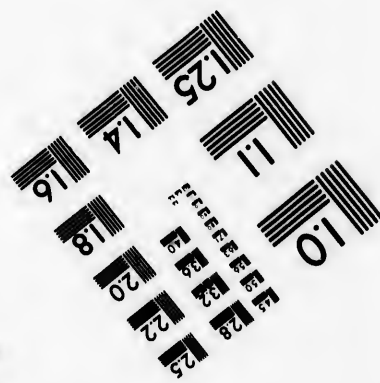
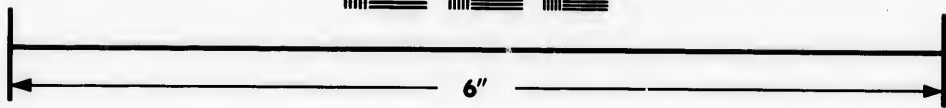
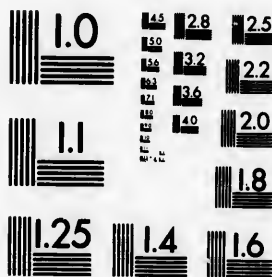


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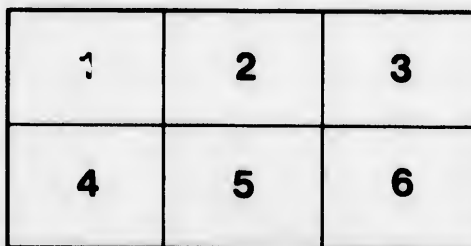
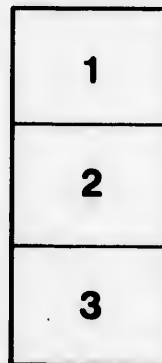
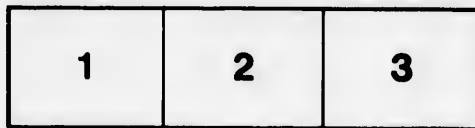
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S P E E C H

OF

MR. LEONARD H. SIMS, OF MISSOURI,

ON THE

OREGON QUESTION.

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*Delivered in the House of Representatives, U. S., January 5, 1846.*

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WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY J. AND G. S. GIDEON.

1846.

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## SPEECH.

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The resolutions reported to the House by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, giving notice to Great Britain of the termination of the treaty of 1818, in relation to the joint occupancy of Oregon, being under consideration—

Mr. SIMS obtained the floor, and addressed the House as follows:

He ought probably, he said, to apologise to the House for claiming their attention; but on the other side of the hall he saw a colleague, who, with himself, resided on the western frontier of Missouri, in the region which was nearest the Oregon Territory; and it must be conceded by gentlemen that those who lived in that quarter took a deep interest in this subject. It might be recollected, too, that the people of far-famed Missouri, and their representatives here, had ever taken an anxious interest in the Oregon question. He would be wanting in his duty, therefore, to the people of Missouri if he failed to make some remarks, though he did not profess to be able to enlighten them on this important subject.

Mr. Speaker, well may you, as well as every member on this floor—nay, the American people—recollect the deep and ardent interest which the lamented LINN, formerly of the United States Senate, from Missouri, felt on this subject. He it was, to a very great extent, who prepared the minds, not only of the people of Missouri, but of the whole Union, on this important subject, that now prevails, with such unanimity of feeling on the immediate steps necessary to be taken for the successful occupation of the territory in dispute. He it was who adhered to the rights of his own country, and at the same time had respect for the rights of others.

Sir, the first proposition which I intend to consider I will put in the form of an interrogatory. I ask this vast and enlightened nation whether Oregon is ours or not? I have heard no man yet who dared to say that our right was not good to the whole territory. Now, sir, if we have a right to



Oregon up to the 49th parallel of north latitude, we have the right to it as been su  
to 54° 40'. anger. A

I beg leave to refer the House to the act of delivery of Astoria from this children  
British Government to that of the United States, which is in the following fertile hom  
language, to wit: I will no

“In obedience to the commands of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, if it be in o  
gent, signified in a despatch from the Right Honorable the Earl Bathurst, migrants f  
addressed to the partners or agents of the Northwest Company, bearing and I was  
date the 27th of January, 1818; and in obedience to a subsequent order to those  
dated the 26th of July, from William H. Sheriff, esq., captain of his Majesty's ship  
which I com  
Majesty's ship *Andromache*, we, the undersigned, do, in conformity to the resolutions  
first article of the treaty of Ghent, restore to the Government of the United States  
with a nat  
States, through its agent, J. B. Prevost, esq., the settlement of Fort George, on the  
any other  
Columbia river. Given under our hands in triplicate, We have  
Fort George, Columbia river, this 6th day of October, 1818. upon it are  
poses of G

