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Ancient Echoes or, Whose Fault Was It?

Written for the REPUBLICAN by M. G. Montgomery.

CHAPTER I.

It was the seventh of November, 1835, when the writer of this article first saw the light of day. My first recollection of political doings was in 1840, when I was five years of age. It was the Harrison and Tyler campaign. One of our neighbors had a threshing bee in which the men were using the old skull cracking flail. We kids, who had accompanied our parents, in looking around for fun procured a pole on which we tied a white rag, and hoisting it, we started a war dance around it shouting hur-rah hu-ru, for Tipicanoo, and Tyler too.

Our enjoyment was short lived however, for the threshers made a raid on the pole and our impromptu flag was ingloriously trailed in the dust.

In 1842 several events transpired that made a lasting impression on my mind. A rebellion broke out in Rhode Island, but I little knew at that age what rebellion meant, still it made such an impression on my mind that I ever after hated the word.

There arose trouble over the dividing line between the British possessions and the United States which caused considerable talk of war. The democrats took up the war-cry of "fifty-four, forty or fight."

I learned later that the figures meant. Then came the burning question of slavery. John C. Calhoun canvassing the southern states advocating the doctrine of state sovereignty. Wm. Lloyd Garrison, a bitter abolitionist and editor of the Liberator, spreading his doctrine through the north by scattering broadcast his papers which were greedily perused by friend and foe. Thus was a gulf opened between the North and South that nothing could close but the life-blood of martyrs.

In 1844 James K. Polk and Dryden were elected. I do not recollect anything transpiring worthy of note outside the slavery question which would not down, although there were many called the peace party who strove with all their power to allay the threatening storm, but alas, the hand writing was on the wall.

In the year 1820 Missouri was admitted into the Union as a slave state and at that time a bill was passed called the "Missouri Compromise," which prohibited any more slavery north of parallel 36-30 which was the south line of Missouri.

The slavery party now began to see that they had consented to an act that would eventually destroy the prestage they held over the north. To help themselves out of the dilemma they saw their chance to extend their territory, and against the judgment of some of our most competent public men, among whom was Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and a host of others, war was declared against Mexico, who, through the intrigues of the filibuster, Sam Houston, had already lost Texas which had become annexed to the United States as a territory.

The Mexican war was a short and decisive one and in 1847 peace was declared and the United States paid to Mexico \$25,000,000 and Mexico in return ceded to the United States California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and part of Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas and New Mexico. Now was renewed the jangle over slavery, Mexico had declared the freedom of all slaves in her domain and some wanted the territories left free as when ceded to us. Others proposed to extend the Missouri Compromise from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific. Both propositions were rejected.

The obstinacy of both North and South was becoming so acute that it was almost out of the question to find a compromise acceptable to both. There had been a bill introduced in the house called the Wilmot proviso. It proposed to exclude slavery or involuntary servitude from any acquired territory except for crime. This bill passed in the house, but was rejected in

the senate and like all other propositions was discussed through the land. Its advocates finally forming a new party. They called themselves Free Soilers.

In 1848 there were three sets of candidates for the presidency. The democrats nominated Cass and Butler. The Free Soilers nominated VanBuren and Adams. Their platform declared that Congress had no more right to make a slave then to make a king.

The Whig party nominated Taylor and Fillmore and they were elected by the Democrats losing New York to the Free Soil party. I was now thirteen years of age and began to take great interest in what was transpiring in our country. California came clamoring for admittance as a free state into the Union. The State rights party, and in fact the whole of the South, opposed it in every way, even then threatening rebellion or secession.

Gold had been discovered in great quantities and there had been such a flood of emigration from the North that the vote had been overwhelmingly for freedom. This had caused great bitterness all over the States, and our halls of Congress rang with cankerous accusation from both sides, in which no one was benefitted or convinced.

California was admitted as a free state, however, and Henry Clay came forward with a conglomeration of bills offered as a sop to passify both parties.

1. He offered a bill that any new states formed from Texas should be admitted as slave states.

2 That the territories of New Mexico and Utah should be decided for or against slavery by the votes of those territories when asking admision as states.

3 Slavery shall forever be abolished in the district of Columbia.

4 That a more rigid fugitive slave law should be passed. These compromises and the fugitive slave law was passed in 1850. Instead of giving satisfaction it only widened the gulf between the South and North. During this agitation our President Zachary Taylor was stricken by death, and Millard Fillmore became President. He carried out Taylor's policy and was considered a good president by his party.

CHAPTER II.

We are now at the middle of the century, 1850, and our country is prosperous. The United States had acquired a vast tract of land toward the setting sun that she knew but little of. John C. Fremont is chosen to explore the country. The Mormon leader, Joseph Smith, who was killed in 1848, was succeeded by Brigham Young, who is moving

(Continued on last page.)

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