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Randall R. Butler, II

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THE NEW ENGLAND EMIGRANT AID COMPANY
AND THE RESPONSE IN MASSACHUSETTS TO ITS GOALS
AND EFFORTS TO CREATE A FREE KANSAS, 1854-1856

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
Loma Linda University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Randall R. Butler, II
August, 1973

Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

The abolition of slavery in the United States was not the exclusive work of any one individual, society, party, or clique, but an achievement in which vast numbers of men and women bore a creditable part, though often working along different lines and by divergent methods. One of these methods was the New England Emigrant Aid Company, first incorporated as the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company in April, 1854. Its contribution to the abolition movement was to propose and attempt to carry out a plan to prevent the extension of slavery to the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska, but particularly to Kansas because of its geographic proximity to the South. The Company's plan called for the peaceful settlement of the plains and prairies of Kansas by Free-soil men sent from New England under the auspices of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The Company hoped to accomplish this goal by obtaining a wide subscription to its stock shares, sold on the market for twenty dollars a share. It is not germane to the body of this topic to try to prove whether or not the Company succeeded in saving Kansas, thus being a precipitating cause of the Civil War. This question and others related to it were heatedly debated by participants and critics nearly

a century ago; some of their various arguments will be discussed in the conclusion.

The New England Emigrant Aid Company was actively involved in Kansas and related affairs until the summer of 1857. The Company's efforts at that time wound down to near extinction due to a variety of reasons, which are touched upon in Chapters three and four. Kansas was admitted to the Union in January 1861, and the following year the stockholders of the Company ordered that all of its properties in Kansas and Missouri be sold. After 1861 the Company transferred its activities to other areas. In 1864 and 1865, it promoted the migration of working women to Oregon, and from 1866 to 1868, it was active in locating Northerners in Florida. By 1870, however, the Company had fallen idle and was never again active in emigrant aid schemes. The stockholders were not called together again until 1897 when an extension of the charter was requested and granted. That year the Company presented its single asset--a claim against the United States government for loss of the Free State Hotel at Lawrence in 1856 to the University of Kansas. Although the Company then ceased to exist for all practical purposes, its extended charter expired on February 19, 1907.

Many Civil War historians, including J. G. Randall, David Donald, Kenneth M. Stampp, Allen Nevins, and Avery Craven, have included in their works at least a reference

to the Company and its efforts to make Kansas a free-state, but none have thoroughly investigated or attempted to measure the response of the people of Massachusetts to the various efforts of the New England Emigrant Aid Company to arouse the public to the cause of a free Kansas. It is my intention to attempt to determine the degree and type of response the Company generated by its efforts to propagandize and win the sympathy of the citizens of Massachusetts, to its own business ventures, as well as to the issue of a free Kansas. Attention is given not only to the response of the Commonwealth's general citizenry, but particularly to the following special interest groups: businessmen, clergymen, politicians, and journalists.

I believe it goes without saying that still in the 1850's all New England, with the possible exception of Connecticut, followed the leadership of the mother Bay State. However, only where it is essential to my subject will I correlate the Company's activities in other states, or show how events outside the State affected the plans and operations of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. I have deliberately avoided a detailed history of the Company, for this has been very adequately accomplished by Samuel A. Johnson in his Battle Cry of Freedom.

My research included the extensive study of seventy Bay State newspapers. Small town papers especially

were not always rewarding for their newsworthiness, however, I attempted to use as wide a variety throughout the thesis as feasible. I also gleaned much unfootnoted background information regarding some towns and their citizens from town directories. A full list of those consulted can be found in the Bibliography.

For clarification, it should be noted that the New England Emigrant Aid Company was often referred to by a variety of names. This was probably due to the number of similar organizations that sprang up throughout the Northeast in imitation of the founding Company, and the popular mind which lumped all the companies under the concept of "Emigrant Aid Society."¹ Some of these names include: Kansas Emigration Society, Emigrant Aid Association, Emigrant Aid Company, Emigrant Aid Society, and Northern Emigration Society. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I will refer to either the Company's fully incorporated title, or the abbreviated form, Emigrant Aid Company.

Even though this manuscript is not intended for publication, I would like to express my deep appreciation to several persons. I owe special gratitude to Dr. G. T. Anderson for his critical eye and most helpful suggestions

¹Samuel A. Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Conflict (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 221.

and comments. I would also like to extend my thanks to Miss Ruth H. Hill of the Beverly Historical Society, and Mrs. Margaret Mitchell of Brown University's John Hay Library for their beyond-the-call-of-duty assistance in locating manuscripts. I owe Miss Mary Brown and the Staff of the American Antiquarian Society much appreciation for allowing me to use their services.

No acknowledgment would be complete without expressing my deepest appreciation to my wife, Donna, for her patience, criticisms, and for suffering through the typing of this thesis.

CHAPTER I: REACTION IN MASSACHUSETTS TO THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL

The passage of the Compromises of 1820 and 1850 had supposedly settled the problem of balancing the Senatorial strength between the North and South. However, the ink on the Compromise of 1850 had hardly dried, before a new gauntlet was thrown down before the North.

The first attempt to organize the Nebraska Territory was made in December 1852, when the Missouri Representative, Willard P. Hill, introduced a bill before the House for the organization of the territory of the Platte. The bill was referred to the Committee on Territories, which reported a bill for the creation of a territorial government for Nebraska in February 1852. This bill, however, did not provide for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line of $36^{\circ}30'$, and for this reason was opposed in the House by the whole Southern delegation, with the exception of only the two Missouri Senators, David R. Atchison and Henry S. Geyer.

When the Thirty-Third Congress met in December 1853, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois took it upon himself to reintroduce the Nebraska question in Congress. On January 4, 1854, Senator Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in the Senate. Douglas' motives for doing so have never been fully explained, but the results of

his action were plain. In its final form the Bill explicitly repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, a measure which had 'forever' prohibited the extension of slavery to the very area out of which the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska were to be carved. A region was thus thrown open to slavery that Northerners had long considered permanently free from the "curse" of slavery.

The immediate response in the North to the proposed Bill was shock and indignation. Horace Greeley in the New York Tribune warned that passage of the bill would be " . . . tantamount to a civil revolution . . ." ¹ Senator Henry Clay believed that they were already "in the midst of a revolution." ² The Worcester Daily Spy copied an editorial from the New York Herald, calling the Kansas-Nebraska Bill a betrayal by all parties:

We were promised by the two great parties, at Baltimore, that the Compromise of 1850 was a 'final settlement' of the slavery question . . . Suddenly there is a muttering of political thunder heard at the capital and the great tinkers of the Compromise themselves, appear as violators of their own 'Compromises' and as 'arch agitators' . . . It is for the people to consider this question, and to act upon it. It is for them to say whether Nebraska shall remain free, as is now

¹Editorial in the New York Tribune, May 18, 1854.

²James Shepherd Pike, First Blows of the Civil War; The Ten Years of Preliminary Conflict in the United States from 1850 to 1860 (New York: American News Company, 1879), p. 230.

expressly provided by law, or whether she will be given up by the minions of the slave power to chains and slavery.³

This same call for action shortly after the Bill was introduced had been expressed earlier in a poignant poem entitled, "An Appeal for Nebraska:"

Rally, ye Sons of Freedom! for there's
danger to your cause . . .

.
Rally, ye Sons of Freedom! with the
spirit of the North, and to Kansas and
Nebraska send your young men quickly
forth . . .⁴

In spite of opposition, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill passed the Senate on March 3, 1854, and the House on May 22, to be signed by President Franklin Pierce on May 30, 1854. At once antislavery feelings were reinvigorated all over the North. The passage of the Bill gave new life to a nearly dead Free-soil Party. It also helped to rekindle the fire of the Abolitionist movement. Suddenly, crowds of people who before had severely criticized William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, and their methods, ". . . now flocked to hear them, and were glad to listen to the arguments of these earnest men."⁵ The change in attitude was aptly illus-

³Editorial in the Worcester Daily Spy, January 18, 1854.

⁴Poem in the Salem Evening Journal, December 18, 1854.

⁵James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 (8 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), I:495-496.

trated in a Boston Daily Bee editorial,

. . . had the President and Senator Douglas made a bargain to furnish material for agitation to the abolitionists, they could not have done better, in fulfillment of their contract, than to have pursued the identical course they have.⁶

State Representative Robert C. Winthrop wrote in a similar vein:

If I could have prescribed a recipe for reinflating free-soilism and abolitionism which had collapsed all over the country, I should have singled out this precise potion from the materia medica of political quackery.⁷

Not a single Massachusetts Congressman had voted for the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The reaction of Massachusetts' Congressmen is well illustrated by a speech from Representative Charles W. Upham of Salem, before the United States House:

I hesitate not to say that instead of the Missouri Compromise being unconstitutional, the Nebraska and Kansas Bill is itself in more complete and utter antagonism to both the Constitution and the Union, than any measure ever proposed to an American Congress.

You [South] have united the free States at last, by this untimely, unprovoked, and astounding proposal.⁸

⁶Editorial in the Boston Daily Bee, June 5, 1854.

⁷Quoted in Godfrey Tryggve Anderson, "The Slavery Issue as a Factor In Massachusetts Politics from the Compromise of 1850 to the Civil War," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1944), p. 75.

⁸Great Barrington Berkshire Courier, May 25, 1854.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill helped to release for action on the side of freedom the old Whigs and old Democrats of New England, both of whom hated slavery.⁹

Total unity of purpose under the banner of a new political organization was to be foreshadowed in the state elections of 1855 and 1856, and to culminate in a Northern victory in 1860. The North was " . . . stirred . . . with a thrill of resentment and resistance."¹⁰

The press of Massachusetts was typical of the North in denouncing the passage of the Bill.¹¹ The well known and respected editor and publisher of the Springfield Republican, Samuel Bowles, changed his whole attitude and politics from Whig to Republican over the issue and denounced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill as a "monstrous proposition."¹² The Catholic Boston Pilot was one of the few Massachusetts papers to favor the Bill and its passage.¹³

⁹Edward Everett Hale, "Emigration to Kansas." An address delivered in Bismark Grove, Lawrence, Kansas, September 16, 1879," (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1879), p. 5.

¹⁰George Spring Merriam, The Life and Times of Samuel Bowles (New York: The Century Company, 1885), I:111.

¹¹James Melvin Lee, History of American Journalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), p. 280.

¹²Merriam, op. cit., p. 113.

¹³Anderson, op. cit., p. 84; editorial in The [Boston] Pilot, November 9, 1854.

In an impassioned editorial, the Berkshire Courier cried:

Tear down, we say, the stars and stripes from yonder capitol, and let the glorious flag of freedom no longer wave in mockery over an American Congress that legalizes slavery, and has done and is doing all that can be done, to extend and perpetuate the curse.

.
The battle of freedom is to be again fought, and now is the time for marshaling its hosts.¹⁴

All " . . . the North was aghast!"¹⁵ The Northern States became a scene of unprecedented resentment, agitation, and alarm.¹⁶ "No single act of the Slave Power ever spread greater consternation, produced more lasting results upon the popular mind or did as much to arouse the North . . ." as the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.¹⁷ The people of Massachusetts had long opposed the spread of slavery. They had almost unanimously opposed the extension of slavery under the Missouri Compromise.¹⁸

¹⁴Editorial in the Great Barrington Berkshire Courier, June 1, 1854.

¹⁵Albert Bushnell Hart (ed.), Nineteenth Century Massachusetts 1820-1889 (Vol. IV of Commonwealth History of Massachusetts, 5 vols., New York: The States History Company, 1927-1930), p. 484.

¹⁶Franklin P. Rice, The Life of Eli Thayer (unpublished biography, [n.p., n.d.], p. 11 of Chapter VIII [Each chapter is paged separately]).

¹⁷Henry Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power of America (3 vols.; Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1874), II:378.

¹⁸Edward Everett Hale, "New England Colonization," in The New England States, ed., by William T. Davis (5 vols.; Boston: D. H. Hurd & Company, 1897), I:79.

But now even the principle of the 36°30' line was being nullified. Amos A. Lawrence, a well known and respected conservative Whig, and his father, Abbott, owner of a large textile mill business in the city of Lawrence, took pains to ascertain opinion among well-to-do merchants and retired gentlemen.¹⁹ These were the men who were usually linked with an attitude of accommodation to the slave power, due partly to commercial interests and the influence of timid conservative politicians like Edward Everett and Robert C. Winthrop, but even they felt they had been cheated.²⁰ After a substantive inquiry, Amos Lawrence wrote several friends that

The sentiment among this powerful and conservative class of men is the same as it is in the country towns throughout New England.²¹

Like their businessmen friends, the clergy of New England was equally displeased by the turn of events. On March 14, 3,050 of the 3,800 clergymen in New England signed a petition scroll 200 feet long, imploring Congress

¹⁹Martin B. Duberman, Charles Francis Adams, 1807 to 1886 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 190.

²⁰Merriam, op. cit., p. 131.

²¹Letters from Amos A. Lawrence to John A. Andrews, May 26, 1854, and William R. Lawrence, June 8, 1854. Amos A. Lawrence Letterbook, Massachusetts Historical Society Library [hereafter referred to as M. H. S.], Boston, Massachusetts.

" . . . in the name of Almighty God and in His presence . . . " to resist all further encroachments of the Southern slaveholders.²² In order to avoid abolitionist connotations, they asked Edward Everett to introduce it before the Senate.²³ Many people of all classes and conditions, of Massachusetts, gathered with patriotic fervor in halls, in churches, and school-houses to put on record their fierce denunciation of the "unparalleled swindle."²⁴ "Never before had so much feeling been elicited; never before had so many been found ready to disown their allegiance to the Slave Power . . ."²⁵ At Boston's Faneuil Hall on February 23, 1854, several thousand gathered to voice their protest and pass anti-Nebraska resolutions. The meeting had been called under the auspices of the conservative Whigs--chiefly the Webster Whigs of 1850.²⁶ The audience, however, was not interested

²²William Gleason Bean, "Party Transformation in Massachusetts, with Special Reference to the Antecedents of Republicanism, 1848-1860" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1922), p. 186.

²³David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1961), p. 360.

²⁴Rice, loc. cit.

²⁵Wilson, op. cit., p. 379.

²⁶Charles Francis Adams, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., A Biography (2 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1890), I:257.

or enthusiastic about Webster compromise politics, for "rapturous applause," accompanied only "everything hostile to the 1850 Compromise and of Free-Soil Character."²⁷ The time had come for a positive stand to be taken--no more compromises. United States Commissioner, Robert H. Hillard, a moderate, addressed the assembly with respect to the growing Northern sentiment:

Our Southern brethren should understand that there is an anti-slavery sentiment in the North which is neither abolitionism nor Free-soilism. It is a principle as well as a sentiment--fed by the silent streams which flow from the mind and heart. It is at once a logical deduction of the understanding and a primitive instinct of the soul.²⁸

In March at the Lawrence City Hall, over 1,200 gathered--including a large representation of women--to listen to speeches by community leaders, including several clergymen, and to pass a resolution opposed to the "sectional bill."²⁹ The city of Dedham resolved " . . . that . . . slavery is a gigantic political evil, a crime against man and a sin not to be further extended in the nation."³⁰ Similar meetings echoing kindred sentiments were held in nearly every major town and village of

²⁷ Ibid., p. 258.

²⁸ Boston Transcript, August 11, 1854, as quoted in Anderson, op. cit., p. 76.

²⁹ Lawrence Courier, March 7, 1854.

³⁰ Dedham Gazette, April 8, 1854.

Massachusetts.³¹ However, not everyone was disconsolate, for at least in Boston Democrats and their friends fired a 113 gun salute to celebrate the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.³²

Stopping the extension of slavery into the new territories, particularly in Kansas, seemed impossible. Both the North and the South expected that Nebraska would be commercially tributary to Iowa, and by the aid of railroad and river transportation, linked with the North and freedom.³³ The contest for Kansas was a more serious challenge. The North feared that the people of Missouri and the deeper South would cross the border and possess the plains of Kansas before Northern settlers could arrive to challenge Douglas' squatter sovereignty principle.³⁴ Many in the North were pessimistic--even Horace Greeley in the Tribune stated that " . . . the revolution is accomplished and slavery is king."³⁵

³¹Nearly every Massachusetts newspaper consulted (seventy in all) contained notices and articles on such meetings.

³²Worcester Daily Transcript, May 27, 1854.

³³Johnson, op. cit., p. 6.

³⁴Elmor LeRoy Craik, "Southern Interest in Territorial Kansas 1854-1858," Collections of the Kansas Historical Society, XV:340, 1919-1922; and James C. Malin, "The Proslavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," The Mississippi Historical Review, X:290-291, December, 1923.

³⁵Editorial in the New York Tribune, May 24, 1854.

During the course of debate on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, a Worcester schoolmaster and state representative contemplated the new Southern challenge. Eli Thayer, the son of a Massachusetts farmer, had worked his way through Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Moving to Worcester, Massachusetts, Thayer established the Oread Collegiate Institute in 1849, a seminary to prepare women for college (a startling innovation of the time); it was a social and financial success.³⁶

It was easy for Thayer, with his Free-soil convictions, to be assimilated into the politics of Worcester, which was one of the leading centers of antislavery sentiment in New England.³⁷ His election to the General Court of Massachusetts as a Free-soil candidate for the term of 1853-1854 brought him into contact with such local Free-soil leaders as Charles P. Allen, Frank W. Bird, Dwight Foster, and George Frisbee Hoar.³⁸

Senator Douglas had said that the effect of his bill would be to transfer the slavery question from

³⁶Horace Andrews, Jr., "Kansas Crusade: Eli Thayer and the New England Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, 35:498, December, 1962.

