

## XXI. JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY.

JACKSON was President two terms. About this time, Congress passed a law laying a high tariff, or duty, on goods brought from abroad, for the purpose of giving an advantage to home manufacturers. This law pleased the people in the North, because they manufactured many things, and wanted the Americans to buy from them rather than from European merchants. But in the South, where there were no manufactories then, people were angry, because they said that Northern goods were not so fine as the European, and that they already paid enough for all that came from abroad.

The result was that, in 1832, South Carolina said the law should be null, or of no force, in her limits. She claimed that, according to the Constitution, Congress had no right to make it, and announced that she would rather leave the Union than pay the tariff. Now, some members of Congress said that this question ought to be decided by the Supreme Court, and not by the states, and that a state, having once joined the Union, could not leave it without the consent of the rest of the states; but others, and among them the eloquent Southerners, Calhoun (cal-hoon') and Hayne, insisted that each state had the right to annul any law it considered unconstitutional, and even to leave the Union.

South Carolina was of the latter opinion, but Jackson was not, and we are told that when he heard the "Nullification Act" had been passed by South Carolina, he flew into a great rage, dashed his corn-cob pipe on the floor, and cried: "By the Eternal! I'll fix 'em! Send for General Scott."

General Scott was then promptly sent to Charleston to see that the tariff law should be obeyed. Still, the two opinions on state rights were so strongly rooted that neither party could convince the other. It was therefore finally agreed that while the tariff should be collected at all the ports of the country to please the North, it should be lowered little by little so as to please the South.

In settling this question, however, several famous speeches were made, among them one by Daniel Webster, who said that the Constitution was greater than any state, being "made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." On that occasion also he spoke of "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," a



Andrew Jackson.  
Library of Congress.

phrase which became the watchword of a great part of the country. This was Jackson's feeling also, so at a dinner party he once gave the toast: "Our Federal Union: it must be preserved."

President Jackson, or "Old Hickory," as his soldiers called him, was very fond of having his own way; and while he had many devoted friends, he also had some bitter enemies. As he did not call meetings of his regular Cabinet, but instead listened to the advice of a few other men, these were scornfully called by his enemies the "kitchen cabinet."

It was probably by advice of the "kitchen cabinet" that Jackson decided not to continue the United States Bank, but to send the money to different states, to be placed in what were called "pet banks." This change caused some trouble, for people borrowed that money and used it in rash ways, hoping to get rich very fast.

Jackson had two Indian wars to carry on while he was President. One was the Black Hawk War (1832), in Il-li-nois' and Wis-con'sin, where the Indians, after selling their lands, obstinately refused to give them up to the settlers. The other was the Florida or Seminole War which began in 1835. The Seminole Indians had been beaten by Jackson himself some time before, and after the purchase of Florida they had consented to give up their land and go to the other side of the Mississippi.

Still, when the time came for them to move, their chief, Os-ce-o'la, would not go, and defiantly drove his knife into a table, saying: "The only treaty I will execute is with this." His influence was so great that the Seminoles rose up in arms and began to massacre all the settlers. They surprised and killed one officer at dinner, and surrounded another in Wa-hoo' Swamp, where he was slain with more than a hundred men.

The Seminoles next retreated into the Ev'er-glades, where several battles took place. Finally they were beaten at Lake O-ke-cho'bee. Osceola, having been treacherously seized in the meantime under a flag of truce, was imprisoned in Fort Moultrie (moo'try), near Charleston, where he died and was buried. The Indians, however, continued fighting, but were finally forced to submit. Many of them were then removed to the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), so that the settlers in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama need no longer dread their presence.

During this Seminole War, which lasted until the year 1842, there was one engagement in which all the officers but one were soon killed. Bravely heading what was left of his troop, this young man cried: "Follow me! I'm the only officer left, boys; but we'll all do the best we can." Doing his best he bravely died, but if his last words serve as a motto for every American boy and girl, our country will become greater than ever.

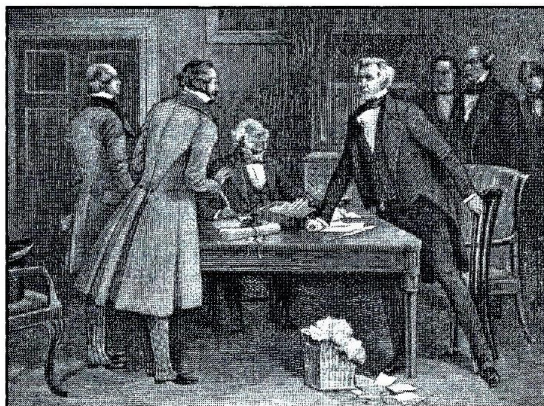
## XXII. NEW INVENTIONS.

**W**HILE Jackson was President, he called upon France to give the five millions she had agreed to pay for damages caused to American ships. This the French did not wish to do, and if England had not interfered there might perhaps have been war.

A story of the time, however, claims that war nearly resulted simply because the French ambassador sent to discuss this question of money with the President knew so little English, and Jackson, on his part, did not know a word of French. After exchanging the usual greetings, we are told that the ambassador began in halting speech: "Mr. President, France demands that this matter be arranged." Jackson, hearing the word "demands," sprang to his feet with clenched fists, crying: "France demands! Let me tell you, sir, that France has no right to demand anything from the United States!"

The Frenchman, who thought that "demand," meant "ask" in English as well as in French, gazed at the President in utter amazement, and had not a third person hastened to explain matters, the interview might have had a stormy close. But when the President heard that the ambassador meant that France was anxious to have the matter closed, he sat down again quietly, saying: "Oh! If France asks anything, I am, of course, always ready to grant it if I can."

It had seemed, for some time past, as if every year some new and important change was taking place. The discovery of coal and the building of canals and railroads were great improvements; besides, steamboats now ran along all the principal rivers, and had even begun to cross the Atlantic. In 1839, the express business began in a small way, and before long goods could be sent quickly from one place to another with little trouble.



Jackson and the French Ambassador.

One of the greatest improvements, however, was brought about by the McCormick reaper, which was patented about ten years before it came into much use. Until then, the broad acres of the West had not paid well, for farmers could not get hands enough to cultivate the fields where wheat grew so well. Of course, they could do their plowing and sowing little by little; but when harvest time came, the grain had to be cut quickly if they did not wish to lose most of their crop. With the reaper, one man could do the work of many; and farmers soon found that they could send their grain by canal, river, or train to the principal ports, and thence to Europe, where breadstuffs were scarcer than in America.

Women's work, too, had grown far easier than in colonial or Revolutionary times. Spinning and weaving were now done by machine in large mills; cooking was made simpler by the discovery of coal and gas and the invention of friction matches; and even sewing and knitting took far less time since they could be done by machinery. The Patent Office was so busy registering all the new inventions made, that it had to have a large force of clerks.

Countless other discoveries were soon to make life still easier and pleasanter. For instance, a few years later, a man named Goodyear, after many experiments, found how to "vulcanize" rubber, thus preventing it from melting in summer and freezing or breaking in winter. Before long, clothes, shoes, diving dresses, and countless other articles were made of rubber, which is so useful in so many ways that we could hardly get along without it.

The country had been growing so rapidly, and so many improvements had been made, that when Jackson left the White House he said: "I leave this great people prosperous and happy." But the prosperity of our twenty-six states was to suffer a severe check, for no sooner had Martin Van Buren become President than the panic of 1837 began. You see, people had tried to become rich too fast, and as a result too much paper money had been issued, and when suddenly called on to pay their debts, so many business houses failed that many men were out of work. In New York, where the merchants had already lost heavily by the great fire of 1835, there was such distress that "bread riots" took place among the hungry people.

