

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT:
Lesson Title - Prudence Crandall Affair
From Emma Tuthill

Grade –9th Grade

Length of class period – 90 minutes

Homework: (Night before this lesson)

The students will read the statement of facts about Miss Prudence Crandall and her school.
(pages 1-3) The students will highlight the important information in the article.

Inquiry:

Why is Prudence Crandall an important figure in United States history?

Objectives:

Students will be able to critically analyze primary source documents and letters.
Students will be able to evaluate the importance of the documents and letters.

Materials

Primary Source Documents- Letters from Prudence Crandall

Activities:

1. Go over the homework from the night before-- highlighting the important information in the article
2. Split the class into groups of 3 or 4 (depending on class size)- each group has a reader, recorder, time keeper, and spokesperson (present information to the class) for their group
3. The groups will be going around to each station examining their document and answering the questions:
 - a. How does this document reflect the time period in which it was written (think about what was going on during that time, what was life like)?
 - b. What is important about the events and people discussed in this document
 - c. What are the implications for today? How does it impact the future?
4. After looking at the last document, the students will present the information they found to the class about that document. Other students in the class can add to their findings if needed.
5. As a class, the students will read “House Set on Fire” (attached final document) to understand how the case against Prudence Crandall was concluded
6. Before leaving class, the students will fill out an exit slip answering the question: Why is Prudence Crandall an important figure in U.S. History

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- The students will be assessed by their performance in their group (each student must be fulfilling his/her duty for the group)
- The students will be assessed by handing in a paper that answers the questions for each document
- The students will finally be assessed by their exit slip

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- Evaluate data within the historical, social, political, and economic context in which it was created, testing its credibility and evaluating its bias
- Using primary and secondary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives

HOUSE SET ON FIRE

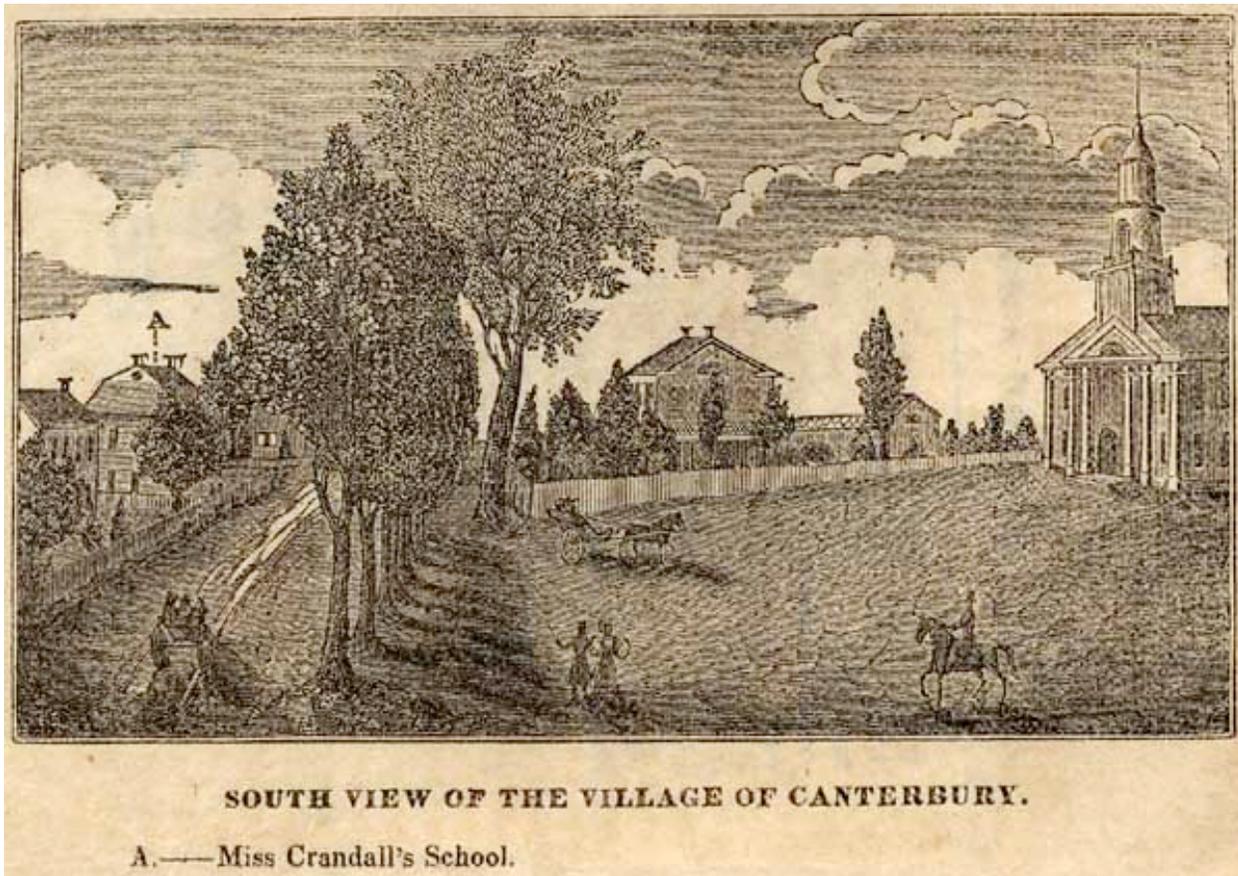
Soon after their failure to get a decision from the Court of Errors, an attempt was made to set her house on fire. Fortunately the match was applied to combustibles tucked under a corner where the sills were somewhat decayed. They burnt like a slow match. Some time before daylight the inmates perceived the smell of fire, but not until nearly nine o'clock did any blaze appear. It was quickly quenched; and I was sent for to advise whether, if her enemies were so malignant as this attempt showed them to be, it was safe and right for her to expose her pupils' and her own life any longer to their wicked devices. It was concluded that she should hold on and bear yet a little longer. Perhaps the atrocity of this attempt to fire her house, and at the same time endanger the dwellings of her neighbors would frighten the leaders and instigators of the persecution to put more restraint upon "the baser sort." But a few nights afterwards it was made only too plain that the enemies of the school were bent upon its destruction. About twelve o'clock, on the night of the 9th of September, Miss Crandall's house was assaulted by a number of persons with heavy clubs and iron bars; five window sashes were demolished and ninety panes of glass dashed to pieces.

