

**GERRIT SMITH AND THE  
VIGILANT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649139620

Gerrit Smith and the Vigilant Association of the City of New-York by Gerrit Smith

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**GERRIT SMITH**

**GERRIT SMITH AND THE  
VIGILANT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK**



32  
GERRIT SMITH

AND THE

VIGILANT ASSOCIATION

OF THE

CITY OF NEW-YORK.

---

NEW-YORK:

JOHN A. GRAY, PRINTER, 16 & 18 JACOB ST.,  
FIRE-PROOF BUILDINGS.

1860.

275

W 15089.26.7

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY  
FROM  
THE BEQUEST OF  
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL  
1918

*From the Syracuse Journal.*

## IMPORTANT LIBEL SUITS.

---

MESSRS. SEDGWICK, ANDREWS & KENNEDY, of this city, have commenced suits in behalf of GERRIT SMITH against WATTS SHERMAN, ROYAL PHELPS, and S. L. M. BARLOW, of New-York. Fifty thousand dollars are the damages claimed in each case. There are twenty-eight other members of this Democratic Committee. But we have not learned when or whether they also are to be sued. Nor have we learned when nor whether any of the many publishers of the "Manifesto" are also to be sued.

The following correspondence preceded the legal proceedings :

PETERBORO, February 13th, 1860.

WATTS SHERMAN, Esq. : SIR : My father-in-law, Mr. Gerrit Smith, has at length so far waked up from the eclipse of his intellect, as to be able to read and to hear reading. He has just now seen for the first time the

"Manifesto of the New-York Democratic Vigilant Association," published last October, in which you connect his name with a certain "Central Association" of bloody and horrible purposes.

As Mr. Smith belongs to no Society, has always opposed secret societies, had never before heard of this "Central Association," and condemns all shedding of human blood, save by Government, he necessarily feels himself to be deeply wronged by you and your associates. He holds you and them responsible for calling in effect upon the people both of the North and South to detest and abhor him.

Mr. Smith wishes to know without any delay whether you and your associates will persist in your libel, or make the unqualified and ample retraction which the case calls for.

Yours, Respectfully, CHAS. D. MILLER.

P. S.—I do not as yet write to any of the Executive Committee except yourself, Mr. Phelps, and Mr. Barlow.

2d P. S.—It occurs to Mr. Smith that it may have been the "Provisional Government" adopted by the Convention at Chatham, C. W., with which you intended to identify him. But Mr. Smith bids me say to you that this can not relieve you, since never, until within a few weeks, has he heard of that "Government," or that Convention. What that Government was, he has yet to learn, as he has not heard or read a line of its provisions.



NEW-YORK, February 18th, 1860.

C. D. MILLER, Esq., Peterboro: Sir: I have received your letter of the 13th inst., complaining, on behalf of your father-in-law, of the use made of his name in a publication by the New-York Vigilant Association in October last; and although the publishing of my name to that document was an unwarrantable liberty, for I never signed it, or authorized any one to sign it for me, yet, as I did not contradict it at the time, I can hardly set up this plea now.

I have been disappointed in seeing Mr. Sherman to-day, but you shall hear from us early next week.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

ROYAL PHELPS.

NEW-YORK, February 22d, 1860.

CHAS. D. MILLER, Esq.: SIR: Yours of the 13th inst. was received by me a few days since; and but for other pressing engagements, would have been answered immediately. Since its receipt, I have looked over carefully the "Manifesto of the Democratic Vigilant Association" to which you refer, and so far as Mr. Gerrit Smith's name is mentioned in connection with the "Central Association," have no hesitation in saying that his statement, that he is not a member of that body, renders it obvious that in this particular the writer of the pamphlet has fallen into an unintentional error. With regard to the letter also inserted in this pamphlet, dated Peterboro, Aug. 29th, 1859, purporting to have been written by Mr. Smith, as you do not allude to it, I suppose *that* is correctly set forth. By

comparing the general tone and sentiment with the constitution of the "Central Association," I think you will see that the writer of that pamphlet might very naturally have fallen into the mistake, (as you assure me that it is a mistake,) of supposing that the writer of one approved of the objects of the other. This was doubtless the view of the writer of this pamphlet, in regard to which particular care was taken to insure accuracy in its statement of facts, and for these the writer of the pamphlet relied somewhat upon the current newspaper articles of the day. After the information now received from you, I am very sorry to learn that Mr. Smith's name was thus connected with the "Central Association" to which you say he did not belong, or that any injustice was done to him in this publication.

Mr. Phelps and Mr. Sherman have each perused this letter, and I am requested by those gentlemen to say they concur in the same, and beg you will receive it also as their reply to the communication you addressed to each of them on the same subject. They also request me to say that it gives them great pleasure to correct the error into which the writer of this pamphlet has fallen in regard to Mr. Smith, as, however much they differ from the sentiments held by him as expressed in the "Jerry Rescue" letter, they respect the boldness and personal integrity of Mr. SMITH, and desire to do him full justice. (1)

Yours very truly,      SAMUEL L. M. BARLOW.

PETERBORO, February 26th, 1860.

S. L. M. BARLOW, Esq. : SIR: I have your letter of 22d inst. Mr. Smith desires me to say that his attention was called at the same time to all the references to himself in your "Manifesto." That he complained of but one, was by no means because he acquiesced in the others. Compared with that one, the others are of no importance. That one is a sheer fabrication. Of all in it that you attribute to him he had done nothing. But in the other references, your responsibility is only for your opinions of what he confesses he had done.

It is true that Mr. Smith did at the close of his long letter to Mr. Thomas on other subjects, (dated 27th August,) assert the probability of servile insurrections, and the possibility of their success, as reasons why the people should, at the ballot-box, put an end to slavery. (2) But, pray, what responsible connection is there between this and the "Central Association," or the sad occurrence at Harper's Ferry? The like thing he did in scores of meetings, in his tour through this State in 1858; and never was he more full and faithful at this point than in his speech on the Nebraska Bill. (3) (See pages 200, etc., of the volume of his Congressional Speeches.) In fact, it is for more than a quarter of a century that he has been continually testifying that unless the American people hasten to put away slavery peacefully, it will go out in blood. His only regret in respect to such testimony is, that it has not availed to persuade, or, if you prefer, to *frighten* the people, both of the North and the South, into his own desir