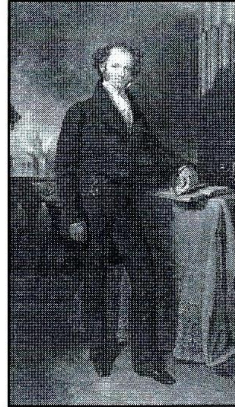
Then, too, the Ca-na'di-ans revolted against Great Britain, and, as many Americans remembered the War of 1812 and still hated the British, they wished to help the rebels.

## XXIII. WHITMAN'S RIDE.

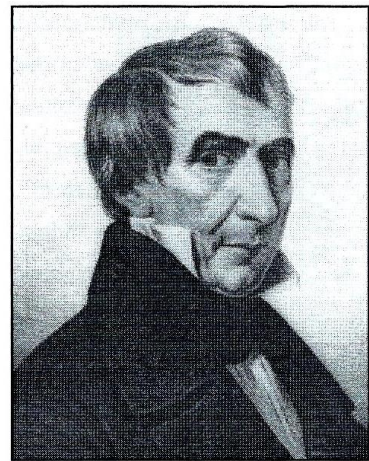
Neither Jackson nor Van Buren would allow this, however, and General Scott was sent to guard the frontier and prevent our citizens from taking any part in the war.

In spite of this, a few Americans managed to disobey. They even put arms on board a vessel in the Niagara River, to ship them to Canada. But the British, warned in time, seized the vessel, set it on fire, and, cutting it adrift, saw it poise a moment at the head of the Niagara Falls, and then plunge down into the abyss!

The money troubles during Van Buren's rule were thought by many people to be his fault; so when the time came for a new election, General William Henry Harrison was chosen President in his stead. He had governed the Northwest Territory, had fought in the War of 1812, and on account of his victory over the Indians was known as "Old Tippecanoe."



Martin Van Buren.  
*Library of Congress.*



William Henry Harrison.  
*Library of Congress.*

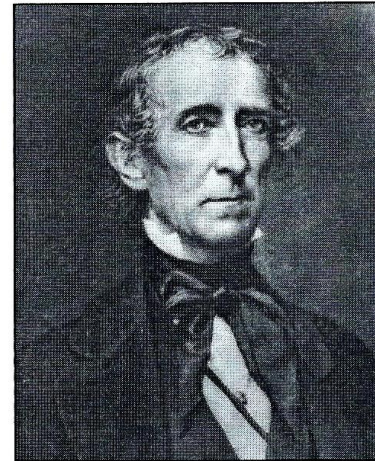
(1841) he died. His last words were: "The principles of the government, I wish them carried out. I ask nothing more."

A good and honest man, the chief fault his enemies could find with him was that he had lived in a log cabin instead of a palace, and had drunk hard cider instead of champagne. His friends, however, admired him all the more on this account, and carried little log cabins in all their parades, using "hard cider" as a rallying cry. They also liked the candidate for Vice President, and the rhyme "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," was soon heard on all sides.

After meetings and parades without end, Harrison was duly elected, and his friends began to crowd around him clamoring for government places. Wishing to please them all, Harrison worked so hard that one month after his inauguration

HARRISON being dead, John Tyler had to take his place. During his one term, Florida, the twenty-seventh state, was added to the Union. Although our country was already very large, the time was near when it was going to be even larger still.

We are told that, in the time when Jackson was President, a party of Indians traveled from Oregon to St. Louis, in quest of "the white man's Bible." They had heard of it from



John Tyler.  
*Library of Congress.*

some traders, and the stories seemed so wonderful that they had journeyed many miles to get the book and someone to read and explain it to them.

It happened, however, that the people whom they asked for it were too busy or indifferent to pay much attention to this request. Still, they kindly fed and clothed the Indians, and gave them many presents. After two of the messengers had died in St. Louis, the others sadly went home to tell their people that no one would listen to their prayer. The story of the long journey taken by these Indians, and of their pitiful requests, was told in the East, where it touched the hearts of

many people; and missionaries were soon sent out to Oregon to convert the Indians. Two of these missionaries set out with young brides, and journeyed slowly all the way across our continent. They traveled by boat most of the way to Missouri, and from there in wagons and on horseback; and they were the first to take white women over the Rocky Mountains. When they reached the Oregon country, which was still open to Americans and British alike, they found that the latter were trying to get sole possession of the land. Still, the Americans claimed that Oregon should belong to them, not only because Captain Gray first sailed into the Columbia River, but because Lewis and Clark explored it from the mountains to the sea, and Astor built the first trading post there.

After living near Wal-la-wal'la five years, one of the American missionaries, Dr. Marcus Whitman, heard that his fellow-Christians in the East had decided to give up his mission station, just when it was most needed, he thought; for many Americans were

coming to settle in the new country. Therefore he resolved to journey east, in order to persuade the Board of Missions at Boston to keep up his station.

Whitman set out at once for his five-months' ride, but as it was already late in the season he knew he would not be able to pass over the mountains by the way he had come, so he took the southern route.

Through blinding snow and deep drifts, across frozen streams, and over mountains so steep and rough that it seemed almost impossible to climb them at all, Whitman made his way. After thrilling adventures with wolves and bears, and many hairbreadth escapes, he reached Santa Fe, and following the trail from there, came to St. Louis. The rest of the journey was easy. On his way to Boston, he stopped in Washington and tried to get the government to make some arrangement whereby the emigrants could reach Oregon more easily. He also declared that emigrants could take their wagons over the mountains, though many claimed it was impossible to do so.



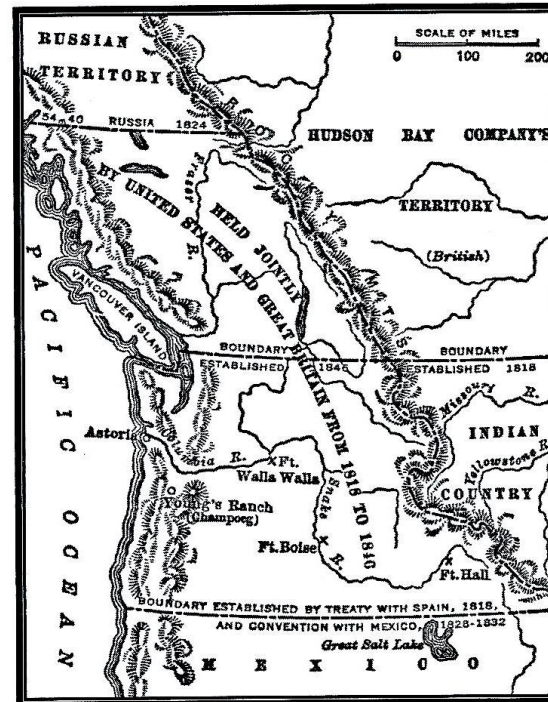
Traveling West in a Covered Wagon.

By this time many Americans were thinking of settling in Oregon, and were asking our government to extend its laws over that country. The Ashburton treaty with Great Britain (1842) settled the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick, but said nothing about Oregon, and no one knew just what the future of that country would be. Still,

by the time Whitman had obtained leave to continue his mission and had started to return, two hundred emigrant wagons, or "prairie schooners," were on their way to Oregon. Whitman joined this train of pioneers and helped them to overcome all the difficulties of the way.

Although the British made sundry attempts to discourage these settlers, they were followed by so many others that, three years later, no less than twelve thousand Americans had passed into Oregon. Our countrymen thus proved so much more numerous

than the English that they soon claimed the whole territory, asking that the boundary be drawn at the parallel of 54° 40'. The British, however, did not wish to give up so much land. So, before long, a quarrel arose, and the Americans began to cry that they would fight Great Britain unless it consented to what they wished. But after a great deal of talk, and many threats about "fifty-four forty or fight," the United States finally thought best to accept the 49th parallel as its northern boundary from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean (1846).



