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SPEECH ON HON. L. M. KEITT, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

On resigning his seat, delivered in the House of Representatives, July 16, 1856.

MR. KEITT said:

MR. CHAIRMAN: I shall propose to-day to discharge a task which has been hanging over me much longer than I wished. Had I replied to the attacks upon the revolutionary history of South Carolina immediately after they were made, I should have repelled them with more violence than I shall use now. I feel, sir, that I approach a grave discussion, and that it is my duty not to discolored historical facts with violence, or prejudice the verdict of posterity through extravagance. To-day I speak for South Carolina—for her dead and her living; for her dead, because their patriotisms and sacrifices have been questioned; for her living, because their revolutionary titles have been denied.

Sir, if, in the course of the vindication of my State I shall be compelled to strip the fig-leaved garments of pharisaical righteousness and hypocritical sanctimony from the shoulders of another State, the fault, if fault there be, is with others. The sages and patriots of the revolution, who reared, through their common struggles and common sacrifices, an august and splendid temple, into which each of the confederated States entered, and hung up along its walls her battered shields, inscribed with memorials of valor and a blaze of fame. In the early days of the republic no one approached this sanctuary but with reverent feelings and holy tread; but recently the magic circle of sanctity, which gratitude and reverence had drawn around it, has been rudely broken, and licentious utterances have echoed along its walls. Within its very "holy of holies" we have seen American legislators, dressed up in the cast-off garments of Fred Douglass, distribute among dupes and victims broken victims from the feast of Abner Folsom and Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and from one portion of the walls of this temple I shall to-day endeavor to efface the stains of these lepers of history.

I shall now proceed to array the charges which have been made against the course of South Carolina in the revolution, and then summon an impartial history to refute them. As they have been drawn from the authority of a Mr. Lorenzo Sabine, the historian of American Loyalty, I shall at once go up to him.

He says: "South Carolina did not—she could not—defend herself against her own toiles."

Sir, I admit that there were toiles, large bands of toiles, in South Carolina throughout our revolutionary war. During that struggle she had, at the same time, to contend against a powerful foreign enemy and a vindictive domestic faction, while even the horrors of such a conflict were intensified by the merciless cruelty of the savage, subsidised by his fellist warfare. Sir, the most awful of all calamities are those of civil war, and the phials of these were in the revolution unsealed and poured upon the devoted head of my native State. There is not within her limits a rivulet, which was not crimsoned with patriotic blood—not a spot, which did not witness to the blood of her dead—nor a stone which has not its story to tell. Her patriots, soldiers, and sages—their grand old men, now housed in the Pantheon of history—before any court on earth will prove her title to revolutionary poeage.

Was it unnatural, then, should there be toiles in South Carolina during the revolution? What does Mr. Sabine say? He says:

"The population of South Carolina, composed as it was of emigrants from Switzerland, Germany, France, Ireland and the Northern colonies of America, and their descendants, was of course deficient in the necessary degree of homogeneity, or sameness of nature, to insure any considerable unanimity of political sentiment. It is true, however, that individuals were not at first, a noble and a decided stand against the oppressive measures of the British Ministry. It is equally true that South Carolina was the first State of the thirteen to form an independent constitution, and that she overpaid her proportion of the expenditures of the war in sum of \$1,205,978."

The revolution in South Carolina was conceived and organized by the native population. The Germans knew that the King of England was a Prince of Wales, and the Scotch, a King of Scots, turned to the Crown; the commercial population, mostly Scotch and English, were opposed to the patriots. The symbol of independence was raised aloft by the native citizens of Carolina, and by them it was triumphantly carried through the war.

Nor was her diverse population the only element of distraction. The very elements of the revolution created division within her limits. How does Mr. Sabine sum up these causes? He says of the legislation which produced them:

"They forbade the use of water-falls, the erecting of machinery, of looms and spindle, and the working of wood and iron; they set the King's arrow upon trees that retted in the forest; they shut out markets for boards and fish, and seized sugar and molasses, and the vessels in which the articles were carried; and they defined the limitless ocean as but a narrow pathway to some of the lands that it embosoms as were the British flag."