I was summoned next morning to the scene of destruction and the terror-stricken family. Never before had Miss Crandall seemed to quail, and her pupils had become afraid to remain another night under her roof. The front rooms of the house were hardly tenantable; and it seemed foolish to repair them only to be destroyed again. After due consideration, therefore, it was determined that the school should be abandoned. The pupils were called together, and I was requested to announce to them our decision. Never before had I felt so deeply sensible of the cruelty of the persecution which had been carried on for eighteen months, in that New England village against a family of defenceless females. Twenty harmless, well-behaved girls, whose only offence against the peace of the Community was that they had come together there to obtain useful knowledge and moral culture, were to be told that they had better go away, because, forsooth, the house in which they dwelt would not be protected by the guardians of the town, the conservators of the peace, the officers of justice, the men of influence in the village where it was situated. The words almost blistered my lips. My bosom glowed with indignation. I felt ashamed of Canterbury, ashamed of Connecticut, ashamed of my country, ashamed of my color. Thus ended the generous, disinterested, philanthropic, Christian enterprise of Prudence Crandall.

This was the second attempt made in Connecticut to establish a school for the education of colored youth. The other was in New Haven, two years before. So prevalent and malignant was our national prejudice against the most injured of our fellow-men!

The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

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Brooklyn, Sept. 1833

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

AFTER having gained a very respectable reputation, as a female Teacher, by her labors in Plainfield, Ct., MISS PRUDENCE CRANDALL went to Canterbury, an adjoining town, about the 1st of November, 1831, and made known her desire to many of the leading individuals of the place, to open a "Boarding School" in their Village, for the instruction of Young Ladies. Her proposal was very favorably received by every individual who could be expected to take any interest in such an Institution as was proposed, and every assistance was readily extended to her, in carrying her project into immediate effect. The School was opened some time in the month of November, 1831. The people of Canterbury continued to befriend Miss Crandall, in every possible manner, patronizing her school by sending their own children, and procuring scholars from abroad, by favorable recommendations, &c.

