

# RALEIGH REGISTER AND NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE.

"Ours are the plans of fair delightful peace, unwarped by party rage, to live like brothers."

THREE DOLLARS Per Annum,  
ONE HALF IN ADVANCE.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1836.

VOLUME XXXVII.  
NUMBER 20.

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

By Joseph Gates & Son.

## TERMS.

THREE DOLLARS per annum—one half in advance. Those who do not, either at the time of subscribing or subsequently, give notice of their wish to have the Paper discontinued at the expiration of the year, will be presumed as desiring its continuance until countermanded.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

Not exceeding sixteen lines, will be inserted three times for a Dollar; and twenty-five cents for each subsequent publication: those of greater length, in proportion. If the number of insertions be not marked on them, they will be continued until ordered out and charged accordingly.

## CONGRESS.

### DEBATE IN THE SENATE.

### SPEECH OF MR. WHITE, of Ten. On the Abolition Petitions.

Mr. President: I address you under the solemn conviction that if this Government is to continue to accomplish the great purposes for which it was established, it can only be by administering it in the same spirit in which it was created.

When the Constitution was framed, the great and leading interests of the whole country were considered, and, in the spirit of liberality and compromise, were adjusted and settled. They were settled upon principles that ought to remain undisturbed so long as the Constitution lasts, which I hope will be forever; for although liberty may be preferable to the Union, yet I think the Union is indispensable to liberty. At the formation of the Constitution, slavery existed in many of the States; it was one of the prominent interests that was then settled; it, in all its domestic bearings, was left exclusively to the States, to do with it as they might think best, without any interference on the part of the Federal Government. This it is admitted by every gentleman who has addressed you, is now the case in every slaveholding State: therefore, it is only urged that Congress has the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. It should never be forgotten that, when the Constitution was formed and adopted, what is now the District of Columbia was then comprehended within two of the slaveholding States, Maryland and Virginia.

Suppose, when all the details of the Constitution had been adjusted, it had been foreseen that the District of Columbia would be formed out of a tract of country ceded by those States, and situated in the centre between them, it had been asked of the members of the Convention, what do you intend as to the District? You have placed the question of slavery in the States entirely under their control within their respective limits—do you intend that Congress shall have the power to abolish slavery in the District? Would not every man have answered in the negative?

It has been said that when petitions to abolish slavery are presented to either House of Congress, those who demand the question whether they shall be received, and thus produce discussion, are agitators, and produce excitement on this delicate subject. To me it seems this is unfair. Let us for a moment consider the circumstances of the country, & the situation in which we are all placed.

There are twenty-four States, several Territories, and this District. Thirteen of these States have no slaves, the other eleven have slaves; in fact, their slaves constitute a large item of all the property they own. During the past year, it has so happened that many newspapers, pamphlets, and pictorial representations made their appearance, and were, through the mail, and by other means, extensively circulated in the slaveholding States.—By these means, a spirit of discontent was created, which occasioned much excitement and disorder in various places, and rendered it necessary, in a summary manner, to put to death several white persons, and a number of slaves. In various quarters of the Union there were assemblages of people, who expressed their opinions with great freedom. In the course of the fall and winter, many of the State Legislatures have been in session; they have been addressed on this subject by their respective Governors. They have expressed publicly their opinions; the President, in his message, has invited the attention of Congress to it; the Senate has referred that part of the message to a special committee, which has made a lengthy report, accompanied by a bill, which is now upon your docket, and must, in due course, be discussed, and either passed or rejected. Are all these to be called agitators, and charged with unnecessarily producing excitement? If not, how is it that members of Congress are to be thus charged when petitions are presented that we must in some mode dispose of? Each of us must suggest such mode as we think most correct, and none can justly be liable to any such charge. If there is any wrong, it is found in those who, in such a state of public feeling, will press their petitions upon us. The petitions are forwarded to members who

feel it their duty to present them; when presented, others think it their duty to demand the question whether they shall be received. Is it true that on this delicate subject every officer of the Federal or State Government can express his opinion as to what it is best to do, and that a Senator dare not express his opinion without being liable to censure? I hope not.