South Carolina suffered no grievance from this legislation—she employed no machinery—she sent out no ships—she lost no vessels by capture: Great Britain bought, at her wharves all her staples, and paid remunerating prices. When pirates infested her coasts, British fleets swept them away; when Spanish fleets assailed her ports, British troops repelled them. She was the favored colony of Great Britain, and into her lap were poured the cornucopia of material plenty and prosperity. Her sons suffered alone from disabilities imposed upon native intellect. Great Britain, from immemorial usage, governed her colonies in Parliament. This shut out native intellect in Carolina (I mean both the Carolinas) from those offices and honors to which it aspired, and to which it was capable.

The sons of the wealthy families in those colonies were educated in the Universities of Great Britain, and were eminently qualified for civil and political trusts. From these they were excluded, and they threw off the tyranny upon intellect. Massachusetts embarked in the revolution for war, waterfalls, spindles, and merchant craft; South Carolina engaged in it for the royalty of mind.

Sir, it is surprising that, with a diverse population, and an appeal only to native mind and ambition, and that, too, against pecuniary and commercial interest, there should have been division in South Carolina? Division there was; but the constituted authorities of the State committed her, from the first, to the revolutionary movement, and she neither wavered or faltered throughout its progress.

Are the claims of a State to be adjudged by its settled policy, or by opposition to that policy? Can a State be known otherwise than through its constituted authorities? Can history claim jurisdiction over other than its organized action? How, then, can a vindictive domestic faction within her limits qualify the claim of South Carolina to revolutionary nobility? The imputation upon her because of this faction is grossly unjust.

Sir, it is fashionable in Massachusetts to claim

the whole credit of beginning the revolutionary struggle; it is fashionable in Massachusetts to regard the battle of Bunker Hill as the whole revolutionary war. Obiding historians and a self-glorifying parish have mutually complimented each other into this conviction. The only difficulty is to drag Truth, so that she shall slumber forever. Let us appeal to facts.

In Charleston, Nov. 15, 1773, a public meeting resolved to seize the tea in Charleston harbor; and they did seize it and prevent its sale. The citizens of Boston threw the tea overboard into Boston harbor; and by that they disgraced themselves as Indians, and did the act in the darkness of night. The citizens of Charleston had already done a similar act in daylight, and in the eye of the sun. Were their difference of action in this matter indicative of a difference in the character of the two people? Since then, a secret party, organized in mystery, and plotting under "cavernous archways," has ruled Massachusetts—but in South Carolina it has not resting spot.

In 1763 Colonel John Ashe and Col. Waddell, of North Carolina, with a band of brave patriots, seized a British ship of-war with stamp paper on board, and carried the stamp paper in triumph to Wilmington. They publicly burnt it, then forced the royal governor to yield up the stamp master. Let that colony to them, and compelled him to take an oath not to execute his office. Here was an act of heroism and magnanimity greater than that of the Boston tea party or the battle of Bunker Hill.

At Charlotte on the 20th May, 1775, the Mecklenburg declaration of independence was proclaimed. They publicly burnt the royal proclamation of independence of 1776. The first victory in the revolution was won at Moore's Creek, North Carolina, on the 27th February, 1776. Well may the Old North State, her head proudly upon her laurels, sleep soundly. Soundly she has slept—so soundly that Massachusetts has fled from her the honor of her earliest achievement.

Into James river, too, did the gallant sons of Virginia throw British stamp paper. These acts have been celebrated in no orations, and embalmed in no poem; but the tea party of Boston is—

—Pealed and chimed on every tongue of fame."

Those who performed most of the achievements of the revolution have not written its history.

