Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition, Volumes 1 & 2

Edited by
Peter Hinks
John McKivigan

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To the memory of our friend and teacher,
John W. Blassingame
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The purpose of Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition is to detail as accessibly as possible the history of antislavery, abolition, and emancipation and to illustrate the broad spectrum of forms these forces acquired and courses they followed over time and space. While the dramatic events in the Atlantic World will occupy a central place in the work, their vital expressions elsewhere in the world will also be highlighted. This two-volume encyclopedia will afford the most current compendium of the diverse and innovative scholarship produced over the past several decades that reckons with the history of antislavery, abolition, and emancipation.

The Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition is organized around three principal thematic concerns: the illustration and explication of the various forms of (1) antislavery and its emergence as an organized movement; (2) the immediate precipitants of abolition and the processes of its passage; and (3) the process of emancipation and its consequences. Slavery existed historically throughout the world, and this encyclopedia will highlight slavery in numerous societies and eras as it moved through these three stages towards its demise.

What exactly constituted antislavery, abolition, and emancipation, and where, when, and why did they manifest? While the earliest expressions of antislavery may have only comprised one or a few isolated voices, the antislavery most commonly reviewed in this encyclopedia will be that animated by a systematic and ardent opposition to slavery and intended to mobilize large numbers of people to attack and end the institution. A wide variety of people and organizations nurtured and extended this antislavery; religious figures, political economists, slaves, sailors, artisans, missionaries, planters, captains of slave ships, democratic enthusiasts, and others were all involved, along with the various organizations—secular, religious, or otherwise—with which they were associated. Antislavery was by no means the work exclusively, or even principally, of an intellectual elite, and the force of all, from the lowly and unlearned to the privileged and articulate, must be represented in this encyclopedia if it is to comprehend accurately the scope of antislavery. The presence of slavery continued to be attacked in the contracting Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, in Liberia
in the 1930s, in Saudi Arabia in the mid-twentieth century, and even in the latter years of the century in countries like Sudan, Pakistan, India, and other states in Southeast Asia. Sometimes the indigenous antislavery movement was feeble or non-existent, but such extra-national forces, such as British or world opinion, and, especially, the League of Nations and the United Nations, would apply important antislavery pressure. This encyclopedia will detail all these critical events, and others, concerning antislavery in the twentieth century.

While movements to abolish slavery have involved a complex aggregation of social, political, economic, and cultural forces, the actual act of abolition itself was largely state-sponsored through legislative or juridical decision. For example, the ending of slavery in the Northern states of the United States during and after the Revolutionary War was largely a legislative, juridical, and elite process with relatively little popular mobilization. While the coalescing of an organized social movement around antislavery might often precede the act of abolition, the actual definitive steps towards abolition and the passage of it may be isolated as a distinct phenomenon meriting a separate category for abolition itself. A vigorous, organized antislavery movement existed in Great Britain and especially the United States well before definitive steps towards the abolition of slavery were taken in the colonies or in the South. In other societies, such as France, Russia, various new Latin American nations, the Ottoman Empire, Thailand, and many other nations, abolition was overwhelmingly a political act of the legislature or monarch, occurring with virtually no organized antislavery movement present. Indeed, these acts were often passed—and modified—in the face of significant opposition to them from slaveholding interests and their supporters. This was particularly the case for the emerging Latin American republics in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Events leading up to abolition were often tumultuous, and abolition edicts were not uncommonly issued during times of war or slave insurrection in the slaveholding society when colonial interests sought to stymie rebellion and also to find troops among the enslaved; St. Domingue and the various young Latin American republics illustrate this process. The diverse and dramatic roads to abolition and the various forms the measure to abolish acquired will be exhibited throughout these volumes.

The encyclopedia will also pay some attention to the numerous, powerful, and articulate figures who opposed abolition and argued for the innate inferiority of the subjugated or their unfitness for freedom. The abolitionists had constantly to respond to these arguments and to undermine pervasive beliefs in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that people of African descent were naturally fit for enslavement. Thinking about race played a vital part in the movement towards, or away from, abolition. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, after the British and French abolition of slavery in their colonies, abolition was increasingly associated with the modernizing and progressive liberal state, and other states such as Brazil in the 1880s and the Ottoman Empire after World War I implemented abolition in pursuit of that progressive modernity. The worldwide abolition of slavery was
also upheld as a foundation of the humanitarianism supposedly underlying British imperial expansion in the nineteenth century. Other European countries would reiterate this argument in the latter part of the century as they penetrated into Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where, for example, Belgium would ban slavery in the Congo, although instituting its own severe labor regimen that all but duplicated slavery.

Finally, the encyclopedia will chronicle the processes and significance of the various emancipations that have occurred over history, but most numerous since the late-eighteenth century. The unfolding of emancipation in a society entailed very different processes, expectations, and conflicts from those that preceded abolition. In sum, one was involved with organizing and mobilizing for or against the continuation of legal slavery within a society, while the other is much more concerned with the economic and social consequences of that abolition—most commonly with the regulation and control of the freedmen’s labor and with their political status. While these latter concerns about the consequences of abolition were certainly expressed during the struggles over abolition, they were marshaled either to defend or attack the institution. After the passing of the abolition struggle, these concerns over consequences and regulation became the centerpiece of the society in which slavery had been ended. Thus, for organizational purposes in this encyclopedia, emancipation and abolition—while evidently related—will also be explored as two separate and discrete processes.

While abolition will be identified as the immediate process of ending slavery, emancipation is designated the process of the formerly enslaved becoming formally free in a previously slaveholding society. The unfolding of freedom continues long after the movement towards and the act of ending. Indeed, over the past thirty years or more, the historiography of the course and trials of the freed people and their former owners after abolition in the American South, the British West Indies, Latin America, and elsewhere has grown immensely. Slaves well might begin becoming free by taking decisive steps towards destroying the legal institution of slavery before abolition and emancipation; such measures characterized the actions of slaves in the American North during the American Revolution and in the South during the Civil War, in Latin America during its various wars of independence, in Jamaica during the Baptist Revolt, and certainly in St. Domingue. And flight, resistance, and rebellion which did not contribute directly to the overthrow of slavery was an integral part of an emerging, organized antislavery movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the maroons and black rebels of St. Domingue, Jamaica, Surinam, Guiana, Demerara, Palmares, Quilombo, and Palenque were crucial agents of antislavery in the Atlantic World both for the dramatic evidence they gave of enduring black autonomy and the keen problems they posed for the maintenance of local slaveholding regimes. But the use of the term *emancipation* in this encyclopedia will largely refer to the processes and consequences of freeing that occurs throughout the formerly slaveholding society after the point of formal abolition. Emancipation is the working-out of the fact of abolition.
Emancipation might be of a very long duration such as the movement from slavery to serfdom in Western, Eastern, and Central Europe where slavery only diminished very slowly over the centuries, or it might occur gradually over a number of years and decades as it did in the North of the United States or in emerging Latin American countries in the first half of the nineteenth century, or it might happen very quickly as it did in the South of the United States between 1863 and 1865. And, emancipations were by no means irreversible—Napoleon reinstated colonial slavery in French possessions in 1802 after the National Assembly had abolished it in 1794; some have argued that serfdom in nineteenth century Russia moved closer and closer to chattel slavery; and slavery reappeared in Nazi Germany by the early 1940s after the labor form had long ceased to exist in the country. Indeed, by 1945, there were more than 7.5 million forced laborers in Europe compared with 6 million slaves in all of the Americas in 1860.

Moreover, the outcomes of emancipations commonly disappointed the formerly enslaved who witnessed the replacement of slavery by new forms of labor exploitation and economic dependence and who had their aspirations for political democracy and social equality checked and crushed. Thus, this encyclopedia will discuss the rise of segregation, black laws, vagrancy laws, racial violence, white terror organizations, laws curtailing access to land ownership, laws restricting labor recruiting, the crop-lien and share-cropping systems, and the convict labor system, for they are all key components of the “working out” by all members of the society of the fact of abolition. In the case of the United States South, this working-out of emancipation spanned 1865 to 1900 and the largely successful installation by then of disenfranchisement, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and economic dependence and vulnerability for blacks. Similar processes for other societies are identified and described, as well. The encyclopedia’s review of emancipations will highlight the broad and complicated social and economic unfolding of the freeing of the enslaved following the passage of abolition.

The Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition is not just about antislavery or abolition or emancipation. It is about all three. And it is not simply that New World slavery and its unique brutalities begets antislavery which begets abolition which begets emancipation. The forces and vectors and reversals and paradoxes render the dynamic vastly more complicated.

This encyclopedia is structured to be of ready use to a broad audience: scholars, high school and college students, librarians, teachers, policy advocates, and the general interested public. The entries are organized alphabetically and contain cross-references highlighted by bold-face type and listed in “See also” lines at the end of the entry text. Most of the more than 300 entries, many of which are illustrated, conclude with a section entitled “Further Readings,” which lists additional works—both print and electronic—which the reader may consult to explore the entry’s topic further and in more detail. For ease in reference, the entries are also arranged in the Guide to Related Topics under a number of broad subject headings, such as “Antislavery Leaders,” “Gender,” “Law,” and “Politics”; those searching for more information on a particular topic can use the guide to quickly identify related entries that might be of interest. The detailed subject index at the
back of the book will also aid in this identification. A lengthy bibliography includes a selection of the most important works written on this vast realm. The Introduction provides a detailed, current overview of the history of antislavery, abolitionism, and emancipation. Finally, a timeline is included to afford a chronological overview of the history of these movements and events.
INTRODUCTION

Within the past several years, four fine encyclopedias of world slavery have been edited and published by leading scholars in the field: John Boles, Joan Cashin, and Junius P. Rodriguez, eds., *Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (1997); Paul Finkelman and Joseph Miller, eds., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (1998); Seymour Drescher and Stanley Engerman, eds., *Historical Guide to World Slavery* (1998); and Seymour Drescher, Stanley Engerman, and Robert Paquette, eds., *Slavery* (2001). Included in these comprehensive and learned volumes are various entries reckoning with early and fleeting opposition to slavery in the ancient world, the emergence of a coherent antislavery ideology in the eighteenth century, and the rise of organized opposition to slavery later in that century and the next, which culminated in the remarkable movement to abolish slavery in the New World and beyond in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although antislavery and abolition served to destroy the institution that is the centerpiece of their works, no worthwhile guide to the history of slavery would be adequate without an intelligent treatment of these powerful oppositional forces which co-existed with slavery when it was at the peak of its vitality in the Atlantic World in the late-eighteenth century. Yet the very thematic focus of these encyclopedias finally renders these momentous forces secondary and supporting.

The rise of antislavery and the abolition to which it led was anything but subsidiary. For any number of eminent historians from the second half of the twentieth century who have studied slavery and opposition to it deeply and broadly, the emergence of a sophisticated antislavery ideology and the rise of organized opposition to slavery in the Atlantic World in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represented nothing less than one of the great intellectual and social revolutions in the history of the world. Historically, the institution of slavery was often linked with a well-ordered society and the regulation of the irrational and the bestial. Aristotle, the ancient world’s foremost commentator on slavery, likened the slave to a dumb instrument guided by the superior moral and intellectual faculties of the master. He argued that slave and master were just one set of the fundamental dualities that characterized the world, including the body and the soul,
woman and man, parent and child, and animal and human. While the slave was connected with the body and the animal, the master was of the soul, the mind, the parent, and ruler. This was an order ordained by nature, Aristotle asserted, and under it, the slave was identified as a sort of domesticated animal rendered useful by the discipline and direction of the master. The superior will of the master used the slave to build and extend social order, thus simultaneously controlling the savage while reinforcing the civilized. However, an argument of cultural convenience also informed his thought: slaves were identified with what Aristotle called “barbarians”—those who make no distinctions between things and live in disorder—and they constituted all who were not Greek. The slave was the essential “other,” the one existing wholly outside of the master’s community and thus readily alienated.

Slavery was also in full accord with Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tenets and practices. Judaism developed in a world pervaded by slavery and the institution continued vital among the Jews as punishment for crime, debt, and capture in war. The first books of Hebrew Scripture are replete with information on the regulation of slaves, both Jewish and outsider, within Jewish society. Slavery and freedom are central themes in Hebrew Scripture; God repeatedly returns his people to bondage for sinning and violation of the terms of his Covenant with Abraham and Moses. On the other hand, God would bring his people out of harsh slavery as reward for their refusal to embrace the heathen ways of their enslavers and for their return to a reinvigorated faithfulness. Slavery thus functioned as a vital discipline for sinning and as a painful contrast to the freedom promised by God to those who adhered to his commandments.

Slavery is equally central to early and medieval Christianity and Islam. Nowhere is slavery deplored in Christian Scripture; indeed, many of the virtues highlighted by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount—humility, forgiveness, poverty, submission—might be most readily realized by the faithful slave. The master was far more likely to be captured by the things and affairs of the world, which elevated his vanity and sense of personal power while moving him farther away from recognition of his utter dependence on God. Paul’s model for the relationship of the devout to God, articulated best in his Letter to the Romans, is founded on enslavement: one wholly submits and sacrifices one’s body and will to God, to the loving and serving of God. Bondage is unavoidable. One is either a slave to the body and sin or a slave to God. There is no intermediate ground. In a world infused with sinning, government and slavery are ordained by God as key institutions for regulating this unavoidable human propensity to evil. As with the Hebrews, Christian Scripture also establishes guidelines for the moral obligations and duties of master and slave to each other in the proper Christian relationship. As Paul wrote in Colossians, “Slaves, obey your human masters in everything, not only when being watched, as currying favor, but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord.... Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, realizing that you too have a Master in heaven.” (Colossians, 3:22, 4:1) Slavery both as ideal and as actual human institution was a vital good for Christianity.
In Islam, slavery was present throughout the Koran and numerous rules structured the proper Islamic relationship between master and slave. Unlike Christianity, Islam explicitly sanctioned the manumission of faithful slaves as an act of benevolence by the master, and such individual freeing was common in the Islamic world, especially as an act of sacrifice and contrition during the annual observance of Ramadan. But the legitimacy of slavery was in no way challenged by such actions, and it thrived throughout Muslim lands. By the early eighteenth century, slavery continued to be accepted near axiomatically as necessary, useful, and thoroughly in accord with Judaic, Christian, and Islamic tenets and virtues. In the Atlantic World, it was celebrated as an enormous force for the material improvement of human life, as well as the extension of the Gospel to the benighted throngs.

Yet from the early 1700s and over the ensuing 150 years, slavery came increasingly to be viewed as the chief vector of evil and the Devil in the world, the very quintessence of sin as some called it, and the chief repository of all that was socially, politically, and, especially, economically archaic, stagnant, and inefficient. Slavery nurtured pandemonium and stymied the material progress and well-being of the world. By the formal conclusion of World War I, with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, legal slavery had been eliminated in most of the world.

What had happened to launch and extend this enormous transformation in human history? Predating by 200 years the swelling antislavery movement of the eighteenth century was the successful attack on the horrendous enslavement of Native Americans in New Spain and Brazil. Led by a Dominican cleric in Mexico, Bartolome de las Casas, and a Brazilian Jesuit, Antonio Vieira, laws proscribing the enslavement of native peoples were established by the mid-1600s. Although the colonists could, and did, infringe these laws, the new system of draft labor instituted for natives under repartimiento was itself stern, and the enslavement of Africans replaced that of the natives, a first abolition of sorts had nevertheless occurred by 1600 in the New World. The writings of Las Casas, in particular, would be used by early English raiders and colonists as vivid illustration of the brutal tyranny of Papist Spain in the New World and to energize their nibbling on the fringes of New Spain. Brazilian and Spanish clerics such as Tomas de Mercado, Bartolome de Albornoz, Alonso de Sandoval, and Pedro Claver were also the first vocal opponents of the Atlantic Slave Trade, highlighting its cruelty and mortality and doubting that such barbarous commerce could be justified on the grounds that the Africans subject to the traffic were legitimately enslaved war captives. Anticipating the more successful evangelical attacks on the trade in the second half of the eighteenth century, these critics also upheld the humanity of the Africans, their natural right to liberty, and their endowment with an immortal soul. Yet none of these critics of Indian slavery or of the Atlantic slave trade condemned slavery per se, arguing instead that it should be regulated justly and that the slaves should be catechized and baptized. Moreover, as Robin Blackburn has written, for those opposing the slave trade, “their work was carried out in obscurity, and came to the attention only of the limited circles able to obtain copies of books published in small editions.”
The mounting of an ultimately successful attack on the Atlantic slave trade and on slavery itself would be the project largely of the Anglophone Atlantic World. The first attacks from this realm would issue from geographical and social obscurity. A meeting of Quakers in the Germantown section of Philadelphia in 1688 first raised the questions that would preoccupy the rising antislavery movement of the eighteenth century: Who among the Quakers and other whites of the Pennsylvania colony would tolerate being "handled"—forcibly transported under horrid conditions and then sold for life like beasts—as the Africans are? Do Christians have liberty to engage in such brutal practices? Do we have any more right to enslave these people than the Turks do, or the Africans might, us? Other Quakers in Philadelphia, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts would follow this first thrust over the ensuing years, including George Keith, Robert Piles, John Hepburn, Elihu Coleman, and Benjamin Lay. Distinctive Quaker doctrines renouncing worldliness, ostentation, and all forms of violence and coercion and proclaiming devotion to the voice of God within the individual through the "inner light" contributed to sparking this early antislavery. Slavery was condemned as founded on dominance, self-aggrandizement, and greed. In "The American Defence," John Hepburn illustrated how slavery violated each and every commandment of the Decalogue. And, God's prompting of the individual through the "Inner Light" to humility, charity, sympathy, and love could only be shuttered and denied when one held another in chattel bondage. Slavery was nothing more, exhorted Hepburn, "than the Anti-Christian Practice in making Slaves of them who bear the Image of God, viz. Their fellow, Creature, Man; A Practice so cruel and inhumane, that the more it is thought upon by judicious men, the more they do abhor it; It being so vile a contradiction to the Gospel of the blessed Messiah." Despite Scripture's own positive engagement with slavery, Hepburn and his fellow communicants were certain God could not condone a fundamentally non-domestic slavery as brutal as that in the New World premised on the gross exploitation of Africans for commercial gain. Christ's "New Dispensation" of universal fellowship and love could only abominate the new, large-scale plantation slavery so characteristic of the Atlantic World.

Yet, while these pronouncements against slavery and the slave trade were universal, they issued principally from the Quakers' preoccupation with the maintenance of their own sanctified community by abjuring all forms of sinfulness. Consequently, this insular focus led the Quakers in Philadelphia to debate among themselves the rightness of their own involvement with chattel slavery and whether or not the community should proscribe it for its members. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the clear consensus of Quaker communities was to sanction slaveholding. But by 1758, as the antislavery adherents continued their assault and other pressures arose for the pacifist Quakers with the outbreak of the Seven Year's War, the Philadelphia Meeting began prodding its members to renounce slavery and prepare their slaves for emancipation. The repercussions from this momentous step would resonate far beyond Pennsylvania over the coming years. By 1774, when the Philadelphia Meeting forbade any further buying
or selling of slaves among its members upon penalty of disownment, even broader international attention would be drawn to the movement.

No one would contribute more to this broadening, international appeal than would Anthony Benezet, a Philadelphia Quaker, who published *A Short Account of that Part of Africa Inhabited by the Negroes...* in 1762. In conjunction with emerging Quaker antislavery organizations, *A Short Account* would prove instrumental in bringing key British politicians to support and work for the abolition of Britain's involvement in the Atlantic Slave Trade and ultimately in West Indian slavery. While Benezet embraced all the arguments articulated earlier by Hepburn and others, he also included numerous excerpts from the accounts of ship captains and travelers in West Africa to establish the civilization and moral dignity of black Africans in their own homelands. These vivid assertions countered notions widely held in the Atlantic World of innate African savagery, notions which eased the consciences of the multitudes profiting from slaves: “the abject Condition in which we see them, from our Childhood, has a natural Tendency to create in us an Idea of a Superiority and induces many to look upon them as an ignorant and contemptible Part of Mankind.”

Far more elaborately than earlier Quaker advocates, Benezet delineated the moral and intellectual equivalence of black African with white Anglo-American and their identical capacity for improvement. What prevented them from manifesting this natural impulse to autonomy and improvement, however, were the restrictions and debasements placed upon them by slavery, nurturing them in ignorance, demoralization, and moral corruption. This reality, in turn, encouraged whites' conclusions that Africans were by nature degraded and specially fit for slavery, especially as they knew nothing of the true character of the Africans' lives in the land of their nativity.

Thus human custom and laws—the social environment, not the predeterminations of God and nature—were responsible for creating the impression of their unfathomable difference from white Europeans, crushing the spirit of the Africans and alienating them so grossly from God: “the natural Capacity of many of them be ever so good, yet they have no Inducement or Opportunity of exerting it to any Advantage, which naturally tends to depress their Minds, and sink their Spirits into Habits of Idleness and Sloth, which they would, in all Likelihood, have been free from, had they stood upon an equal Footing with the white People.”

The nefarious imperatives of slavery dulled the “inner light” of both white and black. Slavery itself, not simply the slave trade, was the most reprehensible of sinning, and Quakers and all other slaveholders must disavow this evil by preparing their slaves for freedom and reorganizing their societies so, upon their emancipation, they may be included as equals. Benezet's widely disseminated work influenced numerous other American antislavery authors, including Benjamin Rush and Samuel Hopkins, and by the early 1770s, Benezet was corresponding with the influential British reformer Granville Sharp. In 1787, Sharp helped organize the Quaker-dominated Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade and played a pivotal role in drawing the influential Anglicans William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and James Ramsey into the antislavery movement by the
late 1780s. These men proved integral to orchestrating the political machinery leading to Great Britain's momentous abolition of its participation in the Atlantic slave trade in 1808.

Yet concurrent with the Quakers' attack on slavery in North America was the far more secular speculations of moral philosophers and political economists in France, England, and Scotland. Central to these arguments were fundamental shifts in conceptions of the nature of humans and of their relationship to society. As if to trumpet the end of feudalism in northwestern Europe and its notions of ranked social orders intricately bound to each other through a myriad of mutual obligations, John Locke in the late-seventeenth century identified the essence of the human individual to be in their endowment by nature with liberty, a liberty one could not alienate without ceasing to be human. This liberty, responsibly exercised in one's own self-interest, legitimated contracts executed between individuals and between individuals and the state. Under each, the individual relinquished a certain amount of that natural liberty to secure some valued object or condition best acquired only through combination with another or with a state. Locke, more fully than any political philosopher preceding him, newly associated freedom with mobility and autonomy rather than with its more traditional connotation—the right to be a recognized and actively participating member of a community from which one derived security and existential meaning. Jimmying the individual fully free from the vestiges of feudal communalism, Locke designated the individual naturally free and empowered and capable to act as a free agent in pursuit of one's self-interest. For Locke, slavery was a fundamentally unnatural condition in which the individual all but ceased to be human by relinquishing the liberty essential to identity. Asserting that this would be all but intolerable for Christian Europeans, Locke allowed, however, for the legitimate enslavement of non-Christian war captives and thus conveniently sanctioned the proliferating African slavery of the New World.

The *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment, enraptured by Locke's vision of human freedom, augmented it by championing the application of this individual liberty to society as a whole to generate an enormous increase in the material and political well-being of a society. The liberation of the individual to exercise his quintessentially human faculty of reason free from the constraints of traditions and coercive laws and to identify and condemn outmoded institutions and belief systems was critical to the envisioned social advance. For Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, no institution corrupted a society and its capacity for improvement more thoroughly than did slavery, although for Voltaire the Catholic Church was at the very least a close second. Slavery dispirited the enslaved, rendering them an inefficient and uncooperative producer. By not being citizens, slaves could not serve the public good and became eternal enemies against which society had to waste energies in vigilance. Masters were damaged as well, for slavery nurtured in them a contempt for labor and a love of indolence, luxury, and tyranny. All of these values contrasted with those promoted by a free society in which reason, enterprise, and efficiency were extolled and human happiness pursued. Indeed, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and especially Rousseau finally
condemned slavery in any form as so contrary to human essence and dignity that one could not become a slave without ceasing to be human; under such abnegation of self, no contract could have any validity. The enslavement of war captives was nothing other than a vestige of an earlier barbarism now demeaning to Europe; when a captured warrior lays down his arms, he has ceased to be a threat and has returned to his natural individual liberty and should be released upon the formal cessation of hostility. While none of them finally attacked New World slavery outright, and Montesquieu even speculated that slaves might be necessary in tropical environments where Europeans faltered and sickened, their formidable arguments assaulted and derided the institution of slavery and contributed further to establishing its immorality and dehumanization.

Adam Smith and Frances Hutcheson, respectively, a late eighteenth-century Scottish political economist and moral philosopher, pushed the secular antislavery of the *philosophes* even farther in a utilitarian direction. While they sought to create moral and materially abundant societies, they argued uncharacteristically that such societies would be achieved most readily by an unleashed pursuit of self-interest. Historically, the pursuit of self-interest had been firmly associated with all that destroyed virtuous republican government, promoted sinning, and led to the concentration of power in the hands of a corrupt few. It was to be countered and even renounced if social justice and harmony were to be realized. But Smith, Hutcheson, and other contemporary Scottish philosophers boldly asserted that, rather than corrupting the good society, the pursuit of self-interest was the very engine of the advance of society and morality. Self-interest was the very core of human motivation and rather than being suppressed, it should be harnessed, enlightened, and rendered useful and productive. The promotion of a responsible possessive individualism would be the surest path to a just, productive, and benevolent society; those reared to participate positively in a free society would recognize that peaceful competition allied with social cooperation and the improvement of others was the most reliable and secure method for attaining that good and useful society. Maximizing individual freedom, rather than diminishing it, was the key to a healthy and prosperous communitas.

Slavery, Smith and Hutcheson argued, profoundly damaged the individual’s motor for improvement and service. As the antithesis of freedom, slavery promoted not only tyranny and civic alienation, but also a stagnant economy incapable of encouraging or satisfying the material needs of its members. Unlike free labor, which Smith defined as inherently intelligent and motivated to improve and innovate, slave labor lacked such beneficent promptings and instead had to be supported by the owners and was motivated to produce little beyond the small amount it consumed. Steadily rising consumption and diversification of demand were key engines for promoting social and economic advance, according to Smith, and neither could be present in a slave society where demand was crimped along with the spirit of improvement. The capital of slaveholders was tied up with the purchase and maintenance of these inherently inefficient and unmotivated laborers rather than freed to invest in machinery and other products and services.
that would enormously increase productivity rather than stultifying it. Free labor, by definition, was always superior to slave labor and consistently would work more efficiently, productively, and cheaply than slave labor. Ridding a society of slavery would indubitably improve and stimulate its economy and its capacity to satisfy the growing material needs of its members. Moreover, slaves, properly prepared for freedom, could be emancipated and made productive members of a free society.

Reinforcing and, indeed, informing this mounting antislavery of the eighteenth century was the vehement and irrepressible opposition of the enslaved themselves. From slave revolts in Hispaniola during the early Spanish occupation of the sixteenth century through to the Maroon Wars in Jamaica in the mid-eighteenth century, and the Saint Domingue rebellion later in the century, and ensuing numerous Caribbean uprisings in the early decades of the nineteenth, the voice and force of the slaves was central to the construction of a widespread and viable antislavery. Rebellions of Africans onboard ships carrying them to slavery in the New World were not uncommon from the onset of the Atlantic slave trade in the late fifteenth century. This long history of shipboard uprisings and colonial rebellions made the frank reality all too clear to the Europeans that Africans were not passive before their subjugators, that they hated their enslavement, and that they were willing to die to free themselves from it. The fierce restiveness of the slaves mandated the brutal regimens characteristic of colonial slavery through the eighteenth century for their overlords fully recognized that the enslaved would rise successfully against them otherwise. Yet a paucity of newspapers and other vehicles for communicating events in the New World to the Old World largely allowed clear evidence of slave assertiveness to remain on the other side of the Atlantic.

It was not until the great revolt in Saint Domingue in the 1790s—publicized vividly throughout the Atlantic World in newspapers, essays, and lurid lithographs—that the broader white populace in the centers of colonial power began to appreciate the vehemence of slave opposition. While on the one hand a cool strategic decision to preserve colonial power, the revolutionary decision of France’s General Assembly to abolish slavery in its colonies in 1794 was integrally bound up with a significant portion of the Assembly’s support for the Saint Dominguan slaves’ own quest for liberty and equality. In 1794, arguing for the urgent necessity to abolish slavery in Connecticut totally and immediately, Theodore Dwight cited the current uprising in Saint Domingue as evidence of the ends to which “oppressed human nature” will go to restore its divine endowment of liberty. Boldly equating the black revolutionaries with the white ones of the American Revolution, Dwight queried, “What American will not admire their exertions, to accomplish their own deliverance?” Over the ensuing decades, many antislavery advocates would hold high the bloody example of Saint Domingue as an irrefrangible argument for the evil of slavery, and tens of thousands throughout the Atlantic World would hear those arguments. Similarly, such historians as Emilia da Costa and Michael Craton have illuminated the great force of slave rebellions in Demerara, Jamaica, Barbados, and elsewhere in the Caribbean between 1800 and 1830 in strengthening popular
resolve in England to abolish slavery in the British West Indies in the 1830s. Understanding the rise of antislavery and abolition in the Atlantic World is impossible without reckoning with the salience of the slaves' own enduring opposition.

Evangelical opponents of slavery chafed at the unwillingness of the Scots to identify slavery fundamentally with sinning rather than with a bad choice for a growing society. Both condemned slave violence. Nevertheless, these three forces of emerging antislavery in the eighteenth century—evangelicalism, moral economy, and slave rebellion—would ideologically undergird the great struggles in Britain to abolish its involvement with the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery, as well as that of other nations, over the ensuing years. Indeed, by the triumph of British emancipation in the 1830s, the religious and utilitarian strains had actually combined, as David Brion Davis has established so brilliantly, into an antislavery amalgam, in which the cause of Christ locked arms with the advance of human freedom and prosperity under the unfurled banner of progress that Britain heralded as its imperial rule extended over the balance of the nineteenth century. Britain's role would be instrumental in compelling or forcing antislavery and abolition on resistant nations in the Atlantic World from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 forward, as would be their role in realms well beyond that world in the second half of the nineteenth century and after. These agreements, however, were often compromised in practice. Treaties with Brazil and Spain to end their involvement in the nineteenth century slave trade were routinely violated, and efforts by the British, other colonial powers, or regional powers themselves to emancipate slaves gradually or outlaw slavery altogether in the Arabic world and in the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa proved largely futile well into the twentieth century. The League of Nations and later the United Nations would proclaim a world free of slavery as a foundation of their principles of human rights. Yet slavery would be renewed with an unusually brutal vigor during World War II and would persist, in ways both official and anomalous, into the second half of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, it has not been a surprise that the venerable flagship of British emancipation in the 1830s, the Anti-Slavery Society, was revived in the 1990s fittingly as Anti-Slavery International. Nevertheless, a long and complicated road had been traveled from the slavery of love, order, and wealth to that of sinning, anarchy, and impoverishment. The hope of the editors and contributors to this encyclopedia is to illuminate the details of that monumental journey.

Notes

4. Anthony Benezet, *A Short Account of that Part of Africa Inhabited by the Negroes...* in Roger Bruns, ed., *Am I Not a Man and a Brother: The Antislavery

5. Anthony Benezet, A Short Account of that Part of Africa, p. 91.


GUIDE TO RELATED TOPICS

**Ancient World**
- Aristotle
- Book of Exodus
- Cicero
- Classical Greek Antislavery
- Classical Rome and Antislavery
- Helots
- Moses
- Plato
- St. Augustine
- Spartacus Revolt (73–71 B.C.E.)
- Story of Joseph (Genesis 30:22–24, 37–50)

**Antislavery and Abolition in Specific Countries and Regions**
- Africa, Antislavery in
- Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery
- Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition
- Barbary Wars and White Enslavement in North Africa
- Benin, Restrictions on Slave Trade in
- British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation
- British Slavery, Abolition of Canada, Antislavery in
- Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at
- China and Antislavery
- Cuba, Emancipation in
- Danish West Indies, Abolition and Emancipation in
- Dutch Colonies, Abolition of Slavery in
- Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in
- French Colonies, Emancipation of
- Indian-Mestizo Captives, Liberation of
- Indian Subcontinent, Antislavery in Ireland, Antislavery in
- Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in
- Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope
- Liberia
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- Maroons of Jamaica/Tacky Rebellion
- Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in
- Nabuco, Joaquim and Abolition in Brazil
- North Africa and Abolition
- North America, Antislavery in
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- Ottoman Empire, Decline of Slavery in
- Port Royal (South Carolina)
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- Roma and Emancipation

**Antislavery and Abolition Leaders**
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- Allen, Richard
- Bacon, Leonard
- Bailey, Gamaliel
- Barnes, Albert
- Benezet, Anthony
- Black Abolitionism
- Bright, John
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- Brougham, Henry Peter
- Burritt, Elihu
- Buxton, Thomas Fowell
- Child, Lydia Maria
- Clarkson, Thomas
- Clay, Cassius Marcellus
- Crandall, Prudence
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- Russian Serfs, Emancipation of (1861)
- Saudi Arabia and Abolition
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- Sierra Leone
- Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in
- Sri Lanka, Antislavery in
- United States, Antislavery in
- Washington, D.C., Compensated Emancipation in
- West Indies Emancipation Day
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CHRONOLOGY OF ANTISLAVERY, ABOLITION, AND EMANCIPATION

1441  Portuguese sailors kidnap Africans from the northwest coast of the continent, bringing them to Europe to work as slaves in the sugar factories in Portugal and on the Atlantic Islands it controlled off the African coast; from these beginnings spring the Atlantic slave trade.

1498  To ensure order and stability in the new Spanish settlements in America, Christopher Columbus sanctions employment of repartimientos, allotments of Indians, usually a chieftain and his people, to work in the mines or on the lands of a Spanish master.

1516  The West African kingdom of Benin restricts the sale of male sales, thus isolating the kingdom from the Atlantic slave trade over the next three centuries.

1542  The Spanish Crown promulgates the New Laws, which ban Indian slavery and undermine the encomienda system in the colonies of Spanish America.

1562  Bartolomé de Las Casas completes his Historia de las Indias (The History of the Indies), in which he criticizes the Spanish for their cruel treatment of Native Americans and declares, in contradiction to his earlier writings, that Africans deserve the same right of self-determination that he seeks for Indians.

1619  Africans are landed at the Jamestown Colony in Virginia.

1644  The advent of the Manchu Dynasty marks a resurgence of slavery in China.

1688  Englishwoman Aphra Behn publishes Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave, the supposedly true story of an African prince tricked into slavery; because she graphically depicts the prince’s torture and execution by Europeans without referring to the racial denigration of Africans common of the era, Behn is often considered an early abolitionist.

Quakers in Germantown, Pennsylvania, sign the Germantown Antislavery Petition, which is believed to be the first public protest against slavery in British North America.

1689  English political philosopher John Locke publishes his influential Second Treatise of Government, in which he describes his reasons for opposing slavery.
1693 George Keith, a Pennsylvania Quaker, issues an “Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes,” one of the first antislavery tracts published in colonial America.


1701 Thomas Bray establishes the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) to spread Christianity in Britain’s North American colonies.

1711 Richard Steele publishes an imaginative reworking of the tale of “Inkle and Yarico” in issue no. 11 of The Spectator; because the periodical was frequently reprinted throughout Great Britain and North America, the tale became one of the best-known and most compelling anti-slavery narratives of the eighteenth century.

1723 A group known as the Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray is organized by Dr. Bray to bring education and Christian religion to Native Americans and African American slaves.

1739 The Stono Rebellion, one of the largest slave uprisings in colonial America, erupts in South Carolina.

1748 Montesquieu publishes The Spirit of the Laws, in which he declares slavery to be “not good by its nature.”

1751 Slavery is formally legalized in the colony of Georgia, thus overthrowing the attempts made since 1732 by the Georgia Trustees, the colony’s proprietors, to restrict the spread of slavery.

1754 John Woolman of Pennsylvania publishes an essay entitled “Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes.”

1760 British in Jamaica suppress “Tacky’s Rebellion” with the cooperation of local maroon communities.

1761 At their Yearly Meeting in London, the Quakers agree to disown any slave dealers among their members.

1762 Anthony Benezet publishes A Short Account of That Part of Africa, Inhabited by the Negroes, and the Manner by which the Slave-Trade is Carried On, which vividly illustrated the devastating effects of the slave trade upon West African peoples and societies.

1769 Granville Sharp publishes A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery, in which he challenges a master’s property rights in slaves.

1772 British Chief Justice William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, renders a decision in the Somerset Case, declaring that a slave, once brought to England, was free; the decision is instrumental in ending slavery in Great Britain.

1774 At their Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia, American Quakers implement a plan for the eventual emancipation of all slaves owned by Quakers.
1775

Thomas Paine publishes “African Slavery in America,” a pamphlet attacking both the slave trade and the institution of slavery.

Anthony Benezet becomes the first president of the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, which in 1784 is renamed the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

Lord Dunmore, the last royal governor of Virginia, issues a controversial decree declaring martial law and promising freedom to all slaves who left their rebel masters to fight for the Crown.

1776

Abolitionist Samuel Hopkins publishes *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*.

Adam Smith publishes *The Wealth of Nations*, in which he decries both the moral and economic cost of slavery.

1777

The Vermont state constitution explicitly abolishes slavery within the state.

1779

Publication of the first edition of the *Olney Hymns*, containing “Amazing Grace,” by John Newton, a former slave trader who may have used an old African American melody for the hymn.

During the American Revolution, British General Henry Clinton issues the Philipsburg (NY) Proclamation promising freedom to any slaves who flee their American masters.

1780

The Pennsylvania Legislature enacts the first state gradual abolition law.

1783

The Massachusetts Supreme Court, in *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Jennison* (known as the Quok Walker Decision), pronounces slavery has no standing in the Massachusetts constitution, thus making Massachusetts the first state to deny its citizens property rights in slaves.

1784

Rhode Island enacts a gradual emancipation law, but continues the slave trade.

Connecticut enacts a gradual emancipation law.

1785

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson condemns the institution of slavery, but argues that emancipation should be accompanied by the removal of blacks to a separate colony.

The New York Manumission Society (NYMS) is founded in New York City.

1786


1787

The new U.S. Constitution counts three-fifths of all slaves for purposes of representation in Congress, a clause that greatly increases the political power of the South.

British abolitionists settle a community of freed slaves in Sierra Leone on the west coast of Africa.

Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson found the Society for the Abandonment of the Slave Trade.

Former slave Ottobah Cugoano, one of the first free Africans in Britain to publicly oppose slavery, publishes *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of Human Species*. 
Congress passes the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibits slavery in the territory west of the Appalachians and north of the Ohio River.

1788 Jacques-Pierre Brissot and Étienne Clavière found the Société des Amis des Noirs, which calls for an immediate end to the slave trade and the gradual and uncompensated abolition of slavery. Englishwoman Hannah More publishes “Slavery: A Poem,” the first of a series of antislavery verses by which she sought to persuade Parliament to abolish the slave trade.

1789 Former slave and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano publishes his popular autobiography, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African.

1790s The Free Produce Movement, which boycotted produce made by slave labor in hopes of thereby undermining the economic viability of the slave system, begins among Quaker groups and continues in some form until the end of slavery in the 1860s.

1790 Founding of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and Persons Holden in Bondage; among the founders are such clergymen as Levi Hart and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. Benjamin Franklin publishes a major antislavery essay in the Federal Gazette.

1791 The Haitian Revolution, which resulted in the abolition of slavery and the achievement of the independence of Haiti (in 1804), begins in the French West Indian colony of Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti).

1792 Jonathan Edwards, Jr., publishes The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave-Trade, and of the Slavery of the Africans.

1793 The U.S. Congress passes the first Fugitive Slave Act, mandating the return of runaway slaves to their legal owners. Abolitionist Samuel Hopkins publishes A Discourse upon the Slave Trade.

1794 Lobbied by the American Convention of Abolition Societies, Congress passes the first American anti-slave trade law, which bans Americans from trading captured Africans to foreign traders. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones publish an attack on slavery entitled, “To Those Who Keep Slaves and Approve the Practice,” which is part of their pamphlet, “A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the year 1793.”

The French National Convention recognizes the end of slavery in the colony of Saint Domingue and abolishes slavery in the other French Caribbean colonies. Former slave Richard Allen founds the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

1794–1836 The American Convention of Abolition Societies meets sporadically during these years, bringing together local abolition societies from around the United States to discuss and coordinate abolitionist tactics and strategies.
1795  The Pointe Coupée Rebellion erupts in Louisiana.

1796  St. George Tucker publishes *A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It, in the State of Virginia*, the only serious proposal to end slavery to be written by a Southerner in this period.

1799  One of the first African American petitions addressed to Congress calls for an end to the domestic slave trade and consideration of a plan for gradual abolition. The New York Legislature enacts a gradual abolition law.

1800  A slave conspiracy known as Gabriel’s Rebellion is foiled in Richmond, Virginia.

1802  Prompted by political, rather than humanitarian, concerns, Napoleon Bonaparte, now emperor of France, reintroduces slavery and the slave trade into French colonies.

1804  New Jersey passes a gradual emancipation act.

1806  The Virginia Legislature amends the state’s Manumission Act of 1782 by requiring liberated bondpeople to leave Virginia or face re-enslavement.

1807  Laws abolishing the slave trade are passed in both Great Britain (May) and the United States (March).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a German philosopher, publishes *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), in which he declares that slavery establishes a relation of co-dependence that is damaging to both slaves and masters.

1808  With the first day of the new year, both Great Britain and the United States officially cease involvement in the Atlantic slave trade.

1811  The German Coast Slave Insurrection erupts in Louisiana.

1814  Holland abolishes the slave trade.

1815  The Congress of Vienna, during which the Great Powers redraw the map of Europe following the Napoleonic Wars, includes in its Final Act a declaration against the slave trade, the *Declaration of the Powers relative to the Universal Abolition of the Slave Trade*.

Shortly after escaping from his exile on Elba, Napoleon, in a bid for support, again abolishes slavery in France.

1816  Founding of the American Colonization Society, which advocated sending African Americans, both slave and free, to Africa.

Bussa’s Slave Rebellion erupts in British-held Barbados.

Simón Bolívar, “the Liberator” of Andean Spanish America, in an attempt to incorporate people of color into his independence movement, decrees the emancipation of slaves in Venezuela.

1820  Congress passes the Missouri Compromise prohibiting slavery north of the southern border of the new state of Missouri.
The Congress of the newly independent Republic of Colombia elects Simón Bolívar first president of the republic and initiates a process whereby slaves in the new state are gradually freed over the next thirty years.

Slave conspiracy of Denmark Vesey, perhaps the largest in U.S. history, is foiled in Charleston, South Carolina.

The American Colonization Society, acting with federal assistance, establishes the colony of Liberia on the west coast of Africa for the resettlement on that continent of African Americans.

Major slave rebellion erupts in Demerara, sending shock waves throughout the British slave-holding colonies in the Caribbean.

Chile bans slavery, the first of the new South American republics to do so.

The Society for the Amelioration and Gradual Abolition of Slavery is founded in Great Britain.

Elizabeth Heyrick anonymously publishes the pamphlet *Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation*.

Founding of America’s first African American newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal*.

Moses Elias Levy, the most prominent Jewish abolitionist in the United States, publishes his *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*.

Abolitionist Benjamin Lundy begins publication of his newspaper, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*.

Mexico abolishes slavery.

Mary Prince, a former West Indian slave, publishes her autobiography, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*.

William Lloyd Garrison begins publishing *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper, in Boston.

Before it is crushed, Nat Turner’s Rebellion leads to the death of sixty whites in Southampton County, Virginia.

The Baptist War, so-named because its slave leaders were all Baptists, fails to force the end of slavery in Jamaica.

Founding of the New England Anti-Slavery Society (NEASS) in Boston.

Formation of the racially integrated Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society.

American writer Lydia Maria Child publishes *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*.

Lucretia Mott and other women, both white and black, form the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

The British Parliament passes the Abolition of Slavery Bill.

The American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) is founded in Philadelphia; the group favors the immediate emancipation of American slaves.
1834  
Pursuant to the passage of the Abolition of Slavery Bill a year earlier, slavery is abolished throughout the British Empire. Slaves over the age of six in the British West Indies are apprenticed to their masters for a term of four to six years as the final stage in the abolition of slavery in the region.

1835  
An extensive postal campaign by the American Anti-Slavery Society uses the postal system to send abolitionist literature throughout the country and especially into the south.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French traveler in the United States of the 1830s, publishes his *Democracy in America*, in which he calls slavery “evil.”

1836  
Southern members of the House of Representatives force passage of the Gag Rule, barring petitions relating to slavery from being read in the House.


In its decision on *Commonwealth v. Aves*, the Massachusetts Supreme Court sets an important precedent by declaring that slavery cannot exist in Massachusetts except as it is regulated by the U.S. Constitution; thus, any slave brought to the state was immediately freed and the only slaves that could exist in Massachusetts were fugitive slaves whose return was mandated by the federal Fugitive Slave Act.

Portugal abolishes the slave trade in its colonies.

Founding of the New York Committee of Vigilance, one of the most radical African American abolition societies in the United States.

1837  
The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women holds its first meeting in New York.

An angry mob in Illinois murders abolitionist publisher Elijah P. Lovejoy as he attempts to prevent the destruction of his press.

The Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society is established in Dublin by Irish Quakers.

1838  
David Ruggles publishes the first black magazine in the U.S., the *Mirror of Liberty*.

Apprenticeship is abolished in the British West Indies, thus effectively ending slavery in the region.

1839  

British abolitionist Thomas Buxton publishes *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*.

Founding of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), which aimed to abolish slavery and the slave trade worldwide without the use of force.


Led by Joseph Cinqué, one of their numbers, the Africans being carried to slavery aboard the Spanish ship *Amistad*, rise against their captors and seize control of the vessel; the ship is intercepted by the American navy and taken to New London, Connecticut, in August.
1840  Brothers Lewis and Arthur Tappan found the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS).
The World Anti-Slavery Convention is convened in London by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS); large delegations from France and the United States are in attendance.
The New York Legislature enacts a law requiring jury trials for African Americans accused of being fugitives from slavery.
U.S. Circuit Court Judge Andrew T. Judson rules that the Amistad mutineers are not slaves.

1841  Former president John Quincy Adams delivers final arguments before the Supreme Court in defense of the thirty-four African American captives from the Amistad. The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the Amistad captives were never legally slaves and are thus free to return to Africa.
A slave insurrection erupts aboard the Creole, an American trading vessel carrying tobacco and slaves to New Orleans.

1842  The Anglo-American Webster-Ashburton Treaty establishes the Africa Squadron, an American naval squadron charged with patrolling the west coast of Africa to intercept any American vessels illegally engaged in the slave trade.

1843  Reverend Stephen Symonds Foster publishes The Brotherhood of Thieves, or A True Picture of the American Church, a searing indictment of American evangelical Christians for their complicity in the sin of slavery.
The government of India, which was exempted from the 1833 British Abolition Act, passes Act V, withdrawing all official support from the Indian system of slavery.

1844  The continuous efforts of Congressman John Quincy Adams, a former president of the United States lead to the repeal of the Gag Rule.
Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), supports the principle of compensated emancipation of slaves.
Slavery is outlawed in Sri Lanka.

1845  Former slave Frederick Douglass publishes his influential Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself.
Abolitionist Lysander Spooner publishes the first part of his famous work, The Unconstitutionality of Slavery; the second part of the work appears in 1847.

1846  The American Missionary Association (AMA) is organized to provide benevolent and educational assistance to African Americans and Native Americans.
War breaks out between Mexico and the United States.

1847  Liberia, the West African colony of resettled African Americans, becomes independent.
Former slave Frederick Douglass publishes the first issue of his abolitionist newspaper, North Star.

1848  Slavery is abolished throughout the French colonial empire.
Iran bans the naval importation of slaves.

Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo is signed, ending the Mexican-American War and transferring large tracts of territory from Mexico to the United States.

The first women’s rights convention held in the United States, the Seneca Falls Convention, meets in Seneca Falls, New York.

The Free Soil Party is established in Buffalo, New York, by antislavery members of the Whig and Liberty parties.

Congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduces into Congress a measure to ban slavery in all territories gained from Mexico.

Slavery is abolished in the Danish West Indies following a slave revolt.

1850

Former slave Harriet Tubman becomes a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Maryland.

With assistance from other abolitionists, illiterate former slave Sojourner Truth publishes her memoirs, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*.

In a speech delivered during the debate on the Compromise of 1850, New York Senator William H. Seward speaks of a “higher law” beyond the Constitution, i.e., God’s law, that demands no compromise with slavery.

Congress passes the Compromise of 1850, a series of measures designed to compose differences between the North and South over the disposition of the new western territories won from Mexico; the Compromise includes passage of a new, more stringent Fugitive Slave Law, replacing the act of 1793.

1851

Former slave Sojourner Truth delivers her famous speech, “Ar’n’t I a Woman?,” at a women’s convention in Ohio.

Founding of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada; Canada West (Ontario) becomes the terminus for the American Underground Railroad in the 1850s.

The so-called Jerry Rescue, involving the forcible rescue by northern abolitionists of an escaped slave being returned to the South, occurs in Syracuse, New York.

1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes her controversial novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

1854

George Fitzhugh publishes his first proslavery book, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society*.

Congress passes the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which organized the two territories by applying the principle of popular sovereignty to determine if a state was to be free or slave; the measure effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

Escaped slave Anthony Burns is arrested in Boston under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; despite demonstrations on his behalf, Burns is returned under guard to Virginia, although Boston abolitionists later purchase his freedom.

1855

Spurred by the arrest in Boston and return to captivity of escaped slave Anthony Burns, the Massachusetts Legislature passes a state personal liberty law to thwart future efforts to return escaped slaves in Massachusetts to bondage.

Slavery is abolished in Peru.
Two years of violence, known as “Bleeding Kansas,” erupts in Kansas Territory as pro- and anti-slave forces fight one another for control of the territorial legislature and thus the right to determine the status of slavery in the territory.

1856

American pacifist Elihu Burritt publishes *A Plan of Brotherly Co-Partnership of the North and South for the Peaceful Extinction of Slavery.*

Proslavery Missourians destroy the free-soil town of Lawrence, Kansas, in an episode that becomes known as the “sack of Lawrence.”

Abolitionist John Brown and his sons murder five proslavery settlers at Pottawatomie Creek in Kansas in retaliation for the sack of Lawrence.

1857

The Ottoman Empire bans the African slave trade, thus eventually reducing the prevalence of slavery in East Africa.

George Fitzhugh publishes his most famous proslavery volume, *Cannibals All! or Slaves Without Masters.*

Hinton Rowan Helper publishes his controversial book, *The Impending Crisis of the South and How to Meet It,* which decries the economic effects of slavery on the South and vehemently attacks the region, the Democratic Party, and African Americans.

In the Dred Scott Decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declares that Congress has no constitutional right to prohibit slavery in the territories or the Free States.

1859

Abolitionist John Brown, seeking to precipitate a slave uprising, unsuccessfully raids the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

1860

Publication of Harriet Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* edited by Lydia Maria Child.

Slavery is abolished in the Dutch colonies.

The enslavement of human beings becomes a criminal offense under the Indian Penal Code, thereby effectively abolishing slavery in India.

1861

Despite the serious economic impact of the Northern blockade on his working-class constituents, John Bright, a member of the British Parliament, publicly supports the North against the slave-holding South at the start of the American Civil War.

Slavery is effectively abolished in all parts of Argentina.

Tsar Alexander II decrees the emancipation of the Russian serfs.

1862

During the American Civil War, the Union Army begins establishing “contraband camps” in the seceded states to house, feed, school, and employ runaway slaves and slaves whose homes were behind Union lines.

President Abraham Lincoln announces his Emancipation Proclamation, which will free slaves in areas under Confederate control, as of January 1, 1863.

1863

Fanny Kemble publishes her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* to persuade the British to stop supporting the Confederacy.

President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation takes effect.

1865

General William T. Sherman issues Special Field Order No. 15, which sets aside certain lands in South Carolina, where the general’s army was then operating, for
exclusive settlement by slave refugees; the order in the twentieth century became the basis for calls for monetary reparations for slavery to African Americans.

Creation of the federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen’s Bureau) to assist the former slaves with their transition to freedom.

William Lloyd Garrison’s newspaper, The Liberator, ceases publication.

The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in the United States, is ratified.

1866 Congress passes the Southern Homestead Act, setting aside public lands in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi, for purchase by freed people for a $5 fee.

1867 The Paris Anti-Slavery Convention, organized in part by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), focuses on the abolition of the East African slave trade. Congress passes the Anti-Peonage Act to abolish Indian-Mestizo servitude in New Mexico and the Southwest.

1870 Ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment.

The American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) is disbanded.

Passage of Moret’s Law, under which Spain gradually abolishes slavery in Cuba over the next two decades.

1874 King Chulalongkorn of Siam declares that any children born into slavery after 1868 are to be freed by the time they become twenty-one.

1876 Zanzibar prohibits the slave trade.

1878 Slavery is abolished throughout the Portuguese colonial empire.

1879 Beginning of the “Negro Exodus,” a three-year period which saw the first great African American migration following the end of slavery; some 40,000 blacks migrated to Kansas from the Mississippi Valley.

1880 Signing of the Convention for the Suppression of the Slave Trade between Britain and Egypt gives Britain the right to search Ottoman ships and to seize contraband slaves, a power that allows Britain to act as the international enforcer of abolition throughout the Mediterranean region.

1881 Former slave and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass publishes a reminiscence of his career, entitled Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.

Moroccan historian Ahmad al-Nasiri publishes his History of the Magrib, in which he declares African slavery to be a violation of Islamic law.

1884 The Berlin Africa Conference is convened by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck to establish rules by which the European colonial powers divided up Africa; concluding in 1885, the Conference resulted in the signing of the Berlin Act for the prohibition of the African slave trade.

1886 Spain abolishes slavery in Cuba.

1888 Brazil abolishes slavery, thus ending chattel slavery in the Americas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>The Brussels Conference, organized in part by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), is convened to consider the abolition of the slave trade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>The Brussels Conference concludes with the signing of the General Act for the Repression of the African Slave Trade, known as the Brussels Act, the first comprehensive international treaty against the slave trade.</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>The U.S. Supreme Court upholds the practice of racial segregation in its <em>Plessy v. Ferguson</em> decision.</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td>Slavery is abolished in Siam.</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>The French officially outlaw slavery in Algeria, though the institution continues to exist for some years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and the Aborigines Protection Society (APS) merge to form the Anti-Slavery Society. Slavery is officially abolished in China.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>France, Great Britain, and Belgium abrogate the Brussels Act for themselves, replacing it with three separate treaties signed at St. Germain-en-Laye, which make little mention of slavery and thus sweep away all the detailed controls that the Brussels Act had placed on the slave trade.</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>The League of Nations creates a Temporary Slavery Commission (TSC) to assess the nature and volume of slavery worldwide and to prepare recommendations for a treaty to abolish slavery in all forms.</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>The Slavery Convention, the first international treaty against slavery and the slave trade, is signed, binding its signatories to end all forms of slavery mentioned in the report of the League of Nations’ Temporary Slavery commission (TSC).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>The International Labor Organization (ILO) of the League of Nations negotiates the Forced Labor Convention to protect colonial peoples from the various forms of forced labor demanded by their colonial rulers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>The League of Nations creates the Committee of Experts on Slavery, a short-lived body that was marked by dissention among committee members.</td>
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<td>1933–1945</td>
<td>Nazi Germany resorts to the use of forced labor, setting up numerous labor camps both within Germany and, during World War II, within occupied Europe.</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>The League of Nations appoints the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery, which succeeds the Committee of Experts on Slavery and lasts only until 1938.</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>The Italians overrun Ethiopia, using the suppression of slavery as a justification for their attack.</td>
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<td>1942</td>
<td>Emperor Haile Selassie abolishes slavery in Ethiopia.</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>The United Nations drafts the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which declares that no one should be held in slavery and that the slave trade should be prohibited in all its forms.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The United Nations appoints an ad hoc committee on slavery.</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Responding to the report of its ad hoc committee on slavery, the United Nations agrees to take over the 1926 Slavery Convention, an international agreement to end slavery and the slave trade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Under pressure from the British, Qatar outlaws slavery.</td>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>The U.S. Supreme Court strikes down racial segregation in public education in its <em>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</em> decision.</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery is signed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>The International Labor Organization (ILO) negotiates the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention.</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>The United Nations issues the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which addresses child labor issues.</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) declares trafficking in persons for prostitution to be a form of slavery. Australia abolishes the imposition of forced contract labor upon the Aboriginal peoples.</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>Oman becomes one of the last countries in the world to outlaw slavery officially.</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>The United Nations establishes a slavery committee, the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which consists of five members of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities.</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>With the abolition of slavery in Mauritania, slavery is no longer recognized as legal in any Muslim country.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery receives reports that thousands of babies are kidnapped or bought each year in Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe for adoption in Europe and North America.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Interpol reports an increase in the number of children kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery; the problem grows in the 1990s as the Internet fuels demand for child pornography.</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>The Antislavery Society, formed in Britain in 1909, changes its name to Anti-Slavery International and is the only British organization in the twenty-first century to focus exclusively on slavery and related issues. Anti-Slavery International addresses the growing problem of “servile marriage,” in which young girls in many countries are forced into marriages against their will and in which they do not have the same rights to property, children, or divorce that are available to men.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Thousands of young Asian women are found imprisoned on the American Pacific island of Saipan, where they are forced to produce goods for well-known U.S. firms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The agreement entitled Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights is signed; it targets transnational corporations that have been linked, both directly and indirectly, to slavery and slave-like practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Niger issues new laws against slavery, which, although officially banned, continues to persist within the country.</td>
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Abolitionist Women

In the antebellum United States, female abolitionists brought democracy to a higher level by engaging in social reform, including organizing, speaking, and writing. Many other abolitionist women worked on the Underground Railroad. Their work underscored the evils of slavery and the conditions of women. Many associate the abolitionists with white Quakers. While many were Quakers, abolitionist women were not of one mind or race. Free and emancipated black women took part in the movement, as well. White women of differing values and religions also participated. Some white abolitionists believed that blacks were inferior, but they did not support slavery. These abolitionists, despite the danger, took part in the most significant program of social reform that included women. Out of this movement, first wave feminism was born. Angelina Grimké conflated the experiences of the enslaved with women who were oppressed and began a new movement. Black and white, all of these women were traumatized and humiliated, some by slavery, all by an oppressive patriarchal hierarchy.

Born Isabella in 1797, Sojourner Truth was the youngest of “ten or twelve” children. When sold at five years of age, she was traumatized. As a house slave, Isabella was bought by John and Sally Dumont. Isabella did housework and endured beatings and whippings. When she told her story as an older woman, Isabella said that John Dumont beat her, but it was Sally Dumont who sexually abused her.

In 1826, Isabella felt God telling her to escape from slavery. Guided always by her spirituality, she walked away from slavery, finding safety in the home of the Van Wageners, abolitionists. According to her autobiography, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, Isabella saw a vision of God that transformed her from victim to abolitionist and feminist. This change was symbolized in her name change, from Isabella Baumford to Sojourner Truth. Sanctified and baptized by the Holy Spirit, she became an itinerant preacher and spokesperson for the abolitionist movement. To understand Sojourner Truth, one must comprehend the depths of her spirituality. During a meeting in which her
friend Frederick Douglass was speaking, Sojourner called out from the back of the room, "But what about God?" Sojourner did not want to let Douglass drift away from the Lord, as she thought he was doing.

Unlike Sojourner Truth, Sarah Douglas was born a free black in Philadelphia. Her strength came not from her religion, but from her education. She started the Philadelphia Institute for Colored Youth, simultaneously working as a spokesperson for the abolitionist movement and contributor to an abolitionist newspaper, The Liberator. The Liberator had a "Ladies' Section," for which powerful abolitionist women wrote of the evils of slavery. Sarah Douglas was a forceful contributor.

Born in South Carolina to a prominent judge and slave holder, white Angelina Grimké witnessed the treatment of the slaves. So moved by their suffering, Angelina tried to imagine herself shackled in chains, as the slaves were. A pampered child, Angelina grew into a strong political force for freedom. Through her identification with the slaves, she realized the commonalities that white women shared with slaves: humiliation and oppression. As an adult, she allied herself to the radical abolitionists. She forged a connection between the abolitionists and the feminists. Angelina and her sister, Sarah, spoke against slavery in the South, where it was very dangerous to do so. Angelina wrote a dramatic article for The Liberator in which she asked God to give the women of South Carolina the strength to speak against slavery and to give men the courage to fight against it. South Carolina officials publicly burned her article and threatened to arrest Angelina if she returned to South Carolina. In her article she uses the words of the Biblical martyr, Queen Esther, "If I perish, If I perish...," demonstrating her knowledge that she might be killed for using her wit to end slavery and her willingness to martyr herself for the abolitionist and feminist movements.

Ellen Harper lived in an underground railway station and spoke against slavery in many forums. She worked with feminists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton until these women opposed the Fifteenth Amendment. It was said that she sided with her race, not her gender.

In the North, Lucretia Mott organized against a plan to relocate blacks to Africa. Lucretia did not object to the concept of colonization, but she objected to a particular plan for colonialization that did not respect the rights of the free blacks. Like other feminists, Mott fought for the Fifteenth Amendment. A Quaker, she spoke from her Inner Light, as Sojourner Truth did from her spiritual connection to God.

Among the bravest women in American history, Harriet Tubman was born into Southern slavery, the worst form of bondage. A childhood head injury left Tubman with seizures throughout her life. She received this blow to the head when she stood between an overseer and a fleeing slave. While recovering on the hard floor of her parents' cabin, Harriet had religious insights that made slavery incongruent with Christianity. So motivated, she contemplated her escape. After recuperating, Harriet began her walk to freedom. When she arrived in Philadelphia, Tubman knew she was free but also alone. She returned nineteen times to slave states, freeing at least 300 slaves.
A common strand that runs through the stories of the women abolitionists is their profound belief in God. Many other women participated in this movement, but only a few of the brave women who joined the abolitionist cause are described here. Much time has passed since they spoke for freedom. Legal slavery in the United States ended. Women gained the right to vote. Despite the heroism of abolitionist women in the decades prior to the Civil War, the United States remained bereft of liberty for all. While abolitionist women tried to make democracy work to free the slaves, their brilliant rhetoric, their writings, and their spirituality did not end slavery. Instead, it took a civil war to end slavery—a war that was not energized by the feminine voice, but by the male patriarchy that dominated both the North and the South. See also Women’s Antislavery Societies.


*Mary Darcy*

**Adams, John Quincy (1767–1848)**

John Quincy Adams was a diplomat, secretary of state, president, and congressman, as well as a prominent critic of slavery and territorial expansion as a member of the House of Representatives from 1831 to 1848.

Adams was troubled by the debates over slavery during the crisis of 1820 over the admission of Missouri as a slave state. But he did not embrace antislavery as a legislative cause until his election to Congress in 1830. He was never an abolitionist; he opposed the abolitionists’ signal measure, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, as politically unwise. He was a staunch critic of the expansion of slavery into new territory. He also fought for the right to read antislavery petitions on the floor of the House and opposed the gag rule, the standing rule of the House from 1836 to 1844 that prevented such petitions from being read. In 1840 and 1841, Adams served as counsel for the thirty-nine African captives from the Spanish vessel, *Amistad*, and delivered the final arguments in their defense before the Supreme Court in February and March 1841.

Like many in the antislavery movement, Adams believed that a Slave Power conspiracy
existed. He and other Northerners asserted that Southern politicians in Congress, the presidency, and judiciary had secretly combined to protect and extend the dominion of slavery and all related Southern interests while undermining and contracting the North’s most cherished ideals—free labor, personal liberty, and political independence. The acquisition of Texas as a slave state was believed key to this conspiracy. Adams was influenced by the pamphlets of Benjamin Lundy. Lundy sent Adams a copy of his pamphlet, *The Origin and True Causes of the Texas Revolution Commenced in the Year 1835*, and Adams began using Lundy’s arguments on the House floor. In 1838, Adams delivered a lengthy speech denouncing efforts to annex Texas. He cheered when the Senate rejected an annexation treaty in 1844, and considered the annexation by joint resolution in 1845 as the death of the union. Adams was one of the few Whigs to oppose the Mexican War, and he voted for the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed to bar slavery from any territory acquired from Mexico. To the end, Adams condemned the war as a war for slavery. Adams placed his last vote in the House of Representatives on February 21, 1848, two days before his death. He voted against a resolution thanking various generals for their service in the 1847 campaign in Mexico. Few statesmen of the 1830s and 1840s devoted as much of their energy to stopping the spread of slavery than John Quincy Adams. See also Whig Party and Antislavery.


Robert W. Smith

Africa, Antislavery in

Most of the antislavery activity in Africa was a product of European activity, but there were antislavery traditions in Africa. These were traditions that did not oppose slavery, but rather that circumscribed the taking of slaves or the treatment of slaves.

At the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade, there were many societies that did not take slaves. These were decentralized and egalitarian societies. Many of them were marked by the existence of age grades, in which different roles in society were assigned to people according to membership in age-defined groups. These age grades generally functioned on the basis of equality among all of their members. Many were hunter-gatherer societies or nomadic societies with very limited surpluses, within which there was little incentive to develop a separate and inferior status. When some such societies did start to keep captives, these captives were often women who were speedily assimilated as wives or men who did work not very different from that done by other persons. Such slavery was not hereditary. The person born in the community, who spoke its language correctly and who was initiated with his peers, had equal status with those people who had a long
genealogy. In all parts of Africa, indigenous forms of slavery evolved slowly and according to the needs of the society. Societies without slavery were found, for example, among acephalous peoples on the Guinea coast. The Jola of Senegal and the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau did not have slaves. They were hostile to the early Portuguese traders and often killed shipwrecked European sailors because there was no idea of ransoming them or using them as slaves. The problem for such societies in western Africa was that, as their neighbors increasingly found slaving profitable, they had to learn to better defend themselves. The Balanta shifted from millet to rice, which was a more intensive crop that used less land and thus could be cultivated close to villages. To farm rice, they needed iron tools, which led them to raided others for slaves to sell. Similarly, the Jola started taking captives in order to be able to purchase weapons. The Balanta never kept slaves themselves because of their age-grade structures, and the Jola kept very few. All over Africa, people learned to defend themselves, and in many areas, that involved some participation in the slave trade. In eastern and central Africa in the nineteenth century, there were still many societies that did not take slaves.

Islam and Antislavery

There were also Muslim traditions. Islam accepted slavery and regulated it. Many of the most systematic slavers in Africa were Muslims, and Muslim traders played an important role in the slave trade. This was in spite of the fact that Islamic law carefully circumscribed who could be enslaved. It also encouraged manumission and insisted on humane treatment of slaves (see Islam and Antislavery). These laws were not strictly enforced south of the Sahara because Muslim societies there often depended heavily on the export of slaves to finance desired imports. There were, however, some Muslim thinkers and statesmen who turned to Islamic law to protest against enslavement practices. The best known was Ahmed Baba, distinguished sixteenth century Timbuctou cleric. Timbuctou was then the most important center of Muslim learning in sub-Saharan Africa. When Morocco conquered the Songhay Empire in 1591, much of the clerical elite of Timbuctou was deported to Morocco. Though he was eventually allowed to return to Timbuctou, Ahmad Baba was deeply offended by the treatment he received. The argument Ahmad Baba made in his Mi’raj was that enslavement was authorized only in a legitimately approved jihad. Few wars met the criteria for a jihad. Muslims were not allowed to make war on other Muslims, and where they did so, were not allowed to enslave other Muslims or subject peoples who had submitted to the authority of Muslim rulers. Ahmad Baba also attacked racism, in particular, the idea that the curse of Ham committed black people to the service of whites.

These legal traditions became important in the nineteenth century, when Islam was challenged by Europe militarily and intellectually. In the 1840s, Ahmad Bey, the ruler of Tunis, was being pressed by the British to end the trans-Saharan trade. He decided to go further and abolish slavery, but first he asked his personal secretary, Ahmad ibn Abi Diyaf to prepare a justification
of his act. Abi Diyaf made a number of arguments. First, he argued that many of those exported to Tunis were either Muslims or had submitted to Muslim rulers and were therefore not enslaveable. Second, using cases that came before the Bey's court, he argued that both in the desert crossing and within Tunisian households, slaves were harshly, sometimes brutally, treated. The implication was that slaves could not be guaranteed the protections accorded by Muslim law.

There were also thinkers like the Moroccan historian, El-Nasiri, who looked to Islam for sanctions for antislavery: “The basic human condition is freedom and the absence of any reason for being enslaved. Those who put the claim for non-freedom are making a claim in opposition to basic principle.” This effort to look for Islamic sanctions for action against slavery was important to those who wanted to reform Islam. Similar arguments were later to be important both to colonial rulers seeking to justify abolition to Muslim subjects within Africa and to Muslim governments elsewhere which decided to abolish slavery.

Another Muslim tradition was one of protest against corrupt rulers. In the 1670s, a puritanical Muslim reformer named Nasr al-Din began attacking established regimes in the Senegal River. He called on all rulers to be strict in the practice of Islam, to limit themselves to four wives, and to stop pillaging and enslaving their own subjects. With the support of Muslim populations, he overturned four Senegal River states, but the French, threatened by his anti-slave trade ideology, allied themselves to the defeated rulers and in 1677, defeated and killed him. His ideals remained important and effected a number of jihads in the subsequent centuries. A jihad in the Futa Toro in the middle Senegal River begun in 1776 was a reaction to the threat slavery posed to local communities. Once they came to power, the new Muslim rulers limited the enslavement of their Poular-speaking co-religionists, stopping boats coming down the river and removing all Poular-speaking slaves, who were presumably Muslim. A similar reaction to the inroads of slavers inspired a jihad that began in Masina in the middle Niger. Slaves who fought with the jihadists were freed. The problem with these antislavery movements, however, was that they never attacked slavery itself and, in all cases, rapidly became slavers and users of slave labor themselves.

This was particularly striking in the Futa Jallon of central Guinea. The Muslim regime created in an eighteenth century jihad became very powerful and soon depended on the labor of slaves, who became a majority of the population. This inspired a number of protests. The most important, the Hubbu revolt, was led by Mamadu Juhe, who had been a member of the Futa's clerical elite, but was disillusioned by the corruption and exploitation he saw at Timbo, the capital of Futa Jallon. Juhe retreated to a frontier area, where he began to attract disciples, most of them poor and many of them slaves. The Hubbu regime seems to have abolished slavery and certainly freed those who fled to it. It thus threatened the Futa rulers until 1883, when an ally of the Futa, Samori Touré destroyed the Hubbu. In the subsequent decade, two other Muslim reformers attempted, as Juhe had done, to rally slaves and other dissidents from the Futa.
The massing of large numbers of slaves in villages called runde in the Futa Jallon led to both flight and revolt. The most successful maroon community, the Nikhifore, was formed by runaways from the Futa in the early eighteenth century. It continued to receive runaways, who managed to survive in the thickly forested hinterland of the Rio Nunez. Other maroon and rebel communities survived in similar regions of the Guinea and Sierra Leone coast. There was a revolt in the 1720s led by a man named Tamba, who was eventually defeated, sold into slavery, and killed after leading a shipboard revolt. Other maroons created highly fortified settlements, but most of them were eventually destroyed by coastal slave traders or by the Futa. The success of the Nikhifores may well have been that they did not regularly raid either the coastal traders or the caravans coming down to the coast from the Futa. Maroon communities almost certainly existed in other forested or mountainous areas of West Africa.

