

Slavery in Kansas (1859)

James Redpath

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James Redpath (1833 - 1891) was an American journalist and antislavery activist. In 1855, Redpath moved to the Kansas-Missouri border and reported for a Free Soil newspaper, the Missouri Democrat, on the dispute over slavery in Kansas Territory. For the next three years, he was active in Kansas affairs, engaging in politics, writing dispatches, securing support in New England for Free Soil setters, and writing poetry about Kansas.

Redpath writes:

"In this volume alone, of all American anti-slavery or other books, the bondman has been enabled, in his own language, (if I may employ the familiar phrase of political essayists and orators), to "define his position on the all-engrossing question of the day." Almost everybody has done it. Why, then, should not he? Surely he has some interest in it, even if it be "subject to the Constitution;" even if his interest is unfortunately in conflict with "the sacred compromises of the federal Compact!" My conversations with the slaves were written down as soon after they occurred as was convenient; occasionally, indeed, in stenographic notes, as the negroes spoke to me."

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