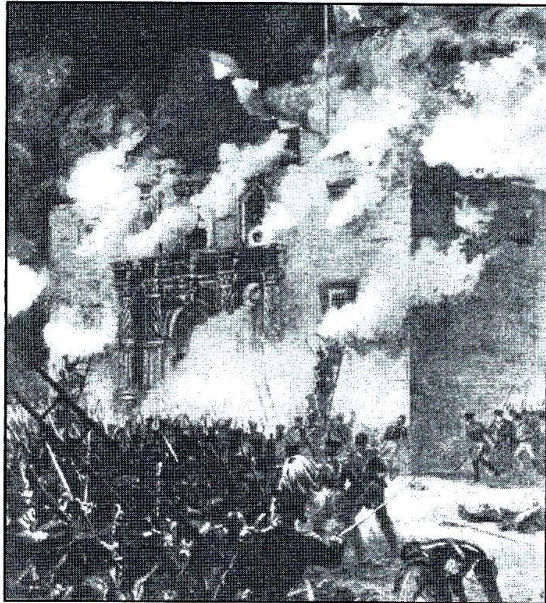
Oregon Territory and the Disputed Boundary.

The next year, Whitman, his wife, and twelve other white people were murdered by the Indians in an attack on his mission. Many years later it was claimed by Whitman's friends that he had saved Oregon—that had it not been for his daring winter ride, and for what he told the President about Oregon, this part of our country would now belong to the British. This is claiming too much; but Whitman was nonetheless a hero, for he was true to his country and died a martyr to his faith.

## XXVI. THE MEXICAN WAR.

**W**E have seen how Oregon became a part of our country. It was settled mostly by people opposed to slavery, so that it came in as free soil. But the Southerners had already asked that Texas be allowed to join the Union as slave soil. Many people wished thus to keep the balance even.

Now, you must know that Texas had grown very tired of Mexico's harsh rule. So Stephen Austin and Samuel Houston, two Americans who had received large grants of land in Texas, encouraged the people to revolt and form a republic of their own. They did so, and when the Mexicans tried to force them to obey, they won their freedom at the battle of San Jacinto (1836).



The Fall of the Alamo.

The most exciting event during this war was the siege of the Alamo (ah-lah-mo), a large mission in the town of San Antonio. Here about one hundred and fifty Texans held an army of more than four thousand Mexicans at bay, until all but seven of the men in the fort were killed. When the Mexicans finally forced their way into the place, they cruelly killed these men, too, although they begged for quarter. Among the dead was the great Tennessee hunter and pioneer, Davy Crockett, whose motto, "Be sure

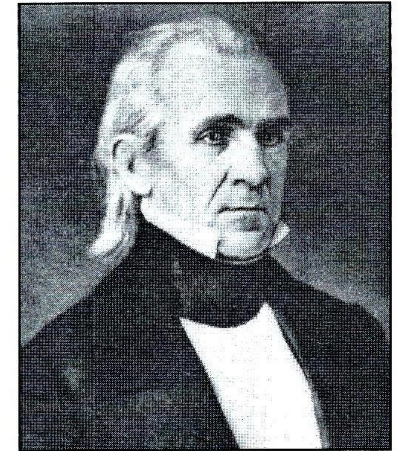
you are right, then go ahead," you will often hear quoted. The Mexicans' lack of mercy made the Texans so angry that after this event they used the words, "Remember the Alamo!" as a battle cry.

Eight years later, Texas asked permission to join the United States. This pleased the Southern people, for although Texas had been free soil according to Mexican law, slavery was permitted in the "Lone Star Republic" when it gained its independence.

Just before Tyler finished his four years' term, therefore, Congress decided to admit Texas (1845); but as a dispute soon arose about its southern boundary, the eleventh President, James K. Polk, found himself with a war on his hands. Many good Americans said that Texas had no right to claim the land between the Nueces (nway-ses) River and the Rio Grande, and that this was an unfair and needless war, but others claimed that it was for the best.

The new President began his term by sending General Zachary Taylor down to Texas to occupy the disputed strip of land. There he was met by the Mexicans, who attacked the American troops. A skirmish took place, blood was shed, and soon after war was declared. Instead of waiting until more troops could join him, Taylor pressed on, and, meeting the Mexicans at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, near the mouth of the Rio Grande, he defeated them both times, in spite of their superior numbers.

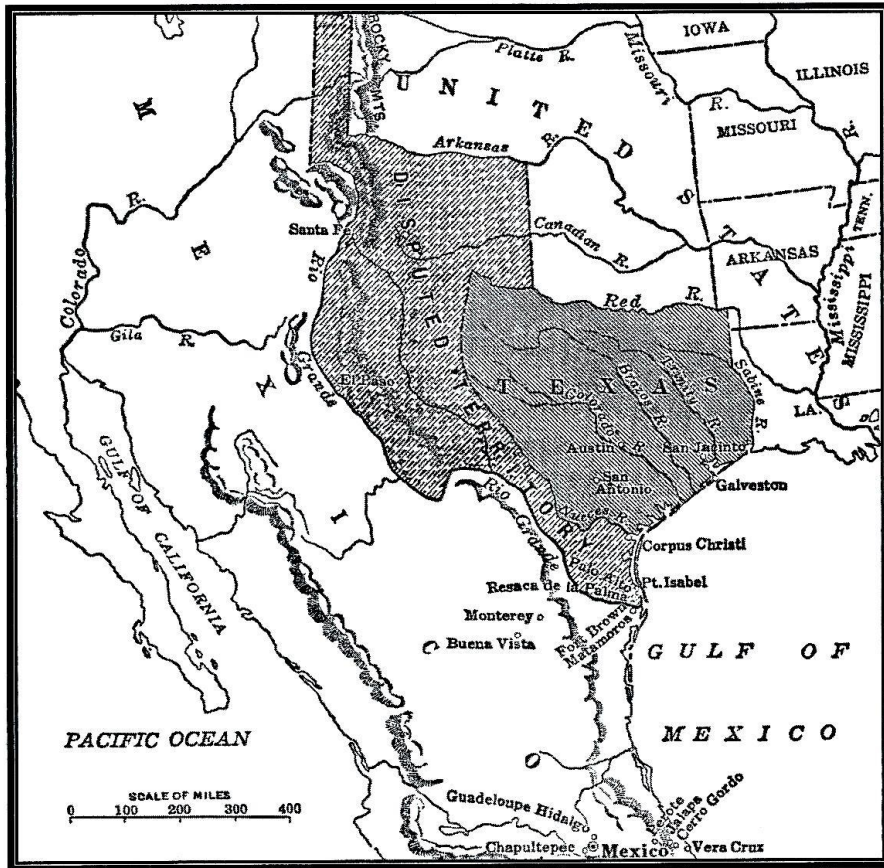
The Mexicans having fled over the Rio Grande, Taylor pursued them, took Matamoros, and began to besiege Monterrey. This place, too, was carried, though defended by a garrison of about ten thousand men. In the meantime, two other armies had been sent out; so the Mexicans were obliged to defend themselves not only against Taylor in the north, but also against General Scott, who took his army by sea to Vera Cruz (vay-rah croos), and marched thence across country toward Mexico City. The third American army, under Colonel Stephen W. Kearny (car-ny), was directed toward New Mexico and California, both of which belonged to Mexico at that time, and included



James K. Polk.  
*Library of Congress.*

all the land from the Pacific Ocean to Texas and the Rocky Mountains, up to the parallel of 42°.

After the siege of Monterey, the Mexican general, Santa Anna, tried to crush the Americans under Taylor, in a mountain pass at Buena Vista (1847). But Taylor was a



The Mexican War.

very good general, and as cool as he was brave. Sitting sidewise on his horse, he calmly directed the troops, paying no heed to the bullets raining around him. We are told that one of his officers suggested that his white steed made such a fine target for the enemy that he had better withdraw; but Taylor quietly patted "Whitey," and said: "The old fellow missed the fun at Monterey; he must have his share this time." A little later, a Mexican brought a message from his army, and, seeing Taylor sitting there, wonderingly

asked what he was waiting for. "Oh," said Taylor coolly, "I am waiting for Santa Anna to surrender."

