

SPEECH OF J. H. CRAVENS,
At the Great Van Buren and Adams
Ratification Meeting in Fifth Street
Market, Cincinnati, August 24.

[Reported for the *Herald* by J. V. Smith.]

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of this Assembly—*I* find myself in rather strange harness to night. All my life until the meeting of the Philadelphia Convention, I have been a Whig—I was a whig until the dissolution of the party at Philadelphia. I grew with its growth, strengthened with its strength, and, unfortunately, as a Whig, died with its death. I have lashed Martin Van Buren up and down through the length and breadth of Indiana, with a cat of nine-tails. I did so because he was ruled by the slave power. I have been asked, how can you make a speech for Van Buren? Well, I don't know. That is what I am going to try now. If you will give me your attention, I will tell you why it is our duty to organize ourselves in the free States, against the encroachments of the slave power, and for self-defence. (Here Mr. C. passed to a rapid but masterly review of the whole history of the slave power, as connected with the Federal Government, commencing with the concessions demanded on the one hand and granted on the other, at the adoption of the constitution—the sanction of the slave trade for twenty years—the result of the Louisiana purchase—the admission of Missouri—the purchase of Florida—the subsequent and consequent war with the Indians for the security of Georgian slaveholders—the admission of Texas—the yielding up of a portion of Oregon—the inter-state slave trade, and finally, as the acme and complement of guilt, the Mexican war, and the imperious demand that the territory acquired thereby shall be yielded up for the purposes of slavery extension.) For the purpose of succoring the Presidential nomination, Gen. Cass comes out and says that Congress has no right in the legislation of territories, but that it should be left to the people of the territories themselves, to govern their own internal concerns. By the way, why did not this occur to Lewis Cass while he was drawing a fat salary as territorial Governor of Michigan? It never occurred to him that it was all unconstitutional. Gen. Cass says that the people of the territories have a right to govern their own concerns—to rule themselves. If so, they have a right to annex themselves where they please—to England—for instance, and then all you would have to do, would be to send Gen. Taylor down there again and reconquer them. And still allowing this new doctrine to be legitimate, you would have nothing but a fee simple in the soil—no right to legislate over your territory after it was acquired. And thus they would force upon you the conclusion that you have been engaged in a foreign war at an immense expense of money and 25,000 lives, and now at its conclusion, you have not even the meagre return of the right to rule the territory acquired by that war.

As to the Philadelphia Convention I am loth to speak of it, for it embraced many of my old political friends, and I feel the force of old associations sticking to me, but then again I think of *revenge* for Henry Clay! The man, who for the last 25 years has been passing before the gaze of the civilized nations of the earth like a blazing meteor—the very greatest of all the great men of our country. The Philadelphia Convention attempted to cast him into the ocean of oblivion, because in his great Lexington Speech he declared his utter opposition to the acquisition of territory for the purpose of making slave states. After that Convention, I wondered where I should go! I heard of your Columbus Convention, but that was a Liberty Convention, and though its measures and principles and actions were all right, still my old prejudices clung to me. Then I heard of the Buffalo Convention, and we called a District convention for the purpose of nominating delegates to attend it. I found it easy to start the pebble down hill, the people were all going one way. Your speaker was one of these delegates, and assisted in nominating Martin Van Buren. I went first for the nomination of Judge McLean, but as your speaker, Mr. Lewis, has told you, he would not allow his name to be used. Then I went for John P. Hale. I could not yet vote for Van Buren—my old party predilections would not leave me. But, my friends, I reflected that the great St. Paul was once Saul of Tarsus. (Laughter.) I have been asked, "how can you go for Van Buren when you admit that he once said he was opposed to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia?" I ask that Taylor or Cass man this question, are you in favor of such abolition? If so, then I put the question to them, is Gen. Cass or Gen. Taylor in favor of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia? If not, then your objection to Mr. Van Buren is, on that account, hypocritical, and wholly unworthy of an honest man!

