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## Susan B. Anthony and John Brown

By ALMA LUTZ

Susan B. Anthony stepped into an environment charged with anti-slavery sentiment when she returned to her farm home outside of Rochester in 1849, after two years of teaching at Canajoharie Academy. She was then twenty-nine and was searching for more satisfying, more inspiring work.

The *Liberator*, with its fearless denunciation of Negro slavery, now came regularly to the Anthony home, and as she pored over its pages, its message fired her soul. She longed to have a part in anti-slavery work. Eagerly she called with her father at the home of Frederick Douglass who had recently settled in Rochester and was publishing his paper, the *North Star*. Not only did she want to show friendliness to this free Negro of whose intelligence and eloquence she had heard so much, but she wanted to hear first-hand from him and his wife of the needs of his people.

Almost every Sunday the antislavery Quakers met at the Anthony farm. The Posts, the Hallowells, the De Garmos, and the Willises were sure to be there. Sometimes they sent a wagon into the city for Frederick Douglass and his family. Now and then famous abolitionists joined the circle when their work brought them to western New York—William Lloyd Garrison, looking out with fatherly kindness at his friends through his small steel-rimmed spectacles; Wendell Phillips, handsome, learned, and impressive; black-bearded, fiery Parker Pills-

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bury; and the Unitarian pastor from Syracuse, the Reverend Samuel J. May, with his saintly face and halo of white hair. Susan, helping her mother with the dinner for fifteen or twenty, was torn between establishing her reputation as a good cook and listening to the interesting conversation. She heard them discuss their antislavery campaigns and the infamous compromises made by the Congress to pacify the powerful slave-holding interests. Like William Lloyd Garrison, all of them refused to vote, not wishing to take any part in a government which countenanced slavery. They called the Constitution a proslavery document, advocated "No Union with Slaveholders," and demanded immediate and unconditional emancipation. Indignant at this time over the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law,<sup>1</sup> they made plans to defy it and took pride in the big protest meeting in Rochester where Frederick Douglass hurled his most fiery eloquence against it. All about them, and with their help, the Underground Railroad was operating, circumventing the Fugitive Slave Law and guiding Negro refugees to Canada and freedom. Amy and Isaac Post's barn, Susan knew, was a station on the Underground and the De Garmos and Frederick Douglass almost always had a Negro hidden away. She heard of riots and mobs in Boston and Ohio, but in Rochester not a fugitive was retaken and there were no street battles, although the New York *Herald* advised the city to throw its "nigger printing press" into Lake Ontario and banish Douglass to Canada.<sup>2</sup>

A year later, when Abby Kelley Foster and her husband, Stephen, spoke at antislavery meetings in Rochester, Susan listened eagerly to them and wondered if she ever would have the courage to follow their example. Like herself, Abby had started as a school teacher, but after hearing Theodore Weld speak, had devoted herself to the antislavery cause, traveling alone through the country to say her word against slavery and facing not only the antagonism which abolition always provoked but also the unreasoning prejudice against public speaking by women. For listening to Abby Kelley, men and women had been expelled from their churches. Mobs had jeered at her and often pelted her with rotten eggs. She had married a fellow-abolitionist and one even more unrelenting than she. Sensing Susan's interest in the antislavery cause and hoping to make an active worker of her, they suggested that she join them on a week's tour of the towns around

Rochester. She accepted at once, but was not as yet ready to join the ranks as a lecturer. However, she continued to serve her apprenticeship by attending antislavery meetings whenever and wherever she could.

She had made a place for herself locally in the Daughters of Temperance and decided that for the time being her work lay there, but very soon, through her acquaintances with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone, she also became interested in the woman's rights movement, attending her first woman's rights convention in Syracuse in 1852. Her temperance activities had brought her in contact with women throughout the state, and she had observed how much in bondage married women were, without the right to their separate property, their earnings, or their children. This led her to call a woman's rights convention in Rochester in 1853 and a state convention in Albany in 1854 to concentrate on an appeal to the legislature for amendments to the married women's property law.