Now, sir, I will proceed with the charges against South Carolina. Mr. Sabine says:

"The whole number of regulars enlisted for the continental service from the beginning to the close of the war, was 331,000. Of these, I have ascertained, 67,907 were from Massachusetts; and I may now add that every State south of Pennsylvania provided but 69,493—8414 less than this single State; yet did 66600 willing soldiers exhaust her resources of men! Could she furnish only 732 more than Rhode Island, the smallest State in the confederacy; only one-half of the number of Connecticut; only one-fourth as many as New Hampshire; then an almost unbroken wilderness? She could not; she could not, defend herself against her own toiles; and it is hardly an exaggeration to add that more whigs of New England were sent to her aid, and now lie buried in her soil, than she sent from it to every scene of strife from Lexington to Yorktown."

I affirm that there was not a single New England company in South Carolina throughout the revolution; that I affirm that there was not a single soldier from Massachusetts in South Carolina throughout the whole progress of that conflict. Let us appeal to history.

When Charleston was first assailed, in June, 1776, though Charles Lee was sent to take command of her defenses, he brought no troops. The battle of Fort Mifflin was fought and won by Gen. Mifflin and Col. Thompson, and only the regular army of South Carolina, from behind a slender breastwork, hastily constructed, General Mifflin shattered a British fleet, and with five or six hundred militia Col. Thompson drove back two thousand British regulars.

When Lincoln was sent to take command, what was the order given to him by Congress? It was "to take command of all their forces to the southward." (Bancroft's War, vol. 1, p. 100.) The regular army of Gen. Gates when he moved to Canada? Fourteen hundred continental troops, consisting of the Delaware and Maryland lines. (Johnson's Gre ne.) With these were militia from Virginia and North Carolina. The remains of this army constituted the nucleus of that of Gen. Greene, for which he received no reinforcements of regulars, except the legion of Col. Lee, most of which were Virginia and Maryland recruits, and a legionary corps, also from Virginia, commanded by General Lawson.

Sir, these are all the continental troops which were in South Carolina throughout the revolutionary war. Thirty bloody battles were fought upon her soil, but they were all fought by Southern men. Sir, in the darkest hours of the revolution, when the cloud of defeat hung from all sides, and our brave patriots leaders, in swamp fastnesses and on mountain top, kept the fires of independence brightly burning. In the wildest storm of that struggle, the Palmetto ship of State was held, with unconquerable firmness, to its path of revolution, becomng right onward by the eternal stars of resistance and liberty. While British fleets darkened her coasts, and British armies ravaged her harbors, and Indian bands wrappd her in flames and drenched her in blood, there sprang up all over her that brilliant race of partian warriors who have never been surpassed in the history of human warfare. From her native militia were sprung up Marion and Sumter, Pickens and Lacy and Cleveland and Adair, and Davis and Hampton and M'chem and Thomas and Bratton and Roebuck, and a host of others whose deeds rival even the legends of Spartan daring and Roman prowess. Sir, for four years South Carolina was the theatre of conflict for both the American and British armies, and from her wasted soil, and through the labor of her slave population, was so tenacious provided for both the contending parties. I repeat the declaration, that not a single private soldier from Massachusetts was in South Carolina throughout the whole Revolutionary war. The thirty battles within her limits were fought by Southern men.

Mr. Sabine also says:

"South Carolina, with a northern army to assist her, could not, or would not, preserve her own capital."

Sir, I have already said that there was not a New England company in South Carolina at any period of the war, and I pronounce the above statement to be a fraud and falsehood.

What are the facts of the case? Three times during the war Charleston assailed. What was the conduct of the Carolinians during the first assault? Ramsay says:

"In South Carolina, particularly, every exertion had been made to put the province, and especially its capital, in a respectable posture of defence."

When it was first attacked, alarm guns were fired, and Ramsay says:

"The militia of the country very generally obeyed the summons of President Rutledge, and repaired in great numbers to Charleston."

The capital was defended, and the British

were beaten off, wholly by the South Carolinians, in one of the most sanguinary battles of the war. This was one defence of the capital.

