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## AN OPTION FOR FREEDOM IN TEXAS, 1840-1844

People migrated to Texas for many reasons. Disappointed in life or love, some sought a refuge like Davy Crockett who, after losing an election, told his Tennessee constituents, "You may all go to hell and I will go to Texas."<sup>1</sup> Another fugitive, escaping the United States law, said, "If there had been no such place as Texas, I would have been hanged."<sup>2</sup> Although Texas was a raucous place of guns, liquor, crime and war—the promise of its rich, cheap lands bred strong hopes among its people.<sup>3</sup> Leaving New Orleans in 1839, Stephen Pearl Andrews joined the migration to Texas. While growing wealthy there, Andrews also found another hope in the new land from which he developed a way for Texas to avoid slavery.

### I

Son of a prominent "Hard Shell" Baptist minister, Stephen Pearl Andrews was born in 1812 at Templeton, Massachusetts. He spent his youth, often ill and unhappy, in fear of the dreadful, certain hell-fire predicted for the unsaved. Because he was never able to find the salvation required by the Baptists (involving, in his words, "unbounded exuberance of emotionality, melting into divine joy"), Andrews wrote that "my nights were given up to tears and suppressed

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth S. Lynn, editor, *The Comic Tradition in America* (New York, 1958), 168.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Stiff, *The Texan Emigrant* (Cincinnati, 1840), 157.

<sup>3</sup>William R. Hogan, *The Texas Republic, A Social and Economic History* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1946), 10 ff.

wailings over my terrible and hopeless condition." He attended Amherst Academy until 1829, when illness forced him to withdraw. Then, in 1830, he moved to Louisiana at the suggestion of his older brother Thomas, who was practicing law there.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen soon became a teacher at the girls' school in Jackson, Louisiana, which the widow of another brother conducted. His ability and learning impressed the community so much that he was asked in 1832 to teach at Louisiana State University then located in Jackson. He had taught there only six months, however, when his brother called for help in nearby Clinton. Thomas Andrews had been struck down with a Bowie knife by some political opponents, and his hand was so badly cut that he asked his brother to handle his paper work. In time Stephen joined Thomas as a partner in practicing law and real estate speculation in Clinton, Louisiana—then "the centre of a rich agricultural neighborhood, and the focus of an immense amount of business . . ."<sup>5</sup> Learning the Louisiana law in this community, Stephen was able to pass the state bar examination in 1835.

Upon coming South, Andrews had not at first condemned slavery; he recalled that "I do not remember that my first actual contact with slavery greatly shocked me." His deceased brother, Elisha, a Baptist minister, had owned slaves, and his brother Thomas married a wealthy Southern woman, Louisa Tyson, whose dowry contained one hundred slaves. Slavery was an accepted part of the family until Louisa's unexpected conversion to abolitionism when she visited New England in 1834. Upon returning South, Louisa wanted to free her slaves at once, but Thomas demurred. Stephen sympathized with Louisa but believed that any emancipation would be impossible, for he felt "the utter hopelessness of any effort . . . to alleviate in the slightest manner the dreadful crushing weight of [the slave's] condemned and wretched life."

In 1835, Andrews moved into New Orleans partly to avoid

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Pearl Andrews, "Autobiography," in the Commons Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. Unless otherwise noted, the quotations of Andrews before 1835 come from the "Autobiography."

<sup>5</sup> *DeBow's Review*, 11:265 (September, 1851).

the quarrel in his brother's family but also to seek new opportunities for extending his law practice and for supporting his recently acquired wife. While continuing a partnership with his brother in Clinton and presenting many cases with him before the Louisiana Supreme Court, Andrews also took part in New Orleans' social life by joining Thomas Bangs Thorpe and others in forming the Louisiana Temperance Society. He had obtained a position of some wealth and prominence before 1838, when the "Depression of 1837" reached Louisiana and cut short his rising fortune. When Andrews went to Texas in 1839, he went there like everyone else to make a fortune and to satisfy some discontent. Financially, he was disoriented by the depression. Personally, his family life had been rather upset because of the division in his brother's household. Socially unhappy in Louisiana, Andrews publicly condemned the dueling, gambling and drinking; and to himself, he questioned slavery. Like the Pilgrims in Leyden, he would not have his family grow in such an alien atmosphere.

## II

There is no evidence that Andrews had favored any scheme of abolition before he came to Texas, but the opportunities which he found there awakened in him a hope that the new republic could end slavery. Arriving with letters of introduction to important leaders in Texas such as President Mirabeau Lamar, Andrews at once found a place at the Texan bar. Having learned Spanish, he was well prepared to handle the cases of conflicting land titles, so often arising from the Spanish grants. Utilizing his linguistic and legal talents, the Texan Congress commissioned him to translate the republic's laws and constitution into Spanish.<sup>6</sup> Andrews further enjoyed the confidence of President Sam Houston, who authorized him in 1842 to raise immigrants, volunteers, and money in New Orleans, in answer to their boast. "Raise but the war cry, and thousands from this city . . . will flock to the standard . . ."

