

The Bugle



Quarterly Journal of the
Camp Curtin Historical Society
and Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Spring 2010
Volume 20, Number 1



The Gathering Storm

"The field upon which we now stand will be known as classic ground, for here has been the great central point of the organization of our military forces. When my administration of public affairs will have been forgotten and the good and evil will be only known to the investigation of the antiquarian, Camp Curtin, with its memories and associations, will be immortal."

- Governor Andrew Curtin, 1865

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June 13 - Monument Clean-Up

Camp Curtin will conduct its semi-annual clean-up around the 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry Monument at the Gettysburg National Military Park on Sunday, June 13. Gather in the Peace Light Memorial parking lot. Wear comfortable clothes; long pants and work gloves are suggested. Afterwards, CCHS member and Licensed Battlefield Guide Paul Cooksey will lead us on a tour of the Wheatfield. For more information, contact Jack Thomas at 717-766-1899 (day) or 717-418-5587 (evening).



June 26-27 Civil War Show

The Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association will conduct the 36th Annual Civil War Collectors' Show, 10AM-5PM, Saturday, June 26, and 9AM-2PM, Sunday, June 27, in the Allstar Complex at the Eisenhower Inn, Business Route 15, 4 miles south of Gettysburg. All types of Civil War artifacts will be for sale, including weapons, uniforms, photographs, newspapers, documents, and accoutrements, and old and new books. For information contact 717-334-2350.



Cover: *The United States Senate debating the Compromise of 1850. Senator Henry Clay stands in the center addressing the chamber. Vice President Millard Fillmore is presiding. Senator John C. Calhoun is to his right, just below chair. Senator Daniel Webster is seated on the left with his hand cupped to his ear. The drawing was done by Peter Rothermel, who was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Legislature to produce a set of paintings depicting the Battle of Gettysburg that are now displayed in the Pennsylvania State Museum.*

Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table

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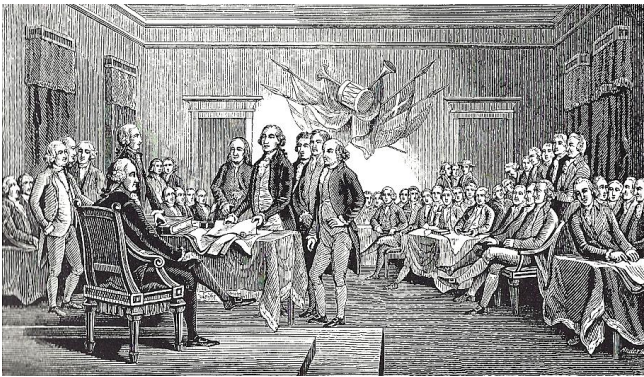
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The Gathering Storm *by Lawrence E. Keener-Farley*

For those of who study the Civil War, the concentration is on the years 1861 to 1865, looking at the battles, generals, weapons, technology, and politics of those four tumultuous years. As the 150th anniversary of that great conflict approaches, it would be worthwhile to review the course of American history that led to “the fiery trial.” The Civil War did not suddenly burst upon the American scene in 1861. The storm clouds had been gathering at the founding of the nation.



In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote the immortal words in the **Declaration of Independence**, “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness.” This basic proposition became the cornerstone of the American experiment in democracy. Unfortunately, to secure the support of the Southern states to pass the Declaration, it was necessary to eliminate another part of Jefferson’s initial draft of the Declaration that charged the King George III with supporting slavery:

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has

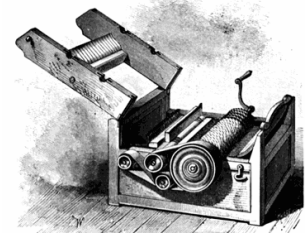
deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

American history might have been very different if those words had remained in the Declaration. Their elimination was the first of many compromises that led to a division of thought among the American people and ultimately to Civil War.

Between 1777 and 1804, all Northern states passed laws that would eventually abolish slavery. In Pennsylvania, a law for gradual emancipation passed in 1780. In the South, however, slavery held on and ultimately became the bedrock of the Southern economy. With independence from Britain won, the states set about forming a new nation. The **Articles of Confederation**, which proved to be unworkable, made no reference to slavery. One of the last acts passed by Congress under the Articles, the **Northwest Ordinance of 1787**, excluded slavery in the territory that eventually became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in 1787, slavery was very much on their minds. Everyone recognized that it could be a major stumbling block if there was an attempt to abolish slavery. Instead, the delegates skirted the issue and although the word slavery is not used in the **United States Constitution**, there are three references to what was called the “peculiar institution” of the South: (1) slaves would be counted as three-fifths of a person for purposes of determining representation in Congress, (2) the importation of slaves would be abolished in 1808, and (3) fugitive slaves would be returned to their owners.