"Another occasion followed when Gen. Lincoln, withdrawing all the regular troops away into Georgia, left its (South Carolina) whole seaboard open, and its capital city liable to a coup de main of Gen. Prevost. What then was the course of the Carolinians? We find a letter to the President of Congress, dated November 11, 1775, Gen. Washington says:

"The trouble I have in the arrangement of the army is really incredible. Many of the officers sent in their names to serve in expectation of promotion; others stood aloof, to see what advantage they could make for themselves; whilst a number, who had declined, have again sent in their names to serve. So great has been the confusion, arising from these and many other perplexing circumstances, that I found it absolutely impossible to fix this very interesting business exactly on the plan resolved on in the conference, though I have kept up to the spirit of it as near as the nature and necessity of the case would admit. The difficulty with the soldiers is as great, indeed, more so, if possible, than with the officers. They will not enlist until they know their colonel, lieutenant-colonel, major and captain; and it was necessary to fix the officers the first thing, which, in fact, in some manner done; and I have given out enlisting orders."

In a letter to Joseph Reed, of date November 28, 1775, when the year for which the men had enlisted was near its close—he says:

"The number enlisted since my last is two thousand five hundred and forty men; and I am sorry to be necessitated to mention to you the serious want of public spirit which reigns here. Instead of pressing to be engaged in the cause of their country, which I vainly flattered myself would be the case, I find we are likely to be deserted in a most critical time. Those that have enlisted must, in a fortnight, which I have been obliged to grant to fifty at a time from each regiment."

In a letter to the President of Congress, dated November 28, 1775—when the year for which the men had enlisted was near its close—he says:

"Such a dearth of public spirit, and such want of virtue, such squalid juggling, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and I pray God's mercy that I may never be witness to again. What will be the disaster that may befall us, in short, should have induced me to accept this command. A regiment or any subordinate command would have been accompanied by all the satisfaction, and, perhaps the honor."

This was whilst the enemy had possession of their capital, and a large number encamped in full view of the American army. In a letter to Gen. Schuyler, dated December 3, 1775, Gen. Washington says, in a letter to Gov. Reed, of Pennsylvania:

"I know that your complaints are too well founded; but I would willingly hope that nothing will induce you to quit the service; and that, in time, order and subordination will take the place of confusion, and command be rendered more agreeable."

Gen. Schuyler, in the letter to which this was a reply, said:

"So far from my supposing the impatience of the troops from the New England colonies to get to their families. Near three hundred of them arrived few days ago, unable to do any duty; but, as soon as I administered that grand specific—a discharge—they instantly acquired health; and, rather than be detained a few days to cross the water, they undertook a march from here of two hundred miles with the greatest alacrity."

General Washington says, in a letter to Gov. Reed, of Pennsylvania:

"In the two last weeks we have enlisted but about two thousand men, whereas I was confidently led to believe by all the officers I conversed with that we should by this time have had the regiments nearly completed. Our total number amounts to ten thousand five hundred; and a large portion of them are returned no longer as recruits, but as men who have been discharged, and are now going forth perpetually requiring all officers, upon pain of being cashiered, and recruits of being treated as deserters, to join their regiments by the first day of next month, that I may know my real strength."

And the danger had increased, and with it the solicitude of Washington, when every appearance he was master of had been exhausted to augment the army, he says:

"So far from my having an army of 20,500 men, well armed, &c., I have been here with less than one-half of it, including sick, furloughed, and on command; and these neither armed nor clothed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such that I have been obliged to use arts to conceal it from my own officers."

He charges them with even carrying off the arms of the country. He says:

"So many have been carried off, partly by stealth, but chiefly as a matter of course, that we have not at this time one hundred guns in the stores, of all that have been taken in the prize-ships of the soldiers, notwithstanding the regiments are not half equipped."

I might multiply similar extracts, but I do not care to press this subject further. I am content that history shall adjudge the claims of South Carolina and Massachusetts. Of blood and of treasure my State furnishes, her share. After 1777, at no time were there more than 6,000 British troops in New England. Why were they not swept away? Why did not the 88,000 valiant heroes of Massachusetts alone center there with their daring courage? Sir, where were these valiant men? If you can find out where they were, I, I speak, you can do more than the British ever did.