Maroon communities were also formed along the East African coast. Gosha formed in the 1830s in thickly forested areas along the lower Juba River and on islands in the mouth of the Juba. Gosha managed to get weapons, some of them obtained by trading slaves, and, aided by natural defenses, managed to survive until the end of the century. Another maroon community was founded along the Pangani River in Tanzania in 1873. Some maroons used mission stations. A group, for example, gathered around a Church Missionary Society station at Rabai in the Mombasa hinterland. Where maroons survived, it was due to their ability to build alliances and find natural protection. There were also religious leaders and state builders, who gathered refugees to their ranks. The sultanate of Witu rallied runaways in the 1860s, though in later years, it also traded in slaves.

Sierra Leone

In 1787, a community of freed slaves organized by British abolitionists settled in Sierra Leone. This was the first expression of an alliance between abolition and Christian missions that was to dominate antislavery. The constitution for the settlement was written by the British abolitionist, Granville Sharp. The first group to arrive consisted of 341 of the black poor, a community that had gathered in England since Lord Mansfield in the Somerset Decision of 1772 held that slaves brought to England from British colonies could not be forced to return to those colonies. They were joined by 70 white women and then in 1792, by the black Loyalists, former slaves who supported the British side during the American Revolution and had been settled in Nova Scotia after the war. In Nova Scotia, they were given inadequate land grants on poor land and in what many found an inhospitable climate. They also faced the hostility of earlier white settlers and white Loyalists, many of whom had been slave owners. Thus, many eagerly accepted the opportunity to leave Nova Scotia. The community was joined in 1800 by a group of 550 Maroons from Jamaica. The first years of the new settlement were very difficult. Though they received land from a local chief, they had constant conflict with local populations. The settlement was destroyed once by the French. Settlers died from African diseases and they had difficulty
earning a living from lands that were not particularly fertile. They also had conflict with governors, who did not all believe that former slaves could create a successful democratic society. Sierra Leone was also situated on a stretch of coast that harbored numerous slaving operations. As a result, kidnapping was a problem. Quite a few of the settlers were returned to slavery, while others ended up working for the slave traders.

In 1808, after the abolition of the slave trade, the British government took over the colony and made it the center of all British operations in West Africa. The Royal Navy squadron that sought to intercept slave ships was based in Freetown, as was the International Prize Court. When a slave ship was stopped, often off the Nigerian coast, it had to be taken to Freetown to be adjudicated. The liberated slaves, or as they were called, the recaptives, were thus released at Freetown. A number of missions gathered in Freetown to help them adapt. As a result, most of the recaptives became Christian and many received an education. For most of the nineteenth century, literacy was higher in Sierra Leone than in Britain itself. The original settlers tended at first to look down on the sick and naked people who got off the slave ships; but by the middle of the century, they had so altered their outlook that significant intermarriage began and the different communities eventually merged into what has been called the Creoles.

The original plan was for the Creoles to become productive, modernizing peasants. Instead, many were attracted to trade, to clerical work, and to the professions. Not only did Creole traders gradually spread out over surrounding areas, but Freetown became a key destination for caravans from upcountry. The Creole elite soon achieved distinction. A class of rich Creole merchants emerged at Freetown and Lagos. Fourah Bay College was founded in 1827 and after 1876, was affiliated with the University of Durham. From 1801 on, there was a lively local press. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* was founded in 1884 and was widely read all along the coast. In 1858, the first doctors emerged from Scottish medical schools. The most important, J. Africanus Horton, wrote on both medical and political problems. There were twenty-three Creole doctors by the end of the century, most of whom served in the West African Medical Service. There were at least fifteen lawyers, the most distinguished being Sir Samuel Lewis, the first African knighted by Queen Victoria. A larger group found their vocations in the church. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first graduate of Fourah Bay College, was the first of many to be ordained as an Anglican minister. In 1864, he became the Bishop of the Niger, in which position he guided Anglican mission efforts in the interior of Nigeria.

The Creoles gradually spread out, many returning to roots in what is now Nigeria, where they played a major role in introducing Christianity. Others went to the Gold Coast or to Gambia, sometimes working for the churches, for commercial houses, or for the colonial state. About a quarter of the senior colonial administration and an even higher percentage of subaltern positions were held by Creoles. Creoles held every office in the colonial administration except that of governor. Then, from the 1880s on, the colonial state gradually turned against them. At a time when the administration was expanding, an increasing number of British administrators and missionaries went to Africa.
infested by racist ideas. Gradually, opportunities for advancement were closed off. The Creoles also found it difficult to play a leadership role for peoples from the interior, whom they looked down upon. They remained important in the colonial enterprise, though they often did not receive the recognition or the opportunities they deserved.

**Abolition**

When slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, the one part of Africa that was most significantly affected was South Africa. South Africa was marked by different kinds of servitude. More than half of the population of the Cape Colony was made up of slaves, generally imported from the East Indies, East Africa, or Madagascar. They were found largely in Capetown and the grain and wine areas near the city. On the frontiers, large family farms were marked by large numbers of “servants” who were every bit as unfree as the slaves. They descended from Khoi herders and San hunters, many from the children of San, who were taken on to Afrikaner farms when their parents were killed. By the early nineteenth century, these groups were merging into the Coloured people. In 1809, the Earl of Caledon required that all Coloureds have a fixed place of residence. Intended to control vagrancy, the effect of Caledon’s regulations was to deprive the Coloureds of the right to move and choose how they would live. The cause of the Coloureds was taken up by London Mission Society missionaries, in particular, John Philip, James Read, and J.T. Van der Kemp. Philip was a particularly effective publicist with influence in London. The repeal of the 1809 regulations was a major effect of their efforts. Along with the 1833 abolition of slavery, it created a free labor force in the Cape and restricted efforts to tie non-white people down. It also led to the Great Trek, in which 10,000 to 12,000 Afrikaners migrated into the interior, where they formed two republics and successfully perpetuated the kind of coercive tied relationship with servants they had in the Cape. Throughout the nineteenth century, a small group of missionaries continued to protect African and Coloured people.

Senegal was a different story. Many of the slaves in France’s two island bases lived a relatively autonomous life. In St. Louis, many worked in the Senegal River trade. On Goree, many worked on coasters that traded along the coast, some of them going as far as Liberia. Some even commanded trading expeditions. Most of the rest were artisans or domestic servants. The freeing of the slaves by France in 1848 went as smoothly as could be expected. There were some discipline problems during the two-month transition period, but the day that emancipation was proclaimed, most went down to the sea for what seems to have been a spontaneous ritual cleansing and then gathered in front of government offices to sing, dance, and celebrate their good fortunes. Once the celebrations were over, business returned to normal. The wealthy métis families and the Bordeaux commercial houses continued to control urban property and the job market. The former slaves, however, had greater freedom of action and some did well.

The big problem was not within the towns, but Senegal’s relations with its slave-owning neighbors. Within a year, Senegal promised those neighbors
that slaves fleeing to St. Louis, Goree, or to French posts would not be freed. In 1855, Governor Louis Faidherbe guaranteed the right of subjects, that is to say, Africans, to hold slaves. Two years later, he set up a system by which runaways claimed by their masters would be expelled from the city as vagrants. Their masters were generally told when and where. It was difficult to sustain this system. By 1871, a republican form of government was restored. Abolitionist politicians and journals could make life difficult for the colonial regime. St. Louis and the new port city of Dakar contained diverse social groups, some of whom opposed slavery. By the late 1870s, Dakar was a port of call for steamships. The Protestant mission in St. Louis was sheltering runaway slaves and feeding information to Victor Schoelcher. In 1880, a speech given by Victor Schoelcher in the French Senate put pressure on the government, and in 1883, Senegal’s first civilian governor, Rene Servatius, decreed that a runaway slave had only to report to judicial authorities to receive papers. His successors, however, tried other ways to restrict the flow of runaways. The most important was the disannexation of occupied territories, which became protectorates, a fiction that made possible the toleration of slavery until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The British position in the Gold Coast was similar to that of Senegal. They controlled a small part of the coast, were dependent on trade with slave-owning African states, and, as a result, until well into the 1850s returned runaway slaves. Two events changed the situation. In 1873, the Dutch withdrew from the Gold Coast, allowing the British to extend their control of the coast. The following year, Britain prevailed in a war with Asante. The Gold Coast government suddenly found itself in control of a large area and free to make concessions to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. They brought in two new laws. The first prohibited slave-trading and the import of slaves into the small colony. The second required the courts to dismiss the claims of any person to the control of any other person. This was the introduction of the “Indian formula” to Africa. There was no massive flight from slavery. To the degree that these laws were effective, it was primarily in the colony, but it is probable that the existence of new legislation gave slaves leverage in revising relationships with their masters.

Portugal was the other slave-holding power in Africa. The export and import of slaves was prohibited in 1836 by the government of Marquês de Sa da Bandeira. It was the product of British pressure and the humanitarianism of the small group of Portuguese leaders. This was bitterly resented in Angola, but it led to important processes of change. With the British and Portuguese navies patrolling the coast, the illicit slave trade shrank, and slaves were increasingly used for productive activity. The subsequent decade was a boom period as Angola increased the production and export of ivory, beeswax, coffee, and other products. In Mozambique, the slave trade lingered longer, but British naval activity increasingly limited it to exports across the Mozambique Channel to Madagascar. There were a number of other antislavery edicts, most associated with Sa da Bandeira, and culminating in 1878 with the abolition of slavery. Enforcement was, however, looser.
than in other colonial powers. The demand for contract labor for Sao Thomé created a disguised slave trade from Angola. That became a major humanitarian issue in Europe, but did not end until the return to power of a democratic government in 1910.

**Christian Missions**

The advancement of Christianity and the fight against slavery had gone hand in hand from the late eighteenth century. The most influential figure in this effort was Henry Venn, who was secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Venn believed in a “self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating” African church. This required that missions occupy themselves with increasing the economic productivity of their communities and creating a leadership capable of taking charge of economic life, management of the church, and religious proselytization. Venn sought education for and promoted promising Africans like Ajayi and James Johnson. He corresponded with Christian lay leaders. The CMS was not alone in combining antislavery, conversion, and economic development. These themes run through mid-nineteenth century mission activity.

On the Gold Coast, the Swiss Basel mission arrived in 1828 and the Wesleyan Methodists in 1836. Both disliked slavery, but their dispersion into the interior forced them to be cautious and pragmatic in how they pursued their ideals. With free labor not available, the Wesleyans purchased the contracts of pawns and allowed them to deduct a portion of their wages until they were free of obligation. The Basel missionaries bought slaves and also allowed them to work off their purchase price. Both missions attracted slaves. The Wesleyans encouraged wage labor. In 1863, the Basel mission banned slaveholding by its members, but local missionaries produced pragmatic compromises that allowed sympathetic slave owners to remain in the church. In Nigeria, the return in the 1840s of Creoles, known as Saros, brought in the missions. As in the Gold Coast, missionaries had to be very careful, but many of those who gathered at mission stations were slaves, and many missionaries got involved in working toward liberation. Both the CMS in Nigeria and the Basel mission were involved in the spread of cocoa.

The involvement of the missions in the fight against slavery was stepped up from the middle of the century. It was paralleled by, and, in some cases was a response to, increasing violence within Africa. A key person was the Scottish missionary, **David Livingstone**. Born to a working-class family in Scotland, Livingstone worked in a textile mill while pursuing an education. By 1840, he had a medical degree and was ordained as a minister. He also was committed to both Christianity and science. In 1841, he was sent to South Africa by the London Missionary Society. He soon began spending time in African villages while he studied the language of the villagers. In 1849, he left on the first of a series of explorations that occupied the last twenty-four years of his life. In Central and East Africa, he confronted the ravages and destruction caused by the slave trade. His books vividly described burned villages and caravans of manacled slaves.
In 1856, while on a visit to England, Livingstone gave a lecture at Westminster Abbey, where he pleaded for the introduction of a program of “Christianity, commerce and civilization” to Central Africa. His plea led to the creation of the Universities Mission to Central Africa and induced hundreds of missionaries to spread out over central and East Africa, focusing in particular on the badly ravaged Lake Malawi area. They included both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, all from many nations. By the 1890s, mission stations were scattered around the Congo basin and the interlacustrine area. To get to their destinations and to get supplies, many depended on slave-trader networks. They had trouble with African diseases. Many lacked the practical skills needed for survival. Even more than the Basel and CMS missionaries, they needed tact and practical skills because most were far away from any European protectors and had to be careful not to threaten slavers. In spite of this, the mission stations all over Africa gathered around them runaway slaves and refugees fleeing the violence of the trade. They provided protection, founded schools, and taught new skills.

In the 1850s, many slaves liberated from Arab dhows were settled in Bombay, where the CMS developed a mission. Like their recaptive counterparts in the Atlantic, the Bombay Africans speedily adopted Christianity and British dress and manners. During the 1870s, many of the Bombay Africans returned to East Africa, where the CMS was developing a liberated African settlement not far from Mombasa. It was named for Sir Bartle Frere, the British diplomat and abolitionist who negotiated a treaty with Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar, abolishing the seaborne slave trade. Frere Town’s biggest problem was its success. So many slaves flocked to it that slave owners in Mombasa wanted to destroy the settlement. Similar successes were experienced in other areas. Near Bagamoyo, the Holy Ghost Fathers had a complex of seven slave villages. Near Blantyre in Malawi, the Church of Scotland created a large mission. There were differences in approach. Most Protestant mission societies refused to buy slaves, fearing that they were just increasing the demand. The Catholics often bought children. In particular, they frequently purchased children on the verge of death, who they then tried to nurse back to good health.

The missionaries did a great deal to make Europe conscious of questions of slavery. Travel literature was popular in nineteenth-century Europe. David Livingstone earned enough money with his first book, *Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857), to provide security for himself and his family. Many other missionaries wrote about their missions, about their experiences, and about the slave trade. Alexandre Le Roy, a Holy Ghost Father, wrote two books about East Africa, which documented the ravages of the trade. With the increase in steamship travel, more and more missionaries returned to Europe on home leave. When they did so, they often went on lecture tours, raising money for their missions and for antislavery work. The churches provided a ready-made propaganda network on slavery, as on other social issues. The Catholic societies raised money to buy the freedom of slaves. Missionaries also provided information to political leaders. Schoelcher depended on Protestant missionaries for his denunciation of Senegalese policy. Reports from missionaries in East Africa led
Cardinal Lavigerie to seek the support of the Pope for a crusade against slavery. Most missionary orders developed publications designed to keep supporters informed of their activities. For many missionaries, antislavery became a central issue in their lives. Alexandre Le Roy wrote a passionate pamphlet, *L’Esclavage africain*, in the hope of influencing the Brussels Conference. In 1896, Le Roy was elected Superior-General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, in which position he served until 1926. He also served as president of the French Anti-Slavery Society and helped to keep the question of slavery in the public eye.

One important result of this mission activity was to make the European public conscious of the reality of slavery in Africa. King Leopold was able to use the issue to present his activities in the Congo in an antislavery light, though it later turned out that his regime was as ruthless as the slavers. While the partition of Africa was incomplete, colonial regimes could argue that freeing slaves would compromise their efforts and put off eventual action on slavery. Once they clearly controlled the territories they had selected, they were under pressure to act. See also Africa, Emancipation in; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at; Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in; North Africa and Abolition; Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope.


**Martin A. Klein**

**Africa, Emancipation in**

Great Britain abolished slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833. France did the same in 1848, and Portugal followed in 1878. In spite of this, very few slaves were freed in Africa before the beginning of the twentieth century. At the time of the historic abolition acts, European sovereignty was very limited in Africa. The British act of abolition applied only in the Cape Colony, where there were about 35,000 slaves. Britain had a colony in Sierra Leone, but it was created as a free colony by abolitionists in 1787. Bathurst was founded in 1816 after the British had returned St. Louis and Goree to
the French. There were few slaves because most of the Africans were former slaves who were freed during the British occupation of Senegal and followed the British to Bathurst. The French abolition applied to about 10,000 people.

**South Africa and Senegal**

The Cape Colony had two kinds of bondage. The slaves descended from people who were imported from Indonesia, India, East Africa, and Madagascar. They were legal property. They were a slight majority in Capetown, where almost all manual laborers and artisans were slaves. There were also numerous slaves in the belt of intensively farmed land around Capetown, which produced grain and wine for the many ships that called at the Cape. On the frontier, another form of bondage predominated. The original Khoikhoi herders had been decimated by European diseases. Some migrated into the interior, but others took service with Afrikaner farmers. In addition, the farmers often killed San hunters when they preyed on domestic stock. The children were generally taken in and raised as servants. These groups were merging in the early nineteenth century into the Coloured people. An 1809 law obligated all Coloureds to have a fixed place of residence. This effectively locked them into service with white farmers. In 1828, Ordnance 50 abolished this law. The abolition of slavery in 1833 finished the destruction of the traditional order. Though there was a period of “apprenticeship,” it was over by 1838.

The transition to a free labor system went fairly smoothly in Capetown. Many of the slaves already worked for wages and lived separately from their masters. They maintained a monopoly of many artisan skills, for example, in construction, until the 1920s, when government legislation started favoring poor Afrikaners, who were then moving into the cities in large numbers. There were some problems on the frontier, where some of the former servants retreated to mission stations and others became bandits or joined predatory bands that preyed on Africans beyond the frontier. One of the results of ending bondage was the Great Trek, in which about 10,000 to 12,000 Afrikaners migrated into the far interior and founded two republics, the South African Republic (better known as the Transvaal) and the Orange Free State. There they took into their service Africans who were either conquered or taking refuge from wars that troubled South Africa at this time. In effect, they recreated the old Cape labor system, though they always spoke of servants and not of slaves. A major theme of the next century-and-a-half in South Africa was the conflict between different attitudes toward the labor of African peoples. Until well into the twentieth century, the Cape remained committed to a free labor system.

The other important act of emancipation took place in Senegal, where the French controlled two islands, St. Louis, in the mouth of the Senegal River, and Goree, in what is now Dakar Harbor. Slaves made up over half of the population of St. Louis and about three quarters of Goree. They did all of the manual labor, but most had some kind of skill. They worked the
boats that went up the Senegal River or along the coast, in some cases, even commanding them. Some slaves traded on their own account and owned slaves themselves. Many of the slaves were owned by signares, women who had married and survived French men, and by the métis families that emerged from these relationships. The marriages were temporary, but many of the men died before returning to France, leaving property to their African wives. Some of the signares were married several times, and most managed their properties well. Many of the signares lived by renting out slaves, who then gave the signare part of his or her wages.

The 1848 law, a product of the revolution that took place that year, provided for virtually immediate and total emancipation. Slave owners received an indemnity. There was a two-month waiting period, during which there was some conflict, but on the day that liberty was proclaimed, the freed slaves in St. Louis went down to the shore for what seems to have been a ritual cleansing and then returned to the government building where they sang, danced and praised the government that had freed them. The masters received indemnities, but they were not paid right away, and those who needed quick cash sold their indemnities to commercial houses. With those exceptions, most owners and slaves did reasonably well. The majority of the slaves continued to work for wages. Only about 200 freed slaves with no visible means of support gathered in a tent. Some of the former slaves were successful in commerce. As for the masters, those who owned the slaves also owned the boats and most urban property. The freed slaves depended on them for jobs and housing. By and large, therefore, most métis families maintained their strong position in the Senegalese economy.

The major problem confronting the Senegalese regime was that they were surrounded geographically by people with whom they had done business and who sold slaves and used slaves. These people were threatened by the possibility that any slave taking refuge in St. Louis would be freed. Many neighboring kingdoms reacted immediately. Trarza suspended the gum trade. Kajoor blocked a shipment of peanuts. In Dakar villages, fishermen refused to sell fish to the French. The French, of course, were not eager to have their small communities invaded by a runaway slave population with little means of support. Within a year, the French governor ordered local police to expel any slaves fleeing neighboring friendly states. In 1855, a new governor, Louis Faidherbe, made a distinction between French citizens and colonial subjects and held that subjects could continue to own slaves. Two years later, he formalized the system set up in 1849. Slaves fleeing to St. Louis would be expelled as vagrants. A master claiming a slave was generally told where and when the slave would be forced to leave the city. In subsequent years, there was also a trickle of manumissions, many of which were sought by people in the towns, who wanted to free a relative, or a female slave desired as a wife. In Senegal, a system was set up under which a slave child could be purchased up-river, brought to St. Louis, freed, and then adopted. The child usually then was a servant, or sometimes an apprentice, and was essentially free on reaching the age of majority. Most of those imported were girls, many of whom were married off to members or dependents of the family, thus “freeing” them. Some runaways managed to
hide, either because they found kinsmen or because they were hidden by the Protestant mission.

**Late-Nineteenth-Century Africa**

Essentially, Senegal’s experience defined the dilemma of all colonial regimes in Africa during the nineteenth century. Wherever a European flag was raised, the colonial power was careful not to alienate its neighbors. This meant, above all, refusing to allow runaways to take refuge in the colony or in any of its forts or trading stations. Slaves fleeing African masters were expelled from Bathurst. In the Gold Coast, runaway slaves had long been regularly returned to Asante and Fante masters. In 1863, the failure to turn over a person accused of crimes led to an inconclusive war with Asante. In Lagos, British occupation in 1861 was motivated by its role as a base for the slave trade, but slavery continued to exist within the town, and the British were careful not to stir up opposition from their neighbors. In Portuguese Africa, abolition of the slave trade in 1836 was difficult to enforce, and slavery itself was untouched for many years. Most Portuguese actions against the slave trade, and then against slavery itself, proved difficult to enforce outside the cities.

In taking any action against slavery, colonial regimes had to be careful, in many cases not fully explaining their actions to metropolitan superiors. These metropolitan superiors were very sensitive to pressures from humanitarian groups. This was particularly important in Great Britain, where the “Saints,” humanitarians based in the churches, had persuaded Parliament to vote for principle over short-term economic interests in abolishing first the slave trade and then slavery itself. They remained an important bloc in Parliament. After 1833, they were particularly interested in India, but that forced them to recognize that slavery still existed in all parts of the world. In 1839, the British abolitionists organized the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS). Its influence on British policy waxed and waned over the years, but it has been a constant presence. Its secretaries maintained correspondence with sympathetic persons in all parts of the world and were at any given moment willing to activate a propaganda network based in the churches. The organization still exists, but is now known as Anti-Slavery International.

In France, abolition sentiment derived from the Enlightenment. Throughout the nineteenth century there were important groups of French abolitionists. They often had influence, but they did not have the mass following their English counterparts had. Most of the abolitionists were anticlericals. The Roman Catholic Church was the only institution capable of mobilizing mass support for antislavery. It had been taken over by the state during the French revolution and was hostile during most of the nineteenth century to anything associated with the revolutionary tradition. Similarly, in Portugal there was a small group of abolitionists linked with the Marquês de Sa da Bandeira involved in every single antislavery measure. In France, however, the revolutionary tradition regularly held power. It was the moderate July revolution in 1830 that led to enforcement of laws prohibiting the slave
trade. And, during the 1848 revolution, Victor Schoelcher was quickly incorporated in the provisional government to write an abolition law. By 1870, almost every government in Europe was a parliamentary democracy in which the legislature was elected by universal manhood suffrage. By this time, it is safe to say that most Europeans accepted a free labor ideology and believed that slavery was immoral. The dilemma for those who sought the expansion of colonial rule was that parliaments held control of the purse strings. Colonial ministries and colonial departments also had to pay attention to the press and avoid embarrassing scandals.

In spite of this, there was little movement on the abolition issue. Senegal was difficult for the government because it was increasingly connected to the outside world, first by telegraph, and then by steamboats, when newly-founded Dakar became a regular port of call for them. The Protestant mission in St. Louis fed information about French policy to progressive newspapers and to French abolitionists, including Victor Schoelcher, who in 1880, gave a speech in the French Senate denouncing those policies. Though the first tendency of the colonial authorities was to defend itself, in 1883, the first civilian governor, René Servatius, decreed that any runaway slave making it into areas of direct administration could have his liberty papers immediately. The number of slaves seeking their freedom rose to about 2,000 a year, but the administration found ways to prevent a more massive flight from servitude. The most important was a migration from Senegal into the Sudan of Fulbe people from the Senegal River area. It led to most of the areas conquered being disannexed and made into protectorates. Thus, no one could insist on the application of French law. This legal fiction was then widely used by both French and British. In both Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, the colony was a very small part of the territory. The vast majority of lands under colonial administration were considered the protectorate.

The most substantial emancipation act of this period was taken in the Gold Coast. In 1873, the Dutch pulled out of the Gold Coast, leaving Britain in control of the whole region. The following year, Asante was defeated by the British army. For the first time, Britain was in a dominant position. The result was two new laws. The first prohibited slave-trading and the import of slaves into the colony. The second required the courts to dismiss the claims of any person to control of any other person. This was a formula first used in India, in which the colonial state undercut slavery by refusing to support the authority of the masters. There was, however, no massive flight from slavery. The biggest limitation was that there were few British officials. Most slaves, even if they knew about the law, probably did not know where to go or perhaps, what to do if they were freed. To the degree that these laws were effective, it was primarily in the colony, but Trevor Getz argues that the existence of new legislation gave slaves leverage in revising relationships with their masters.

In 1885, the Berlin Africa Congress provided ground rules for a process that had already begun, the partition of Africa. The colonial powers still had to conquer the areas they had staked out. This was largely done by the early years of the twentieth century, though some areas were being
effectively ruled by Europeans only on the eve of World War I and a few only in the interwar period. The conquest made the slavery issue an even more sensitive one. European armies were largely composed of slaves. Some were recently freed. For example, in early nineteenth-century Sierra Leone, the British army recruited among recently freed male slaves. Others were acquired more directly. The French gave an enlistment bonus close to the price of a slave. When the slave enlisted, the bonus often went directly to his master. At other times, incentives were stronger. In the French liberty villages, a master from a friendly area could reclaim a runaway slave for up to three months, but if he was willing to enlist, it was only one month. Slaves often used false names to make it difficult for masters to find them. Before invading Cameroun, the Germans bought a body of slaves in Dahomey, trained them, put them in uniform, and used them in Cameroun.

European parlaments were willing to allow colonial armies their wars and conquests, but they never gave the colonialists the funding they desired. One result was that the colonial armies that conquered Africa were overwhelmingly African. They also had greater resistance to African diseases. They were effective soldiers and they were loyal. Colonial armies generally had an esprit de corps and lived relatively well. They were being fed, clothed, and rewarded with booty. The most important booty consisted of captured women. After a victory, the French officers often took the prettiest women for themselves and distributed the rest to their soldiers and their allies. They depended on alliances. In the bitter warfare of the late-nineteenth century, allies were easy to find. Often the colonial army was linked to whoever lost the previous African war. The allies not only received booty, but they often exploited the dependence of the colonial forces by slaving on their own. Of course, during the same period, some slaves always used the disorder to try to return home. Once an area was conquered, the conqueror depended on African chiefs to administer the area. They, too, were often slave holders. In fact, so too were the clerks and interpreters who staffed their offices.

Colonial Rule and Emancipation

Colonial rulers thus had to be careful about how they handled slavery, but they all faced pressure to act. One of the justifications of colonial rule was to end barbaric institutions like slavery. Colonial regimes feared scandals and always worried about antislavery groups and newspapers. The various colonial powers handled the situation differently, but there were certain things that ran through colonial policy. The first is that colonial administrators tended to get their information about slaves from those who owned them. It is doubtful if many ever talked to slaves except when slaves showed up to plead for freedom or for their children. There was a persistent belief that slaves were lazy, that without the master's authority, they would stop working and become vagrants, turning to theft or prostitution to survive. Sometimes this was attached to a belief that the masters were too proud to work. The result of these beliefs is that they often tried to handle the issue in a quiet way, hoping that no one would tell the slaves
what the new laws and decrees meant. In fact, slaves usually learned quickly, sometimes getting information from their brethren in the colonial army. Also, almost all colonial regimes acted quickly to end slave-raiding and slave-trading. They could afford to leave people in slavery and exploit their labor, but the disruption caused by slavers threatened their development plans. The final generalization is that nowhere did slaves get any help, except sometimes from Christian missions.

The first important emancipation was in Zanzibar. The British had considered the Zanzibar “empire” their sphere of influence, but in 1884 and 1885, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck used treaties signed by a German explorer, Carl Peters, to stake out four colonies, one of which contained the most valuable trade routes in East Africa. The British then established a protectorate in Zanzibar and claimed what has become Kenya. All decrees were issued in the Sultan’s name. In 1890, they prohibited all sales, proclaimed that slaves who were cruelly treated would be freed, and gave slaves the right to buy their own freedom. In 1897, the slaves of Zanzibar and Pemba were given the right to ask for their freedom. Slaves were not obliged to do so, and, in fact, there was a substantial disincentive. If they could not prove that they had a place to live and a means of support, they would be declared vagrants. Only about 11,000 took advantage of the decree, most of them urban slaves who wished to no longer give a part of their wages to an owner. Most plantation slaves just drifted away. For those slaves who stayed, the work week was reduced from five days to three. The feared crisis in clove production did not happen because many of the freed slaves were willing to work for wages. The government tried to develop a system in which ex-slaves would contract with plantation owners, but many planters developed a system in which squatters had work obligations in exchange for unused land.

On the mainland, the British did not abolish slavery until 1907, but by the time they did so, most of the slaves had left the plantations. There was no authority to force them to stay where they were. Free land was available, and there was work in Mombasa, where the construction of a railroad increased port activity. In Frederick Cooper’s words, the planters became landlords, unable to extract revenue from former slaves who squatted on and used their land. In German East Africa (later Tanganyika), slavery also declined, though not as rapidly. German figures suggest that there were about half a million slaves when they took over. Slaves could get a freibreife, a freedom letter, by buying their freedom. Foreigners could not buy slaves, but a German planter could buy a slave’s freedom in exchange for his signing of a labor contract. There were some other ways that a slave could get a freibreife, but relatively few did. About 60,000 were issued, a little over ten percent of the slave population, between 1890 and 1914. Two thirds of those freed were women, most commonly by a man who probably wanted her as a wife or concubine. In 1914, Germans estimated that there were about 160,000 slaves left. Almost 300,000 had just disappeared.

We can understand the processes better by looking at French West Africa. The conquest was largely completed by 1898, and the colonial
administration began replacing the military with civilian administrators. In
the French Soudan (now Mali), the administration began acting to end the
slave trade and to encourage manumission in 1901, but in 1903, a new law
code was issued for the whole federation. The letter accompanying the stat-utes told administrators that they were under no condition to accept any
claims to runaway slaves. This was the Indian formula again, but at first,
there was no visible reaction. Slaves had been running away since the late
1890s, but not in a massive or coordinated way. In 1905, the administration
proclaimed a new law that forbade any transactions in persons. Slaves could
neither be sold, bequeathed, inherited, given, nor exchanged. It did not
abolish slavery, though it is sometimes interpreted as having done so.

In Banamba, a market town surrounded by slave plantations with a rigor-
ous labor regime and a relatively new slave force, people started to leave in
the spring of 1905, before the new law, but they were persuaded to stay for
another growing season. In the spring of 1906, they started leaving again.
This time, William Ponty, lieutenant governor of the Soudan (then called Haut
Sénégal Niger), told the local administrator to let them go. Most of them were
slaves who remembered another home. Usually, the walk home was thirty to
forty days. They received little help from the French and generally had little
to eat and few possessions. As the long lines marched through other areas,
slaves in other communities started to leave, and gradually the movement
spread over much of west Africa. In all, about a million slaves seem to have
picked up and walked home. Not all arrived home. Some moved into towns
to look for work. Some arrived back home to find that areas ravaged by slav-
ers had returned to bush, and they then went elsewhere to look for work.
When it was over, almost one third of all slaves had left their masters. About
two thirds remained, but the balance of power had changed.

In Northern Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lugard won a decisive series of victo-
ries culminating in the conquest of Kano, Zaria, and Sokoto in 1903. He
used his victory to replace all emirs who had resisted with other members
of the same family. He moved quickly to suppress the slave-raiding and
slave-trading, but he decided to reform slavery rather than abolish it. He
used a Muslim procedure called murgu, in which the slave was given a
price for his or her freedom. Under Lugard, the slave had the legal right to
have the price set by the courts. Lugard also proclaimed all children born
after March 1901 to be free. Though they were raised in servitude, they
could exercise their rights when grown. Between 1897 and 1917, at least
55,000 slaves were freed through murgu, the intervention of third parties,
or as a result of mistreatment. Many others were freed by the traditional
Muslim deathbed manumissions. Many slaves also fled, especially during the
early years when administration was disrupted. As in French West Africa,
they fled in relatively large numbers toward earlier homes. No one knows
how many, but Lugard assumed that they comprised many more than those
who chose the legal route. Lugard moved to limit and then stop these
departures, at the same time introducing tax and land policies that contrib-
uted to slave autonomy. Slavery was not abolished until 1936.

There were many other areas where the British were cautious about not
abolishing slavery. In the Sudan, policy for much of the colonial period was
not to interfere with it at all. It was hoped that suppression of slave-raiding and the slave trade would dry up the sources, but the vastness of the Sudan made even that difficult. Runaways were expelled from the city as vagabonds and often returned to their masters. As elsewhere, however, slaves took the issue in their own hands. Many fled. Some sought areas where they could farm. Many joined the army. Others became part of a new labor force. Change was slow, but by the time slavery was abolished in 1936, processes of change were well under way. In many other colonies, policies were slow and reticent. In Sierra Leone, once the "province of freedom," many governors believed that economic productivity depended on slave labor, and they consequently feared abolition. When they did act, it was only because the Colonial Office feared that unfavorable attention in the League of Nations would weaken Britain’s credibility in the League. The Colonial Office became impatient with partial measures and insisted on abolition in 1927.

In some areas, slavery disappeared very quickly. Often these were areas where slavery had never been deeply entrenched and where political structures were decentralized. In Buganda, in a highly centralized state, the children of slaves seem to have been rather quickly absorbed into clan structures. Among the Yoruba of western Nigeria, the process seems to have been similar, but a bit slower. Many slaves fled during the conquest period, but others were folded into the clan system. With the development of wage labor, slavery and slave status seem to have become unimportant by the 1930s. In Somalia, public opinion in Italy forced the colonial regime to abolish slavery. Though the regime had limited authority, slaves themselves took responsibility for their own lives and moved away. Generally, the descendants of slaves have remained distinct because they were agriculturalists and because they tended to be physically distinct. When the Somali state collapsed, they found themselves once again victims and many fled the country.

**Renegotiation**

In his reforms, Lugard was trying to create a situation in which masters would conclude that it was in their best interest to treat their slaves benevolently in order to keep them. In all areas where slavery was important, there was a slow process of negotiation. Masters, who could no longer replace slaves, wanted to keep their authority over those who remained. Thus, in many areas, the number of days a slave worked for the master was gradually reduced. In Senegal and Mali, second or third generation slaves often were given the right to farm for themselves in exchange for payment of a portion of their annual crop. Those born and raised in a community often wanted to remain in the community. Where they left, usually in groups, it was often to find some land nearby. After the original adjustments, further changes unfolded slowly. Across the savanna, slavery was transformed into a relationship of dependence. The slave received land from his master, and the master got a shrinking portion of the crop. Former slaves continued to accept some ritual obligations like cooking for the master’s baptisms and
wedding celebration, but they also received gifts. In many savanna societies, the ideal of nobility included generosity. Former slaves learned to exploit that. Some undoubtedly internalized their own dependence, but most seem to have exploited the system, while often reducing their obligations to token acts.

Of course, there were differences. The crucial thing was often the availability of land. If the former slaves could find land to farm, it was easier to establish their autonomy. In Senegal, a Muslim religious brotherhood, the Mourides, colonized lands that were hitherto only used by pastoralists. It was possible for a young male ex-slave with no land to join a group that cleared new land. Everyone would work about eight years and then be freed to marry. They would continue to make gifts to the religious cheikh that organized the village, but they had land. In densely populated areas, it was very difficult for the former slaves. In several other areas, in both East and West Africa, Muslim religious orders seem to have played a crucial role in enabling slaves to establish their economic autonomy. By contrast, Masina sits in the inner delta of the Niger River, an area in central Mali where the river splits into many channels and floods every year. The former slaves have an incentive to remain because the rice yields are much greater than grain harvests in rain-fed areas. On the other hand, before World War I, the French tried to settle differences between the two groups by recognizing the freedom of the slaves while giving the master property rights to the land. This led to generations of conflict over obligations. Control of the land gave masters control of the people who worked it.

The great fear of the colonial administration and the masters that the slaves would not work without a foreman ready to punish them turned out to be a myth. The one thing slaves knew how to do was to work. Often their work was for subsistence. In French Africa, many of the slaves who left in the great exodus returned to areas far from markets, so they did not produce cash crops, but they did migrate to earn money. Many of them migrated to Senegal to grow peanuts or to the gold fields of upper Guinea to dig for gold. Others worked as porters. Until about 1908, coercion had to be used to get men to work as porters, particularly in Guinea, where the rubber harvest had to be head-loaded to the railroad. Then suddenly, a few years after the beginning of the exodus, the French found volunteers willing to do the onerous work for a miserly wage. As governor of the Soudan and then, as governor general of French West Africa, William Ponty frequently wrote hesitant administrators explaining that France had benefited from emancipation because it had created a reservoir of labor that could move. In some areas, many slaves ended up wealthier than their masters because they worked hard and because they were more open to new possibilities.

European authorities generally had some idea where they wanted change to go. The French talked about contracts and thought of métayage, a sharecropping relationship common in France, as a model. Lugard thought about evolving a form of serfdom. Everyone discounted the slaves, but it was usually slave initiative that drove the process. Like freed slaves in the Americas, they were most concerned to work for themselves and to control their own
family life. These objectives were basic to all negotiations. Europeans assumed that slaves were lazy, but just the opposite was true. The advantage slaves had was that they were willing to do all kinds of work and to work hard. They were also more likely to seek out new types of work, for example as taxi and truck drivers or as automobile mechanics. Where they had no access to land, many remained poor, but in many areas, former slaves became wealthier than their masters. In more hierarchical societies, the stigma of slavery remained. The noble was honorable and the slave was not. In some cases, the slave could use that code of honor. In other cases, slaves left and went to places where their origins were not remembered. In many areas slaves also used the Christian missions, which had often offered a refuge for runaway slaves during the wars of the late-nineteenth century. In many areas many former slaves were numerous among the first people to be educated.

Masters also survived. Sometimes they did so because they were the agents of the colonial state. These persons could replace control of slaves by new sources of income. For example, among the Igbo of eastern Nigeria, slave-holding elites were replaced by new people not dependent on slave labor. Where slaves were controlled by merchant elites, as they were in many market towns, elite families often saw private fortunes liquidated without any reward. And yet, the skills these people had served them well in a capitalist economy. Like the slaves, they worked hard to recover their wealth and they invested in new items of trade, in urban real estate, or in education. A century after losing most of their property, many of these families are quite prosperous.

The most conservative areas of Africa tended to be in desert and semi-desert areas, but during World War I, two Tuareg revolts led the French to undercut the rebels by freeing their dependents. In 1946, there was suddenly a movement of slaves seeking liberation in an area north of Timbuctou. In Mauritania, external pressure, drought, and internal discontent led to the abolition of slavery in 1980. Early abolitions were ineffective. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were still some desert people living in servitude, and in the Sudan, civil war led to licensing of militias to attack areas supporting rebels. This is probably the only area where there has been a revival of slavery. There are some other areas where some form of the relationship still exists, but it involves status more than relations of economic exploitation. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Berlin Act; Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at; Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in; Islam and Antislavery; Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope; Liberia; North Africa and Abolition; Sierra Leone.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a renewed interest in the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade. In 1808, the year after the trade was made illegal in both Great Britain and the United States, Great Britain was sending naval vessels to the west coast of Africa in an effort to intercept slavers. By 1833, slavery was abolished in the British Empire, and most western European powers had been cajoled, bribed, or bullied by Great Britain into agreeing to the equipment clause and the mutual right of search. The right of search allowed British officers on slave patrol vessels to halt and search other vessels suspected of being slavers. The equipment clause allowed these officers to seize the intercepted vessels if there was
sufficient evidence that the craft was fitted out for the carrying of slaves. Indications that a vessel was destined to carry slaves included the presence of large cooking pots, shackles and manacles, and additional planks of wood that could quickly be constructed into a makeshift slave deck.

Although Great Britain had the permission of nearly every other relevant power to search suspicious vessels, the United States consistently refused to allow any person, other than American naval officers, to interrupt the journey of any ship flying the Stars and Stripes. This intransigent attitude can be traced to the impressment of American sailors before and during the War of 1812 and the determination by the American people that they would never again allow vessels belonging to their countrymen to be subject to any type of unauthorized search by British naval officers. As understandable as this position was, it effectively allowed the illegal traffic to flourish, as slavers from countries such as Portugal and Brazil simply switched to the American flag when they suspected that British cruisers might be in the area.

In an effort to quash the illegal use of the Stars and Stripes and to improve Anglo-American relations, the government of the United States agreed to Section VIII of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. This provision established that a regular American naval squadron, consisting of a minimum of eighty guns, would patrol the west coast of Africa to intercept any vessels suspected of being slavers and flying the American flag. Theoretically, the presence of American cruisers—designated the Africa Squadron—would solve the problem of British officers boarding suspicious American craft. In reality, the effectiveness of the squadron was negligible when compared to the results achieved by their British counterpart. Although American officers and men generally performed their duties diligently under extremely trying conditions, their force was never great enough to effectively guard the 3,000 miles of coastline used by slavers. The squadron rarely had more than a few ships on patrol at any given time, and the type of vessels sent to the area were usually too large to patrol the rivers and inlets favored by slavers for embarkation. In addition, the American supply base at Porto Praia was approximately 2,000 miles north from the main slaving areas. This meant that by the time any U.S. cruisers reached the principal slaving grounds, they were almost immediately forced to turn back if they were not to run out of supplies before the end of the voyage.

The orders sent to the first commander of the squadron, Captain Mathew Calbraith Perry, by Secretary of the Navy A.P. Upshur, also compromised the initial aims of the treaty. Upshur instructed Perry that his first responsibility was to protect the rights of American citizens engaged in lawful commerce and that this directive should take precedence over all other considerations. Upshur, in one brief, yet concise, set of orders, had changed the primary purpose of the Africa Squadron from suppressing the slave trade to the protection of U.S. nationals engaged in lawful commercial operations. For Upshur and many other Americans, it seemed more prudent to protect American citizens and commerce from British interference than to devote all energies and resources to what was, essentially, a moral issue that had so far bitterly divided the country. This division extended to the American
judicial system, and members of the Africa Squadron were repeatedly disheartened by the lack of convictions brought against slavers.

Knowing that American cruisers were rarely to be encountered in slaving waters, traffickers simply flew the Stars and Stripes all but to guarantee safe passage for their hapless human cargo. Frequent complaints registered by the British condemned the American efforts as half-hearted and completely insufficient. Indeed, Royal Navy officers argued that since the American squadron had been formed, the trade had actually increased due to the protection afforded by the Stars and Stripes to those not legally entitled to fly the flag. The British government refused to officially relinquish the right of impressments, and so the American government continued to deny the Royal Navy the right of search, the one allowance necessary to effectively police the trade.

This situation continued until 1861, when all but one vessel were recalled to home waters to assist in the naval blockades of the Civil War. In January 1862, the remaining ship left the west coast of Africa. Fearful that Great Britain might enter the war in support of the South, and realizing the total impracticality of sending a squadron to police the west coast of Africa during a time of war, Secretary of State Seward, on March 23, 1862, agreed to sign a mutual right of search treaty. With the much-needed authority for the British to search all suspect vessels, the Atlantic slave trade was all but over within a three-year period. In comparison to the British West Africa Squadron, the American efforts proved disappointing. Although firm figures are difficult to arrive at, it is estimated that during the period that the Africa Squadron was in existence, it captured approximately twenty-four slavers, although few were condemned. The Royal Navy captured 566 slave ships and well over ninety percent were condemned. For over half of its period of service, the Africa Squadron did not even fulfill its eighty-gun requirement. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition.


Claire Phelan

African American Communities

African Americans in the antebellum United States lived in major cities throughout the country, usually in biracial neighborhoods. They also established independent free black communities. In 1850, the ten largest African American communities (including free and enslaved people) were New Orleans (23,916), Baltimore (22,774), Charleston (12,969), Washington, D.C. (9,525), New York (7,448), Louisville (6,893), Philadelphia (6,471), St. Louis (3,683), Cincinnati (3,217), and Brooklyn (1,783). Several factors assisted
antislavery work in urban African American communities: black churches, schools, businesses, and benevolent institutions provided a supportive climate; lines between free and enslaved people were often blurred, and this assisted people to escape from slavery; these cities were all major ports, and ships and sailors provided important avenues both of communication and escape from slavery; and links with white allies brought resources into antislavery work. African American newspapers (including *Freedom's Journal*, New York, 1827–1829; *The Colored American*, New York, 1837–1841; *The North Star* and *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, Rochester, 1847–1859) played a major role in promoting antislavery agitation, as did national and state black conventions meeting in Philadelphia, New York City, and elsewhere, beginning in Philadelphia in 1830. Vigilance Committees, often biracial in composition, supported safe houses for the Underground Railroad (many of them kept by African Americans such as Theodore Wright in New York, William Still in Philadelphia, Lewis Hayden in Boston, Stephen Myers in Albany, and Jermain Loguen in Syracuse). Freedom seekers often settled in Northern cities, especially those such as Cincinnati (located directly across the Ohio River from the slave state of Kentucky), 72 percent of whose free black population in 1850 had been born in a slave state, and Buffalo (on the border with Canada), 57 percent of whose free black population in 1850 were Southern-born.

African Americans also created independent communities. Many maroon communities emerged throughout the colonial and early national period without official sanction; the earliest official settlement was Ft. Mose, formed under Spanish control near St. Augustine in 1738. After 1820, African Americans (sometimes with the help of European American allies, including slaveholders turned abolitionists) established dozens of identifiable independent communities in rural areas of the free states, many of them on the Midwestern frontier. Among the best known in the East were Timbuctoo, established in the Adirondacks of northern New York as part of a land grant by the abolitionist Gerrit Smith; Seneca Village, established by several hundred African Americans in what is now Central Park in New York City; and Sandy Ground on Staten Island, formed by farmers from New Jersey and oystermen from Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Many other free black communities were formed in New York State, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and elsewhere. In the Midwest, the Beech and Roberts settlements in Indiana were established in the 1830s; Rocky Fork was an important stop on the Underground Railroad in Illinois; New Philadelphia, established by Frank McWhorter in Illinois became the only documented township to be incorporated by African Americans before the Civil War. According to scholar Mary Ann Olding, as many as seventy such communities may have been established in Ohio between 1800 and 1865.

These communities were generally small agricultural or fishing villages, formed not only for economic independence, but also for political purposes: to create a geographic base for cultural independence and political action and to provide a safe haven for freedom seekers and an alternative to emigration to Liberia, Canada, or elsewhere. Some of them, however, became substantial settlements. The largest was Carthagen, which in 1860
had a population of 600. The second largest, and the only one to have an urban, rather than a rural economic base, was Weeksville, established in the 1830s four miles east of downtown Brooklyn. Weeksville's African American population reached 521 by 1855.


Judith Wellman

**Allen, Richard (1760–1831)**

While Richard Allen remains best known as the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (dedicated June 1794) in Philadelphia, he was also one of the leading black abolitionists of the early republic. Allen was born a slave, probably in Pennsylvania, but was soon sold to a small estate in Delaware. After converting to Methodism in 1777, Allen encouraged itinerant preachers to sermonize his master. The nominally antislavery lecture convinced Allen’s second master, Stookeley Sturgis, to sign a freedom agreement with the young slave in 1780, which Allen paid off early in 1783. Allen became an itinerant Methodist preacher over the next several years, maintaining his belief that Christianity was an abolitionist religion. Allen’s first major essay, "A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the year 1793” (published January 1794, the first copyrighted pamphlet by African Americans), was coauthored with Absalom Jones and featured a short, but sharp, attack on slavery. Subtitled “To Those Who Keep Slaves and Approve the Practice,” the mini-essay condemned slaveholders as un-Christian and challenged masters to not only emancipate bondspeople, but treat them as equals. “If you love your children, if you love your country, if you love the God of Love,” Allen declared, “clear your hands from slaves, burden not your children or country with them.”

From the 1790s through the 1830s, Allen’s “Mother Bethel” church became a key site of black abolitionist protest. Not only did Allen aid fugitive slaves, but he also welcomed antislavery advocates in protest meetings and
conventions. In 1817, he hosted a massive anti-colonization meeting, which produced a stirring pamphlet declaring free blacks’ allegiance to enslaved Americans. In 1830, Allen welcomed the inaugural convention of free black activists to Mother Bethel, a meeting called to bolster black protest movements nationally and consider Canadian emigration as a viable alternative to continued American oppression. Allen was also an advocate of the Free Produce Movement, which supported the purchase of non-slave derived goods, allowing proponents to hold meetings in Mother Bethel.

Allen’s career as an abolitionist was rich and varied. Although he was not allowed to join first-generation mainstream abolitionist organizations (such as the Pennsylvania Abolition Society), he did work with white abolitionists to aid kidnapped free blacks, secure indentures for recently liberated slaves, and inculcate principles of moral and religious uplift in free blacks. Frustrated by slavery’s growth and entrenched racism in Northern locales, Allen also flirted with black-led emigration plans to Africa, Haiti, and Canada between the 1810s and 1830s. In 1799, he signed one of the earliest African American congressional petitions, a memorial seeking an end to the domestic slave trade, as well as consideration of gradual abolitionism. Though a firm opponent of violent abolitionist means, Allen also welcomed to his church black South Carolinians accused of supporting the Denmark Vesey’s Conspiracy in 1822. Allen’s spiritual autobiography, published posthumously in 1832, was also one of the earliest antebellum slave narratives, reminding Americans that enslaved people longed for freedom. In short, Allen was a “giant” of black protest, as the Anglo-African magazine would write in 1859.


Richard Newman

Ambar, Malik (c. 1550–1626)

Beginning with their introduction into Deccan in the central south of the Indian sub-continent as slaves or mercenaries in local armies, Africans soon emerged as significant players in the politics of their new societies in India. They came to be known as Sidis (from “sayyid,” a respectful address for descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) or Habshi/Ethiopian (though not all were from Ethiopia). It was the slave trade that brought them to India. They were transported from the East African coast to the Middle East and from there across the Indian Ocean to South Asia. In their new homes in India, many worked as soldiers and body guards in the slave armies of Indian Muslim rulers. It was in these armies that some emerged to exercise considerable influence in the affairs of the states.

Among the most influential Sidi/slave soldiers in Western India was Malik Ambar, who, beginning as a slave, rose in the ranks to become the
commander-in-chief of the armies of the Sultans of Ahmadnagar (modern day Aurangabad). Little is known about his early life. He was apparently born a slave in Harar, Ethiopia around the mid-sixteenth century. When his master died, Ambar was bought by a slave trader and eventually landed in the slave markets of Baghdad. From there he was taken to India where he served as a slave soldier under the Bijapur Sultan. His talents made him stand out, and soon he was commanding troops for the king. He was instrumental in the defeat of Shah Jahan in Deccan. Later, however, he broke away from Bijapur and established an independent mercenary army consisting of Siddis and others, including local Deccan men. He soon entered the employment of Shah Jahan and helped him deal with the threat posed by his brothers who had designs on the crown. Ambar had become a formidable and most important figure in the Nizam Shahi state at the turn of the seventeenth century. He went on to play a major role for the next few decades campaigning against the Mughals, blocking their further attempts to penetrate deeper into the Deccan Sultanate and overthrowing it.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether Ambar received the assistance of Shahji Bhonsle (who was also in the service of the court) in training Marathas in guerrilla warfare. In any case, Ambar was the leader of a group of Afghan and Maratha soldiers who were extremely well trained. With their horse-riding skills, the Marathas became a formidable mobile force for surprise attacks that earned Malik Ambar a reputation as a great commander.

Ambar, who had already remained loyal to the state of Ahmadnagar, later imprisoned the grandson of Nizam Shah (King Murtaza II) and named himself regent minister. He could now implement financial, educational, and agricultural reforms. Internal opposition to the Mughal emperor allowed Malik Ambar to widen the territory under his control. He led expeditions against Bidar and Golconda (Hyderabad) and successfully withstood the attacks of Khan-i Khanan, commander of Mughal forces under Jahangir. He next installed Burhan III (1610–1631) on the throne before proceeding to deal with Bijapur and Golconda, though he met with limited success against the Mughals.

Ambar, who died in the 1620s, is remembered as having been not only a good commander and administrator, but also a great builder. He established Ghurkeh, later renamed Aurangabad, and decorated it with a magnificent palace and gardens. He was by far the most famous of the Muslim Siddis of India who survived either as part of the Deccan nobility or more commonly as farmers and poor unskilled workers. Ambar's remarkable career represents how some slave-soldiers used the military as a path out of slavery. See also Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Islam and Antislavery.

American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS)

Since the mid-1830s, contention had been growing in American abolitionist ranks over the stridently perfectionist positions advanced by the supporters of Boston editor William Lloyd Garrison, especially their harsh criticism of both religious denominations and governmental institutions as bulwarks of slavery. The Garrisonians often loudly denounced Northern churches for indirectly sanctioning slavery by continuing any form of fellowship with Southern slaveholders. Many Garrisonians endorsed extreme pacifistic or “non-resistant” principles and condemned most government activities as coercive. Further controversy arose when most Garrisonians also became advocates for a larger public role for females in the abolitionist movement.

These Garrisonian activities caused considerable consternation among more religiously orthodox and socially conservative abolitionists, who feared that the antislavery movement would be irreparably damaged by association with even less popular movements. Infighting among Massachusetts abolitionists caused a secession of Garrisonian opponents from the state antislavery organization and the formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society in early 1839. After a Garrisonian majority at the annual meeting of the national abolitionist body, the American Anti-Slavery Society, selected a woman as an officer in May 1840, several hundred dissenters quit in protest and founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Afterward, abolitionists often referred to the American Anti-Slavery Society and the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society as the “Old Organization” and the “New Organization,” respectively.

The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society headquartered itself in New York City, where wealthy Congregationalist merchant Lewis Tappan immediately emerged as its guiding light. Throughout its history, evangelical clergymen, including a significant number of African American ministers, dominated the group’s all-male leadership. These men kept the group’s abolitionist activities focused on lobbying religious institutions, although most also endorsed the new antislavery Liberty Party. Despite limited financial resources, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society attempted to sustain the abolitionists’ traditional moral suasion tactics. It sponsored a number of periodicals and sent out itinerant lecturers. The organization also developed supportive ties with British abolitionists who shared their religiously shaped perspective toward reform. Most of the energies and resources of these religiously-oriented abolitionists, however, were diverted into denominational antislavery campaigns, including the founding of “comeouter” sects such as the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, and interdenominational ventures such as the American Missionary Association.

Aside from these religious “affiliates,” the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society failed to develop a system of auxiliary organizations. By the early 1850s, it had suspended most of its publishing activities and existed mainly as a New York City executive committee that held an anniversary meeting and issued an annual report chronicling antislavery activities in
religious and political circles. In 1855, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society merged its operations with the remnant of the Liberty Party led by Gerrit Smith and reorganized itself as the American Abolition Society. This new group focused so heavily on an unsuccessful effort to create a radical political abolitionist alternative to the Republican Party that some of its members launched the short-lived Church Anti-Slavery Society in 1859 to preserve the original religious abolitionist activism of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. See also Come-Outerism; Perfectionism.


*John R. McKivigan*

### American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS)

Founded in Philadelphia on December 4, 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) actively promoted “immediatism”—the immediate emancipation of black slaves in the United States. The AASS “Declaration of Sentiments,” written at its founding convention, stated that the organization called for the immediate emancipation of blacks, ending racial prejudice and securing equal rights for blacks in America. The AASS condemned colonization plans, such as those promoted by the American Colonization Society, which hoped to transport free blacks in America to West Africa, maintaining that such efforts were meant primarily to remove free blacks rather than assist them.

William Lloyd Garrison was a leading figure of the AASS. He wrote the “Declaration of Sentiments” and established “moral suasion” as the method by which the AASS would achieve their goals. With twenty-one Quakers and a strong evangelical presence led by two prominent businessmen, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, the moral argument against slavery became the centerpiece of the AASS. To spread their campaign, while the national executive office established itself in New York City, local chapters were created throughout most of the North. By 1838, there were as many as 1,350 affiliates and 250,000 members. The minister Theodore Dwight Weld has been considered one of the most influential members. He organized a series of famous student debates on abolitionism when he was a teacher in Cincinnati at the Lane Theological Seminary, edited the AASS weekly, *The Emancipator*, from 1836 to 1840, and pseudonymously published *American Slavery as It Is* in 1839.

Other efforts as well were made by the AASS to shape public opinion. Speakers, including ex-slaves like Frederick Douglass, were sent out to preach against slavery. In 1835, an intensive postal campaign sent abolitionist pamphlets throughout the country. To make slavery an issue of national political debate, the AASS also organized a petition campaign to Congress. Southern members of the House of Representatives, in response, successfully passed the Gag Rule in 1836, barring petitions relating to slavery from being read. In 1844, after Congressman John Quincy Adams, the
former President of the United States, maintained continuously that the Gag Rule violated the constitutional right to petition Congress, the ban was repealed.

With its strong egalitarian message, the AASS was a biracial and mixed-gendered organization. Several women played a prominent role in the AASS. Sarah and Angelina Grimké, sisters who left their slaveholding family in South Carolina, caused controversy within the AASS in the 1830s when they violated notions of the “female sphere” and spoke publicly against slavery to male audiences and published criticisms of the clergy. Controversy over the role of women culminated in 1840 at the annual meeting when Abby Kelley Foster was elected to the business committee. In response, fearing that equal inclusion of women would alienate the churches, Arthur and Lewis Tappan led a group away from the AASS to form the new American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Though subsequently becoming a minority and more radical fringe within the abolitionist movement, the AASS propaganda remained influential, continuing to make slavery an issue of public debate. In 1870, when the Fifteenth Amendment granted blacks the right to vote, the AASS disbanded. See also Garrisonians.


Daniel P. Kotzin

American Colonization Society

The American Colonization Society was founded in 1816 to send African Americans, both slave and free, to Africa. It was supported by a broad array of groups, including prominent politicians, clergymen, and reformers who were attracted to the cause by quite different and even contradictory motives. Colonization achieved its greatest success during the decade following the creation of the colony of Liberia on the west coast of Africa in 1820, and retained considerable popularity among Northern whites throughout the antebellum era. But by the 1830s, numerous problems seriously diminished the organization’s effectiveness.

The rapid growth of the free black population and mounting opposition to slavery following the American Revolution prompted numerous whites to call for the colonization of African Americans. Some Northern blacks also promoted emigration to Africa as a means of escaping white prejudice and ending the slave trade.

One of numerous benevolent organizations established after the War of 1812, the American Colonization Society promised various benefits for its diverse constituencies. For many antislavery groups and evangelical activists in the 1810s and 1820s—especially in the North and the Upper South—colonization represented a conscientious alternative to acquiescing to the existence of slavery, a relatively painless means of dealing with racism, and a vehicle for Christianizing and “civilizing” Africa. The Society attracted the support of nearly all the major religious groups, and clergymen and lay leaders played important roles in the movement.
Many Northern colonizationists also hoped that the repatriation of emancipated slaves would arouse slaveholders’ benevolent impulses and eventually move them to end slavery, or at least ameliorate its worst abuses. Moreover, some of these colonizationists argued that only in Africa could African Americans escape the damaging effects of white prejudice and rise to positions of respect and influence.

Yet most white colonizationists believed that the removal of degraded blacks would preclude racial amalgamation and protect the classical republican virtues of order, morality, and harmony. Racial prejudice, they insisted, was the product of immutable popular attitudes, and African Americans were incapable of achieving equality with whites. In addition, many Southern colonizationists—including prominent slaveholders such as James Monroe and Henry Clay—considered free blacks a “troublesome presence” that gave slaves hope for emancipation; some owners claimed colonization would therefore serve to strengthen slavery. Finally, a few Northern blacks, such as John Russwurm, advocated colonization because they hoped for a better life in Africa than was possible in a racist America.

The organization thrived in the 1820s. By the early 1830s, over 200 local auxiliaries were active, and numerous state legislatures passed resolutions commending its program. The Society’s board of directors, centered in Washington, D.C., received vital federal assistance for the creation of the colony of Liberia in 1820. Moreover, a voluntary system of support raised substantial revenue, Robert R. Gurley served capably as the Society’s national secretary, and the organization’s magazine, the African Repository, disseminated the colonization message. By 1830, the Society had sent well over 1,000 African Americans, most of them emancipated slaves, to Liberia.

Yet, beginning in the 1830s, the Society experienced serious problems. Escalating partisan political conflict, as well as sectional divisions over whether the organization should be an instrument for ending or perpetuating slavery, precluded federal subsidies. In addition, numerous slaveholders, resentful of the antislavery pronouncements of Northern colonizationists, concluded that colonization represented a threat to slavery, and thus left the Society.

At the same time, William Lloyd Garrison and other antislavery Northerners, convinced that colonization was an unrealistic and deceptive scheme that served to deepen racial prejudice and perpetuate slavery, defected from the colonization ranks and launched the abolitionist crusade. The immediateists’ attacks placed colonizationists on the defensive and drained vital energy and money from the Society.

Most Northern blacks had long resented the colonizationists’ racist stereotypes of African Americans and demanded freedom and equal rights in the United States. During the 1830s, they constructed alliances with white abolitionists and created their own organizations to combat colonization and racism. Consequently, between 1820 and 1833, only 169 of 2,886 emigrants to Liberia were Northern blacks. In fact, even during the 1820s and early 1830s, when the Society achieved its greatest success, in any given year the increase in the slave population far exceeded the number of emigrants sent to Liberia.
These groups’ opposition effectively doomed the colonization cause to failure. The Society’s mounting debt, produced by declining revenues and rising costs for transporting emigrants and maintaining the colony, as well as defections by a number of Northern antislavery colonizationists who sought to occupy a middle ground between colonization and abolitionism, compounded these problems. In addition, colonizationists in Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania, who were critical of the national officers’ mismanagement, turned to independent action. The national society responded to the state organizations’ challenge by granting them considerable autonomy. But during the 1840s, Gurley was forced out as secretary, and the organization splintered.

Ironically, the colonization idea remained popular among Northern whites even as the Society struggled to survive. By the late 1840s, Liberia, which for many years had been a financial burden and poorly managed, became independent of the Society. Although revenues and the number of emigrants rose in the 1850s, the organization’s vitality continued to wane. Emancipation during the Civil War virtually ended the Society’s existence. See also Garrisonians; Sierra Leone.


Hugh Davis

American Convention of Abolition Societies

The American Convention of Abolition Societies met sporadically between 1794 and 1836, most often in Philadelphia, the home of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. As the name implied, the American Convention gathered early abolition societies from around the young nation to discuss and coordinate (where possible) abolitionist tactics and strategies. The Convention’s first meeting in Philadelphia attracted twenty-five delegates from nine different local abolition groups, including antislavery organizations from Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, and even Virginia. Over the next several decades, groups from Delaware, Kentucky, and Tennessee attended Convention meetings. The American Convention—short for “the American convention of delegates from the abolition societies established in different parts of the United States”—assembled delegates a remarkable number of times: almost annually from 1795 onward (1795–1798, 1800–1801, and 1803–1805); then off and on in 1809, 1812, and 1815; annually again between 1825 and 1829; and once again for a final convocation in 1836. As this timeline suggests, early abolitionism was far from an inchoate collection of antislavery theorists, content merely to criticize slavery from afar. Rather, through the leadership of groups like the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, the New York Manumission Society, and
the American Convention, the early abolition movement was well organized and savvy in its strategies during the early Republic.

Indeed, the American Convention’s greatest success came in the 1790s, when it helped push Congress to pass the very first anti-slave trade law—a 1794 statute banning Americans from trading captured Africans to foreign traders. The law also prevented foreign ships from outfitting slaving vessels in American ports. Armed with the new law, abolitionists in Pennsylvania and New York successfully prosecuted several American slave traders who flouted the statute. In addition, members of the American Convention shared information on such developing problems as the domestic slave trade and the related issue of the kidnapping of free blacks. In Pennsylvania, for example, abolitionists used information gleaned from their own research and discussions with members of the American Convention to petition the state legislature for stronger penalties against kidnappers. In other states such as Connecticut and New York, local societies aided aggrieved slaves, free blacks, and the kidnapped with significant legal support.

Nevertheless, the American Convention was radically different from the second wave abolitionists of the post-1830 era. To begin with, the overwhelming majority of delegates to the American Convention favored gradual abolition plans debated and promulgated exclusively at the state level. Secondly, the American Convention, like all early abolition societies, did not admit African American members. Finally, the American Convention did not prevent colonizationists or even slaveholders from becoming members. In fact, because early abolition societies in the Southern and Southwestern states often included slaveholders, the American Convention’s Northern members refused to make manumission of one’s slave a requirement for attendance.

The ascension of immediatist antislavery groups in the 1830s marginalized the American Convention. Nevertheless, its long history prior to that time illuminates important aspects of abolitionism’s founding era.


Richard Newman

American Jews and Antislavery

The three decades preceding the Civil War witnessed a rapid growth of antislavery organizations in America, entities that were overwhelmingly Protestant. Since the abolitionist movement became virtually synonymous with evangelical religious fervor, Jewish participation was understandably limited. Nevertheless, there were Jews—most of whom were recent immigrants who had been radicalized by their experiences in Europe—who joined the abolitionist cause and managed to overcome significant social and religious obstacles. These barriers not only included a Gospel-oriented
rationale for ending slavery, but evangelicals further alienated potential Jewish supporters by their aggressive conversion efforts, often directed at the most vulnerable members of the Jewish community. On the other hand, traditional Judaism discouraged public activism of any kind and avoided religious dialogues with Gentiles, a passive strategy that emerged after centuries of Old World oppression. Despite a surge of Jewish emigrants beginning in the 1840s, the Jewish population in the United States remained very low—50,000 by 1850—and the idea of a fraternal Judeo-Christian ethic had yet to take hold on either side of the religious spectrum. Jewish newcomers were confronted with poverty, language barriers, and substantial prejudice; controversial moral crusades were hardly an option for most Jews. Given these circumstances, it is remarkable that individual Jews, often at great personal risk, were drawn to the antislavery movement and assumed leadership positions, sometimes within abolitionist organizations, or as independent activists and/or synagogue leaders.

The most significant Jewish abolitionist to emerge during the antebellum years was Moses Elias Levy (1782–1854). Levy abandoned a lucrative career as a West Indies merchant/shipper in order to promote an ambitious agenda based on European notions of radical reform. After establishing himself in the United States, Levy traveled to London where liberal Protestants, all staunch abolitionists, bestowed acclaim upon him. Levy’s Plan for the Abolition of Slavery (London, 1828) remains the earliest and most important antislavery publication by an American Jew. His effectiveness in London—then the world center of the abolitionist movement—was due not only to Levy’s accomplished writing, oratory, and extensive knowledge of scripture, but owed a great deal to his finely honed diplomatic skills, particularly when dealing with Christian conversionists. Aside from his antislavery efforts, Levy helped establish the first series of public dialogues between Christians and Jews in Britain. He managed to retain a strong Jewish identity while building a reputation as a social activist and antislavery crusader, a position considered so unique that some Protestants believed that he heralded the millennium. Because of his vulnerability as a plantation owner in the South, as well as his belief that immediate emancipation would prove catastrophic, Levy did not participate in the antislavery movement after his return to the United States.

Like Moses Levy, Polish-born Ernestine Rose (1810–1892) was profoundly influenced by European reformers, particularly the communal/egalitarian ideas of the Scottish textile mill owner, Robert Owen. Quite unlike Levy, however, Rose was a secular Jew and disavowed any religious convictions. The estranged daughter of a Polish rabbi, Rose arrived in New York City in 1836 determined to further the rights of women, as well as to liberate the slaves. Rose was a dynamic speaker who lectured throughout the United States—including one brave stint in Columbia, South Carolina, during a period when any such activity was deemed scandalous for a woman and posed real danger regardless of gender. Newspapers such as the New York Tribune and the Cleveland Plain Dealer praised Rose’s platform oratory, but her foreign accent, blunt manner, and lack of sentimentality defied convention, and she remained a contentious figure. Rose’s unrepentant atheism
also drew the ire of ministers everywhere. Despite the controversy, Rose was championed by William Lloyd Garrison and a laudatory, biographical sketch was published in *The Liberator* (1856).

During the 1850s, a relatively small group of well-educated Jewish émigrés from Germany and Eastern Europe escaped the tumult of the failed revolutions of 1848–1851 and, steeped in the ideals of universal liberty and radical activism, took up the antislavery banner. Many of these Jewish abolitionists adhered to the liberal tenants of Reform Judaism, a movement that relied on broad moral precepts rather than the rigid laws and regulations inherent in traditional Talmudic Judaism. Broadly speaking, this same break from biblical and religious literalism presented itself in the new perspectives of Garrisonian abolitionists during the same period.

Among the most prominent of these Jewish antislavery activists was Rabbi David Einhorn (1809–1879). An acclaimed scholar, Bavarian-born Einhorn immigrated to the United States in 1855 after his liberal reform advocacy drew the ire of conservative religious and secular authorities in Europe. From his position as rabbi of a German-speaking Baltimore congregation, Einhorn soon became a leader of the radical Reform movement in America. In 1861, Einhorn and layman Michael Heilprin (1823–1888), linguist, writer, and former supporter of the Hungarian revolution, rebutted the proslavery apologia of New York rabbi Morris J. Raphall (1798–1868) in a series of published articles. Their arguments focused on scriptural interpretations and the dialogue became, in effect, another manifestation of the bitter divide between Reform and Orthodox Jewry. Nevertheless, the affair brought significant national attention to the righteous fervor of Jews who equated the culture of enslavement with the oppression of all minorities. Shortly thereafter, Einhorn’s tenure in Baltimore was cut short after his anti-slavery sermons and articles provoked mob retaliation, and he was forced to flee to Philadelphia. Another noted rabbi, Bernhard Felsenthal (1822–1908) of Chicago, also used the pulpit to denounce slavery and to criticize Raphall’s arguments. The only non-Reform rabbi to take a public stand against slavery, despite the vehement disapproval of certain influential members of his Philadelphia congregation, was Sabato Morais (1823–1897), an eloquent Italian-born cleric who became a founder of Conservative Judaism. Because of the abolitionist movement’s strong association with evangelical Christianity, antislavery rabbis refrained from identifying themselves as abolitionists before the Civil War, although this was primarily an issue of semantics and propriety.