³⁷R. E. Welch, Jr., George Frisbee Hoar and the Half-Breed Republicans (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 8.

³⁸Ibid., p. 10.

Congress to the prairies of Kansas and Nebraska. Accepting Douglas' concept of squatter sovereignty as a two-edged sword, Thayer saw a challenge and an opportunity to beat the South at its own game.³⁹

As the winter of 1853-1854 wore away, Eli Thayer began to have a conviction that something must be done to save the soon-to-be disputed Territory of Kansas. Thayer said he felt " . . . a personal responsibility," and pondered the problem day and night. Early in February, he hit upon the idea of organized emigration " . . . guided and guarded by a responsible business company."⁴⁰

The concept of organized emigration and corporate colonization was not new or unique to this nation's history. In fact, one of Thayer's Worcester neighbors, Reverend Edward Everett Hale, had written a pamphlet in 1845 entitled, "How to Conquer Texas Before Texas Conquers Us," suggesting organized colonization to Texas in order to win there "the contest of freedom."⁴¹

Before long a debate developed over the issue of

³⁹Eli Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Company and Its Influence on National History (Worcester, Massachusetts: [n.p.], 1887), p. 15.

⁴⁰Eli Thayer, A History of the Kansas Crusade--Its Friends and Its Foes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), pp. 23-24.

⁴¹Edward Everett Hale, How to Conquer Texas Before Texas Conquers Us, "A Tract for the Day." (Boston: Redding & Company, March 17, 1845), p. 5.

whether or not Thayer's idea was original or copied from the suggestion in Hale's pamphlet. Hale believed that Thayer had never seen his pamphlet until he rendered him a copy when he hurried to Thayer's house to offer his services.⁴² Thayer's own explanation for the origin of his colonization scheme was that, ". . . suddenly it came upon me like a revelation."⁴³

Thayer envisioned the chartering of joint-stock corporations, based upon sound business principles, which would offer travel inducements, such as group transportation rates to families willing to emigrate to Kansas. His plan included the building of company owned hotels and saw and flour mills for the convenience of the emigrants and the company's profit. His plan rang true to the principles of a Yankee entrepreneur. Thayer always intended the enterprise to be money making--returning a profitable dividend to investors--as well as being philanthropic.⁴⁴

The first opportunity for Thayer to reveal his plan came at a mass rally against the "Nebraska Bill" at Worcester City Hall on the evening of March 11, 1854.

⁴²Edward Everett Hale, Memoirs of a Hundred Years (2 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), II:155, and letter from Edward Everett Hale to Charles Branscomb, February 3, 1855. Eli Thayer Collection. The John Hay Library of Brown University [hereafter referred to as the John Hay Library], Providence, Rhode Island.

⁴³Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 13.

⁴⁴Kenneth S. Davis, Eli Thayer and the Kansas Crusade (Worcester, Massachusetts: Worcester Public Library, 1963), p. 18.

Peter C. Bacon presided over a distinguished list of officers, including William T. Merrifield, Charles P. Allen, Henry Goulding, Eli Thayer, William Dickenson, and the Reverends Horace James and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Eli Thayer and Dwight Foster served with several others on a resolutions committee.⁴⁵ When called upon to address the gathering, Thayer spoke out against the violation of the compact between the sovereign states, and then issued his challenge to the South over Kansas:

. . . It is time now, to think about what is to be done in the event of its passage. 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 freemen . . . (loud cheers).

I am willing to be taxed one fourth of my time or of my earnings, until this thing be done--until a barrier of free hearts and strong hands shall be built around the land our fathers consecrated to freedom, to be her heritage forever. (loud cheers).⁴⁶

Thayer was now ready to take his plan before the Massachusetts legislature to seek a charter of incorporation.

⁴⁵ Worcester Daily Spy, March 13, 1854; and Worcester Daily Transcript, March 18, 1854.

⁴⁶ Worcester Daily Spy, March 13, 1854.

CHAPTER II: THE EMIGRANT AID
COMPANY IN TRANSITION

Early in March 1854, Eli Thayer circulated a petition for an emigrant aid company charter. He obtained sixty-two signatures, more than half being fellow members of the Massachusetts Legislature.¹ Thayer sought a capitalization of \$10,000,000 and stated the purpose of his planned association to be " . . . to aid and protect emigrants from New England or from the Old World in settling in the West, and to secure to them the rights and privileges of free labor."² Speaking at the hearing for his bill of incorporation before the Judiciary Committee, Thayer said:

This is a plan to prevent the forming of any more slave states . . . In the halls of Congress we have been invariably beaten for more than thirty years, and it is now time to change the battle-ground from Congress to the prairies, where we shall invariably win.³

The bill passed the Judiciary Committee and the state legislature, but " . . . not one member . . . had

¹Johnson, op. cit., p. 16; and Robert F. Moody, "The First Year of the Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, IV:149, January, 1931.

²Moody, op. cit., p. 148.

³Thayer, The Kansas Crusade, p. 26.

any faith in the measure."⁴ The governor signed the bill incorporating the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company on April 26, 1854, over a full month before the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was signed by President Pierce.⁵ The charter listed the full compliment of Company officials to include a president, vice-president, seven directors, treasurer, and secretary. The Company was permitted to issue capital stock up to \$5,000,000 divided into \$100 shares, assessable at \$4 the first year and \$10 each succeeding year. Only twenty of the sixty-two petitioners were named as incorporators.⁶ The list of incorporators read like a state who's who, including such prominent businessmen and citizens as Isaac Livermore, Amos A. Lawrence, and Samuel G. Howe. Several, including Moses Kimball, Otis Rich, and Otis Clapp, were state congressmen in Boston. Two, Charles Allen and Stephen C. Phillips, were members of the United States Congress; three others, Alexander H. Bullock, Anson Burlingame, and Henry Wilson, would soon join them in Congress.

⁴Ibid., p. 27; and Jean Holloway, Edward Everett Hale: A Biography (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1956), p. 105.

⁵Thayer, loc. cit.

⁶An engrossed copy of the Act of Incorporation is among the microfilmed Emigrant Aid Company Papers, Topeka, Kansas State Historical Society [hereafter referred to as the Aid Company Papers], Topeka, Kansas.

On May 4, 1854, the incorporators met at the State House in Boston, accepted the charter, elected Thayer chairman and Otis Clapp secretary, and appointed a committee to draw up the Company plans of operation.⁷

Approximately two weeks later another meeting was held to hear the planning committee's report and to launch a subscription campaign.⁸ The Company's plan of operations was a mere iteration of Thayer's original concept:

The Company proposes to carry them [emigrants] to their homes more cheaply than they otherwise go . . .

The Company will build boarding-houses, also . . . sawmills, gristmills, and such other machines as shall be of constant service in a new settlement . . .

. . . Whenever the Territory shall be organized as a Free State, the Directors shall dispose of all its interest there . . . declare a dividend to the stockholders . . . [a new territory would then be selected for settlement as a free state.]⁹

Both Eli Thayer and Edward Everett Hale were optimistic that businessmen would rally to the cause which

⁷Johnson in Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 17, perhaps mistakenly gives the date of the meeting as May 3, 1854. At least two references to May 4, 1854, were found in Thayer's Kansas Crusade, p. 27; and Worcester Daily Spy, May 10, 1854.

⁸Johnson, loc. cit. Johnson gives the date as possibly the eighteenth of May, there seems to be no exact recorded date.

⁹[Edward Everett Hale] History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company with a Report on Its Future Operations. Published by Order of the Board of Directors (Boston, [n.p.], 1862), pp. 4-5.

they were sure would provide "large returns at no distant day."¹⁰ Hale wrote to his father, who was editor of the Boston Daily Advertiser, that,

It is no mere charity scheme, but one in which businessmen, I think, will interest themselves. Benjamin C. Clark, Isaac Livermore, Charles Thurber, Mr. Bullock, here, Moses Kimball, Otis Rich are among the incorporators whom you know. They want to secure your hearty cooperation if the scheme pleases you on the examination . . .

I think I have never had anything so much at heart; I only wish I were a businessman that I might invest in it openly.¹¹

Thayer and Hale believed that the Company would be equally attractive to foreign emigrants; they expected perhaps as many as 30,000 or 40,000 could be induced to go on to Kansas upon their arrival in the East.¹² But for the moment, this was all wishful thinking. On May 26, 1854, Dr. Thomas H. Webb, who had been employed to solicit stock subscriptions, wrote Thayer that "a masterly inactivity" seemed to have taken possession of the incorporators, for not one was willing to subscribe to a single

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹ Letter from E. E. Hale to father, May 11, 1854. Edward Everett Hale Collection. New York State Library [hereafter referred to as the N. Y. State Library], Albany, New York.

¹² [Hale], History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, pp. 6-7; editorial in the Worcester Daily Spy, May 10, 1854; letter from Hale to father, May 11, 1854, loc. cit.; and Edward Everett Hale, Kansas and Nebraska (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1854), p. 249.

share of stock or co-operate in introducing him to wealthy individuals.¹³

The incorporators met several times during the month of June 1854. The most important gathering was convened in Boston's Chapman Hall on June 7, with Eli Thayer presiding.¹⁴ Otis Clapp resigned as secretary and Dr. Thomas H. Webb was elected as his replacement. Because enough stock had not been bought yet to warrant a permanent organization, subscription committees were appointed to open offices and subscription books in Boston, Worcester, and New York City. The meeting then adjourned until June 10, when the Company's by-laws were adopted. The meeting adjourned without being able to select a Board of Directors; concern was growing over the future course of the Company.¹⁵ Amos A. Lawrence, merchant, philanthropist, and a conservative "Hunker" Whig, played a vital role in the preceding events, but even more so in the subsequent course of action.¹⁶

Amos Lawrence had been one of the original incorporators, but disliked the commercial aspects of the

¹³Letter from Thomas Webb to Eli Thayer, Boston, May 26, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹⁴Rice, op. cit., Chapter XI, p. 12.

¹⁵Worcester Weekly Transcript, June 10, 1854.

¹⁶Hart, op. cit., p. 478; letter from Amos Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, September 27, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

Company. Lawrence preferred to carry the venture on as a cooperative society with investment features.¹⁷ June 10, the same day the last official meeting adjourned, Patrick T. Jackson, a Boston merchant and new associate of the Company, wrote a letter to Lawrence seeking to enlist his services in a scheme to organize a new private company.

Jackson wrote:

We find that owing to the loose manner in which our Charter was drawn up, there are very serious objections to acting under it. . . . We therefore propose to abandon this Charter for the present and organize a private Company with a capital of \$200,000 in shares of \$20 each . . .

We want you as a Trustee very much [Jackson's italics]; you can do us more good than anyone else. . . .¹⁸

The new scheme called for three trustees with a consultative council of fifteen to manage the proposed Company. Jackson asked Lawrence to serve with Eli Thayer and one other trustee to be either New York businessman, Peter Cooper, George Niebold, or Moses H. Grinnell. The chief objections to the old charter centered, Jackson wrote, "[on] individual liability, and a large subscription

¹⁷Andrews, loc. cit.; Moody, op. cit., pp. 154-155; William Lawrence, Life of Amos A. Lawrence With Extracts from His Diary and Correspondence (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1888), p. 81.

¹⁸Letter from P. T. Jackson to A. A. Lawrence, June 10, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

extending over [many] years." The new plan called for each to be responsible for his own "acts and neglects only." Lawrence wrote back the same day that he would "cheerfully" serve as a trustee.¹⁹ It is possible that Lawrence's earlier objections to the charter led to the new plan and his acceptance.²⁰

Thayer was soliciting in New York and had obtained subscriptions for over \$100,000 when he received word of the decision in Boston to organize a private company. He said the news was " . . . a shock like a thunderbolt," for, "due to the timidity of the Boston men . . . all [the money] was to be lost."²¹

On June 12, 1854, the incorporators met again and designated Thayer and Amos A. Lawrence as trustees from Massachusetts to serve with a third to be selected from New York--preferably Moses H. Grinnell.²² At a meeting in Boston on June 19, Grinnell's selection was announced, and the articles of organization completed.²³ But Grinnell and other New York men declined to serve.²⁴ The entire

¹⁹Ibid. Lawrence's reply was written on the same letter.

²⁰Moody, op. cit., p. 149.

²¹Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Co., p. 25.

²²[Hale], History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 5.

²³Johnson, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁴Andrews, op. cit., p. 497.

New York group objected to operating on a voluntary non-chartered basis; they were afraid of personal liability in an unincorporated company.²⁵ Lawrence wrote to Grinnell urging him not to withdraw, assuring him that his good name would not be tarnished or dimmed by his association with the new venture.²⁶ An impasse had been reached; the New York men refused to cooperate without a new incorporated company and the Boston men could not work under the original charter.

The only alternative now left was to seek a new and improved charter. Since the New York Legislature was not in session, Thayer sent a lawyer to the Connecticut Legislature to obtain a new charter.²⁷ With exceptional dispatch, the charter was granted within exactly one week of his request.²⁸ The new charter for the "Emigrant Aid Company of New York and Connecticut" retained the \$5,000,000 capitalization, but omitted the provisions for division into shares and for annual assessments.²⁹

²⁵ Ibid.; and letter from E. E. Hale to H. Greeley, [n.d.], E. E. Hale Collection. N. Y. State Library, Albany, New York.

²⁶ Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Moses H. Grinnell, June 21, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

²⁷ Letter from E. Thayer to A. A. Lawrence, June 22, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

²⁸ Johnson, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁹ Printed copy of the Connecticut Act of Incorporation, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

The list of incorporators remained the same, with the exception of mistakenly confusing the name of Abbott Lawrence with that of Amos Lawrence.³⁰ After some debate it was decided to issue stock in \$20 shares.³¹ Arrangements were made for the incorporators to meet in New Haven.³²

The new company was no more successful than the two earlier attempts in winning the support of businessmen in either New York or Boston. Conservative Boston businessmen were suspicious of any mixture of benevolence and speculation.³³ Lawrence wrote Thayer on July 5,

I have heard from or seen . . . in my counting room nearly all the gentlemen interested in the organization of the Emigrant Aid Society, all objecting to the Connecticut Charter, saying that subscriptions could not be had under it.³⁴

He suggested that the New York men work under the charter and that Boston begin anew, " . . . as a charitable society with a Massachusetts organization." His inten-

³⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, June 30, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Letter from E. Thayer to P. T. Jackson, June 29, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³¹Letter from E. Thayer to P. T. Jackson, June 29, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³²P. T. Jackson to A. A. Lawrence, June 30, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³³Andrews, loc. cit.

³⁴Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, July 5, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

tions were to use the present charter for the summer and then seek a new one from the next Massachusetts Legislature.

Lawrence wrote again to Thayer the next day pointing out that little could be done with the Connecticut Charter in Boston. People were willing to "pay down money," but would not subscribe to stock for fear of liability. Therefore, he asked Thayer to consider him out of office, and not a candidate under the present organization. Lawrence was convinced that a complete separation must be made between the Boston and New York groups.³⁵

Thayer did not take Lawrence seriously and sent him a notice of the incorporators' meeting in New Haven for July 18.³⁶ Neither Thayer nor Lawrence were present when the incorporators gathered in New Haven. Lawrence stayed home and Thayer, at Lawrence's insistence, went to Buffalo with the first "Pioneer Party" of Kansas settlers.³⁷ The meeting was dominated by the New York men, especially R. N. Havens. Benjamin F. Butler was elected chairman. The Connecticut charter was accepted, by-laws adopted, and

³⁵Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, Boston, July 6, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

³⁶Letter from E. Thayer to A. A. Lawrence, July 6, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston; and [Hale], The New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 6.

³⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, July 8, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

a slate of officers elected. Eli Thayer was elected president; R. N. Havens of New York and William H. Russell of New Haven, vice-presidents; Amos A. Lawrence, treasurer; and Dr. Thomas H. Webb, secretary. Subscription offices were appointed to open in New York, Boston, and New Haven. Lawrence, however, helped to complete the split when he declined to serve as treasurer (M. H. Grinnell was subsequently elected).³⁸

The future activities of the Emigrant Aid Company of New York and Connecticut do not directly concern us in this thesis. It will suffice to say that it sputtered on until the summer of 1855, never sending anyone to Kansas, and eventually merging with the equally defunct American Settlement Company in 1856. Mr. Johnson in his book, Battle Cry of Freedom, is convinced that the failure of this company resulted from allowing its leadership to fall into the hands of self-seeking politicians.³⁹

Thayer was convinced by another letter from Amos Lawrence dated July 15, that Lawrence had no intention of serving as an officer under the Connecticut charter.⁴⁰

³⁸Johnson, op. cit., p. 23.

³⁹Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, July 15, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Moody, op. cit., p. 152.

Thayer had taken pains in organizing the original company to attract both wealthy and prestigious men. It had been largely due to Lawrence's influence that the Company had secured the support of the Boston and Providence Whigs.⁴¹ Frustrated in not being any more successful than Lawrence in raising subscriptions in Boston, Patrick T. Jackson had already severed himself from the Company.⁴² His name does not reappear on the Company records until the spring of 1856. Thayer could not afford to lose the support of yet another influential figure. With deep concern and a willingness to compromise and accept Lawrence's point of view, Thayer wrote Lawrence on July 17, the day before the New Haven meeting and on the eve of his departure to Buffalo with the first "Pioneer Party." Thayer had sounded out the gentlemen of Roxbury and Boston and found them willing to go ahead under the June 12 Articles of Association.⁴³ He asked Lawrence to ". . . name the Boston Trustee who shall be satisfactory . . ." to him, and offered to vacate his position for anyone Lawrence might desire to replace him with--he offered Patrick T.

