

THE GREATEST AND LONELIEST AMERICAN EVER - U.S. SENATOR CHARLES SUMNER

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Substantially all Historical Facts in this Essay and their Presentation are Based on DAVID HERBERT DONALD'S BOOKS - CHARLES SUMNER - DA CAPO PRESS, NEW YORK, 1996 - "Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War," 1960 - "Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man," 1970. Use of Quotation Marks is Minimized to Improve Readability and Pursuant to Fair Use Doctrine.

On May 22, 1856 the U.S. Senate adjourned at 12:45 p.m.. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts remained at his desk signing copies of his historic speech titled the "Crime Against Kansas." In the speech, he had insulted Senator Butler of South Carolina and the entire State for its proslavery views. Congressman Preston Brooks was Senator Butler's cousin.

While Senator Sumner was sitting at his desk, Brooks approached him and said his speech was a libel to South Carolina. As Sumner began to rise Butler hit him with a heavy cane with a gold head. Sumner was stunned. He threw out his arms to protect his head. Brooks struck him harder and harder with the cane. Dazed by the first blow, Sumner could not remember that to rise from his desk, which was bolted to the floor he had to push back his chair. About a dozen blows fell on his head and shoulders while he was still pinioned. Blood began to flow and Congressman Brooks continued to strike him. Sumner staggered forward, providing an even better target. When he finally broke free he staggered with his hands uplifted. He was reeling around against the seats backwards and forwards and lost consciousness as blood streamed from his head. He lay helpless as a corpse for several minutes with a bleeding head.

Brooks was arrested and freed on \$500 bail. He became the hero of the Proslavery Congress. Southerners said if Congress dared discuss Brook's actions, it would ring with revolvers. The Senate determined that since Brooks was not a Senator, but a member of the House, he could only be punished by, the House. On July 14, 1856 the House passed a motion to expel Brooks, but since a 2/3 majority was lacking, he was not expelled. Sumner would not regularly resume his Senate duties for three years. His vacant chair became his perpetual speech against slavery.

The foregoing is one of the most incredible events to transpire in the U.S. Congress. A Congressman beating a Senator right in the Senate. Kind of puts a damper on the whole "rule of law" thing.

Senator Charles Sumner is one of the most amazing, greatest, passionate, loneliest and pitiful characters in American history. His life is a testament to the premise that leaders pay a high price in terms of happiness to achieve what we call "Greatness." He was probably more responsible for freeing the slaves and attempting to achieve equality than anyone other than Thaddeus Stevens. Certainly, his dedication to the principle of equality easily surpassed Lincoln's attitude and belated resolutions. For almost his entire career, Sumner stood alone against everyone fighting on behalf of equality. He was an advocate of international peace, a leader of educational and prison reform movements, organizer of the antislavery Whigs who became the FreeSoilers, a founder of the Republican Party and the principal antislavery spokesman in the Senate.

He was born in 1811. He had a twin sister who died at 21. He attended Harvard University and later in life remarked, "I am not aware that any one single thing is well taught to the Undergraduates of Harvard. . . . Certainly I left it without knowing anything." His father was a Master Mason who ultimately entered the Anti-Mason movement. After graduating from Harvard, he enrolled in Harvard Law School despite reservations about the legal profession. He once asserted, "a mere lawyer must be one of the veriest wretches. . . ."

In 1837, he traveled to Europe and concluded that French tolerance for blacks was superior to American slavery. After studying the French legal system he concluded that a French Court was a laughable place where the judge, lawyers and parties were merely players in a theatre. Upon visiting England, he concluded the U.S. lacked the culture of England. The contacts he made in Europe helped him become a bridge between American and European society.

By 1843, Sumner began to suffer from paranoia. He was convinced he had enemies in Boston society. This was due partially to the fact that he was becoming a political reformer. He believed the role of a political reformer was a dedication to the good and happiness of society. This required the reformer to dedicate his efforts to principles, rather than individuals.

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The first major turning point in his career occurred on July 4, 1845 when he was invited to give a speech in Boston. His speech was titled, "The Grandeur of Nations." In it, he criticized the "invidious plan" to annex Texas to create slave States. He also criticized wars in general. Many people were shocked by the speech, but antislavery crusaders applauded it.

Throughout his life, Sumner's modus operandi was as follows. He would appear in public, make unpopular inflammatory statements, and be attacked for them. The more he was criticized the more inflexible he became. He carried principles to extremes and alienated moderate opinion of his time. By doing so, he essentially placed himself outside of society.

