

PARDEE BUTLER: KANSAS ABOLITIONIST

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	1
CHAPTER I: LIFE AND BACKGROUNDS OF PARDEE BUTLER PRIOR TO 1855	5
CHAPTER II: PARDEE BUTLER IN ATCHISON COUNTY, KANSAS TERRITORY	16
CHAPTER III: OPPONENTS AND FRIENDS OF PARDEE BUTLER.	29
CHAPTER IV: PARDEE BUTLER WRITES ABOUT ABOLITION OF SLAVERY	42
CHAPTER V: PARDEE BUTLER: AN EVALUATION.	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	65
APPENDIX A: "AN ABOLITIONIST BADLY WHIPPED"	70
APPENDIX B: RESOLUTIONS GIVEN TO PARDEE BUTLER TO SIGN.	71
APPENDIX C: LETTER FROM PARDEE BUTLER TO THE <u>HERALD OF FREEDOM</u>	72

INTRODUCTION

One of the earlier Kansas personalities that has long intrigued me is Pardee Butler, a preacher and free-stater, who was very much involved in the period of conflict in the history of Kansas. Pardee Butler was a man of many interests including farming, logging, freighting, teaching, politics, and preaching. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate one of these interests as it is related to the history of Kansas. The background of the man shall be considered, as will the life that he lived prior to his coming to Kansas, but I shall consider only three years of his thirty-three years in the state of Kansas. Pardee Butler arrived in Kansas in 1855, and the next three years were turbulent ones for this preacher.

No attempt has been made in this paper to investigate his work as an evangelist and organizer of churches, as a member of the Republican party in Kansas, or as a participant in the prohibition controversy in this state. He was prominent in all of these affairs, but this paper is concerned with Pardee Butler as an abolitionist. Even here there is difficulty, because it is not easy to place him in the same category with such men as John Brown, James Lane, William Lloyd Garrison, or Gerrit Smith. Pardee Butler was an abolitionist and a free-stater, and it is the purpose here to show in what way he was involved in these controversies.

Pardee Butler was a man of contention and conviction. When he made his mind up to something, it was seldom, if ever, changed

to any other viewpoint. One might say that he was a stubborn man. I believe that his experiences in Kansas bear this out.

That stubbornness got Pardee Butler into a lot of trouble. He was given a six mile ride on a raft down the Missouri River. Eight months later he was given a coat of tar and cotton because he refused to stay out of Atchison, Kansas, when he was told to do so. He was hounded for months by pro-slavery men who were threatening to hang him. That stubbornness, however, won for him a place of recognition as one of the leading free-staters in Kansas Territory. As such he helped to organize the Republican party in Kansas, and to take an active part in her affairs.

Little has been written of the life of Pardee Butler. Most of the historical writing on Kansas, Atchison, and the Disciples of Christ make mention of him, of his rafting, and of the tarring. Most of these, if they expand the story at all, retell the story or quote it as it is found in the Atchison Squatter Sovereign or the Leavenworth Herald of Freedom.

The only source that is very complete is the book, The Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler, which can almost be classified as two books under one cover. It has been so considered in the footnoting. The first twenty-four pages and the last fifty-four pages were written by his daughter, Mrs. Rosetta Butler Hastings. The middle portion of the book is the work of Pardee Butler, himself. The original manuscript, in his handwriting, is in the archives of the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka, Kansas. This book was published through the ef-

forts of Mrs. Hastings in 1889, about one year after the death of Mr. Butler.

In addition to newspaper items, found either in clipping books or in the newspapers themselves, there is a clipping book compiled by the sister of Pardee Butler. This book is in the possession of the Kansas Christian Missionary Society in Topeka, Kansas. This book is referred to in this thesis as the "Butler Clippings." Pardee Butler was the first president of the Kansas Christian Missionary Society.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many people who have been of immeasurable assistance in the compiling of the necessary information that make up the sources for this writing. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Homer Socolofsky for his insistence that I stay with the subject when it seemed that information was not available. I also wish to thank him for his invaluable help in the research and the writing of the thesis. In addition I want to thank the staff of the Kansas State Historical Society for their help in finding the material that is available there. Also to Dr. Robert O. Fife of Milligan College in Tennessee for his assistance in finding further material of which he was aware as the result of his research into the Christian Church in the slavery issue; to Dr. Dyre Campbell, the executive secretary of the Kansas Christian Missionary Society, for the materials so graciously loaned to me, including some items that could not be replaced if lost; to Mrs. Charles Pardee Butler, the daughter-in-law of Pardee Butler, who at an age ap-

proaching ninety granted me an hour-long interview; to my associates at Manhattan Bible College, who have helped in every way possible; and above all else to my wife, June, who has encouraged me every step of the way toward the completion of this study.

With this kind of help and encouragement I have gone on to write this analysis of Pardee Butler as an abolitionist in the days of conflict in Kansas Territory prior to the Civil War. It is hoped that some small bit shall be added to the history of Kansas and of the Christian Churches.

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND BACKGROUNDS OF PARDEE BUTLER PRIOR TO 1855

Little is actually known of the background and early years of the life of Pardee Butler. The paternal side of his heritage is virtually lost in the past, and very little more is known of the maternal side, the Pardees. Present day knowledge of the ancestry of this Butler family is limited to the following statement by Pardee Butler's daughter, Rosetta.

My father's ancestors were from New England. His father, Phineas Butler, came from Saybrook, Connecticut,¹ where the Congregational Churches framed the Saybrook plat-form. . . . In the autumn of 1818, Phineas Butler . . . went to Wadsworth, Medina Co., Ohio.²

Family records indicate that Phineas Butler was married to Sarah Pardee in 1813. This marriage took place in New York as would be indicated in Chart 1. To this union were born seven children. Pardee was the second of these seven. He was born on March 9, 1816, and he was only two and one-half years old when the family moved from New York to Ohio. Prior to this move the family had been living in upstate New York near Skaneateles in the finger lake country. It is further known that Phineas Butler was well respected, that he was considered to be a great hunter, that he

¹Saybrook was the fourth oldest town of Connecticut and the original site of Yale University. It is now called Deep River.

²Rosetta B. Hastings, Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler, p. 5.

was honest, and that he was quick-witted and courageous.³ The rest of the record is that of Pardee Butler, himself.

More is known of the Pardees for a genealogy has been produced of this family.⁴ These people also came from New England. There is some controversy, however, concerning their origin before migrating to America.

A large majority of the Pardees of America descend from George Pardee, who settled in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1644. The name was spelled Pardee or Pardy in the early records, but the former became the standard spelling in nearly all branches of the family. In a few instances, the spelling Pardy was adopted and occasionally has survived to the present time.⁵

The most accurate tracing of the family is to England, but there is a claim by some of the branches of the family to a French or a Welsh beginning. No one seems to be able to settle the matter accurately, but the information available definitely favors the English origin with a possible earlier French background. The French name is spelled Pardieu. The genealogical chart leading to Pardee Butler is shown on page seven.⁴

When the Butler family moved to Ohio in 1818, they lived first at Wadsworth, where Pardee began school at the age of three.⁶ It was at Wadsworth, which is located about twelve miles southwest of Akron, that the Butlers became a part of the young

³Ibid., p. 6-9.

⁴Donald Lines Jacobus, The Pardee Genealogy.

⁵Ibid., p. 1.

⁶Hastings, p. 10.

A PORTION OF THE GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE PARDEE FAMILY

Anthony Pardee (Rev)

A clergyman in England

George Pardee

Baptized in England as recorded in 1623/24. He moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in June, 1644. He died about 1700. Records show that he was apprenticed to a tailor in June, 1644, for five years.

George Pardee

Born in New Haven in 1656. Died in East Haven in 1723.

Ebenezer Pardee

Born in East Haven in 1699. Died in New Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1756.

Ebenezer Pardee

Born at East Haven in 1732. Died in the battle of White Plains in 1776.

Ebenezer Pardee

Born at Norfolk, Connecticut, in 1765. Died at Skaneateles, New York, in 1812.

Sarah Pardee

Married to Phineas Butler in 1813.

Pardee Butler

Born at Skaneateles, New York, 1816.

American religious movement known variously as the Reformers, Campbellites, Disciples of Christ, or Christians. The preaching of Alexander Campbell, one of the founders of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), influenced the Butlers to become a part of this frontier movement for the reform of the church.

This young American movement was the result of the work of four men principally. One of these men was Barton Warren Stone, a former minister of the Presbyterians in the area around Lexington and Paris, Kentucky, who had broken with his Presbyterian Synod in 1803 to form Christian Churches at Cane Ridge and at Concord. He and the other men who were involved in this separation referred to themselves at first as the Springfield Presbytery, but within a year they dropped this name in favor of the more universal term, Christian. In 1832 more than one-half of this body joined forces with the many followers of Alexander Campbell throughout Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, and Indiana. The remainder of the Stone movement was divided into two groups known as the New Lights and the Christian Connexion. The second of these four men was Walter Scott, who came to America from Scotland in 1820 as a Presbyterian. Soon after his arrival he became associated with the Scotch Baptists in Pittsburg. He was soon drawn into the Campbell movement, however, and became one of its great evangelists, teachers, and writers in the Western Reserve and in southern Ohio. The third and fourth men were father and son. The father, Thomas Campbell, had been a clergyman of the Seceder Presbyterians in North Ireland, and after

his migration to western Pennsylvania in 1807, he soon found himself in difficulty with his denomination because of his learned liberal views. In the Spring of 1808 he was tried for heresy by the Chartiers Presbytery, found guilty, and dismissed. The Synod, however, upheld Thomas Campbell and ordered the Presbytery to reinstate him and give him an assignment, but the Presbytery refused. Actually he was ignored by the officials and never assigned any charge. He was now a man who was no longer condemned, but he was also without anyplace to preach or serve. In the Spring of 1809, a group known as the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania, was formed as a loosely organized group of people from various denominations supporting the union of all Christians on the basis of Scripture alone. By direction of the group Thomas Campbell wrote the Declaration and Address which set down the views of this new movement, and many of the axioms of the present day Christian Churches are expressed in this historic document.⁷

The son, Alexander Campbell, was undoubtedly the most prominent of the four, and he is thus considered by most historians. Alexander Campbell had been prepared for a career of teaching, and he had remained in Ireland to care for the school and the family until the father could send for them to join him in America. When the family left in the late Summer of 1809 to join their father at Washington, Pennsylvania, Alexander was disturbed

⁷Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address.

with the potential meeting with his father. This disturbance was due to the fact that he had seperated himself from the Seceeder Presbyterians, not knowing that his father had already taken this same action. When they met again in American, they discovered that they had reached common ground without the knowledge of the other's thoughts.

Under such leadership this movement grew rapidly on the American frontier, following its movement and expansion. Its greatest strength in Pardee Butler's time was in Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Today it comprises one of the larger bodies of the church in America, and it is the only church body of over two million members with origins in America. At the present time it is represented by two major groups; the Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ.

Pardee Butler was to become not only a member of this movement but one of its preachers as well. He was instrumental in its growth in Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas. He was baptized into Christ in June, 1835, and he began to preach shortly afterward. His daughter tells of it in this way:

. . . nor do I know the exact time when father began to preach, but it was about 1837 or 1838. He was not ordained at Wadsworth, for the church at that time doubted whether there was any Scriptural authority for ordination. He was ordained some six or seven years afterward, in 1844, at Sullivan.⁸

Mrs. Hastings continues in the same section of her story to tell something of his desire for education, as follows:

⁸Hastings, p. 16.