⁴¹Speech by A. A. Lawrence at the Old Settlers Celebration, Lawrence, Kansas, September 14, 1877, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁴²Johnson, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴³Letter from E. Thayer to A. A. Lawrence, Worcester, July 17, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

Jackson's name as a possible candidate for trustee. Thayer offered to join in any better plan Lawrence might have, and admitted:

The Truth is that the private Company is still in existence in the estimation of the citizens and they subscribe for stock under that belief; at least some of them do.⁴⁴

Lawrence replied the same day:

I cannot answer about the organization. We are very peculiar here [Boston] in business transactions and very exact. Therefore, I am inclined to think we must go on by ourselves if at all.⁴⁵

Upon Thayer's return from Buffalo a meeting was held in Boston on July 24, 1854. Lawrence had given some thought to Thayer's suggestion of starting something better, and had drafted a constitution for an "Emigrant Aid Company" with no capital stock, and anyone could join by signing the constitution and paying dues.⁴⁶ His plan was rejected for a revision of the old Articles of Association. The new "Emigrant Aid Company" would have a limited capitalization of \$200,000 divided into \$20 shares. One condition placed on the issuing of stock called for at

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, Boston, July 17, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁶Moody, op. cit., pp. 153-154; and letter from A. A. Lawrence to [letter was never finished, addressed, or dated], Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

least 2,500 shares [of stock] to be sold by September 10, 1854, after which time shares were assessable up to their full value.⁴⁷ The direction of the Company was vested in a board of three trustees, Amos A. Lawrence, also elected treasurer; J. M. S. Williams; and Eli Thayer. Dr. Thomas H. Webb, who had briefly served as secretary to the New York Company, was chosen as secretary with a \$1,000 a year salary.⁴⁸

As a result of the adoption of the new articles, the leadership of the Company passed from visionaries (like Hale and Thayer), into the hands of conservative old-line Whigs like Lawrence and Williams. This transformation would be completed with another reorganization March 5, 1855. Thayer took a less direct part in officiating and assumed more of the role as chief agent for propoganda and fund raiser. This new private organization directed the activities of the Company until a new charter was obtained in February 1855. In a letter from Lawrence to Thayer, dated July 31, 1854, Lawrence reemphasized the goals of the Company:

⁴⁷"Articles of Agreement and Association of the Emigrant Aid Company," July 24, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁸Andrews, op. cit., p. 500.

In all our public character we must conform to the deed of trust; i. e., our prime object must be to aid emigrants, and break up the system of fraud which prevails: and secondly, to fill up Kansas with freemen; though, for the present, we may work hard upon the latter.⁴⁹

The Company's activities until March 1855, were confined to reorganization and to making plans for the spring season.⁵⁰

It appears fairly certain that the trustees and their associates desired to obtain a new charter at the next session of the Massachusetts Legislature.⁵¹ Only a charter could quiet the reoccurrence of questions involving stock liability. This was a special concern, because by September 1, 1854, only 1,000 of the required 2,500 shares had been subscribed for, and in order to save the Company from bankruptcy the three trustees had to subscribe to an additional \$10,000 worth of stock apiece.⁵²

A petition for a new charter was granted by the Massachusetts Legislature on February 21, 1855. The charter of incorporation of the New England Emigrant Aid Company listed only Thayer, Lawrence, Williams, and

⁴⁹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. Thayer, Boston, July 31, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁰Activities of the Company and its agents will be reviewed in Chapter IV.

⁵¹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, Boston, September 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Moody, op. cit., p. 153.

⁵²"An Act to Incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company," Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

Dr. Thomas H. Webb as incorporators. The new Company was capitalized for \$1,000,000 with a \$20,000 limitation on real estate holdings in Massachusetts. No mention was made in the charter of dividing the capital into shares for assessment.⁵³ A circular was issued by the trustees on February 24, for an organizational meeting to be held in Boston on March 5, 1855.⁵⁴

Even before the act of incorporation passed the legislature, the trustees, particularly Amos Lawrence, began the serious work of considering and contacting potential directors of the new company. On February 20, 1855, Lawrence wrote to J. M. S. Williams, proposing that Williams, George Upton, and John Lowell serve as directors.⁵⁵ In a letter to George Upton on February 28, Lawrence urged him to accept the position of president.⁵⁶ However, Upton declined and Lawrence again wrote Williams suggesting that William B. Spooner, John Lowell, Dr. Samuel Cabot, Jr., and Williams himself would make excellent directors. He encouraged Williams not to allow

⁵³Printed circular, February 24, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁴Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, February 24, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁵Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, February 20, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁶Letter from A. A. Lawrence to George Upton, February 28, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

Americanism or temperance to draw his energies away from this work. Lawrence went on to characterize John Carter Brown, of the Brown and Ives firm in Providence, as the best man for president. "The President," he wrote, "should be a conservative man, and old Hunker if possible. Neither Thayer nor yourself are 'old foggy' enough for the place."⁵⁷

The organizational assembly met on March 5, 1855, at the Company's new office on Winter Street in Boston. These quarters were only temporary, for in spite of Lawrence's efforts to locate a suitable office, Dr. Webb insisted upon all future meetings being held in an office within the Massachusetts Historical Society's Library.⁵⁸ The first order of business was the election of directors. There was a general substitution of conservatives over the more radical Free-soilers. Democrats were obviously excluded, and no attempt was made to call on abolitionists, for all they had to say was that " . . . there is no issue but disunion."⁵⁹ The old-line Whigs formed the strongest element in the new organization while the names of

⁵⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, March 2, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁸Moody, op. cit., p. 154.

⁵⁹Thayer, Kansas Crusade, pp. 41-42.

Charles P. Allen, Charles F. Adams, Henry Wilson and Anson Burlingame, and other Free-soilers disappeared along with two antislavery leaders, Samuel E. Sewell and Francis W. Bird; these men had not been active in the Company since its organization anyway.⁶⁰

The list of men serving on the Board of Directors was geographically inclusive. It contained members from all over Massachusetts, as well as New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and one, Albert Day, from Hartford, Connecticut. Such diversity would naturally give the Company a more cosmopolitan image. Though there is no recorded evidence, it seems logical enough to assume that this might have been a deliberate consideration. The list of officers and Board of Directors reads like a directory of New England merchants, lawyers, and doctors: E. P. Walton, Montpelier, Vermont; Joseph Gilmore, Concord, New Hampshire; Franklin Mussey, Bangor Maine; John Carter Brown, Providence, Rhode Island; John Lowell, Boston; J. M. S. Williams, Boston; William J. Rotch, New Bedford; Dr. Nathan Durfee, Fall River; and Dr. Samuel Cabot, Jr., Boston, to name a few.⁶¹ This change in personnel probably

⁶⁰Rice, op. cit., Chapter XIV, p. 2; and Johnson, op. cit., p. 17.

⁶¹[Hale], The History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 11, and Henry Steele Commager, Theodore Parker (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1947), pp. 248-249; and the Board of Directors was increased by June 26, 1856, from 21 in March, 1855, to 35 (see Apendices A and B).

saved the Company from the fate of the "New York and Connecticut" Company in becoming a mere pawn in the hands of politicians.⁶²

John Carter Brown, of Providence, was elected President, as Amos Lawrence had suggested.⁶³ Eli Thayer, of Worcester, and J. M. S. Williams, of Boston were elected vice-presidents. Amos Lawrence, who had earlier declined any other office, was chosen as treasurer, and Dr. Thomas H. Webb was elected to the post of secretary.⁶⁴ It was his job to handle the usual duties of correspondence as well as to arrange the transportation for the Company's parties. It was decided in the meeting to divide the capital stock into \$20 shares. The by-laws provided for an annual stockholders meeting to be held on the Tuesday before the last Wednesday in May, with special meetings to be called by the secretary upon the request of one-fourth of the directors--a quorum consisted of one-sixth of all paid-in-stock. The by-laws further provided that the directors would meet at least once each quarter, with five being a quorum. The directors were empowered to appoint any necessary committees for carrying on the

⁶²Johnson, op. cit., p. 31.

⁶³Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, March 2, 1854, loc. cit.

⁶⁴Ibid.

business of the Company. The meeting adjourned after admitting all former stockholders in the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, by exchanging their shares on equal parity for shares in the new Company.⁶⁵

In order to provide for a more efficient operation in their absence, a quorum of directors met following the meeting, and by the powers newly granted them, appointed an Executive Committee composed of Dr. Samuel Cabot, Eli Thayer, Richard P. Waters, and J. M. S. Williams.⁶⁶ The leadership of the Company was now effectively in the hands of conservative business-minded gentlemen of means. Visionaries like Hale, and politicians like Charles P. Allen and Henry Wilson disappeared from the list of directors. Although Thayer was retained in an executive position, his influence steadily waned. His greatest success was in obtaining stock subscriptions.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Record of the stockholders meeting, March 5, 1855. Records of stockholders annual meetings, March 5, 1855, to February 17, 1897, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁶[Hale], loc. cit.

⁶⁷Rice, loc. cit.; Ralph V. Harlow, "The Rise and Fall of the Kansas Aid Movement," American Historical Review, XLI:4, October 1935; Edward E. Hale was not placed on the Board of Directors until the second annual Directors' meeting in May, 1856.

CHAPTER III: FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE
COMPANY: DIVERGENT LEADERSHIP
AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

Large sums of cash would be needed in order for the New England Emigrant Aid Company to successfully accomplish both its benevolent and speculative purposes. The Company's goal to "save" Kansas by sending out parties on group ticket rates, establish hotels and mills, acquire future townsites, as well as pay dividends on stock, was intended to appeal to as many people as possible. The achievement of these goals in the most convenient and manageable way led to the various changes in charters until the March, 1855 reorganization plan had been adapted. A way had to be found to attract both the altruistic-conservative gentlemen of means, the speculator looking for sound investment, and those who were looking to invest in a promising and worthwhile project based on sound business standards and methods.

This same split in appeal also characterized the two different approaches or methods used to raise badly needed funds. Lawrence favored a policy of encouraging people to invest only what they could afford to lose, and not to expect large stock dividends. To a clergyman who asked advice about stock investing, Lawrence answered:

Keep your money for your own use . . .
The value of land stock companies is the
most delusive of all stocks. . . .

I have taken . . . only so much as I
am willing to contribute to the
cause. . . .¹

Thayer, however, preferred an emotional and enthusiastic appeal to the immediate Kansas needs, promising in turn a sizable financial profit for every dollar invested. Thayer was often heard in meetings to promise to free Kansas in one year and then to free a Southern state at the rate of one a year. Such activity would increase the Company's stock value immensely; Thayer said, "some thought it would pay 25%, he [himself] was of the opinion it would pay a larger percentage."²

Lawrence and other directors viewed Thayer's promises and opinions as excessive and embarrassing.³ Because of the sharp conflict between approaches, and other personal reasons, Lawrence resigned as treasurer on September 26, 1855. However, he did resume his duties after a short absence and remained with the Company until May 1857. Lawrence's advice continued to play a vital role in the making of Company policy and its execution.

¹Lawrence, loc. cit.

²Letter from Pliny Lawton to A. A. Lawrence, November 3, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Pliny Lawton, Boston, October 26, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka, Kansas; Letter from A.A. Lawrence to Professor Packard, October 30, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and letter from A.A. Lawrence to William J. Rotch, March 16, 1855, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

The original charter capitalized the Company at five million dollars, yet in actuality the Company never had more than a few thousand dollars at one time, but that was an exception, not the rule. Instead of the five million dollars it hoped to have the Company actually accumulated only about \$190,000.⁴ The largest amount of this sum came from the enthusiastic but often cautious subscription work of Thayer, with the occasional help of Hale and others.

During the first six months of the Company's charter, Thayer traveled over New England, New York, and to the borders of Pennsylvania; sometimes he was on tours lasting several weeks. He spoke at religious and town meetings, private groups, colleges, and other institutions. Thayer was usually accompanied by another Company agent either Charles H. Branscomb or E. B. Whitman. The usual plan was to make advance arrangements for the meetings, called by a local committee and presided over by a prominent citizen of the local community or area. Thayer would address the gatherings, usually held in a church or town hall, describing the Company's plans. A call would be made for the establishment of a local Kansas League and for emigrant volunteers willing to go to Kansas. Branscomb

⁴An exact financial statement is not available. This estimate is based on the ledgers, account books, and statements found on microfilm in the Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

or Whitman would follow Thayer with a short talk pleading for stock subscriptions. Frequently a committee would be appointed to solicit subscriptions. Throughout the first several months following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, Thayer found his audiences pessimistic about the future of the new territories and eager to hear of his colonization scheme.⁵ In three years he spoke more than 700 times and traveled more than 6,000 miles; including many miles on foot, with nothing more than a carpetbag in hand in order to reach isolated villages.⁶

In spite of the impression the first charter gave of a large monied corporation, the Company by November 11, 1854 had only \$12,731 in its treasury; about twice that amount having been subscribed.⁷ Matters were most discouraging. With the departure in August of the Company's second party to Kansas, Lawrence wrote in his diary:

All the expenditures thus far has [sic] been met by myself, but I cannot go further without funds . . . these must be raised soon.⁸

By September 10, only \$20,000 had been subscribed, but according to the Articles of Agreement and Association

⁵Rice, op. cit., Chapter X, p. 10.

⁶Rice, op. cit., Chapter XIII, pp. 18-19.

⁷[Hale], History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 9.

⁸Lawrence, op. cit., p. 82.

no assessment could be levied on the stock until \$50,000 was subscribed. Acting on the suggestion of J. M. S. Williams, each of the three trustees [Lawrence, Thayer, and Williams] underwrote \$10,000 to put the subscription up to \$50,000.⁹ All subscriptions of less than \$200 were levied one-half (ten dollars).¹⁰ By the end of October, the situation was once again desperate; overdrafts from agents in Kansas totaled nearly \$6,000.¹¹ Lawrence met the need from his own pocket by selling some manufacturing company's stock he owned. In regard to this latest contribution, he wrote in his diary: "If Kansas should not be a free State, I shall lay it to heart and to my pocket too."¹² In desperation Lawrence wrote to Professor Packard of Bowdoin College asking whether something could be done in the colleges.¹³

Lawrence believed that some of the problem lay with the way the goals and objectives of the Company were presented. In his same letter to Professor Packard he wrote,

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Records of meetings of the Board of Trustees, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹¹Lawrence, op. cit., p. 85.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Professor Packard, October 30, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

The scheme is a great and good one, though it sometimes carries with it the appearance of enthusiasm, and almost of intentional delusion, owing to the character of the people most interested in it, or of some of them. The shape in which it is presented is objectionable . . .¹⁴

Three days before writing Professor Packard, Lawrence wrote Captain Bigelow in reference to Thayer, suggesting a partial solution to the dilemma: restrain Thayer, especially his speaking in "visionary" terms of large stock dividends when the Company was obviously not meeting such claims.¹⁵ However, for the time being nothing came of his suggestion and Thayer continued to speak while the bills mounted. Lawrence also realized that the problem, particularly in Boston, had an even deeper foundation. He wrote Williams that, "The failure of our stock subscription is not to be wondered at in this community, which has suffered so severely from land companies of various kinds."¹⁶

Many people seemed to be willing to buy small amounts of stock as though they were donations, but Thayer's rhetoric and enthusiasm did not evidently

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Captain Bigelow, October 27, 1854, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

¹⁶Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

convince very many to speculate heavily.¹⁷ By the end of the year only seven companies and individuals had purchased more than fifty shares of stock each--three of them being Company officers or directors.¹⁸ The stock ledgers of the Company reveal, moreover, that for the duration of its operations, the vast majority of stockholders held from one to five shares. Sixty-eight persons held twenty-five or more shares, but only thirty-five had as many as fifty shares. Nine people owned one hundred or more shares; four held 125; and one had 150.¹⁹ Amos Lawrence alone paid for 405 shares, however, all but 125 were given away.²⁰ John Carter Brown, one of the promoters, held 125 shares, and J. M. S. Williams one hundred shares. Eli Thayer, who carried the subscription campaign forward and talked most about making money, subscribed to over 400 shares, but actually paid for only twenty. A total of seventy-five people owned 3,617 shares in allotments of twenty or more, which is considerably less than one-half of the total 8,346 shares issued. More

¹⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, November 21, 1853, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹⁸Compiled from Stock Ledgers and Index to Stock Subscriptions, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 15.

than one-third of the 3,617 shares were held by twenty-one officers or directors of the Company in lots of twenty or more.²¹

These figures suggest, but do not necessarily prove, two important assumptions. First, the wide distribution of the majority of the stock suggests that it was not widely considered a good investment or an alluring speculation. Perhaps, as Lawrence himself suggested, many who bought one to five shares considered their purchases less as an investment than as a donation to a cause.²² A second assumption could be reasonably made based on the fact that a group of seventy-five owned the largest lots of stock; this group was made up predominantly of businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and included three writers or newspaper editors, one college professor, college president, and several ministers and politicians. Businessmen in fact outnumbered all other professions in a ratio of approximately seven to one. Though the ratio

²¹All of these figures were compiled from Stock Ledgers and Stock Index, loc. cit., and those except the 8,346 and 3,617 numbers are subject to some doubt, since the records do not contain all of the known, or otherwise, stock transfers.

²²Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, loc. cit., and Lawrence's testimony to the United States Congress, House, Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas; with the views of the minority of Said Committee, 34th Congress, 1st session, House Report No. 200 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1856), p. 874.

was less than five to one, the same professional profile fits the twenty-one officers and directors who owned nearly one-fifth of the latter Company's stock. It is also important to note that the political background of nearly everyone of these professional men was of conservative Whig nature.²³ Thus the ownership and direction of the Company was basically in the hands of a small conservative, professional (mostly businessmen) group; actions and events substantially support this conclusion.