I pass now, sir, to another point. We have waged two wars with Great Britain during our brief existence as one of the powers of the earth. Let us invoke history to show the course of Massachusetts in the last war—the war of 1812.

In alluding to the aggressions of Great Britain against us, the memorial of the Boston merchants to Congress says:

"Unless the present disposition of the British admiralty courts and navy officers can be counteracted and removed, a widely dispersed and unprotected commerce, extending to every region of the globe, will only serve to invite degradation to bankruptcy, ourselves and enrich others, until such commerce be swept from the face of the ocean."

They further state that—

"A tacit submission to pretensions thus lofty would be an abandonment of rights openly recognised, and a dereliction of the most important commercial interests of our country."

And they add—

"Reason and the most powerful considerations of humanity enjoin it as a duty on the United States to oppose these pretensions."

mustered and returning a proper roll; but a claim was immediately made for pay by lunar months, and several regiments have declined taking up their warms on this account."

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And they add—

"Reason and the most powerful considerations of humanity enjoin it as a duty on the United States to oppose these pretensions."

And that—

"These pretensions are 'unsound in point of principle, offensive in practice, and nugatory in effect.'"—June 20, 1806.

The Salem memorial to Congress says:

"It would, in their opinion, if established, create greater evils than it professes to redress, by perpetrating strife, destroying the emulations of trade, embarrassing commercial intercourse, and letting loose the passions to prey on the miseries and plunder the property of the innocent. It would subject neutrals to hazard nearly as perilous as those of actual hostilities; and, independent of its influence in stimulating to revenge and retaliation, it would transfer the benefits of peace to its victorious usurper of the ocean."

Your memorialist wish to take no part in the contests which now convulse the world, but acting with impartiality towards all nations, to reap the fruits of a just neutrality. If, however, conciliation cannot effect the purpose of justice, and an appeal to arms be the last and necessary protection of honor, they feel no disposition to decline the common danger, or shrink from the common contribution."

"Relying on the wisdom and firmness of the General Government in its behalf, they feel no hesitation to pledge their lives and properties in support of the measures which may be adopted to vindicate the public rights and redress the public wrongs."—January 20, 1806.

The memorial of the merchants of Newburyport, December, 1805, says:

"In many cases our vessels and cargoes have been captured, tried, and condemned in courts of law, under unusual and alarming proceedings, which, if permitted to continue, threaten the ruin of our commercial interests."

"Having sustained these losses and injuries in the prosecution of our lawful commerce and in the exercise of our just rights, we rely with confidence on the wisdom, firmness, and justice of our Government, to obtain for us the satisfaction, and to grant to us that protection, which a regard to the honor of our country, no less than the rights of our citizens, must dictate and require."

The aggressions of Great Britain continued, and her hostile legislation was additionally evoked. Our commerce was confiscated, and our seamen were impressed.

The Congress of the United States adopted the following resolutions, all looking to war, and only defensible as war measures. Mr. Quincy, and the leaders of the Massachusetts delegation, if not the whole delegation, voted for these resolutions:

[From the Journal]

"The question was taken on the following resolution and passed."—Dec. 16, 1811.

"That it is expedient to authorize the President, under proper regulations, to accept the service of any number of volunteers, not exceeding five thousand, to be organized, trained, and held in readiness to act, on such service as the exigencies of government may require."

"Same day the question was taken on the following resolution and passed:

"That the President be authorized to order, from time to time, such detachments of the militia, as, in his opinion, the public service may require."

"Same day the question was taken on the following resolution and passed:

"That all the vessels not now in service belonging to the navy, and worthy of repair, be immediately fitted up and put into commission."

"Dec. 19, 1811.—The question was taken on the following resolution and passed:

"That it is expedient to permit our merchant vessels, owned exclusively by resident citizens, to arm under proper regulations, to be prescribed by law, in self-defence against all unlawful proceedings towards them on the high seas."

"Feb. 19, 1812.—The engrossed bill for authorizing a loan for one (11) millions of dollars was read the third time and passed."