### The Fight for Kansas

In the midst of this campaign for women's property rights, the antislavery cause again claimed Susan's attention. The passage by Congress in 1854 of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and admitted Kansas and Nebraska as territories with the right to choose for themselves whether they would be slave or free, was a challenge to all abolitionists, Susan included. Her brother, Daniel, left at once for Kansas with the first group sent out by the New England Emigrant Aid Company, which had been formed by a group of New England men, headed by Eli Thayer of Worcester, for the purpose of sending free-soil settlers to Kansas. They founded the town of Lawrence, named after the wealthy Amos Lawrence of Massachusetts, generous contributor to the cause. Some of Daniel's letters, telling of his experiences and impressions, were published in the Rochester papers.<sup>3</sup>

Susan followed developments in this frontier territory with great interest, reading everything about it she could find in the papers. The *Democrat*<sup>4</sup> described the new town of Lawrence, the natural resources and the fertile soil of the prairie, and published what news was available regarding the contest between the free-state and proslavery settlers. With the help of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, which furnished reduced fares and farm equipment, seven hundred and fifty

free-state settlers went out to Kansas during the summer of 1853, traveling up the Missouri in steamboats and over lonely trails in wagons marked "Kansas." Most of them were not out-and-out abolitionists but wanted to see Kansas a free-labor state which they could develop with their own hard work. Although Southerners in large numbers had also come into the territory, free-state settlers still outnumbered them when the territorial legislature was chosen. Nevertheless, proslavery men gained control by stuffing the ballot boxes and declared slavery legal in Kansas. This led to the formation of a separate free-state government in Topeka. President Franklin Pierce gave his support to the proslavery legislature, and thus encouraged, a proslavery mob sacked Lawrence in May, 1856.

The Anthonys now watched Kansas with growing concern. Daniel<sup>5</sup> returned temporarily to the East, but stirred up so much interest by his accounts of the bitter antislavery contest that his younger brother, Merritt, and several other Rochester men headed west. By this time John Brown<sup>6</sup> was in Kansas and his presence there was assurance to the Anthonys and other abolitionists that slavery could not take root. A militant abolitionist, convinced he had a mission from God to free the slaves, John Brown believed he was needed in Kansas. His sons had written, "Send us guns. We need them more than bread,"<sup>7</sup> and the guns had traveled west, camouflaged as supplies in the wagons of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. He followed them, and in May, 1856, the wires flashed word of his raid on Pottawatomie Creek to avenge the killing of free-state settlers at Lawrence.

Anxiously the Anthonys awaited news from Merritt who had taken up a claim at Osawatonic, Kansas. Early in May he had written of his arrival and his letters were shared with others, interested in Kansas, by publication in the Rochester *Democrat*.<sup>8</sup> Well aware of his eagerness to help John Brown, his family knew he would soon be in the thick of the bloody antislavery struggle.

In September, while Susan was spending a few weeks at home, trying to decide whether to devote herself to the antislavery cause or the woman's rights movement, the newspapers reported an attack by proslavery men on Osawatonic in which thirty out of fifty settlers were killed. Was Merritt among them? Rumors spread like lightning,

most of them blaming John Brown for the bloodshed; but the Anthonys still believed in John Brown.

Finally letters came through from Merritt. Susan read and reread them, assuring herself of his safety. John Brown, he wrote, had slept in his cabin the night before the attack, had hurried off early the next morning when shots were heard, and had ordered him to stay in the cabin, for he had been seriously ill. But Merritt too had reached for his gun and was soon in the thick of the fight. Unharmed but weak from the exertion, he had crawled back to the cabin on his hands and knees and had lain there ill and alone for several weeks. Parts of these letters were also published in the Rochester *Democrat*<sup>9</sup>, and the city took sides in the conflict, some papers claiming that his letters were fiction.