Every means available was used to publicize the Company. Early in August 1854 the Company published its first pamphlet, Organization, Objects and Plan of Operations of the Emigrant Aid Company: Also a Description of Kansas. Several other similar pamphlets followed, with one, a revision of the above, going through four editions.²⁴ These original pamphlets were followed in March 1855 by Dr. Webb's Information for Kansas Emigrants.

Edward E. Hale sold his 1854 summer sermons for ten cents each and gave the proceeds to the Company.²⁵ Like Thayer, he also lectured throughout Massachusetts, and

²³All of the above facts and figures are based on the correlation of materials from the Stock Ledgers and Stock Index, loc. cit., the Dictionary of American Biography, and a variety of town directories and newspaper advertisements.

²⁴Johnson, op. cit., p. 62.

²⁵Hale, "Emigration to Kansas," op. cit., p. 13.

wrote many articles on Kansas and Company affairs for the New England press.²⁶ From 1854 through 1855, Hale played a vital role as both the most prominent Kansas correspondent and editor, editing during that time eight leading journals in New England and New York.²⁷ Perhaps the most read book by those who emigrated to Kansas was Hale's Kanzas and Nebraska, published in August of 1854. The book was published independently, but with the blessings of the Company.²⁸

Songs were also used by the Company. In early August 1854, John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a seven-verse poem for the overall Kansas aid movement entitled, "Song of the Kansas Emigrant."²⁹ The poem was sang to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." When the second Company party left the Boston depot on August 29, the sixty-seven members sang:

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Holloway, op. cit., p. 105.

²⁸Edward E. Hale, Jr., The Life and Letters of Edward E. Hale (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917), I:255.

²⁹John Greenleaf Whittier, ed., Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1876), p. 146.

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.

We go to rear a wall of men
 On Freedom's southern line,
 And plant beside the cotton tree
 The rugged Northern pine!³⁰

Starting in September, Dr. Webb offered a prize of fifty dollars for the best song to be submitted.³¹ Lucy Larcom, a teacher in the Wheaton Female Seminary at Norton, Massachusetts, won the award with her song, "Call to Kansas."³²

All of these efforts cost money. Throughout the winter and spring of 1854 and 1855 bills were quickly accumulating. Bills for printing, lecture tours and traveling expenses, salaries, the freighting of machinery for Company saw and grist mills in Kansas, the purchase of a hotel in Lawrence (which eventually cost the Company \$10,000), and other incidental items, threatened to bankrupt the Company by the spring of 1855. By March 2, Lawrence had advanced \$7,000, and only 1,361 shares of

³⁰Ibid.; and the Worcester Daily Spy, September 6, 1854.

³¹Worcester Daily Spy, September 20, 1854.

³²Johnson, op. cit., p. 63.

stock had actually been paid for.³³ In April the Company's expenditures exceeded \$22,000, while \$10,960 of the \$26,844 subscribed in stock still remained unpaid.³⁴

It appeared that the very well-spring of financial wealth had dried up; E. B. Whitman, who occasionally traveled with Thayer, was only able to raise \$178.63 after six months of hard work spent mostly in Boston. He found that there was still a strong reluctance against subscribing in stock to a company whose operations were so far removed from personal observation.³⁵ Samuel C. Pomeroy, who served as both an agent in Kansas and as a traveling agent for the Company, traveled New England and New York, but his appeals only netted a little over \$3,000.³⁶ On April 13, Lawrence wrote Pomeroy that it would be difficult to obtain more than fifty dollars in cash to pay for drafts from Kansas agents.³⁷

³³Boston Daily Advertiser, March 6, 1855; and Letter from A. A. Lawrence to S. C. Pomeroy, March 14, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

³⁴Andrews, "Kansas Crusade," p. 505.

³⁵Letter from E. B. Whitman to A. A. Lawrence, Boston, April 2, 1855, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³⁶Andrews, op. cit., p. 506.

³⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to S. C. Pomeroy, April 13, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

An old ripple of discontent again shattered the relatively calm surface of accord, but now with even more urgency. Lawrence, Williams, and other Company officers and directors were growing tired of the unfulfilled subscription promises that came from Thayer and Hale in Worcester. Lawrence pointed out in a letter to Pomeroy, that as of March 14, only \$200 had come from Worcester, and that was from Thayer personally. The whole subscription was only \$800, not including Thayer's \$200.³⁸ Lawrence had proposed as early as February that perhaps the "young" Worcester group and his own "old foggy" group in Boston might have to part ways. He felt that would be better than to give the Company a bad reputation for the lack of standard business techniques and policies.³⁹

The disagreement included not only the small returns from paid subscriptions, but misleading comments made by Thayer, Hale, and others involving transportation fares, and as in 1854, talk of colonizing the South and seeing a large return in dividends for each share purchased.⁴⁰ Lawrence summed up the general feeling in Boston in a

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to E. E. Hale, February 25, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁰Ibid.

letter to a friend in Washington, D. C., he wrote:

In Worcester where so much noise is made, and which is considered headquarters, they pay nothing, not a dollar; nor do they do anything but make statements as to the magnitude of our plans which cause us constant embarrassment.⁴¹

Perhaps even more alarmed than Lawrence, Williams wrote a series of letters in the summer to Thayer, criticizing his methods. In order to stimulate his audiences, Thayer often subscribed to large sums of stock each time he spoke. He had already subscribed, but not paid for \$200,000 worth of stock.⁴² Williams asked him in mid-July to limit his liability to no more than \$50,000, and to "sober down" his style of speaking "so as not to make any more promises that it is unprofitable for us to fulfill."⁴³ Williams, several weeks later, strongly suggested to Thayer to reassure all concerned by paying some money into the cause. He went on to even suggest that perhaps Thayer should make one of his presentations before the Executive Committee so that they could judge it for themselves.⁴⁴

⁴¹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Joseph Blook, February 6, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴²Letter from J. M. S. Williams to E. Thayer, July 16, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁴³Letter from J. M. S. Williams to E. Thayer, July 19, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁴⁴Letter from J. M. S. Williams to E. Thayer, August 2, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

Thayer responded by personally visiting Williams in Boston. He reminded Williams that it was his speaking style that had initially won Williams to the cause.⁴⁵

Bills, however, continued to stockpile. The situation was desperate when in August, Lawrence expressed to the Executive Committee his unwillingness to advance any more money.⁴⁶ On September 26, he resigned as Company treasurer. His resignation was prompted by two factors. Over the previous twelve months Lawrence had paid out of his own pocket \$13,000 by loan and gift. In resigning, he not only hoped to relieve himself of any further financial liabilities, but to also call to the attention of those concerned, the need for more to also "take hold."⁴⁷ Perhaps he also hoped his resignation would put a little more pressure on Thayer to curb his promises of large dividends. In a letter to John Carter Brown of Providence, he pointed out that the reputation of the Company officers would be damaged if Thayer's promises could not be met.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Rice, op. cit., Chapter XIII, p. 14.

⁴⁶Ibid., Chapter XIV, p. 10.

⁴⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, October 9, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁸Letter from A. A. Lawrence to J. C. Brown, September 26, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

Lawrence's resignation was not made public, and although his active connection with the Company ceased for a brief time, he returned to his position and remained with the Company until May 1857.⁴⁹ Williams probably played an important part in convincing Lawrence to stay on unless the Company should suffer permanently.⁵⁰ Anson Stone was employed as assistant treasurer to thus help relieve Lawrence of some of the booking burden.

Feeling the pressure, no doubt, and the weight of the crisis, Thayer and Hale began a fund drive in November to save the Company.⁵¹ Hale addressed a circular to his fellow ministers of New England and their parishes. It was hoped that each parish would subscribe at least twenty dollars to the Company and thus enroll its minister in the Company's stock ledger.⁵² After some consideration, the Executive Committee agreed on December 19 to an offer made by Thayer to allow him a ten percent compensation on all subscriptions collected, in return for his devotion

⁴⁹Ralph V. Harlow, "The Rise and Fall of the Kansas Aid Movement," American Historical Review, XLI:7, October, 1935; and Rice, op. cit., Chapter XIV, p. 10.

⁵⁰Letter from J. M. S. Williams to A. A. Lawrence, Boston, September 27, 1855, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

⁵¹Harlow, loc. cit.

⁵²Worcester Weekly Transcript, November 3, 1855.

of full time to the project and paying his own expenses.⁵³ Branscomb accompanied Thayer to New York, where he spent nearly three months. Their work proved to be very successful. Thayer was able to enlist the support of such prominent men as John Bigelow, William Cullen Bryant, Horace B. Claflin, William M. Evarts, Moses H. Grinnell, and Thaddeus Hyatt. Horace Claflin and Rollin Sanford each contributed \$6,000.⁵⁴ Thayer and Branscomb were able to collect \$51,580 in subscriptions, representing 3,575 shares of stock.⁵⁵

With the exception of Thayer, the Company discontinued the subscription-agent plan at the beginning of 1856. The Company now depended on volunteers and local town "drives."⁵⁶ The new plan followed the same basic format of calling a town meeting, presided over by a prominent local figure, and addressed by one or more of Company's agents. An appeal would be made for stock subscriptions, as well as contributions. After speaking, a

⁵³Executive Committee meeting minutes, December 19, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; the only stipulation being that he had to collect at least \$20,000.

⁵⁴Thayer, Kansas Crusade, pp. 203-205.

⁵⁵Thayer's Ledger, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁵⁶Dr. Webb Correspondence, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

collection would be taken for the "Kansas relief fund" (headed by Dr. Webb), and a committee would be chosen to canvas the community for additional funds.⁵⁷

The Company also turned its attention to the proposal of calling together persons engaged in certain trades and businesses, and made a general appeal, to be followed by personal canvassing of each prospect. It was hoped that \$100,000 in subscriptions could thus be raised. For each ten thousand dollars subscribed, the subscribing group would be allowed to name a town to be located by the Company in Kansas.⁵⁸

The initial response was rewarding. Thayer addressed the boot, shoe, and leather dealers in the Company's office, and called for the dealers to subscribe to one-fourth of the \$100,000 goal. Those present pledged \$20,000, and selected the names of Claflin and Batcheller (for Lee Claflin and J. and E. Batcheller) to be given to two new towns in Kansas.⁵⁹ By April of 1857, the Company was able to collect \$17,860 of the pledged \$20,000.⁶⁰

⁵⁷The plan was outlined in a letter from Dr. T. Webb to J. S. Emery, April 4, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka, Kansas; and an excellent working example of this program is found in the Fall River Weekly News, February 14, 1856.

⁵⁸The plan and its goals were outlined in a letter from Dr. Webb to P. C. Schuyler, December 24, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁹Boston Post, November 15, 1856; the town of Batcheller was finally founded in 1858, but after the Civil War the name was changed to Milford.

⁶⁰Report of Assistant Treasurer, April 10, 1857, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

Thayer was to meet with the bookdealers of Boston on November 20, but because of poor attendance, the meeting was adjourned until the twenty-fourth. On the twenty-fourth Thayer met with the bookdealers and later a group of Boston merchants. Neither meeting produced any solid results, although both groups chose soliciting committees.⁶¹ With the exception of the leather and shoe dealers, similar efforts to increase stock subscriptions were not very successful and the program was discontinued in early 1857.⁶²

The overall subscription campaign, however, met with success. At the annual stockholders meeting of the New England Emigrant Aid Company on May 27, 1856, the treasurer's report revealed that, in the six months from November 4, 1855 to the time of the May meeting, stock subscriptions had increased from \$45,835 to \$98,940.⁶³ The remainder of 1856 saw the continued increase of stock subscriptions.⁶⁴ In the annual stockholders meeting of

⁶¹Boston Post, November 24, 1856; and Boston Daily Atlas, November 25, 1856.

⁶²Letter from Dr. Webb to C. H. Branscomb, January 26, 1857, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶³Treasurer's Reports to annual meetings, November 24, 1855 and May 27, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁴Trial Balance Sheet for The New England Emigrant Aid Company, December 31, 1856, Lawrence Collection, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

May 1857, the treasurer reported receipts (including subscriptions and contributions) of \$42,557.60 and a cash balance of \$10,365.17.⁶⁵

This favorable report revealed that the largest amount of money came in the last six months of 1856. During the remaining six months until May 26, the treasury had been reinforced by payments made on outstanding subscriptions, plus the final payments from the selling of the Company's hotel in Lawrence, Kansas.⁶⁶ In his last official report as treasurer on May 26, 1857, Lawrence called for the speedy closing-up of business, because the goal of the Company had been achieved--guaranteeing a free Kansas.⁶⁷ The lack of anything but very minor entries in the Company's stock ledgers from the spring of 1857 on, reveal that the Company was effectively dead. Thayer left the Kansas work at the end of 1856, but Lawrence stayed on semi-officially with the mostly defunct Company until it finally closed its books permanently with the auctioning of its remaining Kansas property for \$16,150 on February 27, 1862.⁶⁸ Just enough money was grossed from the auction

⁶⁵Treasurer's Report, May 26, 1857, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁶Ibid.; for a more detailed record, see the Trial Balances of January 1, 1857 to January 1, 1858, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁷[Hale] History of the New England Emigrant Company, p. 22.

⁶⁸Thayer, op. cit., pp. 222-223; and A. A. Lawrence's account as treasurer, "Winding up of the Business," Lawrence Collection, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

to pay outstanding debts.⁶⁹

One reason, undoubtedly, for the Company's financial boost in 1856, was the corresponding issue of "Bleeding Kansas." The Company's well-known involvement in Kansas, and the fact that most of the precipitating events occurred around Lawrence, which was founded by the Company and named after Amos A. Lawrence, added further renown to its name. The beating of Sumner in the Senate following his famous Kansas speech, which include defensive remarks regarding the emigrant aid movement, merely added fuel to the fire, in Massachusetts especially.⁷⁰

Interest in the Company's affairs abated in proportion to the lowering tone of the Kansas crisis. Certainly another factor in the Company's demise must have centered around the tightening of investor's purses due to what was to become in August, the "Panic of 1857." But perhaps the main reason was that Kansas appeared to be safe and free; therefore, men were no longer willing to invest or contribute to that end.⁷¹

⁶⁹Samuel A. Johnson, "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, III:118, January, 1930.

⁷⁰Original manuscript copy of the "Crime Against Kansas Speech" is located in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁷¹This feeling prompted A.A. Lawrence's call for the closing operations. Treasurer's Report in [Hale], loc. cit.

The Company never achieved its capitalization goal of five million dollars. Lawrence was probably correct in stating that such a capitalization only made the Company sound larger, and terrorized the South.⁷² It barely managed to collect approximately \$190,000. No dividends were ever paid to its stockholders. Thus, in spite of what it did accomplish, it was a financial failure, due largely to the lack of public support.

⁷²Planned reply of Lawrence in a letter from Patrick T. Jackson to [A. A. Lawrence], June 10, 1854, Lawrence Letter-book, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

CHAPTER IV: THE CALL TO KANSAS
AND THE KANSAS AID MOVEMENT

The first body of settlers to leave for Kansas under the auspices of the New England Emigrant Aid Company left Boston on July 17, 1854. Though the twenty-nine that started were augmented along the way, the meager beginning was discouraging, especially to Thayer who accompanied them as far as Buffalo, New York, where Branscomb then joined them as their traveling agent.¹ For all future parties the Company hired a conductor. Altogether from July 17 to November 21, 1854, six parties left Boston. A careful study of a variety of sources indicates that 579 persons enrolled as Company emigrants; this was a far cry from the thousands that had been hoped for.² Massachusetts emigrants were the most numerous travelers in all six parties; Vermont was well represented in all the parties and New Hampshire also, except for the first party. Some from Connecticut traveled in the third party, and a large number from New York joined the second, third, and

¹Thayer, op. cit., p. 98.

²The Company only kept accurate records of eleven of its total parties. The work of compiling an accurate list was accomplished by: Louise Barry, "The New England Emigrant Aid Parties of 1854," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, XII:115-155, May, 1943.

fourth parties.³ In spite of the influx of New Englanders in 1854, the majority of new Kansas settlers came from Missouri and Pennsylvania.⁴

The general route to Kansas for all Company parties was by rail from Boston through Worcester, Albany, Detroit, and Chicago to St. Louis. The trip from St. Louis to Kansas City was made by steamboat, and the final leg of the trip from Kansas City to Lawrence and other town sites was made by wagon. The town of Lawrence, which had been selected by the Company's agent, Dr. Charles Robinson of Fitchburg, Massachusetts and named by members of the first parties, was the center of the Company's activities in Kansas.⁵ Lawrence, Kansas, became to many the new hope for a free territory.⁶

Dr. Webb, as Company secretary, was responsible for making the general transportation arrangements (newspaper advertisements of trips), and organization of each party. Dr. Webb's office also handled the hundreds of letters of inquiry and complaint. It was hoped that a party would be ready to leave Boston on Tuesday, "party day" of each

³Ibid.

⁴Worcester Daily Spy, October 25, 1854.

⁵Worcester Daily Transcript, November 3, 1854; and Worcester Daily Spy, November 8, 1854.

⁶Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power of America, II:466.

week of the traveling season.⁷ The Emigrant Aid Company did not exert any firm control over the type of settlers traveling under its auspices. Emigrants were not required to give any oaths of loyalty or belong to any particular political party.⁸ However, those that did go were primarily of a "Hunkerish strain of conservatism" thus to Garrisonians, the emigrants were not abolitionists.⁹

Not until the summer of 1856 was the Company able to offer a flat rate of twenty-five dollars for the fare from Boston to St. Louis. Steamboat rates from St. Louis to Kansas City varied from ten to twelve dollars, depending on the season and condition of the Missouri River. Amos Lawrence was able to maintain a general fifteen percent reduction and savings for the entire trip.¹⁰

The Company's activities from November 1854 until March 1855, were confined largely to reorganization, plan-

⁷Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 37.