In such times of religious excitement it was not necessary for a man to have a college education, to become an acceptable preacher. But father saw the advantages of a good education, and resolved to attend A. Campbell's school, then known as Buffalo Academy, but which was soon changed to Bethany College.⁹

Buffalo Academy, or Seminary, was Alexander Campbell's first venture into education, and this particular school was conducted at his home on the Buffalo River near what is now Bethany, West Virginia. One distinct problem arises here, however, with relation to Mrs. Hastings' historical references. Buffalo Academy was started in 1818, and it was discontinued in 1822.¹⁰ It had existed four years for the express purpose of educating preachers, although Campbell rejected the idea of a professionally trained clergy at this time. Bethany College was chartered in 1840, and it was located on land to the west of Campbell's home. Campbell organized the school, taught in it, was its first president, and gave the land on which it was built. This must have been the school to which she referred.¹¹

The record does not reveal that Butler was ever able to attend the college, but it seems that he never did attend because of the lack of funds. The fact that he never mentioned his attendance at Bethany, and the lack of time in the chronology of his life, make it even less likely that he was ever enrolled in

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰W. E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History, p. 168.

¹¹Ibid., p. 224.

Campbell's school.

True to the pattern of the Christian Churches at that time, for they did not believe in a hired clergy, Pardee Butler taught school and herded sheep during the week. On Sunday he preached at whatever place he might be invited or wherever he could get people to listen to him.

In 1839 the Butler family moved from Wadsworth to a new settlement called Sandusky on the marshy plains of Northern Ohio. This area had only recently been opened to settlement by the relocation of the Wyandotte Indians to the central plains west of Missouri. While living at Sandusky Pardee Butler would occasionally preach for the congregation at Sullivan, Ohio, in Ashland County, which was about forty miles southeast of Sandusky. It was at Sullivan that he met Sibyl Carlton, whom he married on August 17, 1843.¹² For the account of the few years that followed the story that is told by Mrs. Hastings is the sole record. The country in which they lived was not a healthy place. The family became quite ill as a result of the climatic conditions. Phineas Butler and his wife both died, and Pardee and his family were all in poor health. His wife was suffering terribly from the "ague," and Pardee suffered, himself, with a chronic sore throat. They moved from Sandusky to Sullivan, but his condition did not change appreciably. Many years later he wrote

For five years I saw myself sitting idly by the wayside, hopeless and discouraged. I felt somewhat like a trav-

¹²Hastings, p. 18.

eler, parched with thirst, on a wide and weary desert, who sees the mirage of green trees and springs of cool water that mocked his vision, slowly fade away out of his sight. So seemed to perish my castles in the air. At that time making proclamation of the ancient gospel was too vigorous a work, and too full of hardships and exposures to be undertaken by any except those possessing stalwart good health. If I had been predestined to the life I have actually lived, and if it were necessary that I should be chastened to bear with patience all its disabilities, then, I suppose, this discipline I actually got might be considered good and useful. If I have been able to bear provocation with patience, and to labor cheerfully without wages, and at every personal sacrifice, this lesson was learned when I saw only my hopes dashed in pieces.¹³

Thus his ill health and earnest desire to preach sent Pardee Butler westward, wandering from place to place for a brief period in search of that place which would provide him with a livelihood, good health, and a place for fruitful service in the ministry of the "ancient gospel."

In 1850 Pardee Butler sold his few holdings in Ohio and took his family to Iowa. Here they bought a farm near Tipton, Iowa. It consisted of one hundred and sixty acres, comprising the northeast quarter of section twenty-five, north of range one in township eighty-one. This was land that had been assigned to a David Parsons, and it was sold to Pardee Butler.¹⁴ In addition to farming and preaching Pardee Butler found time to teach school in order to finance the family that first year. In the Spring of 1851 he was employed by the Iowa Cooperation of the Christian Churches to serve as an evangelist in the area designated as dis-

¹³Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁴"Miscellaneous Butler Papers," Kansas State Historical Society Archives, Topeka, Kansas. Hereafter called Butler Papers..

trict two. His area consisted of the Mississippi River counties of Scott, Clinton, Jackson, and at least six others. The work grew so rapidly, however, that the district was subdivided, and Butler was reassigned to Cedar, Clinton, Jackson, and Scott counties. Pardee Butler continued in this way through that first year, but then the evangelistic potential seemed to come to a sudden halt due to the heavy immigration of German Lutherans into the area. Butler maintained his family in Iowa for three more years, but he continued his preaching in the Military Tract in Illinois about one hundred miles from his family. At last Mrs. Butler became very dissatisfied with these conditions and insisted upon a settled life for her family. Pardee Butler liked his preaching in Illinois, for it was very fruitful, but land was too expensive there for him to purchase any. They finally decided to claim land in Kansas Territory, but they were going to remain in Illinois for a time to secure funds to operate the land that they would claim in Kansas.

The family was taken one hundred and fifty miles southward to the Military Tract in Illinois to live with relatives at Canton until their father could go to Kansas and establish a claim in the new territory. Pardee Butler then intended to return and spend a few years at Mt. Sterling, Illinois, before taking the family westward again.¹⁵ He set out for Kansas with the sole purpose of getting some land. He left Illinois with little con-

¹⁵Ibid., p. 24.

cern about the issues of abolition and free-state politics, but he soon found himself on different ground when he came face to face with the pro-slavery men in Missouri and in Atchison, Kansas Territory.

CHAPTER II

PARDEE BUTLER IN ATCHISON COUNTY, KANSAS TERRITORY

With the family settled in Illinois with relatives, Pardee Butler set out for Kansas Territory to purchase cheap land as a future home for his family. He felt that Kansas held several of the answers for his future. The land was inexpensive and offered a security for the future. The land was new and the challenges were greater than in the older settled communities. The area would be settled for the most part by Missourians, and since the Disciples of Christ were quite strong in Missouri, there would be many of his brethren among the settlers. The political winds indicated a stormy future, but he had managed to keep peace with the Kentuckians who comprised most of the people in the Military Tract of Illinois. He thus reasoned that he could keep peace with the Missourians, also. He did not realize, however, just how stormy those political winds were in Kansas.

His journey through Missouri found him at Linnville at the end of the first week. He decided to stay at Linnville over Sunday, but the apparent pro-slavery feeling caused him to ride on to Chillicothe early on Sunday morning.¹ Here he attended services in the Christian Church, and after the meeting he was invited to dinner by one of the men in the congregation. In the meantime an appointment was made for him to preach that afternoon.

¹Pardee Butler, Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler, p. 37.

Pardee Butler then told of the treatment that he received in Chillicothe as follows:

After dinner two brethren came in, to whom I had been introduced at the meeting-house. After some desultory talk, they asked me:

"Are you an abolitionist?"

I was both angry and confounded. I had never in my life made myself conspicuous in this controversy that was going on between North and South, and why should I be insulted with such a question. I did not answer yes or no, but proceeded to give my views on the subject in general. They listened and remarked that they did not see anything offensive in such views; then made this apology for their seeming rudeness: An old man, a preacher, whom they called Father Clark, had come from Pennsylvania to Chillicothe to live with a married daughter, and had said something concerning slavery offensive to the people, and they had called a meeting of the citizens, and he had been driven out of town and ordered never to return. They had furthermore resolved that no abolitionist should thereafter be allowed to preach in the city. These brethren explained that as I would be called on and interrogated by a committee they thought it would be better that this should be done by friends, than that I should be questioned by strangers.²

This conversation had a definite effect upon the future decisions of Pardee Butler. He had been forced to state some views that he had not previously put in words. He had in this experience an introduction to the Kansas problem, and in disgust he left the town without preaching and continued on his way toward St. Joseph.

After crossing into Kansas Territory he began to look for a place to select and file claim for some land. His dual goal of land and the gospel caused him to wander rather widely before he actually made a selection. He not only wanted good land, but he was also looking for an area where there was the greater likeli-

²Ibid., p. 38, 39.

hood of finding people of common faith. He visited some of the principle settlements such as Lawrence, Manhattan, and Atchison. The area surrounding Atchison was much more promising from the standpoint of the people settling there. The other areas that he visited were settled more by the New Englanders and others from the eastern portion of the country. The Christian Churches were virtually unknown in that part of the United States since it was primarily a frontier movement. Butler therefore reasoned that the Atchison area was better since many from Missouri had settled there. The Disciples of Christ were numerous in that state, and the probability of these people being among the settlers, or squatters, was much better. His reasoning was correct, especially along Stranger Creek, but this also placed him in the midst of potential trouble for this was the center of the activities of the pro-slavery men.

He filed claim to land in Atchison County about twelve miles southwest of Atchison on Stranger Creek. The land was located on the southeast corner of section twenty-one in township six of range nineteen, subject to sale at Kickapoo, Kansas Territory. The deed for the land was not finally registered until March 28, 1862.³ His closest neighbor was a squatter from Missouri whose name was Caleb May. He was a Disciple of Christ and an anti-slavery man. A lasting friendship developed between these two men, and they worked closely together in both the church and pol-

³"Butler Papers," Land Deed.

itics.

Pardee Butler had not been in Kansas Territory long before the brethren around Stranger Creek sought him out to preach for them. As a result the first public gathering of members of the Christian Churches was held on a Sunday in June, 1855, in a grove of trees on Caleb May's farm. This was the beginning of thirty-three years of preaching in Kansas by Pardee Butler. He was later chosen to act as the first state evangelist for these churches, and when they organized a missionary society in 1874, he was elected as the president. Notes were taken on the sermon by a Lutheran preacher, and from these Butler was able to write up the essential part of it. This is recorded in his book.⁴

With a tract of land set apart, a cabin built, and a successful introduction to the people as a preacher, Butler set out for Illinois to bring the family to Kansas immediately rather than waiting for several years as had been planned. The return trip would be made by river steamer from Atchison to St. Louis, and one of the most dangerous times in the life of Pardee Butler occurred while he was forced to wait for the delayed river boat.

Atchison was a young river town, and it is described by the following:

Six months ago only one house, and that a humble log cabin designated the City of Atchison. We now boast of over a hundred finished buildings and a large number under contract. We have in operation a first class steam saw-mill, quite a respectable tavern, and a printing office, whence is issued weekly several thousand copies of the Squatter Sov-

⁴Butler, p. 55-59.

oreign, the organ of the slavery propagandists. This paper is conducted by Messrs. John H. Stringfellow and Robert S. Kelley, and is the means of inciting half the riots and mobs of which you are daily hearing.⁵

This was the town into which Butler came in August, 1855, and here he came face to face with the strong pro-slavery feelings. He came also at a time when the feelings had been raised to a high pitch by a recent incident that had been publicized in the Squatter Sovereign. A news item had appeared the week before entitled, "An Abolitionist Badly Whipped."⁶ It told of a man by the name of J. W. B. Kelly, who was from Cincinnati, and who was accused of being an abolitionist. A Mr. Grafton Thomason had lost a negro slave who had apparently drowned herself in the river. It was thought that Kelly had persuaded her to drown herself as a way of escaping from slavery. Although it was never proven that Kelly had any thing to do with the drowning, he did express in public that he thought the woman had done the right thing. He also reproached Thomason for being a slave-holder. Thomason went to see Kelly, and after some strong words between them, Thomason proceeded to give Kelly a sound beating. The article then told that a committee of the citizens of Atchison met and commanded Kelly to leave town. The man was fortunate that there was no tar in the town for this "prevented the citi-

⁵"Correspondance with the New York Tribune, dated Tuesday, June 19, 1855." Squatter Sovereign, August 7, 1855, p. 2

⁶"An Abolitionist Badly Whipped." News item. Squatter Sovereign, August 7, 1855, p. 2. For the text of this news item see Appendix A.

zens from doning him a coat of tar and feathers."⁷ He left town within two days with the threat that they would hang him if he returned. The feeling of the community was expressed in an editorial that appeared in the Squatter Sovereign. That editorial said

Circumstances have transpired within a few weeks past, in this neighborhood, which places beyond a doubt the existence of an organized band of Abolitionists in our midst. We counsel our friends who have slave property to keep a sharp lookout, lest their valuable slaves may be induced to commit acts which might jeopardize their lives.