The prevailing political parties throughout the 1830s were the Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs. The Mexican -American War, instigated by the U.S. resulted in the acquisition of an enormous amount of territory. The issue then became whether the territory would be slave or non-slave States. This caused the Whig Party, which had included both northerners and southerners to split. It split into Conscience Whigs who condemned U.S. instigation of the Mexican War as a ploy to obtain slave territory; and Cotton Whigs who supported slavery. Thus, it can fairly be stated that the greedy acquisition of Mexican territory by the U.S. gave rise to our own Civil War. What goes around, comes around.

By the late 1840s, both political parties were splintered over the slavery issue. Instead of just having Democrats and Whigs as in the 1830s, the parties by 1848 included Conscience Whigs, Cotton Whigs, Barnburners, Free Soilers (formerly Conscience Whigs mostly), and Democrats.

Sumner began appearing at Free Soil conventions around 1850. Free Soilers believed the Compromise of 1850 granted unnecessary concessions to the slave States. Sumner called for the abolition of fugitive slave laws, the end of slavery in the District of Columbia, the exclusion of slavery in all national territories, and a general overthrow of the slave power in politics. He was considered to be extremely radical for these viewpoints.

Now, here's how he got to be a U.S. Senator. It was by a corrupt bargain. Sumner was a Free Soiler. The only real principle of the Free Soil Party was to abolish slavery. The Whigs were stronger than either the Democrats or the Free Soilers. But, they weren't more powerful than the Democrats and Free Soilers combined. So that is what the two smaller parties did. They combined for the purpose of beating the Whigs even though they didn't have a single principle in

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common. When the arrangement became public, Massachusetts denounced the coalition of two political parties that didn't have a single principle in common. As part of the deal, the Free Soilers would get a U.S. Senate seat, which went to Sumner. He became one of only three Free Soil Senators in the U.S. Senate.

On June 27, 1852, Sumner moved for repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. On August 26, 1852, he presented his "Freedom National" speech. In it, he contested the assertion that slaveholder rights had been settled by numerous laws by stating, "Nothing can be settled which is not right." He responded to the difficulties of emancipation by contending that antislavery was right, and the right is always practicable. He contended the Founding Fathers who had adopted the Northwest Ordinance carefully excluded slavery from western territories, which attested to their devotion to liberty. He then asserted that from this point of virtue at the nation's inception there had been a decline in the nation's character as evidenced by compromises in favor of slavery. His Freedom National speech lasted for four hours and was presented by memory.

In January, 1854, Senator Stephen Douglass was a leader of the proslavery Democrats. He introduced a measure to adopt the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty in organizing a government for the Nebraska Territory. The doctrine stood for the premise that the issue of slavery should be left to the inhabitants of the Nebraska Territory rather than the Federal government. Previously, pursuant to the Missouri Compromise of 1820 slavery had been excluded in Nebraska. Douglass was thus trying to circumvent the Missouri Compromise. He did this by arguing that all prohibitions against slavery contained in the Missouri Compromise had been superceded by the Compromise of 1850. However, the 1850 Compromise contained no such express statement.

On February 21, 1854 Sumner gave his speech titled "The Landmark of Freedom." In it, he opposed the Popular Sovereignty measure. He argued that it was the South, which had profited from the Missouri Compromise because it allowed for a greater degree of slavery in certain areas. He further argued that now that the South had the consideration of the Missouri Compromise in its pocket, it was repudiating the bargain it made.

Douglas won and Sumner lost. On March 4, 1854 the Senate passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which adopted the principle of Popular Sovereignty. Sumner asserted this delivered the North hand and foot bound to the South. He also asserted it was the worst measure ever passed by Congress, that it annulled

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all past Compromises and effectively made any future compromises regarding slavery impossible. The bill set up a North/South confrontation because it put Freedom and Slavery face to face against each other.

Sumner's antislavery speeches began to cause threats to be made against him. When he protested President Pierce's utilization of force to return a slave to a slaveowner pursuant to the Fugitive Slave Act, the Washington Star published a warning directed at Sumner, which stated:

"If Southern gentlemen are threatened . . . while legally seeking to obtain possession of property for the use of which they have a solemn constitutional guaranty . . . certain Northern men now in our midst will have to evince a little more circumspection in their walk, talk and acts." ²⁶⁸

Sumner paid little attention to the threats until 1856. Pursuant to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the South was instituting a reign of terror in Kansas intent on making it a slave State. When confronted with the violence occurring in Kansas, Douglas contended it was attributable to an abolitionist conspiracy started by antislavery men against peaceful southerners. Thus, it is easy to see one's version of any governmental event depends on which side you are on.