Again. The Cass and Taylormen ask me, "how can you support Van Buren in the face of the fact, that while V. President he gave his casting vote in favor of the bill allowing Southern Postmasters to abstract from the mails, papers and documents which the South said were inflammatory, and calculated to excite the slaves to insurrection, and make them cut their master's throats?" Congress was made to believe that there was actual danger. I do not pretend to say that Southern Slaveholders were really afraid of insurrection. I think any man who will hold another in slavery has just and abundant cause of fear and apprehension; but I say that the South insisted that inflammatory documents were circulated, and threatened them with imminent danger.—Under these circumstances, Martin Van Buren gave his casting vote in favor of a second reading (mark this) of the bill. Now, I contend that if Mr. Van Buren really thought the South was honest in the complaint, and was convinced that there was danger to the lives of the people of the Southern States, by the flooding of that country with incendiary publications through the mails, it was proper that the postmasters should be allowed to look into the matter, and say that the lives of our Southern friends were not jeopardized by their *peculiar and patriarchal* institutions. (Laughter.)

Now, in return, I ask your Cass and Taylor men whether you or your *candidates* are in favor of allowing publications to go through the mails that would incite the slaves to cut their masters' throats? If not, then this objection, like the other, is disengenuous and hypocritical. (Laughter and applause.)

The Taylor men tell us that a candidate for the Presidency should not make pledges—they are now opposed to all *pledges and platforms*, or declarations of principles, and so now they go for "King log." These Taylor men remind me of the fable of the fox, which I read when a boy. The fox had the tallest and handsomest tail in the forest, and was forever bragging of his handsome and beautiful tail, but, unfortunately, Reynard got his tail in a *trap*, and to save his carcass, had to bite it off! He spent the balance of his life in laboring to convince the foxes that the prettiest thing in all God's creation was a fox *without a tail!* (Laughter.) Just so with the Taylor men. Oh yes—they are heartily sick and tired of all platforms and pledges, and now devote their time in endeavoring to prove there is nothing so beautiful as a party without a proclamation of principles, and a candidate for the highest office, without pledges!

The Whig Convention at Philadelphia got their tails into a *Southern trap*, and were under the necessity of dispensing with their principles and platform, and nominate a no-party man for the Presidency, in order to save the southern limb of the party, and then hastily adjourned, *sine die*, which I suppose means, *never to meet again*. (Laughter.)

But we are told that Gen. Taylor won't veto any bill that Congress may pass embodying the Wilmot Proviso. Well, now, I think that the Taylor party is peculiarly obnoxious to the same charge which it makes against Cass. They accuse Cass of having two lives written, the one for Southern circulation, the other for Northern readers. How is it with Gen. Taylor?—All over the South he is claimed as *their* man. The Southern papers advocate his election on the ground that he is a Louisiana slaveholder, and that his habits, associations, interests, and feelings are all with the South. This may be called his Southern life. Now, on the other hand—don't Tom Corwin and other prominent Taylor men in the North assert that their candidate is no friend to slavery extension, and that if elected he can be depended upon for Northern interests—that he will never veto the Wilmot Proviso, &c? Now these letters, and speeches, and newspaper articles, proclaiming and asserting one thing in one section of the Union, and the reverse in an opposite section, amount to the same thing, as though they were published in volumes as the *lives* of General Taylor. Gentlemen, you cannot doubt that both Cass and Taylor are in favor of slavery extension. This is a charge which is not susceptible of direct and what might be called *legal* proof. We are reduced to a secondary kind of evidence. One fact that I may adduce is that all the Senators in Congress who are for Taylor, are against the Wilmot Proviso, with the exception of Delaware, which we are getting in the habit of calling a free State. These Senators, with this exception, are opposed to the extension of the Wilmot Proviso south of 36-30.

