, although in many instances it did more to polarize than to conciliate.

A lack of information occurred on other levels of operation. This was damaging because the company presented itself, as has been demonstrated, as a source of information about Kansas. Yet, as the campaign wore on there were frequent reports of conflicting information. Clement Webster, in a letter to Lawrence, advised that some more reliable sources of information be established in

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<sup>21</sup> Edward E. Hale to Amos A. Lawrence, February 27, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

regard to news from the territory.<sup>22</sup> Of course this would contribute to factioning only insofar as conflicting stories were used by the various elements of the company. This seems to have been the case in the circular to which Hale referred in the letter just quoted. "I availed myself of the only official information I could get, --and it seemed of quite equal authenticity to his Webb's," declared Hale in defense of the circular published by the Worcester group.<sup>23</sup> Stock subscription agent E. B. Whitman also complained about the lack of reliable information from the company. "Acquainted but imperfectly with the affairs of the Company and forced to speak of all those considerations connected with the actual scene of operations only from heresay and in part, my representations must of necessity be weakened in much of their force," explained Whitman in a letter detailing the reasons for his lack of success in selling stock.<sup>24</sup>

Whitman was in an ambiguous position. Although he was hired by the company and reported back to the Boston group

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<sup>22</sup> Clement Webster to Amos A. Lawrence, February 27, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Edward E. Hale to Amos A. Lawrence, February 27, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Report by E. B. Whitman, April 2, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

who dominated its administration, he was "on the road" most of the time and worked closely with Thayer, sometimes speaking on the same platform and other times following Thayer by a few days in a stock canvassing operation. He wrote to the company, in a report dated April 2, 1855, and faulted the Boston group for timidity in financial leadership: "From all quarters attention is drawn towards Boston and its liberal and philanthropic Merchants and Capitalists, and the question is significantly asked, Why does not Boston take the lead boldly and with its accustomed liberality?"

Let her but do this and the Country will respond in its proportion."<sup>25</sup>

This was, no doubt, Thayer's question as well. Later that month Whitman was released from the service of the company.

### The Consequences

Within the structure of the Emigrant Aid Company lay the basis for factoring on other than ideological lines. The many Kansas Leagues and church groups and committees which had joined in the crusade each represented a local faction. The lack of unity of the leadership, compounded by the troubles in Kansas, soon dissipated the strength of the company. Financial support, which had never been strong outside the Boston group, faded badly.

Thayer claimed to rally massive aid in New York, Hartford, and New Haven and some amounts did arrive, but never the amounts claimed by Thayer. Some of these monies stayed in the local community and were used for aiding individual colonies, others may never have existed.

Who was at fault? Two distinct factors played in the splitting of the company. Thayer, a talented platform speaker, proved either unable or uninterested in working on an interpersonal level with the Boston group. His first failure came when, as the company was being put into operation in early June of 1854, he went to New York to solicit Greeley's aid and New York's money. Although he claimed success on this trip, the control of the company passed into the hands of Lawrence and the Boston group. Thayer was not present to defend his plan and, when he returned, could salvage only a compromise working agreement. The split was made at that point.

The second factor which was important in the division of the company were the motives of the Boston group. They did have control of the company, although they never succeeded in muzzling Thayer or Hale. Toch has traced one source of disaffection with a movement in the member who "may join a movement fully aware that his frame of reference differs from that of other

members, but expecting this difference to be irrelevant."<sup>26</sup> The Boston financiers felt that philanthropy could be used in a short term effort to send free-state sympathizers to Kansas. They were uninterested in foreign emigrants, major financial risks and profits, and other possible geographic areas of operation. They allowed financial control and domination of the hierarchy in the company to substitute for any attempt to persuade the Worcester group of the validity of their approach.

Those "irrelevant" differences, mentioned by Toch, created two distinct and soon irreconcilable interpretations of the Emigrant Aid Company. When Thayer and Lawrence withdrew from the company about the end of 1856 the two powerful groups which had followed these men also faded from the scene. Eventually Hale attempted to revive the company with the idea of using emigration as a social force in places like Oregon, but with no success. The Boston group had made their confrontation, the Worcester group (aside from Hale) had gone on to other things.

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<sup>26</sup> Toch, p. 159.

## Chapter X

### THE PERSUASIVE EFFECTS OF THE EMIGRANT AID COMPANY

It would be easy to label the Emigrant Aid Company a failure. The twenty-thousand New Englanders who were to settle in Kansas turned out to be about twelve-hundred and the grand five million dollar stock subscription reached only about one-hundred fifteen thousand dollars by the end of 1856. The company holdings in Kansas were sold, within a few years, for about sixteen-thousand dollars and the outstanding debts of the company were paid. Stock subscriptions were left valueless.

Both Thayer and Lawrence left the company about the end of 1856. Johnson has observed that their departure from the company signaled its end as "a factor in the Kansas Conflict."<sup>1</sup> The long term designs of the company were curtailed. Thayer's correspondence shows that he did pursue the objective of settling Virginia with free colonists during the years from 1856 to 1860. In doing so, he was supported by some of the same people who participated in the Emigrant Aid Company's campaign during its

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in New England Quarterly, Vol. III (January, 1930), p. 119.

most active years.<sup>2</sup> This venture was, however, outside the company's influence.

In retrospect, the company leadership expressed satisfaction with the work of the company. Lawrence, in a letter of resignation read to those in attendance at the "Second Annual Meeting" of the company stockholders, declared:

The main object for which the Association was formed, viz the excitement of free emmigration into Kanzas has been successfully accomplished. The corporation must hereafter be considered a land company, and be managed as such. A speedy closing up of its business seems to me to be the surest method of yielding a return.<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence's claim of success in spurring emigration was probably in reference to the large numbers who had gone to Kansas from the states north of the Ohio River. It is doubtful that the Emigrant Aid Company can take much of the credit for this although parties from New England were augmented in such states as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The company may have been little more than a convenient method of arranging for a journey that would have been made in any event.

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<sup>2</sup> See letters from H. A. Wilcox, July 4, 1857 and Thomas C. Upham, April 27, 1859, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting, Boston, May 26, 1857, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

John Carter Brown, who had served as company president from the time of its founding, made similar claims of company success in his letter of resignation dated May 22, 1861. In this letter it became evident that the real purposes of the company were not commercial:

The great object for which this Association was formed--to make Kanzas a free State--having been successful accomplished and as I firmly believe, largely thro' the instrumentality of the Emigrant Aid Co., it appears to me the time has now arrived to wind up its affairs and close the business of the concern.