Other Jews felt less encumbered. Twenty-three-year-old adventurer and former Austrian student revolutionary, August Bondi, along with two other Jewish compatriots, helped slaves escape and fought pro-slavery rebels during John Brown’s campaign in Kansas. Fellow Viennese radical, Isidor Busch, was a leader of the abolitionist faction of the Missouri state legislature during the Civil War and played a pivotal role in freeing the state’s slaves and in keeping Missouri in the Union. Lewis N. Dembitz, the uncle of future Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, published his own German translation of *Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and became a zealous abolitionist in the border state of Kentucky. Two Jewish shopkeepers,
brothers Joseph and Isaac Friedman, undertook the risky enterprise of freeing a slave, simply after hearing his plea in a small Alabama town. Ernest Krackowitzer and Abraham Jacobi, both distinguished New York City physicians, became active abolitionists. Decades earlier, Samuel Myers, a native Virginian and associate of Moses E. Levy, was appointed a delegate of the Washington (D.C.) Abolition Society during the same period that Levy became engaged in the antislavery crusade in London.

While the exact number and identities of Jewish abolitionists may never be known, Bernhard Felsenthal’s 1862 claim that hundreds of Jews were actively engaged in the cause may not be an overstatement. Still, the percentage of those who identified with and openly supported abolitionism was a mere fraction of the total Jewish population. By and large they represented exceptional individuals who rejected a culture of passive acceptance in favor of the social justice tradition that resided within Judaism. In doing so, they surmounted the long-standing legacy of Judeo-Christian enmity and distrust. As members of an often persecuted minority who were themselves subject to racist attacks, these early Jewish activists often extended their concerns to other humanitarian issues and were particularly sensitive to the plight of all minorities.


C.S. Monaco

American Missionary Association (AMA)

Organized in 1846 when several antislavery and Christian mission groups combined, the American Missionary Association (AMA) provided benevolent and educational assistance to African Americans and Native Americans through a network of foreign and home missions.

Founding groups of the AMA included the Mendi Committee, which consisted of former members of the Amistad Committee. Following the Amistad trial, the group reorganized to aid the rebellious Africans who overtook the Amistad slave ship. The group helped these Africans or Mendians resettle in their homeland. The Union Missionary Society, organized by blacks to take Christianity into Africa, was another key addition to the AMA union of groups. Two smaller groups that also joined the AMA were the Western Evangelical Missionary Association and the Committee for West India Missions.
While the AMA was nondenominational, it aligned most strongly with the Congregational Church. Leaders of the AMA included Lewis Tappan, Simeon S. Jocelyn, Theodore S. Wright, Samuel Cornish, and Samuel Ringgold Ward. The goal of the group was to spread the Christian gospel to all races. It did not allow membership by or support from slave holders. The group supported both foreign and home missions prior to the Civil War.

In October 1848, John G. Fee in Madison County, Kentucky, became the first Southern AMA minister. His fruitful work led to additional AMA work in the South. Notable Southern missionaries included Wilbur Fisk, Kentucky; Daniel Worth, North Carolina; as well as David Breed and George Bassett in Washington, D.C. When the AMA took a more aggressive position toward abolition in 1859, repercussions followed in the South. A number of AMA missionaries were driven by force or threats from their Southern posts including John Fee.

During this early period, the AMA supported foreign missions in Africa, Canada West (Ontario), Thailand, Egypt, the West Indies, and other places. The support of the Mendi Mission at Sierra Leone was of special interest to the group. Fugitive slaves in Canada were also of concern. The AMA also served Chinese immigrants in California.

During and after the Civil War, the AMA redirected its attention to aiding and educating African Americans, particularly newly freed persons. African Americans liberated by the war were generally destitute and homeless. Many lived in vast tent cities or camp towns, where living conditions were often unhealthy and overcrowded.

The AMA sent hundreds of teachers into the South and established numerous schools and churches during Reconstruction. The AMA opened numerous elementary schools in the South to all, regardless of race. The movement of hundreds of teachers into the South by the AMA and other groups gave rise to the stereotype of the Yankee school marm.

In a time when few schools or colleges were open to blacks, the AMA established academies for teachers, as well as general colleges. Over time, some AMA primary schools developed into schools of higher learning. Unlike many short-lived Reconstruction projects, the AMA maintained educational efforts for African Americans in the South over a long period. The group possessed a clear and enduring vision of education as a vital tool to improve the lives and opportunities of American blacks.

Colleges with AMA roots include Atlanta University, Georgia; Berea College, Kentucky; Dillard University, Louisiana; Fisk University, Tennessee; Howard University, District of Columbia; LeMoyne Institute, Pennsylvania; and Talladega College, Alabama. These colleges formed the core of what is now known as historically black colleges and universities. The AMA is now a mission of the United Church of Christ and continues to support several of these colleges.

Amistad

The Amistad was a Spanish vessel carrying captured Africans from Havana, Cuba, to Puerto Principe, another port in the Spanish colony, in June 1839. The Africans had been taken off the coast of Africa by a Spanish slaver earlier in the year, in violation of an Anglo-Spanish treaty outlawing the transatlantic slave trade. On July 1, 1839, the 39 captives, led by Cinqué, mutinied and seized the vessel, forcing the remaining crew to set course for Africa. The Spanish sailors however, sailed secretly for the United States, and the Amistad arrived off the eastern end of Long Island on August 26. The crew of the USS Washington discovered the ship, hauled it to New London, Connecticut, and commenced a claim for salvage in federal court.

Abolitionists sought to use this claim, or prize case, as a test for the legality of slavery. Arthur Tappan, Joshua Leavitt, Simon Jocelyn, and other prominent abolitionists formed the Amistad Committee. They hired New Haven attorney Roger S. Baldwin, known as a lawyer for the downtrodden, as counsel for the captives. The case came before the Circuit Court, presided over by Supreme Court Justice Smith Thompson and District Court Judge Andrew T. Judson. Baldwin and his co-counsel argued that the captives were illegally taken into slavery and should go free. District Attorney William Holabird argued the position held by the administration of Democratic President Martin Van Buren that the Africans were Spanish property and should be returned under the terms of Pinckney’s Treaty of 1795. Thompson ruled that the court had no jurisdiction over a piracy case aboard a Spanish vessel and sent the admiralty portion of the case back to the district court. In the meantime, the Spanish minister to the United States pressed the Van Buren administration to give up the captives.

The slave mutiny on board the Amistad off the coast of Cuba. The ship was captured by the American Navy but the Supreme Court ruled that, under international law, the men should be freed. Getty Images.
In January 1840, Judson ruled that the captives were not slaves. The Spanish crewmembers that survived claimed the captives had been born in Cuba. Resourceful examination, however, revealed that the Africans did not speak Spanish; further inquiry determined that in fact they had been captured in the Sierra Leone region of West Africa. Therefore, seized illegally, they were not Spanish property. Holabird and the Spanish claimants appealed the case to the Circuit Court, which re-affirmed the decision in April. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court.

For months, the Amistad Committee had tried to recruit John Quincy Adams as counsel for the captives. Finally, the aging and hesitant Adams relented and joined the legal team in late 1840, agreeing to argue his first legal case in thirty years. Adams delivered a nine-hour argument on February 24 and March 1, 1841. Justice Joseph Story delivered the opinion of the court on March 9. He ruled that the African-born captives had never legally been slaves and were free. As kidnap victims, they had a right to revolt against their captors. The cabin boy, who had been born a slave, was ordered returned to Cuba. Abolitionists had hoped for a broader condemnation of the legality of slavery, but Story’s opinion was more narrowly based. The surviving captives set sail for Africa in November 1841. The abolitionists had hoped that the natural law of freedom would triumph over the statute law that upheld slavery, but Story’s decision revealed that the courts could not be used to abolish slavery. Lewis Tappan foreshadowed the next phase of the abolition movement by helping the Amistad’s cabin boy escape to Canada before he could be returned to Cuba. See also Cuba, Emancipation in; Democratic Party and Antislavery; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Robert W. Smith

Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism

Antislavery evangelical Protestantism emerged in Great Britain and the United States in the last quarter of the eighteenth century within an environment of changing theological doctrines. While evangelicalism alone did not cause antislavery, there is little doubt that it contributed significantly to its rise and to a variety of other social reform efforts. The demand for immediate emancipation after 1830 sustained an especially strong link with evangelicalism. Many leading abolitionists employed Biblical language, and evangelical Protestants led the drive to found antislavery organizations. Yet, pronounced divisions within American Protestantism after 1840 revealed that not all evangelicals advocated immediate emancipation. Nevertheless, antislavery evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic shaped the movement in significant ways. Not only did they draw attention to slavery’s immoral nature, but they agitated politically for an end to the international slave trade and for slavery’s abolition. In the United States, their involvement in both radical and moderate antislavery efforts subsequently coincided with
the collapse of the Second Party System and the increasingly divisive sectionalism that ultimately resulted in the Civil War.

Origins

Antislavery sentiment among evangelical Protestants can be traced to the influence of the Society of Friends, popularly known as Quakers, in both England and the American colonies, from the early eighteenth century. While an older generation of British Quakers, including George Keith and Benjamin Lay, had protested the buying and selling of slaves, it was not until the 1757 London Yearly Meeting that Quakers as a religious body began to consider the matter seriously. Pennsylvania Quakers like John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, expressing concern over the inherent sinfulness of slavery and its effect on the purity of Friends, encouraged their British counterparts to discipline Quakers who engaged in the slave trade. In 1761, London Yearly Meeting agreed to disown slave dealers. By 1774, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting adopted measures to ensure the eventual manumission of Quaker-owned slaves. Quaker insistence on the immorality of the slave trade and slaveholding drew attention from evangelical Protestants. Benezet, in particular, corresponded with British evangelicals such as John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and Granville Sharp, an outspoken proponent of abolishing the foreign slave trade. In 1787, Sharp joined British Quakers and Evangelicals to form the Abolition Committee, dedicated to ending the slave trade.

Evangelical theology was critical to the early British antislavery movement. Methodists and Evangelical Anglicans stressed individual salvation and redemption from sin over liturgical obedience. Emphasizing each believer’s personal responsibility to reform society and the nation, British evangelicals focused their energies on abolishing the slave trade. Like Quakers, they equated buying and selling slaves with moral corruption. In a 1791 letter to William Wilberforce, a member of Parliament, John Wesley called the slave trade, “that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature.” Wilberforce, who converted to the evangelical faith in 1785, spent twenty-two years struggling to secure passage by Parliament of a bill abolishing slavery. In 1807, he finally succeeded, a testament to the increasing weight evangelicals carried in the antislavery cause.

British antislavery evangelicals extended their influence beyond England’s shores. Wilberforce, for example, maintained contact with Americans and congratulated President James Monroe on Congress’s 1807 passage of a bill ending the United States’ participation in the international slave trade. After the British defeated Napoleon in 1814, evangelicals sought to make abolition of the European slave trade fundamental to a peace agreement and gathered nearly a million signatures on 800 antislavery petitions that they presented to Parliament. Although it is doubtful that these petitions swayed European leaders, the political pressure applied by evangelicals certainly encouraged British peace negotiators to represent their countrymen’s position to the international community. In 1815, most continental powers agreed to abolish the slave trade either immediately or within a few years.
In America, early antislavery evangelicals responded powerfully to the Edwardsean theology that emerged from the Great Awakening. Even though influenced by both Quakerism and British evangelicalism, these reformers relied heavily on Jonathan Edwards’ notion of disinterested benevolence, or good will toward one’s fellow man that was not motivated by self-interest. Interpreting Edwards’s abstract concept as a call to practical action, several of his disciples, including Samuel Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and Lemuel Haynes, began preaching boldly against the evils of slavery during the Revolutionary period. In 1776, Samuel Hopkins informed the Continental Congress that slavery was a “very great and public sin.” Once they linked slavery with sin, New Divinity preachers like Hopkins, a staunch Calvinist, demanded immediate repentance and complete emancipation. Among those employing Hopkins’s interpretation of Edwards were British antislavery evangelicals William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp.

The American Revolution sharply impacted American antislavery evangelicalism. Imbued with the egalitarian language of the Declaration of Independence “that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,” New Divinity evangelicals tied abolition inextricably to the success of the young Republic. According to these reformers, the virtue necessary to be good republican citizens stemmed from disinterested benevolence and could not be sustained in a land of slaveholders. One New Divinity preacher, Nathaniel Niles, asked in 1774, “Would we enjoy liberty? Then we must grant it to others.” These early evangelical calls for abolition, however, were overshadowed by the political exigency to preserve a newly created union, many of whose founders were slaveholders.

Two factors spurred the growth of antislavery evangelicalism in the first decades of the nineteenth century: the rapid social change accompanying the frontier’s westward advance after the American Revolution and a transformation in Christian theology during the 1820s and 1830s. In the decades following the Revolution, New Englanders steeped in the Yankee heritage of Christian benevolence flooded western New England and upstate New York. When the market revolution and the Erie Canal transformed the region after the War of 1812, many individuals unfamiliar with Yankee Protestantism flocked to newly created boomtowns such as Utica and Rochester, New York. On a frontier where few churches existed, Protestants feared the rise of moral corruption and disruption in the social order. In this unsettled, anxious region, Protestant evangelists like Lyman Beecher and Charles Grandison Finney discovered a fertile field for missionary work. Preaching a liberalized Calvinism, they initiated a wave of enthusiastic spiritual revivals that inspired conversion and social reform.

The religious campaigns conducted by Finney between 1824 and 1834 throughout New York State supplied ample impetus for the antislavery movement. Departing from the Calvinist doctrine that sinners were completely passive during conversion, Beecher and Finney preached that the individual will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, was free to choose God’s universal offer of grace. Declaring individuals responsible for their own repentance, the new doctrine indicated that revivals and believers could persuade others to repent as well and eventually transform all of society. Employing
Edwardsean theology, Finney, declared that “all sin consists in selfishness; and all holiness or virtue, in disinterested benevolence.” Thus charged with the duty to pursue God’s good selflessly in the world, converts initiated a variety of social reforms such as temperance and home missions, but embraced no reform with such impassioned dedication as they did abolitionism. Even though Quakers had been instrumental in the formation of early abolition societies like the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, evangelical Protestants in the 1830s invested in the movement with an unprecedented zeal.

The concept of perfectionism motivated many antislavery evangelical Protestants. Finney preached that individuals, by exercising their regenerated moral agency, could achieve perfect holiness or sanctification. Perfectionists believed that they could transform society one individual at a time and that eradicating sin would ultimately usher in Christ’s millennial kingdom. Revivals and reform societies were deemed essential to hastening the millennium’s arrival.

Rise of Immediatism

By the 1820s, antislavery evangelicals in both Great Britain and the United States considered the entire institution of slavery a national sin. Not content merely with an end to the slave trade, abolitionists organized more deliberately for complete abolition. In England, the early efforts by Quakers and their evangelical allies had created a climate conducive to immediate abolitionism. Employing often exclusively religious language, they proclaimed colonial slavery “a System full of Wickedness, hateful to God, and a Curse and Disgrace to Britain.” Motivated by evangelical beliefs and by slave unrest in the West Indies, abolitionist activities multiplied after 1830. Activists spoke to overflowing crowds between 1830 and 1832, lecturing sometimes for hours to thousands of people. Notably, evangelical dissenters offered their churches for these assemblies.

Similarly, American agitation for immediate emancipation became more pronounced after 1830. Through the late 1820s, most opponents of slavery believed gradual emancipation—a policy of steadily releasing the enslaved over many years into society as free—was the most temperate and feasible plan. It was originally advocated by the American Convention of Abolition Societies and enacted in various Northern states in the late-eighteenth century. However, after Finney’s revivals through upstate and western New York from 1826 to 1831, antislavery activists in the North began to adopt a more radical position, rejecting gradualism and plans for black removal as far too compromised with slavery. Perfectionist and millennial in outlook, they espoused immediate and total emancipation as the only path to national regeneration. The relationship between evangelicalism and anti-slavery solidified in the ensuing decades.

Early Tactics

Evangelicals skillfully mobilized public opinion. In England, veterans from the battle over the slave trade joined with a new, younger generation of
reformers to form the Anti-Slavery Society in 1823. It provided an organizational base from which to stir the public and government against slavery. During its first year, the Society printed over 200,000 tracts; by 1830, it published more than double that number. Key to their massive campaign were the thousands of antislavery petitions submitted to Parliament. Between 1826 and 1832, reformers gathered more than 3,500 petitions, many of which originated with church congregations. In addition, Wesleyan Methodists and other nonconformists worked together to encourage voters to elect members of Parliament who supported immediate emancipation. Public orations to large gatherings were also commonly employed. These tactics, combined with numerous other social, economic, and cultural factors, led to Parliament’s 1833 passage of the Emancipation Act, abolishing slavery in the British Empire.

Significant and difficult as was gaining emancipation in Great Britain, it was a far more daunting assignment in the United States. In 1830, Southerners held two million slaves, planters commanded enormous political power, and the Federal government was powerless to end slavery in the states. American evangelicals determined to deploy moral suasion as their principal tactic. Consistent with their perfectionist vision, moral suasionists such as Lewis Tappan, Elizur Wright, Jr., and William Lloyd Garrison believed that slaveholders could be brought to repentance and abolition by a constant declaiming upon moral truth and the barbaric character of slavery. Wright declared that only “direct repentance, confession, and reparation of injury” would bring about slavery’s end. In 1833, Tappan, Wright, and other evangelicals, including Joshua Leavitt and James G. Birney, founded the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) as a national organization to bring abolitionists together under one association and, like their British counterparts, to mobilize public opinion. They sought to convert the entire nation to immediatism. With the Society’s support, reformers petitioned state legislatures and flooded the postal system with antislavery pamphlets to induce Southern masters to emancipate their slaves. By 1838, evangelically inspired abolitionists had formed over 200 antislavery auxiliaries and submitted petitions to Congress with more than 400,000 signatures.

Employing religious language, antislavery activists compared conversion to immediatism with conversion to Christ. For these evangelicals, abolitionism was a sacred duty or calling. Theodore Dwight Weld, a Finney convert and AASS agent, proclaimed that “as long as I am a moral agent I am fully prepared to act out my belief in that thus saith the Lord—‘Faith without WORKS is dead.’” Fueled by righteous faith, antislavery Protestants understood themselves as missionaries. In 1836, for example, the AASS permitted Weld to recruit sixty-nine other men to join him in his crusade. Like the “seventy” that Christ sent out to spread the Gospel message, these abolitionists preached the good news of immediatism.

Throughout the 1830s, especially after the Emancipation Act of 1833, British evangelicals sought to encourage American abolitionists. Theodore Dwight Weld, for example, embraced abolitionism after corresponding with the British Presbyterian, Charles Stuart. Baptists and Methodists, major American denominations, faced increasing pressure from across the Atlantic
to oppose slavery more forcefully. British Methodists in 1837 castigated the Georgia Conference for refusing to declare slavery morally evil. The Board of Baptist Ministers In and Near London exhorted American Baptist clergy “to act in the spirit and with the firmness of Christian principle” to achieve abolition. Many American evangelicals welcomed this transatlantic support. Arthur Tappan claimed that it “greatly aided us in effecting that reformation of public opinion here which it is our object to effect.” Although the 1840s brought new challenges to American activists, the **British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society** continued to sustain and encourage them.

**Division**

Because American reformers, unlike British abolitionists, grappled with slavery within their nation’s borders, they never approached unanimity on antislavery methods. Antislavery evangelical Protestantism encompassed a variety of positions from conservative to radical. For example, in 1834, a controversy over antislavery methods developed at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. The school’s president, evangelical preacher Lyman Beecher, encouraged a harmonious working relationship between abolitionists and colonizationists—supporters of the **American Colonization Society**, which proposed removing free blacks from the country as the best method to prompt manumissions and ease inter-racial tensions. Student leader, Theodore Dwight Weld, however, strongly opposed the colonization plan. He considered the plan thoroughly sinful as it respected slaveholders and sanctioned racial prejudice. Instead, he advocated immediate emancipation and racial equality and a thorough rejection of colonizationism. While at Lane, he converted students to immediatism and engineered reform projects, including education programs for Cincinnati’s African American community. When the seminary’s evangelical trustees expelled Weld’s group of students as too radical, the Tappan brothers, wealthy contributors to the school, founded Oberlin College as an alternative for abolitionist students and installed Charles Grandison Finney as professor of theology. Weld and his cohort relocated there. Oberlin became the first college in the country to accept both men and women, black and white.

By 1840, factional discord ruptured the AASS. Many **Garrisonians** renounced political action, withdrew from regular denomination fellowship, and favored full female inclusion in the governance and promotion of antislavery. The Tappans, Elizur Wright, Jr., and Henry B. Stanton opposed these radical views and feared a conservative backlash against the antislavery movement if they were endorsed. The pressure to allow women an active voice within the Society finally forced the rancorous debate into the open, leading to the organization’s fissure. The Garrisonians gained control of the AASS while the Tappans and other similarly minded Protestants formed the new **American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society**.

It was ironic that evangelicals should split over women’s participation in the antislavery movement. Women who had been converted during the revivals of the 1820s and 1830s represented the majority of church members in the antebellum North and organized many antislavery auxiliaries. In
addition, they signed legislative petitions and actively collected petition signatures. Angelina and Sarah Grimké, former slaveholders from South Carolina, became famous for speaking publicly for the AASS from 1836 to 1838. As evangelicals, the sisters employed Scriptural arguments against both slavery and women’s oppression. After their retirement in 1838, other less well-known women continued to support abolitionism through churches and female antislavery societies. Nevertheless, gender conventions to which the vast majority of evangelical antislavery activists adhered mandated that men, not women, perform the public organizational and promotional activities of the societies.

During the 1840s and 1850s, the tension within abolitionism further disrupted established churches. Disgusted with the proslavery stand that many major denominations and clergymen had assumed, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist abolitionists left their congregations, either by creating their own denominational antislavery wing or by forming nonsectarian churches. Evangelical abolitionists like Orange Scott and La Roy Sunderland, for instance, rejected fellowship with Methodist slaveholders to form the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1843. Not all these “come-outers” maintained a relationship with a church body. Some, like Garrison and James G. Birney, championed radical anti-institutional and anti-ecclesiastical positions. They renounced churches altogether and espoused a more secular humanitarianism. Such heterodoxy appalled orthodox evangelicals like the Tappans, Stanton, and Wright, who favored church-centered activism. Yet, as the 1850s approached, even Wright abandoned orthodox Protestantism.

African American Evangelicalism

The relationship between African American abolitionists and antislavery evangelical Protestantism is complex. Although most free black reformers such as Samuel E. Cornish, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and Alexander Crummell were Protestant clergymen, their evangelicalism differed from white evangelicalism. Exposed to racial prejudice and social, economic, and legal discrimination, many free African Americans refused to embrace the perfectionist, millennial vision of white reformers. Often rejecting moral suasion, black evangelicals employed prophetic language, emphasizing God’s judgment rather than slaveholders’ repentance. Radicals like David Walker, Frederick Douglass, and Henry Highland Garnet all indicted white Christian hypocrisy for sustaining American slavery.

White evangelicals often limited African American involvement in the antislavery movement. When the American Anti-Slavery Society formed in 1833, just three of its original sixty-three delegates were African American. In 1842, Lewis Tappan gained control over the Union Missionary Society, an antislavery mission program founded by former slave and Congregational minister J.W.C. Pennington. He then replaced the organization’s black leaders with white men. Tappan exemplified how strong racial prejudice remained in the North, even among those white evangelicals who actively supported radical abolition and denounced racism.
Along with antislavery activism, black evangelicals also concentrated their reform efforts on religious education and self-improvement programs. Many black reformers recognized their relative powerlessness within white assemblies and focused their energies on building and strengthening their disadvantaged communities. In 1830, black clergymen, along with white allies, founded the National Negro Convention Movement. Distinctly evangelical, it concentrated more on salvation and morality within the free African American community than immediate emancipation. Independent black churches like the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) quietly, but diligently, supported antislavery efforts. Such evangelicals as the Reverend Jermain Loguen of New York aided many fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad, and AME and AMEZ churches served as stops along the way. Where white reformers engaged in organizing and speaking, many more unheralded African Americans extended the antislavery movement to runaway slaves by providing them with clothing, food, and supplies.

**Political Action**

Finding moral suasion too limited, some evangelicals began to shift their attention to using politics to end slavery. In fact, the insistence by leaders within the American Anti-Slavery Society that members vote for antislavery candidates had helped catalyze its division in 1840. Dedicated to Christian anti-institutionalism, the Garrisonians adamantly refused any connection with a government they perceived as evil and ungodly. Non-Garrisonians, however, argued that moral suasion must be reinforced with more practical measures. Imbued with revival enthusiasm, men like Elizur Wright, Jr., Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green, and Joshua Leavitt believed it was their religious duty to enter politics. In 1840, they founded the Liberty Party. Nominating former slaveholder and evangelical convert, James G. Birney, as its first presidential candidate, the party platform demanded abolition in the District of Columbia, termination of the domestic slave trade, and protection of the right to petition Congress.

A diverse group of evangelical Protestants, the Liberty Party leadership underscored the voter's Christian duty to support antislavery candidates. The party's conventions during the 1840s often resembled revival camp meetings, with prayers and sermons urging conversion to immediatism. Practicing “Bible politics,” party members emphasized divine law and morality in government. Critics often pointed to these overtly religious politicians as self-righteous zealots and politically divisive. Tarred with the same brush as the Garrisonians, the Liberty contingent failed to garner broad-based support. Some evangelicals charged that, by engaging in political activism, Liberty men damaged the antislavery cause.

While many evangelicals did not share the Liberty Party's devotion to immediate universal emancipation, they strenuously opposed slavery's spread into new Western territories. In 1845, the United States' annexation of Texas prompted a strong reaction from both conservative and radical antislavery evangelicals. Recognizing the need for greater agreement among themselves,
they joined, in 1848, with non-evangelical reformers to found the Free Soil Party. Committed to preventing slavery in the territories, the party gained support from evangelical Protestants. The Reverend Joshua Leavitt, former editor of the Tappans’ antislavery newspaper, The Emancipator, for example, supported Free Soil. Adopting the religious rhetoric and crusading style of the former Liberty Party, Free Soilers drew evangelical and non-evangelical slavery opponents away from the larger Democratic and Whig parties.

Confronted with the Compromise of 1850, evangelical Protestants again increased their political agitation. William Seward, a New York senator, proclaimed in his maiden speech to the Senate on March 11, 1850, that “there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain.” Free Soilers and antislavery evangelicals embraced “higher law” doctrine, convinced that Christians had a duty to disobey legislation if it contradicted divine law. This became especially important with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850. The Fugitive Slave Law made Northerners complicit in the maintenance of the evil of slavery and ungodliness, an untenable position for antislavery evangelicals, conservative and radical.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 cemented the bond among antislavery evangelicals. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise accompanying the Kansas-Nebraska bill assured slavery opponents that Kansas was being handed over to the devil. As antagonism between North and South escalated, evangelicals from all parties joined with other non-evangelical opponents of slavery to form the Republican Party in 1856. While evangelicals were not solely responsible for the Party’s existence, certainly their sense of Christian duty provided the Party with much-needed energy and support. In 1860, some religious abolitionists read religious meaning into Abraham Lincoln’s statement, “Let us have faith that right makes might, in that faith let us dare to the end to do our duty as we understand it.” For former Free Soilers and Liberty men, this was a call to Christian action.

**Conclusion**

Antislavery evangelical Protestantism contributed to the movement towards Civil War. Both radical abolitionists and conservative antislavery reformers lent an urgency to the crusade against slavery by casting it in a moral light and keeping it continually so before the public. In a predominantly Protestant nation, evangelicalism deeply influenced the growing division between North and South. At the same time, reformers wielded little real power to effect change. While British evangelicals had continued their supportive relationship with American abolitionists throughout the decades preceding the Civil War, Americans faced social, political, economic, and cultural obstacles difficult to overcome. Given the scope of antislavery activity throughout the Atlantic world for over a century, however, the evangelical Protestant impact on the movement was profound. See also Bonaparte, Napoleon; Come-Outerism; Congregationalism and Antislavery; First Great
Awakening and Antislavery; Methodists and Antislavery; Quakers and Anti-
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Dianne Wheaton Cappiello

Antislavery Journalism in the United States and Great Britain

In their efforts to win support for an end to slavery, abolitionists used a
variety of media both to maintain and expand their movement and to carry
their messages to the general community. These media included the speak-
er’s platform, pamphlets, books, dramas, magazines, and newspapers. The
abolitionist press in the United States became a focal point for the cause,
but also resulted in countermeasures, particularly in the South, that
included violence and death for one abolitionist editor, Elijah P. Lovejoy.
In the United States, two abolitionist leaders in particular became identified
with the newspapers they edited—William Lloyd Garrison of The Libera-
tor and Frederick Douglass of the North Star. Douglass also edited a mag-
azine, Douglass’ Monthly, which circulated in England. The abolition press
helped on both sides of the Atlantic to provide cohesion for efforts to end
slavery.

Not long after the American Revolution, the push for an end to slavery
gained momentum in England. Although the movement initially had a reli-
gious foundation, it gained support from changes in political and economic
theory and the French Revolution. The antislavery movement in Great Britain
relied less initially on the swaying of public opinion through the press than through initiatives in the courts and in Parliament.

The abolition movement in England generally had two phases: first, to end slavery in the country and its colonies and, second, to support the movement to end slavery in the United States. Zachary Macaulay founded what was probably the first abolition newspaper, *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, in 1825. The newspaper eventually became the organ of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. It continued publishing, in some form, until 1994.

The abolitionist movement began in England in the 1700s, ostensibly as a religious movement of Evangelicals and Quakers that opposed slavery and England’s role in the slave trade. The abolitionists used books, pamphlets, lectures, and petitions to advance their cause. The movement achieved the most success in the courts. Granville Sharp, a civil servant, frequently challenged in the courts the right of West Indians to remove their slaves from England. The case of James Somerset in 1772 involved the right of a West Indian owner to forcibly remove a slave from England. The lord chief justice ruled that no such right existed. Although it only limited the removal of slaves, it led to the end of slavery in England.

Sharp and Thomas Clarkson were cofounders of the Society for the Abandonment of the Slave Trade in 1787. The group formed from the London Quaker Abolition Committee, although Sharp and Clarkson both were members of the Church of England. William Wilberforce, who had served in Parliament since 1780, took up the twenty-year drive to end the slave trade in 1787. In an attempt to win public opinion, the English abolitionists decided to battle the slave trade rather than slavery itself. To sway public opinion, the movement used books and pamphlets and worked to win support in the general press. Parliament approved the Foreign Slave Trade bill in 1806, and the English slave trade ended on May 1, 1807.

British abolitionists thereafter turned their attention to slavery in the rest of the world, particularly the United States. Great Britain became a source of support of the U.S. abolition movement, including financial backing for
antislavery newspapers in the United States and for contributors to these newspapers. Divisions in the U.S. abolition movement, however, also eventually resulted in divisions in the British movement. At issue were the views of Garrison. Among the British groups that supported Garrison was the Anglo-America Anti-Slavery Association. It sponsored the *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, a newspaper that published from 1852 to 1863. The *Anti-Slavery Reporter* and the *Anti-Slavery Advocate* were the two primary antislavery newspapers in Great Britain, but the Anti-Slavery Society’s Agency Committee that sponsored antislavery lectures in Great Britain, beginning in the 1830s, sponsored its own antislavery publication, *The Tourist*.

The abolitionist press in the United States included not only the publications of antislavery organizations, but also coverage and editorial support in mainstream newspapers and in the black press. The U.S. abolitionist press served international, national, and regional audiences. Along with national publications such as *The Liberator*, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, published between 1840 and 1870, the *National Era*, and international publications such as *Frederick Douglass’s Paper*, a number of regional abolitionist papers also were available, such as *The Instigator*, published in Providence, Rhode Island, and the *Liberalist*, published in New Orleans. Garrison’s Pennsylvania organizations published the *Pennsylvania Freeman* through the 1850s. The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, later the Western Anti-Slavery Society, published the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. Mainstream newspapers also took a role in covering abolitionists and their crusade. The *New York Tribune*, under the leadership of publisher Horace Greeley, became the leading mainstream paper against slavery. Joseph Medill became an advocate for abolition with the *Chicago Tribune*.

The black press, beginning with *Freedom’s Journal* in 1827, provided advocacy of abolition, a forum for abolitionists, and coverage of antislavery organizations. For the antebellum black newspapers, however, abolition was only one area they covered. They also reported on the social, economic, and educational advance of free blacks and former slaves in the North. *Freedom’s Journal*, the *Colored American*, the *Ram’s Horn*, the *Alienated American*, and late in the 1850s, the *Anglo-African*, all addressed abolition as well as other issues of racial justice and improvement of immediate concern to the free blacks of the North. The pioneers of the black press, including *Freedom Journal’s* John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, also faced divisions over support for the colonization movement. The *Ram’s Horn*, which included John Brown and Frederick Douglass among its contributors, took perhaps the strongest stance against abolition, publishing an editorial that directly addressed the slaves in the South.

Of those U.S. newspapers that focused almost exclusively on abolition, the earliest was Benjamin Lundy’s the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, the principal abolitionist organ in the 1820s. The newspaper initially was a one-man operation, and Lundy moved it from Ohio to Tennessee to Maryland in an attempt to build support. The paper closed early in 1829 because of lack of support from slavery states, but Lundy was able to reopen the publication later in 1829 with two associates, Elizabeth Chandler and William Lloyd Garrison.
Garrison, who would become the central personality in the United States abolition movement, faced libel charges in Baltimore as a result of writing in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* that a local slave trader had illegally transported some slaves. A jury convicted Garrison, who was jailed for forty-nine days before the New York City philanthropist, Arthur Tappan, paid his fine and secured his release.

Garrison’s experiences in Baltimore, however, were only previews of his more than 30-year role in the abolitionist press. Garrison’s newspaper, *The Liberator*, began publication January 1, 1831, in Boston, Massachusetts. Despite limited financial support and circulation throughout its operation, the newspaper presented its editor’s views for immediate freeing of slaves, no payments to slaveholders, and no support for colonization of slaves and former slaves in Africa.

Garrison helped found the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, but *The Liberator* continued to offer his personal views and was not the official publication of the society. The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* served that role. The society was a union of Philadelphia Quakers, Garrison’s supporters in New England, and reformers from New York.

Despite *The Liberator*’s limited circulation, Garrison used the newspaper-exchange system to get the paper into the offices of 100 newspaper editors, whose criticism of himself and abolition, Garrison gladly printed. As with other abolition publications, circulation of *The Liberator* in the South resulted in destruction of its copies and violence against its distributors. The U.S. postmaster general condoned efforts to bar circulation of *The Liberator* in the South.

The South was particularly wary of distribution of abolitionist publications after the Nat Turner slave revolt in South Carolina in 1831. The American Anti-Slavery Society launched a pamphlet campaign in 1835. Before 1836, it produced more than one million copies of antislavery items. Southern mobs also tried to bar distribution of these publications.

Garrison’s critics contended that he and *The Liberator* were urging slaves to take violent actions against their owners. Southern states offered bounties for Garrison, who, nonetheless, opposed violence and Turner’s rebellion.

Violent threats against the abolitionist press came not only from the South. In the 1830s, Elijah P. Lovejoy of Illinois published an abolitionist weekly. Mobs destroyed his press four times, and during the fourth attack in 1837, they killed him while he was trying to defend his press and his ideas. Lovejoy, a clergyman as well as an editor, began publishing a Presbyterian newspaper, *The St. Louis Observer*, in Missouri, a slave state, in 1834. Lovejoy advocated gradual elimination of slavery. Fearing for the safety of his family, Lovejoy relocated to Illinois, a free state, where he began publishing the *Alton Observer* and tried to form a state antislavery society. A mob also burned Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia in 1837. The hall had housed the local antislavery office and was the site of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, where blacks and whites freely mixed.

Lovejoy’s death and other violence against abolitionists helped transform the movement from one only against slavery into a larger battle for civil
liberties. Following closely after them were calls for direct action, including more political involvement, to win freedom for slaves. Previously, abolitionists had hoped that the soundness of their arguments alone would convince other rational citizens of the rightness of their cause. Now, some abolitionists like Gerrit Smith and Henry Highland Garnet turned to politics to fight slavery, and the abolitionist press helped to present their arguments.

Abolitionists, however, became divided. At the center of the divide was Garrison, whose Liberator’s pages were open to a variety of reformers and causes, including women’s rights. Maria Stewart, a black woman, began writing for The Liberator in 1831, and the unusual inclusion of a woman’s voice in a newspaper brought opposition from both white and black males. The male-dominated black community so opposed her role at the newspaper that she opted to relocate to New York and seek reforms through education.

The issue of the appropriate role of women in the abolition movement generally divided the movement. Churches tried to limit women speaking about abolition in their communities, even if the events were not at their churches. Opponents tried to bar their voting rights in the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Garrison also condemned the government and Constitution as defenders of slavery and abjured political action as endorsing them. He questioned whether the Constitution could ever emancipate the slaves and protect them. During one protest in 1854, Garrison actually burned a copy of the Constitution.

In 1840, brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to counter Garrison’s recent seizure of control of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison’s espousal of reform causes other than abolition, especially that of women’s rights, particularly worried them. The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society continued until 1855. Garrison’s society was in place until the Civil War, but its role in the movement grew less prominent as antislavery became more part of the political mainstream with the rise of the Republicans by the mid-1850s.

Garrison’s central role in the abolition movement was also somewhat eclipsed by the rise of Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave, as a featured speaker of the abolition movement. An admirer of Garrison and of The Liberator, Douglass started the North Star despite some opposition from Garrison. Douglass received funding for a newspaper in 1847, and the first issue of the North Star appeared December 3, 1847. In December 1850, the newspaper became the Frederick Douglass’ Paper.

Douglass’s newspaper eventually exceeded the circulation of The Liberator and became an international newspaper with circulation in England and the West Indies. Douglass had traveled to England to lecture and raise money for the abolition movement in the United States. English abolitionists were patrons not only of Douglass’s newspaper but also other abolition newspapers in the United States. Black abolitionists who traveled to England briefly or to live also found ready markets for their writings in the abolitionist press in the United States. Frederick Douglass’ Paper remained in operation until 1861.
Both Garrison and Douglass saw the abolition movement change in the 1850s, when a number of factors brought the antislavery more to the forefront. The spread of slavery into the Western territories, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, and the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 helped move the antislavery fight from the abolitionist movement to a wider population. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first appeared in serial form in 1851 in the *National Era*, a newspaper with varied content that included opposition to slavery.

The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 brought secession of the Southern states and the Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 led to the freeing of slaves in the old Confederacy, and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 resulted in the abolition of slavery throughout the rest of the United States. Garrison's *Liberator* ceased publishing on December 29, 1865.

The antislavery press played a pivotal role in galvanizing the abolition movement and providing a model to future reform movements for how to use the press both for internal organizational communication as well as disseminating the message of reform to a broader public. In Great Britain and in the United States, public opinion became essential to the influencing and changing of public policy. Although the abolitionists used a variety of media to influence public opinion, the press dominated their efforts at moral suasion. As with the abolition movement itself, whose success made less important the roles of the antislavery societies, the success of the abolitionist press led to a larger role for the general, mainstream press in furthering the goal of ending slavery.

**Further Readings:**

*William J. Leonbirth*

**Anti-Slavery Society (1787)**

The movement against slavery in England was launched in the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1772, the Lord Chief Justice, William Murray, the first Earl of Mansfield, handed down the landmark *Somerset Decision* that once a slave set his foot on English territory he was considered free. This action had occurred with the help of a number of reformers who had become as concerned about the slavery question as they had about the condition of the poor or the reform of prisons.
In 1787, twelve of these men, including Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson, formed a society for the abolition of the slave trade. Anglicans and Quakers were represented on the committee with support from other religious groups. In the same year, Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger had a famous conversation with another reformer, William Wilberforce (under an oak tree it was said), in which Pitt asked Wilberforce to take over the lead of the antislavery forces in the House of Commons. Wilberforce, who was a convert to evangelical Christianity and already known as a reformer, agreed, joining the society sometime later.

This organization became one of the first single issue groups to emerge in English history, setting the stage for such associations as the Anti-Corn Law League and the Women's Social and Political Union. It lobbied members of Parliament, and under the leadership of Wilberforce waged a constant battle to achieve its ends. He introduced a measure in every year and was buttressed, after the Act of Union of 1801, by the addition of sympathetic Irish members to his ranks. In addition, the Society carried on electoral campaigns, distributed literature, sponsored rallies, supplied speakers, and petitioned the House of Commons. In addition, it also publicized information about slave conditions and the atrocities that had taken place. Numerous obstacles were placed in the path of reform, but finally in 1807, under a sympathetic ministry, the slave trade was abolished.

The next step was, of course, to press for the complete abolition of slavery. Such a need was made clear from the practice of slaver captains to order slaves to be thrown overboard to lessen the fine paid for engaging in the slave trade. Thus, in 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society was founded to seek emancipation for the slaves. Wilberforce had become less involved in public life and had reservations about too hasty an abolition, but he did become a member of the Society.

In 1833, Parliament enacted the abolition of slavery. Because of age and illness, Wilberforce was not active and the leadership was taken by Thomas Clarkson and Thomas Buxton. It should be noted that women's antislavery societies also contributed to the cause. In dealing with emancipation, the most important question had become the need to compensate owners financially and provide a transition in which the slaves continued to work for masters for a period of time. Despite the misgivings of the more radical abolitionists, Buxton, seeing no alternative, made concessions on both points. It should also be noted that Wilberforce lived to see the bill passed, but died a few days later.

Problems continued, however, including how discussions concerning sugar tariffs would affect the condition of the newly freed slaves in the West Indies. Another question was where the Society should focus its attention now. Some wanted to pay attention to Africa, while others preferred to concentrate on India, and others were concerned to monitor the situation of the newly freed slaves in the West Indies.

Looking back, however, the achievement of the Society was substantial, especially considering that the emancipation of slaves in the United States took over twenty more years to be carried out. Moreover, the Society has been in the forefront of the fight against slavery to the present day. See also
Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation; British Slavery, Abolition of.


Marc L. Schwarz

Anti-Slavery Society (1909)

The Anti-Slavery Society was an abolition organization created in 1909 as a result of the merger of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and the Aborigines Protection Society (APS). One of its first campaigns aimed to end Mui Tsai, a system under which girls from poor families in Hong Kong and Singapore were sold as servants to rich families. Its campaign influenced the passing of the Female Domestic Service Ordinance in 1923, which outlawed the system and also forbade the employment of any children under ten years old. The Society thereafter labored to persuade the League of Nations to hold an inquiry into slavery. This action prompted the League to appoint a Temporary Slavery Commission (TSC) in 1924. Its mandate was to assess the nature and volume of slavery and of the slave trade worldwide, recommend that a treaty be negotiated to abolish slavery in all its forms, including debt bondage, forced marriage and child labor, and propose ways to facilitate the shift from slave or forced labor to free wage labor or independent production. The TSC’s report led to the Slavery Convention of 1926, the first international treaty against slavery and the slave trade, which bound the signatories to end all forms of slavery mentioned in the TSC’s report. Because of its role in putting slavery firmly on the agenda of the League of Nations, the Society’s reputation rose considerably. In 1931, for instance, it was consulted by Emperor Haile Selassie on ways to abolish slavery in Ethiopia, and in 1932 it discussed policy with the British Foreign Secretary.

After World War II, the Anti-Slavery Society embarked on a campaign to encourage the United Nations (UN) to set up a permanent advisory committee on slavery. Its efforts led in 1949 to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on slavery, which published its report in 1951. The committee’s recommendation that the UN should take over the 1926 Slavery Convention was accepted, but not its suggestion that a permanent slavery committee should be established. As a result of opposition from the colonial powers and also some former colonies, it took until 1975 before the Society had achieved its aim. In that year, the UN set up a slavery committee as a Working Group of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities. In the late 1970s, the Anti-Slavery Society focused on protecting indigenous peoples and addressing ongoing problems with debt bondage, the link between human rights and development aid, and child labor. In 1990, it changed its name to Anti-Slavery International, which today is the only charity in the United Kingdom to work exclusively on slavery and related abuses. See also Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in.
**Antislavery Songs**

The movement to end slavery in the United States produced what may be the country’s first “protest” songs. As the antislavery sentiment of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries merged with evangelical Christianity to form abolitionism, the new movement adopted every means at its disposal, including song, to disseminate its message. As a result, hundreds of antislavery songs were written, printed, and performed as part of the effort to eliminate slavery in the United States. In their words and music, these songs reflect both the main arguments of abolitionism and antebellum ideas about music and musicians in American society.

Drawing upon a long religious tradition of using words set to music for the moral edification of singer and listener, abolitionists produced songs from the beginning of the movement, commonly printing them in their newspapers. Nearly every issue of **William Lloyd Garrison**’s *Liberator*, published weekly from 1831 to 1865, features one or more songs in its columns, and reports of meetings frequently indicate singing as an integral part of the activities. As early as 1836, Isaac Knapp of Boston published the first abolitionist songbook, *Songs of the Free, and Hymns of Christian Freedom*, compiled by Maria Weston Chapman, and at least a dozen songbooks would follow in the 1840s and 1850s, some running to hundreds of pages.

The songs contained all the main arguments and motivations of antislavery and abolitionism. Among the earliest songs, for example, are those supporting the movement to colonize former slaves in **Liberia**. These were rapidly replaced, however, by an outpouring of songs emphasizing three major dimensions of slavery’s immorality: it was a sin in a professedly Christian nation; it betrayed the United States’ upholding of liberty; and it destroyed families through the traffic in human beings. While a few songs on Liberia appear after 1830, they change from supporting black colonization there to opposing it, reflecting both abolitionists’ rejection of this colonization and the increasing presence of free African Americans in the movement. Among the latter, especially important was Joshua Simpson of Ohio, the most prolific songwriter of the movement. Simpson wrote such lyrics as “Old Liberia Is Not the Place for Me” (1852), “Freedom’s Call” (1852), and “Away to Canada” (1852) and claimed, in one songster, “This is the only book of Original Poetry and Songs, that was ever published by a Colored Author in the United States” (*The Emancipation Car*, 1854, flyleaf).

Although Simpson is responsible for writing more songs than any other author, the production and public performance of the songs was dominated by white Americans, both male and female. Women, important voices and organizers for abolitionism, also often wrote its poetry and songs. The names of **Lydia Maria Child** and Lydia H. Sigourney are found on song
lyrics, along with those identified only as “Mrs. Dr. Bailey,” “Mrs. W.D.G.,” or “Miss Ball.”

The apparent purposes of the songs parallel not only the lyrics but also the occasions for which they were written and on which they were sung. Most commonly, regular meetings of antislavery societies from the local to national levels provided the main venue for singing. These meetings functioned much like church services, and music had an important place in them. Songs opened and closed the proceedings, often intervened throughout them, and reinforced the members’ convictions that slavery violated Christian and American principles. Songs were also written for special occasions such as July 4 and August 1, when emancipation in the British West Indies was celebrated. On Independence Day, the contrast between national principles and actual practice was the theme of both meeting and song: in “Hymn” (1838), which includes the stanza, “Yet, though for all the boon was sought/Those rights for which they [patriots] bravely fought/Slavery their pure, their brightening fame/Has clouded with its hateful name.” Festivities on August 1 emphasized the model Britain provided: a “Song for the First of August” (1845), indicating that it was “written for and sung at an antislavery picnic at Danvers,” includes the lines, “Now let us turn to our own land/That claims to be so free.”

Songs were performed by soloists, choirs, and the entire assembly. Occasionally children’s choirs were featured, including those of African American children. Professional and semi-professional musicians were involved in the movement, and the most famous was the Hutchinson Family, a quartet of three brothers and a sister. The Hutchinsoons modeled themselves on a successful European troupe, the Rainer Family, and toured the country (and later the battlefields), singing concerts in which they included abolitionist and other political songs. Their great exposure brought the songs to audiences not yet converted to abolitionism. The family’s most famous song, “Get off the Track!” was written by Jesse Hutchinson in 1844. Set to the minstrel tune of “Old Dan Tucker,” it was sung frequently, reproduced widely with varying lyrics, and may have been the most popular of all antislavery songs.

Adapting original lyrics to known tunes was a much more common practice than writing new tunes; thus “songwriters” were primarily authors of lyrics. In this respect, abolitionists were part of a long Western tradition of using popular melodies from the church, the home, or the tavern to serve varying causes. By the 1830s, debates were underway in the United States about what tunes were appropriate for various purposes and audiences.
(many objections were raised to hearing “Auld Lang Syne” in church or school, for example). The tunes used most often for antislavery songs are typically eclectic in their sources: “America”; “Scots Wha Hae”; “Auld Lang Syne”; “Missionary Hymn”; and “Old Hundred.” The use of minstrel tunes for antislavery songs apparently stirred a minor controversy, with Joshua Simpson defending the practice. In his Original Anti-Slavery Songs (1852), he wrote (p. 3), “My object in my selection of tunes, is to kill the degrading influence of those comic Negro Songs, ... and change the flow of those sweet melodies into more appropriate and useful channels.” That this was possible by then had been demonstrated by Francis Scott Key, who had written patriotic words to a drinking song and called it “The Star-Spangled Banner.” See also Literature and Abolition.


Vicki L. Eaklor

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship occurred between 1834 and 1838 in the British West Indian colonies and comprised the critical phase of the process ending in emancipation in the colonies in 1838. The 1833 Emancipation Act set aside 20 million pounds to compensate planters for the loss of their enslaved laborers and stipulated that from August 1834 onwards, all children under six would be free, while the other slaves would be apprenticed to their former masters for a period of four to six years, depending on whether they were domestic or field slaves. The apprentices were to work three-fourths of the week for their former masters in return for allowances of food and clothing, housing, and medical care. It was expected that they would use the rest of the week to hire themselves out for wages.

Apprenticeship aimed not only to teach the ex-slaves to respond to the work incentives of freedmen and hopefully ensure the continuation of the plantation system, but also to turn slaveholders into fair employers. To facilitate this, the Emancipation Act transferred the right to punish from the planters to a corps of paid Special or Stipendiary Magistrates (S.M.'s) recruited from both Britain and the islands. S.M.'s could order various punishments for apprentices who failed to carry out their duties, including imprisonment in the parish workhouses and flogging in the case of male apprentices. Taking the right to punish away from the planters served the additional purpose of teaching apprentices to trust the law so that upon full freedom they would turn to the state to resolve their disputes.

Planters predicted that Apprenticeship would lead to a 25 percent drop in output because of the reduction in their laborers’ working hours. To
prevent a drastic decline in their profit levels, the planter-dominated local legislatures included in their local Emancipation Acts clauses which aimed to reduce production costs, such as the clause that S.M.s could order extra labor as punishment. Most of the legal and illegal means that planters used to subordinate the apprentices, however, went against their economic interests. Persuading S.M.s to send recalcitrant female apprentices to work the treadmill in the workhouse, for instance, reduced, rather than sustained, their short-term profits because the women came back so lacerated that they were unable to work at their full speed for a long time. Such measures served little purpose other than to enable planters to continue to exert a certain degree of power over their ex-slaves.

To retain as much of their former socio-economic status as possible, planters not only used the legal system and convinced S.M.s to do their bidding, but also violated the local Emancipation Acts. They also managed to retain some of their former power through their domination of the parish vestries. The workhouses to which recalcitrant apprentices were sent were run by the vestries. The latter adopted rules for the institutions which violated one of the main provisions of the Emancipation Act—a ban on female flogging.

Apprentices did not silently endure the planters’ attempts to undo their new status. They were most outraged about the planters’ decision to divide the required workweek into four eight-hour days plus eight and one-half hours on Fridays to maximize the workings of the sugar mills. They preferred instead a week divided into four nine-hour days and four and one-half hours on Fridays, as this gave them more time to cultivate their grounds. Apprentices took complaints about their working conditions to S.M.s whom they knew were sympathetic to their cause. They also resorted to direct forms of action, including arson and strike. The most militant resistance came from female apprentices as they formed the bulk of the field labor force and were more affected than male apprentices by the methods that planters used to sustain their former power. After August 1834, for instance, planters demanded that women pay back time lost in childbirth.

From spring 1835 onwards, news about the planters’ violations of the Emancipation Act began to circulate in Britain. In the autumn of 1835, the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society launched a campaign, led by the Quaker, Joseph Sturge, to end Apprenticeship early. Largely as a result of abolitionist pressure, the government established a committee in 1836 to investigate the workings of the system in Jamaica. Although the committee observed that the laws in the island could be improved in order to facilitate the work of the S.M.s and afford the apprentices more protection, it was nevertheless convinced that Apprenticeship would achieve its aims. Disappointed with the committee’s report, some members of the Anti-Slavery Society, including Sturge, investigated the conditions in the islands for themselves. The two books that resulted from their visits highlighted that the evils denounced by the committee, in particular the flogging of women in the workhouses, had not diminished and that the jurisdiction of the S.M.s was far from satisfactory. Not long after his return to Britain, Sturge helped to set up the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, which organized
lectures and petitions, published pamphlets, and submitted bills to Parliament for an immediate abolition of Apprenticeship. The campaign had some success; on March 27, 1838, Parliament issued an Act remedying the main abuses associated with Apprenticeship. In an attempt to avert further interference in their internal affairs, the local legislatures passed statutes between March and July 1838 that abolished Apprenticeship throughout the British West Indies on August 1, 1838. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation; British Slavery, Abolition of.


__Henrice Altink__

**Aptheker, Herbert (1915–2003)**

Herbert Aptheker was an influential and often controversial American historian who during a long life of scholarship and activism documented and defended the African-American heritage, with an emphasis on its militant aspects. Born to a well-to-do family in Brooklyn, New York, from early childhood Aptheker was influenced by his nurse, Angelina Corbin, a native of Trinidad who introduced him to that rich culture. At the age of sixteen, Aptheker traveled with his father to Alabama, and en route he gained first-hand experience of Southern poverty and racism.

Excelling in academics, Aptheker attended Columbia University during the 1930s, earning his Master's degree with a thesis on the Nat Turner rebellion. His essays on movements such as the maroons were published in Carter Woodson's Journal of Negro History. During this same decade he worked in the South as a labor educator for the Food and Tobacco Workers Union, and also defended sharecroppers against the peonage system, which still survived from Reconstruction days. He joined the Communist Party in 1939.

During World War II, Aptheker enlisted in the Army, where he commanded black troops in Louisiana, and then saw service as an artillery officer in Europe. In 1943, his doctoral dissertation at Columbia was published as American Negro Slave Revolts. This work emphasized the importance of some 250 episodes of slave resistance in Southern history, and undermined the “happy Negro” view that prevailed in the historical profession at that time. Critics alleged that Aptheker overemphasized the theme of revolt, but generations of African Americans appreciated his emphasis on little-known aspects of their past.

After the war, Aptheker helped write official military histories of the conflict, and began a long association with the scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In this connection, Aptheker had the opportunity to carry out the early stages of work on his massive Documentary History of the Negro
People in the United States, which eventually reached seven volumes (1951–1994).

From the late 1940s into the 1960s, Aptheker served as an associate editor of the Marxist journals Masses and Mainstream and Political Affairs. He wrote polemical works as well, including The Truth about Hungary (1957). On account of these political activities, Aptheker's acceptance as a teacher in American higher education was sporadic; at Yale University, various members of the history department led by C. Vann Woodward vigorously opposed his appointment as even a guest lecturer. Aptheker continued his activism, dramatically leading a delegation to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1965; he was a forceful opponent of the Viet Nam War, as he had been of the Korean War, previously. Because of his activities against the latter, he was dismissed as a reserve officer in the U.S. Army in 1950.

In spite of blacklisting, Aptheker resolutely continued scholarly work, publishing steadily over several decades. Between 1962 and 1985, he was executive director of the American Institute for Marxist Studies, seeing into print a series of books and monographs by various authors. He began a history of the United States, but finished only the first two volumes. Most of his scholarship reflected his life-long interest in African American history, culminating with Abolitionism: A Revolutionary Movement (1989), and Anti-Racism in U.S. History (1992). Another important achievement was his editorship of the works of Du Bois (1973–1986) and correspondence (1973–1978), as well as a comprehensive Du Bois bibliography (1973).

Aptheker left the Communist Party in 1991, and joined the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism, a newly formed radical group. At the end of his career he was honored with a festschrift, as well as a long interview by Robin Kelley, which revealed an intimate and personal side not evident in his more polemical work.


Fred Whitebead

Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery

Slavery is a social and legal system permitting human beings to be owned as the property of their purchasers like any other commodity and whose labor and activity is deployed at the command of their owner. This institution has existed in most societies. Saudi Arabia was one such society where the institution existed from very early times. It was recognized by law and permitted by religion, although with strong encouragement for their kind treatment, which included manumission of slaves as a penance for certain misdeeds. Yet, manumission, while it reduced the number of slaves in society, also stimulated demand for further slaves.

In Saudi Arabia, slavery was closely associated with the existing social stratification. It was a clear marker of power and status among the princely and
wealthy merchant families who kept as many slaves as possible for employment in domestic and other services. Some of these slaves were recruited as bodyguards, camel drivers, and soldiers who were highly regarded. Apart from pilgrimage, which provided some with the opportunity to acquire slaves, slaves were routinely imported across the Red Sea from Ethiopia and Sudan, and sometimes from as far away as West Africa. There were also small numbers that were brought in from Baluchistan, India, and Southeast Asia. Moreover, some slaves were Arabs from Yemen and other parts of Arabia. These slaves occupied the bottom of the tribally linked status hierarchy in Arabia.

It is quite ironic that most of the unfortunate victims of the slave trade in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not enslaved as captives of wars, which is how slaves were created in accordance with traditional Islamic law. Rather, they were the products of raids conducted by unscrupulous slave hunters despite the fact that this manner of gaining slaves was strictly forbidden. This prohibition also did not stop dealers from buying these slaves, for they cared little about where and how they had been acquired. Unlike the Transatlantic slave trade in the Americas, the Middle Eastern slave trade involved more females than males, most of whom came from regions as far apart as the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia.

Saudi Arabia and some of the other Gulf states were among the last countries to outlaw slavery in the twentieth century. In the case of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Feisal, who would later become king, abolished the institution in 1962 on the grounds that the practice was inconsistent with Islam’s stipulation that kindness be shown to one’s slaves. Qur’anic precepts of justice and human equality before God necessarily required such a course of action. Yet, slavery had dragged on for such a long time—King Ibn Saud, who died in 1953, had seen nothing wrong with it—that in the end, its abolition was the consequence of internal political and economic forces. For instance, slave camel drivers had been made economically redundant by the introduction of cars. The newfound oil wealth that led to the gradual modernization of the Saudi economy generated a need for an extensive labor force to work in the homes of the wealthy Saudis and oil-rich Gulf Arabs.

The abolition of slavery notwithstanding, new contract domestic workers from South and Southeast Asia are often very exploited in the oil-rich Gulf countries where law enforcement officials have not provided sufficient protection to foreign maids and nannies against potential abuses by employers. While these women do not fit into the category of unpaid slaves, the fact
that their movements are severely restricted—employers keep both their passports and even their temporary identification passes while they are in their employment—makes them very vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. Surely, if Islamic law prescribes penalties for abusive slave owners including the forced and uncompensated manumission of the aggrieved slave, one would expect more, not less, to be done by Saudi authorities to protect these free women. Abdur Rahman Wahid, the outspoken president of Indonesia, condemned such abuses against his nation’s citizens. However, such slavery-like practices are not unique to this part of the world.

The legacy of slavery is very much alive in Saudi Arabia despite developing notions of calling for the fair and equal treatment of citizens and foreign nationals alike. These changes are reflected in the presence of people of African origins in Saudi Arabia, although not all of them are of slave descent. Saudis of African descent are found in such regions as Hijaz or the region of the holy lands where there has been extensive intermarriage among different groups, and also in the Eastern province and the Najd towns such as Riyadh which has a section called the “Slave Quarters,” where African ex-slaves live. In contemporary Saudi Arabia, new status categories stemming from education and economic advantage, not to mention political power (which favors Najdis over the older elite groups based in other areas such as Hijaz) have begun to slowly undermine tribal affiliations. It might succeed in generating a new system of social relations not based on purported genealogical tribal “purity,” which has tended to favor those with claims of purity of descent (Qabila) over those with non-tribal (Khadira) status or slave ancestry. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; East African Slave Trade; Ethiopia, Hailie Selassie and Emancipation in; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Islam and Antislavery; Qur’an and Antislavery.


Abdin Chande

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.)

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, wrote the earliest systematic philosophical analysis of slavery that survives from the classical world. The most conspicuous and controversial element of his discussion is his conclusion that certain humans are naturally deficient in decision making and thus are natural slaves.

Aristotle was born in Stagira and later became a student of Plato, who had been a student of Socrates. After Plato’s death, Aristotle left the Athenian school Plato had called the Academy and founded his own school, which was called the Lyceum. The Macedonian king Phillip II chose Aristotle to be the tutor of his son, who was later known as Alexander the Great. Aristotle’s interests were universal, and his surviving works include books on ethics, politics, logic, metaphysics, rhetoric, animal physiology, physics, metaphysics, poetics, and the interpretation of dreams.
Aristotle’s most important work on slavery is contained in his *Politics*, in which he discussed the question of whether some persons are slaves by nature, a question that he answered in the affirmative. Since Aristotle’s authority was a powerful force for many centuries, particularly during the Middle Ages when he was often referred to simply as “The Philosopher,” his view was sometimes embraced by subsequent apologists for slavery and remains one of the points illustrating the difference between classical philosophy and that of the modern West. Since this view of slavery is so crucial a part of the history of slavery and antislavery, Aristotle’s specific argument should be reviewed.

In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, which set forth principles of individual conduct as a preparation for discussion of the basis of the *polis* or city in the *Politics*, Aristotle indicated that his analytical procedure assumed that nature revealed specific functions and ends in its creations and that similar ends or objectives govern human decision making. This “teleological” (from Greek *telos*, “end” or “objective”) procedure generally informed his approach to various human relationships as well. Just as observation of nature supported conclusions about nature’s ends, observation of conventional life (with contemporary Athens as his norm) provided Aristotle with support for judgments about what is natural in society. Men conventionally rule women, he noted, and he evidently anticipated no objections from the Greek males who constituted his audience as he concluded that men’s dominance over women was natural. Slavery was also a fundamental feature of life in the classical Greek world, the ancient cities having engaged in mutual violence since their earliest recorded days—the Athenian dramatic treatments of the Theban myths suggest an example. And, the Greek city-states lay next to the conjuncture of three continents, among whose multifarious cultures only the language of force seemed universally intelligible. Aristotle argued that nature designated some to rule and some to be ruled, and though his formulation itself implied awareness that the conclusion was simplistic, he designated those lacking the ability or the potential to rule as natural slaves. Interestingly, he acknowledged the arguments of those who asserted that slavery is itself conventional rather than natural, and since his own teacher, Plato, had apparently at one point been sold as a slave, Aristotle must have been in a somewhat ambivalent logical position on the subject, but he clearly had no great interest in exploring slavery in detail.

While Aristotle’s representation of some slavery as natural may well have been to some extent a concession to the status quo, his rather casual and unfinished argument later assumed considerable significance as Aristotle’s posthumous authority achieved exalted status and influence. Though his associates and his students would have regarded slavery as a familiar and convenient part of their lives, later ages tended to regard Aristotle’s pragmatic acceptance of it as a philosophical conclusion despite the uncharacteristic awkwardness and superficiality with which he had treated it. Aristotle based his ethical and political conclusions upon analysis of what he could learn from observation or reading. Since nowhere in his experience was there a society without slavery (even Homer’s Olympian gods were tyrannized by Zeus), the Greek philosopher did not speculate on a society without the
institution as he set forth his political philosophy. Slavery formed an essential part of the fabric of life in his day, and he accepted it as natural.

Aristotle matured as a philosopher under Plato, an aristocratic Athenian who himself grew up during the most brilliant phase of his city’s intellectual development. Aristotle was the Macedonian son of a physician who attended the gifted and unscrupulous Philip II, the dominant military man of his age prior to his son, Alexander. Plato certainly had witnessed the operation of injustice when his friend Socrates was executed by the malicious politicians of Athens. But Aristotle knew so much more of it than did Plato. For one, he had before him the lesson of Plato’s idealistic, but failed, effort to bring political enlightenment to Syracuse, an effort which had not only endangered Plato’s life, but which had also abrogated his freedom at least for an interval. Aristotle also knew well the violence and cunning which characterized Philip of Macedon’s political and military successes. Even if he had considered challenging it, Aristotle would have recognized the folly of opposing so fundamental an institution as slavery in a Greece seething with faction and warfare and no longer very interested in the speculations of either philosophy or justice. See also Classical Greek Antislavery.

Further Readings:


Robert W. Haynes

Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray (1723–1777)

The Associates of Dr. Bray were established in 1723 to ameliorate the spiritual and temporal condition of the heathen populations of British America by bringing Christianity and education to black slaves and native peoples. The Associates were organized by Dr. Thomas Bray, an English minister who had already launched two significant missionary institutions, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1699 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701, both intended to extend the influence of Anglicanism in the colonies. Although initially their public composition and philanthropic objectives were ill-defined, the Associates were reorganized into a body of around thirty gentlemen in 1730 following Bray’s death; these men soon heightened their efforts and charitable bequests to convert and educate blacks. As a secondary objective, they continued to establish parochial libraries in the colonies.

The Associates used several methods to realize their designs. While occasionally sending salaried missionaries to the lower South, they more commonly distributed large numbers of books and pamphlets to recognized ministers who would undertake to catechize and educate non-white populations in their regions. The Associates later used their funding more radically to support the formal establishment of “Negro” schools, initially in consultation with Benjamin Franklin. Though several schemes fell through, schools
The achievements of the Associates and their agents in the colonies were limited by problems of funding, circulation, language, and personnel. But they encountered their greatest obstacle from white slaveholders who feared widespread education for blacks and refused to sanction it. Unlike earlier slaveholders, few planters of the mid-eighteenth century believed baptism necessitated manumission, but many were still hostile to the Christianization of their slaves on other grounds. They feared that catechism and particularly literacy would encourage dangerous egalitarian notions and rebellious behavior while offering the owners little in return. The moral sensibilities and goals of Dr. Bray’s Associates, who remained poorly informed about the real nature of the institution of slavery, were rarely effectively aligned with the interests and attitudes of the American planter elites.

The Associates of Dr. Bray withdrew their interest in the plight of American blacks following the ruptures wrought by the American Revolution, and they turned instead to domestic projects. Their missionaries, materials, and teachers had reached only a tiny proportion of enslaved laborers—perhaps a few thousand—and only their school in Philadelphia would later be reestablished.

See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Franklin, Benjamin.


Ben Marsh

Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition

The Atlantic slave trade was the forced migration of West African slave-captives from their homelands into slavery in the Americas by European and Euro-American colonizers to labor as plantation, industrial, and domestic slaves. To date, this trade constituted the largest intercontinental migration of peoples in human history, perhaps as many as 20 million people forcibly relocated from the mid-fifteenth century through the latter nineteenth. Millions of Africans were shackled and tightly packed in the bellies of slave ships, in which they endured deplorable conditions as they crossed the Atlantic in what is called “the Middle Passage,” a journey sometimes requiring up to three months, depending upon the weather and destination.

Several factors contributed to the development of the Trade and to its longevity. One of the first documented events occurred in 1441 when Portuguese sailors kidnapped African slaves off the coast of Mauritania in northwest Africa. Three years later, Portuguese sailors took over 200 African captives back to the slave market in Lisbon, Portugal. By 1450, the Portuguese transported thousands of black slaves to Europe annually.

During this period, the Portuguese used African slave labor in their sugar factories on Atlantic islands off the coast of West Africa and later established
plantations for growing cane sugar in their Brazilian colonies in South America. Their knowledge of operating large-scale plantations with enslaved labor expanded in the early seventeenth century when Dutch colonizers in Brazil introduced new technology. This knowledge would next be applied by the Dutch, English, and French in the West Indies, where sugar cultivation would explode in the second half of the seventeenth century. Described by historian Philip Curtin as a "plantation complex," an "economic and political order centering on slave plantations" in the Americas, they were owned and controlled by European and Euro-American colonizers. These plantations supplied the developing Western civilization with key and valuable staples such as sugar, tobacco, cotton, and indigo.

With the addition of English, French, Danish, and Dutch colonizers, the Atlantic slave trade had grown enormously by 1700 and would continue to do so throughout the following century. Designed to enrich the colonizing nation, slavers from Europe and North America organized and financed slaving voyages, hired captains and crews to man the ships to and from the West coast of Africa, and were responsible for successfully marketing the slaves. On slaving voyages, ships carried trading goods such as rum, European and Indian textiles, tobacco, weapons, and beads to barter for Africans with local brokers, chartered companies, and West Africans who kidnapped slaves far inland. Under these economic and social conditions, Africans became reduced to commodities.

Enslavement commonly resulted from capture during wars, but other factors were important as well. For example, during the eighteenth-century rise of the Asante kingdom, wars erupted against neighboring states and resulted in the capture of many Akan peoples who were then sold into slavery. Political instability could render a nation vulnerable to slavery. The fall of the Oyo kingdom in the nineteenth century forced many Yorubans to flee as refugees, and many of them were captured and sold. Africans were also victimized by organized slave-raiding, whose principal object was captives, not territory or political control. Some slaves were also secured through judicial punishments. In some West African cultural groups, adultery was a crime, and the accused, ostracized from society, could end up at a West African coastal slave market. Environmental factors could also increase the amount of the vulnerable. In times of famine or drought, West Africans fled to other lands and were preyed upon by kidnappers. Some nations like the Benin in the sixteenth century resisted involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. But by the seventeenth century, Benin would succumb, as would the vast majority of the nations and ethnic groups along the West African coast from the Niger River delta to the Senegambian region. The force of profits and military pressures by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made involvement almost inevitable.

Yet, on the other hand, other forces, especially by the eighteenth century, began to undermine this nefarious traffic and to disseminate an ideology morally and politically opposed to the trade and to slavery itself. West Africans themselves had long resisted enslavement at the time of capture and as they were being transported to the coast. There were also numerous incidences of organized rebellions on slave ships. The fact of this resistance
had always made the traffic a potentially perilous venture for the sailors and
captains involved in it.

But a combination of legal, social, and political activism in the Atlantic
world after 1750 would be critical in eroding the scale of and sanction for
the Atlantic slave trade. In 1772, British abolitionist Granville Sharp chal-
lenged the institution of slavery in English courts to argue against the kid-
napping of slaves or former slaves in England. Sharp was influenced by
Anthony Benezet’s powerful, *A Short Account of That Part of Africa, In-
habited by the Negroes* (1762), which vividly illustrated the devastating
effects of the slave trade upon West African peoples and their societies.
Sharp corresponded with Benezet and reprinted *A Short Account of That
Part of Africa* for distribution in England.

