

The Gansevoort Melville Folder

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Text I.

Vermont Gazette
(Bennington)

Tuesday, October 17, 1843

(Vol. LXIII, No. 4109)

p.2, c. 5

Among the curious and certainly not insignificant incidents connected with the influence of American character, is a fact recently stated in the *London Tablet*—the leading Catholic journal of Great Britain—that the Repeal speeches of Gansevoort Melville, esq., of New York, are printed in handbills, and hawked about the streets of Dublin and other towns in Ireland.

It is also stated that one of the carriers who was selling them in the city of Wessex, was taken up by the police. His papers were taken from him, and copies were immediately sent to the British Government at London, because the magistrates considered them 'dangerous and inflammatory.'

In noticing this incident, one of the Irish papers says that it is fortunate for Mr. Melville, that English martial law does not reach across the Atlantic. — *Albany Argus*.

Text II.

Southport Telegraph
(South Port, Wisconsin)

Tuesday, December 5, 1843

(Vol. IV, No. 23)
p.1, c. 4

GREAT REPEAL MEETING AT NEWARK.

—On Monday evening, one of the largest meetings ever held in the city of Newark was convened at Stewart's Saloon; which was crowded to the utmost extent. Judicious resolutions were passed, after which Gansevoort Melville, Esq., of New York, was introduced and addressed the meeting at great length, his speech occupying two hours. when Mr. Melville had concluded, contributions were made, and \$137 were collected, being as we are informed, precisely \$67 more than the Repealers of Newark had ever previously contributed to the cause upon a single occasion.

Text III.

The Pittsfield Sun
(Pittsfield, Massachusetts)

Thursday, June 13, 1844

(Vol. XLIV, No. 2282.)
p.2, c. 2-3

To Gansevoort Melville, Richard C. Connelly, Wm. A. Walker, and Wm. C. McMurray, Esq., Committee.

Mr. Van Buren's letter was received with the most lively and oft repeated demonstrations of applause.

Mr. Melville proceeded:—Who is there now, what democrat, what man that pretends to be a democrat, and most especially what citizen of the Empire State, that does not feel a pride in the name and fame of MARTIN VAN BUREN! Who does not feel a manly and conscious pride in having been his uniform and conscientious supporter! Martin Van Buren is the foremost democratic citizen of these United States. His position is taken. It is as undeniable and as apparent as the mountains. It is as firm and fixed as their rock-bound foundations. History will accord it to him. The universal occurrence of all thinking and calm judging men place him where he ought to be and is—side by side with Jefferson, Madison and Jackson, and as an advocate of popular rights, and as an authoritative expounder of the democratic creed. (Great cheering.) He has taken his place as a fixed star in the democratic firmament, and there he will remain forever. (Tremendous cheering.) One thing—thank Heaven—is true, true as holy writ; and that is—the leaders of the democratic party may waver, but the rank and file, the bone and sinew, the mechanic and the working man, the *unadulterated manhood* of the land, never waver; they don't know how to waver. (Tremendous cheering.) The voters of the democratic party have known but one alternative: Henry Clay and his obsolete idea of a U. S.

Bank, a tariff based upon the principle of protection, a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, combined with a latitudinarian construction of the Constitution and an anti-Texas and anti-Oregon bias—or, James K. Polk, a determined opposition to the U. S. Bank and the policy of land distribution—a limited revenue tariff—the occupation of Oregon—and—the re-annexation of the State of the lone star—gallant and fertile Texas—both occupation and re-annexation to take place at the *earliest possible practicable moment*. (Enthusiastic cheers, and cries for Texas.) These are the issues. They must be kept before the people. The people will record their decision on them. In that decision, whatever it may be, we have the utmost confidence. In it we will acquiesce. If we do but half as much for the cause as the cause will do for us, we will most assuredly triumph.