We must infer Taylor's position from what his friends do say, inasmuch as he will not condescend to tell us himself. Not thus was it with Henry Clay—his manly and open position was, and is, that Congress has the constitutional power to prevent the further extension of slavery anywhere.—Our fathers formed the constitution, not for the abridgement of rights, or to render insecure the privileges of citizens, but to secure the people free the blessings of liberty. In the language of our great platform: "Congress has no more right to make a *slave* than to make a *king*."

We love this Union—we revere the institutions of our country; but it is maddening to reflect that while all the balance of the world are clamoring for freedom, and we hear the echoing shouts across the water of *Liberty, Liberty, Liberty*, the response borne back from the "Model Republic" is *Slavery! Slavery! Slavery!!!* Is it not extraordinary that we, here in America, are divided into THREE PARTIES on the question of freedom? One is an open foe who meets us in a fair fight, the other seeks to circumvent us by stratagem; hence the greater need of guarding against the Whig candidate.—*Ohio Free Soil Banner*.

From the Morning Herald.
The Buffalo Convention.
They come from the mountain, they come from the plain. Their motto, "Free Labor, Free Soil, and Free men." They sweep to the rally like clouds to the storm, from hill-top and valley they gather and form.

They cry, "to the rescue!" their march is begun. Their number is legion, their hearts are but one, Their cause is their Country, they war for the Right, and the minions of slavery turn pale at the sight.

At the voice of Jehovah the ocean waves stayed, Its billows rolled back and the mandate obeyed; Thus the tyrant is checked—he beholds with surprise. The slave power recoil when stern freeman arise.

They speak, and that voice shall awaken mankind From the sleep that has rested so long on the mind; No party shall bind us, we are free from this hour. We bow not in meekness to slaveholding power!

Then monster oppression's shrink back to thy den, For the shackles have burst from the spirits of men. They spread their broad pinions, as proudly they soar, Thy efforts are vain—thou canst bind them no more.

Where slavery now rears its broad front to the day, Let them hug the foul fiend to their hearts as they may. But there they must stop—for we sternly proclaim, No slave shall plow our free soil with his chain, Marion County, Aug. 12, 1848.

Why we support Mr. Van Buren.

We are often asked the question, How can you, who have always been a Whig, and never scratched a Whig ticket, support Mr. Van Buren for President?

We answer. Our object in entering into an organization of any kind, is to give success to principles which we deem important. We share our part of the toil and sacrifices of a political struggle, simply and solely for this purpose.

There are to be settled in the present Presidential struggle, certain principles vital to the preservation of this Union, the liberties of the people, and the prosperity of the whole country. Foremost among these stands the question, whether the National Government has power to govern its own territories, and preserve them free from the curse of slavery; and whether it shall now exercise that power.

We say these questions stand foremost.

Not that they are more important, or as much so indeed, in themselves, as

that of Constitutional action for the Free Soil Senator, or prevent an election.

[Cheers.] We will send a Free Soil Senator or *none*. We tell these politicians that want offices—come over to the Free Soil side *now*, and secure your tickets, for hereafter there will be

such a tremendous crowd, there will be

no time to *make changes*. [Uproarious applause.]

I understand that a man from my own State, (the speaker alluded to Hon. Caleb Smith,) made a

speech here the other evening and asserted that Martin Van Buren was not to be *trusted*! Now I ask any—

the bitterest opponents of V. B. even—if he ever *cheated his friends*? [Loud and unanimous responses of no, no.]

He gave us *Whigs Jesse* in past campaigns, and, therefore, I know it is hard to come round—but my friends I am not afraid to trust Martin Van Buren when *I am on the same side!* [Laughter.]

A word about the Buffalo Convention.

I thought previous to its session

that I could not agree with those who would meet there—that the Convention would break up without agreeing on either men or principles. But when I got there I found there assembled

statesmen, men of liberal souls, who were willing to give us a platform upon which all could stand—that platform was unanimously acceded to.

