The “Wicked” Bill

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 as seen in the letters of Charlotte Morgan
The Archives of the Village of Aurora contain a collection of letters spanning 1853-1855 from Charlotte Wood Morgan to her husband Edwin B. Morgan, then serving in Congress.
“I would love dearly to be with you today I wonder what you are doing- I hope not directing speeches- I will not think of you as sitting in the House of Representatives today dear you did till a late hour last night I would rejoice to hear that you had at last tired the wicked ones and they had yielded- The Bill I fear will pass- but do all you can”
What was the “wicked” bill?
The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854

- The Act would end the Missouri Compromise, allowing new territories to permit slavery by popular vote

- Northern abolitionists were fiercely opposed to its passage
FORCING SLAVERY DOWN THE THROAT OF A FREE SOILER
Edwin B. Morgan represented New York’s 25th congressional district.

Throughout his career in Congress (1853-1859) he opposed the expansion of slavery.

The Capitol still under construction in 1858.
Grief at home: In April 1854 the Morgans lost their 14 year old daughter Adele

Edwin B. Morgan

Charlotte Morgan

Adele and twin brother Christopher (who died in infancy) are buried in Oak Glen Cemetery
“How much I wish I could see you this morning-What are you doing and are you looking as pale and sick as you have for several week past- I am afraid this Nebraska business will make you all sick sitting so long and sitting so late in the house this warm weather, is more than your constitution can endure” (Charlotte to Edwin, May 12th)
E. B. Morgan dared not leave the House during a long series of delaying votes.

“I do not know but are you still shaving in your seat with Mr. Webbs razor and soap—What are you doing I wish I knew” (Charlotte to Edwin, May 17th)
The effort to keep the bill from passing frayed nerves

“Ma is going to write you today so she told me yesterday and she will give you good advice to keep your temper if any one can do so when surrounded by such vile creatures as the Nebraska friends Let me beg of you to be calm and not loose your temper” (Charlotte to Edwin, May 21st; “Ma” is Nancy Barber Morgan)
A strange sign

The bill passed on May 23\textsuperscript{rd} and was signed into law on May 30\textsuperscript{th}, setting the stage for the Civil War.

On May 26\textsuperscript{th} a solar eclipse was visible throughout the Northeast. "The girls are preparing the smoaked glass to look at the Eclypse" (Charlotte to Edwin, May 23\textsuperscript{rd})
Public service is a shared sacrifice. Charlotte Morgan’s moral influence and support were vital to her husband and his work.

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