

Zalph ^{11/1/32}

LIFE OF PATRICK REASON, STEEL ENGRAVER (MAINLY 1815-1830)

Patrick Reason, a Negro steel engraver of note, attended the African Free School No. 1 in New York. The same school ~~was~~ also ~~at~~ produced such noted people as Ira Aldridge, the actor, Alexander Crummell, the preacher, Samuel Ringgold Ward, the orator, and the Rev. Henry Highland Garnett, editor of the Clarion of Troy.

In about the middle of the nineteenth century he attracted ~~the~~ attention by his portrait work. He was patronized by the Abolitionists and engraved the frontispieces of several biographies of former slaves. An example of this work can today be seen ~~at~~ the Negro Division of the ^{branch of the} 135th St. Public Library, in whose possession is a tiny volume, barely 2" by 3". It is a collection of religious and secular quotations, entitled "The Foundation for Every Day in the Year" ^{It is} by Mrs. Childs, ^{and was} published for the Anti-Slavery Society in 1836. The frontispiece is "Engraved by P. Reason A Colored Young Man of the City of New York 1835".

Other fine examples of this engraver's work can also be seen at this place. Art students and others interested in seeing this type of work will find a visit there well worth while.

Material about Patrick Reason, despite his recognizedly fine work, is very scarce. The above is all I could find in the 135th St. Library. Michael Bryan's "Dictionary of Painters and Engravers", in the art room of the central Public Library, does not even mention him. (Ed: Stokes' Iconography might be a source of additional material.)

NEW YORK CITY WPA WRITERS' PROJECT
110 King Street, New York City

SUB-PROJECT Negroes of New York SUPT. Ottley WRITER Abrams
ASSIGNMENT Biographical Sketch of James Redpath
DATE ASSIGNED _____ DATE OF REPORT Aug. 12, 1940

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SOURCE: LOCATION: (State name and address of library, institution, or other place where research was made) New York Public Library
42nd Street
Schomburg Library

INTERVIEW: (State name and address of person interviewed)

INSPECTION: (Give location and/or other identifying description)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

IF BOOK	IF PERIODICAL
Title: <u>The Life of James Redpath</u>	Name: _____
Author: <u>Chas. F. Horner</u>	Name of Volume: _____
Publisher: <u>Dodge & Hopkins</u>	Issue: _____
Date published: <u>1926</u>	Year and Month: _____
Place of publication: <u>New York</u>	Title of Article: _____
Pages quoted or rewritten: _____	Author: _____
Classmark: <u>AN (Redpath)</u>	Pages quoted or rewritten: _____

OTHER SOURCES:

FIELD REPORT

The Roving Editor: or, Talks with Slaves in
Southern States. James Redpath
A. P. Burdick, New York, 1859, SEKK

Biography

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JAMES REDPATH

James Redpath has become known as the founder of the lyceum bureau idea but this may be one of his lesser contributions to the American scene. Chiefly he was a prominent anti-slaver in the pre-Civil War days; he was a journalist of the first rank at that time and he was an active fighter for woman's suffrage. His contribution as an abolitionist reached its height with his association with John Brown. Redpath was expected to go to Harper's Ferry with the Old Man but, as someone put it, he "remained behind to write John Brown's obituary." In spite of this he was active with Brown in the conspiratorial stages of that famous coup.

James Redpath was born in Scotland in the year 1833, but there is a difference of opinion about the day and month of that event. His brother, John R. Redpath states that he was born August 23, 1833; the Encyclopedia Britannica records the date as August 14th of the same year and Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography gives it as August 24. In any case he was born at Berwick-on-Tweed, on the Scottish side of the river. His mother was English and his father Scottish. He was the eldest of a family of seven.

During the anti-slavery period the Redpath family came to America, and James Redpath spent his boyhood here. As a boy he read widely, became acquainted with theological influences, and set out early as a printer. To facilitate printing he learned shorthand, which was then called phonography and was an unusual achievement. After awhile he became a reporter. As early as 16 he collaborated with his father in writing his first book, "Tales and Traditions of the Border."