Taylor's men, following his example, were just as cool as he. One of them was sent over to the Mexican camp with a message, and Santa Anna told him that he would treat General Taylor well if the latter would only surrender. The officer, looking straight at him, is said to have proudly answered: "General Taylor never surrenders." This remark so delighted the Americans that they quoted it very freely during the Mexican War, and even long after.



Taylor at Buena Vista.

The battle of Buena Vista lasted all day, and toward evening Bragg's artillery came up to help our troops. They poured their shot upon the Mexicans, who, in spite of all their courage, began to give way. When Taylor saw this, he is reported to have cried: "A little more grape, Captain Bragg!" In obedience to this order, a few more rounds were fired, and the Mexicans, unable to face the shot any longer, turned and fled.

While Taylor was holding the ground he had won, Santa Anna hurried off to meet and stop General Scott, on the road Cortez had traveled when he came to conquer Mexico, more than three centuries before. Scott's advance was one continual fight; but although he lost many men from wounds and disease, he won several battles.

The principal engagements took place at Cerro Gordo, not far from the coast, and at Contreras (con-tray'rahs), Churubusco (choo-roo-boos'co), and Cha-pul-te-pec', near Mexico City. In this campaign our troops did wonders, for they had to climb tall mountains and scale high walls before they could march in triumph into the capital of Mexico (1847).

Taylor and Scott were not the only ones to win laurels during this war, for Kearny, after leaving Fort Leavenworth, went on to take Santa Fe and all New Mexico. He next intended to conquer California, but when he got there he found the work nearly

done, and could only help win the struggle against the Mexicans. This was because Captain Fremont, who was surveying there, had taken command of the American settlers as soon as the Mexicans tried to turn them out. Helped by Commodore Stockton, who was on the Pacific coast at the same time, this small force beat the Mexicans. Next, the Americans decided that California should be called the "Bear State Republic," and govern itself until it could join the United States.



## XXVII. THE SLAVERY QUARREL.

**J**OHAN C. FREMONT is one of our national heroes and pioneers. Besides conquering California, he is noted for his explorations, which he had been carrying on for more than five years. His guide and friend was the famous trapper, Kit Carson, whose name is now borne by a prosperous city in Ne-va-da.

Once when Fremont crossed the Rocky Mountains, he carved his name on a boulder more than thirteen thousand feet above the sea, on Fremont Peak.



Fremont  
the Explorer.

People had long believed that the wide tract of land east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Mississippi, which is called the "Great American Desert" on old maps, was entirely barren. But Fremont, the "Pathfinder," discovered that the greater part could be cultivated or used as pasture land.

Fremont had also explored a vast tract of land in northern Mexico, which the United States wished to own. So, when the treaty of Gua-da-lu-pe Hi-dal-go was signed, in 1848, it was agreed that Mexico should give up all claim to Texas as far south as the Rio Grande, and also to New Mexico and what was then called Upper California—including all the land between the Gila (he-la) River and the parallel of 42°—in exchange for fifteen million dollars.

There was, however, soon after this some slight trouble about the boundary, so James Gadsden was sent to sign a new treaty. He bought for the United States another strip of land, south of the Gila River, for ten million dollars (1853). Because he did this, and signed the treaty, that strip of land is known as the "Gadsden Purchase."

The war with Mexico was, according to Northern views, unfair, and it seemed doubly so because Mexico just then was weak and poor. In speaking of it later on, General Ulysses S. Grant, who took part in it, said it was "one of the most unjust wars ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation." Many other people did not approve of it, either, and when they heard how much money the war cost, some remarked that if Texas were spelled properly it would read "Taxes."

Meanwhile, the old quarrel about the slavery question raged worse than ever. When President Polk, in 1846, asked Congress for money to pay Mexico, a man named Wilmot proposed that it should be granted only on condition that the territory bought with it should be free soil. This is what is known as the "Wilmot Proviso," and it gave rise to endless disputes, not only in Congress, but all through the country.

The quarrel between the slavery and antislavery parties, which had begun so long before, was to go on much longer, and many eloquent speeches for and against slavery were made in the House during the following years. Among the many able speakers of that time there was John Quincy Adams, who was now over eighty, and was known as the "Old Man Eloquent." Hearing the wrangling over this vexed question, he once said with great sadness: "Slavery is in all probability the wedge which will split up this Union."

Still, John Quincy Adams did not live long enough to see his words come true, for he died soon after in Congress, crying: "This is the last of earth; I am content" (1848). As he had served his country faithfully for many years as minister, President, and in Congress, he had a public funeral, and Daniel Webster was asked to make a speech about him.

This Daniel Webster is one of the greatest orators of our country. He had already made famous speeches for the laying of the corner stone of the Bunker Hill Monument, and in praise of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Since then, he had spoken in many parts of the country, and he had now reached the highest point of his fame.

As he is one of the great men of our country, it will interest you to hear a few anecdotes about him.

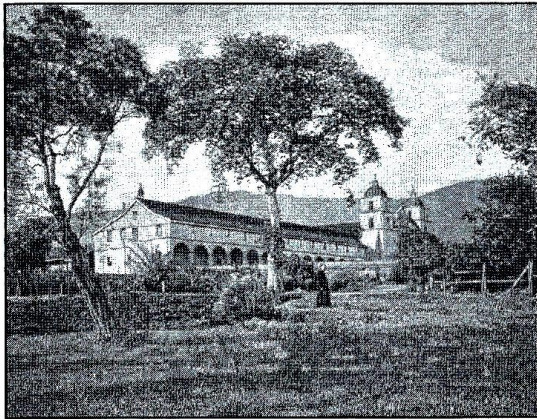


### XXX. EARLY TIMES IN CALIFORNIA.

THE land taken from Mexico included, as we have seen, our present state of California. This new section of land was still little known, although more than three hundred years had passed since the Spaniards first visited it. They named it California because a fabulous story of the time claimed that there was a rich province of that name near India. As people then fancied that India could not be very far away from this part of America, the Spaniards considered this name most appropriate for the newly discovered region.

Some time later California was visited by Sir Francis Drake in the course of his famous journey around the world. He renamed it New Al'bi-on, and is said to have discovered San Fran-cis'co Bay and the one bearing his name, near by. We are even told that he landed on the shores of Drake Bay to refit his vessel, and that he made such friends with the Indians that they begged him to stay with them and be their king.

Drake was followed, early in the seventeenth century, by a Spaniard who not only discovered the bays of San Diego (dee-ay' go) and Monterey, but claimed the whole region for his sovereign. Nevertheless, for nearly a century and a half after that no lasting



Spanish Mission in California.

settlement was made in California. But at the end of that time some Franciscan friars came from Mexico to preach the gospel to the Indians.

These good men built churches and a score of mission stations in some of the most charming "garden spots" in California. Here they preached to such good purpose that at the end of about fifty years—in 1820—there were

nearly thirty thousand Christian Indians. Indeed, the natives felt such awe for the priests that they obeyed them at a word and worked so hard that the missions soon became very rich.

The Spanish had hitherto been the only Europeans in California, with the exception of a few trappers and traders. The trappers roamed about the pathless woods and wild mountains, while the traders, who were mainly New Englanders, sailed up and down the coast, landing from time to time to exchange calicoes and groceries for the hides which the herders had to sell.

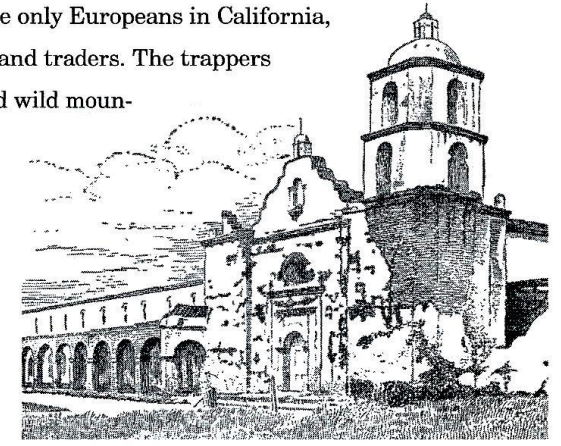
Sometimes these traders carried the hides to China and exchanged them for tea, but as a rule they

went home again and sold their cargoes in Boston or New York. The two-year journey around the Horn, at the southern tip of South America, was not only long, but often very tedious, for ships were often becalmed, or driven out of their course by unfavorable winds.

