

The Position of Lancaster County on the Missouri Compromise.

I am requested to write a short paper on our county's attitude toward the Missouri Compromise. The Society has adopted the plan of having all the papers of the year upon one or another of the various phases of Lancaster County and Slavery. It is hoped this plan will result in a concentrated research upon this single topic, by various members of the Society, and that, thereby, the last authoritative word on the subject may be the product which our Society's research and industry brings forth. For our Society to be the final authority upon any historical subject will be a great honor to it. The plan also will give unity to the work of the year. Then, too, the public celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the chief manifestation of slavery in Lancaster County (The Christiana Riot) is designed to be a great moral object lesson and to accentuate the beauty of the long-established peace and harmony between the sections of neighboring States which clashed sixty years ago in the riot. The public celebration is also intended to cap the climax of the year's work.

This event will be held in a few days; and we feel sure it will meet the expectation of all.

It is hoped that the plan of taking up a subject during a whole year and exhausting it will be continued. Unity, dignity and authority will be achieved by that means. It would seem that the "Opening of the Conestoga Valley

200 Years Ago" is a fair topic to work upon, in 1912, because in 1712 the settlement in the Conestoga Valley began; as it had begun in the Pequea Valley in 1710.

In treating the subject, "Lancaster County's Position On the Missouri Compromise," the simplest form in which to discuss it is to take up the record of our County's Congressman on the subject, as he reflected the local sentiment. This method I have adopted. There are no contemporaneous accounts in our local newspapers reflecting the home position on the question.

Miss Martha Clark has kindly consented to add to this paper the genealogical history of our Congressman at that time, Hon. Jacob Hibshman, and also give some account of his public, political and patriotic career on other questions aside from those arising in his Congressional career.

Our county was opposed to compromises of any kind on the subject of slavery, in any section of the United States, and at any time. In harmony with the early efforts to abolish slavery in this country, among the foremost of which was the Act of Pennsylvania of 1780, our county took advanced ground on the question.

The early county Quakers, German Mennonites and others felt the institution wrong from the beginning, and had practically none of the slaves owned in this county. Former papers on this subject show that the majority of slaves here were held by the other nationalities, who were in the minority—who were indeed much in the minority—in the county. Thus, by the time of 1820 and '21, the Missouri struggle, our county was well rooted in its enmity to slavery.

Our Congressman, Jacob Hibshman, strongly reflected the local sentiment,

during his term in Congress representing us, viz., 1819 to 1821.

When the question of Missouri's admission came up, Hibshman, knowing the House to be composed so as to be able to prohibit slavery in that territory, cast a deciding vote not to let the opportunity slip to wipe slavery out of Missouri, the vote being 87 to 88. (An. 16th Cong., 1st Sess., 938.)

When the Senate sent to the House an amendment to the effect that Missouri should be admitted without the restriction of slavery, on vote, Hibshman voted against it, and demanded slavery restricted out of the proposed new State (do. 1410).

When the Senate proposed that two States be admitted—Maine free and Missouri slave—and sent that proposal to the House, Hibshman voted that they both be admitted free or Missouri be not admitted at all (do. 1455).

When the vote was taken on allowing slavery north of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, north latitude, Hibshman voted against it being allowed north of that line (do. 1456). On February 29, 1819, the House took a vote on the question of allowing Missouri by a convention to decide whether she will have slavery or not; Hibshman voted against allowing her any such privilege (do. 1559). A vote was then taken on disallowing slavery in Missouri, and Hibshman voted for this, though about ten Northern Congressmen deserted their stand (do. 1565). A little later a vote was taken on the motion that even if slavery be not allowed in Missouri, the State should not be admitted until her whole Constitution was satisfactory to Congress. This was an extreme position and was lost, 49 to 125. Hibshman was found in this small band of 49 (do. 1566).

When a joint committee reported the compromise, that is allowing slavery in

Missouri, but no more slavery north of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, Hibshman voted against it, because it was yielding the Northern position (do. 1586). He held this stand, though 12 or 14 Northern men voted for the compromise, so that it carried, 90 to 87.

When these questions had all been disposed of and, December 11, 1820, the question of approving Missouri's Constitution came up, Hibshman voted against it, and in favor of keeping Missouri out, because she allowed and was permitted to have slavery; and the vote to reject the State carried, 93 to 79 (do. 669).

Clay now saw that there was no hope of admitting Missouri and urged another joint committee (do. 1027). Every means was tried to compromise. The joint committee favored allowance of slavery in Missouri, but that there be no more slaves north of her southern line. Hibshman opposed this. Then it was moved she be allowed the slaves she now has, but promise to let slavery die out with the death of her present slaves. Hibshman would not agree to this—he wanted immediate abolishment of slavery in Missouri as a condition to let her come in (do. 1114). Later he agreed to the two-year limit; but only 61 votes for it were cast.

Finally a vote was taken and Missouri was thrown out, by reason of several Congressmen being absent. Clay asked to have the vote reconsidered so that the absent ones, who now had come in, could vote. Hibshman voted against reconsideration, though only 66 members voted with him (do. 1120). Finally, however, Missouri was admitted, but at every step Hibshman voted against it because she was allowed to retain slavery. Thus, through her Congressman, Lancaster County is registered as having opposed any slavery at all in Missouri.

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