Susan wrote Merritt, "How much rather would I have you at my side tonight than to think of your daring and enduring greater hardships even than our Revolutionary heroes. Words can not tell how often we think of you or how sadly we feel that the terrible crime of this nation against humanity is being avenged on the heads of our sons and brothers. . . ."

"Mr. Mowry, who was in the battle," she continued, "arrived in town. Like wild fire the news flew. . . . He thought you were not hurt. Mother said that night, 'I can go to sleep now there is a hope that Merritt still lives;' but father said: 'I suppose I shall sleep when nature is tired out, but the hope that my son has survived brings little solace to my soul while the cause of all this terrible wrong remains untouched. . . .' "<sup>10</sup>

Then Susan told Merritt about life on the farm and how she had used his fish pole to reach some especially choice, ripe peaches in the orchard, adding, "As the pole reached the topmost bough and down dropped the big, fat, golden red-cheeked Crawfords, thought went away to the owner of the rod, how he in days gone by planted these little trees, pruned them and nursed them and now we are enjoying the fruits of his labor, while he, the dear boy, was away in the prairie wilds of Kansas. . . ."

Later, she added a postscript, "Father brings the *Democrat* giving a list of killed, wounded, and missing and the name of our Merritt is

not therein, but oh! the slain are sons, brothers, and husbands of others as dearly loved and sadly mourned.

"Your letter is in to-day's *Democrat*, and the *Evening Advertiser* says there is 'another letter from our dear brother in this morning's Shrieker for Freedom.' The tirade is headed 'Bleeding Kansas.' The *Advertiser*, *Union* and *American* all ridicule the reports from Kansas, and even say your letters are gotten up in the *Democrat* office for political effect. I tell you, Merritt, we have 'border ruffians' here at home—a little more refined in their way of outraging and torturing the lovers of freedom, but no less fiendish."

That autumn Susan watched the bitter presidential campaign with interest and concern. The new Republican party was in the contest, offering its first presidential candidate, the colorful hero and explorer of the Far West, John C. Fremont. She had leanings toward this virile, young party which stood firmly against the extension of slavery in the territories and discussed its platform with Elizabeth and Henry B. Stanton, both enthusiastically for "Fremont and Freedom." Yet she was distrustful of political parties, for eventually they yielded to expediency, no matter how high their purpose at the start. Her ideal was the Garrisonian doctrine, "No Union with Slaveholders" and "Immediate Unconditional Emancipation" which courageously faced the "whole question" of slavery. There was no compromise among Garrisonians.

With the burning issue of slavery now uppermost in her mind, she began seriously to reconsider the offer she had received from the American Antislavery Society, shortly after her visit to Boston in 1855, to act as their agent in central and western New York. Unable to accept at that time because she was committed to her woman's rights program, she had nevertheless felt highly honored that she had been chosen. Still hesitating a little, she wrote Lucy Stone, wanting reassurance that no woman's-rights work demanded immediate attention. "They talk of sending two companies of Lecturers into this state," she wrote Lucy, "wish me to lay out the route of each one and accompany one. They seem to think me possessed of a vast amount of executive ability. I shrink from going into Conventions where speaking is expected of me. . . . I know they want me to help about finance and that part I like and am good for nothing else."<sup>11</sup>

She also had the farm home on her mind. With her father in the insurance business, her brother, Daniel, also in Kansas, Sister Mary teaching in the Rochester schools and "looking matrimonially-wise,"<sup>12</sup> and her mother at home all alone, she often wondered if it might not be as much her duty to stay there to take care of her mother and father as it would be to make a home comfortable for a husband. Sometimes the quietness of such a life beckoned enticingly, but after the disappointing November elections which put into the presidency the conservative James Buchanan, indicating a vacillating policy on slavery, she wrote Samuel J. May, Jr., the secretary of the American Anti-slavery Society, "I shall be very glad if I am able to render even the most humble service to this cause. Heaven knows there is need of earnest, effective radical workers. The heart sickens over the delusions of the recent campaign and turns achingly to the unconsidered *whole question*."<sup>13</sup>

The reply came promptly, "We put all New York into your control and want your name to all letters and your hand in all arrangements."