Let us go into the contest with heart and hand, with an inveterate spirit of determination that causes its opponents to give ground. We do not recognize the existence of any such word as fail. (Cheers.) I have carefully examined the democratic dictionary, the last edition — 1844—and there is no such word as fail init. (Laughter and tremendous cheering.) To use a strong Saxon idiom, **I feel it in my very bones that we will beat them**—(terrific cheering) —we will establish a permanent democratic ascendancy, under our chosen standard bearers, Polk and Dallas—(great cheering) —the accomplished Pennsylvanian, and the young Hickory tree of the great and growing west. (Great cheers.) The old Key Stone has never furnished the Union with either President or Vice-President, and it causes her to feel badly, and she cannot avoid complaining. But let her be easy and contented. She should not complain, for she is going to furnish one now. (Cheers.) As for James K. Polk, the next President of the United States, we, the unterrified democracy of New York will rebaptise him; **we will give him a name such as Andrew Jackson in the baptism of fire and blood at New-Orleans**; we will re-christen him. Hereafter he shall be known by the name that we now give him—it is, **Young Hickory. (Here the cheering was deafening, and continued for some moments. A voice, “you’re a good twig of Old Hickory, too!”** —laughter and renewed cheering) We have had one old hickory tree. Its trunk as yet green and undecayed. **Sixteen millions** of Americans have reposed under its shade in peace and happiness. It is yet vigorous—but it cannot live forever. And now to take its place is springing up at its very side, a tall and noble sapling. It imbibes its nourishment from the same soil. It flourishes in the same atmosphere. It springs from the same staunch old democratic stock. It is heart of oak and sound to the core. It grew originally It grew originally from the same Carolinian ground. Like it, it was early transplanted to the West. There it has struck its root wide and deep. **It will yet be cradled in the tempest and rocked by the storm. Storm and tempest will alike beat against it in vain.** Its growth cannot be checked. It is destined to reach a corresponding elevation with the parent system. **We and our children will yet live in prosperity under the broad branches of this one young Hickory tree. On the 4th day of March next, that young Hickory will be transplanted by the People, to the People’s House at Washington, and you, and I, and all of us, will assist in that transplanting.** (Enthusiastic and long continued cheering followed this very happy burst.)

We are going into this fight on the great and fundamental principle of a philosopher greater than the groves of the Academy can boast—a native-born, home-spun, and backwoods philosopher—Davie Crockett, (roars of laughter) —the principle that he has given to the world, has the advantage of combing in itself the sum and essence of all practical wisdom. “Be always sure you are right—then go ahead.” We are sure that we are right—are we not? (Terrific cheering.) Well, then, we are right and we are going ahead, and all the federalism and whiggery in the land cannot stop us. (Cheers.) The indomitable democracy of New York have by this overwhelming demonstration, set an example to the whole Union—and we call upon the democracy every where to respond to it in like spirit and in like manner. We now

proclaim from what is left of the State of Maine—what Webster and Ashburton, and other highly respectable gentlemen have left of it—(groans) —to Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the farthest confines of Oregon and Texas, that we are united and once more stand shoulder to shoulder. (Great cheering.) Past divisions are healed. Former animosities buried and forgotten. We are all brethren. Our only aim, our only endeavor in this coming conflict will be to emulate each other in penetrating furthest, and striking deepest into the ranks of the common enemy. (Cheers.) Our signal of battle is identical in spirit and almost in language with that which animated the haughty islanders at Waterloo, when they rushed to that final and irresistible charge that sealed the fate of Europe. Let our cry echo far and wide. The democratic war cry is —*Up, democrats, and at them.* [Loud and enthusiastic cheering, and “*three cheers for Gansevoort Melville,*” which were given with terrific effect.]

The meeting was also addressed eloquently and with great effect by Churchill C. Cambreleng, Col. Jewett of Maine, (now of N. York) and the Hon. John McKeon.

A series of admirable resolutions responding to the nominations of Polk and Dallas, alluding in terms of high approval of Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Wright, &c. &c. were adopted by acclamation.

Text IV.

The New York Herald
(New York City)

Tuesday morning, November 5th, 1844

(Vol. X, No. 306— Whole No. 3906.)
p.2, c. 3

**Great Meeting of the Democracy at Newark—
Speech of Gansevoort Melville—The Men and Women of the West—
Whigs taking Possession of Salt River—A Scene at the “Hermitage” —
The Spirit of the Old Man Still Lives.**

An immense gathering of the democracy of the city of Newark, took place on Saturday evening last. Washington Hall, a room of spacious dimensions, was densely crowded, and hundreds were obliged to go away unable to obtain admission. About two hundred ladies were present, and certainly presented a glorious sample of the fair democrats of **New Jersey**—none of your affected, puny, fashionable ladies—but like Wadsworth’s maiden—

“Creatures not too bright nor food
For human nature’s daily good” —

Whole-souled women, with a hue of health on their cheeks, and its rounded grace in their forms—worthy mothers and daughters of the republic.