⁸Essex County Mercury (Salem), April 5, 1855; Governor Robinson's address to the Kansas Legislature, March 5, 1856 as reported in the Greenfield Gazette and Courier, March 31, 1856; and [Hale], op. cit., p. 9.

⁹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Rev. H. A. Wilson, Providence, June 27, 1856 [letter refers to settlers of the "right stamp"; by his own admission Lawrence was a "Hunker Whig"--Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, see footnote on page 9], Aid Company Papers, Topeka; also a quotation from Leverett W. Spring, Kansas: The Prelude to the War for the Union (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), p. 31; and Henrietta Buckmaster, Let My People Go, The Story of the Underground Railroad and the Growth of the Abolition Movement (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 239.

¹⁰Lawrence's testimony to the U. S. Congress, House, Report of the Special Committee, p. 886.

ning, and recruiting for the spring season. The Company scheduled its parties for the spring and summer months, only when the river was navigable and the climate conducive to introducing emigrants to the Kansas territory. From the summer of 1854 through the winter of 1855, Thayer, Hale, Branscomb, Pomeroy, and Whitman stumped New England, especially Massachusetts, by seeking not only stock subscriptions, but also looking for those willing to emigrate to Kansas. Thayer's travels took him as far as Mt. Vernon, Ohio, in mid-August, 1854.¹¹

Pomeroy and Whitman explained in New Bedford that, "the first object of the Society is to plant New England institutions in Kansas, to go there with the Bible in one hand and a spelling book in the other."¹² This appeal to typical New England virtues formed the heart of the agents' general lecture approach.¹³ Attendance at the meetings from Portland, Maine, to Springfield, Massachusetts was generally very large and sometimes exceeded expectations.¹⁴ Once the spring season started, and on

¹¹Letter from J. B. Campbell to E. E. Hale, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, August 14, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹²New Bedford Evening Standard-Times, December 15, 1854.

¹³Traces of this approach can be found in most papers that gave extensive coverage of the meetings.

¹⁴To cite only a few: Dedham Gazette, July 15, 1854; Salem Evening Journal, December 19, 1854 and February 14, 1855; Cambridge Chronicle Sun, February 24, 1855; and the Springfield Daily Republican, February 7, 1855.

through the summer of 1855, Thayer and Hale bore the burden for most of the lecturing. Thayer occasionally had speaking engagements booked for every evening of the week.¹⁵

Undoubtedly it was hoped that the touring lectures would result in a large emigration, beginning in March of 1855. The first spring party started the season off optimistically with 182 people leaving Boston on March 13; however, the succeeding parties steadily declined in number.¹⁶ The parties ran on a weekly basis until June when they became monthly ventures, excluding August completely.¹⁷ The reason for the dwindling numbers and irregular schedule after May was probably due partially to the lack of improvements in Kansas, drought and low-river conditions, which made crossing of the Missouri more expensive, renewed hostilities from Missouri "Border Ruffians," and the lack of timber.¹⁸

¹⁵Letters to E. Thayer from B. Wood, September 3, 1855, and H. A. Wilcox, September 6, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

¹⁶Louise Barry, "The New England Emigrant Aid Company Parties of 1855," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, XII:234-268, August, 1943.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 227; and Letter from Company agent, Noah Barker to E. Thayer, September 4, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

The emigrants sent to Kansas in 1855 numbered approximately 900. One noticeable difference with this group of emigrants is that they were almost exclusively New Englanders, whereas in 1854, the emigrants included many from New York state.¹⁹

The well-publicized activities of the Company helped to spark the South's anxiety.²⁰ The newspapers' coverage of the emigrant parties, and the rumors built around them, soon had the South convinced that thousands of New Englanders were populating the new territory.²¹ An article published in the Salem Gazette in November 1855, was doubtlessly more accurate in describing the influence of emigration:

There is a very general impression that New England has been drained of a considerable number of her people to settle Kansas. It is entirely false. It is not probable that more than three thousand New Englanders, men, women and children, are now in the territory. They form about a tenth part of its present population. The character of the emigration from New England, after the homesick boys came back, was of the very best, for culture, discipline, and morals. The

¹⁹Barry, op. cit., p. 228.

²⁰W. L. Fleming, "Buford Expedition to Kansas," American Historical Review, VI:38-39, July, 1899.

²¹Andrews, "Kansas Crusade," p. 501; and Malin, "The Proslavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," p. 290.

New England settlers, therefore, take a prominent part in the affairs of the Territory, but in numbers, they are in as small a proportion as we have stated.²²

In the first six months of 1856, the Emigrant Aid Company worked diligently to stimulate emigration. Early in January the Executive Committee retained Pomeroy to be its principal lecturer to again travel and promote Kansas settlement and the sale of Company stock.²³ The Committee also instructed its agent, Robinson, "to urge as many individuals as possible to address letters frequently to this office" for publication, "in order to make more generally known" the advantages of settling in Kansas.²⁴ Pomeroy spent four months touring Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, Maine, New York and Pennsylvania.²⁵ Other agents and Company officers continued to make some tours.

The Executive Committee instructed Hale in June to write each town in New England, asking each to send at least one emigrant to Kansas if possible.²⁶ Dr. Webb

²²Salem Daily Gazette, November 27, 1855.

²³Executive Committee meeting minutes, January 5, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

²⁴Executive Committee meeting minutes, January 12, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

²⁵Edgar Langsdorf, "S. C. Pomeroy and the New England Emigrant Aid Company, 1854-1858," Collections of the Kansas Historical Society, VII (No. 4):379, November 1938.

²⁶Executive Committee meeting minutes, June 6, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

handled a large number of written inquiries until his illness in April took him out of service until early June.²⁷ The response to Hale's letters is not recorded, but the Company did supply some tickets for parties. Unfortunately the exact number of parties and the number of people enrolled in them is unknown, but it probably numbered not more than 300 for the whole season.²⁸ The results were small enough in May to prompt Dr. Webb in a letter to Professor Benjamin Silliman to say:

Emigration thus far this year is not so great as anticipated, and not nearly so great as for the same time last season, but it is due mainly to rumors [from pro-slavery sources] of unsettled conditions in Kansas.²⁹

Certainly the news coverage of the unsettled conditions in Kansas must have contributed to the poor emigration. However, the new Kansas aid movement of 1856 probably also helped to channel citizens' energies into a new and less risky commitment--one not tainted with the same danger, frustration, and disruptiveness of moving into a

²⁷Johnson, op. cit., p. 172.

²⁸The Company's Emigrant books covering the period from April, 1855, to April, 1856, are missing. From April to the end of the spring season at the end of May, 1856, five parties totaling thirty-one people left the Boston depot. Barry, "The New England Emigrant Aid Company Parties of 1855," p. 228; and Johnson, op. cit., p. 174.

²⁹Letter from Dr. Webb to Professor B. Silliman, May 8, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

newly unsettled frontier territory.

Following the creation of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, some eight or ten other organizations for forwarding settlers to Kansas soon appeared in Washington, D. C., Ohio, New York, and Illinois.³⁰ Several corresponded briefly with the Boston organization; at least two, the short-lived Union Emigration Society of Washington, D. C., and the New York Kansas League, sought affiliation with the Emigrant Aid Company. The Company, however, was not interested in the possible complications that might arise, so all such offers were turned down.³¹

The Emigrant Aid Company did take the direct responsibility for the founding of local Massachusetts-Kansas Leagues, which were organized as its direct subsidiaries. Thayer, Hale, and other speakers carried printed forms of a constitution for Kansas Leagues, with blanks left for proper names, and encouraged their audiences to organize auxiliary organizations. Each league

³⁰A full coverage of these organizations can be found in Samuel A. Johnson's, "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, III:95-122, January, 1930; and Harlow, op. cit., pp. 1-25.

³¹Johnson, "The Genesis," p. 66, [trustees refuse to cooperate with Union Emigration Society]; for other correspondence and refusals see the Records of the Board of Trustees, December 9, 23, 1854, and January 13, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

was pledged by its constitution to promote antislavery emigration to Kansas and "to cooperate with the Emigrant Aid Company in the colonization of Kansas with freemen." Each had "masters of emigration," whose responsibility it was to obtain tickets for emigrants from the Company office in Boston.³²

There is no record available of the total number of Kansas Leagues created; however, research uncovered references to twelve such organizations, but there were probably many more.³³ Most of them were organized in the early months of the Company's activities. It appears that many of the Kansas Leagues never proceeded beyond the stage of organization, but some did contribute considerable accessions to the Company parties. And at least two, the Hampden County Kansas League and the Worcester Committee of Emigration, sent a total of four parties to Kansas (one from Hampden County).³⁴ The list

³²Copy of the Worcester County Kansas League, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

³³The twelve I know existed were founded in: Amherst, Coleraine, Fitchburg, Hampden County [Springfield], Hampshire County [Northampton], Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Roxbury, Salem, and two in Worcester; based on information gleaned from newspapers and Company correspondence. The Company records on microfilm do not list or name the leagues founded. In Battle Cry of Freedom, Johnson says there were about two dozen leagues, but he does not name them or cite a source for his information. p. 60.

³⁴Barry, op. cit., p. 252; and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Cheerful Yesterdays (Arno reprint; New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968), p. 197.

of officers for each league (where available), like its parent company, reads like a directory of Massachusetts business and professional men. Names of Emigrant Aid Company officers and directors appear on several lists.³⁵

The influence of the various Kansas Leagues on the actual settlement of Kansas was slight. They did, however, help to dramatize and popularize the goals and activities of the Company. The fact that the Company had many imitations throughout the North in the early months of its operation, gives an indication of its generally wide appeal to the public imagination. The leagues and other auxiliaries in Massachusetts also played an important part in the Kansas aid movement of 1856.

By the spring of 1856, the Kansas situation had grown much worse. In February and March the territory was in a turmoil over which state government was legitimate, and by May the shooting of Sheriff Jones and the subsequent raids on Lawrence and Osawatomie had captured the attention of the Nation. The Kansas aid movement, which swept over the North, grew out of the "Bleeding Kansas" crisis. The Sumner beating in the Senate acted as a further catalyst to galvanize the popular mind behind the "aid" movement.

³⁵Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel, July 14, 1854; Salem Evening Gazette, January 8, 1855; and Northampton Courier, February 20, 1855.

Through February and March of 1856, the Emigrant Aid Company made an extensive canvass of all New England, concentrating on Massachusetts. It also added New York to its fund drive. The Company's pattern was to call a local town meeting, and have its representatives and members of the Kansas Free-State delegation address the gathering. It was common to organize a relief committee during the meeting to solicit the community for aid funds and subscriptions to Company stock.

In the western half of Massachusetts, Pomeroy found large enthusiastic audiences for his Kansas lectures.³⁶ In the eastern half, Williams found his audiences just as large and enthusiastic.³⁷ An audience of nearly 2,000 attended his lecture in Lowell.³⁸ Thayer, with Rev. Henry W. Beecher's help in Brooklyn, obtained promises of over \$7,600 for the relief fund.⁴⁰

³⁶Greenfield Gazette and Courier, January 28, 1856; Northampton Courier, January 29, 1856; Palmer Journal--Register, February 16, 1856; and Greenfield Gazette and Courier, February 18, 1856.

³⁷Andover Advertiser, February 23, 1856; and Lawrence Courier, February 29, 1856.

³⁸Southbridge Press, February 23, 1856.

³⁹Executive Committee meeting minutes, January 19, 26, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

From all across Massachusetts, most of the newspapers lent their support to the cause. The Boston Daily Advertiser encouraged the citizenry of Boston to support the people of Lawrence, Kansas by contributing warmly to their relief.⁴⁰ The Middleboro Gazette issued a "call of patriotism, humanity, and religion" to save Kansas.⁴¹ In New Bedford the Evening Standard made an equally dramatic response to a general call from Dr. Robinson, the Company's chief agent in Kansas:

The North and West should pour out their treasure for Kansas. It is a high Christian duty and a patriotic obligation that cannot be evaded.

The fact confronts us at every step. Kansas needs help. New England men, women, and children are encompassed with enemies who seek their destruction having never given the slightest provocation for other than the most cordial sympathy and most generous encouragement. Will a people claiming to be Christian, submit to such abominations much longer? Let men begin to think, and more, let them begin to act.⁴²

Large contributions to the relief fund in Pittsfield convinced the Eagle that the "spirit of the Revolution and of Plymouth Rock is still vigorous in New England."⁴³

⁴⁰Boston Daily Advertiser, January 3, 1856.

⁴¹Middleboro Gazette, January 25, 1856.

⁴²New Bedford Evening Standard-Times, February 12, 1856.

⁴³Berkshire County Eagle [Pittsfield], March 14, 1856.

The challenge to help Kansas soon produced many independent relief drives and organizations in imitation of the Company's Relief Fund Committee. New York and Illinois created state committees; Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee created relief committees--the latter two sought advice and influence from the New England Emigrant Aid Company.⁴⁴ Many similar organizations sprang up across the North.⁴⁵

Relief funds soon began to supplant stock subscriptions as the Company's chief source of funds. In early March the officers and directors decided that it would be best to organize Boston for relief purposes independently of the Company, because some persons might question the propriety of a business enterprise handling relief funds.⁴⁶ The Company officers arranged a meeting of all interested in Kansas relief to meet at Faneuil Hall in Boston on March 12.⁴⁷ The meeting resulted in the creation of the Boston Kansas Relief Committee. The

⁴⁴Executive Committee meeting minutes, March 1, 8, 1856; and Letter from Charles T. Hotchkiss to E. E. Hale, March 18, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁵A good overall coverage can be found in Harlow, American Historical Review, XLI:1-25, July, 1936.

⁴⁶Letter from LeBaron Russell to E. E. Hale, June 30, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Relief Committee worked in cooperation with the Emigrant Aid Company to raise funds for Kansas relief.⁴⁸

From March through June the relief movement continued to pick up momentum in proportion to the events occurring in Kansas. The Taunton Whig urged that the work should go on hastily.⁴⁹ The Company's agents and other spokesmen continued to canvass the state from the smallest towns to the largest cities. A night's lecture in even a village or small town might elicit as much as thirty to eighty dollars or more.⁵⁰ The Summer beating on May 22 added new impetus to the relief fund campaigns. Mass meetings in late May and early June in Springfield, Worcester, and Boston, as well as in most Massachusetts communities, thoroughly aroused the public to the Kansas issue. In both the Worcester and Boston meetings several Company officers and agents helped to address the audiences to the plight of Kansas settlers.⁵¹

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹The American Whig [Taunton], March 13, 1856.

⁵⁰Meeting in Hatfield, Franklin County, reported in the Northampton Courier, March 25, 1856; and Haverhill meeting reported in the Haverhill Essex Banner, April 5, 1856.

⁵¹Worcester Daily Transcript, June 5, 1856; The Congregationalist [Boston], June 6, 1856; and the Hampshire Gazette, June 10, 1856.

On June 25, delegates from the various local Kansas Leagues and aid committees met in convention in Boston and organized the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, which very quickly absorbed the Boston Kansas Relief Committee. George L. Stearns was chosen chairman of the new organization; Patrick T. Jackson treasurer; and Dr. Samuel G. Howe secretary.⁵² Jackson, being a Company trustee, and Dr. Howe, a director, indicates how closely affiliated the Emigrant Aid Company and the Massachusetts Committee were in leadership. In practice the two organizations worked in harmony.⁵³

The Company sent Pomeroy, Richard P. Waters, Thayer, and Charles J. Higginson as delegates to Buffalo, New York, in July to help organize a national relief organization. The Buffalo Convention was called by William Barnes of the New York State Kansas Committee. On July 9 and 10 a total of fifty-seven delegates from twelve states created the National Kansas Committee.⁵⁴ Dr. Howe

⁵²Circular published by the Committee also listed Anson J. Stone as assistant treasurer--the same position he held at the time in the Company. Copy of circular in Boston Public Library.

⁵³Samuel A. Johnson, "The Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, I:439; November, 1932.

⁵⁴Harlow, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

was chosen as financial agent and Thayer was appointed to organize the free states for the purpose of raising relief funds.⁵⁵ It was agreed to pay Thayer five dollars a day for his services.⁵⁶ Thayer did not record how much he earned, but he only successfully organized and canvassed one county, that being Worcester.⁵⁷

The fund raising campaigns reached a high point in June, with public sentiment aroused to fever pitch by the Sumner beating and recent news of beatings and shootings in Kansas. The Massachusetts press recorded meetings for twenty-six different days in June alone. By June 11 it was reported that \$10,000 in cash contributions had been collected from across the state--half of it having been collected in Worcester alone.⁵⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson speculated that in Concord during a few days in June well over a thousand dollars, or approximately one per cent of the evaluation of that city, had been collected.⁵⁹

⁵⁵F. B. Sanborn, Dr. S. G. Howe The Philanthropist (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891), pp. 253-354; and letter from H. B. Hurd [committee secretary] to E. Thayer, August 1, 1856, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁵⁶H. B. Hurd to E. Thayer, November 14, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁵⁷Thayer, op. cit., p. 218.

⁵⁸New Bedford Evening Standard-Times, June 11, 1856.

⁵⁹Ralph L. Rusk, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson (6 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), V:390 [\$960 according to the Lowell Weekly Journal and Courier, June 16, 1856.