Mr. Grafton Thomason lost a valuable negro a week ago, and we have not the least doubt that she was persuaded by one of this lawless band to destroy herself rather than remain in slavery. In fact, one of this gang was heard to remark that she did perfectly right in drowning herself, and just what he would have done, or what every negro who is held in bondage should do. We ask, Shall a man expressing such sentiments be permitted to reside in our midst? Be permitted to run at large among our slaves, sowing the seeds of discord and discontent, jeopardizing our lives and property.⁸

The atmosphere was ripe for an emotional explosion in Atchison, and into this situation came Pardee Butler. When he and his traveling companion arrived in Atchison on August 16, 1855, they went to the office of the newspaper to buy several copies of the August 7 issue to take to his friends in Illinois. True to his character he had to add some comment. The following is the conversation between Butler and Robert S. Kelley as Butler remembered it some time later.

⁷Ibid.

⁸"Watch the Abolitionists," An editorial. Squatter Sovereign, August 7, 1855, p. 2.

After paying for my papers I said to him: "I should have become a subscriber to your paper sometime ago only there is one thing I do not like about it." Mr. Kelley did not know me and asked: "What is it?"

I replied: "I do not like the spirit of violence that characterizes it."

He said: "I consider all Free-soilers rogues, and they are to be treated as such."

I looked him for a moment steadily in the face and then said to him: "Well, sir, I am a Free-soiler, and I intend to vote for Kansas to be a free state."

He fiercely replied: "You will not be allowed to vote."⁹

When Butler left the office the man that was accompanying him was filled with alarm and warned him to be still or the Atchison mob would kill him. Butler ignored the warning, however, and discussed the issue with a number of people that day.

The river boat was delayed for a day, so Butler sought out lodging for the night in a local boarding house. Unknown to him a meeting was called that night to consider his case. During the next morning six men appeared in his room demanding that he sign a set of resolutions. The men were angry, and their leader was Robert S. Kelley. Seeing their anger Butler took the paper which had been clipped from a former issue of the Squatter Sovereign, and sat down to read them. He was already familiar with their content, but he needed to think. After a moment he rose and walked past the men, down the stairs, and into the street where the mob was waiting. As he reached the street one of the six men grabbed him from behind and demanded an answer to their request. These resolutions (see Appendix B) had no direct bearing upon Pardee Butler. They had been written up following the Thomason-

⁹ Butler, p. 66.

Kelly affair. They spoke of that incident almost entirely, and the only portion that would apply in Butler's case was the final resolution which called for the signing of the resolutions in order that they might know who the abolitionists were. He refused to sign the paper, and the mob seized him, dragging him toward the river. There is some doubt as to what they intended to do. The began to question him, and as Butler remembered it, it went like this:

"Are you a correspondant for the New York Tribune?"

"No."

"Did the Emigrant Aid Society send you here?"

"No."

"Well, who did send you?"

"Nobody; I came of my own accord."

"Well, what did you come for?"

"Because, I had a mind to come."

"But did you come to make Kansas a Free State?"

"No, not primarily; but I intend to vote for Kansas to be a Free State."¹⁰

With that they launched into about two hours of discussion on the subject. Toward the end the mob began talking of hanging Butler as an example to other abolitionists. At that point a Mr. Peebles, a dentist in Atchison, stepped forward to speak.

Gentlemen, you must not hang this man. He is not an Abolitionist. He would not steal our niggers. He is what is called a free-soiler; and these free-soilers intend, in making their attacks on slavery, to keep within the limits of the law. But practically, and in the final outcome, there is not a picayune's difference between a Free-soiler and an Abolitionist. The Free-soilers intend to make Kansas a free state and if they do this, and surround Missouri with

¹⁰From a clipping compiled by Mrs. Sarah Eastman, sister of Pardee Butler. It is now located in the archives of the Kansas Christian Missionary Society, Topeka, Kansas. The clipping is from the Atchison Champion. p. 214 of clipping book, hereafter called "Butler Clippings."

a cordon of free States, our slaves in Missouri will not be worth a dime apiece. Still we cannot afford to hang such a man as this. I propose, therefore, that we make an example of him by putting him on a raft and sending him down the river.¹¹

In his Recollections Butler added the information that a vote was taken whether to hang him or not. The moderator of the business men doing the voting was Robert S. Kelley, and after the vote had ended in a tie, Kelley broke the tie by voting against the hanging. Mr. Peebles was then appointed to make a speech to the mob.¹²

The crowd seized upon the idea of a raft, and one was made from two saw-logs. One of the logs was sound, but the other one was rotten. The two were joined together by shakes nailed to them, and they would not hold securely in the rotten log. At one end was placed a crude flag on a forked stick which is illustrated in figure one.



THE FLAG THAT WAS ON PARDEE BUTLER'S RAFT

Figure 1 ¹³

¹¹Ibid., p. 217.

¹²Butler, p. 70.

¹³Ibid., facing page 72.

This flag was kept for many years by Mr. Butler, and he used to get it out to show to friends when he told the story of his raft trip. This flag was loaned to a friend at Valley Falls many years later, and copies were made of it which were used in a political campaign.¹⁴ One of these copies was later presented to the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka by his son, Charles Pardee Butler.¹⁵

The raft was towed into the current of the river, and Pardee Butler was left on his crude vessel to the mercy of the Missouri River. Before they left him they threatened him with worse harm if he tried to get ashore, and they told him that he would be hanged if he ever came back to Atchison. The crowd followed for some distance along the banks of the river to assure themselves that Butler did not leave the raft. Pardee Butler could not swim so the danger was even greater if the raft were to strike a snag and break apart.

When the mob ended its pursuit of the raft Butler crept forward on the raft to get the flag and the forked stick it was tied to. With this he fashioned a crude paddle and maneuvered himself ashore. He landed just south of Sumner, a town about five miles south of Atchison, and walked into Port William where he had made some acquaintances. After some difficulty in getting some help, the Oliphants, residents of Port William, took him in

¹⁴A. G. Patrick, "The Story of Two Flags," Jefferson County Clippings, Volume II, p. 273. Kansas Historical Society.

¹⁵Mary F. Butler, Personal Interview, March 19, 1962.

to their home. The next day they assisted him to Weston, Missouri, where he boarded the "Polar Star" for the trip to St. Louis.

His arrival in Illinois brought immediate preparations to return to Kansas Territory. After several weeks of making the necessary arrangements and a tour of preaching the Butlers left for Kansas in November, 1855. A brother of Mrs. Butler, Milo Carlton, had also settled in the Stranger Creek region, and Fardee Butler took his family to him that he might care for them during the winter. In the meantime Butler returned to Illinois to fulfill some preaching responsibilities that he had made for the winter.

In April, 1856, Butler started back to Kansas and his family. He arrived in Atchison on April 30, 1856, and in doing so he almost lost his life. He had entered the town quietly, and he spoke to no one but the two merchants from whom he needed to make some purchases before going on to Stranger Creek. After he had completed his purchases and was about to get in his buggy to make the rest of the trip, he was seized by a group of South Carolinians led by Robert Kelley. They dragged him into a nearby store yelling that they wanted him killed, one man even threatening to have a battle with him with revolvers. His hands were tied behind his back and dragged him to another store. Here they sat him down roughly and began a sort of trial. Some of the men could think of nothing but a hanging, but some of the men wanted his release even though they were pro-slavery men. Finally, as Kelley saw the way that things were progressing, he stepped for-

ward and said, "he did not take Butler to have him hung, only tarred and feathered." A motion was made to tar and feather Butler, and they also voted to give him thirty-nine lashes, but this last part of the sentence was removed at the last moment. Many of the South Carolinians were disappointed. They had come to help with a hanging, and some even expressed that they should have shot him in the beginning. They stripped him to the waist and coated the upper part of his body with tar, and because they had no feathers they used cotton wool in their stead. Tossing Butler's clothes into the buggy, they led him to the outskirts of the city and sent him on his way home. After a while he managed to remove some of the tar and get some clothes on, but it was still a sad way to meet his family after five months of absence from them. Butler wrote a complete account of this event to the Leavenworth newspaper, and he later told it as a witness before the Howard Committee from the House of Representatives. The letter can be found in Appendix C. The Squatter Sovereign only noted the treatment given to Pardee Butler, but warned all others that they would receive the same.

This kept Pardee Butler out of Atchison for a while, and it also kept him hiding from the South Carolinians. It seemed, however, to encourage him all the more in his anti-slavery activities in the Kansas Territory.

There has been some confusion about the rafting and the tarring, for occasionally there are references to the two events as occurring at the same time, but they were two separate experiences.

The rafting came first in the late Summer of 1855, and the tar and cotton episode came months later in the Spring of 1856.

CHAPTER III

OPPONENTS AND FRIENDS OF PARDEE BUTLER

It would be difficult to use the term enemy as a part of the caption for this chapter, for it is hard to say that Butler had any real enemies. There were many who disagreed with him and participated in mob action against him, but who were not necessarily classified as people to fear as one would fear an enemy. Therefore the term opponent has been used rather than enemy. He was an abolitionist and a free-stater. They were pro-slavery men, and the net result was a clash between these two wills, and Pardee Butler had a stubborn will. There were some persons, however, that might be considered enemies, but they were not extremely dangerous.

The first antagonist was Robert S. Kelley.¹ Kelley has already been prominent in the story that has been told thus far. There was not a great amount of information available concerning Robert Kelley. He was the co-editor of the Squatter Sovereign and prominent in the early days of Atchison on the pro-slavery side of the issue in Kansas. He was a mob leader who seemed hesitant to unleash the mob on its victims as was illustrated in the experiences of Pardee Butler. His influence through the paper, in which he was associated with John H. Stringfellow, was strong. He was not involved in politics beyond Atchison, and he left this

¹This name is sometimes spelled Kelly in the records.

town in 1857 after the sale of the paper. Letters written by Kelley clearly state his pro-slavery sympathies, and Pardee Butler is mentioned in them.² It is known that he was later appointed as a federal marshall in Montana, and from there he wrote that he was the one who juggled the vote to save Butler from being hanged.³

Another person who might have been labeled an opponent of Pardee Butler was John H. Stringfellow. No where does he appear directly on the scene in the story of Pardee Butler, but his prominence in Atchison puts him in the background of the story. At the time of the rafting Dr. Stringfellow was meeting with the territorial legislature. Stringfellow was a southerner by birth, for he was born in Culpeper County, Virginia, on November 14, 1819. He attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and was graduated in 1845. He was married to Ophelia J. Simmons, a niece of Governor John C. Edwards of Missouri. He lived in Missouri prior to the establishment of the Atchison Town Company. The purpose of the town company was to establish a town in Kansas Territory as a pro-slavery center. The town itself was named for David R. Atchison, a senator from Missouri, and for a time he was the president protem of the senate. Stringfellow lived in Atchison from 1854 to 1858 and again from 1871 to 1877. He was part

²"Letters from R. S. Kelley, written in 1855," Published in the Capital Commonwealth, February 15, 1889.