Dr. DARCY occupied the chair, and introduced to the meeting, amid tremendous applause : —

GANSEVOORT MELVILLE, of this city [=New York City]. The reception of this gentleman was indeed enthusiastic in the extreme. After the applause subsided, he addressed the meeting for about three hours, in a speech of singular force and eloquence.

Mr. MELVILLE commenced by stating the issues involved in the present contest. He then discussed the question of a bank—showed that the whigs are still bound to that issue, and pointed out the disastrous consequences which would follow from the election of Mr. Clay and the adoption of the whig policy with respect to the establishment of a national bank. He then adverted to the importance of the maintenance of the veto power—and Mr. Clay's avowed opposition to it—recalled the signal occasions on which its exercise had saved the country from great evils, and by a reference to the past political career of Henry Clay, showed that his hostility to the veto power arises from his insatiable ambition. Mr. Melville then took up the Texas question, and handled it with great ability and much originality of argument. He gave a succinct and comprehensive view of the history, geographical position, and underdeveloped resources of Texas, and defended at length the constitutionality and expediency of re-annexation. The objections urged against the measure, that it would render the States liable to the debt of Texas, he disposed of by showing that the resources of Texas were far more than adequate to pay that debt. He then entered into a very ingenious and lucid argument for the purpose of demonstrating that the annexation of Texas would necessarily lead to the gradual extinction of slavery in the slave-holding States, and their consequent vastly increased prosperity. We have full notes on his remarks on this topic, and hereafter we may give them to the public. After glancing at the probable result of the contest of the various States, and referring to the brilliant prospect which was presented by the speedy triumph of democratic principles, Mr. M. then gave some interesting details of his late tour in the West, in the course of which he spoke of an interesting interview which he had with the Hero of the Hermitage. He said—And now I come to speak of Tennessee—the “home of the hickories.” That's a State worth talking about on many accounts—its striking physical features and great natural resources—the chivalry and patriotism of its men—and the beauty of its daughters. I can tell you that the bachelor who goes there has an ordeal to pass through, which I, for one, could hardly venture upon again. (Cheers and laughter) Why, here, if a gentleman offers his hand to a fashionable lady she receives it in a sort of minimy pinimy, don't touch me sort of air, that may perhaps affect him unpleasantly; but these Tennessee girls take right hold as if they meant it, and in a way that is really delightful to a plain, backward, bashful man like myself. (Great laughter and cheers) And then the Tennesseans of the man sex have peculiar ties of manner which are decidedly interesting and characteristic. One of these peculiarities is, that they make a man talk such an unconscionable time. If a man gets up to speak, and they don't happen to like him, they soon shout out—“Hallo, stranger, you've mistaken your vocation—slope!” (Roars of laughter) And if he won't slope, they make him. (Renewed laughter) Tennessee is, indeed, the land of social democracy. I have seen men clad in linsey-woolsey garments, and with unshod feet, sitting in Colonel Polk's parlor, and at the table of Andrew Jackson (Loud cheers) They are ever frank and free in expressing their opinion, be it pleasant to the hearer or the reverse. On one occasion, after I had addressed a large popular assemblage, a sturdy frontier's man, who was about six feet high, without a superfluous ounce of flesh upon his stalwart frame, one of your men who never turn their backs on either a friend or foe, and who looked as if he could whip his weight in wild cats, (laughter) strode up to me and grasped my hand with an iron energy that gets up reminded me forcibly of a vice, and suddenly withdrawing his grasp, slapped me on the back with tremendous force, sung out—“Old horse—I love you!” (Roars of laughter, repeated again and again.) Speaking of western adventure, reminds me of a scene which I had imagined was for whig eyes alone; I crossed that far-famed stream—Salt River—(laughter and cheers) —I looked at it with utter astonishment. The upward view was certainly anything but inviting, dark dreary and dismal,

