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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

MAY, 1844.

Friday, 17.—The State Convention met in the Assembly Room; I copy the minutes:—

“Convention met according to appointment, and was organized by appointing Gen. Uriah Brown to the chair, and Dr. F. Merryweather, secretary.

Dr. G. W. Goforth presented the following letter, and took his seat in the Convention. Several letters of the same character were presented by other gentlemen, but we have not room to insert them.

‘Muscutah, St. Clair Co., Ill.,
May 4th, 1844. }
Mr. G. W. Goforth:—

Sir:—At various meetings held in this county, where I have had the honor of attending; and the interesting topic of the selection of a suitable person for the high station of President of the United States being at this time the most important to Americans, and with the names that are now before the people, Joseph Smith of Nauvoo is recognized respectfully as a candidate, declarative in the principles of Jeffersonianism, or Jefferson Democracy, Free trade and Sailors’ rights, and the protection of person and property.

A Convention being about to be held in the city of Nauvoo on the 17th of this month, (May) your name has been on every occasion given as a delegate to said convention, and through me the message to be imparted you, asking you to represent our expressions in the case.

Please say for us as Americans, that we will support Gen. Joseph Smith in preference to any other man that has given, or suffered his name to come before us as a candidate. And that at the great Baltimore Convention, to be held on the 13th of July, our delegation to said convention be authorized to proclaim for us submission to the nominee as may be by them brought before the people in case of a failure to nominate Joseph Smith, (our choice) and unite approbatively for his support.

Respectfully, sir, this communication and authority usward is forwarded you as your voucher at said convention, with our hearty prayers for the success of him whose special name is given in the important affair.

HENRY B. JACOBS,

Agent for the friends of Gen. J. Smith.’

Mr. Clay’s letter to General Joseph Smith was then read by Mr. Phelps, and also General Joseph Smith’s rejoinder, which was applauded by three cheers.

It was moved and seconded that the following gentlemen be appointed a committee to draft resolutions for the adoption of this convention:—

Dr. G. W. Goforth, John Taylor, Wm. W. Phelps, William Smith, and Lucian R. Foster.

It was moved and seconded that the correspondence of the central committee for government reform of New York be read by W. W. Phelps, also General Joseph Smith’s answer to the same.

‘New York, April 20, 1844.

Joseph Smith, Esq.:—

Sir:—The subscribers, the Central Committee of the National Reform Association, in accordance with a duty prescribed by their constitution, respectfully solicit an expression of your views as a candidate for public office, on a subject that, as they think, vitally affects the rights and interests of their constituents.

We see this singular condition of affairs, that while wealth in our country is rapidly accumulating; while internal improvements of every description are fast increasing, and while machinery has multiplied the power of production to an immense extent, yet, with all these national advantages, the compensation for useful labor is getting less and less.

We seek the cause of this anomaly, and we trace it to the monopoly of the land, which places labor at the mercy of capital. We therefore desire to abolish the monopoly, not by interfering with the conventional rights of persons now in possession of the land, but by arresting the further sale of all lands not yet appropriated as private property, and by allowing these lands hereafter to be freely occupied by those who may choose to settle on them.

We propose that the public lands hereafter shall not be owned, but occupied only, the occupant having the right to sell or otherwise dispose of improvements to any one not in possession of other land; so that by preventing any individual from becoming possessed of more than a limited quantity, every one may enjoy the right.

This measure, we think, would gradually establish an equilibrium between the agricultural and other useful occupations, that would ensure to all full employment and fair compensation for their labor, on the lands now held as private property, and to each individual on the public lands the right to work for himself on his own premises, or for another, at his option.

An answer, as soon as convenient, will much oblige
Your fellow citizens,
JOHN WINDT,
EGBERT S. MANNING,
JAMES MAXWELL,
LEWIS MASQUERIER,
DANIEL WITTER,
GEORGE H. EVANS,
ELLIS SMALLEY.’

‘Nauvoo, Ill., May 16th, 1844.