In a Commercial point of view, the result of our operations in Kanzas may not have equalled the expectations of some of the stockholders; but this is owing to the destruction of our Property by the Border Ruffians and the depression throughout the Country of every species of business, especially in the sales of lands, caused by the great Slave Rebellion.

The complete Accomplishment however, of the great philanthropic object of saving the beautiful region of Kanzas from the curse of Slavery ought to satisfy the Stockholders.<sup>4</sup>

These claims of success were based on the persuasive effects of the company. As these effects are considered two factors will become evident. First, the propagation of ideology became the basic purpose of this movement. Second, the primary audiences involved in this campaign included not only New Englanders

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting, Boston, May 22, 1861, Emigrant Aid Company Papers. Note the similarity between this criterion for evaluation and Lawrence's, as well as the use of "Association" rather than "Company."

but also pro-slavery factions of the South and of western Missouri.<sup>5</sup>

Ralph Volney Harlow, after arguing that the Emigrant Aid Companies of the east "had practically nothing to do with making Kansas a free state," pinpointed both the primary audiences and the effect of company persuasion upon them:

The most significant results of the work of these organizations /Emigrant Aid Companies/, therefore, were to be found not in the territory concerned, but in the East and South. They exerted a profound and far reaching effect on public opinion, which was reflected in the newspapers, North and South, and in the debates in Congress. In stirring up bitterness and hate the Kansas aid effort may well be looked upon as one of the potent forces of the Civil War.<sup>6</sup>

In exploring the effects of the company in greater detail three levels of consideration will be used. First, the immediate effects in the year 1856 will be considered. Second, the effects of the company persuasion from the year 1856 to the beginning of the Civil War will be evaluated. Finally, some political effects which resulted from company persuasion, although they were not specific company goals, will be examined.

<sup>5</sup> Not only were company activities well reported in Southern newspapers but some materials were even directed toward pro-slavery audiences. See the circular entitled "To the People of Missouri" which attempted to explain the company's purpose and position to the pro-slavery citizens of western Missouri. Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Volney Harlow, "The Rise and Fall of the Kansas Aid Movement," The American Historical Review, Vol. XLI (October, 1935), p. 25.

### Immediate Effects

In 1856 the persuaders of the company had affected their audiences in two basic ways. In New England a cathartic effect and a polarization had resulted. For the South and the pro-slavery forces of the west a threatening confrontation had been made evident.

New Englanders had long been growing discouraged with the state of affairs. The "compromise" measures grated upon some consciences and the occasional enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law kept old wounds open. Still, the spread of slavery was not universally seen as a threat to the North. In a letter written in 1851, one Dr. J. E. Tyler expressed satisfaction in the compromise measures as a means of controlling slavery: "Since it has turned out that the whole of the vast territories hereafter to be admitted to the states are to be free, it seems most unwise to be quarreling about abstractions [in regard to the suggestion that the issue of slavery be brought up in Congress again]. With such a preponderance of political power in the free states, they can afford not only to be just, but liberal."<sup>7</sup> The passage of the Kansas-

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<sup>7</sup> J. E. Tyler to Amos A. Lawrence, February 12, 1851, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

Nebraska Bill struck hard at even the most conservative of the anti-slavery people in New England. Men such as Lawrence and Tyler felt they had been tricked.

Although demonstrations of popular discontent and the passing of resolutions to be sent to Senators and Congressmen proved unavailing, they provided an emotional readiness for a program of action. Lawrence was invited to assist in the presentation of a rally in Concord, Massachusetts, and summed up the feelings of many when he declined with the explanation, "The effect would be to produce some excited speeches upon a subject which is already well enough understood, and about which people are sufficiently excited."<sup>8</sup> Then he pointed to a plan of action, a cathartic climax to the emotional conditioning which had gone before, "The thing to be done at the present time is to settle Kansas with free voters." (Underlining in original.)<sup>9</sup>

Added to the emotional basis for this popular discontent was the Abolitionist campaign, which, it might also be noted, incorporated a plan of action based on the destruction of institutions and the disruption of the Union. Although these actions

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<sup>8</sup> Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

were far too exotic for general acceptance, the inflammatory rhetoric of the Abolitionists did not go unheeded. As Russel B. Nye has pointed out, the Abolitionist portrayal of the Slave Power was particularly effective: "The abolitionists, to perhaps a larger extent than many historians have believed, emerged in the popular mind as sole defenders of the democratic tradition against the machinations of this uncompromising, dangerous, secret cabal."<sup>10</sup> It remained for agencies like the Emigrant Aid Company to convert this impact to a more widely acceptable plan of action.

As the plan of action was advanced, the North was able to regain some degree of the self-esteem which it had lost when the doughfaces had "sold out" and compromise had become the order of the day. The small band of Northern settlers who held forth in such towns as Lawrence illustrated the Northern willingness to sacrifice for a principle. Thomas Wentworth Higginson wrote, in 1856:

Ever since the rendition of Anthony Burns, in Boston, I have been looking for men. I have found them in Kanzas. The virtue of courage has not died out of the Anglo-American race, as some have hastily supposed. It needs only circumstance to bring it out. A single day in Kanzas makes

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<sup>10</sup> Cited in Kenneth M. Stampp, editor, The Causes of the Civil War (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 2.

the American Revolution more intellegible than all Sparks and Hildreth can do. The same event is still in progress here.  
(Underlining in original.)<sup>11</sup>

The Kansas issue had become symbolic of Northern determination. On May 27, 1856, "Rev. Prof. Stowe" [probably Calvin Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe]<sup>12</sup> summed up this symbol in a resolution which was adopted unanimously at the "Second Annual Meeting" of the company stockholders: "Resolved-- That we express our deep sympathy with the settlers in Kanza now suffering from the lawless outrages of the slave power, and our determination, settled and unalterable, to afford them all the aid we lawfully may; and to prosecute to a successful issue, the righteous and glorious work which we have been permitted by Divine Providence to commence."<sup>12</sup> The issue of Kansas had provided the North with martyrs as well as a clearcut and dangerous enemy.