<sup>6</sup> R. H. Chinn to M. B. Lamar, 24 December 1838, *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (Austin, 1921-27), II, 372; *Journals of the Fourth Congress of the Republic of Texas* (Austin, 1929), III, 31; *Constitucion, Leyes Jenerales, &c de la Republica de Tejas. Traducidas al Castellano por S. P. Andrews, abogado de los tribunales de dicha Repú blica* (Houston, 1841).

At that time the Galveston *Advertiser* declared that Andrews was the foremost lawyer in Texas, standing "confessedly at the head of the bar."<sup>7</sup>

Like most Texan lawyers, Andrews' chief income came less from his legal practice than from his land speculation. Even after leaving Texas (when he had sold or lost most of his property) Andrews still owned over twenty-one thousand acres of good Texas land.<sup>8</sup> Such land had no value until it was populated. An army greater than that at San Jacinto was needed to conquer the vast wilderness, and many looked to the Negro for such a force. While accepting slavery as a necessity, most Texans held their slaves with misgivings. Some thought Negroes were lazy workers, too expensive to maintain; a large slaveholder, James Morgan wrote, "I am the slave for my Negroes—while they are happy and content I am unhappy and the loser by them . . ."<sup>9</sup> Although some modern historians have argued that there was seldom any danger of slave revolts, Texans feared such uprisings, their fears being all the worse for their unreality.<sup>10</sup> Some unique regional problems plagued the Texan slaveholder. Slaves were not only more expensive in Galveston than New Orleans but they were of an inferior quality and insufficiently available. Once obtained, a slave in Texas could escape more easily than elsewhere in the South, since the unsettled or sparsely settled areas lacked adequate patrols. The Mexicans also befriended fugitive slaves. One testimony of this appeared in a Houston newspaper:

A Mexican was lately captured . . . in the vicinity of Texana, who was attempting to run away with a Negro girl belonging to a citizen of that place, and with whom he had been living as his wife. . . . He was pursued by a part of the citizens and

<sup>7</sup>Houston to Andrews, 17 March 1842, *Writings of Sam Houston* (Austin, 1933-43), IV, 81; *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 16 March 1842; the issue of the *Advertiser* has not survived, but is quoted in part in the *National Intelligencer*, 12 June 1844.

<sup>8</sup>"S. P. Andrews vs M. R. Gray, Administratrix and Guardian ad litem of the Heirs of W. F. Gray. Harris County Court (1844)" certified copy of the court decision now in the "Andrews Papers" in the Commons Collection, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison; hereafter cited as "Andrews Papers."

<sup>9</sup>Hogan, *The Texas Republic*, 24.

<sup>10</sup>Wendell G. Addington, "Slave Insurrections in Texas," *Journal of Negro History*, 35:408-34 (October 1950).

retaken near the Lavaca: where he was immediately hung to a tree and the slave restored to her master.<sup>11</sup>

Providing another force to break the uncultivated lands, free farmers were particularly welcome because their purchases of supplies and land brought prosperity. While the United States suffered from the depression after 1837, Texans noted that they underwent a boom from the flood of new settlers. To encourage such immigrants, promoters advertised the virtues of Texas for independent farmers in order to offset their bad image abroad, created in part by abolitionists. Publicizing some activities in which Andrews was a leader, they emphasized their temperance, anti-gambling, educational and religious organizations.<sup>12</sup> On slavery (considered by some the source of intemperance, gambling and violence), there was, however, virtual silence because few wanted to discourage any wealthy Southerners from emigrating. This reference of every issue to its effect on immigration blunted the ordinary standards of judgment. One newspaper condemned fighting not because of its destructiveness and disorder, but said, "The occurrence of one street fight in a city or village will often deter a number of enterprising and industrious emigrants . . ."<sup>13</sup>

Stephen Austin had considered Swiss and German immigrants particularly valuable because they were free from the mania of speculation ". . . and above all they will oppose slavery."<sup>14</sup> Following in the tradition of Austin, Andrews formulated a plan which not only would depend on free immigrants

<sup>11</sup> *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 15 June 1842. Mention might also be made of the free Negro: A. F. Muir "The Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange Counties, Texas," *Journal of Negro History*, 35:183-204 (April 1950); and Harold Schoen, "The Free Negro in Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 39: 292-308 (April, 1936); 40:26-34, 85-113, 169-199, 267-289 (July, October, 1936; January, April, 1937). General studies of Texan slavery are Lester G. Bugbee, "Slavery in Texas," *Political Science Quarterly*, 13:389-412, 648-68 (Sept., Dec., 1898) and Abigail Curlee, "A Study of Texas Slave Plantations, 1822-1865," Ph.D. thesis, 1932, University of Texas.

<sup>12</sup> The Union Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1840, 5; J. S. Buckingham, *The Slave States of America* (London, 1842), I, 380.

<sup>13</sup> *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 2 June 1841.