³Pardee Butler, Personal Recollection of Pardee Butler, p. 70.

owner and senior editor of the Atchison Squatter Sovereign from early 1855 to the Fall of 1857. There were two Stringfellows in the Kansas conflict, and the three following excerpts give some information about them.

This Stringfellow is not the "champion," B. F., but only a brother. The Mr. Kelley who does a greater portion of the writing is a nullifier of the Virginia school, and willing to sacrifice the Union rather than fail in his endeavor to fasten slavery upon his people. He is a very young man of some little ability, and was the editor of an ultra-anti-Benton sheet in Missouri before he was transferred by his masters to this territory. . . . and many of the damnable acts of the pro-slavery party can be traced back to him as the originator.⁴

Kelley and Stringfellow were associates in the newspaper business in which Kelley, although he was called the junior editor, did most of the work, while Dr. Stringfellow engaged in his medical practice and politics. The second excerpt tells of the two brothers as follows:

The news papers, particularly the eastern news papers, never knew any difference between the Stringfellows, but J. H. seems to have been the more active in early Kansas History. He had made the Stringfellow name known in Kansas while B. F. Stringfellow was practicing law in Missouri.

From what we can learn, wherever you encounter the word Stringfellow in Kansas history, J. H. is usually meant. B. F. was the more pugnacious of the two, but J. H. the more active.⁵

It is of interest to note the difference in these two statements. The first spoke of J. H. as "only a brother," while the second spoke of J. H. as "the more active." The same author of the

⁴Wilcox Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society Library, p. 11.

⁵Atchison County Clippings, Kansas State Historical Society Library, Biographical sketch of Stringfellow, p. 242.

second statement told this story as related by Mrs. Stringfellow.

The term "border ruffian" was invented by Governor Reeder to fit Dr. Stringfellow, but B. F. Stringfellow took it up, and knocked Reeder down at Shawnee Mission. The incident called attention to the term "border ruffian" and it soon became a part of the language of the border; it spread as other catchy terms do.⁶

J. H. Stringfellow was active in politics, as indicated, and he was the first speaker of the first Kansas House of Representatives at Pawnee.⁷

His house in Atchison was located at Third and L Streets, and he was one of the most active of the pro-slavery men in that city and throughout northeastern Kansas Territory. In 1858, for example, he wrote to the Washington Union in opposition to the admission of Kansas to the Union under the Lecompton constitution. To do so he said, "will break down the democratic party at the North and seriously endanger the peace and interests of Missouri and Kansas, if not the whole union."⁸

In 1858, after his interests in the paper had been sold, he returned to Virginia because of the death of his father. He remained in Virginia until the Civil War broke out. During the war he served in the Confederate army with the rank of Captain, and he was detailed as a surgeon. In 1871 he returned to Atchison where he lived until he moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1877.

⁶Ibid., p. 247.

⁷Ibid., p. 241.

⁸"John H. Stringfellow," Biographical Sketch in the Kansas Historical Collections, 1902, p. 332. Also in the Annals of Kansas, under the date of January 7, 1858.

He lived in St. Joseph until his death in 1905 at the age of 85.

The Squatter Sovereign was considered next for it was the result of the work of Kelley and Stringfellow for two and one-half years. The paper began publishing very shortly after the founding of Atchison. The first issue is dated February 3, 1855, and it was published every Tuesday morning. It was owned by J. H. Stringfellow and Robert S. Kelley. Prior to this Kelley had been the editor of the Democratic Platform in Liberty, Missouri. The paper was openly and beligerently pro-slavery, and it continued so until it was sold to free-staters in the Fall of 1857. On December 16, 1856, Mr. P. H. Lacey was added as a co-editor, and one-half interest in the paper was sold to him. In 1858 the paper was sold to John A. Martin, and he changed the name to Freedoms Champion, which he later shortened to the Champion. Mr. Martin was later a governor of Kansas.

The paper was usually six or eight pages, and it contained mostly local advertising, and boiler plate copy which was typical of the frontier newspapers. The front page contained lengthy articles, ordinarily about slavery, and other items of general literary interest. The local news and editorial comments were always found on the second page. This paper was placed among the opponents of Butler because of its pro-slavery position and its general antagonism toward abolitionists. This paper also carried biased accounts of the experiences of Butler in Atchison, and it voiced the threats of the people made to Butler and others of like mind.

Another group which opposed Pardee Butler remained nameless in the records. These were the band of men from South Carolina who are mentioned in the tarring experience. Butler probably was in greater danger from these men than any others in the territory. They were very much his enemies, but even these enemies could be friends when help was needed. These men roamed the country-side in search of those who were abolitionists or workers for the "underground railroad." When the article, quoted in appendix C, that Butler wrote to the Herald of Freedom appeared, they raided the newspaper's office and dumped the type, the press, and the extra issues of the paper into the river.⁹ Also, some of the South Carolinians had been seen near Caleb May's house soon after the tarring experience. After this Pardee Butler always slept with a gun either under his pillow or nearby.¹⁰

His greatest danger from the South Carolinians came after he testified before the Howard Committee¹¹ at Leavenworth on May 9, 1856. At this investigation the South Carolinians had threatened, "We will shoot Butler on sight."¹² He now worked with a horse tied nearby so that he could make a quicker escape if that became necessary. One one occasion when a group of these men ap-

⁹Hastings, p. 269.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 266.

¹¹ Congressional Report #200, 34th Congress, 1st Session. "Special Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas," 1856, p. 679.

¹²Hastings, p. 266.

peared in the distance he got on his horse and rode off, circling back and forth over the hills. Occasionally he would meet one or two of them as he rode along. He recognized them, and they recognized him, but they apparently wanted to get back together as a group before they tried to seize him.¹³ When he finally rode back to his family where they had been working, he exchanged clothing with his brother-in-law, threw a cover over his horse to conceal its color, and rode off again. He stayed away for several days, staying first with one friend and then another, but each day he would slip home to see that his family was safe. One incident told by Mrs. Hastings illustrated both the help of his friends and the nearness to being captured that once occurred. Butler had spent the night with a friend whose name was Duncan, and in the morning he had just ridden away when the South Carolinians rode up. Mr. Duncan met the men and answered their questions by assuring them that the man who had just ridden away was not Pardee Butler.¹⁴ Finally, growing weary of riding and hiding, Pardee Butler went to Leavenworth to stay for a while. When he came back a few days later the band of men had dispersed, but the danger still existed. On one occasion it is recorded that he preached in one of the homes while an armed guard stood outside the building.¹⁵

¹³Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 270.

The Carolinians seemed determined to get Butler, but they were always very careful. They never rode up to his house to take him. On the night following the preaching service that is mentioned above, Butler remained at home. He had some letters to write, and he stayed awake until past midnight writing them. Butler learned later from a man who worked on both sides of the fence that seven men had waited outside the house for the lights to be turned out so that they could rush the house and seize the preacher in the confusion of darkness. They gave up at last and rode back to Atchison. There they told their associates that Butler was too well guarded.¹⁶

Two other experiences that Pardee Butler had with these South Carolinians ought to be mentioned for they showed the opposite side of the coin. Butler had been told that he would be hanged if he ever came back to Atchison again, but he was assured by some of the merchants that it would be safe for him to come in the daylight to conduct necessary business. They warned him, however, that he should not attempt to come into Atchison at night. One day he took a team and a sled to Missouri to get some corn. It was winter and the river was frozen, so he crossed on the ice south of town in order to avoid any contact with the "ruffians." During the trip eastward everything had gone all right, but on the return trip he found that he could not get the team up the steep, icy bank. At last he devised a method of

¹⁶Ibid.

getting the load to the top of the bank. He unhitched the team and lead them to the top. By means of a chain and a long pole that he had cut he fastened the team to the sled on the river ice. He then started the team pulling, but when the sled was about to the top the chain broke and the sled went back down to the river. Because it was dark he began to look for lights about in order to find someone to help him. The only lights that he saw were in a tavern near the river. He went in and found himself facing the South Carolinians and Grafton Thomason. He explained his problem to them, but after a moment of silence he excused himself and started to leave. Finally Thomason suggested that they should help, and the men went to the river bank with Butler. With their help the sled was easily brought to the top, and Butler gave them some money and said, "Please take that and get something to warm you." It was late so Butler decided to spend the night in Atchison. The only room available was in a boarding house in which the South Carolinians were staying. When some of them heard that he was there they wanted to drag him out, but then the group that had helped him came in. They said,

This thing has to be dried up. . . . Butler is a gentleman. He talks like a gentleman; he treats like a gentleman; he came into this house like a gentleman, and we will show him that we are gentlemen.¹⁷

Butler knew that he was among friends and he slept soundly the rest of the night.

A later incident is told by Dr. A. Morrall, writing many

¹⁷Butler, p. 172-175.

years later at Wamego, Kansas. Dr. Morrall was from South Carolina, and he came to Kansas in 1856. Whether or not he was among the South Carolinians mentioned above is not known. He said

We took each other prisoner, if we were caught in their limits or they in our limits. We could go just so far; and if we crossed the line and were alone we were captured; the same with them. On one occasion we captured a man who proved to be a preacher. Pardee Butler was his name, and he was a very rabid free-state man. Some of our boys wanted to hang him and one of them drew his dirk and was about to slash him, when I caught his hand and stopped him.¹⁸

The group then permitted him to go on his way with a warning to stay out of their territory. It seemed evident that even his enemies could be friends on occasion.

On the other side of the ledger are found many friends who were supporters of the work of Pardee Butler. Most of these remain completely unknown except as they are referred to by group. Most of these were his church brethren, some were his neighbors, some were free-staters in the northeastern area of Kansas Territory, and some of them were members of the new Republican Party.

The best friend that Pardee Butler had in Kansas was his neighbor, Caleb May. These two men lived on adjoining farms, and they shared in all of the anti-slavery activity. They worked together in 1859 and 1860 as representatives for the "underground railroad."¹⁹ It has long been one of the legends of the area that a tunnel lead from the May house to Stranger Creek, so that

¹⁸A, Morrall, "Brief Autobiography," Kansas Historical Collections, Volume XIV, 1915-1918, William E. Connelley, ed., Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1918, p. 130.

¹⁹Mary F. Butler, personal interview, March 19, 1962.

slaves could be taken into or from the house without detection, but such a tunnel has never been located, remaining only a legend. The Caleb May Farm now belongs to the Butler family.