The effect of this was widespread polarization in the Northern states. "It is impossible for me to be more deeply interested in any political or social question than I am in the struggle

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "A Ride Through Kansas," Anti Slavery Tracts, Number 20 (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, n. d.), p. 14. Note: this booklet contains a series of letters, all dated in 1856. The one cited was dated October 4, 1856.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting, May 27, 1856, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

now going on in Kansas, and I believe the people of Vermont have never felt more strongly on any such subject than they do on this,"<sup>13</sup> reported George Marsh of Burlington, Vermont. Hale's appraisal of the excitement in Massachusetts was much the same: "From that moment [the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill] it might be said that any one man in Massachusetts was as much pledged as any other that slavery was not extended over new regions."<sup>14</sup>

Kansas also became the symbol of a change in relationship between North and South. It might well be argued that the original perception of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, at least by the pro-slavery advocates, made it a form of compromise by which Kansas would enter as a slave state while Nebraska would enter free.<sup>15</sup> The Emigrant Aid Company gave New England a means of changing the policy from one of compromise to one of confrontation. Northern goals and attitudes were well expressed in a New York

<sup>13</sup> George P. Marsh to Edward E. Hale, September 4, 1856, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Edward E. Hale, The Story of Massachusetts (Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1891), pp. 326-327.

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, the testimony of Missourian Amos Rees "It seemed to be a tacit understanding, universal among our people, that Kansas was to be a slave State and Nebraska a free State." Howard Committee Report, p. 929.

Daily Times article on June 27, 1854:

What, then, is it that the people of the "Free States" wish? They wish to be allowed to let Slavery alone where it exists, and be let alone by it. They wish also to be excused from aiding in its further extension. They wish the South would cease from its policy of making the Federal Government an instrument for extending the area of Slavery.<sup>16</sup>

This confrontation evolved rapidly to a point where the situation in Kansas became volatile in the Spring of 1856. Although a relatively small amount of money was actually expended by the company and the number of New England settlers was small the pro-slavery forces were responsive to this "paper tiger." At this point the propaganda of the company was having the greatest impact upon the pro-slaverites. Their reaction has been described by James C. Malin:

An organized campaign of this character against the slave interests threw them into a fury. It was unexpected and was considered a violation of the spirit of squatter sovereignty. The statements of the Emigrant Aid Company and the northern press appear to have been taken at face value.<sup>17</sup>

R. H. Williams, "Sometime Lieutenant in the Kansas Rangers," described the process of blockading the Missouri River in order to detain passing steamboats and search them for "Free Soilers and their arms." The reason for this policy, which Williams

<sup>16</sup> New York Daily Times, June 27, 1854, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> James C. Malin, "The Pro-Slavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. X (December, 1923), p. 290.

himself called "rather high handed," was the propaganda of the company: "The Massachusetts Emigrants' Aid Company, with great resources at its back, was pouring men and arms into Kansas, with the avowed object of conquering and dominating the Territory, by fair means or foul, for the Free States party."<sup>18</sup> The "great resources" and the act of "pouring men and arms into Kansas," were far more alive in the propaganda of the company than in the territory itself. This was a deliberate ploy.<sup>19</sup>

To some Missourians, the actions of the company appeared to be a form of invasion of their natural rights. In 1855 Senator Atchison raised the question, "Was it right for the Abolitionists, one thousand miles off, to come to Kansas to vote us out of the territory, and wrong for the people of Missouri, living in sight of her green hills and broad prairies to go there to secure their homes?"<sup>20</sup> To these people the confrontation of the company took the appearance of aggression into their territory.

<sup>18</sup> R. H. Williams, With the Border Ruffians, Memories of the Far West, 1852-1868 (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1907), p. 84.

<sup>19</sup> P. T. Jackson to Amos A. Lawrence, June 10, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers. Also see Hale, Memories of a Hundred Years, p. 157.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Wallace E. Miller, The Peopling of Kansas (Columbus, Ohio: Fred J. Herr, 1906), p. 71.

Although only about one sixth of the Missourians were slaveholders they were generally in sympathy with the South and viewed slave labor as useful in the development of new country.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore they had "a perennial chip on their shoulder against the seaboard states. In fact they combined the South's touchiness on the race question with the frontiersman's traditional distrust of the East and always insisted that slavery restriction was an Eastern attempt to check the growth of the West."<sup>22</sup> Little wonder that the pro-slavery western press responded to the threat of organized emigration with statements such as this:

The Abolitionists, or Free-State men, if you please, have become dissatisfied and are willing to violate the Constitution of their country, which explicitly recognizes Slavery, and disenfranchise themselves as loyal citizens, for the purpose of stealing negroes, and committing other unconstitutional and unlawful depredations. Should such men receive any compassion from an orderly, Union-loving people? No! It is this class of men that have congregated at Lawrence, and it is this class of men that Kansas must get rid of. And we know no better method than for every man who loves his country, and the laws by which he is governed, to meet in Kansas and kill off this God-forsaken class of humanity as soon as they place their feet upon our soil.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Glover Moore, The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821 (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1967), p. 267.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from the Kickapoo Pioneer, December 26, 1855, in Wilder, The Annals of Kansas, p. 91.

In the South, the threat of loss of territory was equally startling. Glover Moore has suggested that a need for territory to "replace the worn-out tobacco lands of Virginia and Carolina" was one motive for Southern concern. More pressing was the impending loss of economic and political power:<sup>24</sup> Retaliation took the form of attempts at organized emigration and the creation of one semi-military force.

A report dated October 27, 1855, described a "Meeting of the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society of Muscogee, held in Columbus, Ga., and addressed by Senators Toombs and Iverson."<sup>25</sup> At this meeting "Nine hundred dollars [was]" raised for slavery in Kansas." Toombs stated "Kansas is the key to the Great West, the high road to the Pacific. The struggle in the Territory is for empire; it is worthy of our best, our noblest efforts."<sup>26</sup> In January of 1856 twenty-five thousand dollars was raised in Alabama "to equip and transport emigrants to Kansas."<sup>27</sup> On August 27, 1856, a Kansas meeting was held in New Orleans. In form it sounded like the Emigrant Aid Company rallies which had been held in New England

<sup>24</sup>

Moore, The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup>

Wilder, The Annals of Kansas, p. 86.