This is a delicate subject: would to God it had not been pressed upon us; but as it is placed here by the petitioners, we must dispose of it. To enable us to do so, we must think upon it, and we may tell each other what we think, and our reasons for so thinking. It is not by speaking upon it we will be likely to do mischief. Every thing depends upon the temper with which we express our opinions, and the sentiments we advance. My wish and aim is, if I can do no good, to do no harm; and if I believed in what I propose to say, I would utter a sentiment from which mischief would be produced, I would close my lips, take my seat, and content myself with ye or nay to every question proposed by others, leaving every person at liberty to conjecture the reasons for my votes: but entertaining no fear of that kind, I must ask permission to state, as briefly as I can, some of the reasons for the course I shall pursue. In doing this, I shall not address myself to Senators coming from either the East or the West, the North or the South, in particular, but to the Senate, the whole Senate, because, if it is desired, as I believe it is, that we should remain together as one people, secure, prosperous, happy and contented, the whole country, every section of it, having a deep interest in this matter, this agitation and excitement must cease.

What then ought we to do, as most likely to put an end to those angry feelings which now prevail?

In my opinion we should refuse to receive these petitions. It is a mere question of expediency what disposition we shall make of them. All who have yet spoken admit that Congress has no power whatever over slavery in the respective States. It is settled. Whether slavery is right or wrong, we have no power to consider or discuss. Suppose, then, a petition were presented, to abolish slavery in the States, would we receive it?—Assuredly we ought not, because it would be asking us to act upon a subject over which we have no power.

But these are petitions asking Congress to abolish slavery in this District. Have we the power? I think not. I consider the argument of the honorable Senator from Virginia, (Mr. LEIGH,) upon that point, conclusive. It has not been answered, and I do not believe it can be. Slaves are property in this District—Congress cannot take private property, even for public use, without making just compensation to the owner. No fund is provided by the Constitution to pay for slaves which may be liberated, and the Constitution never gives Congress the power to act upon any subject, without, at the same time, furnishing the means for its accomplishment. To liberate slaves is not a taking for public use. It is declaring that neither individuals nor the public shall use them. I will not weaken the honorable member's argument by going over it.

This District was intended as the place where the great business of the nation should be transacted for the good of the whole. Congress, under the Constitution, is placed here to legislate upon those subjects enumerated and specified in the Constitution, that we might be able to protect ourselves, and the officers residing here, and be out of the reach of the laws of any State. It was never intended that we should have any local legislation, except such as would meet the wants and wishes of the People residing within the ten miles square. We should never permit this place to be converted into a political workshop, where plans would be devised, or carried into operation, that will have the effect of destroying the interest of any of the States.

Members of Congress, executive and judicial officers, were to come from any and every section of the Union, from the slaveholding and the non-slaveholding States, and their property was to be as secure here, in this ten miles square, as it was in the States from which they respectively came. They would bring their habits and their domestic servants with them; those from the non-slaveholding States their hired servants, and those from the slaveholding States their slaves. And who can believe it was intended to vest the power in Congress to liberate them if brought within the District?

Again: The right of property in slaves in the States is sacred and beyond the power of Congress to interfere with, in any respect; yet if it be conceded that we have the power to liberate them in the District, we can as effectually ruin the owners as if we had the power to liberate slaves in the States. By abolishing slavery here, we not only make a place of refuge for runaways, but we produce a spirit of discontent and rebellion in the minds of slaves in the neighboring States, which will soon spread over all, and which cannot fail to compel owners to destroy their own slaves, to preserve their own

lives and those of their wives and children. I beseech gentlemen to look at this matter as it is. Take for illustration the case of a small planter in Mississippi, living on his own land, with thirty slaves to cultivate it. Suddenly it is discovered that one-half of them are concerned in a plot to destroy the lives of their master, his family, and neighbors, with a view to produce their freedom, and immediately, with or without law, they are tucked up and hanged. The man is thus deprived of his property without any chance for an indemnity, besides the quiet and anxiety of mind occasioned by loss of confidence in his remaining slaves. It cannot have been intended that Congress, by acting on this subject, should have a power thus to occasion a destruction of slave property.

