

"Jim Lane's Speech at Springfield, Missouri," Junction City (KS) *Smoky Hill and Republican Union*, November 28, 1861

<https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/index.php/document/junction-city-ks-smoky-hill-and-republican-union-jim-lanes-speech-springfield-missouri>

From the Leavenworth Conservative.

Jim Lane's Speech at Springfield, Missouri.

On the evening of November 7th, General Lane was visited by the Twenty-Fourth Indiana Regiment, and made a short speech the substance of which is given below :

FELLOW SOLDIERS : The compliment you pay me to-night is as unexpected as it is undeserved. I am aware that these demonstrations are not intended so much for me as for the Kansas Brigade. Yet I should be the first to appreciate and acknowledge any honors which may be paid us by Indiana. When I forget Indiana, the place of my birth, may my right hand forget her cunning. Indiana has given me Legislative, Executive, Military, and Congressional honors. She has nursed me as a mother nurses her child, and may my heart grow cold if I ever cease to be grateful to my benefactor.

But the home of my adoption, toils and strife, is Kansas. She was an unbroken prairie when first I set foot upon her soil. Against desperate odds she has fought her way up to the sisterhood of States, and already her little army has become famous throughout the nation for its brave and patriotic deeds.

Indiana as a part of the past is enshrined in my affections ; Kansas is my home, and as the living present absorbs my attention, and sways my destiny. I am proud that these two sisters of our glorious Union to-day strike hands with each other on the rebellious soil of Missouri, determined that their blood shall crush out this most causeless and wicked rebellion.

Gentlemen, I shall not conceal the fact that in some respects I differ from my compeers in command as to the manner of conducting the war, and the means best calculated to bring this wretched conflict to a speedy, durable, and honorable close. The point of difference refers, of course, to slavery—the cause of all difference—the Pandora's box from which have issued all

our national troubles. My creed is to let slavery and slaves take care of themselves. If slavery can survive the shock of war, let it live ; but if, between the upper and nether millstones it is ground to powder, it is not for me to gather up the dust.

I do not propose to make war upon slavery, but upon rebels ; and in the meantime let slaves and slavery take care of themselves. An oligarchy more cruel and proscriptive than ever before scourged and cursed a nation, ancient or modern, has

inaugurated this war—has inaugurated it for slavery. And if we are required to protect, defend or in any way help slavery, then we are required to co-operate with the enemy, to protect and defend him. Can we form an alliance with this barbarous foe, and at the same time conquer them and crush them ? When lesser contradictions are reconciled we will think of harmonizing this.

War is at best a terrible calamity. In all the country through which we have marched, the mails are stopped, the schools discontinued, churches are turned into hospitals, and general demoralization prevails. Protract this war, and desolation, moral and material, will mark the track of armies. Justice, humanity, and mercy require that the conflict be ended as speedily as possible.

Astonishing as it may seem to you, soldiers of Indiana, yet it is a fact repeatedly demonstrated that a heavier blow is dealt out to the realm of Secessia in the abduction or freeing of a slave than in the killing of a son in arms. *Abduct from the same family a slave, and kill a son in arms, and the loss of the slave will be regarded as the greater calamity—the wound for which there is no healing balm.* I could bring forward more than a thousand witnesses whose observation and experience have taught them this fact.

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands

National Park Service Network to Freedom / House Divided Project at Dickinson College

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If, then, by allowing the slave to fall into the wake of the army and find the priceless boon of liberty, we avoid bloodshed, and strike death-dealing blows upon the front of the rebellion, does not every consideration of justice require that this policy should be adopted?

This war is for slavery. When we make it the mighty engine for the destruction of slavery, the traitors will cry "enough." They will see that, like the fabled Saturn, they are eating their own children, and will make brief the repast. Every guarantee that is given to slavery by the Government is a new army for the defense of Treason.

The Kansas Brigade has met the enemy in battle and routed him in every encounter. We have destroyed that half-town, half-military post, Osceola, but all our victories combined have not brought the rebels so effectually to their knees as the liberation of the few hundred slaves who have followed the track of our army.