F. HICKEY,

*Captain of his Majesty's ship Blossom.* such ques

J. KEEFE,

*Of the Northwest Company.*” frontier, w

I will also refer the House to the acceptance thereof, by the American giving no  
commissioner, which is laid down in the following language, viz: pancy of t

“I do hereby acknowledge to have this day received, in behalf of the we should  
Government of the United States, the possession of the settlement design we made  
nated above, in conformity to the first article of the treaty of Ghent. Give ion of th  
under my hand in triplicate, at Fort George, Columbia river, this 6th fused, an  
October, 1818. mise of th

J. B. PREVOST,

*Agent for the United States.*” the gentl  
that the l

Shortly after the interchange of this correspondence, the British flag wa the Presi  
hailed down, and the American ensign placed in its stead. vate care

Sir, I ask the members on this floor what means would have been more tion to re  
effective in the *surrender of the Oregon Territory* than the above. occupied

It may be true that the people of Missouri, whom I have the honor, in in bad f  
part, to represent, feel a more warm affection for Oregon than others in this cepted, t  
nation. I cannot myself help feeling for it the warmest affection. If Mr. P  
therefore, I should say anything calculated to wound the feelings of any red to an  
who hear me, I assure them that it is not my intention. I have witnessed. ernmen  
with deep solicitude, the tears of the mother in parting with her sons and Mr. S  
daughters, when I have seen them take up the travel for Oregon, which man fro

right to it, as been said by gentlemen to be a route so impracticable and so full of  
 anger. And I have sympathized in the feelings of the aged father, when  
 a from this children were departing for that country, where they desired to find a  
 the follow fertile home on the borders of the Pacific.

I will notice what the gentleman from South Carolina said, (Mr. RHETT,)  
 the Prince If it be in order, as to this country being the refuge of liberty, and free to all  
 Earl Bathurst migrants from every nation who are suffering under tyranny and oppression;  
 any, bearing and I was surprised that he was willing to let Oregon alone, and thus close  
 quent ordet to those who may seek, under our protection, a home in that country,  
 n of his M which I conceive will be the probable results if we fail to adopt the pending  
 ormity to t resolutions. He would leave our rights in Oregon the subject of negotiation  
 f the Unit with a nation which never yielded any thing in its diplomacy to us, or to  
 ent of F any other people.

triplicate, We have, here, openly discussed every branch of this question, and our vews  
 upon it are known to all the world. But you can never tell what are the pur-  
 Y, poses of Great Britain from the debates in her Parliament, for the decision of  
 Blossom. such questions does not depend upon the small portion of the popular prin-  
 E, ciple which is imposed in her system of government. Being a resident of the  
 mpany." frontier, where I have cast my lot for life, I feel very deeply the necessity of  
 e America giving notice to Great Britain of our purpose to terminate the joint occu-  
 z: pancy of Oregon. The gentleman from South Carolina asks for reasons why  
 ehalf of th we should do this, and I will give them. Proposition after proposition have  
 ment desig we made to Great Britain for the settlement of the question, and the divis-  
 ent. Give ion of the territory between her and us. All these she has steadily re-  
 this 6th fused, and, had I been with the President when he offered the last compro-  
 ST, mise of the 49th parallel, I would have advised him against it. But, sir,  
 States." the gentleman from New York, (Mr KING,) was mistaken when he said  
 sh flag wa that the President had not made that offer in sincerity. Sir, I have known  
 been more the President intimately for many years, during his whole public and pri-  
 ve. vate career. I have known his whole history, and have marked his devo-  
 honor, in tion to republican principles in every station that he has filled, and he has  
 ners in thi occupied no small portion of his country's history. *He never made an offer*  
 ction. If *in bad faith.* In making this proposition he supposed that it would be ac-  
 gs of any cepted, and he intended to be bound by it.

Mr. PRESTON KING enquired of the gentleman from Missouri if he refer-  
 red to any thing which he had said, when he spoke of the faith of the Gov-  
 witnessed. ernment?

Mr. SIMS said: I refer to the rumor spoken of by the honorable gentle-  
 man from New York.