To me it seems that we ought to treat these petitions precisely as we would do if they prayed us to abolish slavery in one of the States. We have no more power to abolish it here than we have there. I think, in either case, we ought to refuse to receive them. I hold, that if the petitioners ask us to do that which we have no power to do, or to do that which will be productive of a great and lasting mischief, we not only have the right, but that it is our duty to refuse to receive them.

By the Constitution, no man can be held to answer for a criminal charge but by presentment or indictment. Suppose a petition presented here, alleging that some citizen in the District had been guilty of a crime, and that he was so influential that he could not be reached by the ordinary forms of law in court, and therefore we are asked to pass a bill of attainder: ought we to receive the petition? Suppose a petition to ask us to pass a law to prohibit any member of this body from making a speech against the prayer of the petitioners, would we receive it? Suppose a petition to be offered asking us to establish a particular religion in this District, or to prohibit any publication in a newspaper on the subject of abolishing slavery, unless it was previously approved of by a committee: would we, ought we, to receive any such petition? I think, most certainly, we ought not. But suppose we have the power, is there any Senator who believes we ought to exercise it? I trust not. Those who urge the reception of this petition, which is from the Society of Friends have spoken most highly of the petitioners and the class of citizens to which they belong. In all this I cheerfully concur. These particular persons are strangers to me. I doubt not the purity of their motives; the sect to which they belong is worthy of all the encomiums passed upon it. I respect and esteem them most highly, and do not feel that in my composition there is a particle of unkindness towards them; but I think they would have us do that which we have no power to do, and if we had the power, by exercising it, we should do infinite mischief. These petitioners do not desire. They have discharged what they think is their duty by having their petitions presented; I only discharge mine, when I say, consistently with what I feel to be my duty, I cannot receive them.

But it is further insisted that the right of petition is a sacred one, that belongs to the nature of free government, and existed before the formation of our Constitution, and that instrument did not give the right to petition, but intended only to secure it. This is sound doctrine, and has my hearty assent. The People are sovereign; members are their agents or servants; they have a right to make known their grievances, real or imaginary. We can pass no law, we can make no rule to abridge or destroy that right. But what do gentlemen mean when they speak of the right of petition? Do they mean that, when the petition is presented we must receive it, and do that which is prayed for? No. Not one member contended for this; so far from it, they say, that if the language of the petitioner is disrespectful to the body, or to any member of it, we may and ought to refuse to receive it.

How is this? I beg that we may reflect seriously upon this matter. We are about to establish a doctrine to which I can never yield my assent. Are we to be exalted above our employers? Is our dignity to be of higher consideration than the property and lives of those who send us here? If a petition contains matter charging disgraceful conduct on the Senate, or any of its members, we may not receive it; but if it contains matter which is to destroy the slave property in this District, and in eleven States of this Union, and also to endanger the lives and dwelling of every citizen within their limits, we are bound to receive it. This is the doctrine contained in the arguments. I deny that there is any such distinction to be found in a single feature of our political institutions. The truth is, we have the power in both instances to refuse to receive the petitions, but in exercising it, when we ourselves only are assailed, we ought always to act most liberally in receiving; but where the safety, the lives and the property of our masters are concerned, we have no right to exercise the same liberality.

With great deference for the opinions of others, I think the force of their whole argument rests on a plain mistake. They argue as if we never became acquainted with the contents of a petition, or could consider and decide upon its merits until after it is received. This is most clearly not correct. What we have been doing for the last few weeks is full proof of it. These petitions have been publicly read, their merits and tendency, and our powers to abolish slavery have been long under discussion; has any man denied our right to do so? Not one; the only doubt suggested is, whether it was prudent to adopt this course.