On May 19, 1856 and May 20, 1856, Sumner gave his "Crime Against Kansas" speech that resulted in the violent physical attack upon him by Congressman Preston Brooks. After the attack, Sumner was a Hero in the North and branded a Dog in the South. Brooks was branded a Dog in the North and a Hero in the South. Once again, it is easy to see everything in life is a matter of perspective and depends upon which side you are on.

By 1856, the Republican Party was formed by a coalition of antislavery Parties. Republicans made "Bleeding Sumner" a principal issue of the 1856 political campaign. Democrats contended Sumner was shamming his injuries.

The Southern version of the attack went as follows. Sumner had engaged in a foul-mouthed denunciation of South Carolina and expressed unprovoked vicious insults upon Senators Butler and Douglas. Brooks' weapon was a common walking stick that gentleman frequently use and he had not violated any privileges of the Senate. Southern politicians further contended that Sumner

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fell to the floor in cowardice, even though he only had minor flesh wounds. Once again, everything in life is a matter of perspective.

Sumner traveled to Europe after the attack. In December, 1859 upon his return, Mississippi Senator Albert Gallatin Brown boldly and despicably stated:

"slavery is a great moral, social, and political blessing - a blessing to the slave, and a blessing to the master."²⁶⁹

Senator Mason of Virginia agreed and asserted that the condition of African bondage elevates both races. Sumner re-entered the fracas on June 4, 1860 by giving his four-hour oration titled "The Barbarism of Slavery. He asserted slavery was barbaric and once again singled out South Carolina for scorn.

After Lincoln was elected in 1860 the secession crisis began as Southern States seceded from the Union. Sumner opposed any compromise to avert Civil War. He felt the Missouri Compromise, 1850 Compromise and Kansas-Nebraska Act had all been abdications of principles of decency in favor of the South. But, many Republicans wanted to avert war. Senators Douglas and Crittenden proposed a compromise that would guarantee slavery in all U.S. Territory below a certain, latitude. It was called the Crittenden proposal.

Sumner opposed the Crittenden proposal and it was defeated on Lincoln's inauguration day. It's defeat made war a certainty. The South attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina on April 11, 1861. Southerners blamed Sumner in large part, for the War. He helped ruin the National Whig Party, which once joined Northern and Southern politicians, by becoming a Conscience Whig. As a Free Soil Senator, he seized every opportunity to attack the South. As a martyr after the Brooks' attack, he helped keep Republicans committed to an antislavery course.

With the South out of the Union, Republicans were now in total control of Congress. Sumner who had helped form the Republican Party, and who had been one of only three Free Soil Senators in a Democrat controlled Congress, was now a Senate leader. He was selected to be Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. One of his first acts was to banish from the committee room the free liquor available to members (one of his worst decisions in my opinion).

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As Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Sumner contended his power was inferior only to President Lincoln and nobody else. This created friction between him and William Seward, who was Secretary of State. Lincoln was not well versed in foreign policy when he took office and became disenchanted with Seward early on. This caused him to give Sumner a virtual veto power over foreign policy. Lincoln authorized Sumner to go through all foreign correspondence and allowed Sumner to effectively set up his own State Department. Visiting foreign representatives sought out Sumner, not Seward.

Sumner tried to convince Lincoln to issue an emancipation proclamation freeing the slaves when the war began. But, Lincoln was not receptive initially. As the war progressed, the relationship between Lincoln and Sumner had its ups and downs vacillating between friction and support for each other. Sumner felt that Lincoln was not sufficiently dedicated to antislavery or equality for blacks. At one point in 1862, Sumner arrived at the White House and asked Lincoln:

"Do you know who at this moment is the largest slave-holder in this country? It is Abraham Lincoln for he holds all the 3,000 slaves of the District, which is more than any other person in the country holds."²⁷⁰

Sumner blamed the Union's failure to gain victory over the South upon Lincoln's refusal to proclaim emancipation. By the middle of 1862, Sumner tried to have the U.S. Congress emancipate the slaves with or without Lincoln. Sumner declared full control of war powers rested with Congress alone. This made him quite unpopular, until Lincoln came to his rescue by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. Sumner's opposition collapsed when it became clear he was now on common ground with Lincoln.