All pledged themselves heartily for it—Gentlemen, if you will insist upon it that Martin Van Buren is not to be forgiven for past acts, which in your judgment are wrong, you are more severe than the Almighty!! You will remember the parable of the woman that was caught in a thing not altogether right, to whose accusers the Lord replied: "Let him that is guiltless cast the first stone." For my own part, I remember my own kneeling to the Slave power, and I am charitable to others. I would ask these Taylor and Cass politicians, who are free from all short comings in this particular, to stand out as the accusers of Martin Van Buren.

I once voted for an *available* man, as Whig Elector, in '40. I voted for

Tyler; but, so help me God, I will never vote again for availability.

Taylor and Cass.

It is charged upon the Free Soil party, that they exhibit a special enmity

to the Whigs, that the articles in their papers, and the speeches at their meetings, are, for the most part, directed against General Taylor.

Any one who will reflect for a moment, will see that there is no unfairness in this, but that it is the dictate of sound principle.

General Cass is unequivocally and openly pledged to *vero* any law embracing the principles of the Jefferson Proviso; there is no mistaking his position on this question. He talks, besides, of *diffusing* slavery, of transporting slaves into new territory; evidently intending, thereby, that New Mexico and California shall be surrendered to the slaveholders. No sincere friend of free territory can possibly vote for General C., supposing him to be the representative of his views.

But with General Taylor the case is widely different; his friends in the North and South differ entirely as to his views; the one holding that he is in favor of Slavery, the other that he is opposed to it; and as he declines to tell us "what he will or will not do" in the premises, some sincere friends of free soil may, unless his position is fully exposed, be betrayed into his support.

One is an open foe who meets us in a fair fight, the other seeks to circumvent us by stratagem; hence the greater need of guarding against the Whig candidate.

We love this Union—we revere the institutions of our country; but it is maddening to reflect that while all the balance of the world are clamoring for freedom, and we hear the echoing shouts across the water of *Liberty, Liberty, Liberty*, the response borne back from the "Model Republic" is *Slavery! Slavery! Slavery!!!*

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should consider ourselves unworthy of the cause in which we are engaged, if there were any sacrifices except principle, too dear for us to make for its success. For our part, we rejoice in the opportunity to make sacrifices in such a cause.

We support Mr. Van Buren, then, because by doing it we give success to the principles which we love. We meet the issues distinctly presented to us by slaveholders themselves. We have no dough face for our leader, who, to get the nomination for President, repudiated the ordinance which has given prosperity to the land of his growth and greatness, and the principles and doings of himself and our fathers who have gone before us. Nor have we for our leader one who refuses to *trust the people* with his sentiments, at the same time he asks them to *trust him* with power; one whom, from his very position, must intend to cheat either those living South, or those living North of Mason's and Dixon's line; one, to advocate the election of whom, a person from the free States must spend a good share of his time endeavoring to prove that those living south of that line are the ones to be cheated, while he feels *conscious in his own heart* that what he is trying to prove is not true.

But we have for our leader one who, on this great, leading subject, occupies our position, embodies our sentiments, and from a prior consistent course of action upon it for many years, and under trying circumstances, as well as from his present bold and self-sacrificing stand, *shows that he is to be trusted*—that the cause of Free Soil throughout all our vast domains, will be safe in his hands.—*O. Standard.*

HON. E. D. CULVER.
His opinions—Read them.

Mr. Culver of New York has written a letter to the Washington County Journal relative to his position, and his reasons for not supporting Old Zack.

We give the following extracts:

The signs of the times indicate a general fusion of parties, a deep breaking up, and the establishment of new lines and landmarks. It is doubtful whether Northern or Southern Whigs, or Northern or Southern Democrats ever go to the polls with each other after 1848.

My opinion is, this iron heel has ground our necks long enough. With me, this "Free Soil" question is and shall be paramount to all others. Banks, Tariffs, Land Proceeds, are subordinate questions, because all are moulded, created, annulled and modified by the dictates of Slavery. Dispose of that, and all the others will be permanently adjusted.