Caleb May was born on January 19, 1816, in Madison County, Kentucky. He was thus about two months older than Pardee Butler. When he was sixteen, two years after the death of his father, he moved to Indiana. This was in 1832. In 1842 he went to Arkansas where he lived until 1845, at which time he moved to Buchanan County, Missouri. From Missouri he migrated to Atchison County, Kansas Territory, in 1854, and set up as a Squatter on Stranger Creek. He had been a Democrat in his pre-Kansas days, but the affairs of Kansas turned him away from that party, and he became an ardent member of the new Republican Party. He was very active in local politics, and he was elected to three constitutional conventions.²⁰ He was the only man in Kansas to be elected to these three conventions.

In the early part of 1867 he moved from Atchison County to a farm near Coffeyville, Kansas, maintaining the two farms which had excellent orchards and fine dairies. In the 1880's he sold his holdings in Kansas and moved to Georgia, then to Florida, and died in Florida about two weeks before Pardee Butler.

He was an active member of the Christian Churches, so he and Pardee Butler shared adjoining land, common faith, and joint pol-

²⁰ Caleb May was elected to the Topeka constitutional convention in 1855, to the Leavenworth convention in 1858, and to the Wyandotte convention in 1859.

itical affiliation.

Caleb May was a man of abrupt and bold action. He was powerfully built, standing over six feet tall. While Pardee Butler preferred oratory and less violent actions Caleb May was ready and willing to fight for the cause. Following Butler's raft trip down the Missouri River Caleb May went to Atchison and challenged the mob to put him on a raft, also. He left the town when no one offered to do so, and he promised that he would be back with a company of men to clean out the town.²¹ On another occasion Mrs. Hastings told an experience which revealed something of the respect that people had for Caleb May.

When the ruffians returned to Missouri, after one of their raids, some of them told in DeKalb, where Mr. May lived before coming to Kansas, that they had killed him.

... .

"Anybody killed?" queried Mr. Jones.

"Oh, no."

"Anybody hurt?"

"No."

"Then it's a lie!" responded Mr. Jones. "I know Caleb May well enough to know that when you get him somebody's going to get hurt,"²²

This was the kind of man that Caleb May, the friend of Pardee Butler, was in that day.

Pardee Butler had many more friends than he realized, and many of them only knew him by reputation. Also, not all of them were in Atchison County or in Kansas Territory. During this time of trouble and danger the Butler family made a trip to Illinois,

²¹Butler, p. 75.

²²Hastings, p. 271-272.

and to avoid Atchison they went across the river at Iowa Point. Shortly after crossing into Missouri Pardee Butler became ill, and they sought help at the nearest house. It turned out that this family was from Maine, and they did not like the "border ruffians." When they learned that the man they were caring for was Pardee Butler they assured the family that they would protect them. The head of the house, Mr. Brown, said

Now, you need not be uneasy while you are here. Yonder hang four good Sharp's rifles, and I and my boys know how to use them; and nobody shall touch you unless they walk over our dead bodies.²³

These have been only a few references to the encounters that Pardee Butler had with antagonists and with friends, but to tell more would be but to copy or retell the book which Pardee Butler and his daughter, Mrs. Rosetta B. Hastings, wrote many years ago.

²³Ibid., p. 275.

CHAPTER IV
PARDEE BUTLER WRITES ABOUT ABOLITION
OF SLAVERY

Although Pardee Butler has never been classified as a representative of Garrisonian Abolitionism, his early life was spent in the North with Puritan influences. He began his life as a preacher when the demands of the North and South were being loudly voiced. This was the impression that John Boggs had of Pardee Butler.¹ Boggs was a Christian Church preacher from Indiana and the editor of the Christian Luminary, a paper that was very outspokenly against slavery. Pardee was associated with this man and others in the common cause. Their view, however, was generally a modified one which was based upon Scriptural principles rather than Garrisonian doctrine. They felt that slaves could be owned, but they should be treated as human beings, guarded by the same laws, and subject to freedom by a definite planning. They contended that negro families should be kept intact, that cruelty should not exist, and that slaves should never be bought and sold like animals. They also felt that slavery should be confined to the present areas, with the exception that a man would be allowed to take his legitimately owned slaves into a new area with him. No one in that new territory, however, would be allowed to accumulate slaves. In this way they thought

¹John Boggs, "Pro-slavery Hindrances," printed in the Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler, p. 318.

that slavery would ultimately die out. John Boggs, Pardee Butler, Ovid Butler (not related to Pardee), and others worked together to form a missionary society in 1859 along these lines.

In 1858 and 1859 Pardee Butler exchanged letters with Isaac Errett, a preacher at Lyons, Michigan, on the subject of slavery. Errett's letters were addressed from Cincinnati, Ohio, however, as he was writing in his capacity as the corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society, whose headquarters were located in Cincinnati. The letters began when Pardee Butler had written to the society seeking support in his evangelistic work in the new Territory.

The American Christian Missionary Society had been formed in 1849 to act as an agency for the churches of the Disciples of Christ in missionary activity of all kinds. Outside of sending Dr. J. T. Barclay,² the son-in-law of Alexander Campbell, to Jerusalem in 1850, and J. O. Beardslee to Jamaica in 1850, most of their efforts and money had been spent on state evangelists like Pardee Butler. In this way they continued to establish churches and move with the frontier. That first letter which Butler wrote started a chain of letters which gave us the best discussion that he made of his anti-slavery feelings. This joined with other articles completes the material discussed in this chapter.

The Christian Churches did not split over slavery, but there

²At the time of this writing, the son of Dr. Barclay, also a physician, was still living at the age of ninety-four. His home was in Grainfield, Kansas.

was strong feeling on both sides of the issue. Dr. Robert O. Fife, professor at Milligan College in Tennessee, has discussed this subject thoroughly in a doctoral dissertation written at Indiana University.³ The society was an agency representing both pro-slavery and anti-slavery churches, and this was central in the discussion between Errett and Butler.

On April 12, 1858, Pardee Butler wrote to Isaac Errett seeking to know what action had been taken on the letter which he had written nearly a year earlier. In this he said,

Nearly one year ago I addressed you a letter, to which you very promptly and kindly replied. Perplexed, hesitating, and uncertain, relative to what was my duty under the sore and bitter trials to which I have been subjected since I first came to Kansas, I did not reply. I doubted whether our pro-slavery brethren would extend to me, and others like me, their cordial good will, and at the same time award to us that just liberty of speech that is at once our duty and right. Still schism with me is not a means of grace.⁴

He went on to say that conditions had changed in Kansas, and that they had chosen him to be an evangelist to work through the whole territory. He asked, "can the missionary society afford us any aid."⁵ He then proceeded to relate what had been done, and what attempts had been made to get aid, but without success.

We cannot give this matter up. If there is no other way by which aid can be extended to us, we must ask the privilege of ourselves sending a messenger to the churches, under the endorsement and approval of the Missionary Board;

³Robert O. Fife, "Alexander Campbell and the Christian Churches in the Slavery Controversy," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University, 1961.

⁴Sarah Eastman clipping book on Pardee Butler, p. 41.

⁵Ibid.

but we first desire to know, can the Missionary Society promise us anything?⁶

Isaac Errett's reply was dated May 3, 1858, and at the time that he wrote he did not know that the letter was going to be published. He stated that Butler's letter had been received, and that it had been placed in the hands of a committee. He also told Butler that the Society was short of money since the times were hard, but he says, "and I still think we can raise money to help you in Kansas, provided we are satisfied on two or three points."⁷

The gist of these was the fear that "if our board were to employ you," Bro. Boggs "would immediately publish it to the world as an anti-slavery triumph - seek to rally the brethren of the North to your support on anti-slavery grounds, and endeavor to make a breach between North and South. This we are determined to avoid. It must therefore, be distinctly understood, that if we embark in a missionary enterprise in Kansas this question of slavery and anti-slavery must be ignored; and our missionaries must not be ensnared into such utterances as the 'Northwestern Christian Magazine can publish to the world, to add fuel to the flame already burning in our churches on this question. As an anti-slavery man, I sympathize much with you, I share your feelings, but in the missionary work I know nothing of slavery and anti-slavery."⁸

The other points were concerned with the efficiency of the Territorial Board and the plan for procedure, and they thus had no connection with the slavery issue.

This brought an immediate response from Pardee Butler. Two letters were then written to Isaac Errett. The first answered the

⁶Ibid., p. 42.

⁷Ibid.

⁸J. S. Lamar, Memoirs of Isaac Errett, p. 215.

questions concerning the work in Kansas and the plans for the future, but it was not published. The second was in response to the demand that the slavery issue was to be ignored if they were to receive support. Butler felt deeply that this was a Bible issue, and on Bible issues he could not be quiet. It was "a question of justice between man and man - of mercy and humanity."⁹ He then went on to say,

Did the Jewish Sanhedrin demand more of the Apostles than this? . . . Did Rome demand more of Luther than that he should be silent? Would ever a schism have taken place between us and the Baptists, if we had yielded to their demands that we should be silent? Has not our brotherhood paraded their love of discussion before the world . . . ? And shall we in our turn draw back our head under our denominational shell, and do the very things we have so reprobated in ecclesiastical forefathers? How often have we impaled our adversaries by the cabalistic words, "Truth never fears the light," - "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil," - "He that doeth truth cometh to the light," &c. While some brethren in their verandancy are still telling how the "sects" hate discussion, and how we love it, and how the truth triumphs by it; it is a hard and bitter fact, that no sect enforces silence on a legitimate subject of Bible discussion with more constancy than do some of us.¹⁰

He continues to write his amazement that they should permit him to speak against injustice; for the master to know "his duties to his servant, according to the Bible?"¹¹ This puzzles him greatly. Finally he states this position relative to slavery:

I shall appeal to your knowledge relative to slavery. You know that a terror of being subjected to the unmeasured horrors of the slave traffic, the caprice, death, or bank-

⁹Butler Clippings, p. 43.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹Ibid., p. 44.

ruptcy of their masters crushes the life out of unnumbered thousands of poor miserable, abject human beings, who are ground into the dust beneath the power of slavery. You know that slavery rests as a nightmare on the "poor white folks" of the South, giving them a heritage of ignorance, thriftlessness, and poverty. . . . And now that this scourge cannot be stayed without agitation and convulsion, you would tempt me to become in some sort a partner in its evil, by saying nothing against it.¹²

He continues by speaking of his desire for peace, but notes that Jesus promised that there would be variance against the brother. He then asks if the need for avoiding agitation is rather a desire for popularity.

Brother Errett, I will speak very plainly to you. I do utterly deny that the right to traffic in human flesh is found in the system of servitude authorized by the New Testament. I demand for the slave that his manhood and humanity shall be acknowledged.¹³

However, he did not want to be party to a split in the brotherhood, so he says, "To this end, I would treat this as an open question, a legitimate subject of discussion. Indeed, compatibly with our principles, we can do nothing less."¹⁴

Isaac Errett's answer to this letter is addressed on June 23, 1858. This letter was a personal reply, and he was not writing this answer in behalf of the Society. He first tells Butler that he thinks he has raised a false issue in saying that they had no right to tell Butler not to instruct masters as to their Christian duty to a slave. This was not this issue at hand.

¹²Ibid., p. 44.

¹³Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 47.

The issue was that which was found in Kansas.

The forms it takes on there, are very different from the duties masters owe their servants according to the Bible. It is whether a slaveholder was necessarily a sinner, unfit for membership in the Christian Church - And on the other hand, whether American slavery is a divine institution, the perfection of society for the African race, and essential to their happiness - while all the abolitionists are fit only for the madhouse or penitentiary. And we cannot consent that on one side or the other such pleas shall be made, under the sanction of the American Christian Missionary Society.¹⁵

He went on to say that it was not likely that the work of Butler would be to instruct very many masters in Kansas.