An advertisement of Miss C.'s "Boarding School," appeared in the several papers, accompanied by a flattering notice of recommendation over the signatures of the following gentlemen, who constituted a Board of Visitors:—Rev. Dennis Platt, Rufus Adams, Wm. Kinne, Andrew T. Judson, Andrew Harris, Daniel Packer, Daniel Frost, Jr. Samuel L. Hough. The school continued to prosper, and to sustain a reputation of the first order, both on account of the connection of its pupils with families of great respectability in Canterbury and elsewhere, and on account of its management, so long as Miss C. continued to fulfil her engagements as an Instructress of white Young Ladies. Some time during the month of September 1832, (according to Miss Crandall's own statement of the case,) a respectable colored girl called on her, and expressed a wish to be admitted into her Boarding School. This girl did not, at that time, receive a definite answer, whether she could or could not be received. Upon a second and more earnest application, and after considerable reflection, Miss Crandall yielded to her solicitations, and the colored girl, in the words of the Instructress, "entered as one of my pupils." Miss C. further states, (in her letter, which has been given to the public,) that the girl had not long been under her instruction, when some complaint arose on the part of her original patrons, accompanied by an expression of the belief, that she [the colored girl] must be removed or the Boarding School would be greatly injured. Miss C., however, retained the objectionable scholar, notwithstanding this advice; and after having perused several publications, professing to be devoted to the elevation of the colored population in this country, her feelings, as she says, "began to awaken." By her statement, it appears that she had for some time, contemplated a journey to New York or Boston, for the purpose of visiting schools, and procuring apparatus^[1] for the benefit of her own school, then in operation in Canterbury; "while at the same time, [in her own language,] the most prominent object of my visit was, to see Win. Lloyd Garrison,—to obtain his opinion respecting the propriety of establishing a school for colored females, and the prospect of success, should I attempt it."

Soon after her visit to Boston, Miss C. went to New York, and found those who were friendly to the contemplated school for colored females, from whom she received great encouragement, with the advice to abandon the school to which she was then under engagements, and open one exclusively for colored pupils, who were chiefly to be obtained from New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Providence. She then returned to Canterbury, under an engagement to receive twenty or more colored girls, and soon after, not far from the 20th of February, 1833, went about executing her new designs, by dismissing her white scholars. This was the first knowledge of the change, which was given to the parents of her scholars, or to those who had aided her in the establishment of her original school. The house in which the school had been kept, was then fitted up, newly furnished, &c. and, put in readiness for the reception of the colored girls.

An advertisement soon appeared in the papers, announcing to the public, that on the first day of April 1833, her school would be opened for "Young Ladies and little Misses of color." At the close of this notice, reference was directed to be made to Arthur Tappan, Rev. Peter Williams, Rev. Theodore Raymond, Theodore Wright, Rev. Samuel C. Cornish, Rev. George Bourne, Rev. Mr. Heyborn, James Forten, Joseph Cassey, Rev. S. J. May, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Arnold Buffum, George Benson.[2] This advertisement has doubtless met the eye of the reader, as its publication is yet continued.

The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

<http://www.yale.edu/glc/index.htm>

Document #1

Advertisement and Notice Regarding the Opening of a
"High School for Young Colored Ladies and Misses,"
The Liberator (March 2, 1833)

POETRY—THE WHITE INFANT'S Reply to the Little Slave; Lament; Christian Love.

PRUDENCE CRANDALL,

Principal of the Canterbury, (Conn.) Female Boarding School,

RETURNS her most sincere thanks to those who have patronized her School, and would give information that on the first Monday of April next, her School will be opened for the reception of young Ladies and little Misses of color. The branches taught are as follows:—Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, History, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Drawing and Painting, Music on the Piano, together with the French language.

The terms, including board, washing, and tuition, are \$25 per quarter, one half paid in advance.

Books and Stationary will be furnished on the most reasonable terms.

For information respecting the School, reference may be made to the following gentlemen, viz:—Arthur Tappan, Esq., Rev. Peter Williams, Rev. Theodore Raymond, Rev. Theodore Wright, Rev. Samuel C. Cornish, Rev. George Bourne, Rev. Mr. Hayborn, *New-York city*;—Mr. James Forten, Mr. Joseph Cassey, *Philadelphia, Pa.*;—Rev. S. J. May, *Brooklyn, Ct.*;—Rev. Mr. Beman, *Middletown, Ct.*;—Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, *New-Haven, Ct.*;—Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Arnold Buffum, *Boston, Mass.*;—George Benson, *Providence, R. I.* Canterbury, (Ct.) Feb. 25, 1833.

