

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEWINE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN BROWN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today, May 9, is the 200th anniversary of the birth of a famous American who remains probably the most controversial figure in U.S. history. On May 9, 1800, John Brown was born. It is his birth and his life and the institution of slavery that I will speak about this evening for a few minutes.

I grew up in eastern Kansas. As a child, I played on the ground where John Brown stayed most often while he was in Osawatimie, KS. He was known as Osawatimie Brown for his fighting during the early phases of what led to be the Civil War. He stayed at the Adaire cabin. His brother-in-law was a minister in Osawatimie. It was on property which my grandparents owned that the cabin was later moved, to the park where the Battle of Osawatimie took place. That park was dedicated by Teddy Roosevelt. Such was the importance of what took place there in the epic struggle in this country to end the institution of slavery.

John Brown, the renowned abolitionist, was hanged for his attempt to incite a slave rebellion at Harper's Ferry, VA. Yet even though everyone objects to his tactics, his death has become "the symbol of every element opposed to slavery." His contemporary, Frederick Douglass, the great African American abolitionist, acknowledged that "John Brown began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic."

This 200th anniversary is a reminder of the heartache wrought by slavery in America. It is a humble tribute to the suffering of millions of African Americans who lived and died under dehumanizing bondage. John Brown is a part of that story.

He was born in Litchfield County, CT, on May 9, 1800, and absorbed a deep hatred of the pervasive institution of chattel slavery early in his life. Once, while herding his father's cattle to market a long distance, he watched as a slave boy his age, whom Brown had befriended, was violently beaten with an iron shovel. He was acquainted with the common forms of punishment

wherein "slaves were stripped of their clothing, faced against a tree or wall, tied down or made to hang from a beam, their legs roped together with a rail or board between them, and severely beaten." Such things surely motivated his increasing disdain. He internalized a passage from the Bible, Hebrews 13:3, which says:

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

The English Parliamentarian, William Wilberforce, and other people of courage, had ended slavery in Great Britain by 1807. Yet in John Brown's America, slavery thrived and grew as the American cotton trade boomed from 1815 until 1860, aggressively capturing the European market. By 1860, there were 4 million slaves in America. No one knows the total number of slaves from the time of the first settlers in 1619 to the end of the Civil War in 1865, but the number is staggering—in the several millions.

Particularly during the 17th and 18th centuries, multitudes of people had been abducted from Africa to America. Their month-long passage epitomized the degradation to follow:

Segregated by gender, the blacks were chained together and packed so tightly that they often were forced to lie on their sides in spoon fashion. Clearances and ships' holds often were only two to four feet high. In bad weather or because of some perceived threat, they had to remain below, chained to one another, lying in their own filth. "The floor of the rooms," one 18th-century ship observer wrote, "was so covered with blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of dysentery, that it resembled a slaughter house." Slave ships were smelled before they were seen, as they entered the harbor in heinous conditions.

It is said that slavery contemporary to this time was the largest manifestation of human bondage in the history of mankind. I ask, how could this great nation, birthed in freedom, systematically and shamelessly reap great fortunes, in part, on the backs of abducted, brutalized people? How could human beings be branded like cattle, bought and sold at will in the middle of a busy market place, ripped from their families, raped with impunity resulting in children who were then also enslaved, lashed with bullwhips, murdered without consequence, worked to death, their very humanity mocked in every possible way? One American commenting on our slave trade overseas remarked, "We are a byword among the nations." It was in this evil time that John Brown began to champion political and social equality for African-Americans, as did a growing number of abolitionist societies which mushroomed in the 1830's.

In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was passed by Congress whereby harboring people escaping from slavery, even to the free states, became a Federal crime. This crime carried a penalty of up to 6 months of incarceration and a \$1,000 fine, which was a substantial sum considering that the average daily

wage was \$1.50. Moreover, the act provided that Federal agents would not be charged in tracking escapees, even in the North, forcing slaves back to their masters. Consider that American taxes were paying for this wretched service of slave catching, in a country whose revolution was synonymous worldwide with a renowned liberty.

In protest, John Brown, like many abolitionists of his day, provided assistance to fugitive slaves seeking freedom in the northern United States and Canada. Also, fugitive slaves lived with him and his family, despite the threatened penalties. At one point, he moved his family to North Elba, NY, to live with a community of escaped and redeemed slaves, to teach reading and fanning.

Another blow occurred in 1854 when the Kansas and Nebraska Act was passed by Congress, repealing earlier legislation which had outlawed slavery in the territory from which Kansas was created. This new act allowed residents to vote on whether or not slavery would be adopted by the new state, making it an option for the first time. So Kansas and Nebraska could be slave States.

It was the common thinking of the time that actually what would happen was Nebraska would become a free State and Kansas a slave State; that Iowans would pour over into Nebraska, making it a free State; Missourians would pour over into Kansas, and Kansas would become a slave State; thus, the balance would be maintained.

In response, John Brown and family members moved to Kansas in 1855 to oppose the expansion of slavery into the western territories, as did a flood of Free Soilers, as free state advocates were called, from the East. The free state epicenter was the city of Lawrence, which attracted many Eastern anti-slavery people and became a target for destruction by the Border Ruffians.

During this time, pro-slavery forces terrorized Kansas free state settlers with beatings, shootings, looting, and ballot stuffing. An English traveler observed that "murder and cold-blooded assassination were of almost daily occurrence . . . Murderers, if only they have murdered in behalf of slavery, have gone unpunished; whilst hundreds have been made to suffer for no other crime than the suspicion of entertaining free-state sentiments." Numerous Kansas conflicts included the Wakarusa War, the sacking of Lawrence, and the battles of Black Jack, Osawatimie, and the Spurs. In this brutal period, Brown became a national symbol of "Bleeding Kansas" and the free state struggle. During his 3 years of activity in the Kansas Territory, he orchestrated offensives against the Border Ruffians, and helped to liberate dozens of enslaved African-Americans by force from Missouri farms. Sadly, he participated, tacitly or overtly, in the killing of 5 men at Pottawatimie Creek in a shameful incident which