<sup>26</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>

Ibid., p. 108.

for the past two years: "the Mayor presides; strong speeches and resolutions in favor of making Kansas a Slave State."<sup>28</sup>

One of the more militant reactions in the South came from Major Jefferson Buford who raised a following of about four hundred in the states of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. His advertisement, reprinted in various southern newspapers, called the "industrious, sober, discreet men capable of bearing arms" and he offered "greater inducements" (than forty acres of land and one year's sustenance) to those with "good military or agricultural outfits."<sup>29</sup> By the time it had reached Missouri, after a triumphant march through the southern states, this colony was known as "Buford's Army." Fortunately, for the free state settlers, this organization dissipated as it reached Kansas. Buford was robbed of a large amount of the operating funds, the forces so carefully organized split up, and no definite settlement was made. Although some of Buford's men remained to make individual homes and others joined the Missourians, many returned to their homes.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>29</sup> Miller, The Peopling of Kansas, p. 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 209-210.

That the reactions of the Missourians and the South were prompted by company propaganda rather than by any physical threat of broad dimensions may be inferred from the observations of the Reverend C. B. Boynton and T. B. Mason, of the Cincinnati Kansas League, who wrote of their travels through Kansas in 1855:

The efforts of the Emigration Societies have been met with a certain lack of enthusiasm which gives no high promise for the future, and indicates that the tone of that portion of the press, favorable to the enterprise, is yet quite in advance of the general public sentiment. Men and means have been somewhat sparingly offered to these Societies, and few from the east have as yet gone forward on their individual responsibility. The thousands which the public were led to expect, and which the slaveholders feared, have dwindled to hundreds, and the public has not been sufficiently prompt and liberal toward the Societies, to enable them to provide even for these in an entirely satisfactory manner.<sup>31</sup>

The company's relative lack of success in recruiting settlers and raising funds has already been touched upon in other chapters. Kansas was not the Eden portrayed by the company spokesmen. The "stock company" image damaged the ability of the company to raise funds in a philanthropic way. The different perceptions and goals of various factions of the company leadership added to the confusion. Even though the company was an "Emigrant

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<sup>31</sup> C. B. Boynton and T. B. Mason, Journey Through Kansas (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach, Keys and Company, 1855), pp. 204-205.

"Aid Company" the emigrant needed his own funds.<sup>32</sup> People solvent enough to use the company effectively did not often need to seek a new home in the unsettled west. Some coastal New Englanders did not see the west as a land of opportunity. William Rotch of New Bedford remarked on this in a letter to Amos A. Lawrence: "I wish our people were not so wedded to the Idol of the Sea as to turn their eyes to the many gains of our Western Lands. But they do not seem to be in a prepared state as yet."<sup>33</sup> He concluded with the hope that "they might wake up when they heard pleasant views."<sup>34</sup> It seems unlikely that they ever did.

Although the company appeared to exist for the purpose of selling a service, many of the leaders were quite frank about the actual ideological purpose. Lawrence, for instance, informed Charles Robinson, "We are too far off, we can pay some money and we can hurrah; but we can't send you men."<sup>35</sup> Unlike the

<sup>32</sup> The company charged about \$25 for the trip and the emigrant found it necessary to equip himself in Kansas at prices which were quite inflated. Various settlers wrote that from \$500 to \$1000 was needed to get started. See Webb Scrapbooks.

<sup>33</sup> William J. Rotch to Amos A. Lawrence, March 15, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Letter dated February 12, 1856, cited in Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery, p. 98.

more optimistic company persuaders, J. M. S. Williams favored recruiting only those who were willing to perceive Kansas as a battleground. In his letter to Eli Thayer, dated July 16, 1855, he urged Thayer to avoid "too glowing reports" and warn the prospective emigrant that he should have "reason to expect a hard time," but with hope "of perceiving a glorious result."<sup>36</sup> Such a point of view was hardly consistent with the objective of recruiting large numbers of peaceful emigrants. A token emigration was adequate for the purposes of the company and was all that actually was expected by those of the Boston group.

Once this was secured and the crisis which erupted in Kansas and in the United States Senate in May of 1856 precipitated the purposes of the company were effected. On September 4, 1856, George P. Marsh wrote to Edward E. Hale:

For the present, as it seems to me, emigration has done its work. It has been the means of rousing the nation to a sense of our true condition, and of bringing this long pending issue to a final determination. We may now dispose of it at the ballot box, hereafter it must be left to the arbitrament of the sword.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> J. M. S. Williams to Eli Thayer, July 16, 1855, Eli Thayer Papers.

<sup>37</sup> George P. Marsh to Edward E. Hale, September 4, 1856, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

The crowds who heard Thayer or Hale speak, or who rallied at local depots to see small bands of emigrants off to Kansas, felt a sense of participation, a unity, and a satisfaction that something was being done to control slave power. The pro-slavery partisans, West and South, were convinced that the North was using its two greatest assets, money and people, in a concerted effort to thwart their western expansion. They reacted with attempts at counter emigration and with occasional physical counter-force. Malin has correctly observed that "organized emigration from the south as well as the north was a failure."<sup>38</sup> The immediate persuasive effects of the Emigrant Aid Company were polarization in both North and South, threatened and real physical retaliation in the West.

#### Secondary Effects

War in Kansas began in earnest with the "Sack of Lawrence" on May 21, 1856. Some historians have argued that this was actually the Civil War in microcosm, others that it was a smaller "trial conflict" such as the Spanish Civil War had been before the Second

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<sup>38</sup> Malin, "The Pro-Slavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," p. 308.

World War.<sup>39</sup> The persuasion of the Emigrant Aid Company and the resulting creation of Kansas as a symbol of Northern determination to control the expansion of the Southern institutions built around the slave system heightened the sectional feelings within the country. In the North political figures were swept to power on the basis of their stand on the Kansas issue. This intensified the division of feelings, not only in the states, but in the Senate and Congress.<sup>40</sup>

On the day following the "Sack of Lawrence" Charles Sumner, Senator from Massachusetts, was assaulted on the floor of the Senate by Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina. The attacker, armed with a cane, was acting in retaliation for Sumner's inflammatory speech, "The Crime Against Kansas." The speech had been delivered on May 19 and 20, the attack on Lawrence occurred on the 21st, and Sumner was beaten on the 22nd. In these four days the issue of Kansas was escalated far beyond the scope of the Emigrant Aid Company. This was reflected,

<sup>39</sup> The "trial conflict" idea is developed by Samuel Eliot Morrison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 591-592. Most recent to place the conflict in Kansas as the actual beginning of the Civil War is Irving Werstein, A Proud People: Black Americans (New York: M. Evans and Company, 1970), p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 154-165.

as has been demonstrated, in the company's diminished control of Kansas publication and primacy as a news source.