Still, both traders and trappers told such wonderful stories of the land they had visited in the far West, that a number of adventurers longed to go there. But the journey across the plains, through the deserts, and over the mountains, was so long and painful that only the bravest and strongest dared undertake it.

These men generally followed the road pointed out by the trappers, who often served as guides for the travelers, and beguiled the way by their many stories. Some of these were quite true, but others were told in fun to see if people would really believe them.

For instance, James Bridges, a famous trapper, used to tell of an awful snowstorm in the Great Salt Lake valley which lasted seventy days and stopped only when there were seventy feet of snow on the ground. He said that vast herds of buffaloes perished from the cold, and that their meat was kept fresh by the snow in which they were buried. When spring came, and the snow melted, he tumbled the frozen buffaloes into Great Salt Lake, where the water was so briny that it pickled all the meat perfectly. Thus, he had food enough to last several years for himself and for a whole tribe of Ute Indians. Of course this story was pure nonsense, but it shows what kind of stories some of these backwoodsmen told.



Spanish Mission (entrance).



## XXXI. THE DISCOVERY OF EL DORADO.

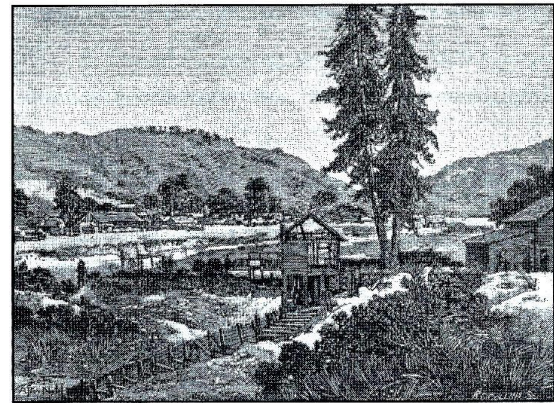
CALIFORNIA was so sparsely peopled, in the first half of the nineteenth century, that the Russians tried to get a foothold in it by building a trading station, and several adventurers settled in the places which best suited their fancy.

One of these men was a Swiss, John Sutter, who had been a soldier, and wanted to plant a Swiss colony in California, on the Sac-ra-men´to River. He was very successful in his ventures, and soon owned large herds of cattle, sheep, and horses. Besides, his farm was thriving, and most of the Western travelers, including Fremont, visited him in the course of their journeys.

Shortly before peace was made with Mexico, and the land really purchased by the United States, a man working for Sutter saw some shiny gravel in a mill race which he

was digging. The man picked up a few of these small shiny lumps, and carried them to his employer, who, examining them carefully, saw that they were pure gold.

He tried to keep his discovery a secret, but it soon leaked out. When it became known, every white man dropped his work as a herder, lumberman, or trapper, and began to dig for gold, or to



Sutter's Mill, where Gold was Discovered.

wash the mud and gravel at the bottom of the streams, where sometimes as much as forty dollars' worth of gold dust was found in a panful. A few, more lucky than their companions, found larger lumps, and thus became rich in a few minutes.

The news of the wonderful discovery spread like wildfire, passed over the mountains, reached the nearest telegraph station, and thence flashed all over the country, creating the wildest excitement. On all sides one heard of nothing else, and people remembered how the Indians had told the Spaniards, more than three hundred years before, that there was a land of gold in the West. The Spaniards had vainly sought this "El Do-ra´do," as they called it, which had now been discovered by chance.

As soon as the newspapers began to describe how easily a fortune could be made in California by a few days of digging, hosts of men started westward. But the journey was long and dangerous, no matter what road one took to get there. Some went by sea, sailing around Cape Horn. Others sailed to As´pin-wall, and made their way as best they could across the unhealthy Isthmus of Pan-a-ma´, waiting on the Pacific coast until some vessel came along to carry them the rest of the way.

Both of these roads were, however, costly as well as tedious, so the majority of the gold seekers set out, on foot, in ox carts, and on horseback, across the plains. Such was the rush for the gold fields in California that before long one could see hundreds of emigrant wagons, and trains of mules, horses, and men afoot, crossing the plains. Of course, there were by this time several ways of getting to California overland, but the most traveled of all the roads was the old Santa Fe trail.

As long as people were on the grass-covered prairies traveling was quite easy, but after a time they came to the desert places and alkali plains, where the fine dust choked both men and beasts. Water was so scarce that many of the animals died of thirst on the way; and as no one stopped to bury them, the road was soon strewn with whitening bones.



## XXXII. THE RUSH TO CALIFORNIA.

I N spite of dangers, suffering, and hardships of all kinds, men kept hurrying on to California where many of them refused to do anything but dig for gold. It was in January, 1848, that the first gold was found in Captain Sutter's mill race. San Francisco was then but a tiny settlement. But before long ship after ship came into the harbor, laden with gold seekers. In 1849 the "gold fever" attacked even the officers and crews of these vessels, which were forsaken in the harbor while the seamen went to seek their fortunes also.

So many people came thus to California that in less than a year San Francisco became a large and prosperous city. Many of the inhabitants were mere adventurers, some of them were criminals, but others were men who came there for love of excitement or in hopes of getting rich in an honest way. Seeing that the bad men thought they could do

anything they pleased in a city where there was as yet only a weak government, the better class banded themselves together, and in 1851 formed what was known as the Vigilance Committee. This was a body of men who kept watch over the people, and who promptly punished all who did wrong.

Most of the men who came over to California in 1849 called themselves the "forty-niners." At first they kept order with their pistols, and executed justice by lynch law. But they soon saw that it would be better for California to have good laws, and the proper officers to see that they were carried out.

The most important forty-niners, therefore, assembled at Monterey to draw up a constitution, and then asked permission to join the Union as a free state. This was granted, and California, which had been for a short time the Great Bear Republic, became in 1850 the "Golden State." During the next five years it grew rapidly, until its population increased fourfold. Besides, many interesting discoveries were made by men in search of gold, and before long several other metals, as well as borax and asphalt, were found in considerable quantities.



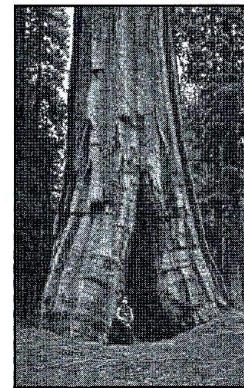
Valley of the Yosemite.  
*Painting by Albert Bierstadt.*

In 1851, while tracking some Indian thieves, a band of Americans came by accident into the Yo-sem-i-te Valley, which is about one hundred and fifty miles from San Fran-

cisco. This is one of the most wonderful places in the world, for the narrow valley is hemmed in by huge straight cliffs two and three thousand feet high.

In one place the Yosemite Creek falls down over the face of a cliff twenty-six hundred feet high, forming three cascades, the highest of which falls more than fifteen hundred feet. Here, too, is the Bridal Veil Fall, whose waters are dashed into fine spray as they fall. Besides wonderful mountains, tall peaks, strange rocks, carpets of bright-hued flowers, and countless charming views, this region also has some of the California redwood trees, which are the largest in the world.

A few miles south of the Yosemite Valley there is a large grove of these trees. A few have been cut down, and by patiently counting their rings people have found out that some of the giant trees are more than twenty-five hundred years old. One of them is so large that a four-horse stagecoach with all its passengers can drive through a hole cut in the trunk, and there is still so much wood left on either side that the tree grows on, and does not seem to have suffered in the least.