<sup>14</sup> Eugene C. Barker, "The Influence of Slavery in the Colonization of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 28:26 (July 1942); italics in text. Arthur C. Burnett, *Yankees in the Republic of Texas* (Houston, 1952) and Rudolph Biesele, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas* (Austin, 1930) show that such immigrants did come.

for prosperity but would also utilize them to destroy slavery in Texas. Andrews noted that most Texans were interested in finding the quickest way to wealth—not in bolstering the Southern slave system. He argued that immigrants were the surest way to prosperity but that innumerable men avoided Texas because of the baneful influence of slavery and the unsettled condition of the government. He believed foreign aid could save the country: If Great Britain would provide a loan to stabilize the Texan government on the condition that they should abolish slavery, the bottleneck to immigration could be ended. Andrews expected a large number of Texans—particularly those from the border states<sup>15</sup>—would acquiesce to his proposal, if only to get the British money; and he looked for a hard core of support from a combination of businessmen, lawyers and wealthy planters.

Such men, because they sold their cotton to and bought most of their supplies from England, were especially attracted to the British policy of free trade. Furthermore, they had backed a prominent South Carolina politician, James Hamilton, when he had attempted to raise a five million dollar loan in Europe for the Texan government.<sup>16</sup> Hamilton had failed in part because of the English abolitionists' opposition to Texas slavery. Except for his emancipation proposal, Andrews' program followed the same lines as that of Hamilton. Based firmly on the realities of the situation, his scheme was by no means visionary or utopian. In the fall of 1839, Andrews presented this plan to the anti-slavery leader Lewis Tappan in New York City and Tappan at once informed his British friends.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The earliest census figures giving nativity are those of 1860. In that year of the total 421,229 white males, 21,772 were born in the Northern states and 70,213 in Ky., Tenn., Mo. and Md. The origins of the 153,043 Texas-born men cannot be easily traced, but a substantial number doubtless had origins in the Northern and border states. Barnes F. Lathrop, *Migration into East Texas, 1835-1860* (Austin, 1949) considers an area which received primarily overland immigrants. It would be deceptive to form general conclusions for all Texas from his work.

<sup>16</sup>Elgin Williams, *The Animating Pursuits of Speculation, Land Traffic in the Annexation of Texas* (New York, 1949), 102ff. Justin Smith notes, "As the trading vessels were almost exclusively English and nearly all the money was in British hands, most of the business men were of that nationality or necessarily affiliated with Great Britain. . . ." *Annexation of Texas*, (New York, 1941), 96.

<sup>17</sup>Lewis Tappan to Joseph Sturge, 19 October 1839, Annie H. Abel and Frank J. Klingberg, editors, *A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-*

While his proposals were evolved from the economic and political conditions of Texas, a major motive bringing Andrews to struggle for his plan was the psychological need this work filled for him. Never able to feel the personal salvation required by his father's religion, Andrews was by no means ready to join the legions of Satan—the "rowdies" who were so pervasive in Louisiana and Texas. Personally insecure without salvation, he required some assurance that, if not saved, he was at least not irretrievably damned. He found such assurance in the temperance movement at first and in abolitionism later. Only a rational decision—not salvation—was required to join such movements, and those clearly identified with evil—drunkards, blasphemers, duelists, etc.—not only provided ridicule but by contrast identified him with godliness.

Andrews' close affiliation with the Baptist Church was not from a religious faith but from a rational conviction that that church could refine the brutality of Texas. In 1840, he had been instrumental in having the Texas Union Baptist Association adopt a resolution urging the formation of temperance societies, "so that the stream of liquid fire which has desolated other countries, may not blast and wither the rising prospects of this young and interesting Republic . . ." <sup>18</sup> If patriotism demanded temperance, utility also demanded it: "The planter finds his farm more snugly cultivated . . . The merchant and mechanic find their customers more punctual and permanent—their credit less doubtful and their business more prosperous without [intoxicating liquors]." <sup>19</sup> Andrews had no doubt that the just thing was the most profitable, and the very arguments, even words, he used against liquor were turned against slavery.

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1858, *Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* (Washington, D. C., 1927), 59; hereafter cited as *Correspondence of Lewis Tappan*. Andrews developed this program on his own initiative; it did not originate with Lewis Tappan, the English abolitionists or the British Foreign Office. Harriet Smither, "English Abolitionism and the Annexation of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 32:194 (January, 1929); and Thomas P. Martin, "Free Trade and the Oregon Question, 1842-6," *Facts and Factors in Economic History* (Cambridge, 1932), 480—both develop from Ashbel Smith (then Texan *chargé* in London) the charge that Andrews was an agent sent to Texas by the abolitionists.

<sup>18</sup> Union Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1840, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Pearl Andrews, *An Oration Delivered on the Fourth of July, 1835, Before the East Feliciana Temperance Society* (New Orleans, 1836), 13.

## III

Andrews explained his ideas between 1839 and 1843 to a variety of influential Texans—wealthy planters along the Brazos River, merchants, lawyers, newspapermen, and clergymen. He had not hidden his views, and the agitation they caused in 1843 came not from their suddenly being uncovered but from a combination of other forces: the injection of Texas into the United States presidential campaign, the Texans' desperate condition and the arrival of an English diplomatic representation there.