But to furnish such instruction, and to go through Kansas lecturing on anti-slavery, or to plant churches with the express understanding that no "master" shall be allowed to have membership in it, are very different things. I cannot yet see how you could misunderstand my language as referring to the relation of master and servant, "according to the Bible," rather than the question of slavery and anti-slavery according to Stringfellow, Jim Lane, Garrison, and Theodore Parker.¹⁶

He further writes of his resentment with being compared with the Pharisees, and said that no one wished to silence Butler.

He said, "If anti-slavery is of more importance to you than the gospel, why their are societies to which you can apply for aid in a course of anti-slavery propogandism."¹⁷ The American Christian Missionary Society could not and would not support such a program.

The date of Pardee Butler's reply to this letter is not

¹⁵Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 52.

known, but from references in Errett's next letter it was apparently in August of 1858. The fore part of the letter answered some of the objections made in Errett's letter as not being accurate. He felt that Errett was not answering his letter, but rather an article which he had published in the Northwestern Christian Magazine (Errett, however, was not aware of this article until Butler mentioned it in this letter¹⁸). As to one of the forms of agitation which Errett had written about he says, "The question shall slaveholders be received as church members, has hardly been debated at all. . . . Slaveholders have been members of our churches from the beginning till now."¹⁹ He then launches into a discussion of Jewish slavery as set up in Biblical law, and then he says,

I conclude, then, that cannot be Christian servitude which has in it no sabbatical release, no year of jubilee - no license to escape by running away, but which hopelessly and relentlessly enslaves the children and the children's children of the slave to all generations - else the servitude authorized by Jesus is more cruel, relentless, and oppressive than that of Moses.

When the Jews changed their own system of temporary and voluntary service into a system of perpetual involuntary servitude, (American slavery,) God spued them out of the land. (Jer. 34.) Can we practice with impunity, what brought such a horrible catastrophe on the Jewish nation?²⁰

He felt that slavery could exist under the terms that were set down in the Old Testament, but "it will die out in a single generation."²¹ He felt that the question was not one to split the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 61.

²⁰Ibid., p. 63.

²¹Ibid., p. 63.

churches, but that it was a Biblical subject to be considered. He further resented the attempt to harass him on the basis of money.

You say, "If I wanted to go through Kansas to advocate such views of slavery as your letter contains, I would certainly apply to an Anti-Slavery Society and not to a Missionary Society if I needed assistance." To this I make no reply, because I have no reply to make. I am what I am. The Lord have mercy on me.²²

Isaac Errett's answer came, dated October 22, 1858. Its answering had been somewhat delayed, and in the meantime he had learned of the printing of the letters, as he says,

. . . . for I have just learned that without my knowledge or consent, our correspondence is being published in Mr. Boggs' paper! This reveals to me the true object on your part of seeking and keeping up this correspondence, intended, as the result shows, to obtain in a dishonorable way, materials for feeding the factious spirit which the aforesaid paper is constantly encouraging.²³

He stated further that he did not object to the publishing of the letters, but that it was done without his consent. He would have wanted his material to appear in better form, for the letters had been written hastily. He also wanted a right to name the paper in which it was published. The remainder of the letter merely reviewed what had been said before, and at the end he says,

The breach alike of confidence and of courtesy, on your part in surreptitiously publishing any private letters, puts an end to all claims from you on my respect. This therefore, closes my communications to you - you are at liberty to publish this, since you have published the rest, though I con-

²²Ibid., p. 65.

²³Ibid., p. 66.

fess I have little expectation that those who read the former letters will be permitted to see these.²⁴

It was published.

The reply made by Pardee Butler on December 4, 1858, is lengthy, but it added nothing to what had already been said. Much of it dealt with the church and the problem of slavery as connected with the restoration principle of the movement, rather than directly with the problem of slavery and anti-slavery as such. He only affirmed that he thought men should free their slaves as soon as possible, but that there was no direct Biblical command for them to do so.

This concluded the correspondence between Isaac Errett and Pardee Butler, but Butler continues to write anti-slavery articles for the Christian Luminary. The first set of articles are written as open letters to Benjamin Franklin, the editor of the American Christian Review. This Benjamin Franklin was a grand-nephew of the great statesman, and was a preacher-editor of the Disciples of Christ. These four letters, or articles, are addressed to Franklin as a result of six articles which Franklin and Isaac Errett had published in the Christian Review to warn the people of Pardee Butler and his associates. Butler attempted to publish his reply in the Christian Review, but his request was refused. He therefore printed his answers in the Luminary, the first of which was published as a five-page pamphlet.²⁵

²⁴Ibid., p. 67.

²⁵Pardee Butler, Reply to Elders Isaac Errett and Benjamin Franklin.

The articles and answers, written in the Spring of 1859 and published during the Summer, are concerned primarily with the problem of slavery as a potential divisive force in the churches of the Disciples of Christ. Very little actually gives the viewpoint of Pardee Butler on anti-slavery. It is not vital to this writing to discuss Franklin's objections and Butler's answers, so only the slavery and anti-slavery material is noted.

Butler is charged in the articles with being a "man of one idea," and this he accepted within the scope of his definition of what that one idea was. This, of course, was the preaching of the gospel, but Franklin had reference to his abolition activity. What he did object to was the charge that his devotion to one idea was splitting the church. In answer to that he says,

You, Brother Franklin, relentlessly create a schism between yourself and those you admit to be brethren - Baptist brethren, by enforcing your views of the operation of the Holy Spirit - the Scriptural order of faith, repentance, baptism, and remission of sins - or by your opposition to creeds, or a Christian experience before baptism. Let it be admitted that I create schism by protesting that Christians should not engage in the slave traffic: - who commits the greater wrong? Yet you warn the brethren against men of one idea!²⁶

It is of interest to note that this same Benjamin Franklin, who is here so concerned about splitting the church, became himself a "man of one idea" in the 1860's and until his death. He became one of the leaders in the anti-society - anti-organ movement, and he used the American Christian Review as his weapon. The movement which did not divide on slavery did divide on music and

²⁶Butler Clippings, op. cit., p. 74.

missions in 1906, with the separation of the Churches of Christ.

There is one statement of Butler's that is of interest in getting an idea of his feelings and reactions in this issue. He was replying here to a portion of the charges made by Isaac Errett in these articles.

Elder Isaac Errett writes: - "Before I was Corresponding Secretary, I had letters from Pardee Butler, the whole tenor of which indicated that he felt sore on the slavery question." Brother Errett is at fault in his recollection. I only wrote him one letter. I do plead guilty to the charge that I felt "sore." I have had more than Missouri River rafts, and tar and feathers inflicted by Border Rufians, to make me "sore," since I began to be hunted for my life like a wolf over the Kansas prairies. But I will stand to it, that is no crime in me; neither does it afford a good reason why I should be required to ignore the question of slavery and anti-slavery in the legitimate discharge of my proper duties as a preacher.²⁷

As before Butler's discussion of slavery is based upon Scriptural terms. At one point he places it in the area of love, for if the Bible says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," how is "slave traffic in harmony with this law of love? . . . does the New Testament authorize Christians to sell men and women?"²⁸

At another point he said that we do not know how the Christian actually approached slavery in Roman days, nor can we always distinguish what is meant by the word, servant. He may or may not be a slave. Then Butler said,

The law only demands "Do as you would be done by," But if I claim a heaven-born and heaven-bestowed right to liberty, so that under no possible circumstances could it be right to make a slave of me, my wife, of my son, or my

²⁷Ibid., p. 74.

²⁸Ibid., p. 71.

son's wife, I ask, would it not then be a crime for me to deny to another man that liberty which I claim as a natural and inalienable birth-right to myself and family? For this reason almost all the great lights of the past age, whether among divines, statesmen, or orators, at the south or at the north, have spoken of slavery as wrong.²⁹

This he further supported in long quotations from Patrick Henry and Daniel Webster.³⁰ Actually all of this had been in response to his original statement which said,

Does that institution known as American slavery, and which Brother Campbell calls "the maximum of all evils, moral, political and religious," and which John Wesley calls "the sum of all villainies," exist in our churches, and if so, is it an immorality? I need not be told that the relation of master and servant subsisted in the apostolic churches, for still the question is, what is the relation? Does any man attempt to define these words by alleging their meaning under Roman and Grecian law, had legally no right to father, mother, wife, child, food, clothing, or kind treatment, but was absolutely at the disposal of his master, who might starve him, kill him with work, or cut him in pieces and feed him to his dogs or fishes. Is this the relationship that subsists between a Christian and his servant? O, no! I shall be told that relationship is modified, on coming into the church. Well, how much modified. Aye, there is the rub!³¹

Butler also contended that slavery continued because there was profit in it. It was a good investment. Take that characteristic away from it and it would die. It may impoverish the rest of the country, but the slaveholder profits. He works the slave without wages and with meager provisions for his welfare. He sells the children for gain, and that right must go unquestioned.

For this reason, all who go for perpetuity of American slavery, do strongly insist that the right to buy slaves, to sell slaves, to breed slaves to sell, and to coerce

²⁹Ibid., p. 73.

³⁰Ibid., p. 73-74.

³¹Ibid., p. 72.

slaves to work without wages, shall be conceded to the slaveholder. They do so because these things are essential to the perpetuity of the institution.

But in opposing the above named practices, we do not oppose any law, or practice, or precedent, in the New Testament.

The above named practices are opposed to the law of love; they are immoral and inhumane.

We shall labor with our brethren who have fallen into wicked, immoral, unchristian practices.³²

This ties in with what he had said earlier with reference to the Greeks and Romans and their practice of slavery. They were not condemned by Christian principle, "but we are," he says.³³

In 1859 a large group of the anti-slavery men came together under the leadership of Ovid Butler³⁴ and John Boggs to form the Northwestern Christian Missionary Society. Their immediate aim was to support Pardee Butler and others in Kansas.³⁵ Other work would be planned in the future. The name, Northwestern, was a popular one with Ovid Butler. He was publishing a magazine entitled the Northwestern Christian Magazine. He had started a college in Indianapolis which he named Northwestern Christian University; now known as Butler University. The new society that they formed came to an end with the beginning of the war,³⁶ and the granting of statehood to Kansas.

³²Ibid., p. 83.

³³Ibid., p. 75

³⁴Ovid Butler is an uncle of the Ovid Butler in Kansas history. "The Butler Line," Kansas State Historical Society.

³⁵

³⁶W. E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History, p. 332.

The last group of articles by Pardee Butler numbered six, and were written to state the position of the newly organized society with regard to American slavery. He began these articles by quoting from Alexander Campbell regarding slavery. Butler then said,

We are told "the Bible does not declare slavery sinful per se." Well, does it declare slavery righteous per se? The failure of the Bible to condemn slavery, in a certain phraseology, never heard of till within a hundred years past, is then taken as a divine sanction for slavery.³⁷

With this statement Butler proceeded to discuss the position that such supporters of slavery held. One of the problems which he pointed out in the process was the completely unsatisfactory definitions for slavery and servant. These could not be distinguished. At the very core of the argument, however, was that although the Bible recognized slavery and servitude it did not necessarily hold that the Bible also justified it. He then quoted seven passages of Scripture, explained them in their slavery context, and ended by placing them all together in a single package tied together by the word, assumption.