In the first few years of the nation, it seemed to many, including some Southerners, that slavery would die a natural death because it was economically unprofitable. That changed dramatically with Eli Whitney’s invention of the **cotton gin** in 1793. Cotton production rose and within a few years it was the major industry and money-maker of the

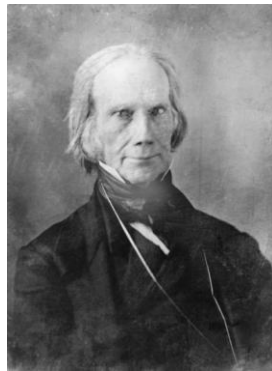


United States. The Southern economy, indeed the entire nation's economic well-being, depended on cotton production, which depended on slave labor.

During the War of 1812, the issue of state sovereignty and the possibility of secession was raised in the North. Some New Englanders opposed the war on economic grounds and suggested that secession from the Union might be a viable solution. Fortunately, the Treaty of Ghent ended the war and talk of breaking off from the Union subsided, but the concept gained a foothold in the political rhetoric of the nation.

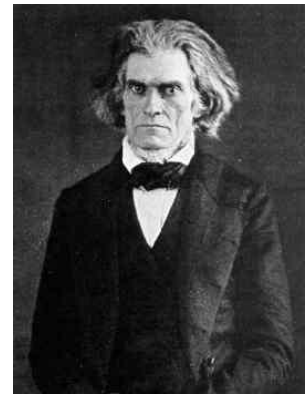
Many Americans saw the contradiction between Jefferson's great words and the existence of slavery. Some Americans opposed slavery on moral grounds while others opposed it for economic reasons but there was never a huge outcry to abolish slavery. The South, however, vigilantly guarded the institution as the nation expanded. They knew they had to maintain a balance in Congress or slavery could be abolished nationwide as it had been in the Northern states. Thus, the compromises that started with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution continued in the halls of Congress.

In 1820, there were twenty-two states in the Union, eleven free and eleven slave states. That balance could have been upset when Maine applied for admission to the Union. Instead, Congress passed the **Missouri Compromise**, negotiated by Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky (right), admitting Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. Further, slavery would not be allowed in any new states north of the southern border of Missouri (latitude 36 degrees, 30 minutes north). The problem of slavery's expansion was averted for the time being.



In the late 1820s and early 1830s, the country was absorbed with the debate over a series of tariffs which culminated in the Tariff of 1828, known to the South as the “**Tariff of Abominations.**” South Carolina's Legislature passed a resolution condemning the tariff and questioning its constitutional legality. John C. Calhoun wrote that states had the right to nullify laws the state considered unconstitutional but South Carolina took no action at that time.

A new tariff bill in 1832 moderated the 1828 enactment but still did not fully please the South. South Carolina “nullified” the tariff and was prepared to secede if the federal government used force to enforce the tariff. President Andrew Jackson's reaction to the “**nullification crisis**” was

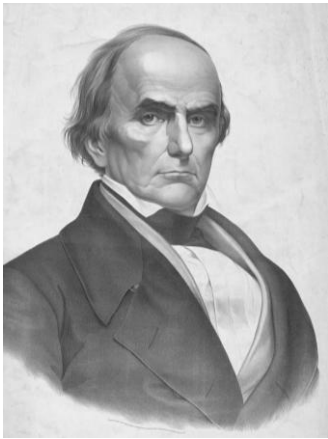


to threaten to invade South Carolina and hang Calhoun (above), arguing no state had the right to withdraw from the Union. The great compromiser – Henry Clay – stepped in again and negotiated a new bill that gradually reduced the tariff. South Carolina suspended its nullification; the crisis was averted, but the issue of a state's right to secede was unanswered.