### **"We Preach Revolution, the Politicians, Reform"**

For ten dollars a week and expenses, Susan now arranged anti-slavery meetings; displayed posters, bearing the provocative words, "No Union with Slaveholders"; planned tours for a corps of speakers, among them Stephen and Abby Kelley Foster, Parker Pillsbury, and two free Negroes, Charles Remond and his sister, Sarah.

In debt from her last woman's rights campaign, she could not afford a new dress for these tours, but she dyed a dark green the merino which she had worn so proudly in Canajoharie ten years before, bought cloth to match for a basque, and it made a "handsome suit." "With my Siberian squirrel cape, I shall be very comfortable,"<sup>14</sup> she noted in her diary.

In her campaign for woman's rights, she had met indifference and ridicule. Now she faced outright hostility, for Northern businessmen had no use for abolition-mad fanatics, as they called anyone who spoke against slavery. Abolitionists, they believed, ruined business by stirring up trouble between the North and the South and they were inclined to blame upon these agitators the financial depression which in 1857 was sweeping the country.

Usually the antislavery meetings turned into debates between speakers and audience, often lasting until midnight. They were charged with animosity which might readily flame into violence. All of the speakers lived under a strain, under emotional pressure. Consequently they were not always easy to handle. Some of them were temperamental, a bit jealous of each other, and not always satisfied with the tours Susan mapped out for them. She expected of her colleagues what she herself could endure, but they often complained and sometimes refused to fill their engagements.

When no one else was at hand, she took her turn at speaking, but she was seldom satisfied with her efforts. "I spoke for an hour," she confided to her diary, "but my heart fails me. Can it be that my stammering tongue ever will be loosed?"<sup>15</sup>

Lucy Stone, who spoke with such ease, gave her advice and encouragement. "You ought to cultivate your power of expression," she wrote. "The subject is clear to you and you ought to be able to make it so to others. It is only a few years ago that Mr. Higginson told me he could not speak, he was so much accustomed to writing, and now he is second only to Phillips. 'Go thou and do likewise.'"<sup>16</sup>

In March, 1857, the Supreme Court startled the country with the Dred Scott decision, which not only substantiated the claim of Garrisonians, that the Constitution sanctioned slavery and protected the slaveholder, but practically swept away the Republican platform of no extension of slavery in the territories. The Constitution, the decision declared, did not apply to Negroes, since they were citizens of no state when it was adopted, and therefore had not the right of citizens to sue for freedom or to claim freedom in the territories; nor did the Congress have the right to enact a law which arbitrarily deprived citizens of their property.

Reading the decision word for word with dismay and pondering indignantly over the cold letter of the law, Susan found herself so aroused and so full of the subject that she occasionally made a spontaneous speech, and thus gradually began to free herself from reliance on written speeches.

Instinctively she reaffirmed her allegiance to the doctrine, "No Union with Slaveholders," and, as she read of the Disunion Convention called by Garrison, Phillips, and Higginson in Massachusetts that



summer, demanding that the free states secede, she gloried in their courage and in their zeal for justice. It was good to be one of this devoted band and she gave herself to the work with religious fervor.

As she continued her meetings, she spoke from these notes: "Consider the fact of 4,000,000 slaves in a Christian and republican government. . . . Antislavery prayers, resolutions, and speeches avail nothing without action. . . . Our mission is to deepen sympathy and convert into right action; to show that the men and women of the North are slaveholders, those of the South slave-owners. The guilt rests on the North equally with the South. Therefore our work is to rouse the sleeping consciousness of the North. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

"We ask you to feel as if you, yourselves, were the slaves. The politician talks of slavery as he does of United States banks, tariff, or any other commercial question. We demand the abolition of slavery because the slave is a human being, and because man should not hold property in his fellowman. . . . We say disobey every unjust law; the politician says obey them and meanwhile labor constitutionally for repeal. . . . We preach revolution, the politicians, reform."