The secondary effects of the company's persuasive campaign involved the martyrs created in Kansas and the Senate, the well publicized loss of property to the lawless "Missouri Ruffians," and the use of arguments and stereotypes which had been cultivated by the company speakers. Other Emigrant Aid Companies, it might be pointed out, had sprung into being. They were secondary to the New England Emigrant Aid Company in effectiveness and often used the New England company as a model for both organization and propaganda. Some were little more than paper organizations, but they did serve to amplify the Kansas issue on a nationwide scale.

The use of the Kansas conflict varied with the purpose of the user. C. S. Griffin has observed, "For their own purposes, the men who described the troubled times banished fact and summoned fancy in its place. Within the territory and throughout the nation, politicians, newspapermen, and participants in the events reconstructed the recent history of Kansas at will."<sup>41</sup> As Griffin concluded, "Instead of a historical reality, territorial

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<sup>41</sup> C. S. Griffin, "The University of Kansas and the Sack of Lawrence: A Problem of Intellectual Honesty," Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4 (Winter, 1968), p. 409.

Kansas was a state of mind."<sup>42</sup>

The involvement of prominent New Englanders was widely accelerated. Mark Hopkins, President of Williams College in western Massachusetts sent twenty dollars to Amos A. Lawrence and was surprised to receive a share of stock in return. "My wish was simply to do something in this crisis for freedom," wrote Hopkins, "and for those suffering and oppressed people who are really fighting our battles, and I knew of noway but through your society."<sup>43</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson took the platform on September 10, 1856, at a Kansas Relief Meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After an examination of the martyrs in Kansas, which sounded very similar to the list put forth in the pamphlet, "The Reign of Terror in Kansas," which had been printed at about the same time, Emerson became prophetic:

But the hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century. I think the American Revolution bought its glory cheap. If the problem was new, it was simple. If there were a few people, they were united, and the enemy three thousand miles off. But now, vast property, gigantic interests, family

<sup>42</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Hopkins to Amos A. Lawrence, June 16, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers. (Underlining in original.)

connections, webs of party, cover the land with a network that immensely multiplies the dangers of war.<sup>44</sup>

The thoughts of war were not unique to Emerson. Amos A. Lawrence made a similar comparison with the American revolution when he wrote "this contest is one of more importance than that of seventy-six, because it is for a Continent: and the little skirmishes that occur, as they indicate the spirit of the people, encourage the friends of freedom every where, and strike dismay into the advocates of slavery."<sup>45</sup>

Samuel Smith, who was cited by Charles Robinson for his assistance in Lawrence, Kansas, during the period leading up to the crisis,<sup>46</sup> wrote some years later of the need for sacrifice and martyrs:

The clouds were dark and threatening for the Free State men, and they did not despair. If the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church, each fresh pro-slavery outrage was an additional argument for Freedom. "Suffer that you may be strong" was Gov. Robinson's exhortation to his party.

The outrages in Kansas, the murderous assault on Charles Sumner in the Senate, for his speech entitled "Crime Against Kansas," and the aggressions of the slave power,

<sup>44</sup> Everett Rich, editor, The Heritage of Kansas (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1960), pp. 42-46.

<sup>45</sup> Lawrence Letters, p. 171.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Robinson to Amos A. Lawrence, November 21, 1855, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

were undermining slavery in Missouri and bringing the American people within seven years of the proclamation, that would emancipate every slave. Kansas was sowing the seed for that rich harvest.<sup>47</sup>

This persecution served the purpose of many persuaders and, in a comment which Lawrence wrote to Judge E. Rockwood Hoar on the back of a letter from Samuel Pomeroy, it was suggested that "there is a strong disposition to let Kansas bleed for political effect."<sup>48</sup>

President Pierce found it necessary, in 1856, to warn "Extremes beget extremes. Violent attack from the North finds its inevitable consequence in the growth and spirit of angry defiance in the South."<sup>49</sup> He then restated the stand, already made by other Northern politicians who had supported the Kansas-Nebraska Bill,<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Samuel C. Smith to Paul Brooks, et al, March 23, 1903, Printed in Reply to T. W. H. in the Boston Advertiser (pamphlet), place, publisher, date not specified. Copy found in the Archives of the New Hampshire State Historical Society.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Pomeroy to Amos A. Lawrence, July 24, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>49</sup> "Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Third Session of the Thirty-Fourth Congress" (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1856), p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> "Speech of Mr. Toucey, of Connecticut, Defending Himself Against the Nebraska Resolutions of The Legislature of Connecticut" (Washington: The Sentinel Office, 1854), passim.

that any agreement, such as the Missouri Compromise, was open to alteration as the needs of the country changed. Pierce closed with a warning specifically directed at the combatants in Kansas: "I call on the citizens, both of adjoining and of distant States, to abstain from unauthorized intermeddling in the local concerns of the Territory."<sup>51</sup>

In spite of Pierce's warning, the persuasion of the Emigrant Aid Company had the secondary effect of preparing the people of New England and the South for war. To some extent it may have served as a "self fulfilling prophecy" in introducing into the minds of many the idea of final "arbitrament of the sword." These secondary effects had their basis in the conditions of polarization and confrontation which had been the primary effects of the company's persuasion. Once the confrontation had been made, and the actions of late May, 1856, had received national attention, the role of the company diminished and a more widespread public interest and commitment took its place. Some of those who had traveled west with the company became martyrs. The arguments and stereotypes, such as the "Missouri Ruffians," so carefully cultivated by the company speakers, became widely accepted and

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<sup>51</sup> "Message of the President. . . .," p. 16.

used. In a sense, the success of the company in propagating its ideology had eliminated its need for being. It was upon this basis that many of the company officers were willing to claim success as they withdrew from active participation in company affairs.