The Constitutional provision that fugitive slaves should be returned to their masters was never popular in the North and some states actually passed laws forbidding the return of slaves inside their state. In 1842, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* that state laws forbidding the capture of fugitive slaves were unconstitutional. The decision went on to imply that enforcement of the fugitive slave laws was entirely a federal matter. The Northern states responded to this decision by simply failing to cooperate in capturing run-a-way slaves. Much to the consternation of the South, this issue would simmer on the back burner before coming to a boil.

The Texas War for Independence in 1836 and subsequent moves to admit Texas as a state ultimately led to the Mexican War in 1846. In order to avoid a war with Britain at the same time over the Oregon Territory, President James Polk dropped the call for “Fifty-Four, Forty or Fight” and accepted the forty-ninth parallel as the border with Canada. To gain Southern support for the concession, Polk agreed to further reduce tariff rates.

Pennsylvania Congressman David Wilmot proposed that any land acquired during the Mexican War should have the same slavery exclusion clause as the Northwest Ordinance. The **Wilmont Proviso** was passed by the House of Representatives and increased the agitation between the North and South. The Senate rejected the proposal and the victory in the Mexican War left open the question of slavery in the new lands acquired by the war.



Trouble brewed again when California applied for admission to the Union as a free state and again Senator Henry Clay, proposed a compromise to hold the Union together. Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster (left) spoke in favor of the proposal, "not as a Massachusetts man,

nor as a Northern man but as an American," arguing that the preservation of the Union was the most important issue and that all sections had to compromise. Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas was instrumental in negotiating the final package of bills that covered a variety of topics. When ultimately passed, the **Compromise of 1850** provided that California would be admitted as a free state; the issue of slavery in any new state would be left to "popular sovereignty," allowing state voters to decide the issue, and slave auctions (but not slavery) were abolished in the District of Columbia. Additionally, a new and much stronger fugitive slave law was passed.

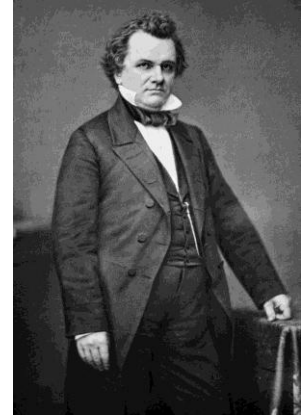
The **Fugitive Slave Act** contained provisions that enraged many in the North. Local law enforcement officers could be fined if they failed to enforce the law. Anyone aiding an escaping slave or interfering with slave catchers could be fined and ordinary citizens could be pressed into service to catch slaves. Federal commissioners who held hearings on run-a-way slaves received \$10 per case if the slave owner won and only \$5 if the fugitive slave prevailed, and the fugitive slave could not testify at the hearing.

The reality of the Fugitive Slave Act came to Pennsylvania in September 1851. William Parker, a free Black and a member of the Lancaster Black Self Protection Society, operated a station on the Underground Railroad in Christiana, Lancaster County. When Maryland slave owner Edward Gorsuch came seeking his run-a-way slaves, Parker and his neighbors resisted. Shots rang out and Gorsuch was killed and several wounded. Thirty-nine people were charged with treason, conspiracy, liberating slaves and resisting arrest. Only one, Castner Hanway, was tried in a federal court in Philadelphia and he was acquitted by the jury. To the South, this incident was proof that the North would not live up to the Compromise of 1850.

The new fugitive slave law, coupled with Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, inflamed Northern anti-slavery opinion like never before. Over one million copies were sold within a year, making it a massive bestseller in a national population of 24 million.

The **Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854**,

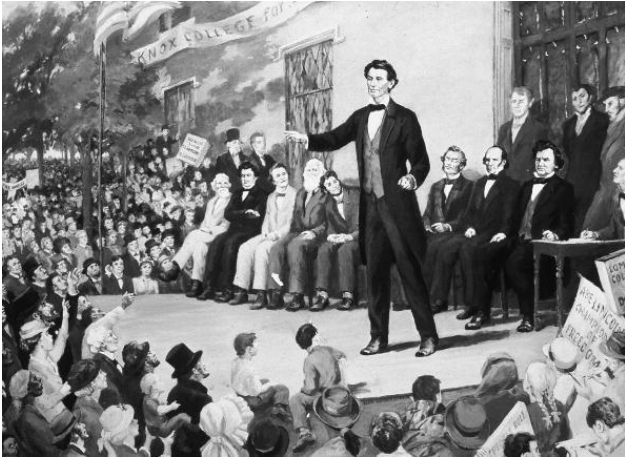
another compromise brokered by Senator Douglas (right), created the two territories, solidified the concept of "popular sovereignty" and abolished the Missouri Compromise line. The act led to "**Bleeding Kansas**" as pro and anti-slavery forces occupied the territory to influence the vote on slavery.