The great question then recurs: What is the duty of "Free Soil Whigs" under existing circumstances? I answer: To MAKE THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY THE PARAMOUNT QUESTION. With that steadily in view, every Whig who conscientiously *believes* Gen. Taylor is correct in his stand on this question, that he will *act* with the North, that he will bend the great energies of his Administration to restrict rather than extend the curse of Slavery, ought to cast his vote for him. Did I believe so, my vote and my tongue should be at the General's service. I honor him as a soldier, and respect him as an honest man. I would infinitely prefer his election to that of Gen. Cass. But for the life of me, on this great overshadowing question I cannot find the evidence I desire. So far from that, I see him a Southern man by location, a slaveholder by practice, Southerner in feeling, bred in the camp, whose only stepping-stone to the Presidency was the successful issue of three battles. Nay, more, I see him the candidate of the whole South, claimed as *their* man, *right on this question*, preferred even to Mr. Clay, because *more* of a Southern man, and safer to be trusted. I see them, moreover, rushing to his support with the avowal upon their tongues that no man who is against them can have their votes—And all this Northern Whigs are compelled to witness, without one openly-avowed affirmative *Whig principle* to redeem his standing. Can we go it? Shall we, ought we again to allow ourselves to be foiled by the second Tyler Administration?

No, but he is the Whig candidate, and we are bound by the nomination. I beg pardon. The Whig party is bound by its own Constitution, its great charter, its own landmarks. If these are violated, their acts are not binding.—The first duty of a Whig Convention was to select a Whig candidate. Did they do this? So far from it, they selected one, who had seven times proclaimed his independence of party, refusing to be the exponent of their principles, and threatening to defeat their nominee. Gen. Taylor says to me, in so many words, "I can't consent to be your party candidate."—Then, Sir, how can I consent to be your party supporter? "I can't," he says, "be the exponent of your principles, or the advocate of your views, if elected." Then, Sir, how can I be the promoter of your election at the polls? The truth is, I hold my Whig views and principles in so honorable an estimate, that I want a President to advocate and carry them out. If he is ashamed to do so, then should I not be ashamed of him at the ballot-box? I ask, are the Whigs thus to be hoodwinked out of their doctrines? Are they thus to be compelled to abandon

the great champions of their cause, whose pride and glory it has been for forty years to be the "exponents" and defenders of Whig principles? No, there are thousands who hesitate to take the chalice now offered to their lips. And thousands more asking if it is not time to draw the line and square the yards with our Southerners? Throw seventeen new Slave States into the U. S. Senate, and the North is swallowed forever. The hour is coming, and now is, when the North must rouse and break the withes of these Slaveholding Philistines, or our strength is gone.

Do I hear it said "Gen. Taylor is that leader"—those are his sentiments? Give me the evidence. I want the record proof that such is his motto; proof that he will be good *after* the election—proof that will nail him and his friends to the counter, when the pinch comes. *It can't be found.* It don't exist. And while Northern Whigs hope it so, dream it is so, and try to make themselves believe it is so, the South grin at our credulity, and laugh in their sleeves at our greenness. They know it otherwise, and ask no odds.

Oregon—Mr. Webster—All Right.

On Saturday evening when every effort was made to defeat the Oregon bill, by preventing the Senate from re-reading from its amendment, engraving upon the House bill the Missouri Compromise, Mr. Webster rose, and said it was desirable to establish a proper government for the Territory of Oregon. He was willing to vote for the House bill as it was, but if the Senate amendment was agreed to he could not vote for it. The House bill contains the clause in the Ordinance of 1787, excluding slavery from the Northwest. The amendment proposes to give a reason for applying the Ordinance of 1787 to the Territory of Oregon, in these words, "inasmuch as the said Territory is north of the parallel of 36° and 30' min. of north latitude, usually known as the Missouri Compromise."

I understand, (said he,) that where a man does an act, and undertakes to give reasons for that act, and gives but one, without suggesting that there are others, the world is fairly entitled to draw