

"Stampedes," Worcester (MA) *Spy*, November 17, 1852  
<https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/worcester-ma-spy-stampedes-november-17-1852>

**Stampedes.**

Scarcely a day passes, on which we do not hear it stated, that there has been a stampede—a flight of slaves from the prison-house of Southern bondage. The "Voice of the Fugitive," a Canadian paper, informs us too, that never before were the escapes to Canada, from our soil, so numerous as they have been this fall. These stampedes, from their inception to the issue of them, are the most heroic events in American history; and yet they are made the greatest of American political crimes. They are dictated by man's natural love of freedom; and are approved by the purest and holiest principles of religion and right; and yet, they are held to be offences of the deepest dye, by the slavebreeders and slavedealers who make the laws, and control the principles of this nation.

The slave power makes laws to prevent the slave from escaping, and, in order to secure his recapture, if he should escape, but these laws neither prevent stampedes, nor secure the return of the fugitives.

Nature and religion are on the side of the slave, and nature and religion are too strong for any bad law, let the modern disciples of Draco say what they please to the contrary. The inborn spirit of liberty impels the southern slave to flee from the "house of bondage;" and the spirit of Christianity compels the northern freeman to aid him in his flight.

On the 21st of October, two fathers, two mothers, and several children, had reached Sandusky, in Ohio, and were leaving in the boat for Detroit, when five professional slavecatchers forcibly dragged the women and children on shore, and took them to the Mayor's office. It was found that the slavecatchers had no-warrant for the apprehension of the slaves, who were immediately borne away to the Lake and carried over the waters in a sail-boat, while the slavehunters could not induce one man in Sandusky, either to let

them have his boat, or assist them in any way, to pursue the fugitives.

This was the triumph of humanity and religion over the "peculiar institution and the Fugitive Slave Law." The boat, impelled by strong willing arms, under the inspiration of generous humane hearts, flew over the blue waters to the "royal land of liberty;" while five slavehunters, representatives of the Fugitive Slave Law, with shackles and fetters in their hands, stood in baffled rage upon the shore, and beheld the escape of men, women, and children from the Republican (shame that we should say it) land of Slavery.

The *Sandusky Journal* tells us of an American mother, who was captured, with the child of her love nestled to her bosom. When she felt the grasp of the kidnapper on her shoulder, she threw away her child, and denied that it was hers.

The love of her child, and the desire to see it free, triumphed in her case over the maternal instinct. She crucified the affections and gave them up a sacrifice to duty and liberty. Did the famed Lavalette, or Elizabeth Fry, or any of the world's moral heroines, ever do a grander deed than this? Did ever a proud and powerful government dwindle down so completely into contempt, as did the Government of the United States with the Fugitive Slave Law in its hand, standing before that poor, hunted, despised, heroic, great-hearted mother? This great government was about to lay its giant hand on the poor child of only a few months old; and was about to confiscate its life to bondage, when it was balled by the maternal heroism of a negro girl. Who says, after this, that the "Fugitive Slave Law must be obeyed?"

We have the assurance of the final triumph of freedom, and the overthrow of slavery in this nation, so long as there is the heroism to produce stampedes, and the goodness that sympathizes with those who participate in them.