Territorial Governor John Geary (later a Union Major General and Governor of Pennsylvania) tried to keep order but a small scale civil war broke out. Most notable were the pro-slavery raid on the town of Lawrence and abolitionist John Brown's attack at Pottawotamie Creek. For several years, competing pro and anti-slavery legislatures and conventions applied for admission to the Union but it was not until January 29, 1861 that Kansas was admitted as a free state.

In 1857, the Supreme Court issued its decision in the case of *Scott v. Sandford*. **Dred Scott** was a slave who sued for his freedom in Missouri (a slave state) after he had lived with his owner in states and territories where slavery was illegal by state law or the Northwest Ordinance. The Court ruled seven to two against Scott. Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote that neither Scott nor any other African-American could be a United States citizen and, therefore, Scott could not bring suit in federal court under the diversity of citizenship rules. Moreover, Scott's temporary residence outside Missouri did not affect his emancipation under the Missouri Compromise, since reaching that result would have deprived Scott's owner of his property. The ruling effectively meant that slavery could exist anywhere in the United States.

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln challenged Stephen Douglas for his seat in the Senate. The **Lincoln-Douglas debates** brought the issue of slavery and its extension into the new western territories to the forefront. Although personally opposed to slavery,



Douglas argued for the concept of “popular sovereignty” that would let people decide the issue on the state level. Lincoln argued forcefully against slavery on moral, political and economic grounds. Douglas was reelected, but Lincoln emerged onto the national political stage as a man to be watched.

John Brown burst onto the national scene in October 1859, when he and a small band of abolitionists seized the United States Armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown hoped slaves would rally to his cause and a massive armed rebellion would end slavery. He was soon surrounded and captured. Within six weeks, Brown was tried, convicted and executed. Northerners had mixed feelings; a few supported his violence but most were appalled by the thought of armed rebellion but many were beginning to agree with Brown’s goal of abolition. In the South, Brown was uniformly condemned and the fear of Northern-inspired slave rebellions led to a greater feeling that North and South could not stay united as one nation.

In April 1860, the Democratic Party met in Charleston, South Carolina, to pick its nominee for president. Senator Stephen Douglas was the front runner but his stand on “popular sovereignty,” which would limit the expansion of slavery into the new territories became a sore point for the Southerners and the delegates from seven states and parts of two others walked out of the convention. After 57 ballots, Douglas could not get the necessary number of votes to receive the nomination and the convention adjourned.

The Republican Convention met in May in Chicago, Illinois. New York Senator William H. Seward of New York was considered the front runner and thought he had the nomination wrapped up as the convention began. Edward Bates of Missouri, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio and Abraham Lincoln of Illinois were in the running but considered long shots. As the convention

progressed and the back room deals were made Seward, Bates and Chase all seemed to have liabilities or had upset various wings of the party. Lincoln, somewhat unknown and considered a moderate, became the compromise candidate and was nominated on the third ballot.

The Democrats met again in June in Baltimore, Maryland. Again, the Southern delegates walked out of the convention because the party platform did not support extending slavery into the new territories. After two ballots Douglas secured the nomination of what was now the Northern Democratic Party. The Southerners regrouped and nominated the current Vice President, John Breckenridge of Kentucky, who became the standard bearer for the Southern Democratic Party.

A fourth party was created by former Whigs, American Party (Know Nothings) and others who could not support the Republican or Democratic nominees. They nominated former Senator John Bell of Tennessee to run under the banner of the Constitutional Union Party.

Although viewed as a moderate by Republicans, Southerners saw Lincoln as a radical who would fundamentally change the status quo of slavery. He was opposed to the spread of slavery into the new territories but adamantly maintained that he would not touch slavery where it already existed. Even so, Southerners threatened to secede from the Union if Lincoln was elected. On November 6, 1860, Lincoln won only 40 percent of the popular vote but won sufficient electoral votes to become president. He carried every Northern state except New Jersey and he did not even appear on the ballot in Southern states.