By the 24th Rule, when a petition is presented, the member must briefly state its contents, and what the petitioners wish should be done. He then asks that the petition may be received, and specifies what he wishes to be done with it after it is received. If no member objects, for the purpose of saving time, it is received and disposed of without formally propounding the question of reception; but if any member objects, he may call for the reading, and then urge his reasons why it should not be received. This Rule establishes no new doctrine; it is founded in good sense, is perfectly consistent with the right of petition, and is laid down as the correct practice by Mr. Jefferson in his Manual at page 140. What is the right of the petitioner? It consists in his having free permission to make known to Congress what he esteems a grievance, and to ask them to provide a remedy. When his petition is presented, the duty of Congress commences. That consists in the members making themselves acquainted with the contents of the petition, and granting its prayer, if it be just and consistent with the public interests, or in refusing to receive the petition, or making some other disposition of it, which, in their judgment, is more conducive to the good of the community. When we refuse to receive a petition, we no more destroy or impair the right of petition, than we do when we receive the petition and lay it upon the table, or reject the prayer of it, or refer it to a committee, who reports that it is unreasonable, & ought not to be granted. In each of these cases, the complaint of the petitioner has been heard, considered and decided on. In neither instance has he obtained a redress for what he supposed a grievance, but each leaves him equally at liberty to renew his petition at any subsequent period.

Four modes have been suggested by which to dispose of this and all others on the same subject.

The first we have been considering, and is to refuse to receive it.

The second is to receive them, lay them on the table, and there let them lie.

The third is to receive them, and then instantly reject the prayer of the petitioners.

The fourth is to receive them, refer them to a committee, and let that committee make a report upon them.

I prefer the first, because, when we refuse to receive the petitions, they are returned to those who sent them, and it will most strongly disencourage all hope that Congress ever can, or ever ought, to pass any law upon the subject to which they refer. In each of the other three, we retain the petitions, place them on our files, in the custody of our officer, and at any subsequent session they are here, and it will be competent for any member to move their reference to a committee; whereas, if returned to the petitioners, if they ever again make their appearance, it must be by their being re-sent and re-presented. I think that plan is the most advisable, and will be most likely to calm the disturbance in the slave States, which will most strongly manifest to all, in every quarter, that Congress will not interfere with slavery as it exists in the States and in this District.

If these petitions are received, I then think the disposition of them proposed by the Senator from Pennsylvania the next best—that is, immediately to reject their prayer. This would be far preferable to laying them silently on the table, without expressing any opinion whatever.

There is another aspect in which this question may be viewed, that has had great influence on my own mind. Congress sits here as the Legislature of the whole Union, and also as the only Legislature for the local concerns of the District of Columbia. These petitions do not ask us to make a general law, operating throughout the whole Union, but a law, the operations of which are to be spent entirely upon property within the ten miles square. Now, if we were in form, as well as in substance, a local Legislature when acting on this question, which gentlemen say is to affect slavery in the District, and nowhere else, would we be bound to receive these petitions? No more than we are bound to receive petitions from France or Germany. Would gentlemen, if sitting as members of the Legislature of Alabama, feel bound to receive petitions from citizens of Maine or Pennsylvania to emancipate slaves within their own State? Assuredly not. If that be so, is it not most reasonable, when we are called upon to pass an act confined exclusively to this District, that

we would conduct towards the people here as if in this matter they were our constituents? Will it not be time enough to receive petitions on this subject when they are presented on behalf of those upon whose property alone it is said the law would operate?

Honorable Senators have told us there are two classes of abolitionists, and that public opinion will soon put down the mischievous class, which is small in numbers. Gentlemen, I doubt not, think as they say. All we know is, that our peace has been very much disturbed by them, whether few or many. Their newspapers, their pamphlets, and pictorial representations have been plenty.—They have come to us through the mail, and by other means, in great abundance; and, if we are to live together as one people, they must stop. It is vain to reason with people about the liberty of speech and of the press, when their lives are put at hazard. When the domestic circle is invaded, when a man is afraid to eat his provisions, lest his cook has been prevailed on to mix poison with his food, or dare not go to sleep, lest the servants will cut the throats of himself, his wife, and children before he wakes, he will not endure it; and, when he can lay hands upon those who prompt to such deeds of mischief, he will not wait for the ordinary forms of law to redress him. He takes the law into his own hands, and every thing which accuses us to violate the law is a serious evil in a country as free as ours, where the laws should govern.

