



**"UNDER THE OAKS" MEMORIAL**  
DEDICATED JULY 11, 1987  
(MICHIGAN'S SESQUICENTENNIAL YEAR)

FEW SERMONS HAVE EVER STRUCK JACKSON WITH THE FORCE OF ONE DELIVERED IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ON OCT. 18, 1850. THERE, THE REVEREND GUSTAVUS FOSTER PREACHED FROM TITUS 3:1, "PUT THEM IN MIND TO BE SUBJECT TO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS, TO OBEY MAGISTRATES, AND TO BE READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK."

THE TEXT IS CONTROVERSIAL ENOUGH IN ITSELF. IN ITS APPLICATION, IT WAS EXPLOSIVE, FOR THE FULL TITLE OF MR. FOSTER'S ADDRESS WAS, "A SERMON UPON THE DOCTRINE OF SUBJECTION TO 'THE POWERS THAT BE.' IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW."

THAT LAW REQUIRED AMERICANS TO ASSIST IN THE RETURN OF RUNAWAY SLAVES TO THEIR OWNERS. MANY AREA CHRISTIANS WERE ACTIVE IN OR MORALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE "UNDERGROUND RAILWAY," WHICH HELPED RUNAWAY SLAVES TO FREEDOM.

IN THE CONGREGATION THAT MORNING WAS CHARLES DELAND, EDITOR OF JACKSON'S AMERICAN CITIZEN NEWSPAPER. HE OBTAINED A TRANSCRIPT OF THE SERMON AND PRINTED IT THE NEXT DAY IN HIS PAPER.

REVEREND FOSTER HAD POSED THE QUESTION — WHAT POSITION SHALL I TAKE CONCERNING THIS LAW? SHALL I OBEY IT OR DISOBEY IT? HE ADVOCATED BOLD VIOLATION OF THE LAW . . . UNTIL HIGH TIDES OF INDIGNATION SHALL WASH IT AWAY . . . WHILE MOST NORTHERNERS WERE HOSTILE TO THE LAW THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ON THE MATTER OF DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS ADVOCACY OUTRAGED SOME CITIZENS.

EDITOR DELAND LATER PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN ORGANIZING THE NEW REPUBLICAN PARTY, SERVING AS THE ORGANIZATION SECRETARY FOR CALLING THE CITIZENS OF MICHIGAN TO THE HISTORIC JULY 8, 1854 MEETING "UNDER THE OAKS" IN JACKSON, OLYMPIA, THAT PARTY SOUNDED THE DEATH KNELL FOR ALL LAWS SUPPORTING THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY.



## GRATITUDE TO MEMORIAL DONORS

THE LAND FOR THIS PARK HONORING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WAS DONATED AS A GIFT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF JACKSON AND THE STATE OF MICHIGAN BY MICHAEL DIVELY AND JERRY ROE.

GRATITUDE IS ALSO HEREBY EXPRESSED TO THE MANY CITIZENS WHO CONTRIBUTED SERVICES AND/OR FUNDING TO MAKE THIS MEMORIAL PARK POSSIBLE. FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO CONTRIBUTED OR IN WHOSE HONOR CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE OF A VALUE OF \$500 OR MORE:

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