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union stating in its “Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession” that the Northern states had failed to enforce the fugitive slave laws, supported the underground railroad, fomented slave insurrections, and that they had “united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery.”

Six more states would secede before Lincoln’s inauguration on March 4, 1861. With the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s call for troops to put down the rebellion, four more states left the Union. The issue of slavery had led to secession and secession had led to war.

Gettysburg National Military Park Summer Schedule

June 5-6 (Saturday-Sunday)

119th New York Infantry at the Pennsylvania Monument
28th Virginia Infantry at Pitzer Woods
Berdan's Sharpshooters at Spangler's Spring

NOTE: Most programs run throughout the day but check at the Museum & Visitor Center Information Desk for exact times

June 12-13 (Saturday-Sunday)

13th New Jersey Infantry, portraying the 2nd Mass. Inf., at Spangler's Spring
2d U.S. Artillery at the Pennsylvania Monument

June 26 (Saturday Only)

Victorian Dance Ensemble at the Museum & Visitor Center, 11AM to 4PM
Band of the California Battalion at the Rupp House History Center on Baltimore Street at 2PM, followed by a sunset concert at the Pennsylvania Monument at 5PM

June 26-27 (Saturday-Sunday)

20th Maine Infantry and 2nd US Sharpshooters at the Pennsylvania Monument
2nd Maryland Infantry and 4th Maryland Artillery at Pitzer Woods
23rd Virginia Infantry at Spangler's Spring



BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG 147th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMS

July 1-3 (Friday-Saturday)

Join a team of rangers for a series of special hourly programs that highlight specific events and chronologically follow the course of the Battle of Gettysburg. Check website for updates.

July 1-4 (Friday-Sunday)

Special ranger-led programs on the battlefield discuss key events during the three day battle. These popular programs average two and one-half to three hours in length. Check website for updates.

July 3-4 (Saturday-Sunday)

Mifflin Guard at the Pennsylvania Monument
Confederate Military Forces at Pitzer Woods



July 10-11 (Saturday-Sunday)

12th Alabama Infantry at Pitzer Woods
10th Virginia Sharpshooters at Spangler's Spring

July 17 (Saturday Only)

Civil War Ordnance Corps Weapons Display at the Museum & Visitor Center

July 17-18 (Saturday-Sunday)

1st Rhode Island Light Artillery at the Pennsylvania Monument
United States Cavalry at Pitzer Woods

July 24-25 (Saturday-Sunday)

9th Pennsylvania Reserves at the Pennsylvania Monument
3rd Virginia Infantry at Pitzer Woods
10th Virginia Infantry "Hilliard's Brigade" at Spangler's Spring



July 31 (Saturday Only)

Victorian Dance Ensemble at the Museum & Visitor Center, 11AM to 4PM

July 31-August 1 (Saturday-Sunday)

General Hancock Society Pennsylvania Monument
5th Texas Infantry at Pitzer Woods
21st Georgia Infantry at Spangler's Spring

For updated information
visit the GNMP website
www.nps.gov/gett
or call 717-334-1124

Camp Curtin Historical Society's **Civil War Days** **June 19-20**

Negley Park, Lemoyne, Pa.

Camp open 11AM-5PM on Saturday, 11AM-3PM on Sunday.

Negley Park and the surrounding neighborhood were the site of Fort Washington, the largest fort defending Harrisburg in June 1863, as Confederates marched on the Capital. A 1/4 mile west of the park is Fort Couch, the only surviving Civil War military site in the Harrisburg area.

**Artillery firing demonstrations by Cooper's Battery
at 1:00PM, 3:00PM & 9:00PM Saturday and 1:30PM Sunday.**

**Displays of original Civil War artifacts.
Presentations on local history, flags and weapons throughout both days.**

Camp Curtin's tour book, *Civil War Harrisburg, A Guide to Capital Area Sites, Incidents and Personalities*, will be on sale.



Civil War Dance at 7:30PM on Saturday.

*This dance is for the public – Fun for all – Families welcome
Period attire is **not** required – No experience is needed – Wear comfortable modern clothing
Dances will be taught by the Civil War Dance Foundation*

After the dance, there will be a spectacular night-time cannon firing!

Negley Park is located at 5th Street and Cumberland Road in Lemoyne.
From Market Street in Lemoyne, go north on 5th Street, turn right and the park will be on your left.

For information, telephone 717-732-5330 or email CampCurtin@verizon.net