The town of Chelsea raised \$750 as a result of one meeting.⁶⁰ Lowell continued to add to their previous levy of \$1,200, and East Hampton decided to spend its money on Kansas relief rather than fourth of July celebrations.⁶¹ Amesbury raised \$1,400, and Worcester \$9,800 by June 19.⁶² By the end of the month, Worcester had reportedly contributed \$10,152 and reports indicated that Taunton had raised \$2,000; Clinton \$800; Raynham \$600; and Leicester \$500.⁶³ Curiously, though individual contributions were often reported, the Boston, Lawrence, New Bedford, Northampton, and Pittsfield newspapers did not provide totals on the amount of aid given.

Most Massachusetts towns and cities had either a Kansas Aid Committee, or an ad hoc relief subscription committee of some type by June. The counties of Franklin, Hampden, Middlesex, and Worcester also maintained their own committees. The officers and agents of the various committees were almost universally prominent local indi-

⁶⁰Lynn Weekly Reporter, June 14, 1856.

⁶¹Northampton Courier, June 17, 1856; and Lowell Weekly Journal and Courier, June 12, 1856.

⁶²Amesbury Villager, June 19, 1856; and Worcester Daily Transcript, June 19, 1856.

⁶³Compiled from reports by the Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel, June 27, 1856; and Worcester Daily Transcript, June 26, 1856.

viduals.⁶⁴ These committees, with the active assistance of the Boston Committees and the Emigrant Aid Company, continued to solicit funds during the last six months of 1856. The momentum of the early months, especially June, carried the fund drives ahead vigorously.

In late June a new approach to aiding Kansas settlers began to appear. In their lectures the Company speakers not only stressed the monetary needs of the settlers, but also the need for clothing and other domestic items. Women, for the first time, began to play a vital role in the total relief picture by organizing in many communities sewing bees, and clothing collections. By December, the women of Amherst, Ashburnham, Beverly, Boston, Concord, Dedham, Easton, Georgetown, Greenfield, Haverhill, Lexington, Lowell, North Easton, Northfield, Plymouth, Quincy, Springfield, Taunton, Warren, Watertown, Worcester, and Westhampton had all organized and held successful sewing bees and donation drives.⁶⁵ These chari-

⁶⁴Based on data from lists of Committee personnel provided in newspapers, advertisements, and town directories and histories.

⁶⁵Salem Daily Gazette, September 12, 23, 1856; Dedham Gazette, November 1, 1856; New Bedford Evening Standard-Times, October 24, 1856; Greenfield Gazette and Courier, September 8, 1856; Middleboro Gazette, October 10, 1856; Old Colony Memorial [Plymouth], September 20, 1856; Quincy Patriot, October 25, 1856; The American Whig [Taunton], October 16, 1856; Waltham Sentinel, October 23, 1856, Springfield Daily Republican, September 18, October 8, 18, November 26, and December 3, 1856; and the Worcester Daily Spy, September 2, 8, and October 10, 24, 1856.

table examples were soon copied all over Massachusetts. Thayer addressed a letter to the press and all concerned citizens in October encouraging every Massachusetts citizen to send all unneeded articles and any surplus merchandise to the Company's Boston headquarters for shipment to Kansas.⁶⁶ Lawrence was able to write Robinson in Kansas that, "money comes in more freely than any time heretofore, and clothing by the cord."⁶⁷ The Company virtually assumed the whole responsibility for collecting and sending clothing from the Boston area. In late October, Dr. Webb wrote that he had shipped 175 boxes and barrels of clothing to their Company agents and volunteers in Kansas for distribution.⁶⁸

With the coming of the Thanksgiving season in November, the women of many communities organized refreshment rooms and tables at fairs, tea parties, and suppers.⁶⁹ The sewing bees, food fairs, and cash solicitations continued through December. However, as early as November 19, Lawrence had written Robinson stating that probably enough

⁶⁶Salem Daily Gazette, October 10, 1856.

⁶⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to C. Robinson, October 3, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁸Letter from Dr. Webb to S. N. Simpson, October 25, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁶⁹The papers record such events in Amherst, Deerfield, Fall River, Greenfield, Northampton, and Southampton; undoubtedly, there were many more.

money had been raised to relieve those in pressing need.⁷⁰ Dr. Howe wrote Lawrence in December indicating that he had reached a similar conclusion.⁷¹

The coming of a new year brought a close to the relief work. Governor John Geary's efforts since September of 1856 to obtain and maintain an informal truce in Kansas, had finally been rewarded. The quieting of the Kansas crisis calmed the feelings of urgency in the North and East, thus the aid movement died as abruptly as it had started. The closing of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee was made public on January 6, 1857, and heralded the demise of various other county and local aid committees.⁷² Other state and local committees across the North also ended their work immediately preceding or following the Massachusetts Committee's example. The National Kansas Committee finally followed suit in the spring of 1857.⁷³ The cash book of the Massachusetts Committee shows that it expended \$35,878.05 in relief to Kansas settlers.⁷⁴ Dr. Samuel Cabot, a director of the Emigrant Aid Company, who

⁷⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to C. Robinson, November 19, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁷¹Letter from S. G. Howe to A. A. Lawrence, December 22, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁷²Northampton Courier, January 6, 1857.

⁷³Harlow, op. cit., p. 24.

⁷⁴Cash book of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

handled the shipping of clothing and articles collected by the Massachusetts Committee, reported that as of November, 1856, sixty-three Massachusetts communities contributed twenty tons of merchandise and articles.⁷⁵

The success of the Massachusetts relief effort was due largely to the work of the Emigrant Aid Company and its ability through its touring agents, officers, and volunteers to publicize the urgency of the Kansas crisis and the needs of its settlers. Being well organized and operative, the Company was able to quickly capitalize on the Kansas issue. Its officers played an important part in helping to organize several other relief committees across the state and the North as a whole. The Company and its personnel also continued to play a most vital part in canvassing Massachusetts and cooperating fully with the general relief effort. The response of the citizens of Massachusetts to the Company's initial and subsequent efforts, coupled by the total relief work of all the committees, was surely gratifying. Dr. Howe, estimated that the total value of cash, clothing, food, and other articles forwarded to Kansas from Massachusetts in 1856 equalled \$100,000.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Boston Daily Advertiser, December 5, 1856.

⁷⁶Laura E. Richards, Samuel Gridley Howe (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935), p. 435.

CHAPTER V: THE RESPONSE OF CLERGYMEN,
POLITICIANS, AND JOURNALISTS TO THE COMPANY

The Emigrant Aid Company sought the active support of the clergymen of New England in the autumn of 1854. Lawrence proposed in a meeting of the Trustees in September the idea of distributing a letter among the clergy asking for help. Sample drafts were presented at the next meeting and approved; a Company pamphlet was also enclosed with each form letter.¹ The letters asked for financial help and for auxiliary organizations to be formed in each parish. The success of the struggle to save Kansas was stated to depend on their response:

On you, more than on any other body of men, has the ALL WISE PROVIDENCE imposed the responsibility of its success; for no class of men has ever held so powerful an influence over the minds of an intelligent and patriotic people as the Clergy of New England.²

The stock records of the Company do not show any measurable success for this first attempt to actively engage clerical support.

In June of 1855 the Company renewed its effort to obtain the moral and financial assistance of the clergy.

¹Records of meetings of the Board of Trustees, September 16, 23, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

²Lawrence, "Call to the Clergy," October, 1854, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

The plan was to make each of the 3,000 New England ministers, who had signed a petition to Congress in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, a life member of the Company, by having him raise twenty dollars (one share) from special parish contributions.³ Hale was given the responsibility of the project. He at once prepared and had printed a circular, which was mailed to nearly every clergyman in New England.⁴ The circular stressed the fact that the Company needed \$150,000 and by helping to enlarge the Company's funds,

The Christians of New England will bring to bear a stronger influence in sustaining the principles of what was last year called the 'ministers' memorial' than by any other means which Providence puts in our hands.⁵

It was signed by eighteen clergymen, including Lyman Beecher, Horace Bushnell, Joel Howes, Calvin E. Stone, and Hale.⁶

Even before the circular had been mailed, the newspapers printed the story of the plan. On June 23, at

³"Circular to Clergy," July 2, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴Rice, op. cit., Chapter XV, p. 22.

⁵"Circular," loc. cit.

⁶Ibid.

their annual conference in South Danvers, the Congregational Churches of Essex County voted to adopt the plan.⁷ Although moral support continued to increase, the monetary results were initially disappointing. Williams wrote Thayer on July 16, urging him to take hold and "put [his] shoulder to the wheel with a steady, determined effort," in order for the plan to succeed.⁸ The Salem Gazette of October 16, decried the fact that even in Essex County, where support to the plan had been obtained so quickly, very little at all had actually been done.⁹

Many farm communities could not afford twenty dollars, but some sent what they could. The Rev. W. C. Jackson's letter of September 12, 1855 exemplifies the typical response to the Company's call:

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.¹⁰

⁷Andover Advertiser, June 23, 1855.

⁸Letter from J. M. S. Williams to E. Thayer, July 16, 1855, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

⁹Salem Daily Gazette, October 16, 1855.

¹⁰Letter from W.C. Jackson to the Company, Lincoln, Massachusetts, September 12, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Thayer, op. cit., p. 135.

Not all was harmony, however, for at least one sour note on the drive was sounded by the Rev. Joseph Chandler of Brattleboro, Vermont:

Is the Company a purely Benevolent, or is it a commercial property-holding and money-making company? There is an apparent mixture of benevolence, patriotism and speculation in this enterprise, which makes me a little suspicious.¹¹

On September 13, the Executive Committee decided to try and salvage the program by hiring Hale on a full-time basis. Hale agreed to spend a few months away from his pastorate and devote his full time to lining up the churches; the Company in turn, picked up the additional cost of supplying Hale's pulpit during his absence.¹² His original and renewed efforts combined with the initial circular results raised by the first of October, \$1,527.47. A total of ninety-nine ministers contributed; however, only fifty-nine were able to send twenty dollars or more; altogether, only about 400 ministers replied in one way or another to the circular.¹³ By December the newspapers reported that \$4,500 had been raised.¹⁴ This figure is

¹¹Quoted in Harlow, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

¹²Executive Committee meeting minutes, September 13, 29, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹³Contributions of Clergymen, end of September 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Letters from clergymen, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

¹⁴Typical article found in the Springfield Daily Republican, December 3, 1855.

no doubt excessive. Though there is no total figure recorded when the drive ended in early 1856, analysis of the available information puts the amount closer to \$2,500.¹⁵

The campaign continued into early 1856; however, it was soon absorbed by the Kansas aid movement. There is no record available to indicate that a renewed circular effort in July had any success.¹⁶ There is virtually nothing in the newspapers describing the new effort. In December Thayer spoke for nearly two hours to 200 clergymen in Boston, but other than a resolution (being passed) to look into the emigration plan, nothing seems to have resulted from the meeting.¹⁷ The lack of securing wide financial support from the clergy should, perhaps, not be wondered at. The New England Anti-Slavery Society had the same problem in a fund drive of 1834.¹⁸ The clergymen may not have been as active as they possibly could have been.¹⁹ However, they did, in general, give their

¹⁵Hale's notebook records that he raised \$917.25. Add this to the September report of \$1,527.47 plus leaving an open amount for other unrecorded funds, puts the total close to \$2,500.

¹⁶Springfield Daily Republican, July 14, 1856.

¹⁷Boston Daily Advertiser, December 3, 1856.

¹⁸R. J. Zorn, "New England Anti-Slavery Society: Pioneer Abolition Organization," Journal of Negro History, XXXII:174, July, 1957.

¹⁹Samuel J. May, Some Reflections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Company, 1869), p. 329.

moral support to the effort, and this in turn, may have helped to increase a wider popular support.

Undoubtedly, to its advantage, the Emigrant Aid Company did not officially play an active part and become embroiled in the politics of Massachusetts. Thayer's own belief that politicians could no longer stop the extension of slavery, had been an important contributing reason for his founding of the Company.²⁰ Thayer observed that the Company worked "independently of political aid or methods," and found "no cordial cooperation . . . by the politicians."²¹ Although the first group of Company incorporators included state Congressmen, Moses Kimball, Otis Rich, and Otis Clapp, U. S. Congressmen Charles Allen and Stephen C. Phillips, and the future U. S. Congressmen, Alexander H. Bullock, Anson Burlingame, and Henry Wilson, none stayed with the Company long enough to participate in the March 1855, reorganization. State Congressman, Eli Thayer, was the only professional politician who remained with the Company.

Correspondence reveals that the Company did seek at least the tacit approval and possible open support of Edward Everett, Nathan P. Banks, and Charles Sumner. Dr. Webb contacted Everett, but although he was "altogether

²⁰Rice, op. cit., Chapter XIII, p. 14.

²¹Ibid.

friendly to the subject" and willing to make a "donation" of twenty dollars, he was unwilling to become a member of the Company; wishing instead to withdraw from all the agitations of political life.²² Hale wrote Sumner in November 1855, that he understood that Sumner had agreed to meet with Thayer and discuss the Kansas emigration plan. Hale urged Sumner to "take hold" of the effort, because his prestige would help the work "go forward like magic."²³ The results of Thayer's interview must have been disappointing, however, because Thayer did not even inform his autobiographer, Franklin Rice, of the meeting. The Charles F. Adams' connection with the Company is also ambiguous. Thayer told Franklin Rice that Charles F. Adams pledged \$35,000 to Thayer for his cause before the Company was even organized.²⁴ There is no evidence and it is highly unlikely that Adams ever fulfilled his pledge. No other reference is made regarding Adams until 1897, when Hale asked Adams' nephew to come to a special stockholders meeting. Charles Adams, II, was not aware nor could he find any record of his uncle having owned

²²Letter from E. Everett To E. E. Hale, June 5, 1854, Quoted in Hale, Jr., op. cit., p. 251.

²³Letter from E. E. Hale to C. Sumner, November 12, 1855, Sumner Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

²⁴Rice, op. cit., Chapter IX, p. 9.

eight shares of Company stock entitling him to be represented or attend the meetings.²⁵ Not until the Kansas aid movement was under way and "Bleeding Kansas" a substantive issue, did the Company enjoy at least more moral support from politicians.

The political divisions in the state, and most particularly between the Whig and Free-soil Parties, had their counterparts in the Company hierarchy, as exemplified by Thayer and Lawrence. Worcester, Thayer's home city, was the leading Free-soil center in Western Massachusetts.²⁶ It is understandable, therefore, that Thayer would be elected to the General Court as a Free-soil candidate in November of 1853. Lawrence a "Hunker" (conservative) Whig by admission, hailed from Boston the backbone of the Whig Party.²⁷ By its choice of officers and directors in March 1855, the Company was a Whig dominated organization (Lawrence's role in choosing the Whig, John C. Brown, for President, and other Whig personnel was discussed in Chapter II). The Company leaders,

²⁵Letter from C. F. Adams, II, to E. E. Hale, February, 1897, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

²⁶Welch, Jr., George Frisbee Hoar and the Half-Breed Republicans, p. 8; and Martin B. Duberman, "Some Notes on the Beginnings of the Republican Party in Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, XXXIV:369, December, 1961.

²⁷Letter from A. A. Lawrence to C. Robinson, August 14, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka; and Bean, "Party Transformation in Massachusetts," p. 6.

however, did not put pressure on Thayer to unite with them politically. In fact, the political division probably worked to the Company's advantage by drawing the attention of people with either Free-soil or Whig persuasions.

During the Autumn of 1855, the Republican Party movement began to grow rapidly in Massachusetts. The Republican Party drew the bulk of its support from the Free-soilers, anti-Douglas Democrats, and many Whig converts who, in the collapse of their party, rallied to the cause of human rights.²⁸ Lawrence was concerned about the change of many of the directors to the new party. He wrote Dr. Robinson in December that the switch was liable to cost the Company the loss of support from the other parties.²⁹ However, instead of losing support during the Kansas crisis of 1856, the Company actually enjoyed wider support. Lawrence happily wrote in April 1856, that the Kansas question had united the North and that "the people of all the parties" had "very similar opinions," sympathizing with the Kansas settlers.³⁰ The remarkable

²⁸Welch, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 10; Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 321; and Arthur C. Cole, The Irrepressible Conflict 1850-1865 (Vol. VII of A History of American Life, ed., A. M. Schlesinger and D. R. Fox. 12 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 273.

²⁹Letter from A. A. Lawrence to Robinson, December 20, 1855, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

³⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to S. G. Haven, April 7, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

vote cast for Fremont (102,921 out of 170,000 votes) well illustrated the political climate developed in Massachusetts by November.³¹ Thayer was able to ride the Republican tide to another term in the General Court.

The Kansas issue played a very vital role in the presidential campaign of 1856. Certainly Kansas was a major factor in contributing to Fremont's overwhelming majority in the Commonwealth.³² Indirectly at least, the Company had contributed to this election victory by having helped to make Kansas a common household word. The Company's letters to the press, editorials, lecture tours, and constant public agitation in general had added fuel to the Free-soil movement, and the subsequent Republican growth to power. It would be impossible to separate the Kansas question from the activities of the Emigrant Aid Company. Perhaps, without fully realizing it, the Company had created a cause that was ripe for the Republicans to capitalize on.

The Kansas relief movement, which began in the winter of 1856, won the support of Charles F. Adams.³³

³¹Bean, op. cit., p. 351.

³²Andrew Wallace Crandall, The Early History of the Republican Party 1854-1856 (reprint edition; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith Publisher, Inc., 1960), p. 107.

³³Quincy Patriot, June 7, 1856.