To John Windt, Egbert S. Manning, James Maxwell, Lewis Masquerier, Daniel Witter, George H. Evans, and Ellis Smalley, Esqrs. Gentlemen:—

Your communication of April 20th, soliciting my views relative to the public lands is before me; and I answer, that as soon as the greater national evils could be remedied by the consolidated efforts of a virtuous people, and the judicious legislation of wise men, so that slavery could not occupy one half of the United States for speculation, competition, prodigality, and fleshy capital, and so that enormous salaries, stipends, fees, perquisites, patronage, and the wages of spiritual wickedness in ‘ermine and lace,’ could not swallow up forty or fifty millions of public revenue, I would use all honorable means to bring the wages of mechanics and farmers up, and the salaries of public servants down; increase labor and money by a judicious tariff, and advise the people—who are the only sovereigns of the soil—to petition Congress to pass a uniform land law! that the air, the water, and the land of the ‘asylum of the oppressed’ might be free to freemen!

With considerations of the highest regard for unadulterated freedom,

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH SMITH.’

After which the meeting adjourned for one hour.

It was moved and seconded that the following gentlemen be constituted a committee to appoint electors for this State:

Dr. G. W. Goforth, E. Robinson, L. N. Scovill, Peter Hawes, and John Reid.

It was moved and seconded that the following gentlemen be constituted a central committee of correspondence, having power to increase their number:

Dr. Willard Richards, Dr. J. M. Bernhisel, W. W. Phelps, and Lucian R. Foster.

The following delegates from the different States of the Union were then received by vote:

NAMES.	COUNTIES.	STATES.
Dr. G. W. Goforth	St. Clair,	Illinois.
J. Myers, Esq.	Adams,	do
J. Sene,	Quincy,	do
A. Badlock,	Joe Davis,	do
J. C. Wright,	Scott,	do
L. White,	Crawford,	do
S. Brown,	Brown,	do
W. B. Ide,	Sangamon,	do
J. Browning,	Adams,	do
W. W. Phelps,	Hancock,	do
W. Green,	do	do
E. Robinson,	do	do
J. Taylor,	do	do
H. Sherwood,	do	do
F. Merryweather,	do	do
John Reid, Esq.,	Chemung,	N. York.
E. Reece, Esq.,	Buffalo,	do
L. R. Foster,	N. York city,	do
Dr. J. M. Bernhisel	do	do
Hugh Herinshaw,	West Chester,	do
E. Thompson,	do	do
S. A. Perry,	Essex,	do
Wm. Miller,	Livingston,	do
Mr. Dorlan,	Kings,	do
E. Swakhammer,	N. York city,	do
P. Bowen,	Chester,	Pennsylvania.
W. Smith,	Philadelphia,	do
J. H. Newton,	do	do
E. Hunter,	West Chester,	do
E. Woolley,	Columbiana,	Ohio.
W. G. Ware,	Cincinnati,	do
Thos. Martin,	Hamilton,	do
C. Brooks,	Lake,	do
Dusten Arne,	do	do
W. W. Dryer,	Lorain,	do
M. J. Coltrin,	Cuyahoga,	do
W. Vanausdell,	Green Briar,	Virginia.
L. B. Lewis,	Massachusetts.	
Dr. W. Richards,	Berkshire,	do
E. Dougherty,	Essex,	N. Jersey.
W. Richardson,	Burlington,	do
J. Horner,	Monmouth,	do
Thos. Atkins,	Burlington,	do
Cap. R. Jones,	N. Orleans,	Louisiana.
E. Ludington,	do	do
J. Harman,	Monroe,	Mississippi.
Mr. Palman,	do	do
S. Gully,	Laurence,	do
E. M. Sanders,	do	Delaware.
E. F. Sheets,	do	do
J. Hatch,	Alice,	Vermont.
J. Houston,	Madison,	do
J. A. Mikesell,	do	Missouri.
Col. Cowan,	Oxford,	Maine.
M. Anderson,	Rutherford,	Tennessee.
H. Stout,	Mercer,	Kentucky.
Gen. G. Miller,	Madison,	do
Mr. Hunt,	Switzerland,	Indiana.
A. Johnson,	Middletown,	Connecticut.