If so, said Mr. KING, I desire to say that I said nothing on the subject of the faith of the Government. The question of faith, good or bad, was not at all involved in the offer last made by our Government to Great Britain. If it had been accepted our Government would have been bound by it, and the line settled at 49°. It was for this reason he had said he would not have made the offer. The offer was rejected by the British Government, and we were saved from all injury. He, (Mr. KING,) felt no sensitiveness on this subject of the faith of the Government. The honor of the country was in safe hands, in the care of the administration. His acts, and the votes of those who sent him here, were the testimonials of his faith for the past, as they would be for the future.

Mr. SIMS resumed. It is so common on this floor for inexperienced members to make apologies for their embarrassments, I will not offer any for mine. I hope gentlemen will understand, what I have heretofore said, that I do not intend to make any personal allusions to any gentlemen here designed to be offensive. I find so much difficulty in getting along with all the questions that may be raised by the North, or by the South, and by lawyers, and metaphysicians, and learned doctors, who abound here, that I shall be compelled to travel slowly in my remarks. I hope, therefore, that gentlemen will keep cool and suffer me to get through. I was about to say, when interrupted by the gentleman, that the fact of the President's having offered the 49° as a compromise, is no reason why he should make it again, or that he should take it if now offered by the British Government.

Sir, suppose that I have a cargo of flour in the port of Boston, a gentleman come to buy it, I offer it for six dollars per barrel, and he refuses it; suppose that he goes out on the wharf and finds that flour is worth eight dollars per barrel, am I bound to take the offer of six dollars per barrel on his return and demanding it, or would it be good sense to make a similar proposition, thereby losing two dollars on each barrel? This is precisely an analogous case.

A great deal has been said here about war. I wish to be distinctly understood what banner I fight under—it is for Oregon, *all or none, now or never*.

Not only I, but the people of Missouri, whom I in part represent, will stand up to this motto. Around it we will rally, and for it we will fight, till the British lion shall trail in the dust. The lion has cowered before us before; and I have no fears, in the event of our being *united*, he will do so *again*. I believe that there is unity and strength enough in the Ameri-

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ican people to enforce their rights and repel aggressions. Talk of whipping this nation! Sir, it is folly—the height of folly. I have not been brought up in the tented field, nor accustomed to make war an exercise, and do not so much thirst for marshal renown as to desire to witness such a war as America and Britain would make. Sighing and moaning would be its consequences; deep affliction would locate itself in the cities, towns, and rural scenes of our widespread country. Notwithstanding all this, I cannot fear the war, nor doubt its success on our part, should we be forced to meet it.

The gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. GIDDINGS,) had brought several other topics into view; and I believe that he would suffer much if he did not say something about abolition and slavery. As he is now delivered of his tiring load, I hope that he will not again impose upon this House similar remarks. I do not wish to say anything against the South. No, God forbid; for she has too often displayed her patriotism on the battle-field, and her devotion to democratic principles. I do not, sir, desire to witness the shock of war, its pomp and parade, and its bloody fields; nor do I ever wish to hear the shouts of those triumphs which I feel that we should achieve in this struggle; but I do hope that we shall never submit to British dictation.

When I was a boy, sir, a small boy, in 1815, I was with my father at church, where he was offering his prayers to the Almighty; and it was then that the news of the victory of New Orleans reached the spot. I never felt so happy as at that moment. At that moment my love of country commenced, and from that hour it has increased more and more every year; and I shall be ever ready to peril everything in my power for the good of my country. Sir, I do not fear, if the resolutions now being debated are adopted, that war will be the result. Will Great Britain make war upon us for taking and using that which is our own? Will she do this, when the treaty itself provides that either Government may terminate the joint occupancy by giving notice? If she desires to have a war, let her see to it. Sir, I am for the whole of Oregon, and for nothing else but the whole. Should it require of us, in self-defence, to make bloody the decks of our ships, crimson our rivers from their mountain sources to the ocean, and cover our land with the slain in battle, we are prepared for the sacrifice.

I cannot hold the idea that some gentlemen do, that Britain could defeat us; the thing is impossible. Why did she not conquer us in former struggles? Because we were struggling for liberty and the rights of man. Our efforts were aided by the Ruler of the destiny of nations, and the

strong arms of the lovers of liberty—ay, that very liberty which dreads not comparison with glory!

Why should we give up Oregon, and cut off the West from the trade with China, and give it all to England? If we show that we are afraid of Great Britain, the loss of the country will be certain.