In the United States, annexation had been put off since 1836 because many did not want to risk war with Mexico and a few opposed extending the boundaries of American slavery. After an uneasy rest of seven years, annexation reappeared as a political issue in January 1843. Evidently hoping to raise support for his friend President Tyler, Thomas Gilmer then wrote in the *Madisonian*, "England . . . will either possess or control Texas, if it does not come under the jurisdiction of the United States."<sup>20</sup>

The position of Texas was indeed desperate in the spring of 1843. The government's ability to command its own troops had been shown nugatory by the "calculated act of mutiny" which led a number of men to their destruction in the Mier expedition. On sea, Commodore Edwin Moore openly defied President Houston without difficulty. A civil war could rage unabated in Shelby County that the government was either unwilling or unable to quell.<sup>21</sup> The financial position of the country was so desperate that a Galveston man wrote: "We have no money in trade, none in the national treasury, no credit abroad, and it is utterly impossible to obtain any relief anywhere, in case we are invaded. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

While there is no evidence that England wanted to take possession of Texas, the British did send out an official representative, Charles Elliot, who arrived there in September, 1842. Of an influential family, Elliot had risen quickly in the

<sup>20</sup> Washington, D. C., *The Daily Madisonian*, 23 January 1843.

<sup>21</sup> Stanley Siegel, *A Political History of the Texas Republic 1836-1845* (Austin, 1956), 205 ff.

<sup>22</sup> A letter quoted from the *New Orleans Bulletin* in the *Emancipator and Free American*, 23 February 1843.

foreign service, but it is more a matter of chance than of design that a man of his stature should have been sent to Texas. As Secretary of the Trade Commission in China, his attack on some Chinese ships had precipitated the Opium War. England had supported his action, but at the end of the war in order to negotiate a better peace, the foreign office had transferred Elliot to Texas.<sup>23</sup> Although Elliot considered his Texan post a type of banishment and complained of the primitive conditions there, he, nevertheless, undertook his job conscientiously and as early as November 1842 sent a private despatch to the foreign office with ambitious plans. He suggested that a convention could be called in Texas to abolish slavery and declare free trade "a fundamental principle." Finding that "their circumstances make them a timid and needy people," Elliot believed that an English loan could "enable this Government to compensate the present Slave Holders, upon the frank and full adoption" of his system.<sup>24</sup> While Andrews knew nothing of this despatch and its proposals, he must have been heartened by Elliot's arrival, since he had proposed as early as 1839 that the English should send out "a pretty full diplomatic representation to consist of persons of high rank or character to treat expressly on the subject of abolition."<sup>25</sup>

If they were not to be annexed to the United States or to rejoin Mexico, the alternative for Texans was to seek British support. The English had used their influence in Brazil, Honduras, Chile, Peru, and other Latin American countries to secure peace and free trade and wherever possible eliminate slavery. In 1840 England had concluded the Texan treaties of trade and recognition with another treaty recognizing the British right of search in order to help suppress the African slave trade. On March 15, 1843, Hamilton Stuart, editor of the *Galveston Civilian* cited the British intervention of 1838 in the war between Brazil and Uruguay which had obtained a

<sup>23</sup> Clagette Blake, *Charles Elliott, E. N., 1801-1875* (London, 1960), 22 ff. Ephraim D. Adams, *British Interests and Activities in Texas* (Baltimore, 1910), 106 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Ephraim D. Adams, editor, *British Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Republic of Texas 1838-1846* (Austin, 1917), 128-129 and *passim*. Hereafter cited as *British Diplomatic Correspondence*.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis Tappan to Joseph Sturge, 19 October 1829, *Tappan Correspondence*, 59.

peace settlement as soon as Uruguay had abolished slavery. Commenting on this incident, Stuart remarked:

It remains to be seen whether this policy will be extended to Mexico and Texas. These countries present the same field for its application. They have been engaged for eight years in a bloody but bootless war, leading not only to the injury of the interests of the people of other nations, but in many cases to their imprisonment and murder.<sup>26</sup>

On the very day of Stuart's editorial, the editor of the *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register* published the full text of Thomas Gilmer's letter on the annexation of Texas. The publication of this letter in Texas evidently set people to investigate their affairs more closely, and the subsequent excitement created what Andrews called "a spontaneous outburst" in Houston. "It seemed engineered or directed by no one or by no party in particular, but by the people *en masse*." A public meeting was called for Thursday, March 16, 1843, "to consider the condition of the country," at which Andrews was asked to give his "views upon the subject."<sup>27</sup>

#### IV

Although a hostile crowd gathered in Houston, they were moved by Andrews' speech, in which he avoided the question of slavery and portrayed "the future destiny of Texas as a new and model nation, devoting herself to the highest principles of human progress . . ." The audience cheered him as he finished. After his antagonist rose, denounced the speech, and said, "What we have listened to means Abolition and nothing else. Are we prepared to become abolitionists?" the Houstonians did not applaud but let him sit down in silence.<sup>28</sup>

Welcoming the success, Andrews and his supporters decided he should go at once to Galveston (at that time the only other large town in Texas) to present his program and to prevent any false rumors from preceding him there. With him,

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in the *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 29 March 1843.