Let it be trusted, that the above quoted passages contain the entire length and breadth, and depth and height of New Testament authority for American slavery. Now were these servants slaves, and were they held by Christian masters? For no man denies that wicked men have held slaves in all ages of the world. Were they held by Christian masters? This does not appear unless in I Tim vi. 1. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke." Let as many servants as are slaves, "count their own masters worthy of all honor, and they that have believing masters." It does not appear from the common version whether those servants that had believing masters were under the yoke or not. It does not ap-

³⁷Butler clippings, p. 86.

pear from the King James' version of the New Testament, that there were Christian masters in the Apostolic churches holding slaves. But as I do not intend to build any debatable matter into any premises, I shall not insist on this. I then proceed to remark, that nobody imagines, that these hypothetical Christian slaveholders bought slaves, sold slaves, coerced unwilling slaves to work under the persuasive influence of the lash, or claimed that these men and women or their unborn progeny were "property." Does then the New Testament sanction American slavery? And what shall be done with those men who have crept into the church, and have been betrayed into the practice of slaveholding according to the tenor of American slave law? This question that has so long been smuggled out of sight, must be met.³⁸

Butler began the second article by asking the question, "What is American slavery?"³⁹ He based his whole discussion of this question on the single word, property. At the very beginning he answered his own question by

Its ruling idea is, that slaves are "property." And being property, they may be lawfully bought and sold - their education may be the education of a mule - and the right of parents to their children, is just the right of a brood mare to her foal, or of a Durham cow to her calf; and in their mock marriages, the preacher . . . joins them together, till they are separated by unavoidable circumstances.⁴⁰

A little later he says in the same article

For ten years past, I have been much in the company of men, born south of Mason and Dixon's line, and I have not found many men, who can look the slave traffic in the face, without blushing.⁴¹

It was his contention therefore that slavery was a business whether a man was selling many slaves or just one. All of this

³⁸Ibid., p. 87-88.

³⁹Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁰Ibid.,

⁴¹Ibid., p. 89.

he felt was built around the single idea that the servant was to obey his master. It was not enough, in his mind, to allow such a charge to cause men, women, and children of humanity to suffer like animals. He felt that this was the wrong kind of obedience. He wondered what had happened to the admonition that we were to be our brother's keeper. Christian brethren were ignoring their responsibility. What should the church do?

What should be done with a church member that sells slaves? The foreign slave trade is piracy, in the judgment of the whole civilized world. The domestic slave traffic, is an infamous business, in the judgment of the South. The ocean is made up of drops of water, and the rivers are made up of little rivulets, so the slave traffic is made up, of individual acts of buying and selling. We have such a membership as this, but we dare not look the matter in the face: but like little, silly, young partridges, we hide our heads under a leaf, and think that nobody sees us.⁴²

The remainder of the material was concerned with the problem of agitation and schism which he had already discussed so much in the previous writings, and it adds little to the material already considered. He concludes the final article with

Having thus developed the policy, that characterizes this "maximum of all evils," we are able clearly to see our own duty. We make, as respects slavery in our Missionary Society, one issue, and only one. Whether we have got at it in the best possible manner, is of no consequence. The issue is made - "No complicity in the crime of American slavery." Is American slavery a crime? This is a question, that every preacher, north of Mason and Dixon's line, will be expected to answer. We have a right to expect it, and the people will have it.⁴³

Pardee Butler was not an abolitionist in the true sense of

⁴²Ibid., p. 90.

⁴³Ibid., p. 98.

the word. He was not for immediate and complete emancipation as was Garrison. He did not deal with it strictly as a social evil in his preaching as did Theodore Parker. He did not give great sums of money for anti-slavery work and the purchase of freedom for slaves as did Gerrit Smith. He was not militant in the sense that Garrison was, nor was he a fighter like John Brown. What he may have read and used from these men is not known. No one can say whether or not they influenced him in any way. He confined his activity in the anti-slavery work to northeastern Kansas, although he did make at least two preaching and speaking tours into Illinois and Indiana to raise money for the work in Kansas. He did not mix his strong political feelings with his religious activity, even though both were very important to him. His writing is prompted by the dispute which he had with two Christian Church editors and the American Christian Missionary Society, and it was probably not read beyond the scope of the brotherhood to which he belonged. Thus, as an abolitionist, he was not widely known.

CHAPTER V

PARDEE BUTLER: AN EVALUATION

What kind of man was Pardee Butler? Was he a fighter, or was he only stubborn? No one can really say from the material available. He was always busy with one cause or another, and usually these had some connection with his preaching. Not only was he active in the slavery--anti-slavery controversy in Kansas Territory, but he was very active in the origins of the Christian Churches in Kansas. This group was one of the earliest in the state, and it is one of the largest Protestant bodies in Kansas today. He was the first preacher, although he did not organize the first church in Kansas of the Christian Churches, its first state evangelist in Kansas, and the first president of the Kansas Christian Missionary Society which he helped to organize.

Pardee Butler was active in the founding of the Republican Party in Kansas, and he spoke at its first convention on July 4, 1856.¹ In later years he was deeply involved in the prohibition fight, and in this he became a writer fighting for a principle. This is the man that is characterized by his daughter-in-law as being a pleasant man but very rigid in his principles.² Once his mind was made up on an issue it was rarely changed by any persuasion. He was radical and outspoken. He was, however, always in-

¹George Martin, ed., Kansas Historical Collections, Volume 9, p. 543.

²Mary F. Butler, personal interview, March 19, 1962.

terested in the good of the community and in public works.

Pardee Butler was a tall man, slightly over six feet, with a slender but strong body. He wore a long, flowing beard throughout his adult years, and the hair on top of his head was thinning. His eyes were piercing, and he had a voice that demanded attention; a valuable asset to a frontier preacher. His bravery is attested to by his Atchison experiences, but one wonders if it were bravery or merely his stubbornness.

Pardee Butler was first and foremost a preacher. How well he was educated is not known today, but he had a good command of language and was well-read. He particularly knew the Bible and its content, much of which he knew by memory, being able to quote entire books of the Bible. He either organized or assisted in organizing many of the early churches in the state. Specifically he worked in the founding of such churches as Farmington, Pardee, Effingham, Atchison, and others. This, however, is another phase of his life which has not been covered here, and about which all too little is known.

Pardee Butler and his wife had seven children, but four of them died in infancy. Only Rosetta, George, and Charles Pardee lived to adulthood. Rosetta married a preacher, and for many years they lived in Atchison County. It was Rosetta who took the pages that her father had written and arranged for them to be printed as the Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler. To this she added her own reminiscences and other items. George farmed near the village of Pardee, which is southeast of the home place,

and Charles farmed the home place, adding the Caleb May land to it. At this writing one son of Rosetta, now in his nineties, still lived in Enid, Oklahoma. Five daughters of Charles were still living, but his two sons were deceased. At least one daughter of George, Mrs. E. M. Jones, of Council Grove, was still living. The house which Pardee Butler built in 1858 still stands southeast of Farmington, and the interview with Mrs. Charles P. Butler was conducted there.

The town of Pardee is now only a memory. It had be started in 1858 and named for Pardee Butler. The railroad passed it by, however, and its life was short. It did possess a post office, though, from 1858 to 1912.³

Many people knew Pardee Butler, and some who did expressed their opinion of the man in writing. Mr. D. C. Milner, who was at one time the Presbyterian minister in Atchison, wrote the following from Manhattan, Kansas, on hearing of the death of Pardee Butler.

. . . . I am moved to lay a wreath of tribute upon the grave of the old hero. He was a man of almost invincible courage. . . . Mr. Butler was a John Knox sort of man.

He lived to see the overthrow of the slave power, which he hated with all the intensity of his nature. He also witnessed the revolution in Kansas as to the liquor power.

. . . . Pardee Butler was in sympathy with good men in every cause. While he was a born controversialist, and strong in his convictions, he was glad to work with Christians of any name in building up the kingdom of God in this world.⁴ . . .

³Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices.

⁴"A Merited Tribute," Correspondance, Atchison Champion, November 1, 1888, p. 2.

The week after Butler's death John A. Martin, the editor of the Atchison Champion gave notice of it in this way:

. . . . He was a sincere man. He was a brave man. He had in him the stuff of which martyrs are made. He deliberately chose the county in which the advocates of slavery seemed to be the strongest and most violent. . . . He was not a fighting man in the worldly sense of that word; but in the broader and higher significance, he was an aggressive, fearless, tireless fighter. He would not kill, but he did not hesitate to brave death. He would not shoot, but he did not quail or cower before guns, or knives, or ropes.

. . . . He was not always correct in his judgments, but he was always earnest. . . . He was a practical, as well as an ardent, advocate of temperance, and the organization of the so called "Third party" prohibitionists, excited, at once, his indignation and contempt. He was one of the first prohibitionists of Kansas to distrust St. John, and to denounce him as a self-seeking, ambitious demagogue.⁵

Also noting the passing of Pardee Butler, Noble Prentiss wrote,

We knew him well in his later years; a brave and earnest man; full of ideas for making this world better, and confident that they would succeed. He has gone to the company of those who on every field for these hundreds of years where the battle for sacred rights of man was to be fought out, have cried, "Oh Lord, make bare thine arm!" and have bared their own.⁶

At the centennial convention of the Christian Churches at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1909, Mr. Grant K. Lewis read this tribute to Pardee Butler. Its resemblance to the language of Hebrews 11 in the New Testament ought to be noted.

By faith Pardee Butler became a sojourner in the land of bleeding Kansas, dwelling in dugouts. Along with John O'Kane, John Boggs, and J. H. Bauserman, who through faith subdued slavery, wrought righteousness and prohibition, es-

⁵"Two Kansas Pioneers," Editorial item, Atchison Champion, October 25, 1888, p. 1.

⁶"Pardee Butler," News item, Newton Republican, October 26, 1888, p. 4.

caping the edge of the sword. These with others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain the victory of the Gospel and establish an unsectarian, undenominational New Testament Church of Christ in the free and virgin land of the great plains of the west.⁷

In very recent times Mr. John W. Harvey said of him,

Pardee Butler, a man of God, believed with his whole being in the dignity of man, regardless of race, color, or creed. He was not a violent man, never bearing arms. Yet with the courage of his convictions he stood up fearlessly and bravely to the worst of his enemies and was a tireless, aggressive fighter for the causes he believed to be right. He was not a politician, but rather a humble preacher.⁸

It might well be said of Pardee Butler that with his stubborn nature he was also courageous. It was a sublime courage. He had a hunger for knowledge, and he loved truth intensely.⁹

⁷Clarence E. Birch, Our Heritage; 150 Years of Progress, p. 11.

⁸"The Rev. Pardee Butler Lived Turbulent Life," Feature article, Topeka Capital-Journal, July 12, 1959.

