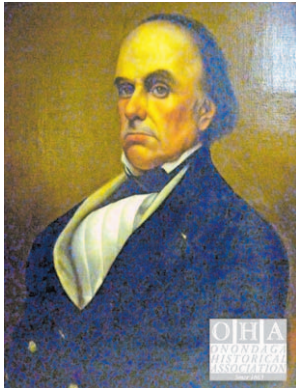


LOCAL HISTORY



Daniel Webster, left, delivered his “Treason Speech” from a balcony of the Courier Building, right, named after the newspaper that was once printed there. Onondaga Historical Association photos



166 Years Ago: On May 26, 1851, Daniel Webster, then U.S. secretary of state, spoke to a crowd of people from the balcony of the Courier Building at Montgomery and Washington streets. He called for all Syracusans to obey and respect the law and uphold the Constitution in what became known as “The Treason Speech.” The law in question was the Fugitive Slave Act, which was part of the Compromise of 1850. It

stated that all citizens were required to help capture escaped slaves and return them to the South. Syracuse, with a large anti-slavery population, openly defied his speech later that year by freeing an escaped slave — who had been imprisoned — in what became known as The Jerry Rescue.

— Dan Connors for the Onondaga Historical Association