Letters were coming from Kansas from her two brothers, Daniel and Merritt. Merritt's bride Mary A. Luther from Rochester joined him in Osawatimie, while Daniel settled in Leavenworth. Vividly they described the small civil war on the prairies and denounced Northern "dough faces" whose treachery kept Kansas in turmoil. Each letter increased her determination to rouse the North out of its apathy.

Hard as she worked, she could not make her antislavery meetings self-supporting, and at the end of the first season, after paying her speakers, she faced a deficit of \$1,000. This troubled her greatly, but the Antislavery Society, recognizing her value, wrote her, "We cheerfully pay your expenses and want to keep you at the head of the work."<sup>18</sup> They took note of her "business enterprise, practical sagacity, and platform ability," and looked upon the expenditure of \$1,000 for the education and development of such an exceptional worker as a good investment.

This new experience was a good investment for Susan as well. She made many new friends. She won the respect, confidence, and goodwill of men like William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Francis Jackson. Her friendship with Parker Pillsbury deepened. Of Parker

Pillsbury, she wrote at this time, "At Poughkeepsie, Parker Pillsbury spoke grandly for freedom. I never heard from the lips of men such deep thoughts and burning words. In the ages to come, the prophecies of these noble men and women will be read with the same wonder and veneration as those of Isaiah and Jeremiah inspire today. Now while the people worship the prophets of that time, they stone those of their own."<sup>19</sup>

Only the crusading spirit of the "antislavery apostles"<sup>20</sup> and what to them seemed the desperate state of the nation made the hard campaigning bearable. The animosity they faced, the cold, the poor transportation, the long hours, and wretched food taxed the physical endurance of all of them. "O the crimes that are committed in the kitchens of this land!"<sup>21</sup> Susan wrote in her dairy, as she ate heavy bread and cake ruined with soda and drank what passed for coffee. A good cook herself, she had little patience with those who through ignorance or carelessness neglected that art. Equally as bad were the food fads they had to endure when they were entertained in homes of otherwise hospitable friends of the cause. Raw food diets found many devotees in those days, and often after long cold rides in the stage-coach, these tired, hungry antislavery workers were obliged to sit down to a supper of apples, nuts, and a baked mixture of coarse bran and water. Nor did breakfast or dinner offer anything more. Facing these diets seemed harder for the men than for Susan. Repeatedly in such situations, they hurried away, leaving her to complete two- or three-day engagements among the food cranks. How she welcomed a good beefsteak and a pot of hot coffee at home after these long days of fasting!

A night at home now was sheer bliss. "Here I am once more in my own Farm Home, where my weary head rests upon my own home pillows," she wrote Lucy Stone in March, 1858. "You know right well, how good it is to get into the home quiet. . . . I had been gone *Four Months*, scarcely sleeping the second night under the same roof."<sup>22</sup>

Spending a few weeks at home in the spring of 1858 and looking back over the past six months, she wrote Samuel May, Jr., "I can but acknowledge to myself that Antislavery has made me richer and braver in spirit, and that it is the school of schools for the full and true

development of the nobler elements of life. I find my raspberry field looking finely—also my strawberry bed. The prospect for peaches, cherries, plums, apples, and pears is very promising—Indeed all nature is clothed in her most hopeful dress. It really seems to me that the trees and the grass and the large fields of waving grain did never look so beautifully as now. It is more probable, however, that my soul has grown to appreciate Nature more fully. . . .”<sup>23</sup>

### The Raid on Harper’s Ferry

Susan needed that growth of soul to face the events of the next few years and do the work which lay ahead. The whole country was tense over the slavery issue, which could no longer be pushed into the background. On public platforms and at every fireside, men and women were discussing the subject. Antislavery workers sensed the gravity of the situation and felt the onrush of the impending conflict between what they regarded as the forces of good and evil—freedom and slavery. When the Republican leader, William H. Seward, spoke in Rochester, of “the irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces,” he was expressing only what Garrisonian abolitionists, like Susan, always had recognized. In the West, a tall, awkward country lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, debating with the suave Stephen A. Douglas, declared with prophetic wisdom, “‘A house divided against itself cannot stand.’ I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. . . . It will become all one thing or all the other.”<sup>24</sup>