and I could not help exclaiming, "Poor whigs, what a sad and weary route you have to pursue next November!" (Cheers and laughter) But looking down the stream, my surprise was redoubled. There I actually saw an ash pole with the flag of "Clay and Frelinghuysen" floating from its top. It is thus clear that so certain are the whigs of being compelled to navigate that river in this present month of November, that they have actually already taken possession of its mouth. (Tremendous cheering) A few additional remarks, and I will close—I have already talked to you nearly three hours, and they must be brief. (Cries of "go on," "go on," and loud cheers) Brief as they must necessarily be, they have reference to the sage and hero of the Hermitage. (Long continued cheering) It was a source of peculiar pleasure to me, when in anticipation of my late journey to the west, I reflected on the prospect of once more looking upon Andrew Jackson. After the great mass convention at Nashville, I had the honor of receiving from him an invitation to spend some days at the Hermitage, and I need hardly say that the impression made by that visit can never be eradicated. If any thing had been wanting to relume the fires of democratic impulses in my breast, the glance of that old man's eye, the pressure of that old man's hand, the patriotism instinct in every line and lineament of that old man's countenance, would have done it all. He has numbered seven and seventy years. His life has been one scene of struggle. On the details of that great life I need not linger. He is now very feeble—a feebleness not arising from a want of strength in his limbs, but because a large portion of his lungs is so disorganized, that the slightest exertion produces a hurriedness and difficulty painful to himself and agonizing to those around him. But he rises from his chair and walks without assistance. He walks in his garden almost daily, and every Sabbath is found in his seat in the house of prayer. He opens and reads his letters—he examines with great interest the newspapers from the principal points of the Union; he takes a great and constant and all-pervading interest in this election—Letters bearing his name have, as you are aware, been extensively published and commented on of late, having reference chiefly to the re-annexation of Texas. The whig press have been disposed to call their authenticity in question. They were each and all either written by his own hand or dictated by him and written under his eye by Major Donaldson, who was his private Secretary during the eight years that he was President of the U. S. To them all he has affixed his signature with his own hand. **With the snows of seventy-seven winters on his brow, and the thoughts and struggles of a thousand ordinary lives having left their traces on his form, daily awaiting his summons to the grave, his memory, not only of events long since transpired, but of those of the most recent date, is as tenacious and ready—his judgment as clear—his will as strong—his affections as warm—his patriotism as ardent as they ever were. When Andrew Jackson dies, he will not drivel his path to the grave like a slobbering dotard, as the whig press falsely call him; but when HE dies—when the great soul within shall have utterly consumed its outer tenement of clay—why, then, a MAN will die! And our children, and children's children, will go up to that corner of the little garden at the Hermitage, where his wife now lies—and by whose side he will sleep in death—and that will forever be to us and our descendants, next to Mount Vernon, the holiest and most sacred spot on American soil.** (Loud cheers—continued applause) I might dwell on this fruitful theme—but time forbids. I will only advert to General Jackson's conduct when his physicians endeavoured to dissuade him from presiding at the great Nashville Convention, they justly feared that the great rush and the shouting of the people as they pressed to look upon him, would be dangerous to him in his present feeble state. He heard this opinion expressed, and after a pause, he lifted up his voice and said and his words fell upon my ear like those of a patriarch of old, "I am very old, I cannot stay here much longer; I can do little or no good by remaining, so if I can do any good by presiding at that Convention of the Democracy, carry me there!" Place me in the chair and I'll die in my seat!" (Great manifestation of feeling amongst the audience) —After a brief exhortation to energetic action, and a complimentary allusion to the ladies who had honoured the meeting with their

presence, Mr. Melville concluded. —His speech throughout was listened to with the most marked attention. The Democracy of Newark are full of animation and hope, and the contest in New Jersey will be extremely close.

Text V.

The New Hampshire Gazette
(Portsmouth)

January 7, 1845

(Vol. XCI, No. 1)
p.1, c. 4

SPEECH of Gansevoort Melville—Chivalry and Beauty of Tennessee—A Backwoodsman—Salt River—Andrew Jackson—Memorable words of the old hero

The following is a portion of a speech delivered by Mr. Melville, at Newark, N. J., and from its peculiar graphic and pithy language, will find general perusal. Mr. Melville is undoubtedly one of the most superior popular speakers in the north:

For Gansevoort Melville's speech, see
The New York Herald
Tuesday morning, November 5th, 1844 (Text III)

Text VI.

Daily Evening Transcript
(Boston, Massachusetts)

Friday evening, August 1, 1845

(Vol. XVI, No. 4606
p.2, c. 4)

THE STEAMER GREAT WESTERN, Capt. Mathews, left New York at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, with 68 passengers, among them Gansevoort Melville, U.S. Secretary of Legation at London.

Text VII.

Daily Evening Transcript
(Boston, Massachusetts)

June 4, 1846

(Vol. XVII, No. 4865
p.2, c. 2)

DEATH OF MR. SECRETARY MELVILLE. Private letters at New York, from London by the *Hibernia*, announce the death of Gansevoort Melville, Esq., secretary of the U. S. legation at the Court of St. James. He died the **12th of May**, after an illness of three weeks. The body has been sent home for interment. **Mr. Melville was about 32 years of age.** His disease was an affection of the main artery of the throat. His sickness was protracted and painful. Mr. Melville was a native of Lansingburgh, New York, and a descendant of General Gansevoort. **Mr. McLane** was still so unwell as to be unable to leave his room. He could not even be present at the funeral ceremonies performed over the body of Mr. Melville.