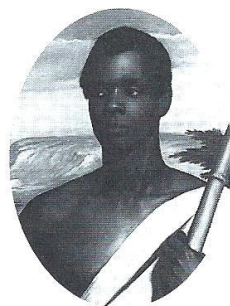


California Redwood.

In 1864, thirteen years after the discovery of this grove and the Yosemite Valley, Congress decided that these wonderful curiosities should remain untouched. Since then the Yosemite has been a state park, and although every one is allowed to go in it and admire its matchless scenery, no one is allowed to cut down trees, blast rocks, or build roads or houses there without the permission of those who keep guard over it for the benefit of the nation.

❧

## 30 *Amistad* means Friendship



In Havana, Cuba, where Sengbe Pieh was sold after being captured illegally, the Spanish gave him a certificate calling him a *Ladino*: a Spanish-speaking slave not born in Africa. Such slaves could still be sold.

In 1839, Sengbe Pieh was working on a road connecting his small mountain village to the next tribal town. He was 25 years old, with shining brown skin, close-cut black hair, clear wide eyes, and a face that reflected a nature both innocent and strong as a nut tree. Pieh was not a prince—as some would later call him—but he was a born leader. He was the father of three children.

Pieh had never been far from his village in Sierra Leone, but when four strange men stepped out of the bush and surrounded him, he knew at once who they were. Sierra Leone, in Africa, was a British colony. It had been a center of the slave trade for almost 300 years; since 1562 to be exact, when England's Sir John Hawkins set out on a slave-gathering expedition.

Slave trading had made people rich: in England, the United States, Spain, the Arab nations, and Africa. But now there were abolitionists, who disapproved of slavery. They were horrified by the idea of selling people, and they were doing something about it. In 1787, some British abolitionists founded Freedom Province, on the Sierra Leone coast. In 1792 they built the city of Freetown and began returning blacks to Africa.

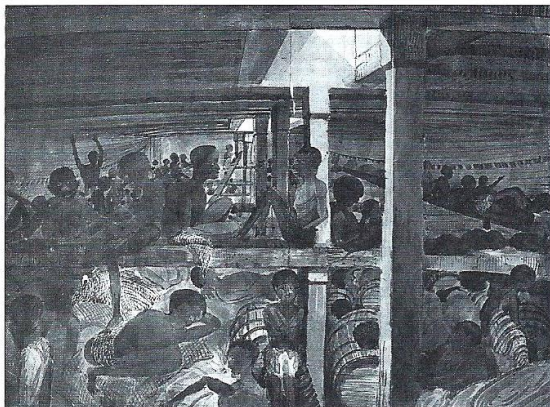
In 1808 the United States outlawed the foreign slave trade. That means it became a crime to bring new slaves into the country. Those who were already slaves could still be bought and sold inside the United States. Be sure that you understand that it was the slave trade—not slavery itself—that was outlawed. No more Africans were to be brought to the United States. (Britain and Spain also made foreign slave trading illegal.) The

**I teach the kings about their ancestors so that the lives of the ancients might serve them as an example, for the world is old but the future springs from the past.**

—MAMADOU KOUYATÉ, A MALI GRIOT, FROM *SUNDIATA: AN EPIC OF OLD MALI* (1217–1237)



Yoked in a *coffle* or neck fetter (coffle comes from the Arabic word for caravan, *cafila*), these West Africans are marched to the Bight of Benin on the Atlantic. There they are kept tied up in the *barracoon* or slave barrack until the ship has a full load. Below is a painting of a slave ship's hold (made after the ship was captured by an antislavery ship).



slavers—those who ran slave ships—were now criminals. The penalty, if a slaver was caught, was death.

So in 1839 Pieh should have been safe. But he wasn't. It may have been illegal, but there was still big money to be made by selling slaves. (Just as, a century or so later,

there would be big money made selling illegal enslaving drugs.)

The four men would not let Pieh say good-bye to his wife and children. Pieh wondered if they would know what happened to him. Would they think he was eaten by a lion, or would they guess the truth?

The rough men with guns had captured other Sierra Leoneans. For three and a half days they kept them marching. Finally they came to the coast. Most had not seen the ocean before; the roaring water terrified some of them.

There were worse terrors to come. They were soon to be chained—neck to neck and ankle to ankle—and thrown inside a ship into a hold so low they could only sit, not stand. For two months they would be held like that—with rice to eat but little water. One in every three of them died. Finally they were brought on deck, allowed to wash, and given some extra food. Pieh knew the journey must be coming to an end. But where were they? What would happen next? He heard the word *Cuba*, but he didn't understand Portuguese—the language of the ship's crew—and he knew no one would answer his questions anyway.

And then the ship stopped. The crew put spyglasses to their eyes and searched the water nervously. The slavers were watching for British cruisers. They were doing something illegal and they knew it. If they were captured no one would come to their rescue. Nightfall came and quietly the ship proceed-

### A Natural Variety of Classes

**R**epudiate, as ridiculously absurd, that much lauded but nowhere accredited dogma of Mr. Jefferson, that "all men are born equal." No society has ever yet existed...without a natural variety of classes...Slavery is truly the "corner-stone" and foundation of every well-designed and durable "republican edifice," wrote slave owner James Henry Hammond

from his home at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, in 1845. Hammond's letter was addressed to an abolitionist. He continued:

**Y**ou will probably say, emancipate your slaves, and then you will have free labor on suitable terms. That might be if there were five hundred where there now is one, and the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, was as

densely populated as your Island. But until that comes to pass, no labor can be procured in America on terms you have it....I have no hesitation in saying that our slaveholders are kind masters, as men usually are kind husbands...and friends—as a general rule, kinder. *What is wrong with Hammond's argument? Whose opinion is he ignoring?*

ed. The Africans were loaded into small boats, rowed ashore, marched into the Cuban jungle, and put in crude shacks. The slavers had made it.

Now they needed to show that these Africans were actually slaves (or children of slaves) brought to the island before the slave trade was made illegal. So each African was given a European name and false identity papers. Sengbe Pieh became Joseph Cinque (SIN-kway). Once that was done the Africans were ready to be sold on the legal market.

And that is exactly what happened. They were marched to Havana, the Cuban capital, and put in a big, open-air stockade. Buyers came and looked them over. There was one problem that everyone ignored. None of these Africans could speak Spanish. They could speak only African languages. Some were children. Anyone with sense could guess they had not been born in Cuba. But, as I said, there was big money in this business. Cuba was a Spanish colony. Both the Spanish and the Cuban authorities looked the other way.

José Ruíz went into the stockade looking for slaves to buy. He saw the newly arrived men. He noticed Cinque. He examined his teeth. He was pleased. Joseph Cinque was lean, muscular, and healthy. Ruíz paid the captain \$450 for Cinque and the same amount for each of 49 other blacks. His partner, Pedro Montes, bought four children: three girls and a boy. The oldest was nine.

If the Africans thought they were through with ships they were wrong. They were now dragged on board a small Baltimore-built schooner, the



On board ship, many slaves got sick: cleanliness was almost impossible, the food was scanty and bad, and they were often beaten. Many sickened from depression and terror, or from being kept locked up below decks. Slavers forced them to dance to fife or drum, to keep their muscles in shape. It was another horrible humiliation.



This is an artist's version of the *Amistad* story. But it doesn't make sense that the ship's crew would stand around watching while the slaves are roused to mutiny. Perhaps Cinque is telling his companions what has happened to them since they reached America.

A **mutiny** is a rebellion against authority, especially when sailors or soldiers rebel against their officers.

*Amistad*. They were headed for an island port. The captain, four crew members, and Ruiz and Montes were breaking the law—they knew these people had not been born in Cuba—but they weren't worried. Their papers seemed legal. They had done this before.

Each black prisoner was given a banana, two potatoes, and a small cup of water—as a day's rations. It was hot and sultry. When one man took extra water he was beaten, and gunpowder was rubbed in his wounds.