So Susan believed, and she was doing her best to make it all free. Not only was she holding antislavery meetings, making speeches, and distributing leaflets whenever and wherever possible, but she was also lobbying in Albany for a Personal Liberty bill to protect the slaves, who were escaping from the South. “‘Treason in the Capitol,’”<sup>25</sup> the Democratic press labeled efforts for a Personal Liberty bill, and as Susan reported to William Lloyd Garrison, even Republicans shied away from it, many of them regarding Seward’s “irrepressible conflict” speech delivered at Corinthian Hall in Rochester on October 25, 1858, a sorry mistake. Such timidity and shilly-shallying were repugnant to Susan. She could better understand the fervor of John Brown although he fought with bullets.

Yet John Brown's fervor soon ended in tragedy, sowing seeds of fear, distrust, and bitter partisanship in all parts of the country. When in October, 1859, the startling news reached Susan of the raid on Harper's Ferry and the capture of John Brown, she sadly tried to piece together the story of his failure. She admired and respected John Brown, believing he had saved Kansas for freedom. That he had further ambitious plans was common knowledge among antislavery workers, for he had talked them over with Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass, and the three young militants, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Frank Sanborn, and Samuel Gridley Howe. Somehow these plans had failed, but she was sure that his motives were good. He was imprisoned, accused of treason and murder, and in his carpetbag were papers, which, it was said, implicated prominent antislavery workers. Now his friends were fleeing the country, Frank Sanborn, Sam Howe, and Frederick Douglass.<sup>26</sup> Gerrit Smith broke down so completely that for a time his mind was affected. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, defiant and unafraid, stuck by John Brown to the end, befriending his family, hoping to rescue him, as he had rescued fugitive slaves.

Scanning the *Liberator* for its comment on John Brown, Susan found it colored, as she had expected, by Garrison's instinctive opposition to all war and bloodshed. He called the raid, "a misguided, wild, apparently insane though disinterested and well-intentioned effort by insurrection to emancipate the slaves of Virginia," but even he added, "Let no one who glories in the Revolutionary struggle of 1776 deny the right of the slaves to imitate the example of our fathers."<sup>27</sup>

Behind closed doors and in public meetings, abolitionists pledged their allegiance to John Brown's noble purpose. He had wanted no bloodshed, they said, had no thought of stirring up slaves to brutal revenge. The raid was to be merely a signal for slaves to arise, to cast off slavery forever, to follow him to a mountain refuge, which other slave insurrections would reinforce until all slaves were free. To him the plan seemed logical and he was convinced it was God-inspired. To some of his friends it seemed possible—just a step beyond the Underground Railroad and hiding fugitive slaves. To Susan he was a hero and a martyr.

Southerners, increasingly fearful of slave insurrections, called John Brown a cold-blooded murderer, and accused Republicans—"Black Republicans," they classed them—of taking orders from abolitionists and planning evil against them. To law-abiding Northerners, John Brown was a menace, stirring up lawlessness. Seward and Lincoln, speaking for the Republicans, declared that violence, bloodshed, and treason could not be excused even if slavery were wrong and Brown thought he was right. All saw before them the horrible threat of civil war.

During John Brown's trial, his friends did their utmost to save him. The noble old giant with flowing white beard, who had always been more or less of a legend, now assumed heroic proportions. His calmness, his steadfastness in what he believed to be right, captured the imagination. "I do not feel in the least degraded," he wrote his friends, "by my imprisonment, my chains, or the near prospect of the gallows. Men cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul."<sup>28</sup>

The jury declared him guilty—guilty of treason, of conspiring with slaves to rebel, guilty of murder in the first degree. The papers carried the story, and it spread by word of mouth—the story of those last tense moments in the courtroom when John Brown declared, "It is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends . . . , it would have been all right. . . . I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, in behalf of His despised poor, I did no wrong but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done. . . ."