Based on his reading of Benezet’s work, his legal studies, as well as his
investigations of slave trading in England, Sharp came to oppose the trading
and ownership of slaves. He published, in 1769, *A Representation of the
Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery*. In this publica-
tion, Sharp challenged a master’s property rights in a slave. He argued these
so-called property rights were actually antithetical to the natural rights of all
human beings, and he advocated the use of a writ of *habeas corpus* to con-
test the recapture and reselling of a slave.

In 1771, Sharp encountered James Somerset, a runaway slave who
resided in England as a personal servant to his master. Somerset had
escaped, yet was recaptured by his master, who resold Somerset for slavery
in Jamaica. Sharp interceded by using a writ of *habeas corpus* to prevent
the export of Somerset. In Somerset’s defense, his barristers denied the le-
gality of slavery on English soil, even though the institution was allowed in
the British colonies. Lord Chief Justice Mansfield’s ruling on Somerset’s sta-
tus took the rights issue further by asserting that no law existed enabling
a master’s rights over a slave in England: “The state of slavery is of such a
nature, that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or
political, but only by positive law.” Since no such “positive law” existed,
James Somerset was on “free soil” and was no longer a slave. Winning
Somerset’s freedom in 1772 would begin to stimulate the cause for abolition
in England.

In 1787, Sharp joined forces with others opposed to the Atlantic slave
trade, including numerous Quakers, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilber-
force, James Ramsey, and others to form the Society for the Abolition of
the Slave Trade. These men would prove integral to orchestrating the politi-
cal machinery leading to Great Britain’s abolition of its participation in the
Atlantic slave trade in 1808, a momentous event given the dominant posi-
tion Britain had occupied throughout the eighteenth century in the traffic.
By the late 1780s, Clarkson had undertaken investigations of the conditions
of slave ships departing slaving ports in England. In 1788, he produced a
schematic drawing of *The Brookes*, a British slave ship, which illustrated
the inhumane conditions under which Africans were shipped. This domi-
nant image became a public testament to the horrendous conditions under
which Africans suffered and was used with enormous effect to mobilize the
British public against the trade. With the assistance of Quakers and
dissenting congregations, Clarkson and the Society forged local oppositional committees that spearheaded a massive petition writing campaign to Parliament, resulting in over 400,000 signatories by 1792. Quakers and allies on a much smaller scale were also conducting similar petition campaigns in the United States at the same time. By 1792, inspired by the recent example of Denmark, which had enacted a measure to end their involvement with the slave trade gradually over the next 10 years, the leader of the abolition cause in Parliament, William Wilberforce, had finally written a measure for the ending of Britain’s own involvement and put it before the body. After much emotional debate, abolition passed the House of Commons, but was eventually blocked by the House of Lords, where the interests of West Indian planters brought great influence to bear. While further efforts to pass the legislation were pursued through 1795, dedication to it waned as the mounting crisis with France preoccupied the nation and diminished interest in promulgating any extensive reform measures.

Enthusiasm for abolition revived in the early years of the new century. While the Treaty of Amiens of 1802 appeared to leave Britain weakened and France resurgent in its West Indian colonies, Napoleon’s reinstatement of colonial slavery and massive assault on Saint Domingue failed miserably, and France largely abandoned the islands for a renewed focus on continental conquests. In 1805, Britain’s dramatic naval victory over the combined French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar left it supreme in the Atlantic and in the seas beyond. If abolition were to be adopted now, Britain was capable of preventing any other nation from filling the void it would create if it suddenly withdrew from the trade. Abolitionists like Clarkson and Wilberforce, who ultimately sought an end to slavery itself, argued that once planters realized they could no longer rely on imported Africans to replenish their labor supply, they would improve the material and social conditions of the enslaved to increase their longevity and their notoriously low capacity for natural increase. Moreover, public weariness over the long war with France was eroding national morale at a time when a Britain isolated from the continent required a vigorous patriotism. Forging a great humanitarian crusade based on ending the inhumanities of the slave trade would hopefully reinvigorate the nation’s flagging spirits by endowing the struggle with a great philanthropic and Christian mission. However, slavery itself in the British West Indies would remain untouched. When a bill for abolition was presented to Parliament again in 1807, it passed readily and was reinforced by a similar action in the United States Congress. On January 1, 1808, both nations ceased their involvement in the Atlantic slave trade.

Britain now almost immediately set about disabling the broader Atlantic slave trade. It began posting boats off the West African coast by key ports and passages used by slavers. In treaties concluded with Spain and Brazil prior to 1815, firm provisions against their participating in the slave trade were entered. Of course, Spanish Cuba and Brazil would violate these terms routinely, well into the second half of the nineteenth century. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which concluded the war with France, adjusted agreements with Spain and Brazil were struck which allowed them a few years to replenish their labor force with imported Africans and the French
five years to do so, much to the dismay of abolitionists in England. Over the
many following years, Britain would place commissioners in Cuba and else-
where to attempt to enforce compliance with the treaties. By 1833, it had
established a much larger fleet of vessels, called the Africa Squadron, to
counteract the wide-scale slave trading that continued from West Africa into
the 1850s. To this force, the United States added a few lackluster ships.
Finally, British pressures and the decline of slavery in Cuba and Brazil after
1870 combined to bring the Atlantic slave trade to an end. Yet, as Britain
and other European powers colonized Africa and Asia in the late-nineteenth
century, they justified their infringement in part on the basis of ending the
slave trade in these various regions. Britain was as often as imperfectly suc-
cessful in these locales as they were in the Atlantic as their professed hu-
manitarian ideals were tempered by their colonialist need to reckon with
regional customs and secure the cooperation of local potentates. See also
Bonaparte, Napoleon; British Slavery, Abolition of; East African Slave Trade.

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Gloria-Yvonne
Baartman, Sara (c. 1790 –1815)

The French government only recently agreed to return the remains of Sara (or Sartje) Baartman to her homeland in South Africa, where she was buried in 2002 with the respect due to a person symbolizing the European exploitation of Africa. Better known as the “Hottentot Venus,” Baartman was a member of the Griqua tribe of the Khoisan people, who were commonly derogated as “Hottentots,” a Dutch word signifying “stutterers.” She was probably born near Cape Town, spent several years in Europe as a freak-show exhibit, and died in France. Incongruously, her career as a public exhibit persisted in France some 150 years beyond her death because the prominent scientist François Cuvier preserved her genitalia and skeleton for display at the Musée de l’Homme in Paris. There she stayed in full view until 1974, when her remains, which no longer aroused public interest, were relegated to a shelf.

The reasons Baartman generated scientific and popular attention, first in England where she was exhibited from 1810 to 1811, and then in France, from 1814 to 1815, were twofold. First, Europeans writing about the Cape of Good Hope had long speculated about the place of the native Khoisan people on the Great Chain of Being. This hierarchical taxonomic system established human beings on the top rung of creation and other creatures at sequentially lower points to indicate their lesser perfection, with certain ethnic groups positioned according to their supposed similarity to or difference from Europeans. When Carolus Linnaeus published his influential classification of natural relationships in Systemae Naturae (System of Nature) (1735), he classified “Hottentots” as creatures midway between human and ape. Cuvier and the German philosopher Gotthold Lessing considered “Hottentots” the basest level of humanity, a separate sub-species degenerated from European stock. Secondly, the Khoisan were interesting in their own right. Possessed of distinctive cultural and physical features, they astonished and titillated visiting Europeans with their relish of raw meat, women’s peculiar mode of nursing their infants, and their genitalia.
Early seventeenth century curiosity was focused on the men, who were believed to possess only one testicle; that belief was reinforced by Linnaeus’s classification of them as *Homo Monstrosis Monorchidei* (Monstrous One-Testicled Man). By the mid-eighteenth century, this prurient interest had shifted to women, who were visibly possessed of two unusual traits. To Europeans, the most remarkable of these was an elongation of the inner lips of the labia that hide the vulva from view and which Linnaeus termed the *sinus pudoris*, or curtain of shame. In French, this physical feature was known as *le tablier* and, in English, as the Hottentot apron. The other characteristic was *steatopygia*, which is simply the accumulation of large amounts of fat in the buttocks. Interest in Baartman, then, derived from a combination of scientific and anthropological curiosity about Khoisan culture, the unenviable place of the Khoisan in contemporary natural classification systems, the origin and purpose of their unusual somatic traits, and outright prurience. In Europe, Baartman’s notoriety as a grotesque exhibit became so widespread that she was frequently caricatured in public commentary, songs, and cartoons.

Baartman came to this pass in an age of novelty, when freak shows in Europe were wildly popular attractions. Hendrick Cezar, who discovered her in service on his brother’s South African farm, and Alexander Dunlop, his English partner, transported her to England and set up their show in London in 1810. Indeed, her naked display proved a popular attraction, although some spectators sympathized with her evident discomfort in the public eye. Despite the vulgar nature of her occupation, she attended respectable public functions and could speak Dutch, some English, and, in due course, a little French. She caused an immediate sensation in London, but some members of the public suspected that this tableau of a naked woman caged like a wild beast involved gross exploitation.

Spurred by the successful abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, members of the African Association set to work to emancipate Sara soon after her arrival. The Association initiated a *habeas corpus* proceeding on her behalf, predicated upon the assumption that her masters had coerced her physically, sexually, or, at the very least, economically, but the action was dismissed because Baartman claimed that her participation was voluntary and satisfactorily rewarded. Following the court case, she left London and turned up the next year in Manchester, baptized in the name of Sara Baartman and married (although her husband’s identity is not now known). In 1814, she resurfaced in Paris, purchased by a former animal trainer. Newspapers announced the exciting Parisian debut of this “Hottentot” sensation, and her owner profited from her display for about 18 months, at which point she fell ill and died. After her death, Cuvier added to the indignities she endured in her life by exhibiting her genitals and skeleton as anthropological curiosities. He also published a monograph of her dissection (1817) in which he constantly refers to her physical and mental similarity with apes, while, paradoxically, acknowledging her actual intelligence, memory, physique, and grace.

To the European public and to scientists alike, the “Hottentot Venus” was a grotesque and alien creature, exciting to see, amusing to mock, and
challenging to define; but in life and death, Baartman was exploited by powerful Europeans who concealed her manifest humanity and intelligence from public view in the pursuit of their own profit and fame. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at; Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope.


*Susan B. Iwanisziw*

**Bacon, Leonard (1802–1881)**

Leonard Bacon was an American reformer, Congregational minister, writer, and newspaper editor who wrote and spoke widely on race and slavery issues during the antebellum era. From the early 1820s until the mid-1830s, he was one of the most influential New England advocates of colonizing African Americans in Liberia. When the debate on whether slavery should be permitted in the territories taken from Mexico erupted in the mid-1840s, Bacon became an outspoken supporter of the free-soil position. Though a harsh critic of slavery who urged its eventual eradication, he consistently advocated a gradualist approach. His moderate antislavery stance brought him into sharp conflict with both the conservatives and the immediate abolitionists.

Born on the Michigan frontier to missionary parents and educated at Yale College and Andover Theological Seminary, Bacon first achieved recognition as a colonizationist in his early twenties. He was drawn to the American Colonization Society by his conviction that white prejudice would prevent blacks from ever improving their condition in the United States; his desire, as an evangelical Protestant, to extend Christianity and “civilization” to Africa; his fear that degraded free blacks threatened the classical republican virtues of order, morality, and harmony; and his belief that the repatriation of slaves would ultimately end slavery. He served the cause in numerous capacities and helped to shape its message and policies for more than a decade.

When William Lloyd Garrison and other immediatists condemned colonization in the early 1830s as an impractical and deceptive scheme that served to deepen racial prejudice and perpetuate slavery, Bacon, writing in the *Journal of Freedom* and other publications, vigorously defended the cause and denounced the abolitionists as single-minded extremists who alienated both Northerners who sincerely wished to end slavery and Southerners who might someday effect state abolition.

Increasingly disillusioned by the mismanagement of the American Colonization Society and disturbed by the escalating sectional polarization, he joined other antislavery colonizationists in the mid-1830s in founding the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race,
which sought to stake out a middle ground between the colonization and abolitionist movements. This society, however, was out of step with the confrontational mood of the time and dissolved soon after it was launched.

Not until the debate on the territorial issue and the missionary societies’ relationship with slavery developed in the mid-1840s did Bacon again become actively involved in the slavery controversy. The dispute that erupted within the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Home Missionary Society was precipitated by the abolitionists’ insistence that slaveholding was a sin per se that required the churches to sever relations with slaveholders. In response to this demand, Bacon stood forth as a leading proponent of the “good slaveholder” concept, which held that only those masters who bought and sold slaves for gain, treated them in an unjust manner, and refused to recognize the sanctity of their marriages and families should, if found guilty of these offenses, be banished from the churches. Even though virtually no slaveholders were willing to ameliorate the system and most churches were reluctant to discipline slaveholding members, he clung to this position throughout the antebellum era.

Nevertheless, during these years Bacon was energized and, in some respects, radicalized by the territorial and fugitive slave issues. Southern efforts to open the Western territories to slavery convinced him that the slaveholders were intent upon capturing the West, subverting the Constitution and the Union, and threatening the fundamental rights and interests of Northern whites. Especially in his capacity as senior editor of the Independent, a religious newspaper published in New York City, he influenced the thinking of large numbers of Northern evangelical Protestants on the slavery issue between 1848 and 1861.

Bacon blamed the slaveholders, not antislavery Northerners, or even the immediatists, for the escalating sectional controversy, and he emphasized that liberty and morality must take precedence over the preservation of the Union. He condemned the Kansas-Nebraska Act as unconstitutional and a crime against Christianity and even encouraged Northern emigrants to Kansas to arm themselves. Indeed, while he counseled against violent resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law, he also argued that Christians should not obey legislation that contravened God’s laws.

Bacon was drawn to the Republican Party in the mid-1850s, especially by its antislavery message. In consistently underscoring the moral dimension of the slavery issue, in viewing containment as a first step toward universal emancipation, and in emphasizing the need to denationalize slavery, he stood closest to the radicals in the party. Indeed, he strongly defended John Brown’s raid at Harpers Ferry, and during the secession crisis, he emphatically rejected any attempt to preserve the nation through additional compromises on slavery.

Yet during the Civil War, Bacon’s deep-seated attachment to moderation quickly resurfaced. In the early stages of the conflict he, like most Northern clergymen, emphasized the preservation of divinely established government, not the destruction of slavery, as the reason for waging war against the Confederacy. Although increasingly supportive of emancipation in the name of
military necessity, he expressed a growing fear that federal abolition might lead to a centralized despotism in Washington. He even proposed a plan for compensated emancipation that would not have eradicated American slavery until 1876. In the end, however, he vigorously supported the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment. See also American Missionary Association.


*Hugh Davis*

**Bailey, Gamaliel (1807–1859)**

Gamaliel Bailey was a well-known journalist and newspaper editor during the first half of the nineteenth century. He was most famous for editing the *National Era* and became involved in the antislavery crusade in the 1830s. Bailey accomplished what no other antebellum individual achieved—he successfully established an antislavery press in the South.

To understand Bailey and other political economists, one has to make a crucial distinction between an advocate of antislavery and an abolitionist. An abolitionist was by definition antislavery, but the inverse commonly was not true for the antislavery advocate. For example, abolitionists called for the immediate, unconditional, and uncompensated emancipation of all slaves who would receive complete constitutional equality. They were morally driven; they viewed slavery as an abomination to all religious and right-thinking people, as a sin against God, and, in fact, as the most egregious sin of American society. Proponents of this position included William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, and John Brown.

Advocates of antislavery, on the other hand, did not usually favor immediate abolition, but rather some scheme of gradual, compensated emancipation—gradual sometimes defined as into the 1900s. It was almost always coupled with some plan for African colonization. They also opposed the extension of slavery into the Western territories. They were willing to constitutionally guarantee federal protection of that institution in the slave states, something a radical abolitionist would never do. They would form the core of the Free Soil Party of the late 1840s and eventually of the Republicans, who were motivated largely to protect the white laboring classes and maintain open land for them in the Western territories. Many antislavery advocates detested black people and radical abolitionists, a number of whom were African Americans. They proudly proclaimed themselves supporters of a party for white men. For these late-antebellum proponents of antislavery, free soil meant soil free of the black man, whom they attacked as physically, mentally, and temperamentally inferior to Caucasians and incapable of mixing with whites as equals. Their numbers included Frank Blair, B. Gratz Brown, and Gamaliel Bailey.
Born in Mount Holley, New Jersey, in 1807, Gamaliel Bailey early demonstrated his ability as a writer. He began by writing articles and editing various religious newspapers and by 1835 became involved in the antislavery crusade. He was one of the era’s most interesting characters. Hardly an abolitionist, he at times nevertheless associated with them. However, he rarely endorsed their positions in his paper, the *National Era*, which he founded in Washington, D.C., in 1847. The reason was clear: Washington was a pro-slavery Southern city, a hostile environment in which to begin publication of an antislavery paper. Yet both antislavery advocates and abolitionists contributed some $65,000 to launch the paper, much of it from Arthur and Lewis Tappan.

Bailey was a conservative on the slavery issue. This orientation helped him to keep the *Era* afloat economically for he offended far fewer people. The *National Era* became a success, reaching a wider audience than any other antislavery or abolitionist newspaper. When the paper began, it had some 4,000 subscribers. By 1850 it had 25,000. Bailey hoped that the paper would spur a broad antislavery consensus that might even include Southerners. As a political organizer, he helped to found the Ohio Liberty Party, lobbied for early Free Soilers and later for Republicans in the nation’s capital. While eventually his paper found little support in the South, it did have an extensive following in the Northwest, an area where the Republican Party quickly grew.

Bailey also stimulated a broader following by including writings on more than just antislavery topics. He hired top literary writers—who were also antislavery—including Lydia Maria Child and the eminent poet and literary editor, John Greenleaf Whittier. He had fiction and poetry, business and financial news; the *National Era* was not simply a “one idea” press.

Bailey vigorously attacked the slave power while simultaneously reaching out to the white working classes of the North and South. Slaveholders upheld an inefficient and oppressive system of labor that interfered with the advance of the nation’s white working classes. And, by the 1850s, the slaveholders had so come to dominate the Federal government that it served their interests alone. Bailey was an Anglo-Saxon supremacist; he believed the Anglo-Saxons were the “great civilizers” of the world. If anything, Bailey argued that American slaves, by being in contact with ethnic Saxons, were thereby at least being educated and uplifted under slavery. American slaves were better off than their African brothers, who still lived in barbarism. Therefore, until some scheme of gradual, compensated emancipation coupled with colonization could be settled upon by the North and South, blacks should remain in the South and continue under white tutelage. Bailey specifically called for black colonization to Haiti and endorsed Abraham Lincoln’s plan for an experimental settlement of black Americans on Île à Vache. Meanwhile, Bailey called for expanded European immigration to replace the colonized blacks. See also Liberty Party.


*James D. Bilotta*
Baptist War (1831–1832)

The 1831–1832 Emancipation War in Jamaica is usually called the “Baptist War” or the “Baptist Revolt” because its main leader, Samuel Sharpe, as well as his principal aides, were all native Baptists: George Taylor, John Tharpe, Thomas Dove, Robert Gardner, George Guthrie, Ramsay, Robert Johnston, M’Lennan, Plummer and Campbell. Sharpe himself (who was tried on April 19, 1832 and hanged May 23, 1832 for his role in the war) became a deacon in the First Baptist Church in Montego Bay, now the Burchell Memorial Baptist Church. This war was a major one in the history of the British-colonized Caribbean, with some enslavers in Jamaica describing it as one “unparalleled in the history of the colony, whether for depth of design or the extent of misery and ruin which it has entailed on the inhabitants” (Jamaica Archives).

The revolutionary plan laid down by Sharpe was that after the Christmas holidays, when the call for work resumption came, the enslaved were to demand the rights of free workers—wages—and to strike en masse if the enslavers refused their demand. But he also had a back-up plan for armed revolt if there was any attempt by the plantocracy to force blacks back to work as enslaved people after the Christmas holidays. When rumor came that the whites were planning to break the strike on the Salt Spring Estate in St. James, the plan to burn the properties was set in motion. It was swift and uncompromising. In the end, the torching of the estates set off the rebellion prematurely before the mass strike action could take effect. Once started, however, the rebellion continued on its violent path until more violently suppressed by the British military forces.

The ensuing rebellion, lasting from December 27, 1831 to January 1832, involved close to 60,000 men and women, the majority enslaved, from 300 plantations, pens, rural settlements, and urban holdings and engulfed not only the parish of St. James, but also spread to Trelawny, Westmoreland, Hanover, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, and as far away from the center of the rebellion as Portland, St. Thomas-in-the-Vale and St. Thomas-in-the-East. The Maroons helped the colonial forces to pacify the rebels. One hundred armed Maroons, fifty each from Charles Town and Moore Town in the east, joined their Accompong colleagues in the west to suppress the antislavery effort of Samuel Sharpe and the 1832 rebels.

When it was all over, the cost in lives and property was horrendous; so was the brutality of the suppression. Damage to property (which was calculated to include the loss of enslaved people through death, imprisonment or transportation) was estimated at over £1,154,589, most of this in St James, totaling over £425,818. The punishment of the rebels was savage. The colonial army and the paramilitary forces unleashed a “reign of terror” on the rebels. The arbitrary hanging of enslaved people, mostly men, and the burning of their property were wide scale. The local militia shot many of the rebels on sight before the authorities could even institute the trials. Based on the official estimates (but this is conservative) some 619 rebels were killed—307 in open rebellion and some 312 executed by the Slave Courts and the Courts Martial. By contrast, only fourteen whites were killed, with twelve having been wounded. The official records also indicate
that three free Colored men were killed and two wounded in the armed struggle. Fourteen free people were also tried and convicted for their role in the revolt (including a white man, a Mr. Ellery, and persons described as "brown"). Others were deported to North America (e.g., to Nova Scotia), and England, whipped and/or imprisoned.


*Verene Shepherd*

**Barbary Wars and White American Enslavement in North Africa**

From at least the time of the Reconquest of Spain, slaves captured from ships and raided from the European coast of the Mediterranean, and even as far away as the British Isles and Iceland, were a major source of slaves for North Africa. According to Robert C. Davis, between 1530 and 1780 there were at least a million and perhaps a million and a quarter white Europeans, including white Americans, enslaved in the Barbary states. While American military engagement with Barbary corsairs did not start until 1801, it can be argued that the period of the Barbary Wars started in 1776, when American ships were no longer protected by the English, and ended in 1815 with the last confrontation of the U.S. Navy with Algiers. In this period, the number of American captives most likely never exceeded 500. The white American slaves taken during the Barbary Wars are important for two reasons. First, as Davis has pointed out, in the study of slavery, the enslavement of white Europeans, and later of white Americans, and the existence of white slavery in North Africa is a neglected topic of research. Second, the existence of white American slaves in North Africa was important in the American antislavery discourse.

As British colonies, American commerce and American ships and crews had been protected by England. After independence, the American government had to form its own relations with the Barbary States and to protect its own ships. The first American strategy, after it lost English protection, was to try to put itself under French protection. However, while the Americans wanted the French to agree to protect American citizens and property from North African attacks, in the 1778 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, Louis XVI only agreed to use his influence with the North African states on behalf of the United States.

The initial American debate on its relations with the Barbary States centered on whether or not a course of peace and tribute or the use of force was the best way to secure the safety of American ships and crew. The option of using force, which called for capturing North African mariners in
order to exchange them for Americans held in their respective states, was complicated by the fact that the United States did not start building a navy until 1794. The United States concluded its first treaty with a North African state in 1787 for two reasons. First, the Emperor of Morocco, Muhammad XVI, better known as Sidi Muhammad, was among the first to recognize American independence. Second, it was believed that because of her Atlantic ports, Morocco posed the biggest threat to American shipping. The peace treaty covered areas such as trade, neutral rights, and exchange of war captives, and while the United States did not have to pay an annual tribute, it did give Morocco £5,000 sterling. Unfortunately for the Americans, treaties with the other Barbary States were far more expensive. By 1800, the United States was behind in payments to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, and these states began capturing American ships and enslaving their crews, as well as threatening war. Moreover, it became obvious to many in the American government, especially President Thomas Jefferson, that the tribute payments were too much of a strain on the American economy, that the rulers of the Barbary States would continue to complain about the quality of the tribute goods that they did receive, and that war might be the better strategy.

The American captives in North Africa were treated similarly to other male slaves. Slaves could be either owned by private individuals and work in private households, or they could be owned by the local ruler, governing council, or the captain of a corsair. These public slaves worked as galley slaves or in heavy construction work. Some slaves were able to work in areas where they held special skills, and a few individuals were able to use their enslavement for upward mobility. However, as Lofti Ben Rejeb has observed, enslavement for white Americans was a temporary condition. Most white Americans slaves could expect to be ransomed within months or years since they were viewed foremost as a commercial commodity whose redemption value was higher than their work value.

The enslavement of white Americans in North Africa became very important in the American antislavery discourse. The existence of white slavery in North Africa turned the "natural law" theory of black enslavement on its head and emptied it of its meaning. As outlined by Ben Rejeb, the importance of the existence of white American slaves for the American slavery debate was that it provided a point of comparison. Ben Rejeb argues that the antislavery lobby used the comparative method as a means to condemn American slavery and as a means of introspection and self-appraisal. This technique was especially used in antislavery poetry, fiction, and drama such as Royall Tyler's 1797 novel, *The Algerine Captive*, and William Dunlap's 1794 play, *Shelby's Travels*. While the existence of white, particularly white American, slavery in North Africa was used primarily by abolitionists between 1780 and 1815 as an argument against black slavery in America, the significance of white American slaves in Barbary was revived in the 1840s and 1850s antislavery discourse. According to Ben Rejeb, in the 1770–1815 time period, the enslavement of white Americans in North Africa was used to rally Americans against the Barbary States, as well as to indict slavery nationally without pointing directly at the South. However, in
the 1840s and 1850s, as the North and South divided on the issue of slavery, Barbary became a politicized and sectional symbol applied only to the South, which became designated the American Barbary. Capitalizing on the growing anti-Southern sentiment in the North, to make their point about American slavery, comparisons between Barbary and the American South were used to suggest that the American South was just as foreign to the American North as was Barbary. See also North Africa and Abolition.


Jennifer Lofkrantz

Barnes, Albert (1798–1871)

Albert Barnes was a New School Presbyterian pastor, author, and abolitionist. Born in the small rural town of Rome, New York, Barnes experienced conversion during a revival meeting at Hamilton College, a biracial institution (Native- and European-American). While a student at Princeton, Barnes was influenced by New Divinity theology, a refinement of the religious thought of Jonathan Edwards, which emphasized a selfless devotion to God and benevolence to others. Following Princeton, Barnes became the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Morristown, New Jersey (1825–1830). He preached and lived in a manner that encouraged personal responsibility for one’s actions and the betterment of society, believing, as New Divinity theologians did, that social activism was the natural result of spiritual revival. One sermon, “The Way of Salvation” (1829), resulted in two unsuccessful heresy trials in 1830 and 1831, but it also resulted in a call to replace the retiring pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. Barnes would remain there from 1830 through 1870. From this prestigious pulpit, Barnes continued to advocate the spiritual and moral improvement of his congregants and country. To promote the Sunday school
movement, he assembled *Barnes’ Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, an enduring set of commentaries designed to be used by Sunday school teachers. While American Presbyterians were splitting into Old School and New School factions in the 1830s, Barnes again was unsuccessfully tried for heresy (1835–1836). When the denominational split became formal in 1837, Barnes found himself a leader among New School Presbyterians because of his connection with New Divinity and his advocacy of social activism.

The American slavery debate was most active between 1830 and 1860. Several significant works had been written on the Bible and slavery in the 1830s, but not until Thornton Stringfellow’s proslavery work, *A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery* (1841), had there been a comprehensive effort to assemble biblical passages in support of American slavery. Barnes’s comprehensive antislavery response, *An Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery*, appeared five years later. The more radical abolitionists were attempting to prove that slavery, in all forms, was a *malum in se*—an “evil in itself,” regardless of the circumstances. Barnes contended that, while not a *malum in se*, the American form of slavery was sinful in many respects. Barnes demonstrated an extensive knowledge of how each biblical passage was used on either side of the debate and sought to craft an argument that safeguarded a consistent interpretation of scripture. He contended that the moral value of American slavery had to be measured in terms of the “golden rule” of loving others as one loves one’s self. Barnes concluded starkly: American slavery so violated the golden rule that it ought to be discontinued and replaced with a more loving form of employment. Barnes’s recommendation for the active engagement of the American Presbyterian churches in the antislavery movement was also published by Parry and McMillan in 1857, under the title *The Church and Slavery*. See also *Bible and Slavery*.


*Kenneth G. Cleaver*

**Behn, Aphra (1637/40–1689)**

Aphra Behn is considered the first professional English woman writer. Her reputation as a playwright, poet, translator, and novelist earned her interment in Westminster Abbey, yet she died alone and in poverty. Details about her origins remain hazy. Neither the correct spelling of her first name nor her family surname can be determined definitively. Speculation as to her parentage and her social status is varied; her father has been identified as a Kentish gentleman or a Wye barber, and her mother identified as the Colepeper family’s wet-nurse. Perhaps she met and married a merchant named Behn at the time she claims to have journeyed to Surinam in the early 1660s. She did spy for Charles Stuart in the Netherlands who wanted
William Scot, who had been living in Surinam, to return to England. When her mission failed, King Charles never reimbursed her expenses, and she spent a brief period of time in an English debtor’s prison. Nowadays, she is best known for her literary works, including translations, poetry, drama, and fiction, which fill seven modern volumes. But she is best remembered for a short work of fiction entitled *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1688).

Presented as a “true history,” the story still retains a strong grip on the public imagination. It recounts the story of an African prince tricked into boarding a slave ship and subsequently executed for leading a slave revolt in Surinam. The anonymous narrator claims that she met Oroonoko there and learned his history firsthand. Behn’s assertion that she visited Surinam is circumstantial, but the author frequently told her friends of this encounter long before she published it.

Some modern readers have identified her as an early abolitionist because of her graphic depiction of the prince’s torture and execution in this English colony. In *Oroonoko* and in her tragedy *Abdelazer: or, the Moor’s Revenge* (1676), which is an adaptation of a Renaissance play, she presents Africans without the era’s common racial scorn. However, her attitude toward chattel slavery has generated intense polemical debate. One side argues that the narrator’s moving description of the plight of Oroonoko and his wife, Imoinda, reflects an early form of antislavery sentiment. The other side focuses on her sympathetic treatment of the noble Oroonoko and his wife as a device for supporting the then beleaguered Stuart monarchy. Like her personal history, her response to slavery is a puzzle. Early abolitionists, who would have been keen to exploit any antislavery sentiment in her works, chose instead to focus on the adaptations of Thomas Southerne’s dramatic version of *Oroonoko* (1696).

While Behn may or may not have favored the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, she certainly despised English colonial brutality and coarseness, and represented those attitudes not only in *Oroonoko*, but also in a posthumously staged play about Virginia entitled *The Widdow Ranter*, performed in 1689 and published in 1690. In both texts, Behn exposes the disreputable nature of local government officials and the harm inflicted on the English king and his colonial interests.

In her own age, Behn was a well-respected playwright and poet, on a par with major male authors, and she was an inspiration to female writers just entering the profession. Her most successful plays were comedies such as *The Forc’d Marriage* (1670), and she wrote or adapted nineteen plays. During her lifetime, she sold three major collections of poetry; she also wrote prologues and epilogues for other authors’ plays. After her death, Behn’s fiction was printed or reprinted in collected works in 1696, 1698, and 1700, and throughout the eighteenth century. See also Literature and Abolition; *Oroonoko* and Early Antislavery Literary Works.


*Susan B. Iwanisziw*
Benezet, Anthony (1713–1784)

Anthony Benezet was born in St. Quentin, Picardy, France, on January 31, 1713. His father and mother were both Huguenots. Under the regime of Henry IV, the persecuted Protestant Huguenots experienced a period of semi-religious freedom, which lasted from the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes in 1598, until its revocation in 1685. His family fled from France to Holland in 1715, then to England, and finally to Philadelphia in 1731. In 1735, he was naturalized as a British citizen, and on May 13, 1736, he married Joyce Marriot who was from a Quaker family.

In Philadelphia, Benezet became a schoolteacher and took charge of the William Penn School in 1742. After working for some years educating Quaker girls, he began to teach young black children, primarily in his home, in 1750. A few years later, he founded the African School for Blacks or the Free African School. His students would include Absalom Jones, the first minister of African descent in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and James Forten, the sail maker and entrepreneur.

Benezet fought actively to end slavery, but, unlike most whites, he also proclaimed the complete equality of enslaved Africans to whites. Building upon Quaker principles, Benezet wrote A Short Account of the People Called Quakers (1780), in which he advocated the equality of all before God and the particular full inclusion of blacks in civil society, nonviolence, and the avoidance of greed and sloth by Quakers.

His most important works, however, reckoned with Africa and the Atlantic slave trade. A Short Account of that part of Africa Inhabited by the Negroes, and the manner by which the Slave-Trade is Carried on was published in 1762 and Some Historical Observations of Guinea in 1771. His study of Africa had a profound effect on the African born abolitionists Ottabah Cugoano and Olaudah Equiano who were both kidnapped as children from Africa. Thomas Clarkson, the British abolitionist, also relied heavily on using Benezet’s Some Historical Account of Guinea in preparing his own work on the Atlantic slave trade, An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African (1786). In Some Historical Account of Africa, Benezet had analyzed early travelers’ accounts of Africa including those of Michel Adanson, Jacques Barbot, Williams Smith, and Willem Bosman to refute the pro-slavery descriptions of a benighted and barbaric Africa. He argued that, prior to the slave trade, Africans lived in relative freedom, with an abundance of the necessities of life. He argued that the trade morally corrupted Europeans and some Africans, who became their accomplices in the buying and selling of their fellow Africans.

Benezet had been deeply influenced by Montesquieu’s argument in The Spirit of Laws that slavery had a destructive effect on both the State and “free men.” He was equally persuaded by the Scottish moral philosopher George Wallace who wrote in his System of the Principles of the Law of Scotland (1760) that Men in their liberty are not “in commercia, they are not either saleable or purchasable,” and his colleague, Frances Hutcheson, who asserted in A System of Moral Philosophy that “no endowments natural or acquired, can give a perfect right to assume power over others, without their consent.”
Together with John Woolman, Benezet wrote *Epistles of Caution and Advice, Concerning the Buying and Keeping of Slaves*, in 1754. That same year, he edited Woolman’s *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes*. He also worked closely with Dr. **Benjamin Rush**, who later wrote anonymous tracts condemning slavery. He corresponded with **Benjamin Franklin** who credited the antislavery petition and pamphlets of Benezet with the decision of the Virginia House of Burgesses to petition the king for an end to the slave trade in 1772. Benezet wrote many hundreds of letters, corresponding with religious leaders such as George Whitefield, John Wesley, and Moses Brown and secular leaders such as Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush about his views on slavery and the slave trade. Upon receiving one of his pamphlets, Patrick Henry wrote on January 18, 1773, “I take this Opportunity to acknowledge ye receipt of Anthony Benezet’s book against the slave trade. I thank ye for it. Would anyone believe that I am a Master of Slaves of my own purchase? I am drawn along by ye general Inconvenience of living without them; I will not, I cannot justify it.” John Wesley’s *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1774) was based almost entirely on Benezet’s *Some Historical Observations of Guinea*.

The correspondence between Benezet and the pioneer British abolitionist Granville Sharp proved one of the first links to the transnational fight against slavery and the slave trade. Copies of Benezet’s pamphlets were delivered to Lord Chief Justice Mansfield and his fellow jurists in 1771 when Benezet and Sharp collaborated on the famous **Somerset Decision**. Justice Mansfield decided that James Somerset, a black who had been brought to England, could not be forcibly removed from the country by his master and was declared free. On May 14, 1772, Benezet wrote Sharp that “six hundred Copies had been delivered” of his pamphlet *A Caution and a Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies* (1767) “to so many Members of both Houses of Parliament.” Sharpe and Benezet developed new methods of collecting thousands of signatures on antislavery petitions and delivering them to their respective assemblies. His descriptions of Africa proved to be so central that **William Wilberforce** quoted Benezet at length in the great 1792 Parliamentary debates about the abolition of the slave trade. Benezet also influenced the founders of the **Société des Amis des Noirs** in Paris.

Immediately after the American Revolution, Benezet was very involved in assisting Philadelphia’s black community. When kidnapped blacks were transported through Philadelphia on their way south, Benezet intervened to obtain their freedom. He became the first president of the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage on April 14, 1775. In 1784, a few months before Benezet’s death, this organization was reformed as the **Pennsylvania Abolition Society**. After he died on May 13, 1784, over 400 local blacks marched in his funeral procession.

The kingdom of Benin, not to be confused with the contemporary West African state of Benin, dated back to the eleventh or twelfth century and existed as a powerful socio-political entity until it was dismantled by British imperialist excursions in the 1890s. A walled city occupying several kilometers in a forested area inland of the mouth of the Niger River, near Yorubaland, Benin was a court society ruled by an oba (king). In the early sixteenth century, Benin, despite growing contacts with the Portuguese, limited the sale of male slaves within its borders, thus making itself the only West African state to withdraw from the African slave trade.

The period of Benin's greatest influence and reach was under the oba Ewuare, who ruled between 1440 and 1473; his son, Ozolua, who ruled from 1481 to 1504; and his grandson, Esigie, who ruled between 1504 and 1550. In the mid-fifteenth century, the oba Ewuare initiated a campaign of military expansion and empire building. During the late-fifteenth century, Benin developed a close trading relationship with Portugal, and Portuguese soldiers assisted Benin in the city-state's many wars. Emissaries from the king of Portugal visited the oba's court and Portuguese came to be spoken there. Captives taken during the period of expansion and occupation were often traded to the Portuguese as slaves.

In 1516, during the reign of oba Esigie, Benin restricted the sale of male slaves, an action effectively isolating the city-state from the growth and development of the Nigerian coast's major export activity over the next three centuries. The restricted sales of male slaves from Benin came at the same time as the Portuguese were increasingly turning elsewhere for the purchase of slaves. Indeed, Benin had never been extensively involved in the slave trade with the Portuguese despite having important trade connections and political ties that would have given it an advantage over regional competitor states. The absence of an organized slave trading network and systematic slave raiding as well as its minimal involvement in the transatlantic slave trade makes Benin unique among West African states.

There has been much speculation about possible reasons for Benin's decision to restrict the sales of male slaves. One possible reason was the slowing pace of the kingdom's expansion, which left it with fewer captives to sell as slaves. Another explanation suggests Benin's need for increased population and labor power during a period of changing domestic production and trade. Thus, it is also suggested that in Benin, as in other African societies, there was an inverse relationship between textile production and the slave trade. When textile production became a priority in Benin in the
sixteenth century, slave trading was prohibited as available labor was needed for textile production.

A further, political explanation, suggested by the Marxist historian Walter Rodney, is that only strong African states such as Benin could resist European pressures to be involved in the slave trade without fear of economic or military reprisals. In this view, only Benin among regional powers was strong enough to defend its decision not to participate in the slave trade with Europeans.

The decision does not appear to have been based on greater humanitarian considerations among the oba since slavery maintained a strong place in the organization of Benin's own social structure. Benin continued to capture neighboring people and put them to work as slaves in the domestic economy, but the city-state did not participate in the transatlantic slave trade. Benin also purchased slaves from Europeans, reselling some of them in the area of what is now Ghana. Indeed, Benin suspended its prohibition on the sale of male slaves for a short period in the eighteenth century.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that due to its refusal to become involved in the transatlantic slave trade, Benin society avoided the disastrous impacts on social relations and institutions that befell neighboring states that became deeply involved in that trade. Benin maintained itself as one of the most durable civilizations in the region, while slave trading empires like Oyo, Asante, and Dahomey suffered severe political instability and fragmentation as a result of the wars that they waged in pursuit of captives for the slave trade. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; North Africa and Abolition.


Jeff Shantz

Berlin Act (1885)

The Berlin Act was the treaty negotiated at the Berlin Conference in 1885. Signatories agreed that the maritime slave trade was forbidden by the law of nations and that the huge slave traffic, which flourished on the African continent, ought "likewise be regarded as forbidden." The powers in the conventional basin of the Congo agreed to use all the means at their disposal to see that their territories would not serve as markets or trade routes for the export traffic. They also bound themselves to "watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery and especially the slave trade."

This fell far short of branding the trade as an international crime, and no practical measures were agreed upon. The value of the act was thus more moral than practical. It condemned the export of slaves from Africa in a comprehensive international treaty and was thus an advance on the
declaration appended to the Act of Vienna in 1815, which merely declared that the slave trade was “repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality.” Moreover, by implication, it gave added sanction to the large number of bilateral treaties against the maritime slave trade negotiated by Britain since 1808. Although not the focus of the Berlin Act, and suggesting no practical measures, these clauses at least condemned the slave trade on land as well as by sea and thus played a small but significant part in the long struggle to end the slave trade that was ravaging large areas of Africa.


_Suzanne Miers_

**Berlin Africa Conference (1884–1885)**

The Berlin Africa Conference, sometimes call the Berlin West African Conference, was convened by the German chancellor, Prince Otto von Bismarck, to establish rules under which the European colonial powers might claim various parts of Africa. The so-called European “scramble for Africa” was already in full swing—European officials, or even private individuals, were making treaties with African rulers and peoples, and using them to claim vast territories with undefined borders, which they had yet to occupy. To prevent territorial disputes in Africa from leading to hostilities in Europe, Bismarck called a conference in Berlin of all the African colonial powers: Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and the Ottoman empire, together with other maritime powers and their allies, including the Netherlands, the United States, Russia, the Scandinavian states, and Austria. The aim of the conference was not to apportion Africa, but to lay down rules for its peaceful division and to ensure that trade and navigation, particularly on the Niger and the Congo, remained open to all nations. The purposes of the conference were not humanitarian, but political and commercial.

The export of slaves to European possessions and to the Americas had now ended. However, countless Africans were still being captured, and either used on the continent itself or exported to the Middle East. Neither the slave trade nor slavery would have been raised at the conference had not the British Anti-Slavery Society urged the British government to ensure that the treaty being negotiated there should state that evils such as the internal African slave trade should be ended by the conquering powers. Nothing would probably have come of this request had not the British Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office suggested that Britain, having little to win or lose from the conference, the credit for which would go to Bismarck, might still garner “all the honors of the meeting” by proposing an international declaration making slave trading a crime against the law of
nations. It could be restricted to Africa if other powers objected, but the
“honor and credit” of the proposal would fall to Britain. The British dele-
gate hastened to propose it to avoid being forestalled by another power
such as the United States of America.

The British had already negotiated a number of bilateral treaties against
the maritime slave trade, but this proposal was more far-reaching. It would
mean that all signatories to the Berlin Act would have to treat the slave
trade on land, as well as at sea, as a crime, and that slavers could be prose-
cuted in the courts of all “civilized” countries irrespective of their national-
ity. This was not acceptable to most of the powers at the conference. As a
result, the Berlin Act merely included some weak clauses against the slave
trade, which had little practical value and did little to end the traffic.

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Suzanne Miers

Berlin West African Conference. See Berlin Africa Conference (1884–1885)

Bible and Slavery

Theologically and historically, bondage and redemption have been essen-
tial elements of the religious narratives of Judaism and Christianity. The
range of interpretations given to these states over the long histories of these
traditions has tested the coherence of each narrative community, so that a
survey of this concept is tantamount to a diachronic review of Jewish and
Christian experience. Such an overview, if it can avoid further complicating
a tangled skein of history and piety, may succeed in clarifying some of
the salient differences among the various branches of Western religious
culture.

Judaism and Christianity alike are organized around doctrines of redemp-
tion, a term which in various languages denotes emancipation from bond-
age. Hence, the relationship between humanity (or a specific segment of
it) and God is conceptualized as freedom from enslavement. How this
redemption is achieved is one of the driving questions of the religious
imagination.

The overarching correlation of bondage and redemption rests on the recog-
nition that knowledge of a redemptive deity presupposes a sense of being
enslaved by some power intractable by ordinary human force. Obvious
though that may be, the course of history has dictated various conceptualiza-
tions of enslavement to preserve the centrality of a doctrine of redemption.
Historical conditions of bondage serve as material counterparts to metaphorical constructions of the “enslaved” and “free” forms of the human condition. To know God as a redeeming deity thus demands that one have prior experience of bondage, and in principle the knowledge of redemption is correlated to degree of servitude from which one is redeemed. Hence, the dialectic of redemption results in an ambivalent stance toward slavery—it is the necessary and continuous condition against which the redeeming deity works. Alternately, one might say that emancipation is the experience of God; but here, too, the human condition must be characterized as a form of slavery.

Narrative Purposes

Oral traditions in antiquity served as encyclopedic repositories of cultural values, and the books that make up the Hebrew Bible are surely no exception. The sequence of stories of alienation (from Eden), migration (from Canaan to Egypt), liberation from bondage followed by more wandering (in the wilderness), to resettlement in Canaan and the establishment of a holy city (Jerusalem) reflects a vulnerability to the vagaries of nature and other peoples. Unlike other contemporary epic traditions, the ancient Jewish narrative is not one of the people’s triumph over adversity, but rather about Israel’s trust in a divine promise of land and the necessary conditions for a life of holiness according to the law revealed to Moses on Sinai. Moses himself, by his own admission devoid of leadership ability, is an unlikely figure in leading the exodus from Egypt, and the irony of his heroic role underscores the fact that the biblical God is the true founder and protector of the people.

Release from servitude and revelation of divine law are so closely interwoven in the Exodus story that the two strains of Torah, narrative and law, should be seen as mutually dependent, with the story serving as the rationale for the law (evidence of the biblical God’s power) and the fulfillment of the law being the purpose of the narrative (the divine will for Israel as a chosen people). Only in God’s protection is Israel safe, and only the promise of a land offers any assurance amidst hostile nations. Given the centrality of the Exodus episode for Israel’s understanding of divine redemption, it would be easy to see bondage and freedom as the structural poles of Jewish historical consciousness.

So obvious a dichotomy would not be entirely accurate, however, for the freedom from alien domination is at the same time freedom to serve the biblical God. Only in complete freedom from the dominance of other peoples can the free service of the divine sovereign be possible. Hence, what historically may be considered liberation from bondage is the necessary ground for full religious conformity to the divine will.

Given that Israel was freed to serve the biblical God and no other power, the link between servile and free subjugation is found in the word ‘avad, politely rendered with the generic term “serve.” A servant (eved) is one fully obedient to another, and Jews saw their own service as exclusively directed to God; a cognate term (avodah) is used for liturgy as well as more mundane duties. Considering that no part of daily life lay outside the scope of
Torah, the redeemed Jew lived in total servitude to God. Freedom from physical bondage must be complete for such spiritual subservience to occur.

Although freedom from human bondage is depicted in radical terms proportional to the ideal of total obedience to the biblical deity, the treatment of slaves is strictly regulated in Torah. Among the first laws presented after the Decalogue are rules governing the purchase and manumission of Hebrew slaves, including the provision that Hebrew slaves be freed after six years in bondage (Ex. 21:1–8, 26–27, referred to later at Jer. 34:14). The legendary ancestry that holds that all humans share in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27) was taken to require that persons be treated honorably regardless of social position. Thus bondage, ubiquitous in the Ancient Near East, was presumably more humane as a result of a religious anthropology that prevented any human to be treated as chattel.

Whether the Israelites were themselves treated as mere property has been a question of dispute. Joseph’s brothers intended to sell him to the Ishmaelites, but it was Midianites who actually did so (Gen. 37:27–28); and Joseph later says that he was stolen (Gen. 40:15), suggesting that he was treated like property. Potiphar is said to have purchased Joseph from the Ishmaelites (Gen. 39:1), but the rest of the Joseph story describes him occupying a privileged place in Pharaoh’s court. Only when the Egyptians began to fear that the Hebrews might turn against them did the service become harsh (Ex. 1:14). That this is slavery in the fullest sense is borne out by God’s promise to free the Israelites from their bondage (’avodah) and redeem them, the latter term (gaal) denoting a transaction in which their servitude is annulled.

Christianity: Otherworldliness and Social Justice

As a branch of Judaism with its origins in a state of occupation that invited comparison with Egyptian dominance, Christianity was centered around a redemptive event in which a state of servitude was replaced by one of freedom, but the parallel with the Israelite model contains substantial differences. The Roman provincial government may indeed have been reminiscent of Egyptian dominance, but its presence on Jewish soil led the early followers of Jesus to redefine the promised land as a heavenly kingdom, with God the only authentic sovereign. Social and ethnic distinctions and differences of gender have no bearing in the kinship forged by faith (Gal. 3:26–28). Christianity is thus from the outset not a social program, much less a revolutionary one, and one finds exhortations throughout the New Testament to conform to the social order (e.g., Mk. 12:17, Rom. 13:1–8, 1 Tim. 2:1–2, Tit. 3:1). Even those in bondage are encouraged to serve their masters honorably (1 Tim. 6:1–2). And freedom is said to be found wherever the spirit of God is present (2 Cor. 3:17).

Christian piety, as initially elucidated by Paul, projected the dynamic of bondage and redemption onto an eschatological realm in which all earthly existence is seen as a form of alienation or bondage, and redemption into a heavenly kingdom is the only authentic liberation. Such a concept of redemption extends the promise of salvation to the entirety of humanity, while at the same time classifying mortal existence as a form of slavery. In
Paul’s language, such bondage is servitude to the “flesh,” one’s bodily nature being the hostile captor obstructing the freedom of the spirit. All of fallen humanity is thus enslaved, and consciousness of the fallen condition inherited from the primordial ancestors of the Eden story is a necessary condition for experiencing redemption.

What remains ambiguous in this early Christian theology is the extent to which social slavery (the cultural rather than the anthropological condition) is considered an evil demanding intentional action. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount associates worldly oppression with blessedness (Mt. 5:10); and elsewhere his solidarity with the oppressed is obvious enough that he was considered a threat to the ruling authorities. The impression to be drawn from the gospel portrayals is that oppression, whatever its form, is a privileged state, although it is never depicted as an intrinsic good.

**Interpretations**

The ambivalence of both the Jewish and the Christian narratives has yielded a dauntingly broad spectrum of interpretive trajectories, ranging from disregard for worldly suffering to organized activism on behalf of those enslaved. The dominant motif across the spectrum is a conviction that servitude in some form is the common lot of all persons, and that divine redemption is accordingly understood as liberation from such bondage.

The Jewish historical narrative echoes in provocative ways the theme of liberation from bondage. Projecting their Diaspora experience upon the image of bondage in Egypt, medieval Jewish piety saw in the rulers of the dominant culture, both pagan and Christian (both categories being “gentiles” in contrast to the people Israel) reappearances of Pharaoh, from whom no mercy could be expected. The protracted subjugation found some resolution in Kabbalistic mysticism, in which God’s absence from the world was counterbalanced by an intuitive perception of divine attributes in an otherwise hostile environment, and in Zionism, obviously a more literal recapitulation of the Exodus event, except for the element of divine agency. (Even religious Zionism has tended to fall short of expecting an upheaval of worldly regimes.)

Jewish piety looks both to the past and toward the future. Liberation from slavery is celebrated annually in the ritual Passover recitation, part of which emphasizes that in each generation Jews are to feel as though they themselves have come out of Egypt. But a return to the promised land is also hoped for in the hope, expressed throughout the year, that God will soon rebuild Jerusalem.

The Jewish tradition, in part because of the role that slavery plays in its redemptive narrative and in part because of the humane treatment of servants codified in biblical law, has historically been sensitive to the sufferings of persons in bondage, and archival research has demonstrated that Jewish participation in the slave trade, and in slave ownership, was generally negligible. The Jewish stance may be represented by David Einhorn (1809–1879), a Reform Jewish abolitionist who saw in American slavery an atrocity against the universal humanity in the image of God symbolized by common descent from Adam, as well as a perversion of the mythical anthropology according
to which Africans bear Noah’s curse of Ham. Later, Jewish religious leaders such as Abraham Joshua Heschel played a prominent role in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Christian attitudes to slavery are less uniform, for reasons previously suggested above; when redemption is construed in otherworldly terms, then all life is one of bondage, the difference being only one of degree. Abolitionists who drew from the Bible found some of their most forceful supporting texts in the Exodus account and passages elsewhere in which God’s power is realized in a redemptive event within the realm of tangible experience. For example, Absalom Jones’s 1808 “Thanksgiving Sermon” on the abolition of the slave trade is an exegesis of Ex. 3:7–8. Many other abolitionists cited Deut. 23:16, prohibiting the return of a fugitive slave to his owner, as evidence that those in bondage must always be treated as persons rather than as property. Opponents of slavery tended to work around the Pauline Epistle to Philemon, in which the servant Onesimus is converted by Paul yet returned to his master, by denying that Onesimus was actually a slave. Those who did see him as a slave (the Greek doulos is unambiguous) argued that a progressive recognition of the dignity of persons prevented the biblical instance from sanctioning in any way the enslavement of Africans.

The dialectic of bondage and freedom emerged in a number of forms in twentieth-century religious thought, most notably in the Latin American Liberation Theology movement and particularly in the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez. Drawing from the Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis, synthesis and the biblical conception of God as a liberator from bondage, Gutiérrez interprets the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt as a symbol for suffering throughout the world, with the Cross of Christ representing divine solidarity with the poor. While Liberation Theology has arguably drawn the Exodus event to the message of Christianity more closely than North American abolitionists had, it has done so by converting the slavery of the Jews into a metaphor for oppression wherever it is found. See also Book of Exodus; Qur’an and Antislavery; Story of Joseph.

Ralph Keen

Birney, James Gillespie (1792–1857)

James Gillespie Birney was an abolitionist and Liberty Party candidate for the U.S. presidential elections of 1840 and 1844. Birney was born in Danville, Kentucky, on February 4, 1792, into a wealthy, slave-owning family. Despite being born into the culture of the Southern planter class, James Birney was exposed at an early age to opinions supporting antislavery. His father, James Birney, spoke out against the institution of human servitude to his young son, as well as did the aunt who helped to raise him. The younger Birney attended Transylvania University, then the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), and later studied law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While in Philadelphia, Birney became further exposed to antislavery debates and became friends with a free black leader, James Forten, and an antislavery Quaker, Abraham L. Pennock.

After his training in the law, Birney returned to his native state, married Agatha McDowell, and served briefly in the Kentucky legislature in 1816.
Similar to others of his class, he migrated from his native state to the Deep South onto land being opened up for white families after the containment of Native American tribes. By 1817, Birney and his family had relocated to the Alabama Territory, and several years later, he was serving in the Alabama legislature. His early exposure to antislavery debates led to his introduction of legislation to allow for compensated emancipation. In addition, he also helped create the University of Alabama in 1820.

Around this time, Birney was converted to the Presbyterian faith during a wave of evangelical revivals in the Southern communities. His conversion produced a stronger concern for humanitarian causes. His early exposure to antislavery debates and treatment of Native American populations in Alabama led to greater involvement into efforts to improve the conditions of both groups. In addition, his political views influenced by his religious conversion began to pull him away from the Democratic Party due in part to his opposition to policies and supporters of Andrew Jackson.

Birney became involved in the American Colonization Society, and later served as that organization's agent from 1832–1833. He moved his family back to Kentucky, and began to devote more time in the antislavery movement. Birney rejected the colonization movement as ineffective and racist and freed his own slaves in 1834. He then became involved in the work of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Birney attempted to start an antislavery newspaper in Kentucky, but was forced by threats and mob violence to move his publication, The Philanthropist, to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1836.

The following year, Birney moved to New York City and became secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In an 1840 schism of that body, he became head of the anti-Garrison faction that advocated the need for a third party to find a political solution to end slavery. Birney became the presidential candidate of that new Liberty Party for the 1840 and 1844 U.S. presidential elections. In the 1844 election, Birney’s candidacy materially affected the vote count for Whig Party candidate, Henry Clay, in the state of New York.

A severe fall from a horse in 1845 left Birney partially paralyzed and forced him to retire from politics. He moved to Michigan and engaged in land development there while vainly attempting to recover his health. In the 1850s, Birney offended some long-time antislavery associates by advocating compensated emancipation. In his final years, Birney and his second wife, Elizabeth Fitzhugh, moved to Raritan Bay Union in New Jersey and lived there until his death on November 18, 1857. Two of his sons, David Bell Birney and William Birney, later served as generals in the Union Army during the American Civil War. See also Whig Party and Antislavery.


William H. Brown
Bleeding Kansas (1855–1857)

“Bleeding Kansas” was the name attached to the violence that gripped Kansas from 1855 to 1857. During those years, settlers from the North and South poured into Kansas Territory, hoping to gain control of the territorial legislature and thus the territory itself. The provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which applied the principle of popular sovereignty to the two territories, allowed the territorial legislature to determine the fate of the territory with regards to the issue of slavery. Instead, Kansas turned bloody over the issue of slavery as political institutions and practices broke down. The territory in fact mirrored what was occurring in the nation’s capital with the two-party system. In many ways, the violence in Kansas presaged the civil war that was to grip the United States from 1861–1865.

The root of Kansas’s troubles lay in the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Many Americans felt the lure of Manifest Destiny and headed west, especially to the Pacific Coast. Better transportation was sorely needed to link the new state of California with the eastern half of the nation. The most effective remedy would be a transcontinental railroad linking east and west. What route this railroad would take proved to be the stumbling block. Southerners wanted a line from New Orleans to southern California. Some Northerners sought routes that ran from Chicago out to San Francisco. Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois was among this latter group. Douglas wanted to see Chicago prosper as the eastern hub of a transcontinental railroad. His interests were not only for the welfare of Illinois, but also for himself. Douglas owned real estate in Chicago and stood to make money if a transcontinental railroad was headquartered in that city. In order to build this
railroad, though, the unorganized territory west of Iowa and Missouri had to be organized. Railroad promoters were not alone in this desire. Residents of Iowa and Missouri also wanted the land to be organized into territories so that further westward growth, which would be beneficial to their own economic futures, would be able to occur.

To gain approval for what became the Kansas-Nebraska bill, Douglas needed Southern support. There would be little interest among Southerners for a railroad that did not benefit their section; therefore, Douglas knew he needed something to attract the attention of Southerners. That something was the promise to secure the repeal of the **Missouri Compromise** restriction from 1820, which stated that there would be no slavery north of 36° 30', with the exception of Missouri. To replace the federal restriction in the 1820 compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska bill proposed the rule of popular sovereignty, which allowed the settlers themselves in each territory to determine whether or not slavery would exist there. This nebulous concept was the brainchild of Lewis Cass, the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1848. Cass was never definitive as to when settlers could decide the fate of slavery. He told Northerners that the settlers could decide during the territorial phase, while he told Southerners that the decision could only be made when the territory applied for statehood. This ambiguity with regard to the timing of the decision remained in 1854. Nevertheless, Douglas succeeded in attracting Southern support, and after a prolonged legislative battle, Congress passed the bill and President Franklin Pierce signed it on May 30, 1854.

After passage of the act, migrants from Missouri began to enter Kansas Territory. As Nicole Etcheson argues, many Missourians viewed a slaveholding Kansas as vital to the future economic well being of Missouri. Other Southerners, many of them non-slaveholders, also entered Kansas. Later in 1854, small farm families from Illinois and Indiana began to move to Kansas. Emigration from the New England states also began, aided by the efforts of the New England Emigrant Aid Company (NEEAC), which helped settlers obtain cheaper travel to Kansas because the NEEAC purchased steamship tickets in bulk quantities.

Early settlement went smoothly, but trouble began when it came time to elect a territorial delegate to Congress and a territorial legislature. In each case, the first in the autumn of 1854 and the latter in March 1855, Missouri “border ruffians” crossed into Kansas, intimidated election judges and voters with the threat of violence, and then voted in large numbers for the pro-slavery ticket. Missourians argued that they were residents while they were on Kansas soil, and thus had a right to vote. Through their efforts, pro-slavery forces voted a pro-slavery delegate to Congress, elected a pro-slavery territorial legislature, passed laws condemning abolitionism and restricting the right of free speech, and had Governor A.H. Reeder removed from office.

Free soil settlers protested the unfair elections by withdrawing from the territorial legislature and creating their own territorial legislature. They knew that such a move would be viewed as treason, but they likened themselves to the American colonists, who when confronted with British oppression decided to revolt rather than be political slaves. In a series of meetings
in Lawrence, Big Springs, and Topeka, the free state settlers drafted a constitution and formed a legislature. They elected Reeder as their delegate to Congress. Their actions angered the proslavery faction and led to calls to bring the free state faction to heel.

During the administration of Governor Wilson Shannon, open warfare between the two sides began. In the Wakarusa War, a proslavery force laid siege to Lawrence, but eventually withdrew. It was during this early phase of the conflict that several killings occurred that angered both sides. Tensions rose when a federal marshal and a force of about 500 Missourians destroyed much of the free-soil town of Lawrence in an episode known as the "sack of Lawrence" in May 1856. In retaliation for this attack, John Brown and several of his sons murdered five male settlers living in the proslavery town of Pottawatomie Creek. Brown's actions stunned both sides. Brown fled from justice but the killing continued. It would not be until the administration of Governor Robert Walker that the fighting subsided. Walker effectively used the United States Army to keep an unsteady peace between both sides. Peace would not come to Kansas until guerilla fighting ended at the close of the Civil War. See also Compromise of 1850; Democratic Party and Antislavery.


*James C. Foley*

**Bodin, Jean (c. 1530–1596)**

Jean Bodin, philosopher and political theorist, was a practicing lawyer and a polymath of unusual range even among his humanist contemporaries. In his youth a Carmelite monk and in later years a royal counsel and ambassador, he also showed strong populist leanings, occasionally incurring disfavor on account of his defenses of the rights of the common people. During the Wars of Religion in France, he was more pacifist than partisan, supporting policies of confessional toleration in the interest of the common good. The author of works on historiography and witchcraft, among other things, Bodin is best known for his political philosophy. His social thought is fully expounded in his *Six Books on the Republic* (*Six Livres de la république*, 1576) with a forceful doctrine of sovereignty and a detailed exposition of comparative law. In both of these areas, he displayed a creative intellect that revealed deep erudition and an original talent for theorizing.

Pragmatic rather than idealistic, Bodin’s *Republic* offers what he considers a realistic plan for a commonwealth to achieve individual and collective felicity. Adopting from Aristotle’s *Politics* the notion that a state follows the same organization as a family, Bodin goes beyond the classical position in his emphasis on obedience due the head of a household by the other family
members, and due to the ruler by the inhabitants of a commonwealth. For Bodin, there are four relationships operative within a household (and by projection in the state): husband and wife, father and child, master and servant, owner and slave.

The doctrine of sovereignty in the *Republic* reveals Bodin’s debt to Roman theories of statecraft, particularly in his concept that the ruler is superior to, and exempt from, the laws of the state. A sovereign is not bound by the codified law of the state, but is bound by natural and divine laws. To the extent that the laws governing warfare and diplomacy are common to nations and hence part of the natural ordering of peoples, a ruler may take captives of a conquered nation as slaves and dispose of them as deemed appropriate. Enslaving people during an unjust war, on the other hand, is not legitimate exercise of power, but rather tyranny.

Bodin’s work invites serious questions about the use and abuse of social control, particularly with respect to the institution of slavery. The strong doctrine of sovereignty found in the *Republic*, underscored by the insistence on familial obedience, suggests a hierarchical society more than an order in which each individual possesses freedom as a natural right. And, Bodin acknowledges that slavery has been practiced and defended throughout history as natural and moral. Nevertheless, Bodin sees slavery as domination by brute force, thus neither natural nor moral, and its retention as a counterweight to the progress of civilization. Its prevalence notwithstanding, Bodin denounces slavery in the harshest terms as a catastrophic institution that should not have been allowed to continue.

Attempts by twentieth-century scholars to find rigorous consistency in Bodin’s thought have been less than successful, in part because the dominance inherent in his doctrine of sovereignty fits uneasily alongside his condemnation of slavery on the grounds of its barbaric nature. Bodin’s ambivalence, however frustrating for his interpreters, serves as an illuminating reflection of the tension felt at the time between original social thought and long-established practices and institutions. See also Classical Rome and Antislavery.


*Ralph Keen*

**Bolívar, Simón (1783–1830)**

Simón Bolívar, “the Liberator” of Andean Spanish America, was an agent of the region’s abolitionist dynamics by freeing slaves who integrated to the Liberationist army through numerous decrees that advanced manumission. Bolívar’s final military success largely resulted from his strategic vision that free and enslaved colored people should be incorporated in his army, and their struggle for liberation and social mobility be represented within the
Republican project. Also, Bolívar’s emancipatory discourse was profoundly linked to the problem of slavery, with the depiction of the goal of independence as the break between backwardness and modernity, darkness and light, colonialism and “liberty.” The revolutionary Americans’ passionate relation with “freedom” was tinted with the contradictions of a time when the word was acquiring important dimensions in Atlantic political discourse, and regional economies were profoundly linked to and dependent on slave labor.

Involved in the first independentist Junta, or council, in Caracas, Bolívar condemned the failure of the first Venezuelan republic. In 1812, he went to New Granada to seek support for the Republican project, but opponents forced him to flee to Jamaica for exile in 1815. While in Jamaica, Bolívar wrote the “Jamaica Letter,” a crucial text that announced the revolutionary cause of the Americas. In this letter, Bolívar strongly engaged the black legend narrative to condemn Spanish colonialism and spoke of Americans as only one race. From Jamaica, Bolívar went to Haiti, where he spent time with Alexander Pétion. Between 1815 and 1816, Pétion gave Bolívar support, and in exchange, Bolívar declared freedom to slaves who joined him in the military fight for independence. In June 1816, Bolívar issued a decree in Carúpano liberating slaves. Directed to men between 14 and 70 years old, these were called upon to enlist for the army in their local parishes to fight for their freedom and their close kin’s. However, if they failed to do so, these men and their families would lose the right to be citizens of the Republic of Venezuela. This move to win popular support and incorporate colored people in the independentist army was an attempt to prevent the experience with José Tomás Boves from repeating. In 1813, Boves had organized a successful popular movement of resistance to the elite patriotic project led by Bolívar in Venezuela. Yet by making military enlistment obligatory for slaves, who would fight for their freedom and rights, the decree resulted in many slaves turning royalist as a reaction to Bolívar’s authoritarian tone.

After 1817, Bolívar was recognized as the leader of the Andean struggle for emancipation, and his army crossed the plains and the Orinoco River into New Granada. In the midst of growing patriot success in 1819, the first constituent congress met in Angostura. With the goal of political stability, Bolívar made incipient use of the idea of nation and national spirit and proposed the creation of the Republic of Gran Colombia, uniting Venezuela, New Granada, and the Presidency of Quito under one government. The incorporation of slaves into the army became a central strategic policy when in 1820 Bolívar ordered the recruitment of 5,000 slaves (later scaled down to 3,000) from the gold mines and farms of New Simón Bolívar. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Granada in Antioquia, Chocó, and Cauca, to continue campaigning in the south.

Bolívar’s project resulted in wide conflict with the patriot elite. Citing Montesquieu, Bolívar argued that slavery was contradictory in a free society, where freedom and equality were the pillars of political modernity. Creole slave owners depended upon their mining and agricultural enterprises, which stood upon a traditional slave society. Because they were the main sponsors of the Liberationist army, Bolívar had to make concessions to the elite and toned down his ideas of liberation and their potential destabilizing consequences for Andean slave societies. Despite such compromises, he continued to appeal to the slaves’ interest and commitment in the cause of freedom to enlarge his army.

After independence in 1821, the Congress of Cúcuta elected Bolívar president of the emerging Republic of Colombia. The Congress established as a national goal the incorporation of black slaves and Indians into the republic as citizens. Slaves would be free by birth or manumission. Yet this process also would be slow and final abolition would only come in 1851, after long struggles by enslaved people and strong resistance from the slave owners.

An analysis of Bolívar’s independentist discourse reveals the profound relation of emancipatory ideas and the praise of “freedom” as a foundational principle of politics. Bolívar continuously spoke of Spanish America as being enslaved, also speaking of the need to break the chains from Peninsular domination. Colonialism was hence equated to slavery, and the goal of independence was to destroy this singular form of alienation implanted by Spain in the Americas. The contradiction of this language and the actual acceptance of it by Creole patriots would have lasting consequences similar to those seen in other places of the Atlantic, where economic pressures and fear of racial conflict narrowed the possibility of integration and equality for colored peoples in newly founded independent nations. See also Haitian Revolution; Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in.


_Marcela Echeverri_

**Bonaparte, Napoleon (1769–1821)**

Throughout his reign, Napoleon’s stance toward slavery was determined by pragmatism rather than by the universalist humanitarian ideals of the Enlightenment and the demands of French abolitionists. Thus, while the National
Convention had abolished slavery in 1794, reacting to the accomplished fact of the Haitian Revolution, for Napoleon the economic interests of France took precedence, prompting him to reintroduce both slavery and the slave trade in 1802. Domestic political considerations also contributed to this move, as did foreign political considerations, when he abolished slavery for a short time after his return from Elba in 1815, during the Hundred Days.

In the early years of his reign, there were some indications that Napoleon may well have sympathized with black demands for liberty and equality in the French West Indies, yet he soon came under the sway of the colonial lobby, led by none other than his first wife, Josephine Beuharnais. This “Creole party” represented the sugar planters and associated shipping interests and clamored for a return to the Old Regime status quo. Strategic reasons also led Napoleon to reconsider the slavery issue, for in the Peace of Amiens (March 27, 1802) the British retroceded Martinique and St. Lucia, where they had maintained slavery, to France. Taking planter interests into consideration, therefore, on May 12, 1802, Napoleon restored the slave trade, slavery itself, and even the old Black Code, in the colonies. Consequently, mixed marriages between slaves and non-slaves were prohibited, slaves were forbidden to enter the metropolis, and the political inequality of free mulattos in the colonies was confirmed.

The Napoleonic Code (adopted on March 21, 1804), however, made no direct mention of slavery. Still, the Code’s strong paternalist character, its strengthening of employer rights, and guarantee of “sacred” property rights certainly strengthened the institution, even if only in an indirect manner.

Abolitionist activism could hardly survive, due to Napoleonic repression. Indeed the Emperor, through his control of public opinion—primarily press censorship—virtually eradicated abolitionist publicity and played into the hands of the colonial lobby. A notable but short-lived exception was the continued publication, by the Abbé Grégoire, of abolitionist writings criticizing the slave trade, but only because of his connections to Joseph Fouché, Napoleon’s minister of police. Grégoire’s more radical attack on the institution itself, published in 1810, however, was immediately suppressed. On the other hand, Napoleonic authorities vigorously promoted the publication of anti-abolitionist writings. Other factors contributing to the strengthening of anti-abolitionist opinion in France under Napoleon were the significant publicity given to black-on-white violence in Haiti, and the pro-slavery writings of prominent anti-Enlightenment authors such as Pierre Victor Malouet, Bory de Saint-Venant, and François René de Chateaubriand in his famous Génie du Christianisme. The global impact of the Napoleonic repression of abolitionism, then, was that the few surviving abolitionists were forced to return to the old, pre-1789, moderate strategy of focussing on abolition of the trade rather than the institution, a strategy which continued long after Napoleon’s demise.

