

SAG HARBOR, *January 3, 1820.*

This may certify that, on or near the 20th day of the month of December, I received from James Guyon, junior, a copy of the within certificates, perfectly according with the same.

EBENEZER SAGE.

QUEENS COUNTY, ss.

JAMAICA, *January 6, 1820.*

We, Edward Parker, of the town of Jamaica, county of Queens, and State of New York, and Thomas Hazard, junior, of Staten Island, State aforesaid, do solemnly swear that we were present on the day and date when Ebenezer Sage signed the annexed certificates, and did see him subscribe his name thereunto; and he acknowledged that he did receive a copy of the annexed certificates enclosed to him in a letter from James Guyon, junior, declaring his intentions to claim his seat in the House of Representatives of the United States.

EDWARD PARKER,
T. HAZARD, JUN.

Sworn before me this day.

JAMES DENTON, *Justice of the Peace,*
and one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas for Queens County.

[16th CONGRESS.]

[No. 481.]

[1st SESSION.]

PROHIBITION OF SLAVERY IN MISSOURI.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 18, 1820.

At a meeting of the citizens of Hartford and its vicinity, held at the State-house, on Friday, the 3d day of December, 1819, pursuant to public notice, for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of permitting slavery in such States as may hereafter be admitted into the Union, John T. Peters was appointed chairman, and J. W. Edwards, secretary.

The following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That the existence of slavery in this republic is an evil deeply to be lamented, and utterly repugnant to the principles of a republican Government.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the peculiar phraseology of the preamble to the declaration of independence, declaring that "all men are created equal," &c., shows conclusively that the illustrious authors of that document never contemplated the further extension of slavery in these United States.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, Congress possesses the clear and indisputable right to prescribe the terms upon which any Territory may be admitted into the Union as an independent State; and that a contrary doctrine would not only tend to destroy that order and harmony so indispensable to the happiness and union of these States, but would prostrate the powers confided to the General Government by the constitution.

Resolved, That it is a duty the American people owe to their republican character, and the honor and glory of their country, to endeavor, by all honorable and lawful means, to prevent the further extension of slavery, which we consider to be contrary to the spirit of our free and excellent constitution, and injurious to the highest interests of the nation.

Resolved, That, while we lament the efforts which the Representatives in the last Congress from the slaveholding States made to extend an evil which all unite in deploring, the thanks of this meeting are eminently due to those members who so ably and zealously opposed the admission of slavery into the proposed State of Missouri.

Resolved, That the Senators and Representatives in Congress from this State be requested to use every honorable and constitutional exertion to prevent the admission of slavery into any new State which may be formed.

Resolved, That the Hon. Thomas S. Williams, Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, Hon. Sylvester Wells, and Hon. John T. Peters be a committee to draught a memorial to Congress upon this subject, which shall comport with the spirit of these resolutions.

Resolved, That the chairman of this meeting be, and is hereby, requested to forward a copy of these resolutions and memorial to the Senators and Representatives in Congress from this State.

Resolved, That Michael Bull, Nathaniel Goodwin, Charles Babcock, Oliver E. Williams, Charles L. Porter, Thomas Huntington, Joseph B. Gilbert, Edward Bolles, Samuel Huntington, Elihu Olmsted, Azor Hatch, and Roderick Terry be a committee to solicit signatures to the said memorial; and that the several printers of newspapers in this State be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting.

JOHN T. PETERS, *Chairman,*
JONATHAN W. EDWARDS, *Secretary.*

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: The memorial of the undersigned, inhabitants of the city of Hartford and its vicinity, in the State of Connecticut, respectfully represents:

That, as your present session will probably furnish the occasion of deciding a question which deeply involves the character and prosperity of the vast republic over whose interests you are called by Providence to preside; the welfare of that countless posterity who are to inherit from us all that can render human life a blessing or a curse; and the fate of thousands of our fellow-men, whose dearest rights have been so long sacrificed to the plea of necessity or of interest, we deem it a sacred duty which we owe to ourselves, to our country, and to our God, to make use of that invaluable privilege which our excellent constitution affords us, of attempting to influence the councils of the

nation, by every consideration and motive which justice, honor, and a sound policy will sanction, ere the final step be taken, which, if a wrong one, will shroud the prospects of our country's happiness and glory in shades of the deepest gloom.

In doing this, we avow that no influence actuates us but the purest patriotism. We would rise superior to that ignoble jealousy which weighs all political questions in the petty scale of mere state interest, and measures every proceeding of the National Legislature by the contracted standard of advantage to the northern or southern, the eastern or western sections of our common country. We would feel as Americans, and present to your respectable body only such considerations as are worthy of the regard of those who, in their least important as well as most momentous decisions, should fix a single eye upon the general happiness of the millions who are to constitute, under the auspices of prudent and magnanimous councils, a great and happy people.