### Political Effects

Although the company had originally professed to be nonpartisan,<sup>52</sup> it was instrumental in bringing about political effects, both national and individual in scope. The newly emerging Republican party found, in the Kansas issue, a basis for widespread popular interest and support. Many individuals, in the process of speaking for the company, had been given an issue and a platform.

In New England, individual political benefits were the most common manifestation of the impact of the company campaign. The first to reap these benefits was Eli Thayer who was elected to the United States Congress in the Fall of 1856. The Emigrant Aid Company ledger showed that, by December, 1856, Thayer had expended over sixty-six hundred dollars in company funds.<sup>53</sup> His

<sup>52</sup> Draft of Speech dated October, 1855, and letter from Dr. Joshua Green to Amos A. Lawrence, November 10, 1854, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>53</sup> "New England Emigrant Aid Company Trial Balance, Dec. 31, 1856," Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

primary activity was speaking. It seems highly probable that the public exposure which he was able to gain provided the basis for his political success.

On a local level many political aspirants were able to be seen and heard. The village of Keene, New Hampshire, was a good example of the use of the company and the Kansas issue. The company stock subscription book showed nine stockholders in Keene.<sup>54</sup> Of these nine, eight may be traced through the book, A History of the Town of Keene.<sup>55</sup> Of these eight, two were ministers and one was a deacon. One of these ministers was William O. White, a Unitarian and a correspondent of Edward E. Hale.<sup>56</sup> His interest in civic work may have been illustrated by his prominence in the founding of the Keene Lyceum. The Reverend Zedekiah S. Barstow was one of the senior members of the local ministry and had been chairman of the school board in 1820.<sup>57</sup> Four of the eight men listed became successful politicians. Chief among these was Thomas M. Edwards, owner of a factory which produced mortising machines, who was one of the directors

<sup>54</sup> Stock Subscription Book, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>55</sup> S. G. Griffin, A History of the Town of Keene (Keene, New Hampshire: Sentinel Printing Company, 1904).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 543.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 377.

of the Emigrant Aid Company. In 1859 he was elected to Congress.<sup>58</sup>

Samuel Woodward and John I. Nestle ("Nessle" in the subscription book) became State Representatives.<sup>59</sup> Reuben Stewart served as the first director of the Keene YMCA in 1859 and later became the local mayor.<sup>60</sup> Of course the Emigrant Aid Company cannot be cited as the cause of their successes. But it does seem safe to speculate that these men were politically active and found, in the company campaign, an acceptable issue and a reason to speak.

Even the reticent Amos A. Lawrence was nominated for the governorship of Massachusetts by the Native American ("Know-Nothing") party. The Boston Daily Advertiser of August 28, 1856, praised Lawrence warmly for his contributions to "that noble organization," the Emigrant Aid Company, but found the alliance of Lawrence and Presidential candidate Millard Fillmore inconsistent, since Fillmore was uncommitted on the Kansas question.<sup>61</sup> Lawrence declined, true to form, but also prepared a speech which he did not deliver "in case I decide to accept," also true to form.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 675.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 533, 693.

<sup>61</sup> See newspaper clipping from the Boston Daily Advertiser, August 28, 1856, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Manuscript, Amos A. Lawrence Papers.

The fact that his alliance with the company had helped him to secure the nomination was, in itself, indicative of the political strength of the Kansas issue.

In the Territory of Kansas the influence of the company was magnified by the quality of the men who had emigrated from New England. Here was a source of political affiliation which persisted long after the company had filled its role. Charles Robinson became the first governor when Kansas became a State, and Samuel Pomeroy was one of the two first Senators. C. B. Lines, founder and director of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony from New Haven, was prominent in the first state legislature, and Lawrence Dudley Bailey, a New Hampshire lawyer, who journeyed west with the company in March of 1857<sup>63</sup> and settled in Emporia, served in the State legislature and, in 1862, was made Judge of the State Supreme Court.<sup>64</sup>

The long range impact of the free-state success in Kansas has been described by Wallace E. Miller:

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<sup>63</sup> Emigrant Aid Company Ticket Book, Emigrant Aid Company Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Charles H. Bell, The Bench and Bar of New Hampshire (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), p. 160.

In territorial days there were but two well-defined political parties. The only issue was slavery. With the deciding of that issue, not only did the two parties as such cease to exist, but many of the adherents of one, the pro-slavery, left the state, and a few of its adherents helped in later days to people the state.

The emigration that secured possession of Kansas was in sympathy northern Republican, which organization has had a continued existence. In times of social peace and economic prosperity the Republican party has been the majority.<sup>65</sup>

The Republican party owed much to the Kansas issue and the work of the Emigrant Aid Company in amplifying and developing that issue. Sewell has described the political condition in New Hampshire in 1854 as one in which "anti-Nebraska men of all parties [were] groping for some new political organization." These included "Free Soilers, Whigs and anti-Nebraska Democrats" with a resolution to break party ties in order to control the expansion of slavery. The ability of the company to polarize the people of the free states carried into the area of politics: "By 1856 these desparate political elements had united in a new, broadly based Republican party, born of the Kansas-Nebraska explosion."<sup>66</sup> And Kansas gave these Republicans a campaign song:

<sup>65</sup> Miller, The Peopling of Kansas, p. 74.

<sup>66</sup> Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition, pp. 156-157.

Far in the West rolls the thunder,  
 The tumult of battle is raging,  
 Where bleeding Kansas is waging  
 Warfare with Slavery!  
 Struggling with the foes who surround her,  
 Lo! she implores you to stay her!  
 Will you to Slavery betray her?  
 Hurrah!  
 Swear that you'll never betray her;  
 Kansas shall yet be free!<sup>67</sup>

### Conclusion

For two brief years the Emigrant Aid Company served as a catalyst in the North. It polarized the energy and frustration that had been brought to a climax with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. It changed the mode of Northern politics from compromise and from the self abasement of sometimes supporting a "Northern man with Southern views," or a "doughface," or as John P. Hale, Senator from New Hampshire sarcastically labeled them "a lover of the Constitution." As a catalyst, it secured the reaction for which it had been put into use. In doing so it reduced its own role to that of a small land company and travel agency (in deep financial difficulty) and yet most of the company's officers and stock holders were satisfied with the state of their "business."

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<sup>67</sup> Wilder, The Annals of Kansas, p. 138.