What is peace without honor? If we once give way on one point, we shall be soon called on to yield another, and so on, till we have nothing to lose. The situation of things on the northeastern boundary I do not wish to see in the West. Those neighbors on one side of the line, see on those on the other bitter foes. Talk about settling the country, extending our laws with the joint occupancy in existence, is a great absurdity. To see two judicial tribunals on the same square mile—one under the British crown, the other under that of the United States—American militia and British soldiers mustering in the same field in the time of peace—would be the result of the policy urged by gentlemen opposing the notice. Perpetual hostility must be expected whenever two governments attempt or desire equal jurisdiction and rights, held and retained on their respective parts. It would be unnatural to expect peace and harmony to prevail under such existing circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I should have much at risk in the event of war—not in wealth, but I have a wife and children, and I love them with all the heart and soul that I possess. No one can love his family more than I do mine, unless his stronger intellect may give him more strength of affection; and that family would be exposed to the merciless savages, who will, as ever, become the allies of Great Britain in every war with us. They will be exposed to the horrors of the tomahawk and scalping knife of the cruel and unrelenting savage. But, sir, in the face of this danger, the people of the frontiers, with all the West, will daringly press, with the rifle in one hand and the implements of husbandry in the other, to the valley of the Columbia. With the former they will mark their enemies; with the latter subdue the forest, and erect habitations for themselves and families. It is not impossible that I may be amongst those who will be seen in this onward and western march. I am far west from the home of my birth. In early life, ere my mind reasoned, I was conveyed, in the lap of my mother, across the mountains, and was located, without the volition of my own will, on the waters of Cumberland, Middle Tennessee. I have since that time, by choice, found my present home on the Ozark Heights, in South-western Missouri, where the signs of savage life can yet be traced, but where the inroads of civilization are obliterating the footsteps of the warlike

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dreads not the tombs. The Indian and the white man alike love the tombs and the resting place of their sires; but destiny moves them both; yet their spirits are afraid of the trade in the graves about the homes of their birth.

We talk about aggression upon British rights. I hold in my hand, and submit to the honorable members upon this floor, a compiled catalogue of the foreign rapacities of Great Britain, which shows, conclusively, her thirst for power, and wantonness in her seizures of the rights of others, and her grasping desire to lord it over land and sea. But to the catalogue:

*The foreign rapacities of Great Britain.*

To see	Names of Provinces.	From whom taken.	Date.	Square miles.
the British	Jamaica -	- Spain -	- 1655 -	- 6,250
militia and	Honduras -	- Spain -	- 1670 -	- 3,600
would be	St. Helena -	- Dutch -	- 1673 -	- 46
Perpetual	Gibraltar -	- Spain -	- 1704 -	- 2
or desire	Lower Canada -	- France -	- 1759 -	- 250,000
itive parts.	Upper Canada -	- France -	- 1760 -	- 100,000
nder such	Grenada -	- France -	- 1762 -	-
	Dominica -	- France -	- 1763 -	-
r—not in	St. Vincent -	- France -	- 1763 -	-
th all the	Bahamas -	- France and Spain,	1783 -	- 5,424
han I do	Tobago -	- France -	- 1793 -	- 88
affection;	Ceylon (in part) -	- Dutch -	- 1796 -	- 12,500
will, as	Trinidad -	- France and Spain,	1797 -	- 2,000
hey will	Malta -	- Knights of St. John,	1800 -	- 98
the cruel	Gozza -	- Do.	1800 -	- 8
people of	Demarara -	- Dutch -	- 1803 -	-
e in one	Essequibo -	- Dutch -	- 1803 -	- 76,000
y of the	Berbice -	- Dutch -	- 1803 -	-
ne latter	St. Lucia -	- Dutch -	- 1803 -	- 3,000
. It is	Cape of Good Hope -	- Dutch -	- 1806 -	- 130,000
his on-	Heligoland -	- Denmark -	- 1807 -	- 5
h. In	Mauritius -	- France -	- 1810 -	- 756
another,	Ionian Islands, viz :			
ny own	Corfu -	- France -	- 1814 -	- 227
ce that	Cephalonia -	- France -	- 1814 -	- 348
South-	Zante -	- France -	- 1814 -	- 156
ed, but	Santa Maura -	- France -	- 1814 -	- 180
varlike	Itaca -	- France -	- 1814 -	- 44