Lincoln's First Emancipation Proclamation was just a propaganda vehicle. He wanted to steal the thunder of emancipation from Congress. He also wanted to use it to coerce Confederates back into the Union. He attempted to accomplish this by delaying the effective date of the Proclamation until January 1, 1863, 100 days after its issuance. Many believed if the South reentered the Union before the effective date, Lincoln would rescind the Proclamation.

Furthermore, the so-called Emancipation Proclamation did not require slaves to be freed who were owned by slave-owners in States that had not seceded. Thus, as a practical matter, it did not free one single slave since it

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applied only to slaves in the seceded States. Those States could not yet be controlled and thus the Proclamation was unenforceable.

Sumner knew as long as blacks had no land, no jobs, no education, and no legal rights, emancipation was just a mockery. He asserted that the Courts could have ended slavery long ago, but just became barracoons" and the U.S. Supreme Court was the "greatest barracoons" of all. This was Sumner's repetitive course in life. He would be the one most responsible for arousing public concern over emancipation and equality. But, his insistence on equality was not viewed as realistic by other members of Congress. They considered his conception of true equality to be so preposterous that many did not even believe he was serious. Although the North was antislavery, it was not in favor of equality. To the contrary, it was widely accepted that the only way to preserve white civilization was by strict rules precluding the mingling of the two races.

As the war drew to a close, the issue of Reconstruction took front stage. Sumner introduced many equal rights bills. Typically, his proposals called for greater rights and enforcement mechanisms than Congress was willing to provide. As a result, in debates he found himself opposing provisions Congress would adopt, but in a voting showdown he voted in favor of them.

On October 12, 1864, Chief Justice Taney who issued the Dred Scott decision, which held slaves were property, died. Sumner wrote to Lincoln expressing his joy upon hearing of Taney's death as a "victory for Liberty"

The major Reconstruction issue was whether the southern States were in or out of the Union during the war. Lincoln consistently asserted southern States never left the Union and had never seceded. He did this because he did not want to recognize the right of a State to secede. From his perspective, there was no war. Instead, he asserted the entire "Union" was putting down a large civil insurrection in the South led by treasonous individuals. Lincoln's concept created a dilemma regarding reconstruction. Drastic conditions could only be imposed upon southern States, if they had in fact seceded. The reason is that if they were never out of the Union it would be unfair to impose drastic reconstruction conditions upon them. Thus, Congress was faced with a logical conundrum.

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Sumner did not handle this conundrum well. He forcefully stated, "No act of secession can take a State out of this Union." But, when it was asserted that meant Louisiana had all rights guaranteed by the Constitution, he replied:

"It is in the Union and it is not. The territory is in, but as yet there is no State government that is in." ²⁷¹

After Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson took office. Johnson met with Sumner and expressed general agreement with Sumner's ideas of equality. Sumner told his friends, "In the question of colored suffrage the President is with us." But, Sumner quickly learned he was mistaken. In 1865, Johnson appointed William Holden as provisional governor of North Carolina and called for an election by only loyal white voters. Sumner thought he was hearing the facts incorrectly. It was too inconsistent with what Johnson told him. But as one Presidential proclamation followed another reorganizing southern States based on white supremacy, Sumner realized Johnson had sold him out. Black Codes were passed in one State after another. They did not secure even minimal rights for blacks. Johnson argued that certain "Rights" were "Privileges." Specifically, he contended the voting "Right" was a "Privilege."

The main issue pertaining to suffrage dealt with proportional representation. Before the war, to determine the number of Representatives a State was entitled to, 3/5 of the slaves were counted. However, after emancipation all blacks would be counted. This would have the ironic effect of increasing southern representation in Congress as a result of the Civil War the South had started. To neutralize this effect, Sumner proposed that representation be based on the number of voters, rather than a State's total population. This would encourage the South to grant blacks the right to vote.

The proposed Fourteenth Amendment declared that if a State denied the right to vote on the basis of race, all such persons would be excluded from the basis of representation. Sumner successfully defeated this proposal due to its emphasis on race. The final version of the Fourteenth took out the reference to "race" or "color" and simply indicated that if a State denied the vote to anyone, those people would be excluded from the basis of representation. The effect was

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that if Southern States denied the vote to blacks, they would pay the price in the form of reduced representation.

At age 55, having never been married, Sumner tied the knot with 25 year old, Alice Hooper. She was the widowed daughter-in-law of a Congressman and had a seven year old daughter. Her first husband died in the war. She was three decades younger than Sumner and considered a "prize catch" in social circles. She was wealthy and beautiful.