In 1850 the Redpath family settled in Allegan County, Michigan, and almost at once James became interested in the abolition movement. In this period he worked for papers in Kalamazoo and Detroit. His talent for journalism was developing, and after a time he went to New York and joined Horace Greeley's staff on the Tribune. From that time on, for a period of thirty years, he did work, intermittently, for this paper. By this time James Redpath had an active sense where slavery was concerned, and he made several trips through the South. He reported his observations, and he became detested in Dixie. It was said that once a poster was issued for his capture in the South, and the reward offered was \$10,000. That was the test for any abolitionist, and the best tribute to him.

In this period, James Redpath predicted that slavery would end only in Civil War; he foresaw the problems of reconstruction even; and he was by now prominent in anti-slavery councils.

It was the Kansas struggle that brought Redpath into considerable prominence. The journalist was in that state, gun on his hip, reporting the struggle, and doing his share for the free-soil advocates. Here he became associated with John Brown, Captain James Montgomery and others who were engaged in guerrilla fighting against the pro-slavery men who had rushed into this region from the south, in the South's greatest aggression, to date, against the north. Redpath believed at this time that one cycle of the anti-slavery struggle was about to close, that the period of remonstrance was ended, and that the time for military action was not long distant. In this prediction history proved him correct.

Redpath spent several years in Kansas, but sometime before the John Brown coup he returned to Boston. He had a home at Malden, Massachusetts and it is said that his home was one of the stations on the Underground Railroad. In the period of his New England residence he took part in anti-slavery conventions, woman suffrage meetings, and similar reforms.

When John Brown was executed, Redpath was ~~asked~~ asked by publishers Thawler and Eldridge, to write the story of Brown. Redpath was especially fitted for the job. Though he wrote hastily he performed a good job and his famous "Life of Captain ^{John} Brown" appeared thirty days after the execution. This book went into numerous editions. The 41st edition of the book, which appeared in 1872, was issued by a group of colored men, and the funds realized were for

the purpose of erecting a monument to John Brown. This work is Redpath's most permanent literary contribution and it has been an invaluable source to the large number of John Brown biographers.

John Redpath was one of the abolitionists who, for a time, took up the idea of colonization. In order to examine more carefully its possibilities, he went, in 1859 and 1860 to Hayti. As a result of these visits there was established the Haytian Bureau of Emigration which effected the colonization of many blacks to this island. About this time too he published a book, a "Guide to Hayti." He also collected an important list of Haytian proverbs.

He was one of the earliest advocates of woman suffrage; and once, in 1860, he addressed a convention in Boston, and reported upon the progress of the woman's cause in Kansas. Garrison, Phillips, Harriet Tubman and others appeared at this gathering.

After the Civil War Redpath became interested in the lyceum and he established the first bureau at number 36 Bromfield Street, Boston, in 1868. His office became a clearing house for speakers and committees; it was an intellectual center also. Phillips, Garrison, Maria Ward Howe and others were members of this lyceum. Years later such speakers as Mark Twain, Josh Billings and Petroleum Nash belonged to the forum. The original name, Boston Lyceum Bureau was later changed to Redpath's Lecture Bureau. At last the lyceum added musical artists and

and concert companies to its roster. But the lyceum was one of the tamer and later developments of his life - though its influence continues in America to this day.

During the closing years of his life he was an editor on the North American Review. He must have been a modest man: he was one of the few persons of this period who wrote no autobiography, and this, in a journalist, is remarkable!

In February 1891 as Redpath was crossing Broadway in New York City he was struck by a passing vehicle. His injuries, added to his impaired health, proved fatal. He died at his home in New York February 10, 1891.

The best summation of James Redpath as a man and humanitarian is found in the preface to his book, "The Roving Editor: or, Talks with Slaves in the Southern States." It follows:

"MY CREED

I am a Republican - and something more. I am inflexible, opposed to the existence of slavery; but equally do I oppose the doctrine of its protection in States where it already exists.....

I am an Emancipationist - and something more. I believe slavery to be a curse, which it is desirable to speedily abolish.

But to Gradual Emancipation I am resolutely antagonistic.....

I am an American - and something more. I think it wrong to give to foreigners rights that we deny to native-born Americans.....

I am an Abolitionist - and something more. I am in favor, not only of abolishing the Curse, but of making reparation for the crime.....

6.

I am a Peace-Man - and something more. I would fight
and kill for the sake of peace.....

I am a Non-Resistant - and something more. I would slay
every man who attempted to resist the liberation of the slave.

I am a Democrat - and nothing more. I believe in humanity
and human rights.....