<sup>27</sup> *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 15 March 1843; Andrews, "A Private Chapter of the Origin of the War"; hereafter cited, "Private Chapter," Andrews Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. This manuscript was uncompleted and the beginning two sections describing his activities before March 16, 1843, have not survived.

<sup>28</sup> Unless otherwise noted all quotations in this section come from Andrews' "Private Chapter."

he took a partner of Houston's mayor, Mr. Thomas League, whom Andrews described as "a shrewd, successful money-getting adventurer upon the common plane of the practical; no crazy philanthropist, and yet a staunch adherent upon purely financial grounds to my emancipation policy. . . ." Since overland travel was difficult and uncommon and the steamer service had been delayed several days because of low water, Andrews and League shared their passage to Houston in a boat with three hundred instead of the usual sixty passengers. While travelling, the group discussed the new proposals, formed parties, and bandied threats. Andrews felt the majority "of the floating congregation evidently verged to our side." When they reached the head of Galveston Bay, they had to lay over for the night because of the low water. Since the boat had stopped opposite the plantation of General Moseley Baker, Andrews sent word to this hero of San Jacinto asking him to speak before the stranded group. General Baker "made a powerful and brilliant argument in behalf of the whole emancipation scheme." Some men were converted by his speech, but a few "became more malignant and determined in their opposition than before."

Landing Saturday morning, March 18, 1843, Andrews found support from a number of influential and powerful men in Galveston. For the weekend, he stayed at the home of Andrew Janeway Yates, who had edited the *Galveston Daily Advertiser*. John S. Sydnor from Virginia, another ally, was one of Galveston's most prominent merchants. James Love had served with distinction in the Kentucky legislature and was now a wealthy Texas planter. At the time of the Civil War, Love volunteered at sixty-six for Terry's Texas Rangers; in 1843, he was supporting Andrews and wrote a friend in Kentucky that he was considering means "to abolish slavery by the adoption of organic laws." Gail Borden, Jr., a fellow Baptist with Andrews, not only led the temperance and antigambling movements in Galveston, but also supported emancipation. Not freaks of history, these men represented the latent hope of many that Texas could by-pass slavery.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> James Love to Judge Nicholas, 1 February 1844, Justin Smith, *Annexation of Texas*, 93; articles on Yates, Sydnor, Love and Borden, *The Handbook of Texas* (Austin, 1952), II, 942, 700, 85 and I, 189-90 respectively.

Andrews might have expected a favorable reception in Galveston not only because he had strong allies there but also because few slaveowners lived in the city. Galveston, however, was the center of both the legal and illegal Texan slave trade.<sup>30</sup> While aboard the steamer, both the French and British representatives to Texas had warned that he might expose himself "to some degree of danger" in Galveston;<sup>31</sup> and, while travelling the streets that weekend, Andrews found "violent knots of men who seemed gathered for the express purpose of compassing my destruction. . . ." Nevertheless they were "sufficiently calmed by my presence to listen with some toleration to my statements, and to permit me to pass uninjured."<sup>32</sup>

On Monday, March 20, 1843, Andrews gathered about twenty of his friends at the Custom House to discuss his scheme. They believed that they had the support of Samuel M. Williams, a former partner of Stephen Austin, and the most powerful man in Galveston. Meeting at ten o'clock, the group received word that Williams could not join them until later. Banking on his prestige, Andrews, therefore, adjourned his meeting until Tuesday. He thereby misjudged the man's sincerity, for an earlier duplicity had so discouraged Stephen Austin that he had written Williams from his deathbed: "You have greatly vexed and worried and distressed me."<sup>33</sup> It is not clear whether Williams wanted only to measure Andrews' support before committing himself or whether he was organizing an opposition party, but it is clear that Williams was not dealing candidly.

By Monday noon, Andrews' plans were public knowledge in the city so that some action was imperative if he hoped to present his plan before an opposition could organize. But Andrews waited. He spent Monday night outside the town in the house of John Sydnor, while an armed crowd called at

<sup>30</sup> William Kennedy to Lord Aberdeen, 6 July 1843, *British Sessional Papers*, 1844 Commons, Vol. 49, Slave Trade Correspondence, Class C, p. 267 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Elliott to Lord Aberdeen, 15 July 1843, *British Diplomatic Correspondence*, 229.

<sup>32</sup> While the crowds did not mistreat Andrews, they frightened his ally, Thomas League, who slipped back to Houston. Andrews, "Private Chapter."

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Austin to Samuel Williams, 3 November 1836, quoted in Ruth G. Nichols and S. W. Lifflander, *Samuel May Williams, 1795-1858* (Galveston, 1956), p. xiii.