Apparently though, unbeknownst to Sumner, Alice was also quite the Bitch. She treated him like dirt, which is rather incredible considering this was a time in our history when women were expected to be quite subservient to men. Alice definitely didn't fit that mold. They would attend parties and when he wanted to leave, she told him to basically get lost and indicated that she was staying. She ridiculed him, laughed at him, insulted at him, and definitely didn't take any crap from him. It's quite amazing. In the Senate he was a man in charge. But, in his marriage his wife walked all over him. He could dominate the Senate, but never played the role of a domineering husband. Instead, he just put up with her antics.

Within a short time, Alice had an affair with a young man from Berlin named Baron Friedrich von Holstein. She and Sumner separated. A few years later, shortly before he died, Sumner quietly got a divorce from her asserting the ground of desertion. In his eyes she was a wicked woman. He never spoke to her again and refused to even utter her name, referring to her only as "that woman." Alice moved to Europe where she became friends with Henry James who adored her "great beauty." She died in 1913.

Republican Congressman were horrified when Sumner proposed that black suffrage be required in northern States as well as the south. Friction between Johnson and Sumner grew. At Johnson's impeachment trial in 1868, Sumner wanted to dispense with limitations on Congress' power to conduct the proceedings. He stated:

"Give me a lawyer to betray a great cause. He can always find an excuse. Technicality and quibble cannot fail."²⁷²

Georgia was readmitted to the Union in 1868. As soon as it was readmitted, it purged all 28 black members from its legislature and instituted a reign of anarchy, cruelty and terror against blacks. Sumner correctly predicted

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that the 14th Amendment would not effectively secure the right to vote for blacks. Congress had required new constitutions be enacted in southern States granting blacks the right to vote before their readmission. But, southern States effectively nullified these provisions by intimidating blacks, largely through the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The KKK systematically intimidated freedmen, and flogged or murdered black leaders. Congress soon began considering the proposed 15th Amendment, which would guarantee the right to vote for blacks.

Sumner took center stage. By 1869, he could argue more effectively for equality because he had all along insisted the reconstruction measures adopted by Congress were too lenient. He forthrightly asserted it was not enough to abolish slavery or give blacks the right to vote. He asserted that so long as segregation existed, blacks would be regarded as an inferior caste. He drew upon the theological argument that GOD rejoices in Unity. He also argued that the Declaration of Independence gave Congress a greater grant of power than the Constitution. He wanted the Declaration to stand side by side with the Constitution. Under this theory, no legal technicality could defend segregation and Congress would possess sufficient power to control reconstruction. He argued that before Virginia could be readmitted it had to ratify the 15th Amendment granting blacks the right to vote. Congress followed his leadership and by 1870 the same provisions were imposed on Mississippi. Mississippi then chose a black as one of its U.S. Senators. Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi became the first black U.S. Senator.

In January, 1870 President Grant showed up at Sumner's home. Grant wanted to annex the Dominican Republic and was seeking Sumner's support. The details of the conversation would become an issue of dispute. Grant contended Sumner pledged his support and didn't fulfill his promise. Sumner disagreed. Whatever transpired, several points are clear. Grant wanted to annex the Dominican Republic to send U.S. blacks there. Sumner successfully assisted with defeating Grant's proposal. But, his opposition angered Grant. Grant got even with Sumner by having him removed as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, which he had commanded for so long.

Secretary of State Hamilton Fish at the time was one of Sumner's friends, but would later betray him. In March 1870, Fish visited Sumner at his house. Sumner was brooding over his loneliness, physical exhaustion, and lack of

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following in the Senate. He told Fish that he was all alone in the world and at night he would wake to realize his solitary, unhappy state. When Fish offered him sympathy, Sumner said, "You can't understand my situation. Your family relations are all pleasant. Why, many and many a night when I go to bed, I almost wish that I may never awake."

Several months later, relations between Fish and Sumner soured when Grant used Fish to secure Sumner's removal as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Near the end of 1870, Grant plotted against Sumner because of his success in defeating the Dominican annexation proposal. Sumner watched his enemies combine. By January, 1871 he was visibly affected by the mental excitement and fearful of physical assault from Grant or one of his aides. On February 15, 1871 he suffered acute pain in his chest and on March 9, 1871 he was removed as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Interestingly, after his removal as Chairman, he remained totally silent. Throughout his life, he gave elaborate, inflammatory speeches on many issues. Yet, on this one subject, his own removal from the Chairmanship that he had held for so many years, he was silent. He was still a Senator, but Grant had neutralized his power. Sumner was a complete outsider during the final stage of his political career. No one wanted to oppose Grant at this time. He was too popular. The scandals and corruption that would later plague his presidency had not yet occurred. Most significantly, Sumner lacked the physical stamina to defend himself.