HIGH SCHOOL FOR YOUNG COLORED LADIES AND MISSES (Article Translated)

It is with a rush of pleasurable emotions that we insert, in another column, the advertisement of Miss P. CRANDALL, (a white lady) of Canterbury, Connecticut, for a High School for young colored Ladies and Misses. This is a seasonable auxiliary to the contemplated Manual Labor School for Colored Youth. An interview with Miss C. has satisfied us that she richly deserves the patronage and confidence of the people of color; and we doubt not they will give her both. The following extract from a letter, received by us from a highly respectable gentleman, contains all that need be said in her favor:

'Miss C. has, for a number of years, been principal of a high school for the education of Females, and has earned great credit to herself and school, as well as for her untiring zeal for the improvement of those entrusted to her charge. Miss C. possessing naturally a great share of the excellent virtue, viz. *Philanthropy*, has been provoked by the benevolent exertions of the day towards ameliorating the condition of the wretched suffering African, in this country, and to cast her mite into the treasury; and, sir, for myself, I have no doubt, knowing as I do her rare qualifications and firmness of purpose, that she would prove a most valuable auxiliary to the African cause.'

In making the alteration in her School, Miss C. runs a great risk; but let her manifest inflexible courage and perseverance, and she will be sustained triumphantly. Reproach and persecution may assail her, at the commencement, but they will soon expire. Her terms are very low—the branches which she proposes to teach are various—she has a large and commodious house—and the village of Canterbury is central and pleasant.

PRUDENCE CRANDALL,

Principal of the Canterbury, (Conn.) Female Boarding School,

Returns her most sincere thanks to those who have patronized her School, and would give information that on the first Monday of April next, her School will be opened for the reception of young Ladies and little Misses of color. The branches taught are as follows:—Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, History, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Drawing and Painting, Music on the Piano, together with the French language.

The terms, including *board*, *washing*, and tuition, are \$25 per quarter, one half paid in advance.

Document #2

Prudence Crandall, "Letter to Simeon Jocelyn (February 26, 1833)," published in "Abolition Letters Collected by Captain Arthur B. Spingarn," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XVIII, 1933, p. 80-81.

Canterbury, Feb. 26th, 1833

Mr. Jocelyn Sir

I can inform you that I arrived home last Friday evening — soon called my family together and laid before them the object of my journey and endeavoured to convince them of the propriety of the pursuit. My views by them were pretty cordially received. Saturday morning I called on several of the neighbours and to my astonishment they exhibited but little opposition. But since that time the people have become very much alarmed for fear the reputation of their village will be injured.

Last evening they helde a meeting to consult what shall be done to destroy the school I have now in contemplation. They appointed a committee (to wait on me at 9 o'clock this morning) comprised of foure of the most powerful men of the towne. They callede ande had an interview with me — told me the meeting hade resolve to do every thing in their power to destroy my undertaking ande that they could do it and should do it ande what will be the result of this commotion I cannot tell — Knowing that the opinion of great men (such as Mr. Tappan) would stand against a swelling tide of opposition — I therefore made as free use of his name in laying the obbject before my friends and neighbors as I thought proper — I told them he was a friend to this benevolent object ande that they did not doubt as they well knew his character. I was thankful for one expression that fell front his lips while on board the Steamboate which was "he did not know but he should come with the scholars when they entered school." I told this to the people and this seemed to alloy their feelings very much. I presume his presence here would alleviate the feelings of many but that is a favour to great to be expected. I have written this day to Mr. Garrison and desired him to intercede with Mr. Buffum to visit me soon as he has not yet fulfilled his engagement. Your opinion and advice will be THANK-FULLY received on this occasion and I hope you will by no means withhold it but write me IMMEDIATELY.

Yours with the greatest respect

P. Crandall

Document #3

THE MEMORIAL OF PARDON CRANDALL, OF CANTERBURY.