L. N. Scovill,
Dr. L. Richards, Providence,
M. Wilber,
J. S. Swiss,
Dr. Shodask,
Abr. Williams,
J. Haws,
R. Alexander, Union District
Y. Maccauslin, Randolph,
D. J. Patton,
Cap. Hathaway,

It was moved, seconded, and carried by acclamation, that General Joseph Smith of Illinois, be the choice of this Convention for President of the United States.

It was moved, seconded, and carried by acclamation, that Sidney Rigdon, Esq., of Pennsylvania, be the choice of this Convention for Vice President of the United States.

The nine following resolutions were then adopted, the fifth of which was carried by acclamation.

1. Resolved, that from all the facts and appearances that are now visible in the United States, that we believe much imbecility and fraud is practised by the officers of government; and that to remedy these evils it is highly necessary that a virtuous people should arise in the panoply of their might, and with one heart and one mind, correct these abuses by electing wise and honorable men to fill the various offices of government.

2. Resolved, that as union is power, the permanency and continuance of our political institutions depend upon the correction of the abuses.

3. Resolved, that as all political parties of the present day have degraded themselves by adhering more or less to corrupt principles and practices, by fomenting discord and division among the people, being swallowed in the vortex of party spirit and sectional prejudices, until they have become insensible to the welfare of the people and the general good of the country; and knowing that there are good men among all parties, in whose bosoms burn the fire of pure patriotism, we invite them by the love of liberty, by the sacred honor of freemen, by the patriotism of the illustrious fathers of our freedom, by the glorious love of country, and by the holy principles of ‘76, to come over and help us to reform the government.

4. Resolved, that to redress all wrongs, the government of the United States, with the President at its head, is as powerful in its sphere as Jehovah is in his.

5. Resolved, that the better to carry out the principles of liberty and equal rights, Jeffersonian Democracy, free trade and sailors rights, and the protection of person and property, we will support General Joseph Smith of Illinois for the President of the United States at the ensuing election.

6. Resolved, that we will support Sidney Rigdon, Esq., of Pennsylvania, for the Vice Presidency.

7. Resolved, that we will hold a National Convention at Baltimore on Saturday, the 13th day of July.

8. Resolved, that we call upon the honest men of all parties in each State to send their delegates to said convention.

9. Resolved, that all honest Editors throughout the United States are requested to publish the above resolutions.

Resolved, that those gentlemen who stand at the head of the list, who have gone to the several States to take charge of our political interests, be requested to use every exertion to appoint electors in the several electoral districts of the States which they represent, and also to send delegates to the Baltimore Convention.

Resolved, that Dr. Goforth and John Reid, Esq., be requested to furnish a copy of their speeches for publication.

Resolved, that the electors be instructed to make stump speeches in their different districts.

Resolved, that the thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Hancock for his patriotic song.

It was moved and seconded that Orson Hyde, H. C. Kimball, David S. Hollister, Orson Pratt, and Lyman Wight, represent this Convention at the Convention to be held in Baltimore on the 13th of July next.

Sidney Rigdon, Esq., then addressed the meeting, and was succeeded by the following gentlemen:—GEN. JOSEPH SMITH, DR. G. W. GOFORTH, LYMAN WIGHT, W. W. PHELPS, JOHN TAYLOR, HYRUM SMITH, and JOHN REID, Esq.

It was moved, seconded, and carried, that the thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman and Secretary.

The Convention was addressed in an eloquent speech by Sidney Rigdon, Esq., showing the political dishonesty of both Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, and stating his views, and the present condition of the country.

Dr. Goforth rose and addressed the Convention in the following eloquent strain:—

‘Mr. Chairman and Fellow Citizens:—As an American—a citizen of St. Clair County, and of the State of Illinois, with the deference ever acknowledged on occasions like this, I feel the spirit of obedience that was required of one of old when he was bade to take off his shoes, for he was walking on holy ground, and that this was a holy cause.