Cinque was terrified. Using sign language, he asked the brown-skinned cook, Celestino, what was going to happen to them. The cook—in a cruel joke—ran his finger across his throat. Then Celestino pointed to barrels of beef—they were part of the ship's cargo. He laughed. Cinque thought he was to be turned into meat. Were Ruiz and Montes cannibals? They were cruel and crude enough. Cinque shuddered at the thought.

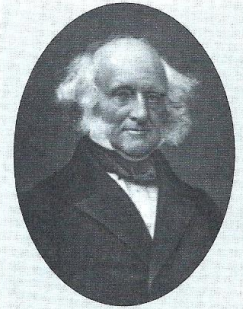
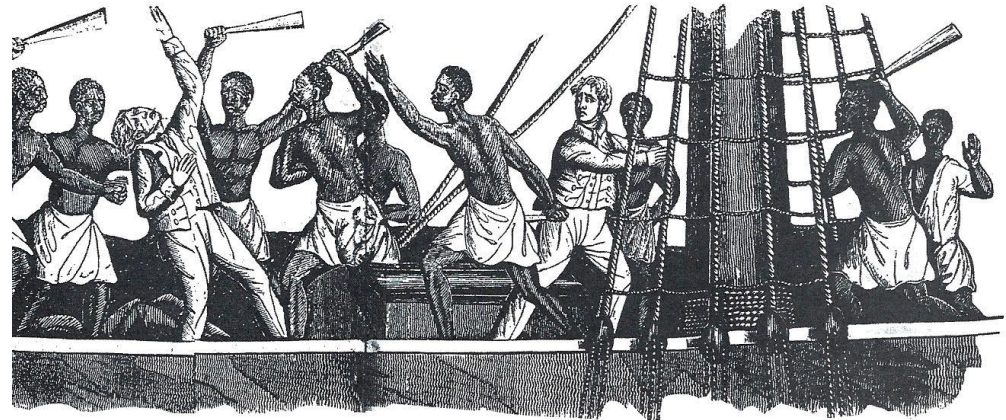
Then he found a big iron nail. Quietly Cinque used the nail to pick the lock on the chain that circled his neck. That night he freed the others. Frantically they looked for weapons and found boxes of sugar-cane knives—knives with fierce blades two feet long.

It was stormy that night, and dark, without moonbeams. The crew had lowered the sails. The ship was quiet. The mutiny began at 4 A.M. Fifteen minutes later it was over. The captain was dead, and so was Celestino. Two sailors had jumped overboard and were not heard of again. Ruiz and Montes were prisoners. Antonio, the captain's slave, was unhurt.

Now the problem Cinque faced was how to get back to Africa. He didn't know how to sail; he'd hardly been on deck before. He didn't know where he was. He did know that Africa lay in the direction of the rising sun. So he forced the two Spaniards to sail east—toward the sun—and prayed they would make it across the ocean.

What he didn't know was that every night Ruiz and Montes changed course and sailed back west. So the *Amistad* zigzagged along the American coast heading for New York, not Sierra Leone.

At last they spotted land, but it was to the west. Cinque knew he had been tricked. He also knew he needed food and water. He took a rowboat to land and



**Martin Van Buren** lost the race for president in 1840 when he ran against "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too." That was the campaign slogan of Whig William Henry Harrison (who fought Native Americans at Tippecanoe) and his vice president, John Tyler.

There's no mistaking this for anything but the mutiny: the blades of those knives are three inches wide at the ends.

was soon captured. The *Amistad*, the Africans, the two Spaniards, and the four children were in Connecticut waters. Now what was to be done with them?

In 1839, President Martin Van Buren was planning to run for re-election. The last thing he wanted was an incident that would cause controversy. Anything that had to do with slavery was guaranteed to do that. The *Amistad* couldn't have landed at a worse time—for Van Buren.

This was the situation:

Blacks had mutinied and killed whites. That was just what every Southern plantation owner feared.

A slave ship had been captured with blacks aboard who were courageous enough to fight for their freedom. That was just what the Northern abolitionists had been waiting for.

A Spanish ship had been captured. The Spanish ambassador called it an "outrage."

A slave ship had broken the terms of the Spanish-English antislavery treaty. Would the British use that as an excuse to invade Cuba? Clearly, this was no simple affair.

"Send the blacks back to Cuba," said those who approved of slavery.

"Set them free," said those who didn't.

This matter would have to be decided in the courts. In Connecticut a judge said the Africans had been captured illegally. The laws prohibiting the slave trade had been broken, he said, and the captives should be freed.

That wasn't the end of it. Everyone knew that the Connecticut judge hated slavery. The case was appealed. The next judge was a New

### Old Man Eloquent



When John Quincy Adams entered the House of Representatives, in 1831, he was 64, short, stout, bald, with a sense of duty that often made him seem quarrelsome. He was an ex-president; he was brilliant; but he saw himself as a failure—until he became a congressman. He loved that job, was reelected eight times, and fought—with all his might—against slavery.

He knew that was important. The supporters of slavery in Congress had insisted on a “gag rule.” That meant that any antislavery petitions were laid aside without discussion. The Southerners didn’t even want the subject brought up. Adams kept introducing antislavery petitions anyway. He fought the gag rule—doggedly, stubbornly, ceaselessly. Finally, in 1844, the rule was defeated. In 1848, Adams had a stroke and died right in the House of Representatives. Even his enemies knew that an uncommon man was gone.

### Making Up History

You will read in some books that Cinque returned to Africa and became a slave trader himself. That is not true. And yet that story has been written many times. Why? Because an author who learned the story of the *Amistad* and Joseph Cinque decided to write a novel about it. A novelist can write anything that makes a good story. He decided it would give the story an ironic twist to have Cinque become a slaver himself. A historian read the novel, thought it was true, and retold the story in a history book. (History books, of course, should always be true.) Then another historian quoted the first historian, and then another, and another. And that is how madeup stories sometimes come to be history.

Englander with a different record. He seemed to approve of slavery. He had made a teacher, Prudence Crandall, close the school where she taught black students. The abolitionists were discouraged.

President Van Buren had a ship readied in the New Haven, Connecticut, harbor. He thought the *Amistad* affair would soon be over. The ship was to take the blacks back to Cuba as soon as the decision was announced. Van Buren wanted them out of the United States—quickly—before another appeal could be made.

The judge studied the law. He may have approved of slavery, but he knew the law was more important than his personal feelings. There was no question about it, he said. These were free people—captured illegally. They couldn’t be taken to Cuba against their will.

Those who believed in slavery were furious. They had only one place left to go—the U.S. Supreme Court, where five of the nine Supreme Court justices were Southerners. Now the abolitionists were desperate. So were Cinque and the men and the children. They had learned some English. They understood what was going on. Besides, they were weary and wanted to go home. The abolitionists asked an old man to help them. He agreed and said he would take no money for doing it. His name was John Quincy Adams. Some people called him “Old Man Eloquent.”

In 1841, Adams stood before the Supreme Court and talked for three hours. One of the justices said it was an “extraordinary” argument. It all came down to one thing, said the former president, and that could be found in the Declaration of Independence.

*I know of no other law that reaches the case of my clients, but the law of Nature and of Nature’s God on which our fathers placed our own national existence.*

The Supreme Court agreed.

Cinque and his companions were free.

## John Quincy Adams Joins Amistad Defense

The *Amistad* Committee believed that they would need additional legal help to assure a favorable outcome for the Africans and decided to ask former President John Quincy Adams to intervene on their behalf. There were many reasons for choosing Adams to assist with the defense. First and foremost, he was clearly considered to be one of the nation’s leading opponents of slavery as evidenced by his relentless fight against the gag rule in Congress. Second, Adams’ status as a former President would attract more publicity and interest in the case and forestall the Van Buren Administration from failing to extend due process of law to the Africans. Third, interpretation of applicable international laws and the treaties between the United States and Spain would be important in the outcome of the case. No person had more knowledge of this subject than John Quincy Adams, who had helped to formulate these treaties and laws while serving as a diplomat and Secretary of State. Finally, even though he had not actively worked as a lawyer for quite a while, Adams had legal experience and had even argued before the United States Supreme Court.