Gentlemen, my logic teaches me that we cannot defend and make war upon the same persons at the same time. If it is the purpose of the Government to crush the rebels and to keep their slaves from stampeding, two armies should be sent into the field.

The advance force might be called the Treason-crushing Army, and should be armed with offensive weapons. The other should move about ten miles in the rear and be called the Slavery-restoring Army; it should be clad in a defensive armor of tripple steel, for such is the meanness of spirit which is bred in the hearts of men by slave-breeding, slave-holding, slave-trading, that the masters would creep into every place of ambush and fire upon the men who were gathering up and returning the fugitive property. It would be illegitimate for the Slavery-restoring army to return the fire—the shot might pierce the heart of some of the pets and darling for whom they were generously acting.

Therefore give them the defensive armor, but no offensive weapons. Such an arrangement, novel as it might seem, must be had if slavery is preserved in the rear of

an army which moves with a force sufficient to crush this huge rebellion. In my opinion the second army should be as numerous as the first. Preserving Slavery will cost the Government ten times as much as crushing the rebellion. [Voices—"That's so."]

The policy inaugurated by the Kansas Brigade, which I have the honor to command, was not adopted in a moment, but is the result of much experience. In a speech recently made in the City of Leavenworth, my feelings of indignation became wrought up to such a pitch that I was betrayed into the use of language which was justly condemned by the religious sentiment of the country, and which in cooler moments meets my earnest disapproval. But whether excited or calm, whether my language be rough or smooth, principle and duty require that our policy be rigidly adhered to until condemned by the Government; and if it shall be condemned—if the Government demand of the Brigade obedience to the behests of Slavery, I shall consider the question of withdrawing from the field.

As soon as the South became convinced that the nationalization of Slavery was impossible, it cried "Down with the Union, let Slavery lift its crest in air!" And here I solemnly asseverate that if Jim Lane is to be compelled to add a note to such an infernal chorus, he breaks his sword and quits the field.

Let us be bold and inscribe upon our banners—"FREEDOM TO ALL." Let us appear what we are, the opponents of Slavery. It is as certain as if written in the Book of fate that this point must be reached before the war is over. Take this ground and it will inspire soldiers with enthusiasm. In courage and steadiness of purpose each soldier will become a Spartan hero. The spirit of the Crusader will be joined to the iron will of the Roman and our armies will be invincible.

These things to you, Indianians, may appear strange, but when your military education has received that peculiar cast

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which experience is sure to give you, and which now characterizes the Kansas soldiers, then will we march shoulder to shoulder against the enslavers of men.

Soldiers, we have a commander on whose courage, skill and kindness of the heart we can always rely. Gen. Hunter has a Kansas education; he has suffered with us because of Slavery and he will, I know, endorse the policy I have advocated to-night.

It should be the business of Congress at its next session to pass a law directing the President by Proclamation to order the rebel States, within thirty or sixty days, to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance or, in default thereof, *declare all men free throughout their borders*. And, so far as I am concerned, I hope the Almighty will so direct the hearts of the rebels that, like Pharaoh, they will persist in their crime. For then we will invade them and strike the shackles from every limb.

I believe that provision should be made for settling the Africans in Hayti, Central or Southern America, and let each race form a separate nation. Liberia has served a glorious purpose in teaching the world that this oppressed and downtrodden people are capable of self-government. I look upon Liberia as the full blown hope of the

whole of Africa. But it is too many thousand miles away for us to colonize 4,000,000 slaves. But our own Continent has room sufficient with a climate suitable for the accommodation of those who, in the mysteries of Providence, have been thrown among us. The good of both races requires separation. Ages of oppression, injury and wrong, have made the African an inferior being in intellect and social attainments to the Caucasian races, and while together, we shall always have cringing servility on the one hand and lordly domination on the other.

Such a proclamation as I have alluded to might have the effect to liberate the slaves of many loyal citizens. I would most cheerfully give my consent to have them paid for all losses out of the national treasury. Let us dare to do right, trusting to the principle that right makes might, and the great Republic will come out of this struggle stronger than ever.

These are some of the reasons why Freedom to All is the watchword of the Kansas Brigade, and would to God I could publish it throughout the army and the country, aye, throughout the world, that it might be heard by tyrants and traitors the world over.