In January, 1872 Sumner gave a speech to arouse support for a sweeping civil rights proposal. He argued that the doctrine of "segregated but equal" was unacceptable because "the substitute is invariably an inferior article." He was clearly envisioning the case of Brown v Board of Education, to be decided 80 years later. He also reasserted that the Declaration of Independence gave Congress a power superior to the Constitution because it was earlier in time.

The animosity between Grant and Sumner was so great that Sumner could not support him in the 1872 election, even though Grant was a Republican. The Democrats nominated Horace Greeley, a lifelong abolitionist. But, many abolitionists considered Greeley to be untrustworthy and felt he would betray blacks. When Sumner supported Greeley, instead of his own Party's candidate, Republicans were sharply critical of him. His friends told him he was insane to believe Democratic promises. Thus, he was ostracized by the Republicans and

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it was said that if the Democrats won they would step on him like a beetle. He was said to be a man on a bridge, upon which he has set fire to both ends.

As the end of his life approached, he was genuinely alone with no political following and very ill. He was overwrought mentally, nervously and plagued with angina. In August, 1872 when he went to London those he knew were struck by the fact that he was a very sick man. They said he spoke with a loudness of tone and vehemence of manner that indicated an "alienation of mind." John Bigelow an American in London said of him, "He is more than ever the center of the system in which he lives. He did not ask a question that indicated the least interest of any mortal but himself."

Sumner returned to New York in November, 1872, but was still very ill. He learned the Massachusetts legislature had censured him for a congressional resolution he presented. In February, 1873 he quietly began proceedings to divorce Alice on grounds of desertion. They had not been together for years by this time and she was in Europe. As the end approached, he renewed ties he had earlier in his life with the Transcendentalists.

His final months were occupied trying to finish his book. He also spoke with Susan B. Anthony who was leading the movement for women's suffrage. He gave her copies of his speeches on reconstruction. He told her to put the term "sex" where he used the term "race" or "color" and she would have the strongest arguments for granting women the right to vote.

He died on March 11, 1874. Sumner stood alone most of his life. He was politically alone as one of the earliest opponents of slavery. When the war began he pressed Lincoln for the Emancipation Proclamation. He pissed off pretty much everybody and few people liked him. The one significant relation he had with a woman was a disaster. At certain times he was in total control, but most of the time he was trying to gain control. He was a passionate, visionary who quite correctly predicted the future many times. He did more to help blacks in this country than anyone, with the possible exception of Thaddeus Stevens. In today's world it doesn't take all that much courage to argue in favor of equality. But, in Sumner's day, it was an unheard of thing to do.

Arguing in favor of equality in his time was viewed as an irrational, cognitively impaired perspective. Yet today, we know that it is really those so-called leaders who argued against equality who were really the irrational individuals.

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This of course leads to the simple premise that the term "Irrational" simply means anyone who doesn't agree with the prevailing view of the time. It is a term, which for the most part can only be defined subjectively. The impact of such is that when Courts today use the term "Irrational," that which they apply the term to, may be precisely "Rational." Similarly, that which State Supreme Court Judges today call "Rational" may in the future be classified as the "Insane" viewpoint of mentally disabled State Supreme Court Justices.

As for Charles Sumner, he accomplished a lot. He proved a lot in his life. He proved that the ideas he held, which were condemned by others, were the proper values and virtues of decency that should be held by a nation. But, he sure didn't get much happiness or satisfaction out of being right. He was a great man. He was also a lonely and unhappy man.

Sumner was the living embodiment of the premise that a mere intellectual devotion to an issue is insufficient to effectuate change. One needs to accompany such devotion with action, or no progress for society is made. That is the reason why we have so many brilliant law school professors writing all these interesting articles on legal issues, but who don't do crap to have their ideas actually adopted. They're too afraid to instigate lawsuits to test their ideas or to subject themselves to the associated risks.

Sumner took the requisite action needed to accomplish change in addition to expressing his views. But, it certainly didn't bring him happiness. So, maybe the law school professors are right. Maybe, it's best to just submit your written opinions to a well-accepted law review where no one will read them.

Substantially all Historical Facts in this Essay and their Presentation are Based on DAVID HERBERT DONALD'S BOOKS - CHARLES SUMNER - DA CAPO PRESS, NEW YORK, 1996 - "Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War," 1960 - "Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man," 1970. Use of Quotation Marks is Minimized to Improve Readability.