Former State Congressman George F. Hoar took an active part in raising money for Kansas settlers.³⁴ Charles A. Phelps, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, helped to organize the June 3 Faneuil Hall Kansas meeting in Boston.³⁵ Nathaniel P. Banks, the speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, also agreed to give his moral support to the Company.³⁶ The full measure of importance to having the support or involvement of these men is hard to determine. None of them had an active and complete connection with the Company; however, their support of the relief effort in Kansas, and at least tacit moral support of the Company undoubtedly contributed to a wider knowledge and acceptance of its Kansas aid effort. Like the case of the Republican Party, the Company probably played more of an indirect rather than direct part in shaping the attitude of politicians regarding Kansas. The Company helped to make Kansas a popular issue worth courting by politicians.

In President Pierce's third annual message to Congress on December 31, 1855, he attributed the trouble

³⁴Too numerous letters to cite found in Hoar Papers, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

³⁵The Congregationalist, [Boston], June 6, 1856.

³⁶Fred H. Harrington, Fighting Politician, Major General N. P. Banks (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), p. 33.

in Kansas to Northern associations that "inflicted injury on the former by unlawful acts."³⁷ Again in a special message on Kansas proclaimed on February 11, 1856, Pierce denounced persons who collected money, engaged men, and provided arms "for the avowed purpose of promoting civil war in the Territory."³⁸ Lawrence used the fact that President Pierce was his mother's nephew to try to correct false impressions of the Company.³⁹ In a letter dated January 1, 1856, he specifically informed the President of the Company's goals, and assured him that never had "a single individual . . . been hired to go there from New England," nor had anyone been compensated for incurring hardships in emigrating to Kansas.⁴⁰ The letters do not appear to have impressed the President, for on December 2, 1856, in his fourth annual message he again attributed the troubles in Kansas to "propagandist colonization."⁴¹ Pierce condemned the "illegalities" of the Emigrant Aid

³⁷James D. Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 vols.; Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), V:344.

³⁸Boston Daily Advertiser, February 16, 1856.

³⁹Lawrence, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to President F. Pierce, January 1, 1856, Aid Company Papers, Topeka.

⁴¹Richardson, op. cit., p. 404.

Society and similar organizations, not the Missourians. His statements merely increased the continued criticism he had been receiving for his handling of the Kansas question. The Plymouth Memorial echoed the sentiment of many Bay State papers when it denounced the "extreme pro-slavery views" of the President and concluded that, "It is one thing to denounce, but a far different one to prove that the Emigrant Aid Societies, are violating any principle of justice or infringing upon any Constitutional Right."⁴²

Some Congressmen attempted to provide that proof in the investigations of Kansas troubles by two Congressional Committees during the spring and summer of 1856. On March 19, the House of Representatives appointed a special committee, chaired by William A. Howard (the committee is commonly referred to as the Howard Committee), to investigate the troubles in Kansas, particularly the charge of fraudulent voting made by both Kansas free-staters, and Missourians. The Committee toured Kansas and listened to testimony from both sides. Because of repeated charges against the Company of sending paupers, arms, and transient voters to Kansas made by Southern Congressmen and Missourians, Anson Stone, Thayer, and

⁴²Editorial in the Old Colony Memorial [Plymouth], February 23, 1856.

Lawrence were called before the Committee in Washington, D. C.

Lawrence carefully explained the purpose and objectives of the Company and denied that arms or paupers had been sent to the Territory. He denied that the Company paid anyone's passage, and that people were encouraged to stay only until after an election.⁴³ Lawrence also presented the Committee with a special report of the Company's executives, which repudiated all charges in detail.⁴⁴ Thayer and Stone, the assistant treasurer, followed with similar testimony, including a list prepared by Stone, of the names of those who had traveled to Kansas under the auspices of the Company in 1855.⁴⁵ The majority report of the Howard Committee favored the admission of Kansas under the free-state Topeka Constitution, pointed an accusing finger at the Missouri "border ruffians" for fraudulent voting and violence, and concluded that the purposes and activities of the Emigrant Aid Company were lawful.⁴⁶

Vindication, however, was to come at a much higher

⁴³Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas, p. 874.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 874-882.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 884-893.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 38.

price in the Senate. On January 3, Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, started a long and heated debate by introducing a resolution calling upon the President to reveal any information he might have on the cause for the Kansas disturbances. When the resolution came up on the Senate calendar on February 14, Henry S. Geyer, of Missouri, denounced the "Emigrant Aid Society" as the source of all trouble.⁴⁷ Within the next few days the Company became the center of arguments made by proponents of both sides. Wilson and John P. Hale (of New Hampshire) provided a spirited defense of the Company, but to little avail.⁴⁸

Denunciation of the Emigrant Aid Company reached its peak with the majority report of the Committee on Territories presented on March 12 by its chairman, Stephen A. Douglas. Slavery, he insisted, was a local concern to be settled by the principle of Squatters Sovereignty. He denounced the free-state Topeka government. Douglas stated that the Kansas troubles resulted "as natural consequences from unauthorized and improper schemes of . . . interference;" namely, the "Massachusetts

⁴⁷U. S. Congress, Senate, Senator Geyer's Objection to the Resolution, 34th Congress, 1st session, February 14, 1856, Congressional Globe, Part 1, p. 415.

⁴⁸Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America, II:475.

Emigrant Aid Company" and its affiliated societies.⁴⁹

On April 3, Jacob Collamer of Vermont, presented the minority report of the territorial committee. Like the Howard Committee report, the Company was found to be a lawful organization. The report concluded that the Company's objectives of helping arrange transportation and providing mills and hotels was very "amiable."⁵⁰ Others, including William H. Seward of New York, also rallied to the defense of the Company. But it remained for Charles Sumner's famous speech on the "crime against Kansas" to provide the most caustic, yet eloquent, reply to Douglas.

Following Douglas' attack on the Company, Sumner sought to gain a better understanding of its activities. On March 13, Sumner wrote Hale and suggested that the Company write a memorial to be presented to the Senate, "responsive to this [Douglas'] assault, point by point, and indicating its simple rights."⁵¹ A broadside refuting all the charges was prepared by Dr. Le Baron Russell, acting for the Executive Committee, dated May 1, 1856.⁵²

⁴⁹U. S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Committee On Territories on Affairs in Kansas, Senate Reports, No. 34, 34th congress, 1st session (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1856), pp. 5-6, 40.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 48.

⁵¹Letter quoted in Hale, Memoirs of a Hundred Years, p. 162.

⁵²Letter from Dr. Webb to C. Sumner, April 10, 1856, Sumner Collection, Houghton Library, Cambridge; and Company Defense to U. S. Senate, copy of broadside, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

In preparing his "Crime Against Kansas" speech, Sumner was supplied with facts and details regarding Kansas and the Company by correspondence from Hale and Dr. Russell, and in personal contacts with Thayer and Williams.⁵³ On May 19 and 20, Sumner presented his speech before a crowded Senate chamber. He explained in detail the Company's objectives and activities, and denied the various charges brought against it. Sumner declared that the Company had been vilified and made a scapegoat in order to cover the true subjugation of Kansas. In all, he declared the Company to be blameless.⁵⁴

The summary beating of Sumner by Preston Brooks, combined with the impact of his speech helped to provide a rallying point for the divergent political opposition in Congress and across the North. The Emigrant Aid Company and its efforts to create a free Kansas emerged from the proceedings stronger than ever. The Sumner speech, beating, and the sacking of Lawrence, Kansas, on May 21, all gave new urgency to the Company's activities. As reviewed in Chapter III, the Company's stock subscriptions and contributions jumped forward on the heels

⁵³Edward L. Pierce, Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner (4 vols.; Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1893), III: 440-441.

⁵⁴U. S. Congress, Senate, Senator Sumner's "Crime Against Kansas Speech," 34th Congress, 1st Session, May 19-20, 1856, Congressional Globe Appendix, pp. 537-538; and the original manuscript copy of the speech in the Sumner Collection, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

of these events. The new Kansas aid movement also surged ahead as a consequence of the events in Kansas and Washington, D. C.

The single most important source of Company support in Massachusetts came from the newspapers. The Bay State papers played a vital role in propagandizing the Company, and its crusade to establish a free-state in Kansas. Editorial opposition to the spread of slavery was nearly universal in the North, and its influence upon the public reached its highest development during the 1850's.⁵⁵

By the Fall of 1855, at least eighty-four Massachusetts newspapers had definite political leanings: ten were affiliated with the Know-Nothing Party; thirteen were Whig; twenty were Democratic, and forty-one were Republican.⁵⁶ The Republican Party won the allegiance of many more newspapers in 1856, particularly from the Know-Nothing and Whig camps. All but ten of the seventy papers utilized in research were favorable to the Company and its activities.

One of the dissenting papers was the Liberator,

⁵⁵ Lee, History of American Journalism, p. 276.

⁵⁶ Analysis is based on newspaper editorials, election banners, and on an article in the Milford Journal, October 20, 1855.

another was the Know-Nothing Boston Daily Bee and the remaining eight were not, surprisingly, Democratic.

The more radical Abolitionists had little faith in emigration or aid to Kansas. William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, unlike the ministers, Thomas W. Higginson and Theodore Parker, held the view that Kansas was lost, and nothing could effectively save her.⁵⁷ Garrison summed up the Abolitionists' belief in an editorial on June 1, 1855:

Will Kansas be a free state? We answer--
no. Not while the existing Union Stands.
Its fate is settled.

Eastern emigration will avail nothing to
keep slavery out of Kansas. We have never had
any faith in it as a breakwater against the
inundation of the dark waters of oppression.⁵⁸

The Emigrant Aid Company purposely avoided any affiliation with the Abolitionists. They did not wish to be identified with their radical positions on government, constitution, and church.⁵⁹ Lawrence made the only recorded exception by writing Gerrit Smith of New York for fin-

⁵⁷Liberator, June 6, 1854, September 28 and August 10, 1855; W. P. Garrison, and F. J. Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (4 vols.; New York: The Century Co., 1889), III:418; Higginson, *op. cit.*, p. 215; and Henry Steele Commager, Theodore Parker (paperback edition; Boston: The Beacon Press, 1960), p. 249.

⁵⁸Liberator, June 1, 1855.

⁵⁹Thayer, A History of the Kansas Crusade, p. 87; Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Company, pp. 10-11; and letter from A. A. Lawrence to C. Robinson, August 18, 1855, quoted in Anderson, The Slavery Issue as a Factor in Massachusetts Politics, p. 105.

ancial help in February 1855.⁶⁰ Smith responded with a donation of \$250 to be used in the way that "will best enhance the cause of freedom in Kansas."⁶¹

The Boston Daily Bee was the only one of six Know-Nothing papers available for research that was openly critical of the Company. Its criticism was really more of a call to caution, particularly in regard to the talk of Thayer and others of encouraging European emigration to Kansas. One writer to the Bee expressed the fear that

. . . So long as Foreigners are aided and encouraged by . . . Aid Societies or by employing them . . . we shall be allowed perhaps the blessed privilege of falling back into the arms of lecherous Priests, Bishops and Father Confessors.⁶²

In another article the Bee called the Company "reprensible" for sending people to Kansas without giving them a clear idea of the hardships to be faced in the Territory.⁶³ Considering the strong "nativistic" feeling

⁶⁰Letter from A. A. Lawrence to G. Smith, November 22, 1855, quoted in Anderson, The Slavery Issue as a Factor in Massachusetts Politics, p. 105.

⁶¹Letter from Gerrit Smith to A. A. Lawrence, February 3, 1856, Lawrence Letterbook, M. H. S. Library, Boston.

⁶²Letter in the Boston Daily Bee, June 17, 1854.

⁶³Boston Daily Bee, August 19, 1854.

in Massachusetts, it is understandable why the Company never seriously tried to establish a channel of emigration from Europe.

The Democratic press was generally highly critical of the Company and its objectives. They viewed the Emigrant Aid Company as a direct threat to the peace and tranquility of Kansas, as the instigator of problems there, as a violator of the law, and as another example of "Black Republicanism." The Haverhill Essex Banner, under the editorship of E. H. Safford, was one of the loudest opponents of the Company. On August 25, 1855, Safford wrote that emigrants to Kansas

. . . Find it a good soil, a good agriculture country, but Reeder and company own all the desirable lots and the Emigration Aid Society all the timberland and sawmills, and in fine the poor emigrant is awfully bled by him after he arrives. Is this right? . . . he [emigrant] finds he has fallen into the hands of Shilocks[sic]. . . 64

In response to the start of the Company's Kansas relief movement in February 1856, Safford wrote in part:

We wonder if those contributors are aware that this Emigrant Aid Society is speculating out of them by their contributions? This Society no doubt is making more money by keeping up the agitation on Kansas, than the people are aware of. There does not appear to be a good thing of any kind started, unless a certain class makes a living out of it. 65

⁶⁴Editorial in the Haverhill Essex Banner, August 25, 1855.

⁶⁵Editorial in the Haverhill Essex Banner, February 16, 1856.

During the summer of 1856, several editorials appeared attacking the relief issue and the problem of "Bleeding Kansas." They reached an inflammatory high in September with the following editorial:

'Bleeding Kansas.' These words have been so often repeated that they come as easily as possible from the flat-headed, white-livered, senseless creatures; but there is now a new addition to the words. viz.; 'Bleeding pockets in the name of Kansas!' It is calculated that about 10,000 colporters are travelling the country exhorting the people to empty their pockets into the hats of these flat foots.⁶⁶

The Democratic Lawrence Sentinel hoped that the Company's call for a large emigration in the spring of 1856, would be answered by all the Republican and anti-slavery citizens of Lawrence.⁶⁷ The Sentinel and the Boston Post accused "fanatics" and "agitators" for stirring up trouble in Kansas and threatening civil war and anarchy.⁶⁸ The most pungent editorials in opposition to the Company, and other "aid societies," and their objectives, are found in the Pittsfield Sun. Though the paper did not have the circulation of the Boston Post or the longevity of its Republican counterpart, the Eagle, it was perhaps

⁶⁶Ibid., September 20, 1856.

⁶⁷Editorial in the Lawrence Sentinel, January 26, 1856.

⁶⁸Editorials in the Lawrence Sentinel, March 8, 1856; and the Boston Post, December 8, 1855.

without equal in its repeatedly, vehement criticisms.

In December 1855, the Sun editorialized that:

No one can read the intelligence from Kansas without being convinced that the ill-advised and mischievous Aid Societies have done immense injury to that Territory. From the moment of the first inception of those organizations this paper has not ceased to denounce them. We were satisfied that much evil would result from them, and time . . . satisfies us that we were correct in our judgment.⁶⁹

Like many of its counterparts, the Sun placed the blame for the Kansas troubles squarely at the feet of the "Aid Societies," who created disturbances "by sending men, revolvers, bowie knives, and ammunition to the territory, for the purpose, as falsely alleged, of advancing the 'sacred cause of freedom'."⁷⁰ The Sun denounced the "Emigrant Aid Society" as a humbug;

A machine to make money upon the pretence of upholding the 'sacred cause of freedom'; a pecuniary speculation to the 'apostles of Freedom', engaged in it, as if they had traded negro slaves rather than in white men.⁷¹

In the spring of 1856, the Sun asked the "Black Republican" papers just what all the "Kansas Aid" money would really be used for. It raised the doubting question

⁶⁹Editorial in the Pittsfield Sun, December 20, 1855.

⁷⁰Editorial in the Pittsfield Sun, January 3, 1855.

⁷¹Ibid., January 31, 1856.

that perhaps the money would be used for "electioneering" or for a "'corruption fund' in the Presidential canvas," or perhaps it would just be pocketed by "Pomeroy and the other peculiar Kansas patriots."⁷²

Not all of the Democratic papers were as critical as those presented above. The pro-Democratic Catholic [Boston] Pilot, the Worcester Daily Evening Journal, and The City Advertiser [Charlestown] wrote more in the vein of the Know-Nothing Boston Daily Bee. The Pilot commented that the emigration scheme itself was a good one, but that instead of stirring up trouble in Kansas, the settlers should be directed to Iowa, Wisconsin, Arkansas, or Michigan.⁷³ This argument, to avoid stirring up trouble, was, in fact, a common factor in the Democratic press. Unlike the Liberator, which declared that Kansas was lost, the Democratic papers held the view that slavery would never successfully advance into the territory, so there was no real reason to cause so much trouble by sending "fanatics" into the territory, and thereby arousing the fears of the South. The contest for Kansas was merely an imaginary one concocted by Abolitionists' "Emigrant Aid Societies."

⁷²Ibid., March 27, 1856.

⁷³Editorial in The [Boston] Pilot, March 3, 1855.

The editorial policy of the Whig and Republican newspapers spoke as if with one voice in support of the Company and its activities. The most important Whig paper, and one of the leading papers in New England, the Boston Daily Advertiser, which was edited by Nathan Hale, gave its whole-hearted support to the New England Emigrant Aid Company and the Kansas campaign.⁷⁴ In an editorial favoring the admission of Kansas and the Company's emigration scheme, Hale wrote,

No New England man--brave and strong--can render a better service for the freedom of Kansas than by going there himself and becoming a settler in the Territory. Any man who cannot go himself can help the cause by contributions of money . . ."⁷⁵

Hale wrote numerous editorials and included many articles in support of the free Kansas movement, the Company in general, and the Kansas aid movement in 1856. With the Pittsfield Sun, The People's Advocate [Salem], the Haverhill Essex Banner, and other Democratic papers questioning the motives behind the Kansas aid, Hale assured his readers that, "Every dollar which it [the Company] invests tells for the benefit of the territory."⁷⁶

⁷⁴Holloway, Edward E. Hale: A Biography, p. 106.

⁷⁵Editorial in the Boston Daily Advertiser, September 20, 1854

⁷⁶Ibid., November 20, 1856.