Andrew Yates' house during the night and dispersed only on the assurance that Andrews was not there. Receiving word of the mob, Sydnor and he decided that Andrews must nevertheless attend the meeting on Tuesday if he were not to abandon the project. Relying on his popularity in town, Sydnor loaned his famous riding horse as a token of support. When Andrews entered Galveston so mounted, he showed himself on the streets "with a determined air which seemed to say, 'Who's afraid?'"

On Tuesday morning before the meeting was scheduled to begin, Andrews, John Sydnor and Hamilton Stuart met at the Custom House with Gail Borden, Jr., (the Collector at Galveston). None of the others had arrived when a band of about twenty men (whom Stuart had quickly joined)<sup>34</sup> entered the room. Their leader, a young lawyer from South Carolina named Mr. Cole, presented Andrews with an ultimatum: "You, Mr. Andrews, are agitating . . . measures and views which must not and shall not be allowed upon Southern soil. . . . We have the power in our hands and we shall use it. . . . You are calmly warned never to return to Galveston to agitate this subject." Since Andrews and his friends were unarmed, John Sydnor's "violent remonstrances against the outrageous proceeding" were in vain, for they were told that there was "no time for discussion." The posse took Andrews to the wharf in military formation and set him aboard a waiting boat.<sup>35</sup>

Returning to Houston, Andrews soon received a visit from the British *chargé*.<sup>36</sup> Charles Elliott argued that Andrews had failed because he had not proposed any compensation for

<sup>34</sup> Andrews' "Private Chapter" does not mention Hamilton Stuart (editor of the *Galveston Civilian*) but his curious gyrations are well brought out by A. J. Yates, *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*, 30 August 1843.

<sup>35</sup> Andrews' "Private Chapter" is supplemented by W. Eugene Hollon and E. L. Butler, editors, *William Bollaert's Texas* (Norman, 1956), 163.

<sup>36</sup> Andrew J. Yates had written a hasty report of Andrews' arrival in Galveston to Sherman Converse of London, 18 March 1843, which seemed to connect the British government with Andrews' scheme; this, however, was a misrepresentation. A. J. Yates to Charles Elliott, 12 July 1843, *British Diplomatic Correspondence*, 229-232. Andrews' "Private Chapter" emphasizes even more strongly that his connection with Elliott did not begin until *after* his expulsion from Galveston. This Yates letter, however, became infamous from the day of its publication in the *Boston Post*, 18 September 1843, and was widely reprinted in the United States.

slave owners. He suggested that Andrews should now visit England and ask the British government to intervene "by pecuniary and, if necessary, by governmental influence and protection." in order to abolish slavery in Texas. Urging that he spoke unofficially, Elliot assured Andrews that his visit would have a powerful effect on Peel and Aberdeen. Not mentioning this meeting in his dispatch, Elliot wrote the foreign office:

... these South Western people are so exciteable, and so ready to jump from extreme to extreme, whenever they perceive the advantage of the leap, that it would never surprise me to find the subject thrown upon favorable public attention by the very event of M. Andrew's [sic] forced departure.<sup>37</sup>

The Texans continued to respect Andrews despite his heresies. When his house in Houston caught fire through carelessness, his neighbors gathered in a friendly spirit to put out the flames. And, while passing through Galveston in early May on his way to New York, he was treated with courtesy. But when he reached New Orleans, his friends rushed him into hiding and warned him of the danger he faced in that city. The New Orleans police had orders to arrest him, and the *New Orleans Bee* wrote in italics: "It becomes the duty of our people to take care of him."<sup>38</sup> Having departed up the Mississippi for the North, Andrews reflected,

It is a fitting instance of the arrogance and lawlessness of the slaveholding power . . . that I should be pursued as an outlaw for no offence committed within the city or state of the United States even, but simply because, as a citizen of a foreign country, and in respect to the affairs of that country, I had dared to advocate freedom.<sup>39</sup>

In late May 1843 Andrews reached New York City where Lewis Tappan, Theodore Sedgwick and William Cullen Bryant provided him letters of introduction to important British leaders. Lewis Tappan accompanied Andrews to Boston where his steamer was to sail, and, on the way, they visited John Quincy Adams at Braintree. Although he "distrusted the sincerity of the present British Administration in the anti-

<sup>37</sup> Charles Elliot to Undersecretary Addington, 26 March 1843, *British Diplomatic Correspondence*, 167-168.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in *Niles National Register*, 64:231 (June 10, 1843).

<sup>39</sup> Andrews, "Private Chapter."

slavery cause," Adams encouraged Tappan to accompany Andrews to London. With Adams' blessing, Lewis Tappan, therefore, joined Stephen Pearl Andrews, and they sailed from Boston on the Cunard steamer *Caledonia*, June 1, 1843.<sup>40</sup>

V

The Second World Anti-Slavery Convention met from June 12 to June 20, 1843, in London, but Andrews and Tappan did not arrive before Friday, June 16. Going directly from the *Caledonia*, within an hour of their landing, they reached the convention floor in time to hear Richard Cobden conclude his speech. Opposing any tariff discrimination against slave-produced sugar, Cobden told the abolitionists that "everything you have done . . . through the government has retarded your sublime mission. . . ." <sup>41</sup> When he had finished, Andrews met him and other leaders of the convention; and, although unexpected, Andrews and Tappan were enthusiastically received once they had revealed their purpose.