Text VIII.

Vermont Gazette
(Bennington)

June 9, 1846

(Vol. LXVI, No. 4242)

From the *Albany Argus*. Death of Gansevoort Melville.

The intelligence of the death of Mr. MELVILLE, proves alas, to be too well founded.—He expired at his lodgings in London, on the 12th of May. His complaint was an enlargement of the heart, brought on by excessive application and confinement, necessarily devolved upon him in consequence of the continued illness of Mr. McLane. He was attended, during his sickness, by several of the most eminent physicians in London; and all that skill and assiduous attention, and the kindness of devoted friends, —not the least devoted of whom, to the extent of his physical strength was Mr. McLane was done to avert a fatal termination. But in vain. He died in the full possession of his faculties, and with resignation to the inevitable stroke, coming as it did under circumstances particularly trying to all the faculties and sympathies of our nature.

Mr. Melville was well known and deservedly esteemed here. He was a nephew of our highly respected townsman, Judge Gansevoort. To his family, to sisters and brothers to whom he was tenderly attached, and especially to his widowed mother, not less than to his friends, he was endeared by high and noble qualities. At the period of his departure on the mission which has proved the fulfilment of his mission [sic] in this world, he was a resident of the city of New-York, engaged in the practice of law, associated with a younger and talented brother.

Mr. Melville was in the prime of manhood. Fitted by nature and education for the liberal pursuits and public life, to which he had been called, he quitted the country with the embassy to England, with the prospect of a high career of usefulness to his country, and of honor and eminence to himself. That he well and ably discharged the duties which devolved on him—and which became the more responsible and arduous, under the continued ill health of Mr. McLane—all bear testimony who were called to the foreign court at which he resided. His selection for the station of Secretary of the Legation, by President Polk, at the request of Mr. McLane, was not less creditable to his position and attainments, than it proved to be honorable to himself and advantageous to the important interests and duties with which he was associated. He possessed fine intellectual powers. Manly and chivalric, he won the

respect, and enjoyed the confidence not only of his government, but of all with whom he was associated either by the claims of duty, affection or friendship.

The death of one, with such large gifts of intellect and the attributes of an elevated nature enlarged by study, opportunity, and intercourse, is, under the circumstances, deeply to be deplored as a public loss—under the circumstances which attended the death of our highly-valued friend, in a far-off country, away from the hearts as it were a part of his being—the deprivation is doubly poignant.

Text IX.

Daily Evening Transcript
(Boston, Massachusetts)

June 27, 1846

(Vol. XVIII, No. 4885)
p. 2, c. 4

We are informed that the remains of Gansevoort Melville Esq, late Secretary of Legation at London, arrived by the *Prince Albert* yesterday, and have been conveyed to Albany. The funeral of the deceased will take place on Sunday, the 28th inst, at 5 P. M., from the residence of his uncle Gen Peter Gansevoort, Washington square, Albany. [*New York Commercial*].

Text X.

The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency 1845 – 1849
(in four volumes)
Now first printed from the original manuscript in the collections of
The Chicago Historical Society

Milo Milton Quaife (editor)

Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., **1910**

Vol. 1, p. 432.

Mr. Buchanan mentioned that he had received a confidential letter from Mr. McLane, expressing great dissatisfaction with Mr. Melville,¹ his Secretary of Legation, and expressing hope that he would not be left in charge of the legation on his return, but that his successor would be appointed and sent out before he left. This hope, Mr. B. said, Mr. McLane expressed for the sake of the honour as well as the interest of the country. I then entered into conversation with Mr. Buchanan as to the proper person to succeed Mr. McLane. I named several persons, with none of whom was I entirely satisfied. Mr. Buchanan said that he would communicate a fact to me confidentially, and that was about two months ago Mr. Robert J. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, had intimated to him a desire to be appointed to the Mission to England on Mr. McLane's return, but expressed a desire to remain in the Treasury [Department] until the tariff bill was disposed [of]. I replied that of Mr. Walker

desired it, I would be disposed to gratify him, if I could find a suitable Secretary of the Treasury.

¹Gansevoort Melville.