Ceeigo	-	France	-	1814	-	116	Kuma
Paxo	-	France	-	1814	-	26	Saugu
Ceylon (in part)	-	Native king	-	1815	-	12,000	Darwa
Chusan	-	China	-	1844	-	800	Ahme
British India, viz :	-	-	-	-	-	584,020	Candi
Twenty-four Pergunnahs	-	Native princes	-	1757	-	-	Ajme
Musalipatan	-	Do.	-	1759	-	-	Poon
Burdwan	-	Do.	-	1760	-	-	Conc
Manapoor	-	Do.	-	1760	-	-	Mahr
Chittagong	-	Do.	-	1760	-	-	On th
Bengal	-	Do.	-	1765	-	-	Conc
Bahar	-	Do.	-	1765	-	-	Beju
Orissa	-	Do.	-	1765	-	-	Sing
Chingleput	-	Do.	-	1765	-	-	Mala
Northern Cicars	-	Do.	-	1766	-	-	Assa
Gemindary of Benares	-	Do.	-	1775	-	-	Arac
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Carnatic	-	Do.	-	1801	-	-	
Goruckpore	-	Do.	-	1801	-	-	
Lower Doab	-	Do.	-	1801	-	-	
Bareily	-	Do.	-	1801	-	-	
Bundelcund (in part)	-	Do.	-	1802	-	-	
Cutach	-	Do.	-	1803	-	-	
Balasore	-	Do.	-	1803	-	-	
Upper Doab	-	Do.	-	1803	-	-	
Delhi territory	-	Do.	-	1803	-	-	
Gujrat (in part)	-	Do.	-	1805	-	-	

116	Kumaon	-	-	Native Princes	-	1815
26	Saugur and Huttah	-	-	Do.	-	1817
12,000	Darwar	-	-	Do.	-	1817
800	Ahmedabad	-	-	Do.	-	1817
584,020	Candish	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	Ajmere	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	Poonah	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	Concan	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	Mahratta country, (in part)	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	On the Nerbudda	-	-	Do.	-	1818
	Concan (in part)	-	-	Do.	-	1820
	Bejupoor (in part)	-	-	Do.	-	1822
	Singapore	-	-	Do.	-	1824
	Malacca	-	-	Do.	-	1825
	Assam	-	-	Do.	-	1826
	Aracan	-	-	Do.	-	1826
	Tavoy	-	-	Do.	-	1826
	Ye	-	-	Do.	-	1826
	Coorg	-	-	Do.	-	1834

States paying black mail in India, viz: - - - 433,000  
 Berar, Onde, Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, Sattarah, Dominions of the  
 Nizam, Dominions of the Rajpoot chief, Dominions of the Bundelcund  
 chief.

Settlements of Great Britain.	Date.	Square miles
New Brunswick	1510	27,704
Nova Scotia	1510	18,742
Cape Breton	1510	
Prince Edward's Island	1510	2,131
Newfoundland	1510	35,913
Barbadoes	1605	164
Bermudas	1609	20
St. Kitts	1623	67
Gambia	1631	20
Montserrat	1632	46
Antiqua	1632	108
Tortola	1666	42
Sierra Leone	1787	50
New South Wales	1787	50,000
Van Dieman's Land	1803	
Western Australia	1829	
New Holland, parts unsettled		3,000,000



## RECAPITULATION.

	Square miles.
British acquisition by seizures from other nations	- 1,620,694
British acquisition by peaceful settlements	- 135,007
British acquisition by claim without settlement	- 3,000,000

Sir, you will see from this catalogue that Great Britain has acquired, by force, one million six hundred and twenty thousand six hundred and ninety-four square miles; by peaceful settlement, one hundred and thirty-five thousand and seven square miles; by claim, without settlement, three millions of square miles. What nation has she not plundered of her territory? Ask France how she (England) got the Canadas? France will answer, by conquest and blood. Ask Spain and India, nay, the world, how she has acquired possessions belonging to them. And shall the American people or the American Congress invite Great Britain to come here and take from our children their inheritance?

It has been said that the route to Oregon was impracticable; that it is beset with dangerous enemies, and that we could not send troops to Oregon, nor provisions to feed them. Now, sir, we of Missouri can fit out ten thousand wagon loads of provisions for Oregon at any time, and ten thousand wagon boys to drive them, who, with their wagon whips, can beat and drive off all the British and Indians that they find in their way.

Some say that the ships of England will bring soldiers and provisions, and block up the mouth of the Columbia, quarter her troops upon the territory, and starve us out of the country. Both parties would have to participate in this; and, take my word for it, Her Majesty's troops would have their share of hunger, from the fact, that her hireling muskets could not compete with the deadly aim of the Western rifleman in felling game, so plentiful in that portion of our Western domain.