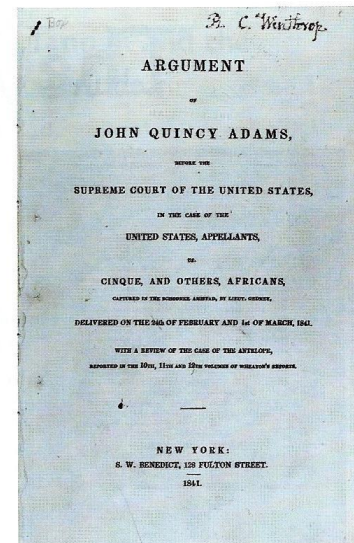
In November of 1841, Ellis Gray Loring and Lewis Tappan of the *Amistad* Committee paid a call on John Quincy Adams at his home in Quincy, Massachusetts (today the Adams National Historical Park “Old House”) to ask him to defend the *Amistad* Africans. At first, Adams questioned his ability to rise to this challenge. He was 72 years old, nearly blind, busy with his duties as a representative to the United States Congress, and had not argued a case as lawyer in over 30 years. However, John Quincy Adams ultimately took the case believing that this would be his last great service to his nation. In February 1840, he argued passionately in defense of the Africans’ right to freedom, decrying President Van Buren’s illegal attempts to influence the judicial system and circumvent the Constitution. In March 1841, the Supreme Court issued its final verdict: the *Amistad* Africans were free people and should be allowed to return home. John Quincy Adams wrote a letter to inform his co-counsel Roger Sherman Baldwin of the verdict and reported that, “*The decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the Amistad has this moment been delivered by Judge Story. The captives are free...Yours in great haste and great joy.*” At the end of 1841, the 35 survivors of the *Amistad* and five American missionaries sailed for Sierra Leone and established a mission colony, which formed the basis for the eventual independence of Sierra Leone from Great Britain, by encouraging educational and political reform. The *Amistad* case unified and advanced the abolitionist movement in the United States. Civil libertarians increasingly used the judicial system to press their cases, inflaming political passions throughout the country and laying the groundwork for the abolition of slavery and the modern Civil Rights movement in America.

## John Quincy Adams’ Enduring Vision

After such a heroic triumph in the Supreme Court, seventy-four year old John Quincy Adams pondered whether this would be the proper time to retire from public life. On March 23, 1841 he confessed to his diary “*I cannot afford it... More than sixty years of incessant active intercourse with the world has made political movement to me as much a necessary of life as atmospheric air. This is the weakness of my nature, which I have intellect enough left to perceive, but not energy to control. And thus, while a remnant of physical power is left to me to write and speak, the world will retire from me before I shall retire from the world.*” John Quincy Adams remained a key figure in the fight to abolish slavery in the U.S. until 1848 when he died after suffering a stroke while at his post as a Member of the House of Representatives. While many mysteries remain about this man, it is safe to conclude that he was brilliant, courageous and painfully honest, not least with himself. Adams died believing his career a failure, but it was only so by the impossibly high standards that he set for himself. John Quincy Adams’ patriotism and quest for freedom during the course of nearly 70 years of public service makes him one of the most important and influential contributors to the strengthening of the nation whose birth he witnessed as a young boy from Penn’s Hill.

**“This is the end of earth, but I am composed.”**

—John Quincy Adams, final words as reported by John Palfrey, February 21, 1848

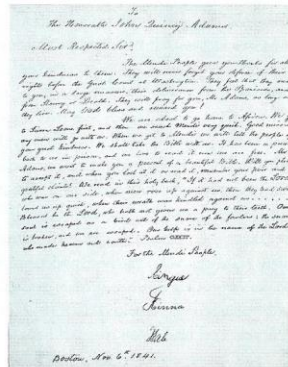


Published version of John Quincy Adams’ Argument on behalf of the *Amistad* Africans

# The Mendi Bible



The Mendi Bible (left) was inscribed (right; see transcription below) by the Amistad captives and presented to John Quincy Adams in appreciation for his invaluable legal assistance on their behalf. The "Mendi Bible" is part of the historic collection at Adams National Historical Park. The fundamental moral principles embodied in the Bible transcended time, language, and culture and provided inspiration to the Africans in their time of need and to Adams as he strived to ensure that justice prevailed in the Amistad case.



Adams National Historical Park

Adams National Historical Park

## Letters of John Quincy Adams to Lewis Tappan and the "Mendian Africans" expressing gratitude for the gift of the Mendi Bible.

Lewis Tappan, Esq. New York

Boston, 19, November 1841

Dear Sir

I received and accept with thanks the elegant Bible presented me by Cinque, Kinna, Kale and the thirty two other Mendians who are indebted to you and your benevolent associates, probably for their lives, certainly for their deliverance from an unjust prosecution and long protracted imprisonment, and finally for the means of returning to their own country.

I enclose herewith my answer to the address of Cinque, Kinna and Kale in behalf of the whole number inserted before the title page to the volume. I ask of your kindness to communicate the answer, with my wishes for their safe return home to them. I have been unwilling to meet them in any public exhibition, which might have the appearance on my part of an ostentatious display of the service which it had been my good fortune to render them. A service of which I have otherwise but too strong a propensity to be proud and of which I feel that all pride and self approbation ought to sink into the sentiment of humble and fervent gratitude to God. The silent gratulations of my own conscience for the part I have taken in these concerns are too precious to seek for the praise or hazard the censure of public assemblies. But I could not cease to take an interest in their welfare, and to hope for the consummation of your kindness to them in the accomplishment of their restoration in freedom and safety to their native land.

I am with great respect, Dear Sir, faithfully Yours  
John Quincy Adams

To the Mendian Africans, Cinque, Kinna, Kale and thirty two others, about to return to their native land.

Boston 19 November 1841

My Friends

I have received the elegant Bible which you have presented to me, through your true and faithful friend Mr. Lewis Tappan. I accept it, and shall keep it as a kind remembrance from you, to the end of my life. It was from that book that I learnt to espouse your cause when you were in trouble, and to give thanks to God for your deliverance.

I am glad to learn that you have the prospect of returning safe and free to your native country; and I hope and pray that you may pass the remainder of your lives in peace and comfort there. Remember with kindness those worthy persons who befriended you in your captivity here and who now furnish you with the means of returning home, and tell your countrymen of the blessings of the book which you have given to me. May the Almighty power who has preserved and sustained you hitherto, still go with you and turn to your good and to that of your country all that you have suffered and all that may hereafter befall you.

from your friend  
John Quincy Adams

To The Honorable John Quincy Adams.  
Most Respected Sir,

The Mendi People give you thanks for all your kindness to them. They will never forget your defence of their rights before the Great Court at Washington. They feel that they owe to you, in a large measure, their deliverance from the Spaniards, and from Slavery or Death. They will pray for you, Mr. Adams, as long as they live. May God bless and reward you!

We are about to go home to Africa. We go to Sierra Leone first, and there we reach Mendi very quick. Good missionary men will go with us. When we get to Mendi we will tell the people of your great kindness. We shall take the Bible with us. It has been a precious book to us in prison, and we love to read it now we are free. Mr. Adams, we want to make you a present of a beautiful Bible. Will you please to accept it, and when you look at it or read it, remember your poor and grateful clients! We read in this holy book, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us..... Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Psalm CXXIV

For the Mendi People,

Cinque  
Kinna  
Kale  
Boston, Nov. 6th. 1841

Adams National Historical Park

Courtesy of The Massachusetts Historical Society

Courtesy of The Massachusetts Historical Society