Influenced by the distinguished honors paid

Maryland.
Rhode Island.
do
N. Hampshire.
Michigan.
Georgia.
Alabama.
N. Carolina.
N. do.
Iowa.
Arkansas.

me on the 24th of April in the convention then here held, and the invitation to associate on this occasion, I feel that on occasions of this importance it commands the rallying excuses of more than a Bonaparte or a Mortier desperation; that to have names now brought before an American people that have for the last fourteen years or longer, been like the foot ball of the sportsman and the extraordinary selected subjects of derision and contumely, that new expressions are about to be made that the people are about to trace back the erroneous doings of a nation, to weep and repent for malefactors, to examine the old building that in those days was founded by our forefathers, and for want of qualified tenants, has become occasionally tinged with filth and spurious matter—that its anticipated solidity to the beating storms has ceded—and its firmness in various ranges assumed dubitable type.

The Jeffersonian doctrines have been forsaken; MERIT and QUALIFICATION have been abandoned, humbuggery and sarcasm in their stead adopted, and modern American growth in the unhealthy tones of vice, farce, non-sustenance of truth, and non-valorous deeds in their stead, the only objects for promotion captioned by these expressions, to this august assembly.

In the character of a delegate from St. Clair county, I say, that reform—politically as well as morally, claims the present field; that the many gubernative exercises of the various Presidents since those days that were honored by a Washington, a Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson, have been to AMERICANS, thorns whose irritability never cease, whose national *maligne depot* has been indelible and that has cindered the lovely cement that germinated in the days of the Revolution in 1776, and that were by our forefathers fostered with hope of ameliorizing the conditions of this and previous generations.

Unwilling as I may be to offer to my nation the least attack of reproach, yet, as publicity was given of a western convention to take up the subject of a national merit—by delegating and instructing delegates, by the expression of a will to submit to the nomination of the Baltimore Convention and covenant to support the nominee—and with all the utterance of our disapprobation of Martin Van Buren’s ever standing before the lovers of the ‘76’ cause in any character that might respect or recognize him as a portion of material in the erection or construction of this American microcosm I on this occasion stay the ceremony of exposition—I tremble for our once happy country, at the threat of Van Buren’s election again by the Americans to the Presidency—and thank God that the age of gray hairs will to every American in these days say ‘look ere you leap!’ since 1819 I have risked an American’s part for the sustenance of democracy, and I do assert, JEFFERSONIANISM; ever shaded by the promise of better times, while the LOCKER was opened and the AMERICANS hope till spill’d.

On this occasion, delegates hasten to the Baltimore convention—and like Americans, we trust, will represent the cares of a nation and claim the western people’s choice—open again as in the ‘Declaration of Independence’ the assertion ‘that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their CREATOR with certain unalienable rights; that among these are LIFE, LIBERTY, and the PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of the ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.’

‘LIGHT AND TRANSIENT CAUSES’ may be by party opposition to be the movers for this proposition of Reform. But with one voice we will respond No! No!! No!!! For very many years agitating ceremonies have roused from their slumber, and caused the offsprings of ‘1776’ to look back and rehearse the tales, remembering the savage shriek and calling up to horrible vivification the bloody banners of Britain, when the unholy proffer was made for ‘SLAVERY OR DEATH.’ When the cradle was only a forest of uncertainty, and our MOTHERS as in the hands of Heaven’s King sustained to impart the voice of patriotic perfection and excellence.

This day associates with our recollection much of the history of Americans, and but for the want of time ’twould be rehearsed. This day sweetens recollection with the privilege of a convention to tell over the national grievances—the omissions of official duty and the usurpation of aristocratical power. This day only whispers the silly illipian efforts of Missouri, sanctioned by VAN BUREN, BENTON, and BOGGS. This day published for days passed, has told the world that to be free was our privilege, that to renounce VAN BURENISM would be healthy to Americans—that to dissanction the deaf eared costumes of a *White Housed scorpion* was prudent, and to tell the old veterans of 1776 that those rights occupy our wills—and the spirits of our fathers yet mingle in our blood and stimulate our actions, to nobly die defending the covenant made by the signers of the ‘Declaration of Independence on the 4th day of July, 1776.