The war was declared, and what part did Massachusetts take in this eventful drama? General Lincoln, in the lower house of his legislature declared that—

"The real cause of the war must be traced to the first systematic abandonment of the policy of Washington and the friends and framers of the constitution to implacable animosity against all enemies in the government of the country; to the influence of worthless foreigners over the press and the deliberations of the government in all its branches; to a jealousy of the commercial States, fear of their power, contempt of their pursuits, and ignorance of their true character and importance; to the capidity of certain States for the wilderness reserved for the miserable aborigines; to a violent passion for conquest."

"Not to be outdone, the Senate of Massachusetts then resolved that—

"The war was founded in falsehood, declared without necessity, and its real object was extent of territory by unjust conquests, and to add the late tyrant of Europe in his view of aggrandizement."

Pending the preparations for war, John Henry was sent from Great Britain to the East, on States. His instructions were to "see how far the malcontents would exert their influence to bring about a separation from the general Union." Also, "how far, in such an event, they would look to England for assistance, or be disposed to enter into a connection with us" (the people of Canada).

He says, writing from Boston, March 7, 1809:

"I have already given a decided opinion that a declaration of war is not to be expected; but, contrary to all reasonable calculation, should the Congress possess spirit and independence enough to place their popularity in jeopardy by so strong a measure, the legislature of Massachusetts will declare itself permanent until a new election of members; invite a Congress, to be composed of delegates from the Federal States, and erect a separate government for their common defence and common interest."

I will not multiply extracts from the same source.

After war was declared, Massachusetts exercised all her energies to cripple the operations of the government, and to bring defeat upon our cause. Knowing that the war could not be conducted without money, she obstructed the government loan in every way. A combination was formed in Boston to defeat it. The author of the Olive Branch, on page 207, says:

"Shortly after the declaration of war, there was a combination formed to prevent the success of the loans authorized by Congress. I believe that nearly all those who entered into this scheme resided in the Eastern States, particularly in Boston, which was the grand focus of the conspiracy."

He also says of the scheme:

"The success in the Eastern States was considerable. Few men have the courage to stem the tide of popular delusion when it sets in very strong. There were some, however, who subscribed openly, in defiance of denunciations and threats. Others of less firm texture loaned their money by stealth, and as clandestinely as if it were reasonable."—Olive Branch, page 800.

Money was then abundant, for John Lowell, in his Road to Ruin, says:

"Money is such a drug (the surest sign of the former prosperity and present insecurity of trade) that men, against their consciences, their honor, their duty, their professions, and promises, are willing to lend secretly, to support the very measures which are both intended and calculated for their ruin."—See Road to Ruin, by John Lowell.

So odious did they make the war, that subscriptions to the Government loan were made secretly. The following advertisement is proof: From the Boston Gazette, April 14, 1814.

THE LOAN.

Subscriptions will be received through the agency of the subscriber to the 25th instant, inclusive.

To avoid the inconvenience of personal appearance to subscribe, applications in writing will be received from any part of the State. Each applicant will name the highest rate he will give, and if the loan shall be granted lower than his proposal, he will reap the benefit; but if higher than his offer, he will have no share in it.

The amount, rate, and name of any applicant shall, at his request, be known only to the subscriber. All the business shall be transacted and certificates delivered to the subscribers without expense. JESSE PUTNAM.

The author of the Olive Branch well and properly remarks that—

"Men in the 'moral and religious' town of Boston are obliged to lend their money to their own Government by stealth."

"But in the face of day, within the knowledge of a whole community, they send specie to the common enemy, to support him against their own country!"

"Can human nature sink lower? They are [too] moral and too religious to rejoice at the victories of their fellow-citizens; but they are neither 'too moral nor too religious' to aid the enemy to victory. An age in penitence in sackcloth and ashes would not offset this foul blot from the conscience of Boston."—[Olive Branch, page 312.]

Not satisfied, however, with crippling the Government and making the war odious, the patriotic State of Massachusetts aided the enemy with money.

Pious Boston, patriotic Boston, Puritanical Boston! well may she exclaim, "Thank God, I am not as others are!" Her property mainly residing upon the African slave trade, loans