He was sentenced to die.

### "His Soul Is Marching On"<sup>29</sup>

Susan, sick at heart, talked all this over with her abolitionist friends and began planning a meeting of protest and mourning in Rochester if John Brown were hanged. She engaged Corinthian Hall for this meeting, never thinking of the animosity she might arouse,

and as she went from door to door selling tickets, she asked for contributions for John Brown's destitute family. She tried to get speakers from among respected Republicans to widen the popular appeal of the meeting, but her diary records, "Not one man of prominence in religion or politics would identify himself with the John Brown meeting."<sup>30</sup> Only a Free-Church minister, the Reverend Abram Pryn, and the ever-faithful Parker Pillsbury were willing to speak.

There was still hope that John Brown might be saved and excitement ran high. Some like Higginson, unwilling to let him die, wanted to rescue him, but he forbade it. Others wanted to kidnap Governor Wise of Virginia and hold him on the high seas, a hostage for John Brown. Wendell Phillips was one of these. Parker Pillsbury sending Susan the latest news from "the seat of war" and signing his letter, "Faithfully and fervently yours," wrote, "My voice is against any attempt at rescue. It would inevitably, I fear, lead to bloodshed which could not compensate or be compensated. If the people dare murder their victim, as they are determined to do, and in the name of the law, . . . the moral effect of the execution will be without a parallel since the scenes on Calvary eighteen hundred years ago, and the halter that day sanctified shall be the cord to draw millions to salvation."<sup>31</sup>

On Friday, December 2, 1859, John Brown was hanged. Through the North, church bells tolled and prayers were said for him. Everywhere people gathered together to mourn and honor or to condemn. In New York City, at a big meeting which overflowed to the streets, it was resolved "that we regard the recent outrage at Harper's Ferry as a crime, not only against the State of Virginia, but against the Union itself . . .";<sup>32</sup> but in Boston to a tremendous audience, Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke of "the new saint, than whom none purer or more brave was ever led by love of man into conflict and death . . . who will make the gallows glorious," and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow recorded in his diary, "This will be a great day in our history; the date of a new revolution." Far away in France, Victor Hugo declared, "The eyes of Europe are fixed on America. The hanging of John Brown will open a latent fissure that will finally split the nation asunder. . . . You preserve your shame, but you kill your glory."<sup>33</sup>

In Rochester, three hundred people assembled. All were friends of the cause and there was no unfriendly disturbance to mar the proceedings. Susan B. Anthony presided and Parker Pillsbury, in her opinion, made "the greatest speech of his life," for it was the only occasion he ever found fully wicked enough to warrant "his terrific invective."<sup>84</sup>

Thus these two militant abolitionists, Susan B. Anthony and Parker Pillsbury, joined hundreds of others throughout the Nation in honoring John Brown, sensing the portent of his martyrdom and prophesying that his soul would go marching on.

## Notes

Miss Alma Lutz of Boston, Massachusetts, is writing a biography of Susan B. Anthony and we are glad to be able to present one chapter here. Editor.