On the Monday after their arrival (June 19), Andrews and Tappan were meeting with Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary. At their interview, Mr. Addington, the Undersecretary, and several prominent English abolitionists were also present. Tappan was presented to Lord Aberdeen and he in turn introduced Andrews, who explained his program. Andrews proposed that the London Anti-Slavery Society "should raise a fund sufficient for the purchase of all the slaves in Texas, and place it under the control of the Government of Texas," which in turn would "grant lands to the abolition society . . . sufficient to secure the society against all loss. . . ." Lord Aberdeen was interested in this plan and offered to secure the payment of money to Texas on the condition that a British commissioner should be allowed "to select the lands and adjudge the quantity." The English government would underwrite the loan and should there be any

<sup>40</sup>Charles F. Adams, editor, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* (Philadelphia, 1876), XI, 380; Lewis Tappan to John Scoble, 24 April 1850, *Tappan Correspondence*, 239-240; Andrews, "Private Chapter."

<sup>41</sup>Andrews, "Private Chapter;" Second General Anti-Slavery Convention of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings*, London, 1843, 144-47; hereafter cited as "*Proceedings*."

delay in payment, "England would pay the interest during the delay."<sup>42</sup>

The following morning, June 20, the last day of the convention, Amos Phelps, a New York abolitionist, led off the discussion of Texas slavery by saying that new information had raised the issue to crucial importance. The British leader George Stacey then told of the previous day's meeting with Lord Aberdeen and noted that Aberdeen seemed to believe "a crisis had arrived in the history of the Republic of Texas, in which British influence might fairly be brought to bear upon it, in relation to the subject of slavery."<sup>43</sup> Joshua Leavitt, editor of the New York *Emancipator*, and Lewis Tappan then made long speeches explaining the importance of slavery in Texas for American slaveholders. As he finished his speech, Tappan recalled that before he had left America, John Quincy Adams had declared "that if slavery were abolished in Texas it would speedily fall in the United States, and if it fell there it would expire throughout Christendom."<sup>44</sup> After approving resolutions urging abolition in Texas and calling on the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to seek aid from Aberdeen in their proposals, the Convention with a standing acclamation passed a resolution of praise for John Quincy Adams.

Ashbel Smith, the Texas *chargé* in England, had secured a pass to the convention from William Clark, editor of the London *Morning Herald* and a friend of the abolitionists.<sup>45</sup> Smith heard the proposals for Texas with horror and set out to thwart Andrews' program. His first tactic was to alert leaders in the United States. Nine days before he informed his own government, Ashbel Smith wrote John Calhoun a long letter explaining the London developments.<sup>46</sup> By pre-

<sup>42</sup> Andrews, "Private Chapter;" Murphy to Upshur, 24 September 1843, Senate Executive Document 341, 28th Congress, 1st Session, p. 23; Ashbel Smith to Anson Jones, 2 July 1843, George P. Garrison, editor, "Diplomatic Correspondence of The Republic of Texas," American Historical Association, *Annual Report, 1907, 1908*, II, 1099-1103; the latter is hereafter cited as *Diplomatic Correspondence of Texas*.

<sup>43</sup> *Proceedings*, 298.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>45</sup> Smith to Jones, 2 July 1843, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Texas* II, 1100; *Emancipator and Free American* 8:38 (6 July 1843).

<sup>46</sup> Smith to Calhoun, 19 June 1843, quoted in part in Smither, "English

tending to befriend Andrews, he had obtained inside information concerning the abolitionist tactics. In order to obtain their confidence, Smith agreed to present Andrews officially to the British government; but at the interview on July 11, 1843, with Undersecretary Addington, he dropped his friendly mien and expressed his "utter dissent from and opposition to all operations then carrying on in London, having for their object the abolition of Slavery in Texas."<sup>47</sup> Smith also alerted Duff Green (a relative-in-law of Calhoun then in London on a mission from President Tyler), and Green sent even more alarmed reports to Calhoun.<sup>48</sup> Since Duff Green believed that "The federal Government was constituted to protect the rights of property of the Slave holder in all questions arising between him and foreign Government,"<sup>49</sup> he felt Andrews' plan was a matter of immediate concern to the American government.

On July 20, 1843, Ashbel Smith obtained an official interview with Lord Aberdeen where he raised the question of Texas and the abolitionists. He warned the Secretary that it was unlikely that Texans would accept their scheme and inquired what England's position was. The *chargé* wrote home that "His Lordship replied in effect, that it is the well known policy and wish of the British Government to abolish slavery every where; that its abolition in Texas is deemed very desirable. . . ." Aberdeen then reiterated (as he was to do many times subsequently) that "there was no disposition on the part of the British Gov[ernmen]t to interfere improperly on this subject. . . ." As Smith had condemned Andrews, Aberdeen asked whether the Texan government wished him not to see the abolitionist again. Smith could only reply that he could not say, since Andrews had no connection with the government of Texas.<sup>50</sup>

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Abolitionism," *loc. cit.*, 200; this extraordinary letter is preserved in Ashbel Smith's letterbook in the Texas archives.