By 1814, however, the defeated Emperor was coming increasingly under British abolitionist pressure. As early as the peace negotiations at the Congress of Châtillon in February and March 1814, the Allies had presented to Caulaincourt, Napoleon’s emissary, a proposal for abolition of the trade. At the First Peace of Paris, through Talleyrand’s adroit maneuvering, the restored Louis
XVIII was able to hold out for a five-year grace period on abolition of the trade, which, in the end, was never really enforced. Meanwhile, Napoleon returned from Elba. In a cynical political ploy, correctly gauging British public opinion and designed to split the anti-French coalition, he abolished the slave trade on March 29, 1815, not only declaring its immediate and complete abolition by French slavers, but also banning foreigners from importing slaves into French colonies. Some scholars contend that Napoleon may also have been motivated by a desire to punish the French slaving ports whose attitude had been too Anglophile for his taste. Ironically, once Napoleon had been finally defeated, the again-restored Louis XVIII was pressured by Britain to honor the Emperor’s own abolitionist decree. Even so, pragmatic economic concerns about the revival of the colonies once again took precedence over regulations to end the slave trade, imposed by the British at Vienna. Thus, these regulations were never really enforced, and the trade continued in a more or less clandestine fashion. Nor did the Abolitionists fare much better under Louis XVIII than under Napoleon, for abolitionism was associated with Anglophilia, and therefore incurred the enmity of the Ultra-Royalists. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of.


William L. Chew III

Book of Exodus

Slavery has been abolished throughout the world by acts of law—constitutions, legislation, or judicial decisions. Virtually unique in history is the Book of Exodus, a chapter in the origins of an ancient nation liberated from slavery. The liberation of the Jews has not been widely influential in abolitionist thought worldwide, but it was central to eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century North American abolitionism. North American opponents of slavery were in a unique position. Some blacks and some whites were resisting slavery, the institution itself was illegal in some states, and a book—the Bible in general and Exodus in particular—was inspirational among abolitionists. For the first time in history, slaves had a book on their side. Indeed, its antislavery power was twofold insofar as it not only recounted the liberation of slaves, but also mandated moderate treatment of slaves (Ex. 21: 1–11). The earliest Anglophone criticisms of New World slavery, written in the seventeenth century, decried not the institution itself, but masters’ violations of scriptural mandates of good treatment of slaves.

Exodus continues the Book of Genesis and narrates the story of the Jews as they flee Egyptian bondage, accept a covenant offered by God, and approach the land he has reserved for them. Quotations from Exodus and allusions to it were prominent in Revolutionary discourse (England was Egypt) and in African American sermons, songs, folktales, and antislavery
writings (slavery in the Southern states was Egyptian bondage). Early engagements with Exodus through 1830 assumed a global view of the text and its implications for slaves and masters, while later engagements after 1830 revealed a focus on Moses’ leadership and the Jews’ liberation.

The relevance of Exodus for slaves began with the resolution of the Joseph story of Genesis. His bones were carried by the escaping Jews. In the eighteenth century, Joseph’s story was understood as an allegory of the slave trade. Africans were betrayed by their kinsmen and sold into slavery in a distant land. Exodus also emphasizes a motif of the Joseph story that was essential to early black understandings of Christianity: God’s power, providence, and use of human suffering as a means of furthering his design and revealing his glory. In Genesis, God uses Joseph’s betrayal, enslavement, and imprisonment as a means of saving Joseph’s family. In Exodus, God causes Pharaoh to hold the Jews in bondage and thus to bring plagues upon the Egyptians to reveal divine power and glory. African Americans perceived a parallel between their own experience and that of Joseph and the Jews. To become an abolitionist was to repeat Joseph’s efforts to save his family. To suffer through the slave trade, enslavement, and racial inequality was to participate in a divine plan whereby God revealed the goodness and beauty of freedom and equality. Genesis and Exodus sacralized slaves’ striving for freedom.

Moses, the central figure of Exodus, is well known in modern popular culture as the leader of the escaping slaves. But early black Christians were interested in him in an additional way. Moses moved from outside to inside the Jewish world. A scion of one of the tribes of Israel (the Levites), Moses was favored by the Egyptians and knew little of the Jews. He remained uncircumcised. He rebelled against Egyptian mistreatment of the Jewish slaves and fled Egypt, returning only when God commanded him to aid the slaves in escaping and in worshiping God properly. Early African American writings revealed a fascination with such transitional figures of the Bible because blacks understood themselves as having moved from a polytheistic, non-Christian world to a monotheistic Christian one. Moreover, virtually all early black Anglophone writers reported an awareness of divine will at work in their lives. This sense of transition and of divine will carried abolitionist implications. All early abolitionists argued that the brotherhood of human-kind declared in the New Testament made slavery immoral. Thus, if blacks and whites were united in a Christian world and were seeking to perfect that world—there is another sense of transition—slavery should be outlawed and slaves should be freed. Moses was one of the transitional figures who moved from outside to inside godly civilization and so served as an emblem of blacks who themselves hoped to enjoy freedom in a Christian society. Indeed, the commands for proper worship of God that appear in Exodus were interpreted as symbolic of the creation of a free society. The tabernacle itself (Ex. 25–31) was understood as a symbol of a free society.

This summary account of the early importance of Exodus for abolitionism should make it clear that a narrow focus on Moses’ leadership and the Jews’ liberation emerged in the nineteenth century and survived into the twentieth century. Several reasons can be adduced for this change. First, the interpretation of Genesis and Exodus sketched herein was shared by American
Calvinists, Revolutionaries, and abolitionists, both black and white. As Calvinism and Revolutionary ideology faded, so did their interpretations of Scripture. Second, after 1830 or so, abolitionists became more urgent, runaways became more numerous, and escaped slave narratives (for example, that of Frederick Douglass) became an important part of the abolitionist campaign. So it made sense to focus on the escape of the Jews. Third, in the nineteenth century, free black society came to be socially stratified and leadership positions emerged in independent black churches and black denominations. Men with new roles were attracted to Moses and extracted his leadership of the Jews from earlier understandings of Genesis and Exodus. See also Bible and Slavery; Story of Joseph.


*John Saillant*

**Boyer, Jean-Pierre (1776–1850)**

Of mixed parentage, Jean-Pierre Boyer was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in February 1776. Sent to France for an education, he returned to the French colony of Saint Domingue where he first worked as a tailor. In 1792, Boyer joined the army.

Saint Domingue in the 1790s was an island in tumult. French colonists who were upset that France's National Assembly had granted some civic rights to the colony's free coloreds were planning a revolt, as were mulattos who were upset with the limits still placed on their political and social status. In the middle of this escalating crisis, a slave revolt broke out, which turned into a full-blown civil war. Boyer fought alongside the leader of the slaves, Toussaint L'Ouverture, who promoted him to captain. But Boyer had to flee the island for France when the rebellion turned against the mulatto population.

Intense fighting continued as French, British, and even Spanish troops intervened in Saint Domingue. Boyer returned to Haiti in 1802 as part of an invading French army, but soon abandoned his new allies to join with one of Toussaint's generals, Alexandre Petion. Following L'Ouverture's capture by the French, Jean-Jacques Dessalines took control of the former colony and renamed Saint Domingue, Haiti, in 1804. He later declared himself emperor. Dessalines proved to be a cruel ruler, and was murdered in 1806 as part of a larger plot.

Henri Christophe, a free mulatto who had also served with L'Ouverture and Dessalines, was made president of the new Haiti while Petion was appointed president of the assembly. Constant plotting enflamed conflict between the two until Christophe decided to cede the southern part of the
state to Petion and establish his own more secure rule in the northern half of the island. Christophe first set up a presidency, but then declared himself king of Haiti and his territory a kingdom in March 1811. To Petion and his supporters, Christophe was a dangerous usurper and a troublemaker. Meanwhile, Petion appointed Boyer commander in chief, a well-deserved honor, as he had fought off Christophe’s attempted takeover of Port-au-Prince and notched several other crucial victories against the self-proclaimed king.

Christophe had the advantage of being well connected with important figures in Britain, such as the abolitionists Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, who provided him with considerable advice and guidance in his relationship with France and also on domestic issues. Like later leaders, however, Christophe was faced with his province’s limited economic capacity. But in the south, Petion along with Boyer, provided safe harbor to Simón Bolívar in 1816, who had temporarily fled the revolts he had led in Venezuela and Colombia. In return for refuge and some financial help, Bolívar promised the two Haitian leaders that he would see to the emancipation of the slaves in the two Spanish colonies and hopefully throughout all of South America. Bolívar sought to implement this promise at the 1819 revolutionary Congress of Angostura, but abolition in South America finally followed a very long and ambiguous gradualism.

In 1818, Petion died, and Boyer was elected president of the southern Haitian republic. Boyer got along no better with his northern rival, and there was constant bickering between the two leaders. Eventually, there were several uprisings against Henri Christophe, who then committed suicide in late 1820. Boyer then incorporated Christophe’s territory into his own, creating a unified Haiti. Several years later, Boyer managed an agreement with the French wherein, in exchange for a sizable payment, the French would relinquish all claims to their former possession.

As president, Boyer faced many of the same problems as later Haitian leaders. Although he worked diligently to shore up the administration and increase educational opportunities, Haiti’s agricultural sphere had been severely damaged by the years of fighting. Boyer encouraged African Americans to migrate to Haiti and offered them generous land allotments to encourage settlement. Between 1820 and 1825, several thousand ventured there, but by 1825, disillusioned, sick, and impoverished, the vast majority of the migrants returned to the United States. Other attempted agricultural reforms failed to alleviate the growing poverty of the populace and to assure the few remaining intellectuals that Boyer had any viable solutions. Following an earthquake that further damaged the economic situation, Boyer was overthrown by Charles Riviere-Herard in January 1843. The former president fled to Jamaica, and later to France in 1848. Boyer died in Paris in 1850. See also Bonaparte, Napoleon; French Colonies, Emancipation of; Haitian Revolution.


Wayne Ackerson
Bright, John (1811–1889)

John Bright was born in Rochdale, Lancashire, a Nonconformist Liberal-Radical center of the cotton industry near Manchester, which would deeply influence his passionate defense of freedom of enterprise, freedom of trade, and human liberty. He was 50 years old when the American Civil War broke out, and his great fame as a politician and orator made him a major—his admirers would say the decisive—actor in the eventual British decision to endorse the North.

John Bright was the eldest surviving son of a family of eleven children. His father, Jacob Bright, a Quaker, had opened a cotton mill in 1809 in Rochdale, and its prosperity enabled him to send the young John to first-rate Quaker schools in Yorkshire. This strict Nonconformist education, which prepared him for his many later conflicts with the Anglican Tories, was reinforced by his constant reading of the Bible and of the Puritan poet Milton. He was also a member of the Bible Society, the Rochdale Temperance Society and the Order of Rechabites. His formal schooling came to an end at the age of sixteen, when he joined his father's mill and began to acquire his practical knowledge of the world of industry.

His first involvement in political activities took place in 1834 over an old bone of contention between the established Anglican Church and the Dissenters—the question of Church rates, a legacy from the old tithes, which Dissenters were increasingly reluctant to pay. John Bright was against all forms of privilege justified by tradition only. He took the lead in the fight for the abolition of Church rates in Rochdale and secured it in 1841, twenty-seven years before national abolition. In 1839, he became a partner in his father's firm. Soon, he espoused the new, national cause of Free Trade in the campaign for the repeal of the Corn Laws. These laws were passed after the restoration of peace in 1815 to protect the agricultural profits of the landed aristocracy that controlled the Tory Party. The Anti-Corn Law League came into existence in 1839 and had two outstanding leaders. Richard Cobden brilliantly took charge of organization. John Bright raised many new converts with his fiery orations, both among the mill owners, who felt they subsidized the landowners through the unnecessarily “high” wages which they had to give to their operatives if they were to buy sufficient bread for survival, and among the laborers, who believed that a policy of “cheap food” would improve their economic position. “The League is the foe of aristocratic injustice,” he maintained. John Bright became a national figure, and he entered Parliament in 1843, where he sat for the rest of his life, often as the leading opponent of the government of the day.

After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, he campaigned next for an extension of the franchise, but failed to secure it. In 1847, he rejected legislation to limit the factory working day on the grounds that the individual working man must be free to decide the terms of his work. That the legislation was also pushed by his sworn enemies, the rural Tories, made it even
more suspect in his eyes. He opposed Great Britain's involvement in the Crimean War in 1854 and became a national outcast—patriotic mobs burned his effigy in Manchester. Yet, his principled stand yielded on February 23, 1855, one of the most potent speeches against war ever delivered in the British Parliament.

John Bright's greatest hour came with the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861. Like all those who made a living in the textile industry, Bright was personally affected by the drastic reduction in the supply of cotton during the war. Eighty percent of the cotton imported to Britain came from the United States. The economic repercussions were most evident in Rochdale and all the "cotton towns" of Lancashire, and John Bright might have been expected to be in the forefront of those who denounced the Northern policy of trade blockade, the more so as he had always been the most eloquent advocate of free trade in the British Parliament. But in the conflict between his economic interest and moral convictions, he chose to be faithful to the latter and to support the North against the South.

The first crisis between the North and the British government was the Trent affair, named after the English steamer boarded by a Northern captain who captured Confederate commissioners en route to Europe on November 8, 1861. This was denounced as an "act of piracy" by the more extreme opponents of the North, with calls for strong action on the part of the British government. John Bright answered them with a speech in Rochdale in December 1861, in which he made abolition the War's central issue, at a time when President Lincoln had not even proposed Emancipation. Bright was aware that the Civil War revolved fundamentally around the question of slavery and freedom and he sought to clarify that for Britain. Earlier in the year, he had asserted:

It is a question of slavery, and for thirty years it has constantly been coming to the surface, disturbing social life, and overthrowing almost all political harmony in the working of the United States. In the North there is no secession; there is no collision. These disturbances and this insurrection are found wholly in the South and in the Slave States; and therefore I think that the man who says otherwise, who contends that it is the tariff, or anything whatsoever else than slavery, is either himself deceived or endeavours to deceive others. The object of the South is this, to escape from the majority who wish to limit the area of slavery. They wish to found a Slave State freed from the influence and the opinions of freedom.

With the issuance of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation January 1, 1863, equivocation was no longer possible, and John Bright denounced his former League friends like Roebuck who continued to maintain that freedom's camp was in the South. He countered them from two fronts. Economically, slavery hampered the development of cotton production which was essential to British expansion; free trade was about economic growth, and therefore could not tolerate that barrier. He argued that the practice was restrictive in at least two ways. Only the wealthiest entrepreneurs had the initial funds to buy a full complement of slaves on top of an estate and its capital equipment, thereby preventing access to
newcomers. Moreover the supply of labor was limited to the existing number of slaves and effectively closed prospects for expansion.

Yet the fundamental issue for Bright was moral. Like Adam Smith or John Stuart Mill, he believed that all men were born equal—not with equal talents, but with a right to be treated equally by the law. In a speech before the labor unions of London on March 26, 1863, he contrasted the status of the worker in the North, where labor was honored as the source of independence, with slavery in the South, where laborers were considered property and degraded. To these ideals, John Bright added the Biblical precept of the universal brotherhood of men. By mid-1863, the ideological battle was largely won in Britain, with no men of equal oratorical stature left to defend the Confederates. Interestingly, the citizens of Rochdale remembered John Bright’s efforts to retard the introduction of State protection of the British working man more than his struggle for the liberation of the black slaves in the United States; few mourned his death in 1889, and the local labor unions refused to participate in the ceremonies commemorating the centenary of his birth in 1911. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Bible and Slavery; British Slavery, Abolition of.


Antoine Capet

Brissot de Warville, Jacques-Pierre (1754–1793)

Jacques-Pierre Brissot was the notable vanguard of the French abolitionist movement during the Revolutionary era. Encouraged by Thomas Clarkson (of the London Abolition Committee), he cofounded the Société des Amis des Noirs with Étienne Clavière, in 1788. The organization called for an immediate end to the slave trade and the gradual and uncompensated abolition of slavery. Brissot’s goals included translating and publishing English literature on slavery, establishing regular correspondence with other anti-slavery organizations in Great Britain and the United States, and investigating slavery in the French colonies.

Brissot’s newspaper, Le Patriote Français, was the official organ of the Amis des Noirs. He printed the society’s minutes, detailed its projects, and offered narratives on the cruelty of slavery. In a 1789 article, Brissot encapsulated the essence of the French abolitionist argument when he wrote: “The [National]
Assembly, by its decree that we men are born and remain free and equal, has it not declared war on every kind of inequality, oppression and tyranny; has it not declared that no man can ever be bought or sold or kept in slavery?"

Brissot used his position in the Jacobin Club to publicize the abolitionist cause and sought to garner additional support by appealing to other municipal organizations in Paris. Hoping to bolster membership in the society, he labored to persuade powerful and influential figures in Parisian society. Such noteworthy benefactors would attract more members and legitimize abolitionist claims before the government. His most famous recruit was General Lafayette, who had celebrity as well as connections to key government officials.

Brissot was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1791, where he came to be identified with the left-leaning Girondins. His early months in office were consumed with responding to the slave insurrection in Saint Domingue. While many of his colleagues felt the news from Saint Domingue was an exaggeration, Brissot insisted it was an outright fabrication. Troubled by inconsistencies in the reports, he accused the white colonists of concocting a ruse in order to escape their creditors and to compel the French government to send troops to Saint Domingue. Brissot worried that instead of restoring order, French troops would be employed to repress the gens de couleur and defend the planters’ bid for colonial autonomy. Brissot was the white colonists’ most vocal detractor throughout the autumn of 1791, constantly deriding them as brutal slave owners, petulant debtors, and veritable traitors to the Revolutionary cause.

Brissot’s interest in abolition, slavery and related colonial topics seemed to wane in 1792. As his political prominence grew, his attention turned to more pressing domestic exigencies, such as the war with Austria and the overthrow of the monarchy. Brissot’s brief career as a republican politician was undone by the Montagnard coup of June 2, 1793, when he was arrested along with several other Girondin deputies. After several months in prison, he was executed in October 1793. Even after Brissot’s death, French colonists continued to use the epithet brissotin as a byword for radicalism and abolitionism. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; French Colonies, Emancipation of; Haitian Revolution; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


Jennifer J. Pierce

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS)

Launched by former British abolitionists in 1839, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) aimed to abolish slavery and the slave trade worldwide without the use of force. It consisted of a London-based executive committee and a network of local societies and employed various methods to achieve its aim, including publishing pamphlets, petitioning, and posing questions in Parliament regarding the international slave trade.

One of the most notable achievements of the BFASS was the organization of the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, which was attended by
large delegations from the United States and France. Because of the enormous significance of the outcome of emancipation in the British Caribbean for future emancipations, the BFASS worked closely in the 1840s to assist the ex-slaves and to promote a successful transition to free labor sugar production in the islands. It was particularly concerned about the legal and extra-legal practices adopted by planters to limit the freedom of the ex-slaves, such as the imposition of excessive rents on those who continued to reside on the plantations. It brought these practices to the attention of the Colonial Office and also established an organization that offered legal aid to ex-slaves.

From the early 1840s onward, planters in the Caribbean tried to remedy their shortage of labor by employing large numbers of indentured laborers from India and Africa. The BFASS denounced this practice as a new slave trade and publicized the maltreatment of indentured laborers. Its activities led to various changes in the laws regulating the importation of indentured labor but did not succeed in abolishing the traffic altogether. In the 1840s and 1850s, the BFASS also took an active part in the debate over whether planters in the British Caribbean should continue to enjoy low sugar duties on the British market. The London committee believed that the government’s move to lower tariffs on foreign-produced sugar would increase the demand for low-cost slave-grown sugar from Brazil and Cuba, which in turn would increase the demand for slaves, boost the international slave trade, and postpone the emancipation of slaves in these countries. It also feared that a lowering of the tariffs would lead to the financial collapse of the former slave societies in the British Caribbean and thereby raise doubts about emancipation elsewhere. Many local societies, however, favored a lowering of the tariffs as it would reduce the price that British consumers paid for sugar. The disagreement came to a head at the 1843 World Anti-Slavery Convention when a group of dissident abolitionists initiated a new antislavery organization that supported free trade. It gained so much support that the London committee called a special general meeting in June 1844 to settle the issue. The meeting agreed upon forms of fiscal regulation that favored free labor. With the government’s decision in 1846 to admit all foreign-produced sugars at a uniform rate, there was nothing that the BFASS could do to limit the consumption of slave-grown sugar except urge people to abstain from slave produce. By 1851, there were some twenty-six free-produce societies in Britain, most of which were run by BFASS branches.

In the 1840s and 1850s, the BFASS also continued to fight the international slave trade. In line with its pacifist principles, it sharply criticized the government’s policy of enforcing international treaties through the use of the Royal Navy and proposed instead economic sanctions as the best way to end the slave trade. It abandoned its campaign for economic sanctions in 1852, not long after Britain had concluded a treaty with Brazil. By that time, the BFASS had lost much of its former influence. Its membership and income had sharply declined and it had almost ceased to publish pamphlets and other materials. Although the outbreak of the American Civil War led to an increased public interest in slavery, it did not bring the BFASS back to
the forefront of public attention. Its pacifist principles meant that it could
not support Lincoln’s war policy to end slavery. Rather than appearing to
support the proslavery South, the BFASS ignored the War and concentrated
instead on such issues as the Cuban slave trade.

The 1867 Paris Anti-Slavery Convention, which the BFASS helped to organ-
ize, singled out the **East African slave trade** as an area of primary concern.
During the 1870s and 1880s, the BFASS devoted most of its attention to this
region, facilitated by its close contacts with explorers and missionaries. It
pressured the British government to assess the slave trade in East Africa and
to encourage states to sign treaties to abolish the slave trade and slavery. In
1873, the British government persuaded the state of Zanzibar, the largest
slave-trading nation in East Africa, to sign a treaty restricting it. The BFASS
also helped organize the 1889–1890 **Brussels Conference**, which con-
cluded with the signing of the **Brussels Act**, first comprehensive interna-
tional treaty against the slave trade.

In the 1890s, the BFASS shifted its focus from indigenous slavery to the
exploitation of colonized people by Europeans, particularly in the Belgian
Congo where people had been robbed of their rights and their numbers
had been reduced as a result of forced labor, murder, and starvation. This
cause was also actively pursued by the Aborigines Protection Society. As
the BFASS’s work increasingly overlapped with the latter’s, the two merged
in 1909 and formed the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery,
Abolition of.

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*Henrice Altink*

**British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation**

In 1834, the end of slavery in the British Empire, including British Guiana,
resulted in a diminished return of profit from sugar production. The abolition
of the ownership of human property and the resultant need to reconstruct a
new labor system for the sugar industry gave birth to the indentureship
movement from India to the Caribbean. Indeed, planters during and after the
apprenticeship period, refused to participate in collective bargaining with
freed slaves; and so the labor market was internationalized. Many planters
imported laborers, while others joined with the existing bargaining unit of
freed slaves, adding to the existing labor conflicts. Thus, there was a need to
find a mechanism to control the diverse contingents of free labor.

Planters in British Guiana were the colony’s dominant economic group, so
they collectively appealed to the home government for help, and in response,
the indentured contract was introduced. Laborers, in signing the indenture
contract, covenanted away their freedom for a specific time period (in that instance, 5 years) and for a stipulated wage. The indenture contract as a labor instrument outlined collective bargaining procedures, the enforcement of labor laws, wages, and subsistence requirements. The indentured contract, despite provisions that allowed for the negotiation of personal and employment relationships, exemplifies a labor relationship that was in key ways similar to slavery. As a consequence, planters found the indentured contract a useful instrument to fulfill their production and profit accumulation needs.

In British Guiana the employment of indentured laborers from Germany, Portugal, and China, proved to be problematic due to the climate and harsh demands of the land. Henceforth, a more suitable labor force was needed, one that was cheap, accessible, replenishable, controllable and acclimatized—the Indian national. In fact, the colonial presence in both India and British Guiana facilitated immigration from India to British Guiana. Between 1838 and 1917, a number of socio-economic-political factors, for example, famine and the British land policies, combined with tales of an affluent life in British Guiana, and Indian labor recruiters’ strategies of kidnapping and coercion propelled nearly half a million Indian nationals to sign indentured contracts. Indian men, women, and children belonging to various castes, language groups, and regions commenced the journey to British Guiana. Indentured laborers, after the long, perilous, and unhygienic voyage arrived in British Guiana, were cleaned up and distributed to their contracted plantations. On those plantations, all social relationships were governed by the material forces of production. And so it follows that within the plantation social hierarchy, planters, freed slaves, and other laboring groups were ranked superior to indentured laborers.

Although, the labor market stipulations of the indentured contract conflicted with the practice and ideology of free labor, those stipulations nonetheless structured labor market participation and the opportunity for upward mobility. In fact, by the 1860s, the British Guiana labor market was dominated by contractual labor. Correspondingly, the demand and compensation for the labor of freed slaves declined as they lost much of their bargaining power.

Planters, in regulating the social order, identified the two laboring constituents as distinct groups. Social structural differences of race and ethnicity combined with physical boundaries through isolation (indentured laborers were isolated on plantations), wage and labor market stratification, (for example, indentured labor was inexpensive in comparison to free labor), erected social boundaries, and prevented labor unity. Indentured laborers were primarily employed in the deskilled sector (fieldwork) of sugar production, whereas a small number of freed slaves were employed in the skilled sector (factory). Thus, incentives and rewards earned by members of those two groups from the production and surplus value of sugar differed socially, politically, and economically.

However, one costly mistake of planters was their construction of indentured laborers as submissive, therefore a suitable replacement for the former slaves who were perceived as a more volatile labor force due to their bargaining power. Although, legally planters were able to exert control over
indentured laborers vis-à-vis their political and economic superiority, maintaining those gains proved highly stressful. In fact, planters’ legal authority and ideology were undermined by the ongoing conflicts between indentured laborers and planters.

In British Guiana between 1866 and 1870, the magistrate dealt with several thousands cases involving defiance of immigration ordinances. Collectively, indentured laborers’ defiance involved acts of group mediation, general strikes, and sporadic work stoppages. Consequently, sugar production and with it profit accumulation steadily diminished. In addition to labor conflicts, social relationships in British Guiana between planters and indentured laborers revolved around the abuse of the indentured women by European men. Many European men found Indian women attractive and engaged in illicit affairs with them. Habitually, the conflictual outcomes in such social relationships manifested themselves in the sugar production process. In addition, the position of indentured laborers after their contract ended became an economic issue that needed to be addressed.

Indentured laborers, at different junctures throughout the indentured period, had three options available to them from the indentured contract in relation to being released. Indentured laborers up until 1891, upon serving their indentureship term, were entitled to free return passage to India at the expense of the planters. Always eager to save money, planters recognized repatriation as a potentially expensive undertaking. Subsequently, planters negotiated with the State over the return passages of indentured laborers. As a result, in 1893 the two administrations, British Guiana and India, agreed that indentured laborers must pay half of their return passage. Gradually, as benefits of the indentured system increased and the expenses of reparation reassessed, indentured laborers were given the option of re-indenturing themselves to the same, or to another, plantation. Those who reindentured were offered a small plot of land to grow provisions, but they still remained dependent on plantations for most of their subsistence needs. The first group of indentured laborers was given plots of land that were difficult to cultivate and irrigate, hence there was a need to offer them a better land deal.

In the midst of such negotiation over land in lieu of return passage, the demand for sugar decreased on the world market. Planters recognizing that, and having had the experience before, produced less sugar. However, planters hoped for a restoration of the demand for sugar, and so they sought to retain their cheap labor force. Accordingly, planters desiring to keep the indentured laborers tied to the plantations demanded the government devise a more acceptable land settlement scheme. The key features of such a new program were permanent villages made available to signatories of the indentured contract so as to dissuade repatriation.

In 1897, the aforementioned village settlement scheme and offers of land in lieu of return passage were revised so as to further encourage permanent residency of indentured laborers in British Guiana. That offer was also extended to time-expired indentured laborers who had fulfilled their indentured contract and remained in British Guiana. However, all indentured laborers, if they accepted land, regardless of their contractual status needed
to be readily available to work on the demands of planters. These initiatives by the planters and planters’ controlled state apparatuses were aimed at maximizing profit and obtaining cheap labor. Thus, land was a financial ploy used by planters to benefit planters, and the majority of indentured laborers continued to depend on plantation work for their survival.

As the European sugar market became more competitive and the price and demand decreased, instead of investing in technology and introducing new produce, planters continued to depend on manual labor. It was at that historical juncture that indentured laborers utilized the decrease in the demand for sugar and redundancy of their labor to concentrate on their own means of production, the leased land around plantations. On those leased plots, indentured laborers introduced rice for their own consumption and as a cash crop for the local market. Initially, rice as a product did not add to the larger economy of the colony, but to the local economy of freed slaves and indentured laborers. Nonetheless, for indentured laborers rice provided the avenue for them to become self-sufficient and upwardly mobile.

Gradually, rice as a staple crop became popular, and when the market demand in the colony switched from sugar to rice, indentured laborers likewise restructured their labor towards rice production and supplied the market demands. Eventually, rice as a product of the local economy became part of the national economy of British Guiana and eventually the Caribbean. Indentured laborers, through the united efforts of land, labor, and capital, invested in their own production process. In fact, parsimony was one of the immediate causes of indentured laborers’ rise to economic independence.

With a change in the economy and governmental structures, the British Guiana social, political, and economic spheres evolved into that of Guyana. Currently, in Guyana, the conflictual labor history of the colonial era continues to inform all social, political and economic realities. See also Apprenticeship; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of; Indentured Labor and Emancipation; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in.


Parbattie S. Ramsarran

**British Slavery, Abolition of**

British abolitionists had hoped that the abolition of the slave trade, which they secured in 1807, would force West Indian planters to treat their slaves better. In its turn, this would encourage the slave population to increase naturally. There would follow, in some unspecified way, the natural decay of slavery itself. First of all, however, it was agreed that a system was needed to monitor the results of abolition, because no one really knew what the end of the slave trade would bring.
Before the Napoleonic wars, the Atlantic slave trade had been a relatively unquestioned feature of European maritime trade and prosperity. As the wars with France finally drew to a close in 1814–1815, Europe tried to put itself back together after a generation of warfare. The British, the senior partner among the victors, had renounced their slave trade and were anxious to prevent European diplomats, gathering at the various post-war Congresses, from allowing the defeated French to revive their own slave trade. Thomas Clarkson, the leading abolitionist in the drive to abolition in 1807, lobbied European statesmen at the peace negotiations for an international abolition of the slave trade. He was strengthened by public backing. Faced by the prospects of a renewal of French slave trading, the British abolition movement was revived in 1814–1815; something like one-and-a-half million people (from a population of 12 million) signed the new abolition petitions circulated in Great Britain. Talleyrand, the chief French negotiator at the Congress of Vienna, thought that British abolition had become "a passion carried to fanaticism, and one which the Ministry is no longer at liberty to check." However, the subsequent efforts of British and American abolitionists have to be set against the fact that a further million-and-a-half Africans were carried into the Americas between 1807 and 1866.

News from the West Indies in the years after abolition was not encouraging for abolitionists. Slave unrest simmered away, and planters showed no signs of moderating their severity toward slaves. Nonconformist missionaries (mainly Baptists and Methodists) were converting ever more slaves, despite the planters' strenuous efforts to obstruct their work. And as Christianity became a dominant force in the slave quarters, slaves seemed to be ever more resistant to their bondage. Between 1815 and 1832, three major slave uprisings, each one more violent than the last, each one repressed with a violence that appalled British onlookers, seemed to confirm that West Indian slavery was a system that could only be kept in place by violence on a ghastly scale. Through all this, the West India lobby and its friends in London put up a rearguard action. To ever more Britons, they seemed to be defending the indefensible.

What also worried British abolitionists was the growing realization that cutting off the supply of imported Africans would not, in itself, bring slavery in the Americas to an end. This was particularly clear when abolitionists looked at the United States. Although North America had been in the vanguard of abolition in the revolutionary years, and had ended its own slave trade in 1808, there was little sign that slavery within the nation was in decline. Indeed, the rapid expansion of cotton cultivation in the South had brought a positive revival of North American slavery, with great material benefits for the United States in general. Cutting off supplies of Africans had clearly not brought slavery to an end in America.

But the British preoccupation was with the Caribbean. There was a growing body of information available in Britain about the slaves. First of all, large numbers of people in Britain (sailors, traders, settlers, and military) had detailed knowledge of the islands. In addition, the missionaries working
in the islands sent regular reports back to Britain about slave life. Their words were edited and circulated by their sponsoring churches. The government also began its own information-gathering about slave society, beginning in recently acquired Trinidad in 1812. This “registration” of the slave population was a census and was the only accurate means of assessing the impact of the abolition of the slave trade. There followed a bitter Parliamentary struggle about extending registration to all West Indian slaves, with planters and their backers inevitably resisting the idea of any form of interference between them and their slaves. Eventually, however, in 1819 an act was passed authorizing the registration of all slaves from 1820 onward. Though the data accumulated slowly, after 1820 indisputable demographic evidence came to hand about the exact consequences of ending the slave trade.

This raw demographic data provided abolitionists with material to promote slave emancipation. But in the process, a marked change came over the campaign for black freedom. Like the initial evidence about the slave trade in the 1780s and 1790s, the slave registration returns shifted the arguments about slavery from the impressionistic and hearsay, to the specific and the indisputable. Whatever flaws existed about that data, they were unimportant set against the powerful evidence now made available to the abolitionist camp.

Not surprisingly, planters were bitterly opposed to slave registration. They hated the abolitionist movement and resisted all attempts to make them answerable for their management of plantations and slaves. Perhaps above all, planters continued to be troubled about slave unrest. After all, Haiti had become an independent black nation as recently as 1804, and the spectre of the Haitian Revolution continued to trouble planters throughout the Americas. Planters accused abolitionists and their friends of encouraging slave unrest and of elevating slave expectations. Then, in 1816, Bussa’s rebellion erupted in Barbados.

Violent resistance was part of the story of African slavery in the Americas, although less strikingly so in North America. In the British Caribbean and Brazil, slave revolts had been common, and planters and colonial authorities lived in fear of them, never fully trusting the slaves who greatly outnumbered them. Despite that, Barbados seemed an unlikely place for a slave revolt. Its slave population was overwhelmingly local-born, and imported Africans no longer played a major economic or social role, as they did in so many of the other islands. Local planters, however, made a rod for their own back. They denounced slave registration, and their indiscreet table talk helped to persuade slaves that planters were denying them the freedom already granted by London. Bussa’s rebellion of 1816, like most before it, was crushed—120 slaves killed, 144 executed, 132 deported. Barbadian planters had no doubt that simmering slave unrest had been fanned by the debate about emancipation.

Planters everywhere were beset by worries. Above all, they feared the slaves, with their simple but persistent demand for freedom; second, they feared British abolitionists’ demanding positive action and change in the slaves’ condition; third, they feared the missionaries who seduced armies of slaves to
their church or chapel. Last, and not least, planters faced a British government that seemed ever eager to criticize planters on behalf of the slaves.

Slaves everywhere had traditionally resisted their bondage—in Africa, on the slave ships, and on the plantations—though their resistance was not always violent or threatening. Foot dragging, feigning ignorance, misunderstanding orders, escaping, all formed the background to slavery in the Americas. But violence was always close to the surface.

Violence was visible in the raw, vicious realities of slave life. And it was a growing awareness of this endemic violence that helped to swing British opinion against slavery. The abolitionist campaign made effective use of slave sufferings to create a public mood that was resolutely opposed first to the slave trade, and later to slavery itself. The inhuman realities of slavery had become obvious to the British reading public even before the abolitionist campaign was launched in 1787. Slave cases in English courts, notably the Somerset Decision of 1772, the words of a small number of black writers and activists living in London in the 1770s and 1780s, and some powerful visual images helped expose the realities of Atlantic slavery. Black writers, for all their differences, returned, in their own distinctive way, to common themes: to the inhumanity of slavery, to the ungodly acts of Christian Britons, and to what independent black people (i.e., the authors) might achieve when free. These were essentially the same issues promoted by the abolitionist movement in order to establish the simple point that blacks were indeed men and women, brothers and sisters.

The full horror of what was being revealed about the slave trade sometimes overwhelmed even the staunchest of abolitionists, never more graphically than in the Zong massacre of 1781. Yet no one was brought to account for the mass murder of over 130 slaves. For all its unique horror, the Zong case was in keeping with the fate of slave rebels on other ships and plantations. Slave outbursts and violence were greeted by draconian white brutality, doled out by sailors, soldiers, planters, and colonial officials. From first to last, violence was the essential lubricant of the slave system, and slaves inevitably responded violently, though it merely provoked further white brutality against them and a tightening of the local slave laws. The permanent fear of slave violence hardened the heart of the whites against slaves in general. Planters believed that slaves were not to be trusted and that it was madness to tamper with the slave system. They also felt that the Haitian revolution proved them right.

Between 1787 and 1838, the details of slave life in the Caribbean were, then, basic to the ebb and flow of British abolitionist debate. With the coming of peace in 1815, there was a greatly heightened concern about slaves and slavery, partly because of slave revolts, beginning with Bussa's rebellion in 1816. For their part, the planters felt that slavery was being undermined from a number of different directions. Slaves' own resistance gnawed away at slavery, while missionaries, often unconsciously, were also digging away at slavery's foundations. In addition, the debates about the slave trade made headlines wherever European diplomats gathered after the war. Taken together, this all gave slavery an unprecedented political importance. Moreover, the slaves themselves were acutely aware of the debate in Britain.
Whites in the islands discussed, argued, and gossiped about the way slavery was being handled in London. Slaves heard the news (often garbled) from London via their masters’ careless table talk. Speculation about the emancipation debate quickly passed from the Great House to the slave cabins. The enslaved Atlantic had traditionally been linked by information networks, with hard news and gossip filtering from one corner of that system to another by way not only of sailors and slaves, but also by merchants and planters. The upshot, after 1815, was that slaves knew they had friends in Britain. They also knew that the planters and their friends did not approve of what was unfolding in Britain.

At the same time, the work of missionaries was also unsettling slavery. Missionary work was guided by strict rules from their home churches in Britain. Preachers were ordered not to upset the delicate social balance in the slave colonies, but their very presence among the slaves was deeply unsettling. So, too, was their Christian message, however much it might be couched in theological terms. The established Anglican Church had never really worked with the slaves, but those failings were made good, from the 1780s, by a string of nonconformist missionaries who targeted the slave communities. Baptists and Methodists, following where German Moravians had begun in the mid-century, set sail for the islands, but with advice such as the following ringing in their ears: “Remember that the object is not to teach the principles and the laws of an earthly kingdom ... but the principles and laws of the Kingdom of Christ.”

Such a distinction looked easier in Britain than it did in the Caribbean, where there was an inevitable slide from the theological to the secular. What the missionaries said to the slaves about the equality of all before God seemed to the slaves to indict their worldly condition. Even more importantly, Christianity quickly passed into the hands of local black preachers, free and enslaved. Chapels, the Bible, hymns, and home-grown enslaved preachers all served to shape a potent weapon against slavery. Black enslaved congregations, black preachers, Old Testament fire and brimstone, communal singing—all of this Christian phenomena added up to a spiritual rod for the planters’ back. Though British critics generally agreed that Christianity was the first step towards “civilizing” the slaves, many Anglicans, including prominent Evangelicals, felt uneasy about the work of the missionaries on the islands. While Christianity was seen as a means of winning over enslaved peoples to a civilized form of society, it was hard to see how that could take place without causing unpredictable social consequences. The conversion of slaves was, then, a vital part of the aspirations of all abolitionists. In his “Sketch of a Negro Code” (1792), Edmund Burke specified that “A competent minister of some Christian church or congregation shall be provided for the full instruction of the Negroes.” Christianity would help to provide slaves with those personal and social skills needed to survive as free people. What few realized was that this Christian drive into the slave quarters would also help lay the foundation for ending slavery once and for all.

One unintentional result was to increase the number of British supporters for black freedom. The very groups actively converting the slaves, especially the Baptists and Methodists, were, at the same time, expanding rapidly in
Britain. Inevitably British nonconformists felt a bond of sympathy for their enslaved co-religionists. There were, for example, more than a quarter of a million British Methodists by the 1820s, and perhaps 100,000 British Baptists twenty years later. By then, there were almost 15,000 dissenting places of worship across Britain. Nonconformity had clearly become a major force in Britain. This was to have a major impact on the campaign against slavery. Moreover, British nonconformity was increasing most rapidly in new, industrializing areas of rapid population growth. And it was the people of this “new Britain” who were the very people to lend their numbers and voices to demands for an end to slavery. Nonconformity could rally large numbers of British people, and its preachers spoke with great eloquence in the British campaign for slave emancipation in the 1820s and 1830s. At the same time, nonconformist Christianity transformed slave life itself.

The Atlantic slave trade had enabled planters, before 1807, to replenish their labor force by purchasing newly imported Africans. In time, some islands, notably Barbados, like North America, had been able to dispense with the Atlantic slave trade and rely on its own local-born slaves. But Britain's new colonies, acquired in the recent wars—Trinidad for example, or frontier societies, most notably Demerara/Guiana—continued to need new Africans. But after 1807, planters in those regions had to plan for a world without imported Africans and in the process had to rethink their slave management systems. As they did so, they were scrutinized with great suspicion by abolitionists, government officials, and other outsiders. The planters were renowned for their true hostility to abolition, and they continued to resist any outside interference with the slave colonies. They were permanently reluctant partners in any scheme emanating from London and made no secret of the fact that they would drag their feet in any change demanded of them by London.

The immediate consequence of the end of the slave trade in 1807 was a short-term fall in the slave population. Faced with a declining labor force, planters increased their demands on their labor force. They began to rearrange their workforce, switching slaves around, demanding more of all of them, and generally interfering with established, familiar work customs. Planters also began to relocate slaves from one property to another, rationalizing their overall labor force in ways that often caused great distress to the slaves. Women and children now undertook tasks once reserved for men. Skilled or elite slaves might now be expected to do rougher, more physically demanding work. People long accustomed to better working conditions now found themselves brutalized in the fields. Such changes made economic sense to planters, but it angered and confused the slaves. These changes are easily illustrated. There were now more women, and more “colored” slaves, working in the sugar fields. Stated crudely, fairer-skinned children might no longer expect the preferential treatment normally accorded to the offspring of black and white. On top of all this, it was clear enough that slaves were not becoming more docile. The optimistic expectations of the abolitionists were being dashed at the very time the fears of the planters were confirmed. At the same time, plantations were awash with rumors that full freedom, offered by the king, and/or Parliament, was being held back by the
planters—all this at a time when the slaves' lives in the sugar economy on the older islands had become more demanding and more uncertain. The simple truth was that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 had been a leap in the dark, and no one knew exactly what would happen when the transatlantic flow of Africans stopped. Planters hoped that as the old generation of Africans died out by natural aging, a new population of slaves born in the Caribbean and never having known freedom directly in Africa would become more manageable and compliant. Yet, the contrary seemed to be happening. Planters assumed that slave truculence was made worse by outside interference, by a critical British government and its colonial officers and by the swarm of missionaries wooing slaves to the chapels and prayer meetings. What happened after 1807 confirmed the planters' greatest fears. Bussa's rebellion (1816) in Barbados had been bad enough. But worse was to follow.

The newly developed slave lands in Demerara attracted a new breed of aggressive investors and planters including the father of William Gladstone. Slaves there were managed under a draconian system that appalled abolitionists. Missionaries arriving in that unforgiving climate were shocked by what they found. The most brutal treatment of slaves was often to be seen in the early days of settlement and expansion, in those societies that were, in effect, frontier communities. The crudeness of slavery in Demerara could be explained by its early state of development. It was perhaps more like seventeenth century Barbados and Jamaica. But times and sensibilities had changed. What had gone unnoticed two centuries earlier was unacceptable now to an ever-more inquisitive British gaze. Reports of the planters' wrongdoings sped back to British congregations by way of missionaries' correspondence.

The slaves in Demerara lived mainly on the coastal regions and along the rivers and had long been famed for their resistance and truculence. When the missionary, John Smith, arrived in Demerara in 1817, slaves flocked to his new congregations. Six years later in 1823, a major slave revolt erupted. It was suppressed by the military and planters. The subsequent summary and legal punishments were excessive even by local standards. The killing of three white people led to the killing of 250 slaves. Smith, too, was tried, in a hearing made all the more dramatic by Smith's own decline into consumption. He died in jail in February 1824 shortly before his Royal pardon had been received. There followed an outcry in Britain, though the outrage should have concentrated on the deaths of so many slaves, slaughtered for an indefensible system. Yet Smith's death served a purpose, once more focusing British attention on slavery. The flagging British abolition cause was promptly revived in 1823. It was abundantly clear to ever more people that West Indian slavery stood condemned by the actions of its principal proponents and benefactors.

Although the most important impact of the Demerara revolt was in Britain, the revolt naturally sent shock waves through the other slave colonies. Smith's death was used to goad a hesitant British government to move towards abolition. More and more people in Britain simply wanted to wash their hands of the entire slave system. It seemed obvious that planters would never bring justice, to say nothing of freedom, to the slaves. In a mood of
profound national disgust, it was widely felt that slavery should be brought to an end. The practical problem remained: how to clinch black freedom.

As the data accumulated from the slave registration returns in the 1820s, the decline of the slave population became increasingly evident. That decline would continue until a new generation of slaves entered their childbearing years. Everywhere, enslaved labor regimes were more brutal than ever, at the same time that Christian missionaries were winning over more and more slaves. Serious friction between planters and missionaries was ubiquitous. Viewed from Britain, the planters’ open hostility to missionaries and to Christian slaves helped confirm the need to bring down slavery. In the very years when the British removed religious disabilities, most notably against Roman Catholics, it was ironic to see newly converted slaves harassed and obstructed in their worship in the West Indies. To make matters worse, excessive violence remained the hallmark of slave management and even of colonial administration. By the mid-1820s, the slave colonies seemed like survivors from a lost epoch. Any remaining optimism that the slave colonies could be expected to reform themselves was dispelled by the death of the Reverend Smith and the legions of slaves slaughtered at the same time. In 1823, it was time, once again, to rally the abolitionist troops.

The revived abolitionist campaign really began with the idea that slavery could be undermined by an economic attack, by undermining the sugar duties. The British Caribbean needed the protection of sugar duties to compete with sugar grown in other parts of the world. The abolitionists’ new idea was simple: expose slave-grown sugar to free competition and it would simply collapse from its own inefficiencies. Some of the earliest abolitionist arguments (in the 1770s and 1780s, for example) had embraced an economic critique of slavery, though rarely as a pivotal objection. Half a century later, however, other cheaper sugars were readily available on the world market. And, as the 1820s advanced, the economic critique gained in strength and persuasion. Promoted initially as a relatively minor objection by Quakers with East Indian interests in the early 1820s, by the late 1820s, it was widely accepted that a free trade and open competition for sugar would undermine West Indian slavery. The case was promoted most forcefully by James Cropper, a Quaker with East India interests, but he and other abolitionists were again convinced that their arguments needed public support. For that, they needed a reprise of the old abolitionist tactics.

With this in mind, the Society for the Amelioration and Gradual Abolition of Slavery was founded late in January 1823. Within a year, Thomas Clarkson, the durable survivor from the 1780s and 1790s, had spurred the formation of 250 societies across Britain. Over the next decade, these local societies—large numbers of them female—provided the impetus for the campaign to end slavery. A central London committee orchestrated the national campaign, with the country divided into organizational districts, and all were encouraged to rally support and organize petitions for black freedom. It was, instantly, a significant, national pressure group, made all the more influential by the energy and activities of female abolitionists, many working through their own associations.
By the 1820s, however, abolition had changed. The ideological core of the campaign was quite different from its forebears. The economics of antislavery had now shifted to the center of the arguments, though integrated with the older moral and religious objections. Slavery thus found itself under attack from a powerful combination of economic, religious, and moral objections. Large numbers of British people were attracted to the idea that slavery was both wrong and uneconomic. The West India lobby on the other hand, now faced an impossible task: struggling to promote both the morality and the economic utility of slavery. Yet on both counts, they were repeatedly outflanked by events and by abolitionist arguments. How could they justify the recent treatment of slaves in Demerara, or the persecution of black Christians? And why should British consumers keep the slave system in place by paying more for their sugar? By the mid-1820s, the West Indians were clearly on the defensive and faced massive, well-organized, articulate ranks of British people who were now wedded to demands for black freedom sooner rather than later. Abolition had in effect captured both the economic and moral high ground.

Under this pressure, early in 1823 the Commons resolved to press for gradual slave emancipation. Once more the indefatigable Clarkson found support from ordinary citizens throughout the country, from all political quarters and, critically, from most churches. Despite a rearguard opposition in the House of Lords, black freedom no longer divided the British, but had, instead, become an issue that united the British people as no other. Abolitionists were confident that they could mobilize an outraged public opinion, which, in its turn, would make emancipation inevitable—Parliament would be unable to resist demands for black freedom.

After 1823, the campaign for black freedom reprised the familiar tactics: mass petitions, innumerable publications, and lectures, many of them of remarkable length, to packed audiences. Overspill audiences, people locked out, hundreds defying bad weather to get to a lecture—all and more bore testimony to the staggering popularity of the abolitionist campaign. Through all this, female abolitionists and their own, discrete organizations were vital; female abolitionists were at the heart of the campaign, as organizers, as lecturers, and as audiences. Female abolition was important in itself, but also as part of the much broader and more deep-seated shift towards female political activism. A profusion of abolitionist publications fluttered down on an increasingly literate people. Between 1823 and 1831, the Anti-Slavery Society issued more than three millions tracts, about half a million in 1831 alone. All of this was in addition to publications from local abolition groups and abolitionist material in the local and London newspapers.

Despite all this public pressure, abolition in Parliament languished. The figurehead, William Wilberforce, was old and weary, handing over the parliamentary leadership to Thomas Fowell Buxton. But by 1830, little headway had been made in Parliament. Of course, slave emancipation was only one of a number of reforming issues confronting Parliament. Dominating everything was the reform of Parliament. Nonetheless, younger abolitionists began to tire of their leaders’ apparently endless patience in asking for black freedom, and in 1832 the Agency Committee was founded by George Stephen and Emmanuel and James Cropper (both Quakers) to press
for immediate emancipation. Once again, unpredictable events took a hand, both at home and in the islands. Domestic British life was thrown into a national panic caused by the terrible cholera epidemic of 1832 which killed 32,000 people. Here was a disaster, some thought, provoked by divine punishment for national sins; and, what sin could have been greater than slavery? And, as if to confirm this judgment of the Almighty’s wrath, Jamaican slaves revolted in 1831–1832.

The Jamaican revolt was quite unlike those in Barbados in 1816 or Demerara in 1823. It was a massive upheaval involving 60,000 slaves; it caused the death of 14 whites, and saw the killing of 540 slaves. Led by the inspirational preacher Sam Sharpe, the revolt raced through western Jamaica, with estates torched and Baptist slaves at the forefront. There was something different about this revolt. It was, above all, a revolt of Christians. Sharpe, though still a slave, personified the power of black Christianity, and he and other rebels spoke a language of radical, egalitarian Christianity.

News of the Jamaican revolt and of its violent repression caused another outcry in Britain. Missionaries returning from Jamaica on the eve of the debate for Parliamentary reform roused British audiences with the latest news from Jamaica. They added an emotive element to the wider debate both for black freedom and for the Reform Bill. The coincidence of timing greatly helped abolition. When a Parliamentary election was called in August 1832, using the new reformed franchise, abolitionists seized their chance. They forced parliamentary candidates to declare their views on slave emancipation. Something like 200 MPs declared themselves for black freedom. The reform of Parliament in 1832 thus paved the way for the ending of slavery.

Earl Grey’s new government had little option but to end colonial slavery, though the Lords again remained doggedly supportive of the planters. After 1832, however, the parliamentary arguments were about when slaves would be freed and under what terms. Finally, the Abolition of Slavery Bill of August 1833 inaugurated black freedom the following year in August 1834. Even then, what was proposed had severe limitations founded primarily on the need to satisfy the planters’ demands for a guaranteed source of labor. All slaves less than six years old were freed immediately; the rest became “apprentices” for up to six years, working most of their time without pay for their former owners. Bermuda and Antigua opted for immediate emancipation.

No less surprising, in retrospect at least, Parliament also allocated a staggering 20 million pounds to be distributed on a per capita basis, not to the slaves, but to the slave owners. In effect, Parliament was buying the slaves’ freedom by paying planters the current market value for their human property. Lord Harewood for example, already fabulously wealthy from his family’s sugar trading and West Indian plantations, received more than £26,000 for the 1,277 slaves still in his possession. Abolitionists asked the obvious question: why not compensate the slaves instead?

The interim apprenticeship scheme, monitored by a new breed of commissioners entitled Stipendiary Magistrates sent to the islands, was clearly a concession to the planters. But from the first, the scheme’s failings (and abuses) were obvious, enabling abolitionists to continue their demands for full, immediate freedom. They kept up the pressure on Parliament using the
old tactics. The abolition debate also reflected a major divide in British life. Abolitionists spoke for the “new” Britain, for urban, industrial, and dissenting British life; slavery tended to have its natural support in small-town, rural Britain and in the House of Lords. By then, however, there was little the slave lobby could do to save slavery. On August 1, 1838, apprenticeship was brought to an early end, and full emancipation was granted. Two centuries after their first ancestors had shuffled from the slave ships into the British colonies, something like three quarters of a million slaves were henceforth free people.

Planters understandably feared that ex-slaves had long memories and would remember the long litany of personal and collective grievances. They feared an understandable revenge. However, the ex-slaves celebrated their newly won freedom in the most peaceable of fashions: large numbers simply went to church.

Across the Caribbean and among abolitionists, black and white, in the United States as well, August 1, 1838, was celebrated peacefully. Freed people gathered in parades and public meetings, but above all, in crowded churches. Here was a staggering turn of events. For almost three centuries, African slavery had defined relations between black and white throughout the Americas, and it was a system rooted in violence. In Africa, in the mid-Atlantic, and on the American plantations, slavery had been characterized by violence. Although it is true that slavery in Haiti had been destroyed by the volcanic slave revolt of the 1790s and, although slavery in the United States was to end in the bloodshed of the Civil War, the British system of slavery ended peacefully. British slavery, and the British slave trade, had been infamous for their brutality, yet both ended without bloodshed by Acts of Parliament. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation.


James Walvin

Brougham, Henry Peter (1778–1868)

Henry Brougham was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on September 19, 1778, into a wealthy family of landowners. He died in Cannes, France on May 7, 1868. He secured fame as a lawyer and Whig politician, espousing several worthy causes, including antislavery.

At the early age of fourteen, Brougham went to Edinburgh University, initially as a science student, but by 1800 he entered the Law School. After completing his studies in 1803, he left for London, where he was called to
the bar in 1808. As a barrister, he was associated with the defense of Radical opinion and the progressive wing of the Whig party. He first acquired intellectual notoriety when he joined in the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802, a Whig journal to which he contributed many articles pleading for social reform. His early interest in the abolition of the slave trade is reflected in his two volumes, *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers* (1803), and his booklet, *A Concise Statement of the Question Regarding the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1804), which influenced opinion leaders. He also went to Holland to try to convert that country to the cause of abolition. For Brougham, dealing in slaves was “not a trade but a crime.” His force of conviction led to his selection to organize the Whig press campaign in the General Election of 1807.

On March 25, 1807, the Slave Trade Bill received royal assent. The Act prohibited the capture and transportation of slaves on British vessels, on pain of forfeiture of the ship and a fine of £100 per slave found on board. It had been piloted by the Tory, William Wilberforce, but it only passed thanks to the full support of Whigs like Brougham, who saw it only as a first step. Brougham was offered a safe seat in Parliament in 1810, and his immediate preoccupation was the consolidation of the Slave Trade Act. He introduced a bill “for rendering more effectual” the existing legislation by augmenting the controls and the penalties. Passed on May 14, 1811, the resulting law, commonly known as the Felony Act, made it a felony, punishable by fourteen years’ transportation, for any British subject anywhere in the world or for any foreigner in British territories, to buy, sell or transport slaves. Being severely enforced by the Royal Navy, Brougham’s Act effectively put an end to the British slave trade, whether in British possessions or ships. In 1812, Brougham dared to stand as the Whig candidate in Liverpool, a city whose wealth was largely built on the slave trade. He was defeated by the Tory candidate, whose party still largely supported slavery, and only regained a seat in 1815. In the early 1810s, his activities as a lawyer were notable for his defense of Lancashire textile workers who tried to organize labor unions, which remained illegal. Later in the decade when popular agitation led to increased repression and culminated in the Manchester massacre of 1819, he publicly criticized the insensitivity of the authorities and the severity of the sentences imposed on the labor leaders. His hour of glory as a lawyer came in 1820, when he successfully defended Queen Caroline against the accusations of adultery leveled at her by the new king, George IV, who wanted to obtain an annulment of the marriage. By clearing her, Brougham became the champion of those who fought injustice, whatever their rank in society. In British overseas possessions, those with the lowest rank were of course the slaves, whose cause Brougham continued to further indefatigably, denouncing “the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man” and being one of the founder members of the *Anti-Slavery Society* in 1823.

The Act of 1824 “for the more effectual suppression of the African Slave Trade” made that trade worse than a felony: a practice equivalent to piracy, punishable by death. Still, it did not attack slavery as such, and it still made
it possible to take severe repressive measures against the existing slaves, as was shown by the sentences passed on the slave rebels of Demerara (British Guyana) who rose up in 1824. What was imperative in the eyes of people like Brougham was the abolition of slavery, not only of the slave trade, and his increasing stature enabled him to use his influence to that end. He was elevated to the peerage in 1830, becoming the first baron of Brougham and Vaux, and served in the great reforming government of Earl Grey as Lord Chancellor from 1830 to 1834.

Besides being a major force behind the extension of the franchise—obtained with the Reform Act of 1832—he is largely associated with the passage of the Slavery Abolition Act of August 29, 1833. This measure abolished slavery in British colonies (except India and St. Helena) as of August 1, 1834, with the proviso that all slaves had to serve an “apprenticeship” of four (for domestic servants) or six years (for field laborers). In one of his greatest speeches before Parliament, Brougham argued forcefully for immediate emancipation during the debates. He maintained that experience had shown that all previous fears were vain: “The slave has shown, by four years' blameless behaviour and devotion to the pursuits of peaceful industry, that he is as fit for his freedom as any English peasant, aye, or any lord whom I now address. I demand his rights; I demand his liberty without stint. In the name of justice and of law, in the name of reason, in the name of God, who has given you no right to work injustice. I demand that your brother be no longer trampled upon as your slave!” The apprenticeship provision was revoked in July 1838.

After that great triumph, Brougham left the foreground of British politics. Yet he remained dedicated to antislavery until his death. He vehemently supported the North in the American Civil War. Returning from his retirement on the French Riviera to participate in the debates organized in London, Brougham, according to one witness, was “still filled with the fire that had lasted him for sixty years of leadership in judicial, suffrage, and antislavery in both Houses, in Commons and in Lords.” See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of; British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation.

The General Act for the Repression of the African Slave Trade, known as the Brussels Act, was the treaty negotiated by the Brussels Conference of 1889–1890. It was the first comprehensive international treaty against the African slave traffic and was thus a landmark in the history of the abolition movement. It was signed by all the powers with territories in Africa—Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Spain, the King of the Belgians’ Congo Independent State, the Ottoman Empire, the Sultanate of Zanzibar, and the other signatories of the Berlin Act, Belgium, Austria, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, as well as Persia. Its importance was that the slave trade was now clearly condemned by all the African colonial powers and most of the maritime powers, as well as the powers that imported slaves, the most important of which was the Ottoman Empire.

The Act was touted as primarily a humanitarian treaty and is seen as a fore-runner of the present human rights movement. In fact, it also served the purposes of the colonial powers by giving an antislavery complexion not just to the conquest of Africa, but also to the establishment of administrations, the building of fortified posts, the development of trade and communications, as well as the protection of trading companies and missionaries. All these operations, necessary for the development of colonial territories, were presented as measures against the slave trade, together with the initiation of Africans into agricultural labor and the “industrial arts.” Moreover, the arms traffic, particularly in precision weapons, was to be limited in an area that stretched across the continent and up to 100 nautical miles out to sea, between latitudes 20° north and 22° south. This effectively disarmed Africans in this zone and gave Europeans a monopoly of this lucrative trade. To please the temperance societies and other humanitarian organizations, restrictions were also placed on the liquor traffic, although not in areas “already contaminated” where they provided revenue from import duties and were an important branch of the European spirits trade.

The signatories also bound themselves to prevent slave raids, to arbitrate in local wars, and to prevent the capture and transport of slaves and the castration of males. They were to control the caravan routes and the ports of embarkation. Freed and fugitive slaves were to be repatriated or liberated and re-settled, and freed children were to be educated.

To prevent the export of slaves, the British retained their existing treaties, allowing them to stop and search suspected slavers on the high seas. They agreed, however, to limit these rights to the “slave trade zone.” This zone included the east African coast north of Quelimane, Madagascar, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean as far as Baluchistan. The agreement was also limited to native vessels of less that 500 tons, very small fishing craft being exempted. Strict rules were laid down for the granting of flags to national vessels. Crews and passengers had to be issued with identity papers, and the latter could only embark and disembark at controlled ports. Slaves found on board, or who managed to swim to a warship, were to be freed. The procedure for the stopping and searching of suspected vessels was crafted to avoid disputes. All signatories in whose territories
slavery was legal were to pass laws against trading, importing, exporting, or transporting slaves and against castration. Liberation offices were to be established to care for freed slaves.

Finally, a bureau was to be set up in Zanzibar to record captures and exchange information. Another bureau in Brussels was to collect and publish all information sent to it by the signatories to record their advances against the slave, arms, and liquor traffics. The Act came into force in 1892 and was ratified by all signatories except the French, who objected to granting the right to search their ships. However, they agreed to enforce the regulations on their own shipping.

Although hailed as a great humanitarian triumph, the Act had serious limitations. It contained no effective mechanism for enforcement or for monitoring results. The Zanzibar bureau led to some cooperation between coastal powers, but the real diminution in the export traffic was the result of the occupation of the coast by the European colonial powers. By 1912, the British were complaining that the Act was out of date. The traffic in native craft was now on a very small scale, and many slaves were now transported by steamers and hidden among their passengers, especially pilgrims. Moreover, the act had never applied to the Mediterranean.

When, in 1916, Britain, France, and Belgium began discussing the revision of the Brussels Act, it was generally—and wrongly—believed that the slave trade had been almost eliminated. Over most of Africa, large-scale slave raids no longer took place, and the slave trade was now a small underground operation. These powers saw no need to retain the slavery clauses of the Act and wanted to abrogate it to be free of its limitations on customs and navigation in the Congo basin. The slave trade was barely discussed. They abrogated the Brussels Act for themselves and replaced it with three separate treaties signed at St. Germain-en-Laye in 1919, revising the clauses on the arms trade, the liquor traffic, and on commerce. Only one article in the last of these treaties mentioned the slave trade. It merely bound signatories to safeguard and improve the moral and material well-being of native peoples and to suppress completely slavery in all its forms and all slave trading by land and sea. All the detailed clauses to control the slave traffic were thus swept away. The abrogators were either overly sanguine or cynical. At the very time that they abrogated the act, perhaps unknown to them, the slave trade was raging in southwest Ethiopia and parts of Sudan. Moreover, numbers of slaves were brought to Arabia by sea or overland, and pilgrims were still being enslaved. This news was not to reach Europe, however, until after the Brussels Act had been abrogated by the colonial powers who signed or adhered to the Conventions of St. Germain. However, they maintained that it was still in force for all other nations. This remained a legal grey area until the British gave up the claim to secure the signing of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery in 1956.

The abrogation of the Brussels Act was long lamented by the Anti-Slavery Society. As late as the 1950s, the Society considered it had been the most effective of the anti-slave trade treaties. It is hard to say how much its success
was due to the Act and how much to the occupation of the coast and the establishment of control of most of the continent by the colonial powers. There is no doubt, however, that it focussed attention on the traffic and was at least a factor in reducing, if not ending, the African traffic on land and sea. 


**Suzanne Miers**

**Brussels Conference (1889–1890)**

The Brussels Conference played a unique, if limited, part in the history of the abolition of slavery. It was the first official international conference convened to negotiate a treaty against the African slave trade and was described by the British prime minister of the day as the first meeting in the world called to promote "a matter of pure humanity and goodwill." It met from November 1889 to July 1890, and resulted in the signing of the Brussels Act. The British, having failed to secure such a treaty at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, had signed numerous bilateral treaties against the export slave trade, with most of the maritime powers agreeing to mutual rights to search each other's ships on the high seas, and delineating procedures for the arrest and trial of suspects. France, however, had refused to allow its ships to be stopped as long as their papers were in order. Moreover, Britain's hodge podge of different treaties—all signed at different times and directed primarily at the now defunct transatlantic traffic—no longer adequately served the new diplomatic imperatives created by the allotting of Africa by the colonial powers.

By the early 1880s, the Atlantic slave trade had virtually ended, but slaves were still being exported to the Muslim world, some came over land or across the Red Sea and Persian Gulf under the guise of pilgrims, while others were smuggled from Africa in small native vessels. Some even crossed the Mediterranean from North African ports in steam ships, disguised as passengers. Others were exported under the guise of contract labor. In parts of Africa, the slave trade was ravaging whole regions and supplying this export market as well as a buoyant internal one. By the late 1880s, the European colonial powers and the King of the Belgians, who was building a personal empire in the Congo, were dividing most of the continent and the Indian Ocean islands among themselves. The danger was that they would allow the export trade from their coasts and countenance the internal traffic to attract native trade to their territories, and to avoid the expense and odium of policing the traffic by land and sea.

The slave trade was also supported by a lucrative arms traffic, which in its turn aided the slavers and also gave them the means to resist the expansion of rival European colonial powers. Commercial and political reasons existed, as well as economic ones, for ending the slave trade, which was creating turmoil in the interior and the arms traffic, which attracted trade but also threatened European conquest.
In the 1880s, the European advance into Africa was spearheaded by traders, missionaries, settlers, prospectors, and adventurers. Africans and their Swahili and Arab trading partners, who controlled large parts of the far interior and supplied the necessary arms, were anxious to protect their independence, to preserve their trade, and, in some cases, to carve out conquests of their own. They clashed with European rivals. As the European threat became more explicit, the endemic slave raiding increased and Europeans themselves, missionaries and traders alike, came under threat, particularly in the Great Lakes Area in the far interior. They reported all African and Swahili resistance to European encroachment as slaving operations. In Britain, interest in the slave trade in Africa had already been raised by the writings of David Livingstone, who had appealed to Europeans to bring Christianity, civilization, and commerce to the heart of Africa. The response was the establishment of Scottish missionaries and a trading company and other missions far in the interior. Hard on their heels followed the Society of Our Lady of Africa known as the White Fathers, a French Catholic missionary society founded by Cardinal Lavigerie. Finding his missions threatened, Lavigerie, with papal blessing, toured Europe, founding antislavery societies, and making emotional appeals for European crusaders to fight the slave traffic.

The British government, anxious to retain leadership of the antislavery movement and fearful that the proposed armed crusaders would create further turmoil, decided to call a conference of the European powers controlling the African coasts to negotiate an end to the export of slaves. Knowing that the French and others would be deeply suspicious of their motives, they asked King Leopold II of Belgium, then still believed to be a philanthropic ruler, to invite the powers to meet in Brussels for this purpose. They intended only to get the coastal powers to share the odium and expense of ending the export traffic. However, both King Leopold and the German chancellor, Prince Bismarck, realized that they could use the conference for their own ends. The British also saw that a wider conference could serve other aims, as well as end the export slave trade.

Thus, when the supposed humanitarian conference met in Brussels in November 1889, it included representatives not only of the African coast powers, but of all the powers who had attended the Berlin conference, as well as Persia, a Muslim state believed to be cooperating against the slave trade, and the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose territories were being divided between Britain and Germany. The invitation to the last two, together with the inclusion of the Ottoman Empire, which had taken part in the Berlin Conference, was to avoid any appearance that the Brussels Conference was a Christian versus Muslim meeting. Many leading experts on Africa also attended, including observers from trading companies, temperance societies, and the Anti-Slavery Society, each with their own agenda.

Over many months, the conference hammered out the General Act for the Repression of the African slave trade. This act was to have far-reaching results and serve the purposes of the colonial powers, as well as contribute to the decline of the African slave trade. See also East African Slave Trade.
Buddhism and Antislavery

Buddhism is a global religion, practiced by nearly 300 million adherents around the world. Its fundamental principles advocate liberation from suffering, a possible ideological basis for abolition and antislavery. Yet throughout its doctrine, Buddhism displays ambivalence toward dāsātā (Sanskrit: slavery). Directed to an audience who thought slavery was naturally inherent to society, Buddhist doctrine contains elements that condone lay employment of slavery. Alternatively, Buddhist doctrine prohibits monastic engagement in any form of slavery, and there are examples of egalitarianism and stories of liberation throughout its corpus. As a social force that encapsulates the science, history, and politics of a region, different Buddhisms (of which there are over a dozen, such as Korean, Mongolian, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, Nepali, Burmese, Sri Lankan, Indian, and Bhutanese) have had a critical effect on sentiments toward slavery throughout Asia. These effects are evidenced through Buddhisms' interactions with Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese, and Thai societies.

The slavery that existed throughout these Asian countries had a distinctly different background, culture, and history from that of European countries. For example, in the Brahmanical culture of South and Southeast Asia, discrimination and enslavement was predicated on religious beliefs that are commonly referred to by a Portuguese term, the caste system. Elsewhere in East and Central Asia, Confucian ideals lay importance not on the lack of freedom for slaves, but on the absence of any social status. In this way, different Buddhisms' relationships with antislavery must be understood against their distinctive cultural backdrops.