1. Not only were runaway slaves tracked down under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, but even those who had fled from their masters years before were hunted out and suspects were denied the right to a trial by jury. Anyone implicated in the escape of a slave was liable to \$1000 fine, to the payment of \$1000 to the owner of the fugitive and to a possible jail term of six months.
2. Amy H. Coughton, *Antislavery Days in Rochester* (Rochester, 1936).
3. May 11, 26, June 4, 9, 1855.
4. Dec. 26, 1854; Dec. 5, 10, 14, 1855.
5. Daniel R. Anthony settled permanently in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1857.
6. It is possible that the Anthonys became acquainted with John Brown when he visited Frederick Douglass in Rochester before going to Kansas, but so far no evidence has come to light which would indicate that Susan B. Anthony ever met John Brown.
7. Leonard Ehrlich, *God's Angry Man* (New York, 1941), p. 57.
8. Susan B. Anthony Scrapbook, Library of Congress. "Three of the party are with me," he wrote. "Thirteen of them have gone out prospecting for a place to make our final 'pitch'. . . . We can get some very good prairie claims near the place; but we wish to locate together if possible. . . . I never saw a country better supplied with stone and there is a greater quantity of lumber here than I saw in any part of Iowa. . . . While writing this I sit on a bundle of straw with a barrel of crackers for a writing desk."<sup>2</sup>  
A few days later he added, "We have concluded to take claims on this and make some improvements. . . . There is a vein of coal in one of the banks here. . . . I have high hopes of it. . . . We are living in tents yet. We have good success baking corn cakes. Twice we obtained a supply of milk which gave us a rich treat. . . . I am now writing in front of one of our tents by the light of a huge fire. . . ."
9. Sept. 9, 1856.
10. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis, 1898), I, pp. 144-45.
11. Blackwell Papers, Susan B. Anthony to Lucy Stone, October 19, 1856.

12. Ibid.
13. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Works of Susan B. Anthony*, I, p. 148.
14. Ibid., p. 151.
15. Ibid., p. 151.
16. Alice Stone Blackwell, *Lucy Stone* (Boston, 1930), p. 197.
17. Ms., Library of Congress.
18. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, I, p. 154.
19. Ibid., p. 152.
20. Parker Pillsbury referred to the little band of devoted abolitionists as 'antislavery apostles' and so named his book which recorded their work.
21. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, I, p. 160.
22. Blackwell Papers, Susan B. Anthony to Lucy Stone, March 22, 1858.
23. Susan B. Anthony to Samuel J. May, Jr., 1858, Alma Lutz Collection.
24. H. C. Hockett and A. M. Schlesinger, *Land of the Free* (New York, 1944), p. 297.
25. Susan B. Anthony to William Lloyd Garrison, March 19, 1859, Boston Public Library. Some of the Personal Liberty bills prohibited the use of local jails for confining fugitive slaves prior to their extradition to the South.
26. Right after the raid on Harper's Ferry, Henry R. Selden, traveling home to Rochester, overheard the U. S. Deputy Marshal from Virginia boast that he was on his way to Rochester to arrest a runaway "nigger" for whom he had a warrant. Convinced that he meant to arrest Frederick Douglass, Henry Selden hurried with Samuel D. Porter to the Douglass home to warn him and to urge him to flee to Canada. Douglass left for Canada on a horse loaned him by Henry Selden. In 1875 when Susan B. Anthony was on trial for voting, Judge Henry R. Selden was her counsel. Clara Sayre Selden, in collaboration with Elizabeth Rogers Selden, Henry Rogers Selden II, and George Baldwin Selden, Jr. *Family Sketches* (Rochester, 1939)
27. Francis Jackson, William Lloyd II, and Wendell Phillips Garrison. *William Lloyd Garrison* (New York, 1889), III, p. 486.
28. Ibid., p. 490.
29. Julia Ward Howe, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.
30. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, I p. 181.
31. Ibid., p. 180.
32. Henrietta Buckmaster, *Let My People Go* (New York, 1941), p. 269; Leonard C. Ehrlich, *God's Angry Man*, pp. 344-45.
33. Ibid., p. 350.
34. Susan B. Anthony Scrapbook, Library of Congress.
35. In 1890, after visiting the John Brown farm and memorial at North Elba, New York, Susan B. Anthony wrote, "John Brown was crucified for doing what he believed God commanded him to do, 'to break the yoke and let the oppressed go free,' precisely as were the saints of old for following what they believed to be God's commands. The barbarism of our government was by so much the greater as our light and knowledge are greater than those of two thousand years ago. . . ." Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, II, p. 708.