<sup>47</sup>Smith to Daingerfield, 11 July 1843; Smith to Jones, 31 July 1843, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Texas*, II, 1110, 1116.

<sup>48</sup>Jesse S. Reeves, *American Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk* (Baltimore, 1907), 124-133.

<sup>49</sup>Duff Green, "England and the United States," edited by St. George L. Sioussat, *American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings* 40:227 (October, 1930).

<sup>50</sup>Smith to Jones, 31 July 1843, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Texas*, II, 1116-1117.

While Ashbel Smith went to Paris, Andrews pushed his work in England during the summer of 1843. Lord Morpeth received him with a letter of introduction from Theodore Sedgwick and gave him leave to form a party at his sister's country estate. An interview in August with Lord Brougham led to Brougham's querying in the House of Lords that steps were being taken to insure the abolition of slavery in Texas. Aberdeen replied that "He was sure that he need hardly say, that no one was more anxious than himself to see the abolition of slavery in Texas. . . ." <sup>51</sup> With John Scoble and George Stacey, Andrews presented a report of the conference with Brougham to a special meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Andrews and Scoble then prepared an address, which the society sent to Santa Anna and Sam Houston, calling for peace between the warring countries on the condition that slavery be abolished in Texas. <sup>52</sup>

Andrews enjoyed his reception in England where "hostility to Slavery was the rule and the anti-Slavery policy triumphant. . . ." <sup>53</sup> But his duty was in Texas, and at the end of August he prepared to return. Ashbel Smith had warned the Texans "that the vague promises which Mr. Andrews will send or carry to Texas will prove false and illusory." And the Southern newspapers (particularly the New Orleans *Picayune*) had mounted an unrestrained attack on Andrews. <sup>54</sup> It is not surprising that when he returned to Texas in September, a mob aroused by these reports drove him from the country. The American *chargé* in Texas wrote that "On his return, the citizens having found out the object of his mission to London, and that he had been making propositions to the British Government for the abolition of slavery in Texas, drove him, by force, from the State, denying him the privilege of return." <sup>55</sup> Only by a difficult overland journey

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, 71:918, August 18, 1843.

<sup>52</sup> *Tappan Correspondence*, 145 n.

<sup>53</sup> Andrews, "Private Chapter."

<sup>54</sup> Smith to Jones, 31 July 1843, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Texas*, II, 1118; Fayette Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1943), 121-139.

<sup>55</sup> W. S. Murphy to A. P. Upshur, 24 September 1843, Senate Executive Document 341, 28th Congress, 1st Session, p. 23.

through Arkansas was Andrews able to reach the United States, and by October 1843 he was safe in New York. Andrews was then only thirty-one years old and had a long future as a reformer in the North. He never returned to Texas.

## VI

The difficulty Andrews faced in Texas was not alone what Benjamin Lundy called "the grand combination of slaveholding despots and avaricious marauders. . . ." <sup>56</sup> He faced the inertia of men unwilling to venture on the untried. Andrews believed that a great moral transformation was required before his program could be realized. Although people have undertaken such moral endeavors, the people of Texas hardly had enough vigor or scope for such a change. Their problem was not to transform civilization but to retain some of its most elementary forms. Theoretically, Texans had a greater choice as to how their society should develop; but, in fact, their spirit of experimentation had been numbed by the harsh realities of war, poverty, and the uncertainties of the new land. Nevertheless, neither extenuating circumstances nor physical necessities should obscure the fact that the Texans in the end *chose* slavery despite the alternative that Andrews had articulated.

If history be preordained in the mind of some Hegelian, Marxian or other God, if slavery was destined to sweep across Texas by some inexorable fate, Andrews' ideas were folly, even blasphemy; and those who drove him from Texas would have done better to have burnt him for resisting the will of God. But if in history, man, men and groups of men have alternatives open to them, decisions to make, errors to commit and victories to achieve—then Andrews' plan provided a reasonable and feasible program for the new republic. Certainly, both his supporters and his opponents believed that they had the power to decide whether Texas should be slave or free. No one believed that they were fatally committed to slavery by Austin's decision in 1830; nor could any believe their fate sealed by that melancholy Dutch cargo of 1619. John

<sup>56</sup> Benjamin Lundy, *The War in Texas . . .* (Philadelphia, 2nd ed., 1837), 64.

Quincy Adams may have exaggerated when he said that "the freedom of this country and of all mankind" depended upon the abolition of slavery in Texas,<sup>57</sup> but his contemporaries recognized a great issue at hand.

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<sup>57</sup> Adams, *Memoirs*, XI, 380.