It is important to note that all religions, at least in their nascency, have hesitated in prohibiting slavery for its economic, and therefore, political implications. Although a Jesus, Krishna, Muhammad, or Buddha may be quoted for specific actions or comments that denounce slavery, these textual moments never curbed slavery under their respective religions. Religious condemnation of modern slavery arises from modern religious interpretations of modern conflicts. Slavery existed for centuries before the Roman Catholic Church wholly denounced it. Likewise, Hinduism supported the oppression of the Untouchables of India for centuries before Mohandas K. Gandhi and his rewriting of the Bhagavad-Gita. While the religious umbrella of Buddhism lacks such ideological revolutions, it is important to note that Buddhist countries also lacked the social processes that brought about these movements, such as the Middle Passage for enslaved Africans, or the construction of a caste system in India.
Doctrine

Buddhism rejects fatalism, insisting that any situation one is born into is mutable. This mutability is crucial in achieving the ultimate goal in Buddhism, nirvana (Sanskrit: extinction of suffering). In this regard, Buddhism aims on the liberation from suffering, the symbolic representation of anti-slavery. Buddhism's doctrine is primarily, but not solely, found in the Tripitaka (Sanskrit: Three Baskets). The Tripitaka is comprised of three sections: the Vinaya, Sutras, and the Abhidharma. The Vinaya is a collection of the Buddhist monastic laws, the Sutras recount discourses attributed to the Buddha and his disciples, and the Abhidharma is an eclectic grouping of theoretical discourses.

While lay practitioners accumulate merit for success in their lives or a better rebirth, their ultimate aspiration is emancipation from suffering. Yet, similar to other world religions, Buddhism has no explicit canonical prohibition for slavery. In some cases, early Buddhist doctrine could be interpreted as advocating slavery. Buddhist stories, often considered pedagogical tools for teaching the doctrine, use the acquisition of slaves as an indicator of one's positive karma (Sanskrit: action) in a previous life. For instance, the Thai story of Phra Malai tells of how karmic rewards from past lives are measured by the amount of servants in a god's entourage. There are also interdictions that point to Buddhist tolerance for slavery. Within the Vinaya, runaway slaves are forbidden from becoming monks.

However, many of the values and processes inherent in Buddhism's belief system encourage emancipation. Even today the auspicious ritual of ordination offers economically enslaved individuals the ability to elevate themselves in Buddhist societies. Illiterate farmers and fieldworkers ordain as monks and thereby acquire access to the education, food, and shelter privy to Buddhist monks. On a social level, they accrue prestige in their communities. This social liberation ideology can be traced to stories in the Sutras. An example is found in the story Assalayana, found in the Majjhima Nikaya section, where a Socratic dialogue unfolds between the Buddha and a layperson named Assalayana over the importance of egalitarianism. The Buddha rejects the normative view that some people are born into servitude and are lesser beings than others. He espouses that all people, no matter the color of their skin, are equal to one another. The story of the man, Ambattha, in the Digha Nikaya, reveals how the Buddha does not consider the relevance of sociological identity relevant to Buddhist soteriology. According to the Buddha, liberation is unrelated to one's ethnicity or race.

One of the fundamental principles of Buddhism is the Eightfold Path, a guideline toward freeing oneself from suffering. Each step along the path is cumulative and consists of a correct view, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. A correct livelihood has been considered one of the building blocks for Buddhism's antislavery position.

To maintain a correct livelihood, one cannot mistreat or cause another person to suffer. Due to this requirement, there have been restrictions as to the handling of slaves. The Buddhist laity is prohibited from trafficking...
slaves (although this did not exclude employing them) and monks are not allowed to employ slaves.

The Buddhist work called the *Arya-bodhisattvacaarya-gocbaropaaya-visbaya-vikurana-nirdesha-naama* stands as another example of how issues over one’s livelihood affect the treatment of slaves. In the text, the Buddha recommends that rulers oversee the equal distribution of wealth among laborers and servants and consider all their citizens as sons and daughters. To rule otherwise would be maintaining an incorrect livelihood.

Wherever Buddhism flourished, its *Sangha* (Sanskrit: monastic institution) and doctrine wove themselves around political structures. The earliest political enactment of Buddhist doctrine can be found inscribed on the Fourteen Rock edicts, also known as the Pillars of King Ashoka in India (d. third century B.C.E.). The inscriptions advocate egalitarianism in the name of the Dhamma (Pali: Buddhist doctrine). Although this egalitarianism did not emancipate those born into slavery, it did mandate respect and loyalty be given to them.

**India**

Buddhism’s founder, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha, d. 600–450 B.C.E.), was born in what is now Nepal and began his teachings in northern India at a place called Deer Park. Institutional slavery was a part of early South Asian society. *Dāsas* (Sanskrit: slaves) were considered an integral part of society by South Asian texts such as the Brahmanical scripture, the *Manusmriti* (Manu’s Code of Law, d. fifth century B.C.E.). Later Buddhist texts, such as the *Dīghanikāya Atthakathā* (d. between fourth and third centuries B.C.E.), reflect on this social acceptance and categorize this economically driven social institution. According to Buddhism, there were four different types of dāsas: those who willingly became slaves, those born into slavery, those purchased as slaves, and those captured and forced into slavery.

Dāsas were not the only individuals subjugated in India. The Buddha’s indigenous society of South Asia was stratified into four different varnas (Sanskrit: castes) determined by birth: *brahmans* (Sanskrit: priests), *ksbatriyas* (Sanskrit: nobility class), *vaishyas* (Sanskrit: merchants) and *sbudras* (Sanskrit: servants). The varna system, deriving from Brahmanical tradition and beliefs, was a cultural norm of Siddhartha’s time period. While slavery in Europe and the Americas was attributed to economic and racial discrimination, the majority of South Asia’s discrimination lay in its cultural and religious disposition of the varna system, specifically the sbudras and those beneath them, the Untouchables, both of whom had darker skin tones than those more elite within the varna system, such as the brabmans.

Early Indian Buddhism did not formally adopt the caste system into its belief system, permitting sbudras to become monks, even though the majority of its early monks were brabmans and ksbatriyas. However, in contemporary times, Untouchables have used Buddhism as a means of liberating themselves from their existential shackles. In 1956, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (d. 1891–1956) led over 800,000 Untouchables in a ceremony
that released them from the Brahmanical tradition, converting them from social pariahs under the caste system into egalitarian Buddhists.

**Sri Lanka**

Buddhism’s relationship with the caste system was most prevalent in Sri Lanka, where certain monastic schools were specifically aligned to castes. This historical relationship lasted until the twentieth century. In addition to the caste system, a loophole unraveled the monastic prohibition of participating in enslavement. Starting in the first century B.C.E., the Buddhist Sangha began to receive human beings as gifts of labor. A famous Buddhist philosopher, Buddhaghosa (d. fifth century C.E.), explains that if human beings are given to the temples in order to assist in its upkeep, this would be charitable work and not be considered an endorsement of slavery. Sri Lanka’s early royal patronage of the Sangha became so great that entire villages and their people were sometimes donated.

This act of charity complicated the act of freeing slaves under Buddhist guidelines. According to Buddhist tenets, monks and nuns cannot discard anything given to them, thus making the donating of people to the Sangha a serious issue. Buddhaghosa attempted to counterattack this problem by declaring that the Buddhist Sangha could not receive slaves, only servants, but this did not deter the process of enslavement, it merely reclassified it. In the Cūlavamsa (d. ninth century C.E.), the leniency on slavery allowed for monasteries to accept prisoners as slaves and, in a few instances, to purchase slaves with monastic funds.

In 1880, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (d. 1832–1907) journeyed to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and met the Buddhist reformer, Anagarika Dharmapala (born David Hewavitarne, d. 1864–1933). Together, they reconstituted Buddhism and proselytized it, earning it the label of Protestant Buddhism. Olcott adopted many Christian elements under this reform, such as the catechism and organizations that were structurally akin to those under Protestantism. Among these reforms was an emphasis upon women’s rights and caste reform, moving social values closer toward antislavery.

**China**

As early as the fourth century B.C.E., slavery was present in China. Abolitionist thought and slavery during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.—220 C.E.) alleviated some social problems for slaves, but by the sixth century C.E., chattel slavery was normalized, and slaves resided at the bottom of Chinese hierarchical society. In this Confucian society, a slave was not one who was bereft of freedom, but rather status. Chattel slavery and serfdom, as commodified donations, were thus funneled into the Buddhist Sangha, as similarly practiced in Sri Lanka. During the Tang dynasty (d. 618–907 C.E.), slaves operated the enormous Buddhist estates that arose under charitable contributions. This institutional use of slaves continued through the centuries and migrated north into Mongolia by the late seventeenth century. Due to agricultural demand, slavery proliferated in Mongolia. There are records
indicating that, under the Tushetu Khan, nearly half the population was comprised of slaves. Although Mongolian monastic intellectuals in the early twentieth century fought to end this tradition of servitude, it was not until socialist regimes of the Mongolian People’s Republic and China’s Mao Zedong that institutions of slavery were abolished.

**Thailand**

One notable development in the antislavery movement within Buddhist history can be found in nineteenth-century Siam (Thailand) under King Mongkut and his son, **King Chulalongkorn**. Although Thailand did not have India’s caste system, slavery was an integral part of its religious and economic system, similar to that of China and Mongolia. One of Southeast Asia’s most sought-after resources through the nineteenth century was manpower. Slavery was customary after battles, a prize acquired by the victor and supplied by the loser.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Thai society was divided into five categories: the monarch, the monarch’s extended family, nobility, commoners, and slaves. The first of many legislative reforms addressing slavery came under King Mongkut (officially referred to as King Rama IV, d. 1851–1868). King Mongkut, striving to improve the international opinion of Siam, enacted legal revisions in order to improve the public treatment of slaves and regulate conditions for debt slaves, making their redemption more accessible. Once a monk himself, King Mongkut introduced a new school of Buddhism, the **Thammayutika** (Thai: adherence to the *dhamma*). Within the *Thammayutika*, the value of the individual is heralded over the non-confrontational doctrine of *kamma* (Pali: karma). This shift in focus affected Thai Buddhism’s and the Siamese government’s positions toward civil rights, placing more importance on individuals’ rights.

Instigating both legal and religious reform, King Mongkut began to reform Thailand’s tradition of slavery, but his kingship was only the beginning of this antislavery movement. King Mongkut’s eldest son, Prince Chulalongkorn, was impressed by Western tutelage and travels throughout Europe, particularly its judgments against polygamy and slavery. Chulalongkorn traveled to Europe, and upon his ascendance to the throne (as King Rama V, d. 1853–1910), he followed the path his father had set for the Siamese government. One of the first great advances in this vein occurred in 1874 when King Chulalongkorn declared that any children born into slavery as early as 1868 had to be freed by the time they became twenty-one. His brother, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (d. 1862–1943) was also extremely influential in changing the social opinion of slavery. Prince Damrong argued that Thai identity itself was opposed to slavery, and he substantiated his writing using Buddhist texts. By 1905, slavery was abolished in Siam, a first for Buddhist countries around the world. See also China and Antislavery; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Islam and Antislavery; Sri Lanka, Antislavery in.

Burned-Over District

The Burned-Over District occupied a region of upstate New York beyond the Catskill and Adirondack Mountains. Settled by New Englanders in the late 1800s, its early society reflected a culture of religious exuberance. The agrarian villages and small cities these migrants dominated shared a traditional Puritan concern for piety, morality, and communalism. Social trends and religious movements cultivated in the area contributed significantly to the history of religion and reform in the United States in the nineteenth century.

Identified with the intense religious enthusiasm that regularly blazed there, the Burned-Over District served as the epicenter for the early nineteenth century revivals of the Second Great Awakening. The countryside and small cities of the region where the new emotional preaching styles typically flourished witnessed mass conversions and social change. Across the North, Protestant churches competed to host Presbyterian preacher Charles Grandison Finney, the era’s most dynamic and persuasive revivalist. His controversial homiletic techniques, entitled the “New Measures,” were designed both to inflame and enlarge congregations. They ignited especially intense revival fires in the Western Reserve (1825) and Rochester (1831).

After the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, formerly frontier environs in upstate New York developed swiftly into dynamic towns and farming regions, driven by a growing market economy. Families hoping to establish a secure social footing in an evolving middle class responded favorably to the revival culture. Women focused on elevating the moral and religious awareness of their husbands and children, while men associated with the revivals embraced religiously infused habits and values thought both to serve God and advance a moral capitalism.

The Second Great Awakening also brought theological innovations emphasizing humankind’s ability to achieve personal and social change. New moral imperatives spurred men and women alike to join the numerous benevolent and voluntary associations that sprang up across the district. New England missionary organizations offered spiritual aid to the early migrants, and soon the Yorker Yankees also supported the many Bible, tract, temperance, antislavery, and home mission associations that made the region a national nucleus for social reform.

At the heart of many reformers’ efforts to perfect themselves and society was a widespread religious emphasis on perfectionism and millennialism. Along
with other "ultraist" experimental views, these beliefs may have found more intense articulation in the Burned-Over District than elsewhere in the nation. As a result, a number of utopian groups resided in the area, including Fourier socialists and John Humphrey Noyes's controversial Oneida Community. Mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, phrenology, and other spiritual fashions also flourished.

This cultural milieu provided ready followers of the visionary native son and Mormon founder, Joseph Smith. Myths and religious issues long familiar to the region informed his writings. Smith was never well known there, however, and relocated to Ohio with one hundred devotees in 1831. On the other hand, Adventism, which originated elsewhere, provoked a sensation in the district. Founder William Miller and 50,000 adherents across the country augured and fervently anticipated Christ's return about 1843. Religious and social experimentation, popular nationwide in the nineteenth century, achieved their highest and most influential expression in the Burned-Over District. See also Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Antislavery; First Great Awakening and Antislavery.


Cathy Rodabaugh

Burns, Anthony (d. 1862)

The Anthony Burns case involved an escaped slave who sought refuge in Boston, but was returned to his master under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The case galvanized the antislavery movement in Boston.

Burns was a Virginia slave owned by Colonel Charles Suttle. He escaped in January 1854, arriving in Boston in February. On May 24, Judge Edward Loring issued a warrant for Burns's arrest as a fugitive slave. The warrant was served the next morning. Suttle's agent, William Brent, identified Burns as a runaway. Two prominent Boston attorneys, Richard Henry Dana, Jr. and Charles Mayo Ellis, volunteered to serve as Burns's counsel.

The arrest coincided with two events that catapulted it to prominence. The first was anniversary week, the week when the reform societies of Massachusetts, including antislavery societies, convened their annual meetings. The second was the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which created and opened Kansas and Nebraska territories for settlement and possibly for slavery because the act revoked the Missouri Compromise line of 1820, which had prohibited slavery North of Missouri's southern boundary. Both events highlighted the slave question. Boston's abolitionists, led by Theodore Parker and Wendell Phillips, hastily summoned a meeting at Faneuil Hall on May 26, to plan a response to Burns's arrest. Thomas Wentworth Higginson assembled another group at the courthouse to
attempt to free Burns from prison. About nine o’clock that night, a messenger informed the Faneuil Hall meeting that a riot had erupted at the courthouse, and Phillips, Parker, and the others rushed to join the effort there to free Burns. The attempt failed, and one deputy was killed.

The result of the trial, which began on May 29, was almost a foregone conclusion. Burns had already admitted that he was Suttle’s slave. Ellis and Dana attempted various strategies, including challenging the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law and claiming that Brent and Suttle had misidentified Burns. A group of abolitionists attempted to buy Burns, but District Attorney Benjamin Hallett quashed the effort. On June 2, Judge Loring ruled that Burns was Suttle’s slave, and Burns was taken under armed guard to a ship that would take him back to Virginia.

Boston philanthropists later purchased Burns. He trained as a minister at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, and later settled in St. Catherine’s, Ontario, where he died in 1862. Parker, Phillips, and Higginson were indicted for their roles in the courthouse riot, but the charges were eventually dropped. The case propelled the Know-Nothing Party, both anti-Irish and antislavery, into power in the state and, in 1855, the Massachusetts legislature passed a personal liberty law designed to thwart future efforts to recover fugitive slaves.


*Robert W. Smith*
Burritt, Elihu (1810–1879)

The author of *A Plan of Brotherly Co-Partnership of the North and South for the Peaceful Extinction of Slavery* (1856), American pacifist Elihu Burritt was an advocate of compensated emancipation. With tensions rising between the North and the South over the issue of slavery and its extension into the western territories, Burritt hoped that the United States might avert civil war by following the example of Britain in whose colonies slavery had been abolished peacefully in 1834, with former slaveholders receiving £20 million as compensation for the loss of their slaves. Burritt proposed that the federal government should sell all public lands in the western territories and use the funds generated to compensate Southern slaveholders for the emancipation of their slaves.

Burritt spent much of 1856 and 1857 lecturing throughout the Northern states and two upper Southern states, promoting this plan for compensated emancipation. His campaign culminated in August 1857 in a national Compensated Emancipation Convention held in Cleveland. While the convention was attended and supported by prominent abolitionist Gerritt Smith and resulted in the formation of the National Compensated Emancipation Society, not much came of Burritt’s efforts. The Compensated Emancipation Society never truly became a society; it failed to attract anything but lukewarm support from a handful of individuals. Within a year it was essentially defunct.

Prior to this campaign for compensated emancipation, Burritt’s contributions to abolitionism had been indirect and sporadic. He had risen to prominence in the late 1830s as the “learned blacksmith.” Son of a cobbler and a workingman himself, Burritt had earned public acclaim for his extraordinary linguistic accomplishments; he was reputed to know fifty languages. In 1844, he launched a newspaper, *The Christian Citizen*, that was sympathetic to, but not formally associated with, the antislavery Liberty Party, and in that same year he stood as a Liberty Party candidate for the Massachusetts state senate. Like all state Liberty Party candidates that year, he lost. Between 1845 and 1855, Burritt devoted most of his energies to pacifism. He was the editor of the American Peace Society’s *Advocate of Peace and Universal Brotherhood* in 1846; in that same year, he traveled to Great Britain, beginning a sojourn abroad that was to last the better part of a decade. In Britain, Burritt launched a reform organization called the League of Universal Brotherhood. The League was a transnational voluntary society of individuals who had pledged not to lend aid to any war effort of their nation. While the ending of slavery was not the principal goal of the League, the League’s pledge did include “the abolition of all institutions and customs which do not recognize and respect the image of God and a human brother in every man of whatever clime, colour, or condition of humanity” as one of the League’s central aims.


Robert K. Nelson
Buxton, Thomas Fowell (1786–1845)

Thomas Fowell Buxton was a prominent British abolitionist. He was born in Essex, England. His mother was a Quaker, and she introduced him to the Gurney family, who were very active in various social causes. After graduating from Trinity College in 1807, Buxton married Hannah Gurney.

For the next ten years, he participated in a number of Quaker social reform organizations. He was active in the movement to end capital punishment. He worked closely with Elizabeth Fry to study the treatment of prisoners. His investigation into the penal system of England prompted him to write a book in 1817 entitled, *An Inquiry into Prison Discipline*. In 1818, Buxton was elected to the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament, for Weymouth.

Shortly after being elected, Buxton met William Wilberforce, the most outspoken abolitionist in Parliament. It was through his friendship with Wilberforce that Buxton became active in the antislavery movement. In 1823 he helped found the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery. He later became the vice president of this organization. When Wilberforce retired from Parliament in 1825, he asked Buxton to continue his efforts to pass an antislavery law. By this time, Buxton was regarded as a very effective member of the House of Commons.

In 1833, Buxton presented Parliament with a national petition asking for the abolition of slavery. The petition contained so many signatures that it took four people to carry it. Later that year, partly as a result of Buxton's efforts, Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act, which outlawed slavery in the British Empire. After loosing his seat in Parliament in 1837, Buxton turned his attention to studying the international slave trade. By reviewing many statistical reports, he estimated that half a million Africans were sold into slavery each year. He eventually became convinced that slavery would only end when African nations discontinued participation in the slave trade. His studies were published in 1839 in a book he wrote entitled, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*.

Buxton encouraged the British government to negotiate treaties with African nations, promising them increased trade in return for abolishing the slave trade. In 1841, at his insistence, a diplomatic delegation from the British government traveled to Niger, Africa to hold negotiations with various African rulers. However, many members of the expedition died from epidemic diseases, and the remaining delegation returned to England later that year, without any antislavery treaties having been reached. Buxton continued to promote ending the international slave trade until his death in 1845. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of.


*Gene C. Gerard*
Antislavery in Canada divides into two distinct phases—the first beginning in the late-eighteenth century while slavery itself was in full flower, and the second in the 1830s after slavery had disappeared from Canada and England, and British colonial slavery had been outlawed by Parliament. Antislavery sentiment in Canada first appeared when the Quaker Loyalist community of Beaver Harbour (New Brunswick) was established in 1783; slaveholders were not permitted to settle there. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick provided sanctuary for American refugee slaves in 1783 and again in 1814/1815. The presence of a significant number of freed blacks from and after 1783 set the stage for the antislavery movement to begin in Nova Scotia. By the time many of them left for Sierra Leone in January 1792, it was already underway.

The antislavery movement proper began in 1788 with the publication in Halifax in pamphlet form of the Reverend James MacGregor’s *Letter to a Clergyman urging him to set free a Black Girl he held in Slavery*. MacGregor (1759–1830), a Presbyterian dissenting minister, was almost alone among clergymen of his time in being a radical abolitionist. A product of Scotland, where slavery was illegal, and of the Scottish Enlightenment, MacGregor argued against slavery on both scriptural and philosophical grounds. He also practiced what he preached, redeeming slaves from their owners so that he might set them at liberty. He is reputed to have declared that he would rather burn at the stake than keep communion with a slaveholder.

Soon progressive lawyers and judges took up the cause and slavery was gradually but effectively extinguished, one slave at a time, over a period of thirty years. Courts held owners attempting to repossess fugitive slaves to an unrealistically high standard of proof of title. If an owner went to court to try to repossess an escaped slave, the onus would be on the owner to prove title. If he could not do so to the court’s satisfaction, then the slave would go free, and most did. In practical terms, slavehold tenure became untenable; courts almost never returned slaves to their owners. Slavery was
fatally undermined by the judicial emancipation of individual slaves. The central point, property in human beings, was never adjudicated. It could not be; slaves were chattels, and personal property was a common-law right.

In the British North American colonies generally, antislavery took the form not of abolitionism but of emancipationism. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Lower Canada (Quebec), the few attempts to legislate on slavery—for or against—did not succeed. In Canada as in England, legislatures and courts were more concerned about violating private property than about violating human rights. Yet the years between statutory abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 and of colonial slavery in 1833 saw the complete and final extinction of the peculiar institution in British North America. No colonial legislature abolished slavery in its territory any more than Parliament abolished it in England. In 1825, however, after slavery had disappeared, Prince Edward Island repealed an act of 1781 declaring that slave baptism did not emancipate. Only Upper Canada (Ontario), in 1793, enacted a bill aiming at the gradual abolition of slavery, chiefly through the non-importation of slaves from the United States. It freed no slaves, and had little if any impact on the decline and disappearance of slavery.

By 1833, when the Colonial Slavery Abolition Act was passed, slavery had disappeared from all of British North America except for the West Indies; it was against plantation slavery that the act was exclusively aimed. Antislavery sentiment had to be redirected once slavery in both Canada and England had died a natural death through attrition, and been abolished in the West Indies. The center of attention moved to the Southern United States, where slavery continued to flourish. Churches, especially the Methodist and the Presbyterian, became outspoken in their denunciations of slavery and entered the controversy with their communions in the United States where deep rifts divided North and South over slavery. Canadian blacks became abolitionists themselves; they celebrated as Emancipation Day (first Wednesday in August) the anniversary of the final coming into force in 1838 of the Colonial Slavery Abolition Act, and they set up their own abolition societies and wrote antislavery tracts.

The second phase of antislavery activism in Canada reached its climax in the aftermath of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law by the United States Congress in 1850. The Antislavery Society of Canada was founded in 1851 and Canada West (Ontario) became the ultimate northern terminus of the Underground Railroad. In Nova Scotia, Emancipation Day continued to be celebrated even after the end of the American Civil War. The fact that slavery disappeared from Canada, as from New England, relatively early and without a prolonged, bitter or violent struggle over its abolition, has tended to substitute a triumphalist antislavery narrative for the history of slavery in Canada. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of.

Canning, George (1770–1827)

George Canning was a British politician who held numerous important posts, including Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister. Canning’s father was disinherited from his wealthy Anglo-Irish family. George Canning, Sr. died when the future statesman was only one, leaving an impoverished widow who became an actress. An affluent uncle paid for Canning to attend Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford and introduced him into Whig political circles. He also provided him with a small Irish estate, which brought a very modest but regular income. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn, but was never called to the bar.

The excesses of the French Revolution and the profound influence of William Pitt the Younger brought Canning into the Tory party. He began his Parliamentary career in 1793 as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Newtown, Isle of Wight. He was ambitious for office and served as Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs (1796–1799), Treasurer of the Navy (1804–1806), and Foreign Secretary (1807–1809). After dueling with Lord Castlereagh in 1809, both resigned from the ministry.

In 1812, he returned to politics as the MP for Liverpool under the new Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool. He declined office because he refused to work with Castlereagh. He changed his mind, however, and served from 1816 through 1820 as President of the Board of Control for India, resigning in protest against the government’s prosecution of Queen Caroline, a friend and possibly former lover. After Castlereagh's suicide in 1822, he replaced him as Foreign Secretary (1822–1827). King George IV asked Canning to be Prime Minister in 1827. Canning died the same year.

When Canning entered the House, abolition of Britain’s involvement in the Atlantic slave trade was a prominent issue. William Wilberforce was the leader of the parliamentary campaign, and many of the leading politicians of the day including Prime Minister Pitt supported the cause. Popular opinion was mobilized by the harrowing evidence of the nature of the Atlantic trade circulated very effectively by the abolitionists. However, the West Indian interest, entrenched attitudes about personal property, and the fear of the French Revolution made the fight for abolition and emancipation of the slaves a very protracted one.

In his early years as an MP, Canning voted repeatedly for abolition. He thought that the case for abolition was obvious. By the late 1790s, it was clear that victory would not come easily, and Canning brought his impressive intellect and oratory skills to bear. He was, however, more of a politician than Wilberforce and appreciated the many problems inherent with abolishing the trade. In 1798, Canning supported Wilberforce’s annual motion for abolition, which was once again defeated. Canning proposed a concession: that the West Indian traders should bring no more land under cultivation. This was aimed largely at Britain’s new possession of Trinidad.
(captured in 1796), which had a great deal of land, which could be cultivated. Canning hoped free white labor would be used instead. When Wilberforce introduced the abolition motion once more in 1799, Canning criticized his fellow MPs for placing the responsibility instead on the colonial assemblies, which were not inclined to do away with the slave trade.

Wilberforce did not bring the motion forward again in the early 1800s, and in the interim Canning hoped to fashion a compromise bill, which would unite abolitionists and moderate members of the West Indian interest. He sought Pitt's backing, but the government was by then too embroiled in the Napoleonic wars. Canning was very critical that Pitt had not made abolition a government issue as it cut across party lines. After Pitt's death, Lord Grenville's ministry did so, and abolition was passed in 1807.

Canning faced many challenges during his time as Foreign Secretary, not the least of which was realizing international abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. He had to contend with British public opinion, which was opposed to the trade and several foreign governments that paid either only lip service to abolition or openly resisted it. In fact, few other countries were interested in enforcing prohibition of the trade and, despite the promising rhetoric of the multinational Congress of Vienna (1814–1815), slaving was increasing during this period. Canning urged the Duke of Wellington to point out to the members of the Congress of Verona in 1822 that atrocities against the blacks were more rampant because of efforts to conceal illegal slaving. Canning applied diplomatic pressure to enforce abolition, and the British navy was used to search and detain suspected slavers.

In an effort to curtail slavery and the trade, Wilberforce's successor, Thomas Fowell Buxton proposed that all slaves born after a specific date be freed. Gradual abolition had been undertaken in the Northern United States and several of Britain's colonies. Canning thought this would prove difficult in the West Indies as it would be hard to enforce and could incite a slave uprising. Instead, Canning proposed various ameliorative amendments to Buxton's motion, which would improve the condition of slaves immediately as a prelude to future emancipation. While Canning's amendments passed, the planters in the West Indies were intensely displeased with them, and a slave revolt in Demerara (1823) harmed the abolitionist cause.

Canning introduced his order-in-council to the Commons in 1824. It was designed to protect the slaves from harsh treatment, grant them some rights, and to move towards emancipation. However, it only applied to Trinidad, St. Lucia, and Demerara, which were controlled directly from London. Canning hoped Britain's colonies would follow suit, but Wilberforce was deeply skeptical. It wasn't until six years after Canning's death that Parliament voted in favor of total abolition (1833).

Although contemporaries like Wilberforce questioned his commitment at times, it is clear that Canning was both a humanitarian and a practical politician. Certainly, Canning was instrumental in advocating a gradualist approach to abolition and emancipation in the House of Commons. Although dedicated to the Cause, he had friends and allies on both sides of the debate; he tried to negotiate solutions, which freed the slaves but
minimized political and economic tumult. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of; Gradual Emancipation.


Ceryl Fury

Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at

Slavery was formally abolished at the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa, as in other British territories, on December 1, 1834, as a result of the abolitionist campaign that had started in Britain decades earlier. Long before 1834, however, slavery at the Cape had been undermined by economic forces associated with the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

In 1834, the 36,000 Cape slaves mostly worked on the wine and wheat farms of the southwestern Cape. The removal of measures protecting wine in 1826 helped divert investment to the wool sector of the economy, which was less labor-intensive and required a more mobile labor force. The settlers who supported the removal of the old mercantilist restrictions and the liberalization of the economy wanted unfree labor to be replaced by wage labor. Colonial Ordinance 50 of 1828 in effect repealed a system of indenture that the British had formalized for the indigenous San hunter-gatherers and Khoi pastoralists in the Caledon Code of 1809, a system that had made them virtual slaves. The campaign for the “emancipation” of the San and Khoi was led by John Philip, who was in charge of the London Missionary Society’s operations in South Africa. He campaigned for Ordinance 50, which, by removing restrictions on Khoi residence, enabled the Khoi to become a rural proletariat on the new wool farms.

Most slave owners at the Cape accepted an amelioration policy that in the decades before 1834 improved the lot of the slaves step-by-step. They did so in the hope that such a policy would deflect the attack on slavery itself. As the West Indian proslavery lobby in England fell on hard times, however, and was out-maneuvered by the antislavery campaigners, the Cape slave owners came to accept the inevitability of emancipation, some time before 1834. As the work of Richard Watson shows, there was no significant antislavery movement at the Cape. Cape slavery was ended by the imperial power, not by the actions of any group of colonists.

The 36,000 slaves would not only not receive any financial assistance when freed on December 1, 1834; once slavery ended, they had to serve as “apprentices” to their former masters for another four years. Their lives, therefore, changed little in 1834, and this was true as well when the final emancipation arrived four years later. Children born to slave mothers after 1834 were indentured until the age of twenty-five. A proposed colonial Vagrancy Law of 1836 would have reintroduced the residence restrictions of the Caledon Code and extended them to all laborers; though it was vetoed by the British government, there were sufficient coercive labor controls in place to ensure that once the period of apprenticeship was up, little would change for most of the ex-slaves. On December 1, 1838, some ex-slaves whose period of apprenticeship was up did leave
their owners. Some moved into Cape Town, where most of them ended up living outside the city proper in what became District Six. Others traveled to the fringes of the colony, and tried to eke out an existence there, often becoming members of other marginal groups on the colonial frontiers. Most, however, were unable to move, especially because they had children who were indentured, but also because there were few opportunities of an alternative existence; the colonial state made no provision of land or capital for them, and land was limited on the mission stations, while going to one was not an option for Muslims and many of the ex-slaves had converted to Islam.

Most of the historians who have considered this issue argue, therefore, that emancipation at the Cape meant little for the vast majority of the ex-slaves and did not bring them any real freedom. Wayne Dooling has recently tried to argue that the end of slavery did mean some limited opportunities for labor mobility and wage bargaining, but he has been criticized for exaggerating those opportunities, for the overwhelming mass of the ex-slaves continued to live as impoverished farm workers tied to the land. Only a few ex-slaves won a measure of real independence by obtaining land to farm in the Kat River Settlement in the Eastern Cape or by moving beyond the colonial frontier. There were ex-slaves among the Kat River rebels who allied with the Xhosa in an attack on the colony in the frontier war of 1850, an uprising crushed ruthlessly. The end of slavery, it can be said, left the basic class division of Cape society intact. Though it would be wrong to argue that the end of slavery and the advent of freedom meant nothing at all for those affected, it had no real material significance for most of the former slaves.

Two wider historiographical issues relating to emancipation at the Cape deserve brief attention. Did the process of emancipation help drive Boer farmers into the interior on what became known as the Great Trek? Though exploratory treks into the interior took place in 1834, it was not until 1836 that the mass migration from the colony began. Most of those who went into the interior to escape British rule were not slave owners, however, and though a dislike of the new ways of the British was undoubtedly a major factor in pushing the Boers out of the colony, it seems wrong to link emancipation directly to the Boer exodus. Secondly, some have sought to link slavery to white racism, but the area of slave-owning, the Western Cape, became known for its liberalism, and white racism was directed most intensely at black Africans who were not slaves. Did the process of emancipation, in promising a measure of freedom for the slaves, breed fears among whites that expressed themselves in new and harsher racial attitudes? This, too, is an argument hard to sustain, given the harsh attitudes that existed well before emancipation and the marginal changes that emancipation brought for most of those affected by it. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of; Baartmann, Sara; Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope.

**Further Readings:** Dooling, Wayne. “Agrarian Transformations in the Western Districts of the Cape Colony, c. 1838–c. 1900.” Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University,
Chase, Salmon Portland (1808–1873)

Salmon P. Chase was a senator, governor, cabinet secretary, and chief justice of the Supreme Court. Chase was born January 13, 1808, in Cornish, New Hampshire. He attended school in Keene, New Hampshire, and Windsor, Vermont. After his father died when Chase was nine years old, he lived with his uncle, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Ohio, Philander Chase. He continued to attend school and started college while living with his uncle. When his uncle went to England to raise money for a seminary, he returned to New Hampshire to attend Dartmouth College, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1826. Chase taught school and studied law in Washington, D.C., with Attorney General William Wirt before being admitted to the bar in 1829. He returned to Cincinnati in 1830 and established a law practice. While starting his practice he compiled a three-volume compendium with commentary of the laws of Ohio, which became the standard work on the topic in Ohio’s courts.

Initially more interested in other reform issues than slavery, Chase defended James G. Birney on charges of harboring a fugitive and became strongly committed to the antislavery cause. He saw slavery as a serious sin and often defended runaway slaves when their return to slavery was sought by former masters or slave catchers. His antislavery activities drew him into politics with first the Liberty Party, then the Free Soil Party, and finally the Republican Party.

In 1840, he was elected to the Cincinnati City Council and joined the Liberty Party the following year. He quickly emerged as a leader in the antislavery movement in Ohio and as a strong advocate for direct political action against slavery. Chase was elected to the U.S. Senate as a Free Soil candidate in 1848 and served from 1849 to 1855. He was a leader among antislavery forces in the Senate. He opposed both the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas Nebraska Bill because of their concessions to slavery. His pamphlet, “Appeal to Independent Democrats,” attacking the Kansas Nebraska Bill, received widespread attention nationally.


Christopher Saunders
Support in Ohio for his position on these issues led to his election as governor as a Free Soil Democrat in 1855. In his campaign, Chase stressed the dangers of compromise with the South and strongly opposed the expansion of slavery. As governor, Chase was an economic conservative, but a reformer on social issues. He promoted education, the establishment of a geological survey, a railroad commission, a bureau of statistics, and women’s rights. He was also supportive of radical antislavery measures, and during his term Ohio passed personal liberty laws and other strong antislavery legislation. He was reelected in 1857 as a member of the new Republican Party, but was less successful due to a scandal involving the state’s treasurer. He remained personally popular and respected, however, and in 1860 he was elected to the United States Senate a second time.

Chase was a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, losing to Lincoln in the convention. He was a member of the 1861 peace convention that tried to compromise the differences between the North and South and prevent the Civil War.

He resigned his Senate seat just two days after taking it to serve as Secretary of the Treasury in the Lincoln Administration. He served as Treasury Secretary until July 1864 despite many differences with Abraham Lincoln over the conduct of the Civil War and policy toward the South. Chase wanted the elimination of slavery made an explicit war goal early in the conflict and supported General David Hunter when he recruited African Americans into the Union army in the summer of 1862. Lincoln and most of the cabinet were more moderate and slower to move on issues related to race and slavery than Chase, who supported voting rights and full equality for African Americans. Chase had become identified with the anti-Lincoln faction within the Republican Party and was openly interested in the Republican nomination for president in 1864 when Lincoln accepted his resignation, offered during one of their arguments.

Despite their differences Lincoln appointed Chase Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, succeeding Roger Brooke Taney, author of the Dred Scott decision. As Chief Justice he presided over the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson and a number of Civil War and Reconstruction-related cases. He insisted that the Senate conduct itself as a judicial rather than a legislative body during the impeachment trial, alienating some of his former allies in the Senate. Chase served as Chief Justice from December 1864 until his death on May 7, 1873 in New York City, never completely giving up his presidential ambitions. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Whig Party and Antislavery.


William H. Mulligan, Jr.
Lydia Maria Child became an influential figure in the abolition movement through her great literary skills. In addition to her crusades on behalf of African Americans, she also argued for the rights of Native Americans and women. Born Lydia Francis on February 11, 1802 in Medford, Massachusetts, to Convers Francis, Sr. and Susannah Rand, her social conscience was influenced by her father, a baker, who allegedly helped a fugitive slave escape in 1805. Lydia attended a dame school and Miss Swan's Academy, but her beloved older brother Convers, Jr. was the only figure in her young life to take a serious interest in her academic abilities. The pair read voraciously and discussed philosophical matters, and Convers, Jr. encouraged his sister to hone her writing skills. When he left home to attend Harvard, Lydia was devastated that she could not follow him to the all-male academy.

Susannah died of tuberculosis in 1814, and the following year Convers, Sr. pulled the thirteen-year-old Lydia out of school to live with her older sister, Mary, on the Maine frontier. At the time, Maine was still part of Massachusetts, but the social hierarchy on the frontier was fluid. During her years there, Lydia encountered the dispossessed Penobscot and Abenaki tribes, and she developed a deep sympathy for their plight. In 1824 she wrote *Hobomok*, her first novel. The book articulated her fierce belief in the humanity and goodness of the American Indians.

Her next book, the historic novel *The Rebels, or Boston before the Revolution*, attracted the attention of David Lee Child, editor of Boston's *Massachusetts Journal*. He courted her and proposed in October 1827. During the mid-1820s through mid-1830s, Lydia enjoyed a brilliant literary career, writing short stories and editing a children's magazine, *The Juvenile Miscellany*, which she founded in 1826. David and Lydia wed in October 1828, but the marriage was not a happy one. Her husband's persistent indebtedness impoverished them, and in 1829 she wrote *The Frugal Housewife* out of economic necessity. The book sold 6,000 copies in its first year and established her as an eminent American author.

Her popularity ended abruptly in 1833 with her publication of *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, in which she argued for radical abolition. Child had met William Lloyd Garrison when he worked as a printer for her husband, and she had quickly converted to his controversial doctrine of immediate emancipation. The general public responded to the *Appeal* with outrage. *The Juvenile Miscellany* lost so many subscriptions that it folded, and Lydia's popular *The Mother's Book* went out of print. Her message, however, did reach many Americans, including Charles Sumner, who credited her with his conversion to abolition. Child published *Oasis* (1834) and *Anti-Slavery Catechism* (1836) to address readers' concerns about immediate emancipation. She worked with local abolition groups and served on the business committee of the New England Anti-Slavery Convention.
Lydia’s personal life remained unhappy. In the 1840s, David moved her to a farm in Massachusetts to grow sugar beets as part of an abolitionist effort to prove that the North could free itself from its dependence upon slave-grown crops. Child became so depressed that she stopped writing. Her husband’s venture threw them deeper into debt, so she took work editing Garrison’s *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. She hoped to use her position to heal the growing rift between the Garrisonian and evangelical abolitionists, but the schism deepened and she resigned in disgust. Child reprinted her *Standard* column in two volumes of *Letters from New York* in 1843 and 1845.

The beating of her close friend Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner spurred her back into action. She wrote “The Kansas Emigrants,” which encouraged abolitionists to unite behind those settlers in Kansas who sought to have the territory admitted as a free state. She also organized relief shipments to the emigrants. After John Brown’s failed uprising at Harpers Ferry in 1859, Child petitioned Virginia’s Governor Wise for permission to nurse Brown in prison. She published their letters in *Correspondence between Lydia Maria Child and Governor Wise and Mrs. Mason, of Virginia* in 1860, urging Northerners to risk Civil War. Child also raised money for the families of the Harpers Ferry victims and helped Garrison organize a mourning mass for Brown.

In 1860, Child edited Harriet Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. During the Civil War, Child continued to agitate for immediate abolition, and she grew frustrated with Lincoln’s slow, uncertain movement toward emancipation. She organized supplies for abolitionist-led regiments and *contrabands*. After the war, Child published *The Freedman’s Book* and fought for black suffrage, land redistribution, women’s rights, and the rights of American Indians. During her latter years, Child explored non-Western religions for means to advance gender and racial equality. Her husband died in 1874, and Lydia died October 20, 1880.


*Susan Fletcher*

**China and Antislavery**

The prohibition of slavery in China did not occur at a single point, but rather ebbed and flowed over the course of two millennia. Most of the movement toward universal emancipation occurred not because of organized resistance in the populace, but as calculated actions by the rulers to limit the power of the aristocratic land-owning families.

Slaves, or *mu*, were either privately or state-owned. The former were normally acquired through self-sale of peasants during times of famine and
strife and were retained as domestic servants or agricultural hands. State-owned slaves were war captives, families of criminals or gifts given to the state by wealthy families as offerings, and often were retained by sensitive government agencies or in the imperial household. State-owned slaves were also conscripted to serve in armies, to build palaces and structures such as the Great Wall of China, and to work in state industries. Abject chattel slavery never existed in the same form as it did in the West. Because no legal concept of individual rights existed, it may be more accurate to speak of dependency and privilege rather than slavery and freedom. Slaves were considered "pan-jen pan-wu" (half human being, half material possession), which meant that although they could be bought and sold, they were responsible for their actions under law and still had some of the rights of free persons.

The first evidence of slavery dates to the early Shang dynasty (eighteenth to twelfth centuries B.C.E.), during which approximately 5 percent of the population was enslaved. The system was institutionalized in 594 B.C.E. as a result of a new policy for collecting land tax that created a system of feudal tenancy and agricultural slavery. Beginning with the Han dynasty, the state attempted unsuccessfully to limit slavery in the empire. One of the first acts of the new emperor, Kao-ti, was to redeem those who had been sold into slavery during the Warring States period, but landowning families retained their privately-owned slaves.

In 17 C.E. during the “Red Eyebrow rebellion,” the chief minister, Wang Mang, usurped the throne and instituted a series of sweeping reforms, including the abolition of slavery to limit the power of the landowning families. The aristocracy rebelled and organized a coup against him. After his assassination in 23 C.E., slavery was reinstated.

In the Three Kingdoms Period following the fall of the Han dynasty, several categories of persons with a status in-between slaves and the free population came into existence. These included serf-like tenants (k'o) and soldiers of the many private armies of the day (pu-ch'ü), both of whom were considered part of the unfree servant class. However, during this time, slaves never exceeded one percent of the population at the most.

Social strife during the Song dynasty (960–1279) resulted in a large number of prisoners of war. However, slavery became more highly regulated and the government gradually made it easier for slaves to gain their freedom. In the early part of the Song dynasty, the buying and selling of slaves was the prerogative of the individual owners. In 1116, a decree allowed a slave to be freed by the enslavement of two other persons. Later, in 1141, a decree permitted the government to free slaves by compensating owners with textiles. By 1200, slaves could be freed by monetary compensation, although apparently only if their slavery was due to self-sale and not military enslavement.

The limitations on slavery were curtailed with the Yuan dynasty, which enslaved large numbers of Chinese as punishment for resisting their Mongol conquerors. The Chinese emperor T'ai Tsu, who founded the Ming dynasty and overthrew the Yuan Mongols, abolished all forms of slavery. Yet, as was the effect of most imperial decrees, slavery continued
throughout the Ming dynasty at the private and public level. The manorial system, in which land-owning families controlled and farmed large tracts of land, required a critical mass of slaves to function properly. As a way of limiting slavery in the absence of a prohibition, the Ming rulers passed a decree that limited the number of slaves that could be held per household and extracted a severe tax from slave owners. The Ming rulers had a real reason for wanting to limit the number of slaves in the empire. As the dynasty came under increasing attacks from the Manchus in the north, several slave rebellions in the 1630s added to further internal instability.

The Qing dynasty, founded in 1644 by Manchu invaders, marked a resurgence of slavery in China. The Manchu possessed about two million slaves when they conquered China. However, as the previous Chinese rulers before them, the Qing rulers soon saw the advantages of slowly phasing out slavery. Over the course of the eighteenth century, slaves were gradually allowed to become indentured servants who could eventually buy their freedom. Most slaves, as in the earlier period of conquer by the Mongols, were Chinese who resisted the Manchu occupation, as well as captured prisoners from other conflicts. There were very few Manchu slaves, mostly families of criminals and indigent men.

Laws passed in 1660 and 1681 forbade landowners from selling slaves with the land they farmed and prohibited physical abuse of slaves by landowners. In 1685, Emperor Kangxi freed all hereditary slaves belonging to Manchu families, and in the 1730s the Qing rulers launched a program to free state-owned slaves without requiring any compensation. Private slave ownership was still allowed; however, changes in the structure of Chinese society, such as increased commercialization and the rise of absentee landlordism made slavery a less economically feasible option for the landowning class. The Yung-cheung emancipation between 1723 and 1730 sought to free all slaves to strengthen the autocratic ruler through a kind of social leveling that created an undifferentiated class of free subjects under the throne. Although these new regulations freed the vast majority of slaves, wealthy families continued to use slave labor into the twentieth century.

Slavery was not officially abolished until 1909, three years before the collapse of the Qing dynasty to Republican forces. However, this did not end all forms of slavery in the country. During the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), millions of Chinese were reduced to virtual slavery at the hands of the Chinese leader, Mao-Zedong, to the outrage of the international community. See also Buddhism and Antislavery; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Sri Lanka, Antislavery in.


Nicole Hallett
Christian Perfection. See Perfectionism

Chulalongkorn, King of Siam (1853–1910)

King Chulalongkorn of Siam, also known as Rama V, laid the foundation for the modern nation of Thailand through a series of reforms that included the abolition of slavery. Chulalongkorn was born on September 20, 1853, at the royal palace in Bangkok. His father, King Mongkut, had spent most of his life as a Buddhist monk, and through his studies had come to believe that his kingdom must change if it were to survive in the modern world. He raised his son (along with his eighty-one other children) to accept both Eastern and Western values. He hired English tutors to educate his children in Western ways; among them was a woman named Anna Leonowens, whose story of life in the royal harem was later spun into the popular musical, “The King and I.”

King Mongkut died on October 1, 1868, and Chulalongkorn succeeded to the throne. Barely seventeen years old, he was considered too young to rule. His chief minister, Chao Praya Si Suriyawongse, was appointed as regent. The young king spent four years studying and traveling broadly in Southeast Asia and beyond. His trips to India, Java, and Singapore made him the first Thai ruler to leave the country.

Chulalongkorn took power formally in 1873 and embarked on an ambitious program of reform. However, his first attempts to modernize his kingdom were met with resistance from the ruling elite, and in 1874 he was forced to put down an attempted coup. From that point on, he proceeded with caution.

Slavery was a centuries-old practice in Siam, and slaves constituted a major source of wealth and prestige of many noble families. Chulalongkorn opposed slavery as immoral, while also viewing it as a major threat to his key reforms: it prevented him from centralizing political power within his own family; it diminished the position of Siam in the eyes of the West; and it stalled industrial growth by keeping a large pool of workers permanently out of the market.

His regent had attempted to push through a program of compensated emancipation around 1870, but the move had failed. Once he came to power, Chulalongkorn decided to implement gradual emancipation instead. In 1874, he decreed that anyone born into slavery after 1873 would be automatically freed when they turned twenty-one. Many people sold themselves into slavery to pay off gambling debts, so he closed the gambling houses. In 1905, thirty-one years after his initial decree, he finally outlawed the slave trade throughout the kingdom.
Chulalongkorn reigned for forty-two years and instituted countless changes in all aspects of Thai life, from simplifying court etiquette to reforming civil law and taxation. He established a new system of administrative provinces (changwat) and districts (amphoe) and new currency (bhat), all still in use today. He freed political prisoners and established religious freedom. Through diplomacy and compromise, he kept his kingdom free from colonial incursion. He died on October 23, 1910. The date of his death is an honored national holiday in Thailand. See also Buddhism and Antislavery; China and Antislavery; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Sri Lanka, Antislavery in.


Heather K. Michon

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Antislavery

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (commonly called Mormons because of their belief in the Book of Mormon as sacred scripture along with the Bible) consisted, in the first year of its organization in April 1830, almost entirely of people from New York and New England who neither owned slaves nor approved of slavery. The church was organized around the prophetic visions of Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844) and his translation of the Book of Mormon, texts of which affirmed the observance of the Law of Moses and frequently portrayed slavery in negative terms: "It is against the law of our brethren ... that there should be any slaves among them" (Alma 27:9). As a result, most converts did not favor slavery, and early congregations were racially integrated. This would lead to some of the earliest persecutions of the church.

Beginning in June 1831, church members were encouraged to emigrate from New York and Kirtland, Ohio, into Jackson County, Missouri. At this time, Missouri was becoming further embroiled in controversy over slavery. The immigration of substantial numbers of Mormons, whose land ownership was facilitated through a communal economic system, was seen as a social and electoral threat by older proslavery settlers. A crisis arose when a local Mormon newspaper carried an editorial addressed to "Free People of Color." The text clearly warned Mormon converts of African ancestry not to come to Missouri, because laws passed in the state following the Nat Turner rebellion (1831) would severely restrict or deny their rights altogether. The editorial unintentionally highlighted the differences between the proslavery Missouri population and the Latter-Day Saints. Mob action soon destroyed the Mormon press, seized other properties, and drove the Latter-Day Saints from Jackson County by November 1831.

At Christmas 1832, Joseph Smith delivered to the church a revelation prophesying that a rebellion in South Carolina would lead to an expanding war between Northern and Southern states (The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 87). The first person of African ancestry known to have been ordained in the Melchizedek priesthood of the Latter-Day Saints church under the direction of Joseph Smith was Elijah Abel (1801–1884). He was ordained an Elder on March 3, 1836. He was later
ordained a Seventy on December 20, 1836, the latter ordination being renewed April 4, 1841. At least two of his descendants also were ordained: Elijah's son, Enoch, was ordained an Elder on November 10, 1900, and Enoch's son, also named Elijah, was ordained an Elder on September 29, 1935.

Moving farther north in Missouri gave the Mormons only temporary respite from persecution. Opposition reached a peak with Missouri's Governor Boggs issuing a genocidal "extermination order" to his militia on October 27, 1838: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public peace." The community fled to the state of Illinois, and purchased and built up the city of Nauvoo as a new gathering place.

As thousands of converts joined them, new problems arose. Politicians courted the Mormon vote, which could swing Illinois elections and the state's electoral vote in presidential elections. Joseph Smith corresponded with both Whig and Democratic candidates in 1844 and sought a redress of their grievances including their loss of properties throughout Missouri, loss of life, and general violation of their rights. Martin Van Buren's response was typical: "Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you. If I take up for you, I shall lose the vote of Missouri." Van Buren courted the pro-slavery vote here as he did in insisting his Justice Department attempt to overthrow the acquittal of the illegally enslaved Africans on the Amistad.

In 1844, the final candidates, James Polk and Henry Clay, refused to commit themselves on a number of questions Joseph Smith put to them regarding the annexation of Texas, slavery, and federal intervention for the Mormons in Missouri (see Texas, Annexation of). Representatives of both candidates tried to lock up the Mormon vote without making any commitments on the issues. Finally, Joseph Smith put himself forward as a third party candidate, published a detailed platform to force the issues into a public forum, and sent out hundreds of missionaries both to preach and promote his candidacy. The mainstream candidates' silence resulted in Smith's platform being widely published and commented upon throughout the country.

Joseph Smith's platform represented a middle-road abolitionism. Stung by Missouri's expropriation of Mormon properties without compensation, Smith and the Mormons opposed on principle the outright freeing of slaves without compensation, recognizing that it clearly would result in division and war. The U.S. government had profited on the sale of every slave through taxes, so like the British in 1833, who after abolition in the Caribbean compensated plantation owners for the loss of their "property," Smith's platform advocated abolition through compensation.

Petition, also, ye goodly inhabitants of the slave states, your legislators to abolish slavery by the year 1850, or now, and save the abolitionists from reproach and ruin, infamy and shame.

Pray Congress to pay every man a reasonable price for his slaves out of the surplus revenue arising from the sale of public lands, and from the deduction of pay from the members of Congress.

Break off the shackles from the poor black man, and hire him to labor like other human beings; "for an hour of virtuous liberty is worth a whole eternity of bondage"
Restore freedom! break down slavery! Banish imprisonment for debt, and be in love, fellowship, and peace, with all the world!

... and when we have the red man's consent, let the Union spread from the east to the west sea. ...

The Southern people ... will help to rid so free a country of every vestige of slavery, whenever they are assured of an equivalent for their property.

... were I the president ... when that people petitioned to abolish slavery in the slave States, I would use all honorable means to have their prayers granted, and give liberty to the captive by paying the Southern gentleman a reasonable equivalent for his property, that the whole nation might be free indeed!

Joseph Smith's platform on slavery and other issues threw down a gauntlet to Polk and Clay who wanted to coast into the 1844 election without a debate on the issues. But this was the age of the "spoils system," and party operatives in each state counted on their candidate's election to obtain federal jobs, contracts, and opportunities for graft. Clay's cabal in Illinois, seeing the threat Smith's candidacy represented, set in motion a conspiracy to assassinate the candidate. Smith was jailed on a novel charge and a militia unit disguised as a mob stormed the Carthage, Illinois jail where the prophet was held. Wounded, Joseph Smith was set up against a well-curb and a previously designated firing squad completed on June 27, 1844 what one of the cabal leaders, Thomas Sharp, described accurately in his newspaper, the Warsaw Signal, as a "summary execution." This assassination effectively removed the question of abolition from the election of 1844. Less than two years later, the first group of Mormons were driven by mobs from Illinois into Iowa and then to Utah, in what was then Mexico, after the governors of every American state had refused them refuge.

Early in their residence in the Utah territory, Mormons first encountered the slavery of Native Americans. Tribal raiders would kidnap children from other tribes and offer them for sale. If Mormons refused to buy the children, they would be killed on the spot. The Latter-Day Saints' new prophet, Brigham Young, encouraged the Mormons to purchase the children, but on the terms of a fixed term indenture similar to that which brought many immigrants to the U.S. Moreover they were additionally obliged to teach the children literacy and the other skills they taught their own children. Mormon converts who went to the Utah territory from slave states before the Civil War were urged to free their slaves, and most soon did so.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints showed no tolerance for conditions like slavery after 1865 and in South Africa maintained integrated congregations throughout the era of Apartheid after World War II. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Whig Party and Antislavery.

Gordon C. Thomasson

Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.)

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman statesman, philosopher, and orator, was an early proponent of the humane treatment of slaves. Born in Arpinium on January 3, 106 B.C.E., he studied oratory in Athens, Rhodes, and Asia. After moving to Rome, in 75 B.C.E. he achieved his first elective office: quaestor.
The quaestor was a minor provincial administrator. Cicero served his term in Sicily. Later, he became an aedile, one of the Roman officials who oversaw public works and the grain supply. In 66 B.C.E., he was elected a praetor, but his long-term goal continued to be the consulship—the highest elected office in the Roman Republic. It was rare for a novus homo, a new man to the political scene and governing aristocracy in Rome, to be elected consul. Yet, Cicero prevailed in a hotly disputed contest with L. Sergius Catalina (Catailine) and was elected consul in 65 B.C.E.

Catalina plotted revenge and planned an uprising. The Roman Senate gave Cicero special powers, which he used to drive Catalina and many of his conspirators out of Rome. He arrested those who did not flee and executed them without trial. This action led to his banishment from Rome in 58 B.C.E.

Cicero lived in dangerous and changing times. He lived at the end of the Roman Republic and died during its transformation into the Roman Empire. In an era of shifting allegiances, Cicero became attached to the Senate party. He wanted to preserve the Republic and unwisely relied upon the Senate as an agency of change. Cicero attacked leaders he viewed as counter to the Republic and those he considered self-aggrandizing. One he attacked was Mark Antony. Consequently, as a result of the formation of the Second Triumvirate (Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus), Antony settled an old political score and asked for Cicero’s head. Soldiers executed him on November 22, 43 B.C.E. and presented his head and hands (Cicero had written and delivered a series of speeches that were harshly critical of Antony) to Antony and his wife in Rome.

Cicero is well known for his orations, especially those against Catalina. He is also recognized as a major force in the transmission of Greek and Roman ideals to Europe. In particular, he influenced such eighteenth century thinkers as Edmund Burke.

Perhaps Cicero’s most valuable contribution, however, has been his letters. More than 1,000 letters to and from Cicero survive. These rare sources offer insight into the political and social life of his times. Cicero wrote intimate, candid letters that also reveal much about daily life and social interaction during these turbulent times.

Through Cicero’s letters, researchers have gained a better understanding of Roman slavery and Roman attitudes toward slavery. Much of the Roman population consisted of slaves. Slaves handled domestic duties and also furnished the agricultural workforce for the latifundia, large estates. The letters reveal that Cicero grieved deeply, and he feared excessively, when his reader Sositheus died.

In a letter to his son, Cicero urged him to treat slaves justly and kindly. He thought the work of slaves was valuable and disagreed with his contemporaries who worked their slaves in chains. When the slaves collapsed from poor treatment and inadequate food, the Roman Cato, for example, just bought new ones. Varro, another contemporary of Cicero, in a book on agriculture classified slaves with oxen and wagons as agricultural implements.

Cicero developed close friendships with some of his slaves. His correspondence includes many letters to Marcus Tullius Tiro, a slave, his secretary, and a family friend. Cicero manumitted Tiro in 55 B.C.E., but maintained close ties
for the remainder of his life. In return, Tiro collected and arranged much of Cicero’s correspondence and speeches for publication. Tiro also wrote a biography of the orator. When Cicero freed Tiro, Cicero’s brother Quintus wrote Cicero commending his action and celebrated that the family would now have Tiro as a friend and not a slave. Despite Cicero’s enlightened views, he was not successful with the slave Dionysius. The educated and well-treated Dionysius was in charge of Cicero’s library. However, he seized his opportunity and successfully escaped to the Balkans.

Despite his concern and admonitions, Cicero did not advocate the abolishment of slavery nor decry the necessity of punishing slaves. By Roman law, a slave’s evidence in court was only acceptable if obtained during torture. Cicero understood that perspective, but excelled in his efforts to separate that which was legal from that which was just. So, while he found slavery in tune with the moral perspectives of the Roman Republic, he also saw the need for humane treatment of the slaves on which Roman life depended. See also Classical Rome and Antislavery.


Alexia Helsley

Cinqué. See Amistad

Clarkson, Thomas (1760–1846)

Thomas Clarkson was born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, in 1760. He entered Cambridge University in 1780 where he intended to become a minister. While completing a graduate degree at Cambridge, he entered the university’s essay writing contest. The contest required students to answer the question, “Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?” Clarkson had not previously thought much about slavery. He began to research the institution as practiced in England and the Atlantic World, and he interviewed other students who had come into contact with slaves. His essay won the contest and began Clarkson on his life-long quest to end slavery.

In 1786, while traveling to London to find a publisher to print his essay, Clarkson believed that he received a message from God to commit his life to ending slavery. His essay, entitled “An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African,” was published and received a wide audience, both in England and America. In London, Clarkson met several other abolitionists, including John Wesley and Granville Sharp. In 1787, Clarkson helped found the Committee for Abolition of the African Slave Trade. His responsibility within the committee was to gather evidence that would compel the British government to ban the slave trade.

For the next two years, Clarkson traveled throughout Britain, collecting evidence of the brutality of the slave trade. In particular, he visited the slave ports of Bristol and Liverpool. He interviewed over 20,000 sailors who worked on slave ships, and he obtained various equipment used on slave ships, including handcuffs, leg shackles, thumb screws, tools for
forcing open slaves’ jaws, and branding irons. He also made numerous
detailed drawings of slave ships.
Clarkson’s evidence was turned over to Parliament, which began to
debate the slave trade. He published several books on slavery between
1787 and 1794. In 1789, he traveled to Paris, where he lobbied the French
government to abolish the slave trade. Clarkson returned to Britain in 1790.
Public interest in ending the slave trade was not strong, and the issue had
made little progress in Parliament. As a result, he campaigned tirelessly
against the slave trade for the next four years and dramatically increased
public awareness of the brutal trade and opposition to it. In 1794, Clarkson
suffered health problems because of his activities, and he was forced to
temporarily retire from the abolitionist movement. In 1796, abolition of the
slave trade almost passed in Parliament, but rising tensions with France led
to the postponing of further campaigning against the traffic.

In 1803, the Committee for Abolition renewed the movement to end the
slave trade and a restored Clarkson resumed his energetic campaigning.
Public interest grew, which resulted in Parliament passing the Abolition Bill
in 1807, ending the slave trade. In part, this prompted the United States
Congress to ban the importation of slaves the same year, as well. Clarkson,
drawing on the great popularity he had secured during the abolition crusade,
then joined immediately with another prominent abolitionist, Thomas
Fowell Buxton, and founded the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual
Abolition of Slavery.

In 1823, Clarkson became the vice-president of the world’s first human
rights organization, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Due to
decreasing health, he was not as active in this movement as he had been in
the previous one. However, Clarkson again helped to build public support
for ending slavery and contributed to Parliament passing the Slavery Aboli-
tion Act in 1833.

Clarkson continued to write antislavery pamphlets and books in the
1830s and 1840s. He wrote two pamphlets directed at encouraging planters
in America to free their slaves. In 1840, he gave a speech to an interna-
tional antislavery meeting, which many in attendance considered to be his
most powerful speech ever. Thomas Clarkson died in Suffolk, England in
1846. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery,
Abolition of.

Further Reading: Wilson, Ellen Gibson. Thomas Clarkson: A Biography. York:
William Sessions, 1996; Kitson, Peter, et al., eds. Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipa-

Gene C. Gerard

Classical Greek Antislavery

The inhabitants of the Greek city-states during the classical period consid-
ered slavery a normal part of life, yet also commonly feared losing freedom.
While to modern thought it seems paradoxical that these great early practi-
tioners of philosophy should have failed to question the validity of institu-
tionalized involuntary servitude, the paradigm of conquest by superior force
was always dominant for the ancient Greeks both theologically and politically. The Athenians, who saw themselves as characterized by a freedom notably contrasting with the strictness of life which identified their great rivals the Spartans, were themselves still so intolerant of challenges to their traditions that they executed Socrates for introducing new ideas. Athens did not swerve to maintain and defend its traditional institutions. In the fifth century B.C.E., a universal fear of enslavement by the Persian Great King swept over the Greek cities and generated conservative tendencies as that threat took precedence over the ordinary feuds and rivalries which had formerly marked the relationships of these cities. Freedom, at least from the point of view of the Athenians, was something to be won, but so was the right to enslave those defeated in the process of winning. The legacy of Classical Greece in the history of slavery is that Greek philosophy provided a mechanism for analyzing the institution, but the Greeks themselves failed to conduct such an inquiry on slavery.

The most important texts for the Greeks were the two epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which contained the basic political, social, and religious values informing Greek society. These poems provided not only history, but also theology and genealogy, sometimes overlapping as family lines were traced to divine sources. The basic plots of these Bronze Age stories reflect the Hellenic preoccupation with power and its implications. In the *Iliad*, Helen, queen of Sparta, has either run away with or been kidnapped by Paris, son of the king of Troy, and a Greek coalition has besieged Troy to seek her return and to avenge the insult. The Greeks, represented as a collection of predatory and ferocious clans, display little moral superiority toward the Trojans, although the Trojan Paris did violate the divine law of hospitality. The poem is built upon the dramatic possibilities of the hierarchies of human and divine power, with great compassion shown at times for the helpless victims of heroic activity. This heroic activity is itself a reflection of the divine monarchy of Zeus, who had only recently achieved dominance among the gods on Mt. Olympus. Zeus, like the mortals struggling before Troy, has allowed limitations on his options by Fate, and he as well has some fear for the security of his tenure. Like the human heroes, Zeus treasures his personal honor; unlike them, he has means to preserve it. His deference to Fate sets a pattern for human acceptance of the inevitable, a pattern which Achilles, the human protagonist of the poem, is painfully forced to follow, and this pattern is one of the essential themes of subsequent Greek literature, recurring, for example, in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, and providing a basis for tragedy. This sense that even the most powerful humans are subservient to greater forces is no doubt related to the Greeks’ view of slavery itself.

The *Odyssey* also treats slavery as an unquestioned convention normal to a world where personal power was bound up with divine sanction. At one point when Odysseus has returned to Ithaca in disguise after twenty years of war and wandering, a goatherd threatens to sell one of Odysseus’ loyal retainers into slavery (17.247 ff.), and later in the same book the retainer remarks, “For Zeus of the wide brows takes away one half of the virtue / from a man, once the day of slavery closes upon him” (322–323).
The frequent quotation of Homer in subsequent Greek writing shows the strong influence of the epic poems upon classical attitudes. With the transition from warlike monarchies to city-states governed more or less by laws, the various centers of Greek civilization turned their attention away from personal honor and toward trade, but slavery, itself a part of trade, did not become a moral issue. The rise of Athenian drama presented two aspects of slavery within a literary context: tragedy represented the lot of the individual in a world governed by inhuman forces, thus figuratively suggesting that slavery is an essential feature of all human life since human liberty is always limited; comedy, on the other hand, sometimes upended the assumed degradation of slavery by using stage-slaves who were governed primarily by their appetites to celebrate the energy of the human spirit and undermine their masters’ putative superiority. The gods were also put on the stage as characters, often as buffoons as well. Athenian comedy thus gave slaves more equality and complexity, even if it was theatrical, than any other feature of Greek civilization. But here as elsewhere no one spoke for the slaves’ equality, and the theater produced no substantive political consequences.

The Greek historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon dealt broadly with those issues of slavery, which seemed important for their historical treatises. A favorite Greek thesis was that the Greeks were free and thus deserved to be, and that the opposite was true for the Persians. The Spartan defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.E.) struck a mortal blow to the Athenian democracy and seemingly demonstrated the superiority of a régime which enforced strict limits upon individual freedom; the Athenians’ subsequent preoccupation with preserving their own freedom demonstrated that no significant lessons had been learned from the long struggle. For the Greeks, antislavery remained largely a matter of avoiding slavery themselves, and the only insights with implications for slavery which survived to develop in later eras were those philosophical principles of free inquiry and analysis which had to await a more favorable historical environment to reach fruition.

Of the Greek philosophers, the Athenians Socrates and Plato developed critiques of conventional contemporary life that remain cogent today. Plato’s Socratic dialogue *Meno* demonstrates the unsuspected intellectual potential of a young slave who happens to be present at a Socratic conversation, but the prevalence of slavery was so fundamental that any questioning of its philosophical basis remained academic. Plato’s student, Aristotle, sketched out in his *Politics* a theory that some individuals are slaves by nature, but though this theory has generated a vast response over the succeeding centuries, Aristotle only developed it very loosely and appears not to have intended it to be a pillar of his political thought. In any case, Aristotle’s close connections to the highly undemocratic court of Macedonia suggest that he would not have adopted positions that might have been regarded as subversive. At least Aristotle put the issue of the basis of slavery squarely upon the table, though what he did after that is far from clear. The fact that slavery tended to originate in violent conquest would have been even more evident to Aristotle’s contemporaries than it is today, so the argument that there are slaves by nature seems to emphasize by contrast that most slaves
were slaves by convention, which opens the provocative question of how such slavery is to be justified. See also Classical Rome and Antislavery.


Robert W. Haynes

### Classical Rome and Antislavery

Ancient Italy, from the third century B.C.E to the second century C.E., was a slave society, as was classical Greece and the South of the United States, the French and English Caribbean, and Brazil between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is very difficult to quantify the number of slaves in Italy at that time, but it is estimated that by the end of the first century B.C.E., slaves comprised 30 to 40 percent of the total population. In the Roman world as a whole, slavery was not the sole mode of production. It coexisted with free labor and other forms of dependent and semi-dependent labor. In the works of the Latin agronomists—Cato, Varro and Columella—it is even hard to guess the status of the workforce mentioned, since it is specified only by its tasks. Otherwise, it can be said that in the cities, the main services in the households were performed by slaves; and not by chance, the surviving references to slavery in the Roman sources, produced by aristocratic authors who were themselves slave-owners, focus mainly on the domestic sphere.

But, as Moses I. Finley has argued, the test to identify a slave society is not the number of slaves, but their location. A slave society emerged when slavery and its labor provided the bulk of the immediate income from property of the economic, social, and political élites. For Athens, and other Greek communities of the sixth century B.C.E., and in Rome since the third century B.C.E., Finley has argued that the combination of three factors permitted the rise of slave societies: the concentration of landed private property in a few hands; the development of commodity production and of markets for the exchange of goods; and a lack of adequate indigenous labor within society to meet the demands for labor. However, if these factors help us to identify slave societies, they do not explain their different historical evolutions.

There is a marked difference between ancient and modern slave societies: in classical Athens and Rome there was no organized antislavery movement of the kind that sprang up in Europe and the Americas by the second half of the eighteenth century. When the ancient Greeks and Romans thought about a slaveless society, they situated it in a mythic, ahistorical, and precivilized era. They presupposed that the opposition between free men and slaves was a normal one to any human society.
In Rome, freedom was primarily defined as a legal status opposed to slavery. In the Twelve Tables, the earliest Roman code of laws (451–450 B.C.E.), *libertas* (freedom) generally means the status of one who is not a slave. Under Roman law, a slave was a piece of property and therefore liable to be owned, bought, and sold as chattel. The owner could exercise violence upon him, force him to work, flog him, chain him, and even kill him. The slave had no citizenship (*civitas*), no right to formal marriage (*conubium*), and no right to own property. Under the Principate—the period from the end of the first century B.C.E. to the fifth century C.E. when emperors ruled Rome and its empire—some laws were enacted to restrict the severe treatment of slaves, but the great power of masters over their slaves remained. The main difference between a slave and a citizen was precisely that the former was subjected to degrading forms of punishment. The slave could be burned alive, crucified, or thrown to the animals in the arena. In civil cases in which the evidence of slaves was needed, it was taken normally by torture.