The increasing Northern frustration, the Northern conscience aroused by the Abolitionists but unable to subscribe to that program, had found a release. Sending men was practical, it was legal, and it answered the challenge of popular sovereignty. Few went, but the threat of many maintained the confrontation in the eyes of Missourians.

Within two years Kansas had become the symbol of the resolve of both North and South. As a symbol it was useful to political men and parties, as well as to men who needed to feel that by donating to a rifle fund, buying stock, giving to Kansas relief, or just cheering at rallies they could take part in the contest for or against the "peculiar institution." By 1856 men were polarized, the threats and counterthreats were clearly heard, and the United States took on even a more sectional look. The Emigrant Aid Company, largely through its persuasive campaign, had supplied one more wedge between the sections.

## IN RETROSPECT

Social movements, in their capacities as gadflies, are indirect agents of change. They do their part by coming into being, and by pinpointing problems through their efforts to cope with them. Sympathetic observers must decipher these efforts and must deduce their implications for action. Society has to do the rest.<sup>1</sup>

When Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861, the ultimate goal of most of the officers of the Emigrant Aid Company was fulfilled, whether the company could be given the credit or not. Although the effect of the company on the destiny of Kansas is questionable, the effect of the company's campaign on the New England mind is not. It operated, as Toch has observed that social movements do, in the capacity of a "gadfly," as an "indirect agent of change." Herein lies the real success of the New England Emigrant Aid Company.

Ideological placement was the first key to its success. For several decades the Abolitionists had argued that slavery was "morally wrong" while the pro-slavery advocates had developed the countervailing idea that it was a "positive good" in providing social and religious benefits to an inherently inferior people. The

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<sup>1</sup> Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements, p. 247.

Emigrant Aid Company tacitly aligned with the Southern "positive good" philosophy. Thayer even cited Southern "proofs" of the racial differences in his speeches while, at the same time, extending the argument that because it was good for the black man it was economically inefficient, a poor way to develop new territory, and even harmful to the white man. This enunciated a non-moral basis for anti-slavery action.

Although this point of attack alienated the Abolitionists philosophically, and the pro-slavery South from a practical standpoint, it was a fine strategy for welding a large number of previously uncommitted Northerners. It provided a moderate anti-slavery "middleground." Certainly the Abolitionist campaign must be credited with providing some of the emotional conditioning which made this moderate campaign successful. Uncle Tom's Cabin, which had been published two years before, also helped prepare the way, as did the occasional enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. The "Slave Power," which more rightfully should have been called the "Slaveholder's Power," gained dimension and power in the Northern mind through these types of preconditioning. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise proved to many that the problem of the "Slave Power" had not been exaggerated.

**Organized emigration for the profit of the stockholders proved to be a failure, but talk of organized emigration and solicitation of funds for an investment designed to pay dividends did not. For it was in the process of talking that many people were able to show their sympathies, not with the slaves, but with the threatened North. And it was through the purchase of a share of stock (or the contribution toward the purchase of a share in the name of a local clergyman) that people were able to back up their convictions. These actions, in many cases more talked about than actually taken, soothed Northern consciences. They were legal, even patriotic, and they were possible.**

**The ability to reach large audiences on the local level was the second key to the company's success. By being the first "on the market" with information about Kansas the company developed a reputation for expertise that brought in many listeners in an area hungry for news about the disputed territory some eight days journey to the west. By sending scouts to Kansas, compiling the available information on the territory, and encouraging publication the company was able to enhance this image of expertise. Thus the advocates of organized emigration were able to set the tenor of the Kansas issue in its formative stages.**

The ability to form a wide circle of alliances was the third key to company success, although it did provide a basis for dissipation of company power. Before this loss of power became serious, however, the company was well on its way toward bringing the situation in Kansas to a state of national crisis. Within the company such diverse elements as the Boston business community, aspiring politicians, university professors, and the "Maine Law" clergy were able to find a common cause. It does seem strange to find a letter from Lawrence, ordering several barrels of wine, which bears a date close to that of his instructions to Robinson in Kansas to "enforce the Maine Law" prohibiting intoxicants. This does indicate the breadth of company affiliation.

The fourth source of company success was in the creation of a confrontation with the pro-slavery elements. The number of Yankee settlers who actually went to Kansas could never have, by the rules of "popular sovereignty," controlled the elections. Still, by providing leadership in the free-state factions which operated within the territory, and by founding the town of Lawrence, the company was able to give their confrontation credibility. The reports in the Northern press added to this.

Although the company was instrumental in the formation of several towns in the territory, Lawrence was its greatest

achievement. It not only lay on the dominant waterway entering the territory less than fifty miles from Missouri, but it also gained a symbolic value that was enhanced by such publications as The Herald of Freedom. When the "sack of Lawrence" occurred in May of 1856 the publicity was invaluable to the polarization of the North. It was "the murder of Lovejoy" all over again on a grander scale. The exaggerated reports of burning, destruction of printing presses (and with them freedom of the press), and brutal acts by the Missouri Ruffians all struck familiar chords and irritated old wounds. When raiders rode down Massachusetts Avenue in Lawrence, Kansas Territory, their hoof-beats echoed in the Commonwealth for which it had been named. This echo was amplified by its original source, the Emigrant Aid Company.

Although it achieved the objective of creating a confrontation in Kansas and focusing attention upon it, the company failed as a business venture. Certainly the idea of making money by developing a territory and then selling building lots and commercial properties there at profit was a highly speculative one, far too speculative for the conservative businessmen who were putting up the money. They were not motivated by profits, but by the need for some agency through which they could speak against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the encroaching "Slave Power." In

fairness to Thayer it should be noted that he had already been successful in another highly speculative undertaking when he founded a women's college, The Oread Collegiate Institute, in Worcester. He also held real estate investments in the Worcester area which, by 1854, were proving to be financially sound. He had demonstrated enough business sense and imagination to develop an estate valued at about eighty-thousand dollars within the nine years prior to the founding of the Emigrant Aid Company. Thayer had more faith in the business potential of the company than did the treasurer or the other major financiers who supported it. While this was reflected in his credibility before a general audience, it damaged him in his dealings with the other officers of the company. As a general persuader Thayer was successful in commanding large and enthusiastic audiences. Within the interpersonal context of the company he failed.