The Republican press included two of the leading New England newspapers, the Springfield Daily Republican and the Worcester Daily Spy. Samuel Bowles of the Republican was one of the best editors in the nation.⁷⁷

Bowles wrote a series of editorials in the summer and fall of 1854, extolling the Company's emigration scheme.

In August, Bowles wrote in part:

. . . the indirect and moral influences of this Company's operations are even greater than their direct and palpable movements. They have turned the tide of emigration from the western states into Kansas, and they have frightened off the slave-holders from their purposes of emigrating thither with their 'property'.⁷⁸

On September 2, 1854, Bowles wrote one of his most eloquent editorials in favor of Kansas emigration:

The object is a great and noble one, none greater in its probable results, or nobler in its aims, has marked the present century. The purpose to make Kansas a free state; to establish there the social, educational and religious institutions that make New England what she is, in the proud estimation of her sons, appeals strongly to every sentiment of patriotism and religion, and should arouse a general enthusiasm sufficient to ensure its accomplishments. Make Kansas a free state, and the tendency towards freedom in Missouri, already strong, will soon secure to that state free labor and the prosperity that free labor brings.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Lee, loc. cit.

⁷⁸ Editorial in the Springfield Daily Republican, August 30, 1854.

⁷⁹ Ibid., September 2, 1854.

Bowles continued his writing on behalf of the Company and the later Kansas aid movement.

Although John Earle, the editor of the Spy, was not perhaps as eloquent as Bowles, he wrote more voluminously on the same subject. Earle not only viewed the Company's emigration plan as morally sound, but also an "eminently practical" approach to create a "thriving Western Colony," as a link with "our markets and factories."⁸⁰ The Spy became one of the main sources of Company propaganda, including letters from Kansas editorials, and articles on the Company's Kansas parties. The Spy contained a larger amount of Company source material than any other single Massachusetts newspaper.

Most Republican papers viewed the Emigrant Aid Company as stated in the Boston Daily Atlas, "an ally of freedom."⁸¹ The Company was upheld as a true moral force against the extension of slavery. From all across the state, other Republican papers including: the Amesbury Villager, Salem Daily Gazette, Old Colony Memorial [Plymouth], Fall River Weekly News, the Southbridge Press, Fitchburg Reveille, Greenfield Gazette and Courier,

⁸⁰Editorial in the Worcester Daily Spy, April 12, 1854.

⁸¹Editorial in the Boston Daily Atlas, June 16, 1855.

Northampton Courier, Berkshire County Eagle [Pittsfield] and the Worcester Daily Transcript, all rallied to the "cause" and exhorted their readers to judge the Company and its efforts worthy of the attention and support of everyone.

In the spring of 1854, Thayer sought and obtained the support of the nation's leading Whig newspaper, the New York Tribune. Thayer hoped that the support of the Tribune would influence all other Whig papers to follow suit; also, no doubt, he hoped to enhance the Company's position in the business communities of New England.⁸² Greeley told Thayer at their second meeting on May 28, that he had "full faith" in the plan, and agreed to "advocate it to the best of my ability."⁸³ On May 29, 30, and 31, Greeley wrote a series of editorials in support of the new "Plan of Freedom."⁸⁴ Greeley's support of the "cause" continued through the crisis years of 1855 and 1856. While in New York in May, Thayer also enlisted the support of William Cullen Bryant's [New York] Evening Post.⁸⁵ Winning the support of these two

⁸²Thayer, A History of the Kansas Crusade, pp. 40 and 47.

⁸³Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁴Editorials in the New York Tribune, May 29, 30, and 31, 1854.

⁸⁵Thayer, The New England Emigrant Aid Company, p. 36.

papers, which were among the best edited in the nation, undoubtedly contributed immeasurably to the Company's influence.⁸⁶

⁸⁶Thayer, A History of the Kansas Crusade, p. 41; and Lee, loc. cit.

CHAPTER VI: THE COMPANY IN EVALUATION

It is not the purpose of this thesis to revive the old arguments as to whether or not the New England Emigrant Aid Company saved Kansas from slavery.¹ The available facts on the Company's parties to Kansas, however, do help to give an insight to the answer of this question, and also to indicate the degree of public response in Massachusetts to the Company's call to Kansas. The records are incomplete, but Lawrence estimated that about 1,300 persons were sent to Kansas under the auspices of the Emigrant Aid Company from 1854 to 1856.² There is no record at all of how many settlers joined the Company parties along the way. Samuel Johnson in his Battle Cry of Freedom estimates that the total of all emigrants, including those who joined along the way, numbered about 3,000.³ This figure does not include the many who returned. Johnson estimates that probably between one-third to one-half returned to the East.⁴ The Democratic newspapers

¹For years writers on early Kansas argued over who deserved the principle credit for having saved Kansas. Charles Robinson's The Kansas Conflict and Thayer's A History of the Kansas Crusade defend the Company's claim. William E. Connelley's An Appeal to the Record, and Leverett W. Spring's Kansas: The Prelude to the War For the Union are the two most outspoken critics of the Company's claim.

²See Chapter IV for figures covering 1854 and 1856. Lawrence quoted in a letter from Thayer to William Lawrence, March 22, 1888, Thayer Collection, John Hay Library, Providence.

³Johnson, Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 296.

⁴Ibid.

contained numerous letters from dissatisfied settlers and returnees, particularly in 1855 and 1856. The New England Emigrant Aid Company collection on microfilm, which is available from the Kansas State Historical Society, also contains a sampling of this same dissatisfaction.

The Kansas census of 1860 reveals that only 4,200, out of 107,206 were of New England birth.⁵ Only 1,200 of the 4,280 came from Massachusetts.⁶ Numerically, the work of the Company was insignificant. The hopes of sending 30,000 to 50,000 a season to Kansas, were clearly unfulfilled. The people of Massachusetts clearly declined to embark en masse to the Company's plan.

The work of the Company cannot be adequately exhibited by mathematical computation alone. A very vital part of its work lay outside the field of mathematical measurement. It was Thayer who first presented a workable plan of organized emigration, sparked by Douglas' own squatter sovereignty principle, which was copied by numerous Kansas leagues and Kansas committees in the North and West. The Emigrant Aid Company helped to provide a common ground for all opposed to slavery to identify with. Lawrence and Topeka, Kansas, founded by the

⁵ Andrews, "Kansas Crusade," p. 511.

⁶ Hart, Nineteenth Century Massachusetts 1820-1889, p. 487.

Company, became centers of free-state political activity, and two major focal points of the Kansas Civil War. The Company was able to capitalize on the publicity surrounding "Bleeding Kansas," which became in itself a symbol far more important than Kansas, the territory or state.⁷

If volume and bitterness of criticism could afford a trustworthy standard by which its effectiveness could be measured, the Emigrant Aid Company would have to be credited with playing no small part in the Kansas struggle.⁸ One major allegation made against the Company by the Southern press, "Douglas Democrats" and even President Pierce, involved the implication that it sent arms to Kansas settlers. This charge, which has appeared in several places in this paper, deserves clarification. The Company never sent any arms or ammunition to Kansas, however, several of its officers and directors, including Lawrence, Thayer, and Dr. Webb, personally collected funds; purchased, and sent several hundred Sharps rifles to the Territory.⁹ The opposition, understandably, failed to

⁷Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 361.

⁸Spring, op. cit., p. 32; and Harlow, op. cit., p. 25.

⁹Lawrence, Life of Amos Lawrence, pp. 97, 106; W. H. Isely, "The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History," American Historical Review, XII:46, 565-566, November, 1907; and also the previously cited Congressional testimony listed in Chapter V.

appreciate the academic difference between the actions of the Company and its personnel.

In overview, the New England Emigrant Aid Company was organized and operated, in general, by conservative businessmen. Its goal to populate Kansas with freedom-loving New Englanders by means of organized emigration, was strictly pacifist, in contrast to the violent disunion sentiments of such Abolitionists as Garrison, Phillips, and Higginson. However, the Company ever remained a business corporation interested in attracting capital and making dividends. Unfortunately for the Company's coffers, its officers and directors found it impossible to win the wide support of their own business colleagues. The people of Massachusetts as a whole did not subscribe heavily to the Company's stock, and donations were meager until the "Bleeding Kansas" issue of 1856. After Sumner's attack and from that point on, the history of the Emigrant Aid Company and its affiliates and imitators, merges with that of "Bleeding Kansas" and that of the entire schizophrenic nation.¹⁰ Only during the Kansas "crisis of 1856" did the Company enjoy its greatest financial success.

The Emigrant Aid Company did not meddle in political affairs; it did not publicly advocate any political

¹⁰Holloway, op. cit., p. 109.

candidates. Only a few politicians, such as Henry Wilson, Charles Allen, and Stephen C. Phillips, actively participated in the first Company organization; however, it appears that they lost interest in the venture and were not involved with the spring reorganization in 1855. The general conservative or "Hunkerish" Whig background that Lawrence kept identifying with, provides us with the most obvious reason why the Free-soil politicians were not early Company supporters, at least not for very long. Charles F. Adams was the only prominent politician who showed an early interest in the Company, and participated in several Company Kansas aid lectures in 1856. Only when the Company's future looked dim in the fall of 1855, was an abortive effort made to win the support of the prominent Charles Sumner. The motive behind this attempt appears to have been the desire to win his influential prestige, and not political favors. The Company never attempted to draft the support of politicians, as it did the clergy. The high point of political support came with Sumner's famous "Crime Against Kansas" speech.

Clergymen were generally sympathetic to the Company's efforts, even though their financial help was meager.¹¹ In particular, the Kansas aid movement

¹¹Thayer, A History of the Kansas Crusade, p. 124.

which was started by the Company, had wide clerical support. The newspapers of the period record that churches were the most common place where meetings were held. Reports of such meetings and articles regarding clerical support of the movement are countless. The moral support of the clergy, and especially the majority of the Bay State newspapers, though not total, was nevertheless substantial.

In summing up the influence of and the response to the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Massachusetts, it is clear that although the Company was not a financial success, it popularized with the help of clergymen and journalists, the Kansas issue in the State. By popularizing the plight of Kansas and providing a means by which all groups could unite, the Company helped to prepare the way for the success of the Republican Party in the Commonwealth in 1856 and to ultimate victory in 1860.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Roster of Officers, Directors, and Executive Committee
of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, March 5, 1855.*

President: John Carter Brown, Providence, R. I.

Vice Presidents: Eli Thayer, Worcester, Mass.;
and J. M. S. Williams, Cambridge, Mass.

Treasurer: Amos A. Lawrence, Lawrence, Mass.

Secretary: Thomas H. Webb, Boston, Mass.

Executive Committee: Samuel Cabot, Jr., Boston,
Mass.; John Lowell, Boston, Mass.; R. P.
Waters, Beverly, Mass.; J. M. S. Williams,
Eli Thayer, Amos A. Lawrence, and Thomas
H. Webb.

Directors: Samuel Cabot, Jr., John Lowell,
William B. Spooner, Boston, Mass.; William
J. Rotch, New Bedford, Mass.; J. P. Will-
iston, Northampton, Mass.; William Dudley
Pickman, Salem, Mass.; R. P. Waters, R. A.
Chapman, Springfield, Mass.; John Nesmith,
Lowell, Mass.; Alvah Crocker, Fitchburg,
Mass.; Charles H. Bigelow, Lawrence, Mass.;
Nathan Durfee, Fall River, Mass.; Franklin
Mussey, Bangor, Me.; William Willis,
Portland, Me.; John D. Lang, Vassalborough,
Me.; E. P. Walton, Montpelier, Vt.; Joseph
Gilmore, Concord, N. H.; Ichabod Goodwin,
Portsmouth, N. H.; Thomas M. Edwards,
Keene, N. H.; Albert Day, Hartford, Conn.

*[Hale], History of the New England Emigrant Aid
Company, p. 11.

APPENDIX B

Roster of Officers, Directors, and Executive Committee
of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, June 26, 1856.*

President: John Carter Brown, Providence, R. I.

Vice Presidents: Eli Thayer, Worcester, Mass.;
and J. M. S. Williams, Cambridge, Mass.

Treasurer: Amos A. Lawrence, Lawrence, Mass.

Assistant Treasurer: Anson J. Stone, Boston,
Mass.

Secretary: Thomas H. Webb, Boston, Mass.

Executive Committee: William B. Spooner, Boston,
Mass.; J. M. S. Williams, Eli Thayer, Samuel
Cabot, Jr., Boston, Mass.; R. P. Waters,
Beverly, Mass.; LeBaron Russell, Boston,
Mass.; Charles J. Higginson, Boston, Mass.;
and Edward Everett Hale, Worcester, Mass.

Directors: William J. Spooner, Samuel Cabot, Jr.,
LeBaron Russell, Charles J. Higginson, John
Lowell, Boston, Mass.; Samuel G. Howe,
Boston, Mass.; George Upton, Boston, Mass.;
Patrick T. Jackson, Boston, Mass.; William
J. Rotch, New Bedford, Mass.; J. P. Will-
iston, Northampton, Mass.; William Dudley
Pickman, Salem, Mass.; R. P. Waters, R. A.
Chapman, Springfield, Mass.; Charles A.
Bigelow, Lawrence, Mass.; Nathan Durfee, Fall
River, Mass.; William Willis, Portland, Me.;
Ichabod Goodwin, Portsmouth, N. H.; Albert
Day, Hartford, Conn.; John Bertram, Salem,
Mass.; Francis Wayland, Providence, R. I.;
Edward E. Hale; Seth Pedelford, Providence,
R. I.; Samuel B. Tobey, Providence, R. I.;
Benjamin Silliman, New Haven, Conn.; Horace
Bushnell, Hartford, Conn.; Moses H. Grinnell,
New York, N. Y.; William Cullen Bryant,

* Johnson, "The Genesis of the New England
Emigrant Aid Company," pp. 120-121.

New York, N. Y.; Henry W. Elliott, New York, N. Y.; Edwin D. Morgan, New York, N. Y.; Henry C. Bowan, New York, N. Y.; Horace B. Claflin, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Edward W. Fiske, Brooklyn, N. Y.; J. L. Bailey, Philadelphia, Penn.; and Thomas M. Edwards, Keene, N. H.

THE NEW ENGLAND EMIGRANT AID COMPANY
AND THE RESPONSE IN MASSACHUSETTS TO ITS GOALS
AND EFFORTS TO CREATE A FREE KANSAS, 1854-1856

An Abstract
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
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by
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ABSTRACT

A wave of indignation and shock swept over the North following Stephen A. Douglas' introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in the United States Senate in January, 1854. The South conceded Nebraska to the North, because of the Territory's geographic proximity to Northern transportation routes and the free-state of Iowa. In return, the South expected the North to concede the loss of Kansas as a future slave state. But many Northerners were not willing to assent to this new compromising proposal without a struggle.

Eli Thayer, a freshman Congressman in the Massachusetts State Legislature, envisioned a scheme to use Douglas' concept of squatter sovereignty to the North's advantage. He proposed and guided through the Bay State Legislature a charter for a large moneyed corporation over a month before President Franklin Pierce signed the Territorial Bill and made it an act of law.

Thayer's plan called for the corporation to aid Northern settlers willing to emigrate to Kansas, by obtaining group ticket rates on railroads and steamboats going West. He also planned to use the money raised from the selling of company stock on internal improvements

in Kansas, including saw and grist mills, cabins, hotels, churches, and schools. Because of several organizational problems and the question of the amount of liability of each stockholder, the condition of the corporation remained unsettled until its re-organization in March, 1855.

The New England Emigrant Aid Company was most active in the affairs of Kansas from March, 1855, through the spring of 1857. The Company was especially active in Kansas during the "Bleeding Kansas" crisis of 1856, assisting the Territory's beleaguered settlers. The Company's work officially ended in Kansas in 1862, following several years of relatively little activity.

The Company was not a financial success. It never paid any stock dividends, and its officers and agents were only able to raise a little more than \$190,000, nearly all of which was expended in Kansas. Also, only about 1,300 people traveled to Kansas under the auspices of the Company; however, many of the Company's agents and settlers became prominent local businessmen and politicians, and several established political careers in Washington, D. C.

The overall influence of the New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas free-state cause was far greater than the above statistics seem to indicate. The

influence of the Company within Kansas and upon the nation as a whole, has been admirably portrayed by Dr. Samuel A. Johnson. There have been no recorded attempts prior to this thesis to evaluate the response in Massachusetts to the Company's goals and efforts to create a free state in Kansas. It is to this point that this thesis is addressed and provides an original contribution.

The writer of this thesis fervently subscribes to the belief that the Company played a very significant role in popularizing the "Bleeding Kansas" issue, and in galvanizing the attitude of the people of the Bay State to the free-state cause. Extensive newspaper files, correspondence, and diaries of prominent men associated directly or indirectly with the Company are utilized to support this belief.

Careful research reveals that many of New England's most prominent businessmen, especially the conservative Whig faction, actively supported the Company. Most clergymen also lent their moral support to the cause, although their financial support was disappointing. Most disappointing of all, was the initial lack of strong support from the more prominent Bay State politicians.

The Company began to enjoy more political and moral support following the Republican Party's emphasis on "Bleeding Kansas," and especially after the beating of

Charles Sumner. However, Eli Thayer remained the only active politician within the Company's organization. The most vigorous and nearly unanimous support of the Company's goals and efforts was secured from the editors of the Republican, Whig, and Know-Nothing newspapers. The Abolitionists' Liberator and the Democratic press were almost alone in denouncing the Company's activities.

Although the people of Massachusetts did not flock en masse by aid of the Company to Kansas, and gave of their financial means somewhat guardedly, this thesis concludes that they did in all other ways rally behind the Company's crusade to save Kansas.