This legal degradation of slaves led some Roman thinkers to criticize the institution of slavery as it functioned in practice. The way the slaves were treated and some aspects of enslavement have sometimes been criticized. But these criticisms should be clearly distinguished from what may be taken as true critiques of slavery. For instance, Stoic philosophers, such as Seneca (4 B.C.E.—65 C.E.), stated that fortune, not nature (as argued by Aristotle in his *Politics*), made men free or slave. Indeed, piracy, kidnapping, war, and self-sale could turn men of free birth, Roman citizens included, into slaves. But despite such criticisms, a broad consensus existed among the elite that slaves were inherently hostile to their masters and thus required some degree of coercion to ensure obedience and loyalty. Although slavery could be considered unjust, it was taken as ultimately necessary because the stability of society was directly linked with stable slave-master relationships in the households. These assumptions explain why Roman authors were not concerned to criticize chattel slavery, but rather to propose methods of control for obtaining servile compliance and thus alleviating tensions in the household. Seneca’s recommendations in a letter to a friend exemplify this orientation:

Do you not see even this, how our ancestors removed from masters everything invidious, and from slaves everything insulting? They called the master “father of the household” [*paterfamilias*], and the slaves “members of the household,” a custom which still holds in the mime. They established a holiday on which masters and slaves should eat together, — not as the only day for this custom, but as obligatory on that day in any case. They allowed the slaves to attain honours in the household and to pronounce judgement; they held that a household [*domus*] was a miniature commonwealth [*res publica*].

Seneca’s text—one of the most telling examples of the kind of criticism of slavery developed in classical Rome—reveals an important aspect of Roman society: patriarchalism. In Rome, the slave was integrated into society through his inclusion in a household (*domus*). *Domus* meant the physical house, the household including family, slaves, and freedmen, the kinship
group including agnates and cognates, ancestors, and descendants, and the patrimony. Slavery was thus inserted in a network of relationships of dependence that included other subordinates to the head of the domus, the paterfamilias. Even after manumission, the slave continued under the influence of the master. Manumission was usually granted for economic reasons. It was expensive to keep a slave, providing him food, clothing and shelter, and when he grew old or ill and unable to labor productively, the master had much less interest in keeping him. In the case of slaves who provided profit to their masters, manumission did not end the master’s economic rights. If stipulated by the patron, the freedman was obliged to perform operae (labor) including a stipulated number of days within the patron’s household and/or workplace. The patron also had a share in the freedman’s property on his death. In the case of the slave being manumitted informally (becoming, under the Principate, a Latinus Junianus), all his property reverted to the patron at his death.

There were three methods of formal manumission in ancient Rome: the manumissio censu, characterized by the enrollment of the former slave in the census-lists of Roman citizens; the manumissio vindicta, carried out ritually before a magistrate, who confirmed the claim to freedom made by the slave and not contested by the master; and the manumissio testamento, or testamentary manumission. All of these forms involved a formal act of admission by the representatives of the res publica (the commonwealth) and conferred citizenship to the former slave. In late Republican Rome, between the second and first centuries B.C.E., this act was politically important because it implied that the freedmen were inscribed in the four urban tribes (voting units) of the city and could thus vote in the popular assemblies. In the Principate, the voting attribution of the tribes was restricted, but even so the allotment in one of them qualified the citizen to receive the corn distributed by the State. At any rate, freedmen’s civic importance remained as an often cited passage from Tacitus’s Annals reveals. The historian narrates a debate which took place in 56 C.E. in the council of the Emperor Nero about a senatorial proposal allowing patrons the right of annulling the emancipation of their freedmen. A key argument against this proposal asserted that

the body in question [i.e. the freedmen] was widely extended. From it the tribes, the decuriae [units of civil service assigned to a magistrate], the assistants of the magistrates and priests were very largely recruited; so also the cohorts enrolled in the capital; while the origin of most knights and of many senators was drawn from no other source. If the freed were set apart, the paucity of the free would be apparent! It was not without reason that our ancestors, when distinguishing the position of orders, made freedom the common property of all.

Despite any rhetorical exaggeration, Tacitus’s text illuminates a duality within Roman slave society: if, on one hand, the body of free citizens was continuously replenished with a mass of former slaves, on the other hand, the patron-freedman relationship meant the reestablishment of dependent bonds between free people in the heart of that same body. While the
freedman remained a second-class citizen, his portion of freedom distinguished him from the slave and neither were to be questioned. The reenslavement of free people was roundly criticized and rejected.

A similar tension existed in the early centuries of the Republic. In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., debt slavery was a great social problem. A large number of farmers fell into debt as a result of declining agricultural yields. An impoverished farmer sometimes had no choice but to enter into a formal contract (nexum) in which he gave his personal service as security. If he did not manage to clear his debts, the creditor could sell him into slavery or even put him to death. In 326 or 315 B.C.E., after popular protests against this enslavement of free men, a law (lex Poetelia Papiria) was passed prohibiting enslavement for debt. At this time, chattel slavery had not attained the levels in Rome it would by the third century B.C.E., but slaves were nevertheless very present. What is key here is that only the possibility of the enslavement of free citizens was being attacked, not slavery itself.

During the Republic and early Empire, citizenship was essential for defining who was free and who was slave. The revocation of the libertas (freedom) of a citizen was repeatedly determined unacceptable. It is only in this sense that we could say that in classical Rome there was antislavery. See also Cicero; Classical Greek Antislavery; Spartacus Revolt.


Fábio Duarte Joly

Clay, Cassius Marcellus (1810–1903)

Cassius Marcellus Clay was born at Clermont, his father's plantation, near Richmond, Kentucky, on October 19, 1810. His father, General Green Clay, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and a cousin of Henry Clay.

Clay was educated at Madison Seminary, St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, Transylvania University in Lexington, and Yale University. While at Yale, in 1832 he heard William Lloyd Garrison speak and became an
outspoken opponent of slavery for the rest of his life. Unlike Garrison, however, Clay was a supporter of the gradual emancipation of slaves through legal and political means. That same year he returned to Kentucky, completed a law degree at Transylvania, and married Mary Jane Warfield. He settled at White Hall, an estate near Richmond, Kentucky.

Clay inherited 17 slaves in 1828, but freed them in 1844. While a supporter of the gradual, legal elimination of slavery, Clay was a powerful and forceful speaker and had a volatile personality. He elicited strong, often violent, reactions from his audiences. He served briefly in the Kentucky legislature from 1835 to 1837 and again in 1840, but his antislavery views effectively ended his political career in Kentucky. He fought a number of duels and was an expert knife fighter, writing a book on the subject. In 1843, he was shot during a debate and fought back with a large Bowie knife he carried for self-defense. Clay's large knife had blocked the bullet. He started a newspaper in Lexington, *The True American*, the only antislavery newspaper in the South. In August 1845, while Clay was ill with typhoid fever, his second cousin, James Brown Clay, a son of Henry Clay, and a number of others obtained an injunction from a proslavery judge and dismantled the paper's printing press and shipped it out of state. Clay reestablished the paper in Cincinnati, but defiantly kept Lexington as its dateline. He later won $2,500 in damages from Clay in court.

In 1846, Clay volunteered for service in the Mexican War and when the unit he commanded was captured, he managed to save them from execution by quick thinking. He returned to Kentucky a hero and had a somewhat easier time with audiences during his antislavery speeches, with one major exception. At the conclusion of an 1849 speech in Foxtown, Kentucky, Clay was clubbed as he finished his speech. His attacker was given a gun by someone in the crowd, but it misfired while Clay lay on the ground. Clay had managed to stab his attacker several times with his knife and the attacker died several days later from his wounds. Clay survived but took many months to recuperate. Clay was charged with mayhem as a result of the affair, but was successfully defended by Henry Clay.

During the 1850s, Clay traveled extensively in the Northern states lecturing against slavery. In 1851, he was an unsuccessful candidate for governor of Kentucky, running on an antislavery platform. Among those he met during this decade was the Reverend John G. Fee, an antislavery minister from Kentucky. Clay gave Fee ten acres of land and some cash to establish a school for those opposed to slavery. The school became Berea College, a pioneer in racially integrated education. One of the places Clay spoke...
during his travels through the North was Springfield, Illinois, in 1854. Among those who heard him speak that day was Abraham Lincoln. Clay was involved in the formation of the Republican Party in 1854 and supported Lincoln during the 1860 presidential campaign.

Clay was to be appointed minister to Russia when Lincoln took office, but before taking that assignment he volunteered for service in the Union Army and was put in command of a unit pressed into the defense of Washington, D.C. Clay’s Battalion, as the group was known, remained on duty until federal troops arrived to replace them. He served as minister to Russia in 1861 and 1862, returning to Washington during 1862 as a result of political maneuvering in the administration. He resumed his commission in the Army and continued to give powerful antislavery speeches. Lincoln consulted him on how the Emancipation Proclamation would be received in Kentucky before issuing it. Clay referred to his role in the Emancipation Proclamation as “the culminating act of my life’s aspirations.” In 1863, Clay returned to Russia as U.S. minister and served there until 1869. He worked to keep the major European powers neutral during the Civil War with great success and later was involved in the American purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Clay returned to Kentucky in 1869 and quickly became alienated from the Republican Party due to the policies it pursued during Reconstruction. Clay’s gradual emancipation approach to slavery had little common ground with the views of the Radical Republicans who controlled federal policy. He joined the Democratic Party, but sought no public office. His personal life included a divorce from his wife after 45 years of marriage, a brief marriage, at age 83, to the fifteen-year-old daughter of a neighbor, and acquittal on grounds of justified homicide when he was tried for the shooting death of an African American former employee. His daughter, Laura, became a crusader for women’s rights based in part on the treatment her mother received as a result of the divorce and the legal position of women in Kentucky. Clay died on July 22, 1903, at White Hall.


William H. Mulligan, Jr.

Clay, Henry (1777–1852)

Henry Clay was born in Hanover County, Virginia on April 12, 1777. His father, John Clay, was a minister who died while he was young. He was admitted to the Virginia bar in 1797 and moved to Lexington, Kentucky that same year and began practicing law. He married Lucretia Hart, a member of a prominent local family. His political career began with his election to the Kentucky legislature in 1803.
The unifying principle of Clay’s political career was his belief in the importance of the Union to all sections of the country and his strong economic nationalism. As a young man, he was a leading War Hawk who, with others, including John C. Calhoun, drove a reluctant president to war with Great Britain primarily over the security of the trans-Appalachian settlements. His vision of an interconnected and complementary national economy, known as the American System, tried to balance the economic needs of the various sections of the country in ways that helped each section prosper without any one section being left behind. It also sought a truly national economy rather than a series of sectional economies.

Clay’s enduring reputation is as “the great compromiser,” the one man who could craft legislation that kept slave and free states together in the Union and avoided a decisive showdown over slavery. He was the major architect of compromises in 1820 and, thirty years later, in 1850. A strong supporter of the Union who also owned slaves, Clay could bridge the ever widening gap between the North and South as no other politician of his era.

Slavery was both a central factor in Clay’s political career and an issue he wrestled with on a personal level. Implementing his American System and otherwise advancing his economic vision for the nation’s future was complicated by the increasing division and animosity between the nation’s sections and political parties over slavery. Clay had come to maturity during the period when the merits and long-term future of slavery were still open to debate even in slave states. Throughout his career his views on slavery were generally those of an earlier generation, one that was passing from the scene as his career was reaching the national stage.

His personal view of slavery was negative. He saw it as an evil institution—but he owned slaves, at times as many as sixty, and did so until his death. He had emancipated the majority of his slaves before he died, however. Clay did not see Africans as fully equal to whites and did not believe the two races could live together peacefully. In both of these views, he was very much a man of the time he lived in. He was an early supporter of the African colonization movement and presided at the meeting where the American Colonization Society was organized in 1816. In Congress, Clay opposed both the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War in the 1840s because of the additional territory this would open to slavery and the resulting increase in the political power of slave states. In the 1844 presidential election, his last realistic chance to be elected, his opposition to the annexation of Texas probably cost him the election. Clay never resolved the issue of slavery for himself and it remained an obstacle to
his goals both in developing the integrated national economic policy he saw as essential for the nation's full development and in achieving the presidency.

He died in Washington on June 29, 1852. He lay in state in the Capitol Rotunda, a rare honor, and was buried in Lexington, Kentucky. See also Compromise of 1850; Texas, Annexation of; Whig Party and Antislavery.


William H. Mulligan, Jr

Coartación

The term coartación refers to a slave's gradual self-purchase of him or herself from their owner. Under Spanish law, a slave who contributed a considerable partial payment on his or her purchase price acquired the status and specific rights pertaining to a coartado. The law stipulated that slaves could not be sold for a price greater than the fixed price at the time of the coartación, and he or she was allowed a share of the rental income if hired out. Supposedly, coartación presented an opportunity for self-emancipation and created a transitional status between slave and free. In actuality, an increase in slave prices meant that the likelihood that a slave could amass the purchase price diminished. In Cuba, slave prices during the 1860s rose up to six times more than the earlier conventional value of 200 pesos per adult slave, making self-purchase nearly impossible for most Cuban slaves to achieve.

The practice of coartación was fairly common in the Spanish islands and elsewhere in Spanish America in the eighteenth century. It acquired some of its most distinctive forms in Cuba, especially after it was codified in the Cuban slave code of 1842. This code stipulated that slaves could not request coartado status prior to seven years of service. In many remote farming areas where most new slaves were sent, distance from legal officials limited general understanding of coartación, thus hindering its implementation. By contrast, urban slaves had access to legal authorities who might inform them about this process. Moreover, skilled slaves such as carpenters, seamstresses, bakers, dockworkers, tailors, musicians, and cobblers earned supplemental wages that paid for coartación. Thus, coartación remained more available for Creole urban slaves than newly arrived field slaves. It also facilitated the gradual rise of free blacks in cities who eventually comprised most of the urban working class.

Under coartación, Cuban slaves were entitled to work on their own accord, thus retaining a part of their wages and the right to change owners. However, coartados' attempt to implement these privileges in Cuba faced strong opposition from the Spanish government and slaveholders during the 1870s. This decade, during which the Ten Years' War (1868–1878)
occurred, comprised the era when the Spanish government gradually abolished slavery under the 1870 Moret’s Law. In 1871, the governor of Cuba mandated that coartados had no right to change owners, despite the coartación law. In 1875, the colonial administration in Cuba decreed that coartados possessed no right to earnings for Sunday and holiday labor. These measures demonstrated the perceived threat of coartación that ultimately compelled slaveholders and the colonial government to strictly prohibit its use. After the U.S. Civil War, most Cuban slaveholders feared that free labor would eventually replace slavery. However, some continued to vigorously oppose any limitations on labor that allowed partial wages or coartación rights of any kind, asserting that slavery enforced the appropriate regimen of work upon the slaves.

In Cuba, the síndico, a local official appointed to represent slaves in legal proceedings, supervised the process of self-purchase. Prior to 1870, legal measures failed to improve the lives of most slaves. However, after 1870, when abolitionism intensified, síndicos became more central to antislavery debate. During that decade, many síndicos were Cuban rather than Spanish and perceived their responsibility in an inclusive manner that disturbed slaveholders and the colonial administration. While not advocates of slaves’ rights, the sindicatura represented a legal recourse through which slaves could extract partial compromises from their owners. Many sindicaturas affirmed requests from slaves to change owners as well as grants of freedom. As a result, coartados increased in cities, with urban slave owners interested in the income generated by coartación from slave artisans who remitted a portion of their wages. Although coartación seemed to promise possible emancipation for Latin America slaves, the reality was almost always disappointing. See also Cuba, Emancipation in; Spanish Empire, Anti-slavery and Abolition in.


*Kimberly Welch*

**Come-Outerism**

Come-outerism describes the actions taken by antebellum church members to protest their denominations’ antislavery policies. During the 1840s and 1850s, some Northern abolitionists separated from their congregations over their churches’ willingness to accept slaveholders into membership. These “come-outers” adhered to the Biblical command, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). Often influenced by the perfectionist strain of evangelical Protestantism, come-outers rejected communion with slaveholders as sinful and terminated any affiliation with churches unwilling to do the same.
Antislavery come-outerism was not a single unified movement. Some come-outers subscribed to radical abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison’s position that no church, clergyman, or institution should stand between the believer and God. According to Garrisonians, individuals should be governed by God alone and, consequently, must separate themselves from any other institution that interfered with their ultimate obedience to God. For example, abolitionists Angelina Grimké and Theodore Dwight Weld refused clerical officiation at their 1838 wedding. For radical come-outers, clergymen epitomized the sinful church. Critics charged that this radical anti-ecclesiastical stand bordered on anarchy. In fact, some Garrisonians renounced association with any form of government.

Non-Garrisonians, on the other hand, represented more moderate come-outerism. At odds with their denominations’ conservative slavery position, these abolitionists formed their own sects. In the 1830s and 1840s, some radical reformers such as William Goodell and Gerrit Smith attempted to form nonsectarian free churches whose sole test for membership was abolitionist and/or other moral convictions. Many come-outer sects, including the American Baptist Free Mission Society, the Free Presbyterian Church, and the Franckean Evangelical Lutheran Synod, originated as abolitionist wings of major denominations. Perhaps the most successful was the Wesleyan Methodist Church, founded in 1843 as an antislavery offshoot of the Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1845, members numbered close to 15,000. As Southern church members seceded from major denominations, however, many sectarians returned to the fold, and antislavery churches declined in significance and number.

Although not strictly come-outer churches, independent black congregations served the abolitionist cause as well. African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) clergymen such as Daniel Payne and Jermain W. Loguen engaged in important antislavery activities, supporting the Underground Railroad and opposing the Fugitive Slave Law.

Non-Garrisonian come-outerism was important for two reasons. First, it offered institutional support to abolitionists. Second, it allowed denominational church members a means to adhere to theological doctrines without compromising their consciences. Explaining the dilemma faced by come-outers, abolitionist and come-outer James G. Birney stated in 1846, “How to reconcile an intelligent love of freedom and a desire to remain in a proslavery church, under the preaching of a proslavery minister, I do not know.” Come-outerism appeared to offer a balanced solution. See also Anti-slavery Evangelical Protestantism; Bible and Slavery; Garrisonians.


*Dianne Wheaton Cappiello*
Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Jennison. See Quok Walker Decision (1783)

Commonwealth v. Aves (1836)

An 1836 Massachusetts Supreme Court case, Commonwealth v. Aves, was the most important court victory for the antislavery movement of the 1830s and became a major precedent for Northern opponents of slavery. There are a number of ironies connected to those involved in the case. The author of this strongly antislavery opinion, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw of Massachusetts, was not an abolitionist and probably opposed any agitation on slavery. In 1860, while most of his neighbors voted for Abraham Lincoln, Shaw cast a ballot for the Constitutional Union ticket. Similarly, the winning attorney, Rufus Choate, was a conservative opponent of abolitionists and other radicals. Later in his life, Choate would represent slaveowners in fugitive slave cases. The losing attorney, who represented the interests of the slavowner, Benjamin Robbins Curtis, would later become an antislavery hero for his dissent in Dred Scott v. Sandford (U.S., 1857). However, despite his position in Dred Scott, he, too, remained a conservative opponent of the abolitionists and antislavery throughout his life.

The case involved Med, a six-year-old slave girl owned by Samuel Slater of New Orleans. In 1836, Slater’s wife, Mary Aves Slater, went to Boston to visit her father, Thomas Aves. She brought Med with her, probably for companionship and to help her as a servant. Shortly after their arrival in Boston, members of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society began to investigate Med’s status. They visited the Aves household in the guise of a “Sunday School Committee” to determine if Med was indeed being kept as a slave. Once they determined she was held as a slave, the antislavery women, led by Maria Weston Chapman, began to build a legal case to win her freedom. Although none of them were formally trained in the law, these women conducted an investigation and outlined a legal strategy. They then hired Rufus Choate, an elite Boston lawyer, to represent their interests in a habeas corpus proceeding. Joining Choate were two committed abolitionist attorneys, Ellis Gray Loring and Samuel Sewell. Like Choate, both were elite lawyers with ties to the highest levels of Boston society. But, unlike Choate, they would commit themselves to a lifetime of opposition to slavery. While styled as a prosecution—Commonwealth v. Aves—the case was really more like a private suit to release Med from the custody of Aves.

The writ of habeas corpus was directed to Thomas Aves, the father of Mary Aves Slater, because Med was in his house. It was brought in the name of Levin Harris, a male abolitionist, which was consistent with the notion at the time that women should not be in the public eye or public forum. The writ was served on Aves while his daughter was out of town, perhaps to spare her the embarrassment of being brought into court. The case was soon brought before Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

The legal issue was fairly straightforward. Slavery was illegal in Massachusetts. No one could be held as a slave under Massachusetts law. Curtis,
representing Aves, argued that interstate comity—the respect one state gives the laws of another—required that Massachusetts give a temporary and qualified recognition to the laws of Louisiana and allow Slater to keep Med for a short time before returning her to Louisiana. Curtis argued that to do otherwise would undermine the Union.

In a lengthy opinion, Shaw examined and discussed numerous British and American cases on slavery and the slave trade. He also considered French cases and the general notion of international law. He also looked at how slavery ended in Massachusetts. He expressed surprise that the issue had never been decided before in Massachusetts. But, after examining various precedents, including the British case of Somerset v. Stewart (1772), Shaw concluded that Med became free the moment her owner voluntarily brought her into the state. Slavery could not exist in Massachusetts, except as regulated by the United States Constitution. The only person who could be treated as a slave in the state was a fugitive slave because the U.S. Constitution specifically provided for the return of fugitive slaves. Shaw speculated that a master might be able to cross a free state with a slave under some dire circumstances, or perhaps to return a fugitive slave to the South. But Med did not fall into this category. In offering this analysis of slave cases, Shaw noted that a number of Southern states, including Louisiana where Mary Slater and Med were from, accepted the principle that a slave became free if voluntarily taken by a master to a free state. He cited cases from both Louisiana and Kentucky showing that even the slave states understood that a slave voluntarily taken to a free jurisdiction would become free. He noted that in the British case The Slave Grace (1827), the High Court of Admiralty had ruled that a black who willingly went back to a slave jurisdiction after being brought to England could be re-enslaved. Shaw simply noted that this was not the case in the United States.

Commonwealth v. Aves proved to be a powerful antislavery precedent. In the next few years, most of the Northern states would accept the logic of Shaw’s ruling: that slaves brought to free states would become free. Connecticut adopted this principle in Jackson v. Bulloch in 1837, while New York (1841) and Pennsylvania (1847) passed legislation declaring that all slaves brought into the state were immediately free. Ohio courts came to adopt this principle in 1841, and the Ohio Supreme Court confirmed this idea when it finally heard a case on the subject in 1856. By the eve of the Civil War, every Northern state except Indiana, Illinois, and New Jersey offered immediate freedom to any slave brought within its jurisdiction. By the eve of the Civil War, most Southern states no longer accepted the principles of Aves and Somerset. Thus, in Mississippi and Missouri courts rejected long-standing precedents and ruled that slaves did not become free if brought to free states. The Supreme Court affirmed their right to do this in Strader v. Graham (1851) and Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857). Indeed, if the Missouri Supreme Court had not reversed nearly thirty years of precedent in Dred Scott, the case would never have reached the Supreme Court because Scott, who won his freedom in a jury trial based on residence in a free territory and a free state, would have remained free.
While *Commonwealth v. Aves* was a victory for antislavery, it nevertheless raised some moral dilemmas. Mary Slater’s husband owned Med’s mother, who remained in Louisiana. Med was heartbroken when she found out that she would not be able to return to her mother and siblings in New Orleans. Instead, she was forced to remain in Massachusetts. The abolitionist women who brought the case took custody of Med. She was renamed Maria Somerset, after Maria Weston Chapman and the famous Somerset case. Eventually, she ended up in an orphanage, where some abolitionists tried to look out for her welfare.


*Paul Finkelman*

**Compromise of 1850**

The Compromise of 1850, according to the hopes of its advocates, was to be a sectional compact between North and South that maintained the peace between the sections, much as the Missouri Compromise had since 1820. These hopes proved illusory. The Compromise of 1850 was, in the words of David Potter, more akin to an armistice than a lasting peace. Unlike the Missouri Compromise, which lasted for thirty-four years, the Compromise of 1850 began to break down shortly after its passage, due mostly to the

Map showing the western United States after the Compromise of 1850. Courtesy of the North Wind Picture Archives.
aggravations caused by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, one of the elements of the Compromise of 1850.

A sectional compromise became necessary as a result of the Mexican War of 1846–1848. The United States had won a large section of northern Mexico as a result of the war. According to the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States received present-day California, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Utah and Colorado from Mexico. The problem posed by slavery had become apparent during the war. David Wilmot, a freshman Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania, added an amendment to a military spending bill in 1846, which stipulated that slavery would not be allowed in any of the territories that the United States might win from Mexico. The Wilmot Proviso failed to win passage in the Senate, but its introduction sparked a political firestorm that had not been seen since the Missouri debates of 1819–1821. Southerners contended that this territory, won with the help of Southern money and the blood of soldiers from the South, should be open to slaveholders as well as non-slaveholders. A number of Northerners argued that Mexican law forbade slavery in the territory, but also that the territories should be reserved for free white labor, a key part of an ideology that quickly became known as Free Soil. Both sides championed liberty and freedom, but they defined these terms in different ways. Southerners argued that liberty and freedom meant the right to take slave property into the territories, unmolested by local abolitionist legislation. Upward mobility came from being able to purchase land and slaves and become a planter. Free Soilers argued that slavery hampered the ability of non-slaveholding white men to move upward in society because slaveholders purchased the best land, leaving lesser quality land to other white men. Thus planters had a monopoly of land, labor, economic gain, and cultural refinement. Moreover, the proximity of free labor to slave degraded the former. These two ideologies proved to be mutually exclusive when it came to the issue of the western territories.

The major source of contention between the two sides was California, which rapidly gained population as a result of the discovery of gold. Residents of California wished to enter the United States as a free state. At the time, however, there was an equal number of free and slave states. With the addition of California, the North would not only dominate the House of Representatives, but would also gain a majority in the Senate. Southerners had long feared becoming a minority section within the Union, because as a political minority it would be more difficult to protect slavery from anti-slavery legislation. These concerns led to fierce debate in Congress, which delayed California’s entry into the Union. California was not the only concern. The Missouri Compromise line did not extend to the West Coast. What to do with the recently gained territories also became an issue of major concern.

Henry Clay, who had gained a reputation as the “great compromiser” for his work in 1820 and 1833, tried to solve the problems gripping North and South. As he had done in the Missouri Crisis, Clay formed a committee, the Committee of Thirteen, to study this problem and come up with compromise solutions. Clay and the committee attempted to solve all of the
problems with an omnibus bill containing the following provisions: California would be admitted as a free state; New Mexico and Utah would be granted popular sovereignty to decide the slavery issue for themselves; the slave trade would be ended in the District of Columbia; the boundary dispute between Texas and New Mexico would be resolved, with New Mexico gaining land while Texas received monetary compensation for its losses; and there would be a new federal fugitive slave law to replace the original 1793 Fugitive Slave Act. The problem Clay faced was that the different provisions attracted too many enemies, and thus Congress rejected the omnibus bill. With the defeat of his bill, Clay left Congress in early August and returned later in the summer.

Prospects for sectional compromise appeared bleak during the period from May to early August 1850. President Zachary Taylor, a slave-holding Whig from Louisiana, staunchly supported California’s admission to the Union as a free state. His death on July 9 would remove one major impediment from efforts to achieve a compromise, but other obstacles remained. Southern “fire-eaters” demanded immediate secession by the South in order to protect its rights, especially those associated with slavery. Radical abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison, also supported disunionism, believing the Union would be better off without the stain of slavery.

Into this maelstrom stepped Senator Stephen Douglas, a Democrat from Illinois. He hoped to succeed where Clay had failed. His strategy was to shepherd through both houses of Congress the pieces of Clay’s failed omnibus bill one at a time. Using this method allowed Douglas to build constituencies of support sufficiently strong to overcome the vociferous opposition that had doomed Clay’s bill. The strategy worked. Throughout August and into the first week of September, with strong Democratic support and the absence of many Whig Senators on key votes, the separate pieces of legislation gained passage in both houses.

The Compromise of 1850 proved a palliative, rather than a lasting cure for sectional issues. Antislavery forces were pleased to see the slave trade, if not slavery, ended in the nation’s capital. They were also pleased to see California admitted as a free state and Utah and New Mexico awarded popular sovereignty, believing as they did that the two latter territories would enter the Union as free states. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, however, had greater immediate impact on the North and antislavery advocates. This law forced Northerners to confront slavery face-to-face, because under the provisions of the act they had to help recapture fugitive slaves. Northerners thus became agents of the federal government, working on behalf of Southern slaveholders to help the latter recover their runaway property. The harsh features of the law angered many Northern whites, who feared their civil liberties were being eroded by this fugitive slave law. For free blacks and fugitive slaves, life after 1850 was filled with the dread possibility of recapture and enslavement. Nothing did more to aid the antislavery movement, and lead to civil war, than this feature of the Compromise of 1850. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Texas, Annexation of; Whig Party and Antislavery.
Confiscation Acts (1861, 1862)

The First and Second Confiscation Acts, passed during the American Civil War, contained the first provisions for freeing slaves in the rebellious states. The First Confiscation Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln on August 6, 1861, authorized the president to seize any property used in “aiding, abetting, or promoting insurrection” if its owner permitted the use. The Act also stated that anyone who used “the service or labor of any other person, under the laws of any State” to aid the rebellion would lose any legal claim to that person’s labor. While not explicitly authorizing emancipation, the provision was designed to liberate slaves. The First Confiscation Act directed seizures to be accomplished through in rem proceedings, a legal device for holding property, not its owner, guilty. This device entitled U.S. officials to condemn property without the owner’s presence or other legal protections. Few actions were taken under the statute, however. President Lincoln worried that the Act would antagonize the South and border states and did little to enforce it. Moreover, difficulties in proving that property had been used to aid rebellion prevented seizures of land and goods even when owned by known Confederates.

The Second Confiscation Act, signed into law on July 17, 1862, was intended to broaden the scope of the 1861 Act. The Second Confiscation Act authorized the taking of all property belonging to secessionists. Under the Act, the president was authorized to seize the property of six classes of rebels and to condemn all land and goods of others who continued to aid the resistance sixty days after being warned publicly to desist. The statute instructed the president to use seized property to support the Union Army. Like the First Confiscation Act, the Second Act treated slaves separately from property. The statute stated that the slaves of those helping the rebellion would be “forever free of their servitude” if they reached the Union Army. Military officials also were prohibited from deciding the validity of claims to slaves.

The Act offered few guarantees or specifics as to the status or future of those freed under the emancipation provision. Section 11 of the Act authorized the president to employ African Americans “for the suppression of the rebellion,” and the following section allowed him to make provisions for the voluntary colonization of those freed. Radical Republicans in Congress had wanted to distribute land seized under the Act to African Americans. President Lincoln, however, forced the radicals to abandon their plans, refusing to sign the Act unless it limited the forfeiture of land to the natural life of the offender.
While the Second Confiscation Act expanded provisions of the 1861 law and added new and clearer language, enforcement of the Second Act also was problematic. Like the First Act, the Second Confiscation Act contained in rem procedures for forfeiture. The Act, however, provided that confiscation proceedings for land should take place in the federal court with local jurisdiction. As courts could not operate in areas where fighting continued, it was nearly impossible to condemn real property.

The emancipation provisions also were difficult to implement. In liberating only the slaves of those aiding the rebellion, the Act forced federal authorities to locate owners and find them guilty before their slaves could be legally freed. Moreover, as the military could not adjudicate claims to freedom, federal courts, which were not in session in much of the South, needed to hold that owners were rebels. Moreover, even if judges were sitting throughout the states in rebellion, emancipation would have required thousands of trials.

Military officials never enforced the provisions of the Second Confiscation Act related to emancipation, and less than $130,000 of property was seized under the Act. Less than three months after signing the Act, President Lincoln announced his preliminary emancipation proclamation on September 22, 1862.


*Edward Daniels*

**Congregationalism and Antislavery**

Although many antislavery leaders sprang from Congregationalist religious backgrounds, the decentralized and lay-centered nature of Congregationalism prevented the denomination from ever taking a united stand against the "peculiar institution." Confined largely to New England and the states of the Old Northwest, few Congregationalists held slaves, and most clergy and laity in the antebellum era certainly disapproved of the practice. Nonetheless, Congregationalist churches seldom took strong antislavery stands, and most church leaders sought to distance themselves from organized abolitionism.

During the colonial era, Congregational clergymen constituted part of the elite "standing order" that governed New England society, and, as such, they generally shared a genteel lifestyle that often included domestic servants. A few ministers disapproved of slavery, such as Boston’s Samuel Sewall (1652–1730), who, in 1700, published *The Selling of Joseph,* the first antislavery tract written in America. But it was far more common for Congregationalist ministers to tolerate slaveholding, and some owned slaves themselves.
The influential theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), pastor of the Church in Northampton, Massachusetts, and a leading apologist for the Great Awakening, owned several slaves in his lifetime. His views were typical of Congregationalist clergymen of his generation. Like the great contemporary revivalist George Whitefield, who also owned several slaves, Edwards came to regard the African slave trade as an evil, in part because he believed it impeded evangelical missionary work. But he never identified slaveholding per se as sin, and never questioned the legitimacy of owning American born slaves so long as masters treated them humanely and gave them Christian instruction.

Some of Edwards’s “New Divinity” students and intellectual heirs developed a radical antislavery theological stance during the Revolutionary era. This may have had more to do with local circumstances and personal experience coupled with the heightened awareness of the tension between slavery and liberty fueled by the revolutionary struggle than anything intrinsic to Edwardsean logic. For example, Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803), perhaps the most influential of Edwards’s many pupils, served the church in Great Barrington, Massachusetts for a quarter of a century without advocating antislavery and for a time owned a slave. Then in 1769, Hopkins moved to Newport, Rhode Island, where he saw firsthand the brutality of the slave trade. He soon emerged as a passionate foe of both the slave trade and slaveholding. In 1776, Hopkins wrote a fiery antislavery address to the Continental Congress, denouncing slavery as sin.

Hopkins argued that the mark of a true Christian is first and foremost “disinterested benevolence” toward all beings, a readiness to set aside sinful self-interest for the sake of others. Christian slaveholders could not pursue their own liberty and rights while refusing it to others. In 1784, Hopkins led his Newport congregation in barring all slaveholders from communion. His position was embraced by many other New Divinity clergy of the Revolutionary era, including Levi Hart (1738–1808) and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (1745–1801), who in 1790 played a key role in founding the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom. Virtually all of the founding members of this early antislavery organization were Edwardsean Congregationalist clergy or lay leaders such as Noah Webster.

Despite the strong antislavery currents in late-eighteenth century Congregationalist circles, it did not develop into a consistent opposition to slavery during the antebellum years. Over time evangelical Congregationalist ministers became increasingly conservative, turning their attention to the conversion of individual souls rather than social action to end injustice. Generally they were far more likely to support gradualism and the work of the American Colonization Society than immediate abolition. Nonetheless, during the early nineteenth century individual Congregationalist ministers and sometimes local ministerial associations did take strong stands against slavery, and a handful became committed abolitionist reformers. Among those ministers who took openly abolitionist stands were Owen Lovejoy, pastor of the Congregational Church in Princeton, Illinois; Henry Ward Beecher, the nationally famous pastor of Plymouth
Church in Brooklyn, New York; and John Payne Cleveland of Providence, Rhode Island.

The Congregationalist churches lacked any national ecclesiastical structure, and thus chose to conduct their mission work primarily through interdenominational evangelical organizations like the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). These associations drew financial support and recruits from Southern Presbyterian churches, and feared the divisiveness of organized abolition. Andover Seminary, the single largest theological school in antebellum America and the alma mater of many Congregationalist ministers across the United States, likewise drew students and financial support from every region of the republic. Although the Congregationalist faculty of Andover all supported the cause of colonization, they adamantly opposed the work of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) and prohibited students from engaging in organized abolitionism on campus.

The reluctance of the Congregational Churches to embrace abolitionism caused a crisis of conscience for many radicals who had been reared in the tradition. Some, like Reverend Stephen Symonds Foster (1809–1881), a prominent lecturer for the AASS, followed William Lloyd Garrison in leaving the church and moving toward a more secular humanitarianism. In 1843, Foster penned one of the most effective tracts ever issued by the AASS, *The Brotherhood of Thieves, or A True Picture of the American Church*, a searing critique of the complicity of the nation’s evangelical Christians in the sin of slavery. Other Congregationalist abolitionists, such as the lay reformer Lewis Tappan, never gave up their attachment to the church of their fathers or their hopes that it would eventually become an engine of social change. In the 1846, Tappan was instrumental in launching the American Missionary Association (AMA) as an antislavery rival to the AHMS and ABCFM. Accepting no funds from proslavery churches, the AMA was ostensibly non-sectarian but actually drew most of its support from antislavery Congregationalists. Although the new organization grew rapidly and soon funded numerous missions in both the United States and abroad, it never received the united backing of America’s Congregationalist clergy. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; New England Antislavery Society.

James R. Rohrer

Congress of Vienna (1814–1815)

The Congress of Vienna, which convened from September 18, 1814 to June 9, 1815, ranks as one of the great peace conferences in European history. It concentrated mainly on the forging of a stable territorial and political settlement for post-Napoleonic Europe, guided by the conservative principles of legitimism and balance of power. While redrawing the map of Europe clearly constituted its most tangible legacy, Britain persuaded the other Great Powers (France, Prussia, Austria, Russia) to append to the Congress’s Final Act an eloquent declaration against the slave trade. This declaration, though in no form binding on the signatories, constitutes the first international condemnation of the trade on humanitarian grounds.

It is unclear whether Britain’s quest for abolition of the trade was primarily motivated by humanitarianism or by economic interests, but public pressure on Castlereagh to obtain its abolition was strong, suggesting a clear moral abhorrence of the inhuman traffic. Indeed, before his departure to Vienna, the Commons were deluged by some 800 abolitionist petitions. While Britain had already abolished the trade in 1807, by 1815 peace and high Continental tariff walls appeared to give France, Spain, and Portugal a new economic edge. Since a powerful abolitionist movement made a repeal of the Abolition Act impossible, Britain was forced to seek universal abolition for commercial reasons, the economic argument runs. To Castlereagh, France seemed to be the key to successful abolition, and Spain and Portugal would probably follow the French lead. Consequently, he made the issue his first priority at Vienna.

The Continental slaving powers, led by France, responded with skepticism. On the one hand, the French were hardly in an enviable negotiating position, for Napoleon had abolished the trade during the Hundred Days and Louis XVIII, newly restored by the grace of the Allies, felt obliged to cooperate with Britain. On the other hand, the French colonial lobby was stronger than ever, just having regained much of its West Indian territory, and merchants feared British naval power, especially if Britain were given the right of search-and-seize. For some Frenchmen, the continuation of the slave trade was even perceived as a point of national honor.

Not surprisingly, Talleyrand, the experienced French envoy, stonewalled the British who early on tabled the idea of an international league of the Big Five, armed with the reciprocal right of search-and-seize, to suppress the international Atlantic slave trade. Talleyrand’s deft maneuvers and the strong opposition of the Spanish and Portuguese made the ambitious British aims ultimately unattainable so that, in the end, a compromise declaration was agreed upon.

The Congress did not address the slave trade in the Final Act itself, but in one of seventeen additional treaties, conventions, and declarations in annex. They were, however, considered of a force equal to the core treaty. The
Declaration of the Powers relative to the Universal Abolition of the Slave Trade was signed on February 8, 1815, and annexed to the General Treaty of the Vienna Congress (Art. CXVIII) as Act XV. It qualifies the slave trade not only as a scourge to humanity which had long desolated Africa and degraded Europe, but indeed as a bane to the whole world and an unacceptable affront to the principles of humanity and universal morality, as perceived by enlightened and just men throughout history. The Declaration recalled that numerous European governments had either abolished the trade or resolved to do so. Specific attention was drawn to the fact that Britain and France had, in the First Peace of Paris, engaged to urge all the Christian powers, at Vienna, to declare its definitive abolition. While the authors acknowledged that economic circumstances had so far prevented abolition, they agreed—under British pressure—to make a solemn declaration of principles, thereby pledging the signatories to work toward total abolition of the trade by all Christian powers in the future. At the same time, however, sovereigns were allowed to consider the situation of their subjects and proceed to abolish the trade in their own time—a clear concession to the pragmatic demands of the Continental slaving powers. Still, the Declaration closed on an optimistic note, announcing that the ultimate triumph of abolition of the trade would crown the age with a glorious monument to humanity.

Clearly, this Declaration was nothing more than a strong moral statement without any real legal bite. Still, considering the pressure both parties faced at home—the British from the abolitionist lobby, the slaving powers from the colonial interests—it was a remarkable achievement. It raised European consciousness for the issue considerably, thereby maintaining it on the agenda of future congresses. The fact that the Declaration was considered part of the Final Act gave it considerable international weight, since inclusion in the Act meant all signatories at Vienna subscribed to the strong moral condemnation of the trade, as per the Declaration, and not just the document’s eight signatories.

Scholars continue to debate the historical significance of the Declaration for the abolition of the slave trade, promoted in a spirit of hopeful humanitarianism by Britain, and grudgingly signed by the old Continental slaving powers. Many historians consider it an outright failure, while others see it as a modest, but nevertheless necessary, moral link in a complex causal chain ultimately leading to real abolition. Indeed, some argue that the Declaration at Vienna in some ways anticipated modern antislavery conventions like the Geneva Anti-Slavery Convention of 1926 and that of the United Nations of 1956. See also Slavery Convention of 1926.


William L. Chew III
Congressional Debate on Ending U.S. Atlantic Slave Trade

The U.S. Constitution allowed Congress to abolish the nation’s involvement with the Atlantic slave trade as early as 1808, but did not guarantee that Congress would do so. In the end, Congress outlawed the practice by an overwhelming vote. Yet the crafting of the measure was riddled with sharp and revealing disputes between the North and South. What was said in these debates illustrated the danger of broaching subjects related to slavery and foreshadowed elements of later, more famous, controversies.

The disputes ranged throughout the second session of the Ninth Congress, from December 1806 to March 1807. A clear pattern emerged; while there was broad consensus behind abolishing the African slave trade, certain provisions of the bill provoked heated disagreements. The three most controversial issues were: what to do with blacks brought illegally to America; the penalty for violating the law; and whether the federal government could regulate the domestic seaborne slave trade. Although the divisions were sectional, Southerners carried all but the last point by gaining cooperation from Northerners.

How to deal with illegally imported people was the first question debated at length and showed the depth of sectional differences. A select committee reported a bill stipulating that persons of color imported after 1807 would be forfeited by the smuggler. James Sloan of New Jersey moved that the government liberate anyone thus forfeited. Southerners objected based on their fear of letting free blacks loose in the South. As he would at other times, Peter Early of Georgia elucidated the extreme form of the Southern position. He declared that a large number of freed black people in the South would inevitably lead to race war.

Many Northerners countered that should the federal government sell the contraband blacks as slaves, the taint of the slave trade would attach to the government. Others objected to the whole idea of the government confiscating human beings, for “the idea of forfeiture” relied on the “false principle” “that a property may be had in human beings.” Early and his fellow Southerners perceived in such objections an attack on slavery itself. The principle behind these Northern objections, Early and others declared, “might in its effects strike at all the property held in slaves; ... consequently it became their duty to resist it.”

This question strained the spirit of compromise, but did not break it, at least for some Northerners. Timothy Pitkin of Connecticut, for one, declared that he would not consent to a provision confiscating human beings, “unless absolute necessity should require it.” Passing a bill abolishing the Atlantic slave trade was clearly an “absolute necessity” in the North, and thus the bill ended with a compromise favorable to the South. The law decreed that the government would confiscate captured slave ships, but would deliver their human cargo to state authorities to be dealt with as they saw fit. The government would thus avoid directly countenancing property in man, but Southern officials would surely sell them into slavery. Meanwhile, Southerners received assurance that an intrusive federal government would not turn loose thousands of Africans or West Indians to
slaughter or be slaughtered. Despite the strong sectional rhetoric, the South gained a victory with crucial Northern acquiescence.

Another heated exchange centered on the appropriate punishments for violations of the law. John Smilie of Pennsylvania began it by declaring captains of slave vessels guilty of “one of the highest crimes man could commit.” Participation in the slave trade, he reasoned, should be a felony punishable by death. Other Northerners echoed this argument, forcing Southern representatives to defend not only slavers but all Southerners who had bought or sold human beings. They tried to defend the slave trade from complete moral stigma, although not as a positive good. They could not quite bring themselves to say that the trade was moral, only that it was not immoral.

The morality of the slave trade, and of slavery by implication, was the heart of the matter. Yet once again some Yankees backed the victorious Southern position. The act ultimately decreed a fine up to $10,000 and two to four years’ imprisonment. It was not until 1820 that Congress affixed the death penalty to smuggling foreign slaves into the United States.

None other than Peter Early sparked the final debate over a provision of the bill when he proposed an amendment exempting from prohibition the seaborne slave trade between states. From this point forward, John Randolph took Early’s place in the Southern vanguard, seeking to prevent Congress from setting any dangerous precedents. He objected that meddling with the internal traffic might someday “be made the pretext of universal emancipation.” He also threatened to lead the secession of the South. “If the law went into force as it was,” he warned, “he, for one, would say, if the Constitution is thus to be violated let us secede, and go home.” Despite Randolph’s threats, Congress voted along sectional lines to outlaw the coastwise internal trade, if only in vessels under 40 tons. The North had won a qualified victory, a rarity in these proceedings.

There were signs of consensus on this bill throughout its legislative history. A straight-up vote in the House on whether to abolish the foreign slave trade produced a margin of 113–5 in favor. Jefferson signed the ban into law March 3, 1807, one day after Congress passed it. But these signs of unanimity obscured the deep fissures the debate over the specifics had revealed. The arguments in relation to this bill demonstrated the divisive potential of discussing slavery, for they featured forays into comments on slavery itself. It proved nearly impossible to discuss the slave trade without discussing the peculiar institution itself. As the players engaged this issue, many of the arguments prominent in later, more famous, controversies received attention and elucidation. The slave trade debates, then, have a place in the story of America’s unfolding sectional drama. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition.

Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom

Organized in 1790, the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Holden in Bondage elected the Reverend Ezra Stiles, president of Yale University, as its first leader. Comprised especially of an educated elite of clerics, lawyers, and academics, the Connecticut Society in the late-eighteenth century looked forward, along with its sister organizations in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and New York, to a steadily extending abolition in the United States which would eventually encompass the whole of the new nation—North and South. In 1794, the Connecticut Society gathered in Philadelphia with several other similar state antislavery organizations to form the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in order to advance this objective.

The Connecticut Society, however, differed from most other state organizations in that Quakers had almost no presence; the Connecticut Society was dominated by Congregationalists and its leadership drew heavily from a neo-Edwardsian wing among them named the New Divinity, which was led by the antislavery Reverend Samuel Hopkins. The New Divinity clerics pushed the Connecticut Society to seek full and immediate emancipation of the slaves in the state in 1794. However, the majority of its members were also Federalists and were dedicated to gradual emancipation, a much slower process of abolition that was embodied in the state’s Gradual Emancipation Act of 1784 and that freed children born of slave women after the Act’s passage. The Connecticut Society also provided legal assistance to a number of aggrieved blacks in the state.

The kidnapping of blacks—both free and enslaved—for sale in New York or farther south was a serious problem in Connecticut in the 1780s and 1790s. A number of children were also subject to removal for sale outside of the state or might be exploited by unfair indentures. Against these injustices, attorneys including Theodore Dwight and Simeon Baldwin fought vigorously for the defense of these afflicted individuals. The Society, which convened annually in early May in either Hartford or New Haven, also offered some of the most important late-eighteenth century antislavery orations delivered in the United States, including The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade, and of the Slavery of the Africans: Illustrated in a Sermon by the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and An Oration Spoken Before the Connecticut Society, for the Promotion of Freedom and the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Holden in Bondage by Theodore Dwight. While vigorous through most of the 1790s, the Connecticut Society lapsed.
and soon disappeared after the turn of the century. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery.


*Peter P. Hinks*

**Constitution, U.S.** See United States Constitution and Antislavery

**Contrabands**

During the U.S. Civil War, enslaved people who came into contact with Union forces were popularly known as "contrabands." This unusual moniker had its origin during the earliest days of the war, when three enslaved men sought protection at Union-occupied Fortress Monroe, in coastal Virginia. The Union commander, General Benjamin Butler, faced a quandary. The federal government's policy of upholding the property rights of slaveholders obliged Butler to relinquish the men to their owner. Yet Butler knew that if the men were released, they would be forced to labor for the Confederacy, whereas if they stayed at Fortress Monroe, they could perform valuable work for the Union. Butler therefore declared the fugitives to be legally confiscated property, or "contraband of war," a move that provided a legal
veneer for holding the men. The term quickly entered the popular lexicon, often shortened simply to “contraband.”

The term contraband captured the fugitive slaves’ ambiguous status during the first year and a half of the war. Indeed, as Union forces pushed into heavily populated plantation regions of the Confederacy early in 1862, the Union government had no organized policy toward the thousands of slaves with whom they came into contact. Contrabands became indispensable to the Union war effort. Throughout the Confederacy, they pressed toward Union lines, searching for freedom, and hoping to aid the Union. The earliest escapees were able-bodied men, whom the Union employed a variety of ways, including building fortifications, caring for draft animals, staffing ships, and attending Union officers. Women also found employment as laundresses and food purveyors. Fugitives offered the Union not only their labor, but also invaluable information about unfamiliar terrain, Confederate positions, and Southern civilian morale.

Responding to political and military pressures in the fall of 1862, the Union government began establishing contraband camps, most of which were located within the seceded states. The camps were designed as hubs for government and philanthropic efforts to house, feed, school, and employ both displaced fugitives and slaves whose homes had come behind Union lines due to the advance of Union forces. The organization of contraband camps was also meant to reassure white Northerners that the Emancipation Proclamation (announced in September 1862) would not result in a massive northward migration of freedpeople.

Residents of contraband camps often suffered from exposure, disease, malnutrition, and abusive treatment by soldiers. Yet the camps were also places where people escaping bondage could reconstitute families, organize communities, earn a livelihood, debate politics, and begin to build their lives in freedom. Many had their first experiences with wage labor in and around the camps. The Union government employed contrabands not only in military labor, but also on abandoned and leased plantations. Indeed, at least 474,000 former slaves and free blacks participated in some form of government-sponsored free labor in the Union-occupied South. In regions where many former bondsmen joined the Union army, contraband camps became homes for the women, children, and elderly members of soldiers’ families. As the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union victory, and finally the Thirteenth Amendment made their status more secure, the contrabands of the Civil War became the freedmen of the postwar period. See also Lincoln, Abraham.


Kate Masur
Contract Labor

Contract labor, in which a contract with either a state or business restricts workers’ freedom to end work, was not limited to indentured servants. Indeed, such labor, in which workers were compelled to serve out labor contracts upon penalty of criminal prosecution, including imprisonment, was the norm for workers in the United States and Britain well into the seventeenth century. Imprisonment of workers for labor contract violations continued as a common, if not widespread, practice into the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century contract labor satisfied the growing demand for manual labor, especially in the resource extraction industries, and also served the increasing needs of large-scale industrialization projects such as the construction of railroads and canals. Typically, contract laborers worked under contracts of indenture that required them to work for a specified period of time, often upward of a decade, in return for travel expenses and subsistence. Often characterized by employer brutality, working conditions were also generally unhealthy and unsafe. At the same time, contract workers had no access to legal protections or whatever workplace rights that were available to the non-contract workforce.

Colonial states as well as companies often required large supplies of cheap labor to carry out production in generally highly labor-intensive industries such as mines or plantation agriculture. In the mines of southern Africa, the mining companies required a constant stream of low-paid workers to serve under the grueling conditions of labor-intensive mining operations. Intermediaries who profited from supplying the mines with workers hired Africans from all over eastern and southern Africa on short-term contracts. Similarly, plantation owners in areas ranging from Hawaii to Cuba to Australia recruited contract laborers, primarily from India, China, Africa, and the islands of the South Pacific.

Colonial governments instituted a variety of mechanisms to ensure a regular availability of such labor to colonial projects and private interests. In addition to taxes, colonial states often used legislation to compel workers, usually males, to work for designated periods each year. Often workers were required to carry a work contract to prove that they had fulfilled these duties, lest they be forced to work again or taken into custody.

With the abolition of slavery, at least officially, within the European empires, many companies and governments turned to unacknowledged forms of slavery within systems of contract labor. Following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, tens of thousands of Indian, African, and Chinese workers were taken to the West Indies under systems of contract labor. Similarly, slavery continued under the guise of contract labor on French colonial island plantations even following the official abolition of slavery. With the decline of the transatlantic slave trade, many African slaves were redirected into contract labor systems such as the transfer of slaves from Mozambique to sugar plantations. The use of slaves from Mozambique as contract labor on French plantations lasted for decades after slavery had supposedly been abolished in the French colonies. Contract labor, often coerced or even forced, served in many cases to extend slavery by another name.
Contract labor has often resulted in large-scale migration. Several million contract laborers, primarily from India, China, and Japan, were employed from the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries in areas ranging from East Africa, the mainland United States, Chile, and the West Indies.

Contract labor should in no way be viewed as a practice of the distant past. In Australia, forced contract labor was imposed on aboriginal people until 1968. Wages for aboriginal workers under contract labor were only half of state minimum wages.

Recently, conditions of capitalist globalization have focused increasing concern on the renewed growth of unfree contract labor. The pressures of global competition and the demand for ready supplies of cheap and precarious labor, along with the neo-liberal retrenchment of social citizenship rights, have encouraged the use of contract labor in poorer and, on the basis of migrant labor, in wealthier economies. Another concern related to the growing use of contract labor is the increase of trafficking women within the global sex trade. Sex trade trafficking is carried out under deceitful and coercive contract arrangements in which women often surrender their passports to contractors as part of the contract arrangement.

The horrible impact of contract labor systems goes far beyond the suffering of the workers themselves. As under slavery, areas that relied upon contract labor often suffered economic stagnation as the presence of a large supply of cheap labor, constrained in terms of mobility and often forced to work, discouraged the deployment of various labor-saving technologies. Contract labor systems, quite often based on migrant labor, also impact workers' home communities. The departure of sometimes large numbers of men from rural areas to colonial work sites has impacted rural development, household labor, and the status of women. See also Apprenticeship; British Slavery, Abolition of; China and Antislavery; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in.


Jeff Shantz

Convict Leasing

The practice of leasing convicts for use as unpaid labor proliferated in the post-bellum South. Prisoners were leased by state and county officials to agricultural and industrial concerns, saving the expense of official incarceration. Convict leasing bore an uncomfortable resemblance to slavery and
was indeed a variant of that institution. The Thirteenth Amendment had recently abolished chattel slavery, but it contained an explicit exception for convict labor; slavery and involuntary servitude were prohibited “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”

Convict leasing was not peculiarly Southern, but that region left an indelible stamp on the institution. Southern states first embraced the practice in the 1840s, a time when virtually all prisoners were white. Under slavery, slave criminals were not typically punished by state authorities, since imprisoning slaves amounted to taking private property. But emancipation subjected the freedmen to state justice, which more than doubled the cost of maintaining prisons. Their economies ruined by the war, the ex-Confederate states embraced convict leasing as a cost-saving measure and as a revenue stream. They could slash or eliminate prison expenditures while filling their coffers with lease revenue.

Men, women, and children, white as well as black, entered the leasing system. African Americans, however, always bore the brunt of leasing. Unlike slavery, economic factors and self-interest could not protect prisoners. The expense of purchasing slaves dictated that slave owners not waste human capital. But in a convict lease arrangement that incentive did not exist. This reality in many respects rendered it worse than slavery. Leaseholders could—and often did—work prisoners to death. Punishment claimed many thousands more, as did squalid living conditions and substandard medical treatment. No matter how many prisoners were lost, fresh bodies always were available. Prison sentences grew longer in direct proportion to market demand, and minor offenses became grounds enough for a sentence to the work camps. Many poor souls found themselves condemned to camps by way of corrupt prosecutions.

Convict leasing varied among the states. Georgia was perhaps most typical with its relatively straightforward lease-for-work arrangements. Arkansas stood apart for the fact that it actually paid private landowners and industrial concerns for putting convicts to work. Louisiana and Mississippi employed leasing as a complement to state-operated penal farms. The institution’s most extreme iteration appeared in Alabama where the practice supplied the manpower needed for the dramatic expansion of the state’s mining and metallurgical industries. Alabama was exceptional in that it leased the most convicts, but also because the state’s government was utterly dependent upon lease income. When the practice took hold in Alabama during the early 1880s, it generated 10 percent of the total state budget. By 1898 it generated 73 percent of public revenues.

Convict leasing was always controversial. Activists, newspaper editors, politicians, and labor leaders consistently demanded its abolition. The latter were particularly vociferous because leasing was used as an anti-Union tool. Tennessee’s coalfields saw fierce battles over the use of free and convict labor. As for the political realm, officeholders were willing to turn a blind eye to abuses if given the proper motivation. Political corruption, anti-Union sentiment, and market demand fed and sustained the system and dictated that any “reforms” be incremental. But in the end, market forces led to its eventual extinction. By the late 1920s, convict leasing was no less
expensive than free labor and thus faded away. Convict leasing disappeared but forced convict labor did not. The infamous chain gangs of the early twentieth century replaced leasing and convict labor remains employed even now, most conspicuously in roadside litter crews and in non-profit prison industries. See also Contract Labor; Indentured Labor and Emancipation.


*R. Volney Riser*

**Coolies**

The etymology of the word *Coolie* is uncertain and has been the subject of much debate. It has been attributed to the Hindi *qul*, meaning “laborer,” *Kul*, a Gujarati “tribe,” *kuli*, a Tamil word for wages, *Col é/Koli*, the pre-Aryan hill people in India or *Cul é/Culí*, used by the Portuguese in Asia to mean load-bearers. Tinker’s discussion definitely suggests that it is not indigenous to India, but is a loan-word which lexicographers believe came from Southeast Asia, most likely Ceylon where *Culé* meant load-bearer. Most

Indian languages and dialects recognize the term, but also suggest that it is of foreign origin. During colonial times in Asia, it appears to have been used to apply specifically to railway or airport porters or laborers or someone who made a consistent livelihood carrying baggage. The English in India may have picked up the word from Portuguese traders, for the Portuguese language was employed as the trading lingua franca of Europeans operating in the ports of Asia.

Whatever Coolie’s origin, it is clear that by the sixteenth century the word had already assumed servile meaning, applied also to Indian laborers operating in Southeast Asia. By the 1850s, it had come to be equated with all Asian laborers, particularly Indian indentured (contract) workers in the Indian diaspora, whether they were from low or high caste. Interestingly, even though Coolie could also have been applied to Chinese indentured workers in the Caribbean, as it was in places like Southeast Asia, it rarely was. Although banned from official use, Coolie, considered pejorative and an offensive name for an unskilled Indian laborer, is still at times used to refer to Indians of whatever caste or class in the Caribbean. See also China and Antislavery; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in.


Verene Shepherd

Crandall, Prudence (1803–1890)

White American Abolitionist educator Prudence Crandall was born into a Quaker family in Hopkinton, Rhode Island, September 3, 1803. She grew up in eastern Connecticut, in the town of Canterbury, and returned to Rhode Island to attend the New England Yearly Meeting Boarding School from 1826 through 1830. Upon completing her studies, Crandall started teaching in Connecticut in 1830—exactly where is not clear—and converted to the Baptists. In late 1831, the village leaders in Canterbury endorsed her as principal for a female boarding school in the town. In September 1832, a local black woman, Sarah Harris, whose father, William Harris, served as local agent for The Liberator, asked Crandall if she could attend the school. When Crandall agreed, white villagers objected to having their daughters in the school, despite the fact that Sarah Harris had attended common schools with these same girls. When white parents withdrew their daughters, Crandall drew up a bold new plan. She sought the aid of Boston’s William Lloyd Garrison, the editor of the radical antislavery newspaper, The Liberator, which had been supplied to her by her household assistant, Mariah Davis, a black woman from Boston who was affianced to Sarah Harris’s brother, Charles.

With the active encouragement of Garrison and a racially integrated list of sponsors, Crandall reopened her school in April 1833, welcoming a class
of black women and girls, most from the urban centers of the North. During the year and a half her school was open, twenty-one students are known to have attended, including Julia Williams, future wife of Henry Highland Garnet, Sarah Harris (who, with her husband, George Fayerweather, aided Abolitionists in Rhode Island), and her sister Mary Harris, who would teach freedmen in Louisiana after the Civil War. Crandall aimed to prepare black women to be teachers; her curriculum was among the most intellectually challenging for women prior to that offered them by Oberlin College in Ohio.

Abolitionists, led by Samuel Joseph May, a Unitarian minister in nearby Brooklyn, Connecticut, gave substantial support. Arthur Tappan assisted financially, and Garrison made the case famous through his press coverage. William Harris, Frederick Olney, and David Ruggles championed the school in the local African American community. What assured the school's fame, however, was the opposition it met. Even prior to its opening, the town leaders, directed by Andrew Judson, tried to block the school. A law was passed by the state legislature making it illegal to instruct blacks who were from out-of-state. This “Black law” was used to arrest Crandall. She intentionally endured a night in prison in June 1833 to draw attention to the case. Three separate trials were held. The first ended in a mistrial, while the second, adjudicated by the noted colonizationist David Daggett, led to her conviction. Her lawyers, who based their argument on a bold reading of the Constitution that assumed black citizenship, appealed. Although the state Court of Errors ultimately overturned the conviction, it did so on a technicality and refused to rule on the substantive issues at hand.

Vigilante violence and rude insults were daily fare at Crandall's Academy. Local people often refused to help the school, including doctors, clergymen, and merchants. White youths threatened the students when they dared to stroll Canterbury's streets. The school building weathered incidents from egging to the fouling of the well water.

In August 1834, despite the misgivings of her friends, Crandall married Calvin Philleo (1787–1874), a Baptist minister and widower with three children to raise. Having a husband did not protect Crandall or her students from the anger of her frustrated enemies. Their legal avenues against Crandall exhausted, bitter townspeople viciously attacked her school on the night of September 9, rendering it uninhabitable. The next day, the school was closed.

Crandall’s husband moved their family to Boonville, New York, where Prudence was unable to help when her brother, Reuben, was put on trial in Washington, D.C., for simply having copies of The Liberator in his luggage; he died in 1838 from the effects of his imprisonment. While Crandall enjoyed raising her stepchildren, her husband was a petty tyrant who sniped at her and tried to limit her reading material. In the 1840s, she made a few attempts to assert her independence from him, settling on land her father had purchased near Troy Grove in north central Illinois. By 1847, she permanently relocated to Illinois, and did some informal teaching of local farmers’ children. During the Civil War she helped distribute abolitionist pamphlets written by her stepdaughter’s husband, Charles Whipple.
When her husband died in 1874 after a protracted illness, Crandall and her older brother, Hezekiah, moved to Kansas in 1877. Here they homesteaded in Elk Falls, and Crandall became locally famous as an advocate of women’s rights, temperance, and, most prominently, spiritualism. She was the center of an active spiritualist network in southeastern Kansas, to the extent that no local Protestant minister would deliver her funeral oration. The Connecticut legislature, prodded by novelist Samuel Clemens and descendents of her Canterbury persecutors, granted Crandall a pension in 1886, to compensate for her sufferings fifty years prior. She died on January 28, 1890.

Crandall’s Academy recruited many to the abolitionist cause, and demonstrated a high degree of cooperation among abolitionist forces—black and white, New England and New York, male and female. The contrast between Crandall’s benevolence and the prejudice of her opponents dramatically unmasked the agenda of the colonizationists, vindicating the criticisms that free blacks and white abolitionists had made concerning the goals and tactics of colonization. The arguments of her lawyers for black citizenship have been considered progressive, and similar ones were deployed in the landmark Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision in 1953. The crucial roles of free blacks and of women in establishing and maintaining Crandall’s school, deserve greater attention. Her school in Canterbury is now open as a museum. See also Garrisonians.


Jennifer Rycenga

Creole Affair (1841)

The Creole was an American intercoastal trading vessel owned by Johnson and Eperson of Richmond, Virginia, and captained by Robert Ensor. On the evening of October 25, 1841, the ship set sail from Richmond bound for New Orleans carrying a cargo of tobacco and slaves. There were at least 135 slaves on board and ten crew members. On the evening of November 7, first mate Zephaniah Gifford was informed by a slave that some of the other slaves had gone down aft with the female slaves who were being kept
separately. At about nine p.m., William Merritt was sent to investigate. When Merritt had the hatch removed from the hold for inspection, a slave named Madison Washington seized the opportunity to climb the ladder and make for the deck, calling on other slaves to help him. In the ensuing struggle, Captain Ensor was severely wounded and sailor John Hewell was killed. By about 1 a.m., Washington and nineteen other male slaves were in full control of the ship. Washington and the slaves initially wanted to sail for Liberia, but Merritt convinced them that, owing to insufficient provisions, the Bahamas were a more practical choice. Although Merritt was put in charge of the vessel, second mate Lucious Stevens was pressed into service as the navigator.

On November 9, the ship arrived in Nassau. Before the vessel entered the harbor, Washington had all weapons collected and thrown overboard. In harbor, first mate Gifford requested that the ship be guarded so that none of the slaves responsible for the murder of Hewell might go ashore. With the help of American counsel John Bacon, Gifford requested an interview with Governor Francis Cockburn, who sent a detachment of soldiers to take control of the vessel. This gave Cockburn a chance to determine the question of jurisdiction in the matter. The final official British position was that any slaves implicated in the murder would be detained, possibly to be remanded into custody of the American government. Any other slaves deemed blameless in the matter would be freed.

The final provision of the British decision did not please Bacon who, along with mates Gifford, Stevens, and a Captain Woodbine of the American ship *Louisa* decided to retake the *Creole*. The attempt failed and British authorities decided at that point to cease taking depositions from those on board. Cockburn then directed Attorney General George Anderson to proceed to the ship with policemen, remove the troops and prisoners, and allow the remaining slaves to come ashore. Bacon reported back to Secretary of State Daniel Webster that he had been prevented from taking custody of the slaves remaining on the vessel by the British authorities and a mob on shore. On November 14, Bacon issued an official protest, citing the position he maintained in future dispatches. He contended that the slaves, as property, were legal cargo being transported under the American flag. The British government had no right to interfere with the officers of the vessel in the performance of their duties and cause the subsequent loss of property. He requested that the fugitives being held in custody be returned to American authorities and sent to New Orleans for trial. Cockburn, awaiting instructions from London, declined Bacon's request.

The *Creole* was subsequently released and arrived in New Orleans on December 2, unleashing a diplomatic firestorm. The question for Southern slave owners was whether or not British authorities could confiscate the property of Americans without their consent. Webster sent a dispatch to American minister to London Edward Everett demanding the return of the slaves and invoking the “comity of nations.” In the United States Congress some Southern politicians threatened a retaliatory strike against the Bahamas. President John Tyler increased tensions by releasing the letters of Counsel Bacon, and the crew depositions that supported Bacon, to Congress. There was a very real possibility that the *Creole* incident would
poison Anglo-American diplomacy. Tyler's lingering concerns over safe passage in the Bahama Channel and extradition insinuated their way into the negotiations for the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, delaying a resolution of the border between Maine and Canada.

Legal questions regarding the Creole incident required eleven years to resolve. In the case of at least seven insurance claims related to the Creole, courts only found the insurance companies liable in two cases. Judge Henry Adams Bullard of the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the slaves had not been lost through the negligence of British authorities. In fact, the vessel had been guarded at Counsel Bacon's request, and no complaint had been made until an attempt was made to retake the vessel. In short, the insurrection of the slaves broke up the voyage, not British authorities. Four other cases finding the insurance companies not liable cited almost identical findings. In 1853, the Anglo-American Claims Commission awarded the United States $110,330 for the loss of slave property.

As far as the slaves on board the Creole went, many were sent to Jamaica within a month of the ship's arrival in Nassau. As for those detained by the British government, two died in prison, and the rest were released. In the opinion of British legal experts, slaves seeking their freedom were not pirates and could not be held. And what of Webster's invocation of comity? Great Britain had outlawed slavery in 1832, and therefore slavery was not legally recognized in that nation. Recognition of comity in cases of extradition requires that a cooperating nation not find the law it is enforcing in the name of another nation to be offensive. Not having slavery, the British were under no obligation to honor American requests for extradition of the mutineers. See also Amistad.


Stephen P. Budney

Cuba, Emancipation in

The emancipation of slavery in Cuba was a protracted and complex process. It was not completed until 1886, nearly twenty-five years after Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in the United States. The abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, two years after the abolition in Cuba, would end chattel slavery throughout the Americas.

Cuba remained a colony of Spain until 1898 when, following the Spanish-American War, Spain lost Cuba and most of her other overseas colonies. This meant that Cuban slavery, the most difficult and important of all the colonial questions confronting the Spanish Empire following the independence of the Latin American nations, had to be resolved by Spain.

African slavery in Cuba, as in the rest of the Americas, was the product of European colonialism. African slaves had been brought to the Americas through the Atlantic slave trade, and slavery had helped to reinforce colonialism in Cuba just as it had in other European colonies. It was not surprising therefore that Cuba's status as a Spanish colony did not long outlive slavery.
The Atlantic slave trade had continued longer to Cuba than to any other part of the Americas. Britain had tried without success to force Spain to abolish the slave trade to Cuba and to Spain’s other colonial possessions in the Americas following the Napoleonic Wars. Spain signed a treaty with Britain agreeing to prohibit the slave trade from 1820, but the rapid expansion of sugar cultivation in Cuba meant a parallel growth in the numbers of African slaves who constituted the labor force on the Cuban sugar plantations. The institution of slavery in the island remained impregnable as long as it was possible for Cuban planters to continue to bring African slaves across the Atlantic, whether legally or illegally. Neither a second treaty, signed between Britain and Spain in 1835, strengthening the antislave trade provisions of the earlier treaty, nor a penal law against the slave trade passed by the Spanish Cortes in 1845, could abolish the slave trade.

The U.S. Civil War eliminating slavery in the United States made both planters in Cuba and Spanish politicians aware of how vulnerable Cuban slavery now was. It took a combination of stronger measures by British naval forces on the west coast of Africa, the changed international climate caused by the American Civil War, and the belated realization in Spain that action against the slave trade might help to preserve Cuba as a Spanish colony to force an end to the Atlantic slave trade by 1867. The termination of the slave trade to Cuba, however, meant that slavery itself in the island could not survive much longer. Its abolition took place slowly and gradually over the next twenty years. Spanish colonial policy determined the specific measures, but Cuban slaves themselves contributed a lot of the internal dynamic pressure to bring about abolition.

The Spanish government had consistently supported those Cuban planters who did not want to lose their African slave labor force. Successive governments throughout the colonial period until the last third of the nineteenth century had accepted the argument, repeated frequently by slave owners and slave apologists, that African slavery underpinned Cuba’s wealth and could not be replaced. By the middle of the century, shortages of labor, especially African slave labor, forced planters into systems of mixed agricultural labor where slave labor, contract labor, and free labor co-existed in an uneasy partnership. External pressures acting upon both Spain and Cuba in the second half of the 1860s, especially the new environment brought by the end of the American Civil War and the outbreak of a civil war within Cuba, beginning in 1868, drove the Spanish government to consider more fundamental changes.