Thayer was anomaly. He viewed himself as what Eric Hoffer would call "a man of action"<sup>2</sup> who saved the anti-slavery cause from the "suicidal dissensions and recklessness of the fanatics" (in this case the Abolitionists).<sup>3</sup> But his program of

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Hoffer, The True Believer (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), pp. 146-151.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

action had been altered to suit another group of "men of action" that included such men as Amos A. Lawrence, John Carter Brown, and J. M. S. Williams. In the fifty speeches Thayer had given prior to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the start of company operations, he had demonstrated himself to be a "man of words"<sup>4</sup> as well. This was his role throughout the founding of the company and remained his primary role during the years in which he was associated with it. He did demonstrate many of the characteristics Hoffer found common in the "man of action." He had a "deep-seated . . . craving for recognition." This is very evident in his later letters to various people soliciting their support in his claims that he had been the primary instrument in the "saving" of Kansas.<sup>5</sup> It seems probable that the men in Boston could have better controlled Thayer by making him "one of them." The correspondence of such men as Lawrence showed that this never did come to be. Perhaps a basic "class" difference between the upstart Thayer and the men of established families like Lawrence and Brown provided a barrier.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 129-141.

<sup>5</sup> Eli Thayer Papers. Passim. Note particularly those letters written to Franklin P. Rice and Theodore Roosevelt during the period from about 1880 to 1900.

## General Implications

In considering the study of a persuasive campaign like that of the New England Emigrant Aid Company several factors become clear. These factors may be detected in other campaigns as well and may serve as a basis for developing some critical approaches to the evaluation of persuasive activities of a campaign.

The first consideration, a discovery of the ideological breadth of a social movement, has wide implications. Although breadth of appeal may indicate the likelihood that the movement will initially draw a large constituency, it may also contain the basis for division, bickering, and loss of credibility. The involvement of a variety of ideological commitments may dictate strategies to be used by company persuaders. For instance, the appeal of the prohibitory "Maine Law" was used to solicit support from the clergy in Northern New England. The alliance of this law and the campaign for emigration to Kansas gave promise that the company program in Kansas would include such anti-liquor measures.

Second, the time sequence involved in the campaign should be considered. In this study the dates of inception and conclusion were easy to fix. A sense of emergence was detectable as the company approach changed from "information about Kansas," through an enunciation of the argument about Kansas, to "war in

Kansas." The total time sequence of the company was submerged in the more massive national movement toward sectionalism. Thus the campaign merged for a period with the total context of the times and was instrumental in adding to the general temper of the context. It can be viewed as both a unified action and a segment in a larger sequence of actions.

Third, the goals of the company should be enumerated. These may include both the stated and unstated goals. In Toch's definition of a "latent social movement," both levels may be readily seen: "The ostensible purpose of the relationship is the rendering of a routine service in exchange for profit. This, however, is a fiction which hides the fact that solutions to basic social problems are promised."<sup>6</sup> In the case of the Emigrant Aid Company the normal profit motive which is associated with the purpose of stock was secondary in the minds of most stockholders. For this reason, the company did not need to operate on a grand scale in order to supply the platform that these people desired, the token emigration and symbolic action of the company was sufficient. The masking of goals was not always evident at the time of the inception of the company. Here the idea of sequence again comes into play. It seems safe to speculate that as the company drifted away from the

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<sup>6</sup> Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements, pp. 90-91.

**businesslike approach so strongly advocated by Thayer the possibility of using the company as a platform for his political candidacy became increasingly important. Thus people who become at odds with a campaign may, through the location of desirable secondary goals, still find reason to participate actively in the persuasive effort. Unstated goals may even become more important than the initial stated ones. This occurred when the company became more concerned with making a successful confrontation (including such "unofficial" acts as purchasing arms for the settlers) than it was in actually moving settlers into the territory.**

**Finally, although the paradigm of Bitzer, the insights of Toch, and the guiding questions or "rhetorical problems" suggested by Simons were very useful in creating a sequence or framework for studying the persuasion of this movement there seems still to be a need for more refined critical tools. Some kind of synthesis of information on group action within the structure of a movement might provide part of this. The essential element would, it seems, be the emergence and modification of the various elements of the campaign. Hoffer has touched upon this idea in regard to his "men of words," who initiate movements and "men of action" who implement them. Certainly the campaign of the Emigrant Aid Company was marked by changes in the roles**

of the persuaders. Early in the campaign there was much stress on recruiting settlers and setting up local organizations to assist with this recruitment and with the raising of funds. Late in the campaign the stress was on recruiting people who could carry on the fight and raising funds, unofficially, for weapons. The campaign may have been said to progress through a series of exigent situations, each of which demanded its own "fitting response." Indeed the very context within which the company speakers functioned was different in 1854 and in 1856. Some stereotypes had been accepted, some modified. The rejection of Abolitionism had softened considerably and a redefinition even allowed some of the company officers to accept the label. The most striking thing about the study of the persuasion of a movement should be its sense of motion.

The inter-relationship of a movement and its context is a remarkable phenomena. The Emigrant Aid Company itself was instrumental in manufacturing an issue which fed the very sectional feelings that had initially given impetus to the contest for territory. In doing so it became a method of amplifying the general fears, hopes, and determination of the constituency. Designed to "solve" a problem, it lunged doggedly into a situation in which the problem became even more intense. Designed to be an "expert" on Kansas,

it became instead an agency for interpreting the Kansas issue in a manner best suited for popular agitation.

The use of the symbolic contest in Kansas has implications today. The use and interpretation of distant conflicts can be the backbone of much agitation. Control of the sources of information, as the Emigrant Aid Company controlled much of the early publication about Kansas, is a source of political power. This is particularly true when direct observation is difficult as it was in 1856 in Kansas.

Still, two basic questions may be asked of any movement: What triggered it? What did it finally accomplish?

In an inflammatory poem written upon the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854 Samuel Phillips posed the challenge to New England and predicted the response which was to become the forte of the Emigrant Aid Company:

Shall her vast plains and prairies,  
    filled with flowers  
As glorious as the night is filled with  
    gleaming stars,  
Be cleared, and ploughed, and hoed,  
    and reaped by slaves?  
Let pulpit, press, platform, and people speak!<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Samuel R. Phillips, Nebraska: A Poem, Personal, and Political (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), p. 14.

This alliance of "pulpit, press, platform, and people" marked the successful implementation of the company's campaign. Two years later, the issue of Kansas emerged as its most striking product.

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