To the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, now in session at Hartford:—

I would inform you that some time past, Prudence Crandall proposed and notified to open a school for the instruction of young ladies and little misses of color, in the town of Canterbury. Instead of the leading men in Canterbury coming forward to encourage an Institution designed to enlighten the ignorant and elevate the depressed people of color, they have called together a number of Assemblies and town meetings, and have passed a number of resolutions, to do all in their power to destroy the institution. Among others, was one passed at the town meeting, to appoint a committee of ten to draw a petition to the General Assembly, now convened, to prevent people of color from assembling for the purpose of getting an education, and also to correspond with other towns in the State in order to forestall public opinion for the same purpose, which petition is now pending before the General Assembly now in session. I entreat the members of the General Assembly, when acting on this petition, to remember those self-evident truths, that all mankind are created *free and equal*, that they are endued with inalienable rights, of which no man nor set of men have a right to deprive them. And my request is, that you will not grant the prayer of any petitions nor pass any act that will curtail or destroy any of the rights of the free people of this State, or other States, whether they are white or black.

And as I am in duty bound will ever remain your humble and sincere friend;

PARDON CRANDALL

Canterbury, May 5th, 1833.

Document #4

"Argument of William W. Ellsworth, in the case of the State of *Connecticut vs. PRUDENCE CRANDALL* [excerpts]." Delivered before the Supreme Court of Errors of the State of Connecticut, July, 1834.

... The defense of Miss Crandall will be rested upon the unconstitutionality of this statute law of Connecticut, and may be embraced under these two heads.

1. These pupils are citizens of their respective states.
2. As citizens, the constitution of the United States secures to them the right of residing in Connecticut, and pursuing the acquisition of knowledge, as people of color may do, who are settled here....

To the first position then.

Are these pupils citizens of their states respectively? If they were white, it is conceded they would be.

1. A distinction founded in color, in fundamental rights, is novel, inconvenient, and impracticable. Hitherto we have seen no such distinction; none in the ancient common law of England which justly boasts of her equal principles; none in that immortal instrument which our republican fathers put forth as the groundwork of all just government — the Declaration of Independence. There, we read 'we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'...
2. Such were not the ideas of our fathers, when the colored soldier stood in the ranks of that army which achieved for us our liberty....
3. These pupils are human beings, born in these states, and owe the same obligation to the state and the state's governments, as white citizens.

Document #5

Calvin Goddard, "Argument of Calvin Goddard, in the case of the State of *Connecticut vs. PRUDENCE CRANDALL* [excerpt]." Delivered before the Supreme Court of Errors of the State of Connecticut, July, 1834.

The questions involved in the decisions of this case are of immense magnitude and I regret that circumstances make it necessary to discuss them here and particularly at this time. It is singular indeed that occasion has never risen since the existence of our constitution in which the question whether the free, native inhabitants of the United States were citizens and been judicially decided. The circumstances that no such question has arisen, is to my mind high evidence that their rights to the privileges of citizenship are unquestionable; for numerous occasions have risen in which those privileges have been exercised...

I do not come to advocate the claims of either of the great parties who are engaged in the business of emancipation, although the plan of educating free colored persons, and planting a colony on the shores of Africa; of sending thither free, intelligent and virtuous instructors to diffuse through a continent the blessings of liberty, science and religion; of commencing the work of renovating that continent, and in some measure repairing the wrongs which its colored inhabitants have suffered from the whites, is a plan which I have always considered grand in all its features; nor is it for me to say whether its execution has been thus far equal to its conception. But whether the views of those who adopt this plan be or be not more correct than the views of those who suppose that the cause of humanity as well as justice will be best promoted by the continuance of these people in the country of their birth, and elevating them to the condition of all other citizens is, for the purpose of this immaterial, as education lies at the foundation of both, and the adoption and execution of such laws as that against which we contend, will forever extinguish the benevolent exertions and hopes of all... This statute prohibits their being instructed — it takes away from them the privilege of being taught to read and write — it deprives them of all opportunity to acquire that knowledge and those habits which may render them good citizens, useful to each other and their country...

It was the intention of those who framed the law to put down the school...

Document #6 *Andrew T. Judson, Andrew T. Judson's Remarks to the Jury, on the Trial of the Case State v. P.*

Crandall. Superior Court, Oct. Term, 1833. Windham County, Ct. Hartford: John Russell, Printer.

The information, State vs. Prudence Crandall, was filed in the Superior Court, Oct. Term, 1833, held by the Hon.

DAVID DAGGETT, Chief Justice.