We are inspired with a lively hope that what we may venture to suggest will be weighed with carefulness and candor when we call to mind the honorable and energetic measures which Congress has of late adopted to check the future progress of slavery in the United States—measures which, we trust, will yet derive resistless efficacy from the co-operation of the whole Christian world, from a vigilant enforcement by those officers whose province it is to carry them into effect, and from the repeated adoption of such future auxiliary provisions as the elusive cunning of the traffickers in human blood may yet render necessary to wipe from the character of man one of its foulest stains. Most unhappy will be the result if the accession of new States to the Union, by granting them the privilege of holding a portion of their fellow-men in bondage, should prove to be the discomfiture of those generous efforts which are made to prevent our vast portion of this western hemisphere from being any longer the disgraceful prison-house of the unfortunate sons of Africa.

That the constitution invests Congress with ample power to impose a restriction with regard to slavery upon such States as may from time to time be admitted into the Union, the territory of which lies out of the original limits of the United States, we think there can be no doubt. The Union is indeed a compact of independent and sovereign States; but it is a compact whose base rests on the principles which all the States avowed in their combined struggle for freedom; on the principles of relative justice, of mutual sacrifices of interest for the general welfare, and of a surrender of individual rights to promote the strength and prosperity of *one common republic*.

These principles, which, under Providence, gave vigor to the resistance of the colonies against the usurpations of the mother country, and a happy result to that resistance, did not cease to have a binding force upon the States when the conflict for liberty was over, and when, assuming again for a little while their original sovereignty, they deliberated in their individual capacity upon the adoption of such a form of government as would best secure to them and their posterity the blessings for which they had been contending. They were unshackled, it is true, by the restrictions of any *written instrument*, but they were still bound to each other by the ties of *honor and justice*. When we find them proclaiming to the world as one of the principles—nay, as the fundamental principle under which they had acted in concert—"that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," can we cast such a reproach upon the worthies who conducted their councils as to suppose that they meant entirely to abandon this principle, or not to feel its force? Its application, indeed, was waived with reference to those States whose policy led them to make it a condition of their adoption of the federal constitution that they should retain the privilege of holding slaves, and that these slaves should go to increase the mass of their population who should be entitled to a voice in our national councils. But this was done in the *spirit of compromise*; and the original principle which was avowed in the declaration of independence *revives, in all its primitive force*, with reference to any *new States* which may be admitted into the Union, and which lie out of the limits of those States who made the compromise; so that no argument in favor of the absolute and entire sovereignty of new States is more fallacious than that drawn from a supposed analogy between *their* relation to the Union and *that* which existed between the States who *originally* formed this Union.

There has never been a period in our history since the time of our first resistance to Great Britain that a greater or less surrender of the rights of State sovereignty has not been made for the general good; and if, for the same object, such a surrender is now demanded of any portion of our country that wishes to enjoy the privilege of becoming a State, it has no right to complain of partial treatment; and unfounded indeed is such a complaint, when the surrender required, or the restriction imposed, is sanctioned by one of the fundamental principles of the great charter of our liberties; a departure from which, for reasons that *no new State* can now urge, was once reluctantly made in order to secure the unanimous adoption of the federal constitution.

Surely, if the States who were the original parties to the compact had a right to stipulate with each other with regard to the surrender which each should make of some portion of its sovereignty for the common weal, they have now the right, through Congress, as their organ, to make similar stipulations for the *same object* with those who are to become new parties to the compact. The only question, then, that remains is, has the constitution empowered Congress to act as this organ? The third section of the fourth article of that instrument says: "New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new States shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State, nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned, as well as of the Congress." The fair construction of this language is, that Congress is to judge of the expediency of admitting new States into the Union, and also of the terms of their admission; and, lest this power vested in Congress should seem to encroach upon the sovereignty of the States who were actually parties to the compact, their consent is made necessary in case new States are formed out of them, or by their junction; which evidently proves that, *in all other cases*, the power of Congress was to be complete and unrestricted. As the constitution nowhere gives any portion of territory, or any mass of population, the right to force itself into the Union; and as it nowhere describes the precise conditions upon which new States may be admitted, but refers the whole subject in the most *general terms* to Congress, it seems to result from the very necessity of the case, as well as from the fair interpretation of the constitution, that Congress must judge of the expediency and of the conditions of all such admissions. This power Congress has more than once exercised; nor have the various restrictions which it has imposed upon several of the new States, as the terms of their admission into the Union, been heretofore considered any infringement of the constitution, or undue encroachment upon State sovereignty. Good faith, therefore, will be strictly kept with those who have become subject to the Government of the United States by the treaty of the cession of Louisiana, if, upon their wishing to be made a new State, they are required, as a condition of this, to pledge themselves to interdict slavery within their limits; for, although the treaty stipulates that they shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, yet all this is to be done, as the same treaty stipulates, "according to the principles of the federal constitution." Like every other citizen of the United States, a citizen of the contemplated new State will have the privilege of holding slaves in those States where slavery is *permitted*; and, like other citizens, be debarred this privilege in States where slavery is *not permitted*. Nor does it at all affect the merits of the case that *his own* happens to be one of these States.