⁹"Biographical Material on Pardee Butler," typed, Mrs. A. F. Atkinson -- copied from original by Mrs. George A. Root, in Kansas State Historical Society Library, Topeka, Kansas.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

AN ABOLITIONIST BADLY WHIPPED

The most interesting ceremony ever witnessed in this town, was the whipping of a "live Abolitionist" with the euphonious name of J. W. B. Kelly, who hails all the way from Cincinnati, Ohio; by Mr. Grafton Thomason, late of Clay County, Mo. Mr. Thomason, a short time ago, lost a valuable negro woman, who it was thought was induced to drown herself by the thieving scoundrel who is the subject of this article. Kelly, who was heard to express himself in the matter, severely reproached Mr. Thomason for being a slave holder. Mr. Thomason on hearing of the matter, called on the said Kelly, who gave him to understand that he did not speak to men who owned negroes. Mr. Thomason did not wait for a further expression from him, but seized the independent individual and nearly wore him out against the ground. A friend attempting to interfere was, by one blow from the powerful fists of Mr. Thomason, landed backward, "on the other side of Jordan."

A meeting of the citizens was called on the following morning, and a committee appointed to command Kelly to leave the place, at one hour's notice. The absence in the town of the article, "tar," prevented the citizens from donning him a coat of tar and feathers. He left our town between two days, and should he ever come back, he will be forced to go through a tight rope performance.¹

¹News item, Atchison Squatter Sovereign, August 7, 1855, p. 2.

APPENDIX B

RESOLUTIONS GIVEN PARDEE BUTLER TO SIGN

WHEREAS, By recent occurrences, it is not known that there are now among us agents of the Underground Railroad for the express purpose of abducting our slaves, and

WHEREAS, One J. W. B. Kelly, hailing from some infernal abolition den, has, both by words and acts, proved himself a worthy representative of such an association; and

WHEREAS, Others in the vicinity, whose idle habits and apparent plenty of money, induce us to believe that they are hirelings of some such infamous society; believing it due not only to ourselves, but to the adjoining portion of Missouri, to rid ourselves of so great an evil, and for the fulfillment of this evil end;

RESOLVED, That one J. W. B. Kelly, hailing from Cincinnati, having upon sundry occasions denounced our institutions, and proclaimed pro-slavery men ruffians, we deem it an act of kindness to rid him of such company, and hereby command him to leave the town of Atchison in one hour after being informed of the passage of this resolution, never again to show himself in this vicinity.

RESOLVED, That in case he fails to obey this reasonable command, we inflict upon him such punishment as the nature of the case and circumstances require.

RESOLVED, That other emissaries of the Aid Society, who are now in our midst, tampering with our slaves, are warned to leave, else they, too, will meet the reward their nefarious designs so justly merit - hemp!

RESOLVED, That we approve and applaud our fellow townsman, Grafton Thomason, for the castigation administered to the said J. W. B. Kelly, whose presence among us is a libel on our good standing, and a disgrace to the community.

RESOLVED, That we have commenced the good work of purging our town of such miscreants, shall do the same for the settlers on Walnut and Independence Creeks, whose propensities for cattle stealing are many.

RESOLVED, That the chairman shall appoint a committee of three to wait on the said Kelly and acquaint him with the action of this meeting.

RESOLVED, That the proceedings of this meeting be published that the world may know our determination.

On motion of Henry Adams, copies of these resolutions were ordered to be made out and a committee of three be appointed to obtain signatures, that we may know who are Abolitionists.²

²From clipping book compiled by Mrs. Sarah Eastman. Taken from Atchison Champion. Page 214 of clipping book.

APPENDIX C

LETTER BY PARDEE BUTLER TO THE HERALD OF FREEDOM

MR. EDITOR - Dear Sir: The bar of public opinion seems to be the only tribunal to which Free State men of Kansas can appeal for redress. I must, therefore, a second time ask your indulgence while I make a statement of facts:

One year ago I came to Kansas and bought a claim on Stranger Creek, Atchison county. On the 17th of August, the Border Ruffians of the town of Atchison sent me down the river on a raft. We part under a mutual pledge - I, that if my life was spared, would come back to Atchison, and they, that if I did come back they would hang me. Faithful to my promise, in November last, I returned to Kansas with my family, visited Atchison in open day, announced myself on hand, and returned without molestation. Kansas being yet sparsely settled, and having few houses for meeting, it was determined that Mrs. Butler should live on our claim with her brother and her brother's wife, while I should return to Illinois and resume my labors as a preacher.

April 30th, I returned to Kansas, and crossed the Missouri to Atchison. I spoke to no one in town, save with two merchants of the place, with whom I have had business transactions since my first arrival in the Territory. Having remained only a few moments, I went to my buggy to resume my journey, when I was assailed by Kelley, co-editor of the Squatter Sovereign, and others - was dragged into a grocery, and there surrounded by a company of South Carolinians, who are reported to have been sent out by a Southern Emigrant Aid Society. In this last mob, I noticed only two who were citizens of Atchison. or engaged in the former mob. It is not reported that these emigrants from the Palmetto State seek out a claim and make for themselves a home, neither do they enter into any legitimate business. They very expressively describe themselves as having "come out to see Kansas through." They yelled, "Kill him!" "Kill him!" "Hang the d---d abolitionist!" One of their number bustled up to me and demanded: "Have you a revolver?" I replied, "No." He handed me a weapon, saying, "There, take that, and stand off ten steps, and d--n you, I will blow you through in an instant." I replied, "I have no use for your weapon." I afterwards heard them congratulating themselves in reference to this, that they had been honorable with me. The fellow was furious, but his companions dissuaded him from shooting me, saying, they were going to hang me.

They pinioned my arms behind me, obtained a rope, but were interrupted by the entrance of a stranger - a gentleman from Missouri - since ascertained to be General Tutts, a lawyer from Buchanan county. He said, "My friends, hear me. I am an old man, and it is right you should hear me. I was born in Virginia, and have lived many years in Missouri. I am a slaveholder, and

desire Kansas to be made a slave State, if it can be done by honorable means. But you will destroy the cause you are seeking to build up. You have taken this man, who was peaceably passing through your streets and along the public highway, and doing no person any harm. We profess to be law and order men, and should be the last to commit violence. If this man has violated the law, let him be punished according to the law: but for the sake of Missouri - for the sake of Kansas - for the sake of the pro-slavery cause, do not act in this way."

They dragged me into another grocery, and appointed a moderator. Kelley told his story. I rose to my feet, and calmly, and in respectful language, I began to tell mine. I was repeatedly jerked to my seat, and so roughly handled that I was compelled to desist. My friend from Missouri again earnestly besought them to set me at liberty. Kelley turned short on him and said, "Do you belong to Kansas?" He replied, "No, but I expect to live here in Atchison next fall, and in this matter the interests of Missouri and Kansas are identical." Mr. Lamb, a lawyer in Atchison, and Mr. Samuel Dickson, a merchant of the same place, both pro-slavery men, also united with Gen. Tutts in pleading that I might be set at liberty. While these gentlemen were thus speaking, I heard my keepers mutter, "D--n you, if you don't hush up, we'll tar and feather you." But when Kelley began to see how matters stood, he came forward and said, "he did not take Butler to have him hung, only tarred and feathered." Yet in the other grocery, he had said to the mob they should "do as they pleased!" He dared not take the responsibility of taking my life, but when these unfortunate men, whose one-idealism on the subject of slavery, and southern rights has become insanity; when these irresponsible South Carolinians, sent out to be bull dogs and blood hounds for Atchison and Stringfellow; when they could be used as tools to take my life, he was ready to do it!

Our gunpowder moderator cut the discussion short by saying, "It is moved that Butler be tarred and feathered, and receive thirty-nine lashes." A majority said "Aye," though a number of voices said "No." The moderator said, "The affirmative has it. Butler has to be tarred and feathered and whipped." I began to speculate how that sort of thing could work as far north as the latitude of Kansas. There was a great deal of whispering about the house. I saw dark, threatening, and ominous looks in the crowd. The moderator again came forward, and in an altered voice said; "It is moved that the last part of the sentence be rescinded." It was rescinded. I was given into the hands of my South Carolina overseers to be tarred and feathered. They muttered and growled at this issue of the matter. "Be d---d," said they, "if we had known it would have come out this way, we would have let ----- shoot Butler at the first. He would have done it quicker than a flash." One little sharp visaged, dark featured, black eyed South Carolinian, as smart as a cricket, and who seemed to be the leader of the gang, was particularly displeased. "D--n me," said he, "if I am come all the way from

South Carolina, and have spent so much money, to do things up in such milk and water style as this."

They stripped me naked to the waist, covered my body with tar, and then, for the want of feathers, applied cotton wool. Having appointed a committee of seven to certainly hang me the next time I came to Atchison, they tossed my clothes into my buggy, put me therein, accompanied me to the suburbs of the town, and sent me naked out into the prairie. I adjusted my attire about me as best I could, and hastened to rejoin my wife and little ones on the banks of Stranger Creek. It was rather a sorrowful meeting after so long a parting; still we were very thankful that, under a good providence, it had fared no worse with us all.³

The text of this letter is almost identical with the text of Butler's testimony before the Howard Committee which was given three days after this letter was printed. The only other record is a brief news item in the Squatter Sovereign that mentions that Butler was tarred and feathered.

³Correspondance, Herald of Freedom, May 6, 1856.

PARDEE BUTLER, KANSAS ABOLITIONIST

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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Pardee Butler, a Christian preacher who was stubborn in his convictions, was born in central New York State in 1816, and was raised on the frontier in Ohio. Early in life he affiliated himself with the young American religious movement called either the Christian Churches or the Disciples of Christ. Soon after he became a preacher in this movement and was typical of the preachers of the movement. He was virtually self-educated and usually made his living at some work such as farming or teaching. Preaching was an avocation and not a vocation.

In 1850 he took his family westward from Ohio. They first settled in east central Iowa, then in Illinois, and finally in Kansas Territory. Pardee Butler came to Kansas ahead of the family to file a claim for land. He arrived in the Spring of 1855, and before he left Stranger Creek in Atchison County he built a cabin, made many friends, preached for the settlers, and encountered the pro-slavery mob of Atchison. That encounter came as he was preparing to return to Illinois and bring his family to Kansas. He said too much about his views in the free-state issue and was finally committed to a trip down the Missouri River on a crudely built raft that was not designed to take him very far. Fortunately he was able to guide his craft to the river bank after only about six miles of the river had been navigated. He went on to Illinois by steamer, but in the Spring of 1856 he was back in Atchison.

This time he was not seeking trouble, but it came. New men had arrived in the town from South Carolina, and under the leadership of Robert S. Kelley they seized the preacher. After a brief "frontier" trial he was condemned to be tarred and

feathered. The sentence was duly carried out and he was sent home to his family on Stranger Creek with his coat of tar and cotton wool. It was a sad meeting that he had with his family whom he had not seen since the previous November.

Pardee Butler became a voice for abolition of slavery in the Kansas conflict. It was not a "voice" like that of Garrison or John Brown, but it was heard for its own purpose. He was moderate in his appeal, but he was also stubborn in his convictions. His position is revealed in published correspondence and pamphlets which were considered in this paper. He was a man with friends and opposition, but he gave a good account of himself.

Pardee Butler was also involved in Kansas politics, but not to the extent that he was involved in the founding of Christian Churches in Kansas. He helped to found the Republican Party in the Territory in 1856, and he was later active in the move for the establishment of prohibition. Very little is known, however, of these areas as matters of record, therefore the concentration of the thesis was upon the question of abolition of slavery and free-state politics.

Pardee Butler died in his home in Atchison County in the Fall of 1888, and he had made his place in the history of that region and in the State of Kansas.