The facts charged against the defendant were harboring and boarding colored persons, not inhabitants of the State of Connecticut, in violation of the act of the last Session of the General Assembly.

Plea — Not Guilty.

After the evidence closed, the case was opened on the part of the State, as follows

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY:

The subject matter of this cause, has been much misunderstood by some, who were honest, and so much perverted by others, less entitled to that appellation, you will allow me for the purpose of preventing all future misapprehension, and staying the current of unjustifiable reproach, attempted to be cast upon our native State, to say, that the legislators who enacted this law, and the people who support it, are not opposed to the *education* of the black population, as you may have so often heard reiterated by those who love to put darkness for light. The law rests upon no such basis, and will not be supported upon any such principle.

The people of Connecticut have done more for the *education* of the blacks, than has been done in any other portion of the civilized world. It is a matter of congratulation with us, that *all the black children* have the same and equal privileges, at all our common schools, with the *white* children. Nay more, they are admitted to all our district schools, nearly 1500 in number, supported entirely by the school fund, which exceeds one million eight hundred thousand dollars. They are indeed admitted upon better terms than the white children. The white inhabitants are taxed for *school houses* — *they* board the instructors — *they* furnish the wood, while the colored population are exempt from all these burthens, and then participate equally in all the benefits and blessings of the school fund. No other State in this Union has done any thing like this, yet some of them are quite liberal in abusing us. I wish you particularly to understand, that in supporting *this* cause, and *this* law, I do not oppose the *education* of the people of color, but I do oppose the importation of black's from other countries, for any purpose. There is also one other topic, to which I would advert for one moment, and upon that too, I desire not to be misunderstood, and for the purpose of placing it out of the power of any one, to put a false construction upon my sentiments or my opinions, I deem it my duty to remark, that I am no advocate or apologist for slavery. I lament its existence, and regret its evils as much as you can. It was the policy of our fathers to rid the State of the evils of slavery, and as early as 1784, they began this great work, and long since, by wise and salutary laws, this State took its rank as a "free state," among her sister States. This work was done by State legislation. In its own sovereign capacity; freedom was given to the slave. Those who may be acquainted with the history of events know, that the States south of the Potomac came not here to prevent this philanthropic reformation within our State. The constitution of the United States does recognize slavery, and

leaves it with every state to continue, regulate, or abolish it, at their pleasure. One State cannot interfere with another State, in this matter, any more than she can in the election of its state officers. To admit the proposition that we can authorize an interference with Virginia because she does not see fit to liberate her slaves, will be giving Virginia the same power to come hither and say to Connecticut, you shall be a slave state! To instruct and educate missionaries, to go there for the purpose of disturbing their tranquility, and teaching the massacre of their inhabitants, would prove a sad business for us. If there are any among us, who feel it their duty to alleviate the condition of the slave, let them go where that slave is, and address the master. Let them go to that government where laws tolerate slavery, and read to that government, their moral lessons. If too cool or cowardly to do this, their philanthropy is not worth possessing. There are indeed a few individuals in New England, who "*would prefer to see the constitution torn into a thousand atoms, rather than live under it, so long as it tolerates slavery.*" But these mistaken men, should be informed, that by dissolving the Union, they cannot abolish slavery — they would only make it perpetual. There are now twelve free, and twelve slave states, in the Union, and as the Constitution cannot be amended except by the consent of three quarters of the States, it is evident this matter must be left, where the framers of the Constitution left it, *with each State, or force* must be the resort. If the time has indeed arrived, when the citizens of New England are, to go deliberately at the work of dissolving the Union of the States and a Jury of the County of Windham is to begin that work, then we will so understand it. For one, I will enter my protest at the outset, and call upon you, as a branch of that government under which we have enjoyed so much prosperity, to do the same, by your verdict. The law in question is not made to promote the interest of slave holders, for we have none in our State. It is not made to perpetuate the evils of slavery, for there is not a man in the State of Connecticut who is in favor of slavery. I admit there are many, and that I am of that number, who would not break up the union of the States, as an experiment to abolish slavery at the South. I would prefer to leave this matter to the moral sense of that portion of the Union who now deem it their right to hold slaves. New England has nobly discharged its own debt, and she ought not to incur another, by dissolving the Union, for then slavery would be perpetuated for ages to come, where it now exists.