If the Pilgrims, who landed at Plymouth over two centuries ago, had landed at the mouth of the Columbia, the same necessity for occupying the whole North American continent would then have existed that now exists. We should have pressed eastward, until we occupied the shores of the Atlantic, and southward to the Gulf of Mexico.

We have heard it said that Oregon is poor and sterile. Then why does Great Britain want it? We have agricultural lands in the vast valley of the Mississippi, and we desire to have some manufacturers on the Pacific, and a share in its commerce and navigation. If the fact does exist, that a portion of the country is not so well adapted to farming, it is only an argument in favor of our holding on to it; for it is evident that this Government, at a future

day, must enter largely into the manufactory of her products—for even now, after supplying herself at home with articles to satiate her people, the remaining surplus is so large, in connexion with that of other countries, that our producers are poorly rewarded for their industry. It, then, must happen that on the Columbia and the Pacific there will be established, as at the east and north, upon the Atlantic and the lakes, manufactories; that portion of our Government adapted to agriculture is to be found in the fertile valley of the Mississippi; no part of the habitable globe being its equal. If Oregon is not so well supplied with water power, as some have urged, the objection is lost by the successful operation of steam upon machinery. But, sir, much of Oregon is a fine grazing country. There are, already, flocks of cattle feeding upon her luxuriant and fertile pasture, continuing through all seasons of the year. Her hills beneath the snow-peaks are already bleached with the fleece of the sheep, giving reward and comfort to our settler there. Go with me, in imagination, to the plains of Oregon. Let us take an impartial look at this lovely country. What do you behold? Rich and fertile lands, awaiting only the industry of toiling thousands, soon to be rewarded with an increased and plentiful harvest. With every wave that shall leave the shores of the Pacific, bearing off her surplus products, in exchange for the gold of India and the manufactures of China.

How it is possible, sir, that gentlemen from the South should feel so indifferent to the acquisition of Oregon, I cannot see. I belong, morally and geographically, to the country south of Mason and Dixon's line. I am identified with its destiny, and will labor for its interest, peace, and prosperity, at all times, and under all circumstances. But I look upon this as an American question, and upon the country of Oregon as belonging to every portion of the American people, and worthy of the united efforts of this nation, from Maine to Louisiana—from Boston to the farthest settlement in the West.

Without speaking for the people of other States, I must be permitted to say, for the people of Missouri, that there is but one voice and one heart among them on this question. If the whole people of that gallant State could be collected in a hollow square, and the line of  $49^{\circ}$  put before them, and the line  $54^{\circ} 40'$ , they, with entire unanimity of thought and action, would choose the latter. If you put to them the question, notice or no notice, they would all go for the notice, and immediate notice, *and risk the war*.

The more you cry out "war, war, we are in danger of war," the stronger they will go for Oregon and for **THE NOTICE**. It is not in character

with the western people to be thus intimidated. Their love of enterprise and national rights, make them willing to dare and suffer. They have tried their valor on the plains of New Orleans, a bright page in our country's history; and if the venerated patriot and soldier who now sleeps in peace and honor in the shades of the Hermitage, he who refused to be buried in the tomb of a king, could be permitted to give us his advice, he would say—go for Oregon, and for the whole of Oregon—*go for the notice, and that notice now*. England's threats were idle tales to him. Her eagerness to grasp the property of others, was by him despised. He universally exhorted his countrymen "to ask nothing but what was right, and submit to nothing that was wrong." Let us follow his example. I must be excused, Mr. Speaker, for speaking of one who was my friend, of one that I delight to honor; under the roof of him who has shown me kindness, from whom I have embodied my political creed, one who took the Constitution of his country and used it as a political telescope, through it saw his duty, and beheld his country's interest; he straightway performed the one and advanced the other. He prized the Constitution of his country, the most effectual ornament and guide to our republican institutions.

Should our countrymen stray into the roads of anarchy, we will disinter the bones of the patriot Jackson, and point them to the man who struggled for liberty and independence, and who guarded with vigilance the bright inheritance of his much-loved country. He loved her in his youth—age impaired it not—and dying, his exclamations were for his country.

In conclusion, I call upon you, my countrymen, "to come to the rescue" of Young Hickory in the adjustment of the Oregon question; *without the loss of one square mile*.

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