The honorable Senator from Mississippi has shewn us something of the feelings of his State, which has suffered much.—In Tennessee when we first heard of punishing persons in Mississippi, without legal trial, we thought it all wrong, and some of our leading newspapers courteously found fault with it. Their columns were not long dry until one of these distributors of abolition pamphlets was found in our most populous and respectable city, and an assemblage of our most orderly and discreet citizens resorted for redress to the same summary process which had been used in our sister State. Public opinion may have done something on this subject. I know of only one attempt to establish a press for such publications in any slaveholding State. The neighbors of the gentleman informed him that his press would be productive of mischief, and he must not establish it in their town; he answered that he held it a high duty, which he could not dispense with, to proceed, and he would do so. They replied, if he did, they would consider it their duty to demolish his building, and sow his types broadcast in the streets. This manifestation of public opinion he respected.—He knew that those with whom he had to deal would keep their word. He desisted, retired to a neighboring State, where, as I have understood, he is now publishing his paper.

I beg gentlemen to consider that it is of no consequence to us whether the abolitionists, in their States, are many or few; their publications are numerous; they have already produced much mischief, which, if persisted in, must end in consequences to be forever regretted by us all. For myself, on the subject of the disposition we may make of these petitions, I can have no other wish than that it may be such as will most tend to allay excitement, and restore that harmony which is so essential to the common interest of our whole country.

## THE PEOPLE MOVING! MEETING IN NORTHAMPTON.

At an unusually large and respectable meeting of the citizens of Northampton county, convened according to previous notice, at the Court-House in the town of Jackson, on Monday of March Court, Colin W. Barnes, Esq. was called to the Chair, and Mr. Robert A. Ezell appointed Secretary.

After a brief explanation of the object of the meeting, Mr. S. B. Spruill moved that a Committee of six be appointed to draw up Resolutions expressive of the sentiments of the people in attendance. Whereupon the Chair named as the Committee, Dr. Isaac Hall, Roderick B. Gary, B. F. Moore, Junius Amis, Peterson Peebles and S. B. Spruill, who, after retiring a few moments, returned and reported through Mr. Amis, a series of Resolutions.

When the Resolutions had been read, Col. W. L. Long, at the request of many persons present, addressed the meeting in a very chaste and eloquent speech of about an hour's duration; in which he handled the Baltimore Convention, its nominees, and the "spoils" party generally—"with gloves off," and concluded by recommending the adoption of the Resolutions under consideration, which were afterwards carried unanimously.

Whereas, we the freemen of Northampton county, recognize in the late Baltimore Convention, principles dangerous in a representative Government, and destructive to the freedom of the elective franchise.

1. Resolved, therefore, That we deem it a duty to ourselves and to our country to oppose, by all honorable means, the election of Martin Van Buren to the Presidency of the United States.

2. Resolved, That this meeting will cordially support the nomination of HUGH LAWSON WHITE, of Tennessee, believing him capable and honest, and, in every way, worthy of the confidence of his countrymen.

3. Resolved, That, in opposition to Richard M. Johnson, the Van Buren manufacture of the Baltimore Convention, we will support, for the Vice-Presidency JOHN TYLER, of Virginia, a patriot and an honest man.

4. Resolved, That we will support, for Governor of this State, EDWARD B. DUDLEY, of Wilmington, a friend to the People and an ardent advocate of the good old principles of '98 and '99, and who was so when Democracy signified something more than a passport to Office.

On motion of Mr. Rod. B. Gary, Resolved, That the Chairman of this meeting appoint five Delegates, to meet other Delegates in the Electoral District, at Britton's Cross Roads, on the third Saturday of this instant, for the purpose of selecting some individual to be placed on the White Ticket.

Whereupon the Chair appointed Rod. B. Gary, Simmons Barnes, Bryan Randolph, Peterson Peebles, and Junius Amis, to constitute said Committee.

On motion of Mr. Spruill, Resolved, That the Chairman appoint a Committee of Vigilance, consisting of ten in each Captain's District in this county.

On motion of the same, Resolved, That the Chairman and Secretary sign the proceedings of this meeting, and request the Raleigh Star and other papers in the State friendly to the same, to publish them.

C. W. BARNES, Chairman.  
ROBERT A. EZELL, Sec'y.

## MEETING IN MARTIN.

Agreeably to public notice, the citizens of Martin met at the Court House in Martin, on Wednesday, the 2nd March. Whereupon, on motion of Col. Jos. J. Williams, Major Sam'l S. Shepherd was called to the chair, and William Briggs appointed Secretary.

Col. Williams explained the object of the meeting, and offered the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That in a government like ours, which recognizes all power as residing in the people, we as free men insisting upon the right of the people themselves to nominate and appoint their own chief magistrate, must therefore denounce the nomination of the Baltimore Convention, as an attempt, by interested office holders and office seekers, to dictate to the people in a matter in which they themselves are sovereign.

Resolved, That we recognize in HUGH L. WHITE, the farmer of Tennessee, a pure Patriot, an able Statesman, and an honest man; and that we therefore approve of his nomination as a fit person to be run for President of the United States.

Resolved, That we highly estimate the Republican principles and great abilities of JOHN TYLER, of Virginia, and therefore concur in his nomination, as a proper person to be run for the Vice Presidency.

And whereas the amended Constitution requires that the Governor of this State shall hereafter be elected by the people.

Resolved therefore, That we highly approve of the nomination of Gen. EDWARD B. DUDLEY, of New Hanover county, as a fit candidate for Governor of this State, and that his eminent support of republican principles, his warm attachment to the interests of the south, and the purity of his private life, entitle him to our support.

On motion of Col. J. J. Williams, the following persons, viz. Jos. R. Ballard, Wm. K. Williams, Imrie Spruill, John B. Griffin, Benj. L. Taylor, Samuel S. Shepherd, were appointed delegates to confer with delegates from the other counties in this district to meet at Britton's Cross Roads, on the 19th March, for the purpose of nominating an elector.

On motion of Mr. Imrie Spruill, the name of Col. Jos. J. Williams was added to the list of delegates.

On motion, Resolved, That the Chairman be authorized to appoint as many persons as a committee of vigilance as he may think proper.

Whereupon the following persons were appointed: [Here follow the names of 137 gentlemen]

On motion, Resolved, That a copy of the proceedings of this meeting be sent with a request that they be published in the Raleigh Star, Richmond Whig, and all the Whig papers in this State.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.  
S. S. SHEPHERD, Chairman.  
Wm. BARNES, Secretary.

## NEW HANOVER COUNTY.

In conformity with the notice published in the two last numbers of the Wilmington Advertiser, a numerous and respectable meeting of the Republican Whigs of the county of New-Hanover, convened at the Court House in Wilmington, on Monday the 14th instant.

The meeting was organized by the nomination and appointment of William B. Meares, Esq. as Chairman, and John A. Taylor, Esq. as Secretary.

The object of the meeting having been made known, in a short address from the Chair, it was resolved that a Committee of three persons be raised, who should draft and present to the meeting, Resolutions expressive of their views and principles. Dr. John Hill, Joshua G. Wright, Esq. and William C. Lord, Esq. were nominated and appointed to constitute said Committee.

After a brief interval, Mr. Joshua G. Wright, on behalf of the Committee, (having prefaced the same with an eloquent address to the meeting) made the following Report:

Whereas, we the freemen of N. Hanover, deem