First, the government ordered the effective enforcement of the ban against the slave trade. The issue of slavery itself could no longer be ignored especially in Spain where reformers were discussing colonial questions more openly. Spanish politicians decided upon a policy of gradual emancipation of slavery, hoping to preserve African slavery in Cuba as long as possible and thus conciliate the Cuban planter class. This, they hoped, would undermine the growing movement for Cuban independence.

The first Spanish law passed against slavery came in 1870. The Moret Law was an example of this Spanish gradualist approach toward abolition. Confronting a civil war which had broken out in eastern Cuba in 1868
and fearing U.S. intervention in this struggle which was likely to bring with it the complete abolition of slavery in the island, the Spanish government believed it was imperative to act. The Moret Law was also known as the law of free birth because it transformed newborn African slaves into apprentices, known as *patrocinados*, who would serve their apprenticeships until the age of eighteen under their masters. The law also freed slaves ages sixty or more, although as *libertos* they, too, were obliged to work for their masters either on the plantation or in the master’s house if they chose to remain with their masters. Designed to prepare Cuba for eventual abolition and delay the politically difficult policy issue of whether compensation would be offered to the slave owners for their slave property, the law in effect postponed consideration of full abolition for another decade.

The Moret Law also provided for slave registration and arbitration of disputes between slaves and masters. These elements and the endorsement of the principle of abolition contained in the law helped to accelerate the disintegration of slave structures. Slavery in Cuba was therefore significantly weakened in the years prior to its formal abolition.

The civil war, known in Cuba as the Ten Years’ War and lasting for a decade from 1868–1878, was fought mainly in eastern Cuba where it steadily undermined the social relations of slavery and provided opportunities for slaves to find their own freedom. The rebels in this uprising committed themselves to abolition, an overt challenge to the legitimacy of slavery in Cuba. Within the confusion of civil war, some slaves were able to escape or to negotiate terms for their freedom even as slave owners tried to maintain the institution. In central and eastern Cuba, a continuous interaction between slaves, free and contract workers occurred. This contact motivated slaves to become more ingenious in their methods to find freedom and more determined to do so.

With the end of the civil war in 1878, Spain had no more desire to keep slavery in Cuba and moved again towards gradual emancipation. By eliminating slavery Spain still hoped to preserve Cuba as a colony. The move to emancipation would remove the antislavery forces and slave resistance from the anticolonial struggle to free Cuba from Spain. Spain introduced the law of gradual abolition in 1880. This law provided for a period of apprenticeship or *patronato* between slavery and complete emancipation. During this apprenticeship the former slaves would continue to work for their masters, receiving token wages. Unwilling to grant compensation to slave owners, the Spanish government substituted the idea of apprenticeship so that slaves would work to pay off the costs to the owner of their own emancipation. Between 1885 and 1888, those slaves still remaining were scheduled to receive freedom, the order to be determined by lottery beginning with the oldest and proceeding over three years to the youngest. The law was promulgated in Spain in 1880, but in Cuba the conditions on the ground soon caused its provisions to unravel.

Slaves were no longer willing to wait for emancipation. They became more aggressive in seeking their own freedom through self-purchase, legal challenge, or flight. Facing an imminent breakdown of what remained of slavery,
the Spanish government accelerated the planned emancipation by two years, giving legal freedom to all slaves and *patrocinados* on October 7, 1886.

Cuban planters quickly converted to wage labor, tenant, and contract farming to take advantage of the expanding market for sugar exports to the United States, especially after 1902 when Cuba became nominally independent and developed closer trading ties with the United States. The former slaves now became landless agricultural laborers, tenant farmers, or they moved to urban centers to seek new employment. The Cuban sugar plantations grew in size and mechanized as sugar monoculture took new forms. Seasonal demand for field workers also grew, but it was seasonal work with no guarantee of permanence. The end of Cuban slavery did not see the end of Cuban sugar monoculture; indeed it grew even stronger in the twentieth century. See also Contract Labor; Latin America, Antislavery and Emancipation in; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Emancipation in.


David Murray

**Cugoano, Ottobah (1757–?)**

Along with Afro-British writers *Olaudah Equiano* and Ignatius Sancho, Ouobna Ottobah Cugoano became one of the first Afro-Britons to oppose publicly African slavery and the slave trade. Cugoano was born around 1757, near the coastal Fante village of Ajumako in present day Ghana. In 1770, when he was thirteen, Cugoano was kidnapped and forcibly transported to work in a slave gang in Grenada. His owner, Alexander Campbell, took him to Britain at the end of 1772. Cugoano entered Britain only months after the landmark high court ruling on June 22, 1772, by Lord Mansfield, known as the *Somerset Decision*, which weakened slavery in England by disavowing the slave owners’ authority to forcibly return their slaves to the colonies. While this case did not abolish slavery in Britain, slaves could now legally free themselves by escaping from their owners. After the Mansfield decision, many Afro-Britons still regarded Christian conversion as a safeguard against reenslavement. After Cugoano’s arrival in London, people advised him to become baptized to avoid being resold into slavery. He was baptized as John Stuart in St. James’ Church in Piccadilly on August 20, 1773. It is unknown when Cugoano gained his freedom, but by the mid-1780s, he worked as a free black servant for the distinguished painters Richard and Maria Cosway in London. Cugoano appeared in several works portraying the Cosways, such as Richard Cosway’s 1784 etching entitled *Mr. and Mrs. Cosway*. While living with the Cosways, Cugoano became acquainted with public figures who later subscribed to his 1791 book. These included painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, poet William Blake, and abolitionist Granville Sharp.
In 1786, Cugoano joined William Green, another Afro-Briton, to work with Granville Sharp to rescue Harry Demane from being re-enslaved in the West Indies by his owner. Sharp obtained a writ of habeas corpus that freed Demane while the ship was under sail. In 1787, Demane joined the Sierra Leone settlement of former slaves, but he himself became a slave trader by 1789. Cugoano published *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of Human Species* in 1787, perhaps with guidance from his friend Equiano. Three issues of the book appeared in 1787, and in 1791 Cugoano published a shorter version. Unlike most abolitionists who concentrated solely on ending the slave trade to avoid antagonizing prospective audiences, Cugoano ardently promoted the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. He repudiated proslavery arguments by asserting that slaves had the right and obligation to revolt against their masters.

Cugoano’s *Thoughts and Sentiments* exemplifies the genre of the jeremiad, or political sermon, named after the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, who condemned the transgressions of the Hebrew populace and forewarned of divine retribution if amoral acts persisted. As the British abolitionist movement grew during the late Regency period, the impassioned denunciation provided by the jeremiad represented a powerful counterpart to the religious and economic justifications of proslavery advocates who declared that slavery sustained a long historical tradition. While Cugoano admitted that slavery had roots in antiquity, he contended that it was not valid. He strongly believed that every Briton shared accountability for the immorality of slavery, which endangered Great Britain with divine punishment. Cugoano supported the promotion of “legitimate trade” to replace the African slave trade and Christian conversion of Africans. In 1791, financial hardships possibly motivated Cugoano to request funds from Granville Sharp to build a school for Afro-Britons and to travel to Nova Scotia for recruitment of free blacks for resettlement in Sierra Leone. However, there is no evidence of the school Cuogano proposed or his participation in the Sierra Leone colony. After 1791, Cugoano disappears from history. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of.

Danish West Indies, Abolition and Emancipation in

The Danish West Indies consisted of three small, adjacent islands in the Caribbean. St. Thomas was colonized in 1672, St. John in 1718, and St. Croix in 1734. Opposition to slavery within the Danish West Indies was expressed in various forms, including maroonage and revolt, from the beginning of Danish colonization until emancipation in 1848. After emancipation, the lives of former slaves on each island followed different trajectories based on social systems and conventions that evolved in the slavery era.

For individuals and small groups, the most feasible recourse to slavery was running away from the slaveowner. Official records attest that this was the most common form of thwarting slavery from 1672 until 1848. Opportunities to flee grew enormously after the 1833 emancipation in the neighboring British West Indies. Collective efforts to end slavery were attempted through organized revolts. Slave revolts were launched on each island within twenty years of colonization. The first recorded slave rebellion in the Danish West Indies occurred on St. Thomas in 1691 and was promptly suppressed. The first large-scale revolt took place on St. John in 1733. Rebel factions took control of the island and ended slavery from November 1733 through May 1734. Conspiracies to revolt were discovered in 1746 and 1759 on St. Croix before the revolts began.

A limited form of abolition occurred with the end of the Danish slave trade. A committee convened to investigate the Danish slave trade in 1791 determined it was not profitable and suggested that the Danish West Indian slave community could likely replenish itself through reproduction alone if social and material conditions were improved. Denmark abolished the Danish slave trade by ordinance in 1792, with a grace period that lasted until 1803. The end of the transatlantic trade changed the demography of the slave population. In 1804, 46 percent of slaves in the Danish West Indies were born in Africa while by the 1840s, only 10 percent had been. This demographic transition resulted in increased kinship and social networks, which in turn advanced the demand for rights and freedom among the enslaved.
Colonial administration was not concerned with reforming the conditions of slavery when the Atlantic slave trade was active. Afterward, reforms became increasingly important to prevent depletion of the enslaved labor force. Governor General of the Danish West Indies, Peter von Scholten accordingly initiated a sequence of ameliorative reforms in 1828 that came to be regarded as a quasi-emancipation plan by 1834. During the 1830s and 1840s, building upon those reforms, the Danish government issued new slave codes that curtailed the planters’ unlimited authority over the enslaved, provided slaves with some limited rights, and sought to improve the social conditions of the enslaved. The length of the workday was strictly regulated, slave owners’ arbitrary powers over corporal punishment were curtailed, a prison was built for slaves to bring their punishment under the jurisdiction of the government, and maintenance of plantation journals for regular inspection became mandatory. Slaves gained some property rights, slave testimony gained legal validity under certain circumstances, and Saturday became an institutionalized day off for all slaves. Public auctions of slaves were banned, the word *slave* was officially replaced with *unfree*, and elementary schools for slave children were opened. Cumulatively, these reforms made steps toward reversing the dehumanization of the enslaved.

The short-term goal of the slave codes was an improvement of social conditions and work relations, the long-term vision was the creation of a responsible class of freemen acclimated to their new status. To this end, von Scholten supplemented legislative changes with active enforcement of the new legislation, institutional changes, and changes in social practice. Although schools and prisons are instruments of social control, by establishing a prison and schools for the enslaved, von Scholten shifted this measure of control from the planters to the government. Simultaneously, he institutionalized the rights to education and a consistent system of punishment for slaves that were independent of planter whim.

The first genuine act of abolition was King Christian VIII’s royal proclamation of July 28, 1847. This proclaimed that all unfree in the Danish West Indies would gain their freedom twelve years hence and all children born after that date were born free. The proclamation resulted from the influence of British emancipation and years of negotiating between Danish officials and Governor General Peter von Scholten. Von Scholten promoted gradual emancipation with definite provisions for a necessarily long period of transition to prepare the enslaved for conditions of freedom. He strongly recommended against the free birth policy, believing it would not be acceptable to the parents or the planters. The conventional view among historians is that the free birth policy provoked the 1848 slave revolt that resulted in emancipation.

This revolt began on July 2, 1848, as enslaved laborers blew conch shells to announce it was time to assemble in Frederiksted, St. Croix. Moses Robert, Martin Williams, and John Gottlieb (a.k.a. General Buddhoe) were the main leaders. They planned to obtain their freedom through an island-wide work strike. Thousands gathered in town on July 3, awaiting von Scholten’s response and threatening arson if their demands were not met.
Von Scholten declared emancipation at four p.m., citing weak colonial institutions as integral factors in his decision, and three days later he resigned. King Frederick VII issued a royal decree on September 22, 1848, officially ending slavery in the Danish West Indies.

Emancipation brought a new social system, the form and process of which varied significantly among the three islands. This variability was a consequence of geography, the impact of migrations, and traditions that had developed on each island from the earliest days of colonization.

The Danish West Indies were relatively small islands: St. John measures nineteen square miles, St. Thomas twenty-eight square miles, and St. Croix eighty-four square miles. The terrain of the islands primarily consists of rugged hills; St. Croix is the only island with a large expanse of flat land. The islands are part of the Lesser Antilles and located near the traditional points of entry to and from the West Indies from North America and Europe. They are aptly situated for establishing a trading entrepôt. St. Thomas proved to be the prime location and quickly became a successful free port. Its limited agricultural potential was offset by the colonization of St. John and St. Croix. By the 1840s, St. Thomas had a commerce-based social system and over eighty percent of the population was engaged in non-agricultural occupations, particularly trade-related work. By comparison, St. John and St. Croix were dependent upon sugar production from plantation-based social systems.

After emancipation, planters were eager to organize a new means of retaining cheap, dependable labor on the plantations. Consequently, they established the Labor Regulations of 1849, which were among the most restrictive labor regulations applied in the West Indies. The fundamental stipulation was a mandatory yearly contract with fixed wages for fixed hours of work. Establishing wages, hours, and length of contract by law, rather than leaving them open to negotiation between workers and planters, resulted in a rigid system that benefited the planters. Workers were required to enter into contracts on the first day of October each year, and notice of non-renewal could only be given in August. A harsh vagrancy law ensured compliance with the regulations. In return, the employer was required to provide free housing, a small cultivation plot, and fixed wages. The labor regulations were slightly modified to fit local conditions on each island.

The stipulated size for the provision grounds was larger on St. Thomas than St. Croix and only limited at discretion of the landowner on St. John. Wages were consonantly lower on St. Thomas and St. John. The minimal significance of estate cultivation on St. Thomas made strict compliance with the labor regulations unnecessary. On St. John the regulations were initially enforced, but decreasingly so as estate cultivation diminished over the next three decades. On St. Croix, the regulations were enforced, but labor shortages induced some planters to illegally offer higher wages and increased privileges by the late 1850s.

Some workers perceived the 1849 regulations as a new form of slavery. Workers from seventy-seven Crucian plantations initiated a strike on July 2, 1849, but police quickly suppressed it. Later that month, St. Johnian workers began boycotting canefield labor. The post-emancipation era thus began
in conflict. Some Crucian workers migrated to the towns to find work. Workers from St. John and St. Croix migrated to St. Thomas. Migration into towns began during slavery as a result of their increasing need for service-related labor. Officials reduced migration by creating a limited mandatory passport system. Even with tight social controls in place, the labor force continued to decline. Lack of labor was a central concern of planters throughout the post-emancipation era and shaped their oppressive relationships with workers. Rather than improving social conditions for local workers to deter migration, planters chose to solve the labor problem by spending excessive resources to import immigrant workers. Immigrant workers were primarily recruited from surrounding islands, which further fueled dissatisfaction with working conditions.

On October 1, 1878, local and immigrant Crucian workers rebelled against the plantation system. The 1878 investigative committee identified three causes: planters’ abuse of the penalty fining system, frustration with the short term allowed to annul contracts, and obstacles created to prevent workers from leaving the island. Discontent over wage inequalities and the differential employment opportunities created by the opening of a central factory and a day-laborer system were also factors. The “Fireburn” rebellion lasted four days, resulted in extensive damage, and was fiercely suppressed. As many as 250 laborers died during the rebellion and its aftermath. The labor regulations were repealed on August 1, 1879, resulting in the freedom to choose length and location of employment. Significantly, workers referred to 1848 as “the first free” and 1878 as “the second free.” After the regulations were repealed, many workers left the plantations for the towns to work as porters and day laborers for neighboring plantations.

Sugar production continued to be the predominant industry on St. Croix, constituting more than 90 percent of crop production as late as 1917. Considerable modifications in sugar cultivation and processing methods were initiated after emancipation. Processing of cane was made more effective through use of plows, fertilizers, steam-powered mills, and, eventually, through the establishment of central factories. Despite technological improvements, labor continued to be a critical problem that plagued plantation owners throughout the post-emancipation era. By the 1890s, higher wages drew workers away from St. Croix, and by the end of the century importation of workers was very unsuccessful. Throughout the West Indies, importation of workers was combined with social reforms to induce laborers to remain; on St. Croix these reforms were not initiated with few exceptions. Reform of work and social conditions ended, and in some cases reversed, upon emancipation.

On St. Thomas and St. John, emancipation was devastating to sugar production, which was already in a state of decline. On St. Thomas, plantation wages could not match those paid at the harbor, thus workers migrated to town. Consequently, sugar production was largely abandoned by 1860 on the island. By the 1850s, St. Thomas was a locus of transit trade for South America and Haiti and an important shipping and distribution center for the West Indies. The main harbor and town employed thousands of workers in service-related jobs and as artisans. These workers received high pay and
were rarely limited by labor regulations. Trade and commerce continued to be central to the island's economy in the second half of the nineteenth century, although they were adversely affected by natural disasters and the increasing use of steamships.

By 1848, nearly all slaves on St. John were involved in a system of food production that included crop cultivation, raising livestock, and fishing. Many were also engaged in other activities that were pre-arranged with plantation owners, such as cutting wood, burning lime, and sending commodities to St. Thomas on estate boats. The peasant society that emerged on St. John after emancipation derived from this social structure. The enslaved had become largely self-sufficient through subsistence activities, and they sought to establish their own independent society of self-sufficient small farmers outside of the plantations after emancipation. But the owners struggled to retain them as a dependent labor source. An injunction that limited the sale of land to workers was enacted in July 1848 to curtail their ability to leave the plantations. It succeeded in limiting sales, but also had the unforeseen detrimental effect of considerable emigration from the island. Over the next three decades, sugar production on St. John became increasingly unprofitable and eventually ceased around 1880 due to the cumulative effect of lack of capital to modernize sugar plantations, serious epidemics and natural disasters, and lack of labor due to emigration from the island. Many prominent sugar estate owners sold their estates in the 1860s and 1870s and left St. John. African West Indians from other islands purchased these estates. These immigrants became the core of the new upper class of black plantation owners on the island. Sugar production was replaced by production of bay oil and lime trees and raising cattle. When sugar cultivation ceased, planters were no longer threatened by smallholdings and their number rose dramatically. By 1915, the majority of St. Johnians lived on smallholdings and the population stabilized. The preponderance of smallholdings resulted in a degree of egalitarianism among the different social groups.

The post-emancipation communities that developed in the Danish West Indies were based on social systems and social practices initiated during slavery. A subsistence-based social structure developed on St. John, a trade and service-based system on St. Croix, and a rural proletariat of wage workers emerged on St. Croix. The post-emancipation era was a complex period of adjustment as former slaves, free blacks, immigrants, planters, and officials negotiated strategies of labor and independence. Social instability in this period was fatefuly combined with natural disasters and economic decline. Denmark lost interest in the unprofitable islands and sold them to the United States in 1917. See also British Guiana and Caribbean Emancipation; British Slavery, Abolition of.


*Lori Lee*

**Declaration of Independence (1776)**

Leading the rebellion of thirteen North American colonies against English rule, the Second Continental Congress formed a committee in June 1776 to compose a formal declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson took the lead, leaving the other committee members—John Adams, **Benjamin Franklin**, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingstone—the task of suggesting modifications. In early July, the Congress debated and altered the committee’s draft, promulgating the Declaration on July 4. Beginning in early August, representatives from all the rebellious colonies signed the document. Jefferson later published the document the committee presented to Congress. The Declaration intersected the history of abolitionism in several ways.

Jefferson’s draft contained a paragraph criticizing King George III for promoting the trade in slaves. Congress deleted this critique, which read as follows:

> he has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it’s [sic] most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation hither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which be has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom be also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

Patriots in the Southern colonies did fear that slaves were responding to an offer made in 1775 to gain liberty by joining the English forces. Yet it was unrealistic to blame George III for the slave trade, for the trade predated his ascension to the throne and many colonists were traders and purchasers of slaves. Nonetheless Jefferson’s words do suggest discomfort with the trade. Indeed the documents of the Continental Congresses do contain many
cautions and reservations about slavery. Jefferson later recalled that the Congress excised his critique of the slave trade in order not to offend the delegates from slavetrading and slaveholding areas. It is just as likely that many delegates disapproved of slavery but were unwilling to make a public pronouncement on it in the Declaration.

The Declaration was printed and disseminated. Many Americans first heard it in public readings. It is clear that some phrases inspired African Americans of the 1770s: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Particularly in the mid-Atlantic and the New England colonies, black men responded to this claim of equality, serving as patriots in the militia or the Continental Army and believing that the new nation to rise out of the War of Independence would be committed to an equality of rights. Legislation, constitutional statements, and judicial decisions did begin to end slavery in the North during the Revolutionary era, but a true equality of rights was not achieved.

The English philosopher John Locke has often been cited as an inspiration for the Declaration. Indeed, Locke’s thoughts on rights and government were representative of an English tradition that was well known in the colonies. Locke himself, however, penned documents for colonial South Carolina that authorized slavery there. Yet one of Locke’s concerns—property—was relevant to opposition to slavery and blacks’ efforts to free themselves. For Locke, property was not only an object but also a skill or an ability such as literacy or craft. In the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, more and more African Americans, even if enslaved, were acquiring property in the form of such marketable skills. Freedom was attractive at least partly because black men and women expected to be able to support themselves, their families, and their social institutions by exercising their skills in the marketplace. Today we usually think of property as physical, but if we want to understand that Americans, black as well as white, of the Revolutionary era were intent on the protection of their education, abilities, and skills, we should refer to Locke.

Finally, the Declaration, in the very phrases that inspired African Americans of the 1770s, became a focus of antebellum debate on slavery. In 1848, John C. Calhoun, a defender of slavery, argued that Jefferson’s famous phrases were erroneous and irrelevant to the act of separating from England. In 1858, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, campaigning for nomination in the Illinois senatorial race, debated the meaning of the Declaration. Lincoln asserted that Jefferson had properly identified...
self-evident truths, that people remain convinced and moved by those phrases of the Declaration, and that they applied to blacks as well as whites. Although he believed that blacks might be inferior to whites in some ways, Lincoln insisted that both races—he also included the Indian—were equal in rights. Douglas would support Lincoln and the Union cause after hostilities commenced in early 1861 (he died later that year), but in 1858 he still believed in state sovereignty and compromise between North and South. He responded to Lincoln by satirizing him as a friend to blacks and by denying that the equality noted in the Declaration applied to blacks. Douglas, not Lincoln, won his party’s nomination, but the debates enhanced Lincoln’s national reputation and helped set the stage for his victory in the 1860 presidential contest. See also United States Constitution and Antislavery.


John Saillant

Delany, Martin Robison (1812–1885)

Martin Robison Delany was a prominent African American leader during the nineteenth century as an abolitionist, author, black nationalist, and a major in the Civil War.

Delany was born in Charlestown, Virginia (now West Virginia), to a slave father and a free black mother. Since his mother had free status, Delany was legally free as well. Although denied the right to attend a school, Delany relentlessly pursued his education. In 1822, his family moved to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, to escape the consequence of this illegal activity. In 1831, Delany departed to Pittsburgh to further his education and met John Vashon, a wealthy businessman who became his ideological mentor. Delany decided that he wanted to become a doctor to prove that blacks were capable of engaging in this profession, one traditionally denied to them.

In 1843, Delany practiced medicine. However, Delany was a man of indefatigable energy with varied interests. From 1843 to 1847, he founded and published the Pittsburgh Mystery. In 1847, Frederick Douglass invited Delany to work with him on the new antislavery weekly newspaper, the North Star. From 1847 to 1849, Delany served as coeditor and lecturer for the North Star. In 1850 and 1851, Delany attended Harvard Medical School.

In 1856, Delany moved his family to Chatham, Canada, where John Brown, the radical abolitionist, unsuccessfully sought Delany’s support for an armed campaign against slavery. Delany instead pursued plans for African American emigration. Delany had become disillusioned that black people could attain freedom and equality with their white counterparts in North America. Despite his new interest in emigration, Delany opposed the American Colonization Society’s program because he believed that it was designed by the slave owners to rid America of free blacks. In 1859, Delany traveled to Liberia and
Abeokuta (modern-day Nigeria), where he negotiated a treaty with the Alake to permit settlement for African Americans. Delany also conceived an economic scheme to undermine the South’s economy, which was heavily dependent on cotton production by slaves, by growing cotton with free African labor.

With the onset of the Civil War, Delany saw the opportunities for blacks and became a recruiting officer in Massachusetts for blacks to join the Union Army. In 1865, Delany was promoted to a major and sent to South Carolina as a field commander, making him the first African American to attain such a high position. After the Civil War, Delany worked for Freedmen’s Bureau in South Carolina to help former slaves reintegrate into the New South and held political office during Reconstruction.

Although Delany supported the Republican Party, in 1876 Delany endorsed the South Carolina Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Wade Hampton, III, who was a wealthy former slave owner. With the Democratic Party’s victory, segregation would become the norm in the South. With no political office and facing old age, Delany slowly retreated from the political scene, devoting most of his time to writing. See also Free Produce Movement; Radical Republicans.


Lumumba H. Shabaka

Democratic Party and Antislavery

Though the Democratic Party contributed important members and ideas to the antislavery movement, the party’s antebellum policies were consistently proslavery. Those policies would encourage the birth of the antislavery Republican Party in 1854 and contribute to the coming of the Civil War. By the 1850s, most Southern Democrats interpreted the Constitution as a proslavery document that enabled slavery’s expansion into federal territories. Institutionally, the party’s core strength among Southern voters and its requirement of a two-thirds majority to select candidates in party caucuses blunted the power of the party’s majority Northern wing. As a result, anti-slavery ideas and candidates failed to gain prominence in the party.

Still, individual Democrats did make important antislavery contributions. Ohio’s Salmon P. Chase argued that the Constitution failed to recognize slavery in federal jurisdictions, giving Congress the power to prohibit slavery in the nation’s territories. In August 1848, Pennsylvania Congressman David Wilmot employed Chase’s doctrine in the so-called Wilmot Proviso, which sought to prohibit slavery in territories gained in the Mexican War. However, Chase and Wilmot found little support among fellow Democrats.

Instead, their party embraced proslavery principles from its Southern wing. Employing John C. Calhoun’s constitutional doctrine that the national territories were the joint property of the states, most Democrats argued that Congress could not exclude slavery from federal territories. As a
consequence, the party spearheaded slavery’s expansion in the 1850s. The Democratic administration of Franklin Pierce briefly sought the annexation of Spain’s lucrative slave colony of Cuba in 1854 and also recognized the proslavery government of Southern filibusters who briefly took over Nicaragua in 1855. At home, Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Bill repealed the slavery prohibition clause of the Missouri Compromise that had governed the Kansas and Nebraska territories. In its place, Douglas inserted the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which allowed settlers of those territories to determine whether or not to recognize slavery.

In protest, Chase and a small group of antislavery Democrats and Whigs published the “Appeal of Independent Democrats,” criticizing Douglas’s bill “as a gross violation of a sacred pledge,” designed to make free territory into a “dreary region of despotism, inhabited by masters and slaves” (Potter 1976, 163). However, a majority of Northern Democrats and nearly all Southern members of the party combined to pass the bill in May 1854. Unsupported by Democrats and dissatisfied with the ineffective Whig Party, frustrated antislavery Northerners gradually began to switch their allegiance to the antislavery Republican Party, formed that same year. The expansion of slavery became the preeminent point of conflict between Republicans and Democrats by 1856.

Republicans charged Democrats with being an integral component of a Slave Power conspiracy to expand slavery’s reach and political power at the expense of civil liberties and free labor. Republicans decried Democrats’ supposedly violent proslavery principles. As evidence, they pointed to internece warfare between antislavery and proslavery settlers in Kansas in 1856 and the caning that year of antislavery Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts by a proslavery Democratic Congressman. In the Dred Scott case of 1857, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney sought to end this conflict and deal a death blow to antislavery and the Republican Party. In arguing that slavery could not be constitutionally prohibited from territories or even Free states, the Democratic Chief Justice essentially declared antislavery unconstitutional.

Emboldened proslavery Democrats sought to build on that decision by pledging their party to protect slavery in all territories. Douglas and his supporters blocked that effort at the party’s 1860 presidential convention. That impasse broke up the convention. Southern delegates consequently nominated John C. Breckinridge for president later that summer. Northern Democrats countered with Douglas. Former Whigs organized a compromise-oriented Constitutional Union ticket behind John Bell, while Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln. The election essentially was a two-man race in each section: Douglas against Lincoln in the North and Breckinridge against Bell in the South. Northerners, hoping to check Southern power, chose Republican antislavery over the uncertainty of Douglas’s principle of popular sovereignty. Lincoln carried every Northern state but New Jersey, winning the presidency with only 39 percent of the national popular vote. See also Mexican War and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Slave Power Argument; Whigs and Antislavery.

Matthew Isham

Dessalines, Jean-Jacques (1758–1806)

Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared the former colony of Saint Domingue the independent republic of Haiti on January 1, 1804. He was an able leader and commander of black soldiers during the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804, and he emerged as the head of the new Haitian government in 1804 following the evacuation of French troops. But Dessalines’s rule was so brutal that he is sometimes remembered more for his violence against whites than for any positive achievements. He lends credence to protagonists’ claims that the Haitian slave revolution principally precipitated economic ruin and annihilation of whites. While the revolution was bloody, Dessalines also helped achieve the independence of Saint Domingue from France, the emancipation of all the country’s slaves, the first institutions of national government.

Dessalines crowned himself emperor of Haiti in 1804. Unlike his immediate predecessor, Toussaint L’Ouverture, Dessalines had imperial and national ambitions. Toussaint had attempted to remain within the French empire, apparently desiring to establish a quasi-independent commonwealth status for Saint Domingue; and Toussaint appealed to Napoleon Bonaparte for a special status that would recognize the freedom of the former slaves and would have left Toussaint as the ruler for life in Saint Domingue. Following the defeat and expulsion of the French expedition from the island by November 1803, Napoleon contemplated the major mistakes of his career and concluded that he should have ruled Saint Domingue through Toussaint and acceded to Toussaint’s other requests, especially for freedom of the black cultivators. But Napoleon was under the influence of the former planters who had been dispossessed by the blacks and free coloreds and decided to seize Toussaint and restore the half-million Africans to bondage. In the United States, Thomas Jefferson learned of Bonaparte’s decision to restore slavery in the colony and he then sought an independent Saint Domingue free from French control.

Dessalines spent much of 1805 attempting to reconquer Spanish Santo Domingo, which constituted the eastern two thirds of Hispaniola. The effort, however, failed. Haitians refer to Dessalines’s tenure in office as the period of the Haitian empire, partly because of expansion eastward, but also because of his domestic policies. Like other Haitians before him, Dessalines dreaded another European expedition to conquer the island, so he
ordered the construction of defensive bulwarks, confiscation of French property, and revival of the sugar plantations under black property owners.

Every policy was bent to the common goal of defending Saint Domingue against another attack. In the spring of 1804, he also ordered the killing of the remaining French whites in the colony, whites who had rallied to the cause of Napoleon during the Leclerc expedition of 1802–1803. “I have given the French cannibals blood for blood,” Dessalines proclaimed. His anger was directed against the French, not against the English, Americans or whites in general, even though the English had occupied Saint Domingue from 1793–1798. But the English had also supplied arms and ammunition during the French occupation. The Haitians considered American merchants as the good whites, for they seemed to have only commercial, not territorial, ambitions in Hispaniola.

For some unknown reason, Napoleon’s policy of exterminating the blacks on Saint Domingue is not remembered by white historians, but Dessalines’s policy of killing the treacherous French is regarded as a principal exhibit proving that the blacks wanted not freedom but instead revenge against whites, an interpretation which totally ignores the blood thirsty policies of Leclerc and Rochambeau.

Like Toussaint before him, Dessalines believed that the former colony could only be safe by making it once again as prosperous as it had been under the French. Anticipating another French assault, he ordered fortifications constructed in the harbors and he envisioned the island dominated by state-owned plantations, worked by a state-employed peasantry, and operated by state officials. Dessalines wrote President Thomas Jefferson, suggesting the establishment of cordial relations. He also indicated an interest in strengthening commercial and political ties. But the president decided to reject the offer and did not respond. Dessalines did not have much chance to pursue his diplomatic initiative. In October 1806, an insurrection against Dessalines’s rule occurred in the southern sector of Haiti. Dessalines moved against the rebels in the south, but his drive into the south was his last campaign, for he was killed in a roadside ambush on October 17, 1806. His death revealed what would become Haiti’s persistent problem of regional fragmentation, for the three sections of the island—north, west, and south—had always shown an interest in regional autonomy. The northern sector was dominated by Henri Christophe, while the south was under the control of the free coloreds, led by Alexander Pétió. Many thought that either Christophe or Pétió had plotted to kill Dessalines.

Dessalines had spent most of his life as a slave and he had been badly abused by whites. During his rule, he showed the stripes on his back as proof of the evils of white society and slavery. White historians have looked on Dessalines as proof of the evils of black leadership, but the Haitians themselves look back on Dessalines as one of the most revered of their founding fathers; many believe that he is more important than the heroic Toussaint L’Ouverture. Haitians are critical of Toussaint because he failed to declare Saint Domingue independent of France and because he believed that an accommodation could be reached with Napoleon. Haitians express their admiration for Dessalines precisely because of his bold decision to declare independence and to defend the
new nation by all means, including killing the treacherous French. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


_Tim Matthewson_

Disenfranchisement. See Segregation and Disenfranchisement in the American South

Disinterested Benevolence

Both influential and notorious, “disinterested benevolence” was the major ethical premise of the _New Divinity_, a Calvinist theology developed in the last third of the eighteenth century by the followers of Jonathan Edwards. Disinterested benevolence set a high standard in ethics, requiring the true Christian to love God and humankind without regard to his or her own interests or even salvation. To many it seemed absurdly extreme, since in other theologies and ideologies available to Americans—particularly moderate (or Old School) Calvinism, free-will Christianity, deism, and enlightened thought—some degree of self-love was natural and acceptable.

Disinterested benevolence came to the fore in efforts to end the slave trade and American slavery because the leading New Divinity spokesman, Samuel Hopkins, insisted that white Christians were obliged to include blacks in the circle of humanity deserving of love. The slave trade and slavery were undoubtedly violations of such love in abolitionists’ eyes. Hopkins tended to cast benevolence as love of family and neighbors—an effective strategy in many parts of colonial America and the new nation since blacks and whites often shared the same social spaces. Newport, Rhode Island, where Hopkins preached from 1769 to 1803 (albeit with interruptions caused by the Revolution), included, for instance, a number of free blacks. This was true of many port cities in the Northern and Middle colonies (later states), while blacks and whites lived in close quarters in many parts of the South. This high standard of love for others, including those of other races, motivated many opponents of slavery as well as provided a lever for criticism of racial oppression in the writings of blacks such as Richard Allen and John Marrant.

In the postslavery world of the twenty-first century, an ethical premise that undermined the slave trade and slavery appears, of course, as a positive good. However, the insistence upon disinterested benevolence was occasionally, even in Hopkins’s writings, accompanied by an acknowledgment of whites’ “selflessness” or “self-denial” in taking up the blacks’ cause. The white person was overcoming a seemingly natural antipathy for black people in opposing the slave trade and slavery. Such claims did match the theological understanding of disinterested benevolence, but they also did little
to challenge whites’ racism. Perhaps a fuller understanding of ethical principles would have encouraged a welcoming assumption of the cause of the blacks along with an unflinching protest against the prejudices of many whites. Hard as it was to end the slave trade and slavery, racism proved an even more tenacious element in America.


*John Saillant*

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**District of Columbia Emancipation Act.** See Washington, D.C., Compensated Emancipation in

**Douglass, Frederick (1818–1895)**

Frederick Douglass—abolitionist, journalist, and civil rights activist—was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in February 1818. His mother, Harriet Bailey, was a slave and his father an unknown white man, but possibly his owner, Aaron Anthony. For the first six years of his life he lived with his grandmother, Betsy Bailey, in comparative comfort. In 1824, he was sent to Holme Hill Farm, on the plantation of Edward Lloyd, to live with his master, where he witnessed some of the horrors of slavery. In 1826, he moved to Baltimore to live with Hugh and Sophia Auld and serve as the companion to their young son, Tommy. Baltimore was the beginning of the end of his bondage. During his seven years there he learned to read, underwent a religious conversion, joined the Bethel A.M.E. church, and found hope in the word abolition.

In 1833, Thomas Auld, brother of Hugh and Frederick’s new master, had Frederick returned to the Lloyd estate on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Auld considered him insolent, and in 1834 hired him out to Edward Covey, known in the area as a “slave breaker.” After numerous beatings, Frederick stood up to Covey and instead beat him; thereafter, he was no longer whipped. “I was a changed being after that fight,” he wrote. “I was nothing before. I WAS A MAN NOW.” In 1836, Frederick and some other slaves plotted an escape that failed, and he was sent back to Baltimore to live with Hugh and Sophia Auld. While
he learned the caulking trade and joined a debating club, Frederick met his future wife, Anna Murray, a free black woman who worked as a domestic.

On September 3, 1838, masquerading as a sailor and carrying the free papers of a black seaman he had met in Baltimore, Frederick escaped north by train and boat. Later that month he married Anna Murray. They settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where Frederick found work, and on the recommendation of a black friend, he changed his last name to Douglass—taken from Sir Walter Scott’s hero in *The Lady of the Lake*—to hide his identity as a fugitive. He and Anna started a family in New Bedford, and within a decade they had five children.

In New Bedford Douglass was drawn into the abolitionist movement. He read William Lloyd Garrison’s newspaper, *The Liberator*, attended meetings, and, after speaking at an August 1841 convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society on Nantucket, was hired as a lecturer. His oratorical skills brought him growing recognition, and in 1845 he published the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*. The book was an enormous success and made him famous. But fearing that the disclosure of his identity would endanger his freedom, he left for England, Ireland, and Scotland for an eighteen-month speaking tour. While there, British admirers raised money for him to purchase his freedom and start his own newspaper. He returned to the United States in 1847, moved to Rochester, New York, a center of radical reform, and started the *North Star*, a four-page weekly that promoted numerous reforms, especially immediate abolition, temperance, and women’s rights.

Douglass’s move to Rochester partly reflected his growing disenchantment with Garrison, the racial inequalities within the American Anti-Slavery Society, and the society’s doctrine of nonresistance. By 1849, he endorsed slave violence, and after the passage of the draconian *Fugitive Slave Law* of 1850, he embraced abolitionist violence to combat the growing belligerence of the South’s Slave Power. He formally broke with Garrison and the society in 1851 (Garrison was its president from 1843 to 1865), joined the National Liberty Party, and changed the name of his newspaper to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* to reflect his commitment to political action. In 1852 he published *The Heroic Slave*, his only work of fiction and the first African American novella. It explored the virtues of violence and featured an interracial friendship between the “heroic slave” and an abolitionist modeled on Gerrit Smith, the white friend to whom he dedicated *My Bondage and My Freedom*. *My Bondage*, which sold well when it was published in 1855, was one of the first African American autobiographies detailing at length not only the individual’s experience with slavery but with freedom in the North as well. It also highlighted Douglass’s emerging revolutionary ethos. Throughout the 1850s, Douglass was a close friend of John Brown, and he helped plan Brown’s raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. When the raid failed, Douglass fled to Canada to avoid arrest, then left for a speaking tour in England. For the rest of his life, Douglass considered Brown a hero, referring to him as “THE man of this nineteenth century.”

With the onset of the Civil War, Douglass’s prominence continued to grow. During the war he was invited to the White House three times by
President Abraham Lincoln. From the beginning of the conflict he pressed the administration to make emancipation a war aim and to arm black troops, which he felt would hasten an end to slavery and racism. In 1863, he stopped publishing his newspaper after sixteen years as its editor, ending the tenure of the then longest-running black newspaper in America. By the end of the war, he was a committed Republican and would remain so for the rest of his life.

During Reconstruction, Douglass advocated black male suffrage and sought to prevent Confederate elites from returning to power. He met with President Andrew Johnson in 1866, urging him without success to endorse these measures. In 1870, he resumed his editorial career by purchasing the New Era, a Washington, D.C., weekly; he became editor-in-chief and changed its name to the New National Era. After his Rochester home burned down in 1872, he moved to Washington to be near his paper. But two years later, growing losses forced him to stop publishing it, and he became president of the insolvent Freedmen's Bank. His newspaper and bank failures cost him not only money but respect among other black leaders, who felt that he had become more moderate on questions of race. In many respects he had; he failed to criticize the Republican Party's abandonment of Reconstruction in 1876 when it removed federal troops from the South. That same year he was appointed marshal of the District of Columbia by President-elect Rutherford B. Hayes. His appointment masked the concessions Republicans had made to white supremacists to get Hayes elected.

Even after the failure of Reconstruction, Douglass continued to view the Republican Party as the most viable means for black empowerment. In 1881, President James A. Garfield appointed him the recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia. With his Republican appointments, he gave fewer lectures, no longer needing to rely on speaking fees for financial security. In 1882, he hired as a secretary Helen Pitts, a white woman who was twenty years his junior. That same year his wife, Anna Murray, who had never learned to read, died. He married Helen Pitts in 1884 and was attacked by whites and blacks alike, including members of his own family. His final Republican appointment came in 1889 when he was appointed U.S. minister to Haiti. He served in that position for two tumultuous years.

Douglass published Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in 1881, which was over twice as long as My Bondage and My Freedom. The book was largely a reminiscence and reviewed his career from the perspective of a senior Republican statesman. Instead of advocating radical social change, he sought to remind readers that the story of slavery—and his life—should not be forgotten. But his attempt to create a usable past failed, for the book sold few copies, and an updated edition in 1892 did no better. Life and Times reads as history, and Douglass's vision of progress was now linear, secular, and progressive. Gone was his hope for a sharp break with the past and for a new age. Although he viewed the war in apocalyptic terms, in the wake of Reconstruction it seemed as though the millennium had come but the new age was nowhere in sight. As a result, a heaven on earth increasingly seemed to him a sentimental delusion. He gradually abandoned his faith that God could enter into and affect the affairs of the world.
Despite his growing moderation and skepticism about the possibilities of substantive reform, Douglass remained a race leader until his death in 1895. He denounced the growing disenfranchisement of black men, Jim Crow laws, and the upsurge of lynchings. He was the most influential African American of the nineteenth century and never abandoned his activism or his outspoken hatred of oppression. "I was sent into the world to make an abolition speech," Douglass said during the Civil War. He continued to agitate for racial equality until his death. See also Garrisonians; Radical Republicans.


John Stauffer

Dred Scott Decision. See Freedom Suits in North America

Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt (1868–1963)

The broad meaning of slavery and emancipation run like a leitmotif through the voluminous writings of the black historian, sociologist, and propagandist William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois. Throughout Du Bois's many scholarly and polemical writings, his tone remained unmistakably antislavery. For him slavery symbolized "crushing repression," the seed of national tragedy, misunderstanding, and ridicule. More than any other twentieth-century American writer, Du Bois linked slavery to the exploitation of nominally "free" labor.

Schooled as a historian at the University of Berlin and Harvard University, Du Bois wrote influential scholarly studies on the Atlantic slave trade, slave culture and religion, and the African origins of America's slaves. Du Bois's pioneering biography of John Brown and his brilliantly polemical work on Reconstruction also underscored slavery's deleterious legacy.

Unlike virtually all white historians of his day, Du Bois positioned blacks at the center of his writings on slavery. He characterized them as victims who resisted their brutal treatment by whites. Until his death in Ghana in 1963, Du Bois remained the most articulate and vocal critic of post-Civil War arguments defending slavery and railed against the institution's direful imprint on race relations and American life. Du Bois inveighed so forcefully against slavery because, as he wrote in 1905, it "spread more
human misery, inculcated more disrespect for and neglect of humanity, a
greater callousness to suffering, and more petty, cruel, human hatred than
can well be calculated. We may excuse and palliate it, and write history so
as to let men forget it; it remains the most inexcusable and despicable blot
on modern human history.”

As a black American, Du Bois sensed slavery’s broad pathological impact
on both races. It left a legacy of mistrust and hate, of ignorance and suspi-
cion. Du Bois attributed many characteristics of blacks to the “peculiar insti-
tution.” For example, he held slavery accountable for the lax morals, poor
hygiene habits, and frivolity of Philadelphia ghetto blacks who had served
as bondsmen in the upper South. In his 1901 study of blacks in the Georgia
black belt, Du Bois concluded that the freedpeople farmed exhausted soil,
lived in squalor, and, more often than not, lived apart from their spouses.
These poor conditions, he said, resulted from “long custom, born in the
time of slavery.” Black tenant farmers and sharecroppers also remained in
“the slavery of debt” to white landlords and cotton factors. “A slave ances-
try and a system of unrequited toil,” argued Du Bois, made these blacks
resemble “all ground-down peasants”—ripe for “crime and a cheap, dan-
gerous socialism.”

Du Bois branded the South’s crop lien and convict lease systems “the
direct children of slavery and to all intents and purposes . . . slavery itself.”
The latter method of procuring laborers, especially popular in the Gulf
states, outraged Du Bois because so large a percentage of Southern convicts
were black. He said the system contained all “the worst aspects of slavery
without any of its redeeming features.” Similarly, in an interview published
in the Cincinnati Times-Star in 1910, Du Bois charged that the peonage
existing throughout the South offered yet another example of how slavery
persisted in the United States in the twentieth century.

Du Bois insisted that slavery explained still other negative aspects of
black life in the New South. The bondsmen, he said, were taught to live
degraded lives as slaves. Not surprisingly, many of their descendants became
criminals. Slavery encouraged ignorance and fostered “timidity, lack of a
sense of personal worth and inability to bear responsibility,” explained Du
Bois. It also instilled in blacks a certain carelessness and laziness. He judged
most grievous the lasting cleavage slavery caused within the South’s work-
ing class between its black and non-slaveholding poor white population. Du
Bois held the planter class fully responsible for slavery’s legacy of
“oppression, cruelty, concubinage, and moral retrogression.” In Du Bois’s
opinion, the planters “debauched, destroyed, and took from” the African
“the organized home.” They wrenched apart the slave family and left its
members passive characters—“owned,” “spoken for,” accorded mere “con-
temptuous forgetfulness” in the plantation tragedy. Slavery precluded
the emergence of “growth or exception” on the part of blacks, leaving
them enslaved physically and to the “slavery of ideas and customs.” Slavery
left such deep scars on blacks that it bred in them utter “contempt for
themselves.”

In his 1909 biography of John Brown, Du Bois hammered home slavery’s
long-term effects in circumscribing the freedom of black Americans. The
overthrow of Radical Reconstruction, Du Bois wrote, “meant and means a policy of state, society and individual, whereby no American of Negro blood shall ever come into the full freedom of modern culture.” At every turn white southerners blocked—by any means necessary—the civil rights of the freed people. “The inherent and natural difficulties of raising a people from ignorant unmoral slavishness to self-reliant modern manhood are great enough for purposes of character-building without the aid of murder, theft, caste, and degradation. Not because of but in spite of these latter hindrances has the Negro-American pressed forward.”

Twenty-six years later, in Black Reconstruction in America, Du Bois celebrated the role that blacks played during the Civil War in liberating themselves. “As soon,” Du Bois wrote, “as it became clear that the Union armies would not or could not return fugitive slaves, and that the masters with all their fume and fury were uncertain of victory, the slave entered upon a general strike against slavery by the same methods that he had used during the period of the fugitive slave. He ran away to the first place of safety and offered his services to the Federal Army.” Union victory, however, led only to short-term freedom. Following the demise of Radical Reconstruction, Du Bois noted with regret, the planters re-established racial hegemony over the freedman. “The slave went free; stood a moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery.” As people of color worldwide fell under the yoke of imperialism and capitalism, Du Bois believed that they succumbed to new forms of slavery. “The upward moving of white labor was betrayed into wars for profit based on color caste. Democracy died save in the hearts of black folk.” Such, according to Du Bois, was life under the veil of racism.


John David Smith

Dunmore Proclamation. See Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation

Dutch Colonies, Abolition of Slavery in

It might seem that the prohibition of the Dutch slave trade should have hastened the abolition of slavery in the Dutch colonies. In fact, it did no such thing. In England there was a direct connection between the two measures. After the English abolitionist movement had succeeded in banning the slave trade in 1808, it turned its attention to freeing the slaves. For tactical reasons the abolitionists initially said nothing about emancipation. Before 1808, they insisted that their only concern was the abolition of the degrading trade in humans. They even claimed to believe that the condition of the slaves in the colonies would automatically improve once the detestable trade was abolished. After all, the planters would no longer be able to
buy new slaves in Africa and would therefore have to treat their own slaves better.

But after the slave trade was abolished in 1808, the English abolitionist movement changed tactics. It now asserted that the West Indian planters were not in a position to reform slavery fundamentally. Therefore, not only the slave trade but slavery, too, must go. Instead of horror stories about the trade, the movement now spread horror stories about slavery. It is striking how many people in England, Scotland, and Wales showed an interest in the cause. Much of that interest was generated by ministers in the Baptist, Methodist and Quaker communities, many of whom had worked for some time in the West Indies. They aroused their congregations with long sermons in which the miserable lot of the slaves was vividly arrayed. In particular they mercilessly censured the harsh physical punishments and the disastrous effects that the sale and transport of slaves had on family life.

The result was a torrent of petitions to Parliament to abolish slavery. No subject before or after has ever generated as many petitions to Parliament. The new middle class saw the antislavery campaign as a means of asserting itself against the dominant power of the nobility and gentry. It is a remarkable fact that the English public came to learn more about slavery in the West Indies than about the social misery in their own country. One could, after all, become indignant about abuses in far-off lands without fear of creating social unrest at home.

Reform and industrialization took longer to come to the Netherlands of the early nineteenth century. The archetypal Old Dutch merchant preferred to let his goods rot in the attic rather than sell them cheaply. “When the world ends, go to the Netherlands. There everything happens fifty years later” was a saying familiar to many Europeans. The Dutch abolitionist movement never attracted more than a couple of hundred members, and it certainly did not represent a wide cross-section of the population. Most of the Dutch abolitionists seem to have been ministers or professors. That, too, caused problems because it led to two organizations, one Christian and one “neutral.” Initially it seemed that the two groups would never join forces since they could not even agree on whether their first joint meeting should start with prayers or not. After 1840, the Dutch abolitionists finally surmounted these organizational difficulties. Yet even at its peak the Netherlands Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery counted no more than 700 members, and the absence of any earlier popular opposition to the slave trade—as had existed in England—gave it little additional momentum. In the Netherlands abolitionism had to be built from the ground up because the abolition of the slave trade had been imposed from above by royal decree.

While a number of issues roused the Dutch in the early decades of the nineteenth century, abolitionism was not among them. The decision of the pope to reintroduce bishoprics into the Netherlands gave rise to a massive protest movement by the Protestants and one hundred thousand signatures were collected. There was much debate about the Dutch East Indies and in particular the pros and cons of the system of forced farming. The system compelled every village in Java to hand over a certain amount of coffee and
sugar as a form of taxation in kind and it raised a huge amount of money. Opponents of the system pointed out the many abuses in the administration of the system and the fact that it threatened the cultivation of subsistence crops on Java.

A small number of experts quietly deliberated over abolitionism free from being hounded by a large and vocal abolitionist lobby. It was thus no surprise that the parliament in The Hague did not pass an act abolishing slavery in the Dutch colonies until 1860. Other bills had previously been rejected because one set the level of compensation for slave owners too low while another had neglected to make adequate provision for attracting wage labor should the former slaves all suddenly abandon the Suriname plantations.

Curiously enough the slow progress of the debate had an unintentional outcome. The dramatic consequences of the slave revolt in Haiti and the disastrous decline in coffee and sugar production after the abolition of slavery on the English and French islands had alerted the Suriname planters to how important the slaves were for their survival. Any alternative would raise labor costs, as the experiments with indentured labor from Asia showed. But as well as the economic argument, the planters also had a moral incentive for their "policy of amelioration." They had to convince their critics in Europe that the living and working conditions of their slaves were superior to those of laborers in the Netherlands. The planters explained to every visitor who was prepared to listen that a slave was not expected to do as much each day as a "quarter European." To ease the transition to emancipation, or at least to prepare the planters for it, the government in The Hague decreed that sick bays be set up on every plantation and that regular medical care for the slaves should be compulsory. It also laid down minimum allowances for food and clothing. Punishments by plantation overseers were circumscribed, as were the number of hours that a slave could be required to work. Finally, the colonial administration was given the authority to take up complaints from slaves if the regulations were flouted and to reprimand or even punish offending planters.

It all made no difference. Neither the prohibition of the slave trade nor the new policy of amelioration could turn the tide. It was inevitable that slavery in the Dutch West Indies would be abolished, certainly after England in 1833, and France and Denmark in 1848 had done so. The Netherlands simply had to follow suit, even though the experience of the English and French colonies had shown that it would result in the collapse of the plantation economy and an ensuing sharp decline in the income of both the planters and the emancipated slaves. All that the Suriname planters and their representatives in the Netherlands could achieve was a transition period of ten years, between 1863 and 1873. During that period, ex-slaves who had previously worked in the fields had to continue to work on the plantations, although they could change employers and would receive their wages in money rather than in kind. After July 1, 1863, the slaves in the Dutch colonies in the West became free, even if not entirely.

Nevertheless, Dutch emancipation of its slaves had a calculating dimension to it devoid of humanitarianism. When Great Britain undertook
emancipation, its taxpayers were prepared to pay up to 20 million pounds sterling to redeem the slaves in the English colonies. In the Netherlands, taxpayers paid next to nothing. During the 1850s, the Netherlands was flooded with the profits from the system of forced farming in Java. By compelling Javanese villages to pay their taxes in the form of coffee and sugar and then selling the products on the world market, the Netherlands was able to transfer hundreds of millions of guilders from the Indies to the Dutch treasury. At its peak, as much as a third of the national income consisted of colonial profits. Not even the present-day natural gas resources in the Dutch section of the North Sea have been able to rival it. Money from the East Indies not only financed canals and railways in the Netherlands, it also purchased the freedom of the slaves in the West. In the Dutch colonies, one form of unfree labor was used to abolish another. Furthermore, the system of forced farming on Java meant that Suriname was no longer so important to Dutch importers of coffee and sugar. After 1830, in addition to Cuba and Brazil, the bulk of those products were imported from Java. In comparison with England, the Netherlands emancipated its slaves at a bargain price. See also Dutch Slave Trade, Abolition of.

Further Readings:

Pieter C. Emmer

Dutch Slave Trade, Abolition of

Although by the end of the eighteenth century opposition to the slave trade was becoming increasingly vocal in much of Europe, there was little sign of such unrest in the Netherlands. To some extent it was to be expected since in contrast to England, France, and Portugal, this particular branch of commerce had been in decline for the Dutch since 1780. But it is doubtful whether reactions in the Netherlands would have been very different even if the Dutch slave trade had continued to flourish as it did elsewhere. Around 1800, the leading lights of Dutch society were far from being in the vanguard of the enlightened thinkers who dominated European political debate at the time, and the new ideas about liberty, equality, and fraternity received a lukewarm response. Although the Dutch had to concede that the slave trade and slavery were hardly philanthropic institutions, without them their plantations in Suriname would cease to be profitable. Of course there were certain disadvantages associated with unfree labor, but were there any alternatives?

In the Netherlands, ideals were only put to the test after their financial implications have been carefully calculated. Consequently, proposals to prohibit the slave trade and abolish slavery were often presented as if they might actually be profitable. It was suggested, for instance, that paupers, wastrels, miscreants, and criminals in the Netherlands should be sent to the
plantations in Suriname. It would constitute a considerable saving for the
country and could compensate for the loss of income from the slave trade.
Why should one have to switch off the calculator while improving the
world? In 1773, an anonymous writer for the journal De Koopman summarized
the situation:

If one adds up the money required to purchase each Negro slave, the cost of
their daily subsistence as well as that of their women and children, the num-
ber of slaves lost by each plantation every year, partly through death by sick-
ness or maltreatment, partly by their running away, and if one then includes
the damage suffered by the colony every time there is a revolt, one can see
that it would be far easier to use European day labourers.

Of course, the international abolitionist movement was not entirely with-
out its supporters in the Netherlands. The well-known author, Betje Wolf,
translated abolitionist literature from France, and Pieter Paulus, a leading
member of the revolutionary pro-French “Patriot” movement, published A
treatise on the question to what extent all men should be considered equal and the rights and obligations that flow from it. Following the
French writer Frossard, Paulus pointed out that in spite of the prosperity of
the West Indies, the Europeans should not allow their black “fellows in na-
ture” to throw their lives away in exchange for some strong drink and a
musket.

But the French veneer could not always disguise the underlying commer-
cial attitudes of the Dutch. The Economic Wing of the Holland Society of
Sciences, a progressive and patriotic association, offered a prize to “any sub-
ject or subjects of the State, with the exception of all servants of the West
India Company residing on the coast of Guinea, who designs and uses a
copper-bottomed barque for the slave trade on the Guinea coast.”

Fortunately the Deventer branch protested against the competition on
the grounds that “the slave trade should not be encouraged either by bar-
ques or any other means. The members of this branch are of the opinion
that the slave trade should rather be abominated than encouraged by a phi-
lanthropic society such as ours.” However, they did give their support to
competitions for a plan to revive the fortunes of the plantations that did
not involve the use of slaves, for the design of a waterproof bonnet for
slaves, and for a solution to the heavy burden of mortgage debt which
weighed on so many of the Suriname plantations.

The debate on the abolition of the slave trade took on an official charac-
ter after the French invaded the country in 1796 and instituted a new
National Assembly in The Hague. Colonial relations including slavery were
debated on April 27–28, 1797. It was an academic debate because virtually
all the Dutch overseas possessions had for some time been in English hands
and direct communications with both East and West were cut off. Many
members of the National Assembly trod cautiously and wanted to omit any
reference to the abolition of slavery or the slave trade in the new constitu-
tion since it would only have alarmed the overseas Dutch planters unneces-
sarily. After all, the French National Convention in 1794 had helped spur
the largest slave revolt of all time in Saint Domingue by its abrupt abolition
of the slave trade and slavery. It was inappropriate to use the constitution as a battering ram for pushing through a range of social and economic reforms. A number of the Assembly's members drew attention to the constitution of the United States, then a young and progressive country. Although it enabled the abolition of the slave trade by 1808, a number of the Southern states had eagerly reopened the traffic. Other contributors to the debate pointed out that European slave traders did not themselves enslave any Africans. The Dutch traders merely bought slaves who had been put on the market by African dealers. If all those slaves were to remain in Africa their fate would be far worse. The well-known abolitionist Pieter Vreede attempted to change the minds of his fellow members. Was there anyone present who honestly believed that it was an act of charity to transport an African into a life of slavery? Were the members of the National Assembly not aware that Africans, too, were human beings?

It was all to no avail. Most members of the first Constitutional Assembly in the history of the Netherlands preferred to wait and see and not act differently from other countries. They were in no position to pursue an independent policy on the slave trade. Even the English Parliament, in spite of all the political agitation, had not yet voted to abolish the slave trade, and other countries showed no sign at all of moving in that direction. Only Denmark had forbidden the trade in slaves under its flag, but it had allowed such a long period of transition that the planters on the Danish islands in the West Indies had had ample time to make other arrangements. Furthermore, if the Netherlands were to ban the slave trade, there was a danger that many planters in the Dutch West Indies would settle elsewhere in the region and take their slaves with them. It was even possible that merely debating abolition in The Hague might drive the Suriname planters to rebellion. It could in any case be a pretext for them to regard the English occupiers as allies rather than as enemies. The National Assembly voted by a large majority not to include any reference to the abolition of slavery or the slave trade in the new constitution. Only in 1814, on the return of King Willem I, was the Dutch slave trade ended.

It is paradoxical that the slave trade was not abolished during the most revolutionary period of Dutch history, but rather in the conservative restoration that followed. And it is ironic that it did not come about under pressure from a progressive, revolutionary France, but from a conservative England that of all the slave trading countries stood to gain the most from its continuation.

England’s eagerness to ban the international slave trade, including that of the Dutch, was not entirely disinterested. As soon as England had forbade its own subjects to engage in the slave trade, it became an economic necessity to ensure that other countries followed suit. Without a worldwide ban the English planters would have been placed at a disadvantage because the supply of African slaves into the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch colonies would remain unaffected.

And so William I, sovereign of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, issued a royal decree on August 13, 1814, forbidding his subjects to engage in the slave trade. It came about as a result of intense English pressure and
the threat that the Dutch colonies, which England had taken during the
Napoleonic wars, would not be returned. There was no question of its
being discussed in the Dutch Parliament because the measure was consid-
ered a part of foreign policy. Until the constitutional reforms of 1848, the
King of the Netherlands dealt with foreign nations without interference
from the people’s representatives. However, William I could not bypass Par-
liament in 1818 when he signed a treaty with England agreeing to take
action against illegal slaving. The government in London knew that various
nations’ prohibitions of the slave trade had had little effect in practice.
While no Dutch ships had been apprehended, there were numerous Span-
ish, Brazilian, and French slavers on the seas. Consequently, England
attempted to sign treaties with as many countries as possible stipulating
that illegal slave ships would be hunted down and brought to justice. So
the treaty prohibiting the slave trade now had to be underpinned by a
Dutch statute making the trade a punishable offense, and this could only be
done by the parliament in The Hague.

On November 12, 1818, the slave trade was debated by the members of
the Lower House. It took place in Brussels because at the time Belgium was
also a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and parliament sat alterna-
tively in The Hague and Brussels. The debate did not produce any fresh
insights. The representatives from the Northern Netherlands were rather
ashamed of the bill and hastened to point out to their southern colleagues
that although Holland and Zeeland may have transported a few slaves in the
misty past, that particular branch of commerce had been on its last legs
long before the French invasion. The Belgian Members of Parliament should
not get the idea that many Dutchmen had been involved in the trade in
humans. After all, William I was the first monarch on the continent to pro-
hibit the slave trade. Naturally it was necessary to lay down penalties for
illegal slavers, but in practice such legislation would doubtless prove super-
fluous. Between 1814 and 1818, not a single Dutch slave ship had been
spotted by the English Navy.

In the long term, even the treaty of 1818 did not go far enough for the
English. The English Navy wanted a broader definition of the term “illegal
slave ship.” Consequently, England sought to add a number of supplemen-
tary articles to every treaty against the slave trade, including the Anglo-
Dutch agreement. These articles entitled the English Navy to apprehend
any ship sailing within twenty miles of the West African coast and found to
contain an excessive number of planks, water tanks, and boilers. According
to the English these were all indications that the ship was engaged in the
slave trade. Henceforth, the suspicion alone would be enough to justify
bringing in the suspect and arraigning him before a naval court, even if not
a single slave were found on board. A further article laid down that confis-
cated ships could also be broken up since experience had taught that many
ships that had been apprehended and convicted would sooner or later
resume trading in slaves. Eventually the treaties were also extended to
include East Africa because the traders had moved their operations there.

These English initiatives caused no difficulties for The Hague. The Dutch
were aware that acceding to the English demands could only be
advantageous. In the first place, nobody in The Hague wanted needlessly to alienate its most powerful ally. The English had their hands full trying to gain the cooperation of the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Americans. The Dutch could quickly build up credit and do so the more easily because absolutely no economic interest was at stake. Not a single Dutch shipping company ever protested against the increasingly rigorous enforcement of the ban on the slave trade. After almost three centuries, the Dutch slave trade came to an end without a murmur. See also Dutch Colonies, Abolition of Slavery in.


Pieter C. Emmer

Dwight, Theodore (1764–1846)

Grandson and brother of two influential theologians (Jonathan Edwards and Timothy Dwight, respectively), Theodore Dwight was one of the founders of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Holden in Bondage, formed in 1790. He aided numerous aggrieved blacks and those wrongly enslaved who approached the Society to assist them in their suits. The Society sought to hasten the process of ending slavery in Connecticut, but the gradual emancipation that had been legislated in 1784 prevailed. In 1794, Dwight delivered an antislavery Oration before the Society that was integral to the Society’s vigorous, yet finally failed, effort to abolish slavery in Connecticut in 1794. As the coeditor of the Federalist Hartford Courant, he also wrote numerous essays against slavery and the slaveholding South. He involved himself in several social reform movements, and he became a scourge of the Jeffersonians and a champion of the Federalist Party as it declined in the early nineteenth century. Early African American abolitionists like Richard Allen and Lemuel Haynes were drawn more to the Federalists than to the Republicans, so Dwight was political kin to the blacks who were fighting slavery. See also Federalists and Antislavery.


John Saillant
East African Slave Trade

East Africa was one of the earliest sources of slaves for the Middle East and the Indian Ocean Basin, but slaves were not a major export from the region until the nineteenth century. Ancient Egypt received some slaves from an area called Punt, which is believed to be where Somalia or Eritrea is today. In more recent times, northeast Africa was a source of slaves for the Middle East and India. There was in particular a demand for Ethiopian women who were considered attractive. Many men were purchased to become soldiers. One sixteenth-century slave soldier, Malik Ambar, became the ruler of a small Indian state and surrounded himself with a bodyguard of African slave soldiers. The coast south of Somalia was part of an Indian Ocean maritime world. The nature of the monsoon rains facilitated the development of trade. The winds blow into Central Asia almost half of the year. They blow out almost half of the year. That made the development of maritime navigation relatively easy. The monsoons were important as far as the Mozambique Channel. Swahili civilization developed within the area affected by the monsoon rains.

By the beginning of the common era, the East African coast was in regular contact with the Greeks of the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and India. The Swahili language, which was spoken from southern Somalia to southern Tanzania, is symbolic of the marriage of cultures that took place in the Indian Ocean. It has a Bantu grammatical structure, but has numerous words from Arabic, Persian, English, and other Indian Ocean languages. Some slaves undoubtedly were traded among these cultures. In the ninth century, there was a revolt in lower Mesopotamia of African slaves known as Zanj, although it is not known from exactly where in Africa they originated. There are also communities in India of African origin, but it is clear that in general, slaves were less important than ivory and gold in the Indian Ocean trade. Swahili civilization flowered between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. It was a period in which trade flourished, largely financed from India and staffed by Arabs, though with much movement back and forth. The Swahili city-states were marked by the coral architecture, particularly
the mosques and palaces. The coast was conquered by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, but in the seventeenth century, Arab traders cooperated with the Swahili in pushing them out of most of the area north of the Mozambique Channel.

Swahili culture looked to the sea rather than the interior. This was largely because of the geography of East Africa. The coast is reasonably well watered, but the hinterland is relatively dry and not very productive. Much of what is now Kenya and Tanzania had little surplus and nothing to trade. The richer and more productive societies tended to be in the better watered lands of the Rift Valley, the interlacustrine area, and the Congo basin. In addition, the presence of sleeping sickness carried by the tsetse fly made it difficult to use beasts of burden. Trade goods had to be head loaded, which meant that only goods with a high value for weight could be traded long distances. Until late in the eighteenth century, no one had the capital or the incentive to develop long distance caravan routes into the far interior. Goods, especially ivory and copper, did move down to the coast, but they did so in a relay trade, in which the more valuable trade goods were exchanged from one area to the next rather than one merchant dominating the whole traffic from source to port. The absence of any significant slave trade in the interior of East Africa meant that most people lived relatively peaceful lives. People tended to live in dispersed homesteads, which suggests they were not threatened by warfare. In West Africa, people commonly clustered together in walled villages to protect themselves from warring invaders.

The Europeans early sought slaves for their colonies largely, especially in Mozambique, which was a base for their trade to India. The Portuguese
purchased slaves there for their Indian colonies. The Dutch purchased small numbers of slaves from Mozambique and Madagascar for the Cape Colony and their Asian colonies. For the Swahili coast, the change came with the development of sugar and coffee plantations on the Mascarene Islands of Reunion and Mauritius. The plantation complex grew slowly until the 1730s when there was an effort to develop a plantation economy. Over two centuries, the Mascarenes imported about 160,000 slaves. A majority came from Madagascar and Mozambique, but from 1735 the French were buying slaves from Kilwa on the southern Swahili coast. During the same period, demand for African slaves was also increasing in the Middle East as the expansion of Russia down to the Black Sea cut off a valued source of slaves. The Ottomans continued to import the Circassian and Georgian women, who were preferred for their harems. The sources for Slavic slaves, were, however, largely closed, and Turks, Arabs, and Iranians thus increasingly looked south.

The forging of long distance trade began in the interior with several ethnic groups who were involved in local trade and steadily extended their expeditions. The Yao, from the Lake Malawi area, originally started trading iron hoes, tobacco, and skins with their neighbors. By the early seventeenth century, they were bringing ivory purchased from other Lake Malawi people to Kilwa. Kilwa had earlier developed as an entrepôt for the trade of gold from Zimbabwe and sustained its position because it was a preferred site for African traders seeking to avoid the taxes levied by the Portuguese at the trading centers on the Zambezi River. At some point, the Yao also began hunting elephants. The Nyamwezi of west central Tanzania crafted a second major trading complex. They started trading iron hoes, salt, and copper locally, but gradually extended their networks down the coast, carrying ivory to Bagamoyo on the coast by the late-eighteenth century. They also developed trade routes extending across Lake Tanganyika into the Congo Basin and north to Lake Victoria. The oral traditions of Buganda tell us that during the reign of Kabaka Kyabuga (c. 1763–1780), Buganda first received Chinese porcelain. This is probably the first arrival of long distance caravans. On the northern coast, Kamba, Arab, and Swahili traders opened up routes that went as far as Lake Turkana and north in to Ethiopia. These routes were primarily concerned with ivory.

East Africa was ripe for dramatic change at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Zanzibar, the largest island along the coast, had become an important center for Arab traders and was claimed by the Sultans of Oman. The Omanis had originally turned to the sea because they inhabited a poor desert land. In 1806, Sayyid Said ibn Sultan (1791–1856) seized power, killing his cousin and rival. Said was a shrewd diplomat who recognized Zanzibar's great economic possibilities. He early established ties with the French and British, cooperating with the British in destroying piracy in the Persian Gulf. In 1818, cloves were first introduced and thrived in the soil and climate of Zanzibar. Said encouraged Omani Arabs to settle on the island and nearby Pemba and grow cloves. Clove production grew so rapidly that Zanzibar soon became the world's largest producer. By 1845, the supply of cloves on the world market was surpassing demand and prices began to
drop, but the clove economy remained important and created a constant
demand for slaves. Said ended up with forty-five clove plantations of his
own. The biggest demand for slaves was for the Zanzibar plantations, but
the systems that supplied those plantations with slave labor could also pro-
vide slaves for other purposes.

Said gradually established a loose control over the coast, recognizing that
high taxes would alienate coastal subjects but prosperity would link them
together. His control of the coast was completed in 1837 when the Mazruis
of Mombasa submitted. He invited Indian financiers to settle in the cities of
the coast as tax farmers. These Indian tax farmers provided capital and
trade goods for traders, both Arab and African. As a result, more and more
caravans penetrated the interior, where they developed bases like Tabora
and Ujiji. Muslim Swahili-speaking towns in western Tanzania that served
as trade depots. These traders are often referred to as Arabs, but by mid-
century, most were men born on the coast who primarily spoke Swahili
and operated largely in a Swahili cultural milieu. The most successful of
these traders was Hamed bin Myammed el-Murjebi, better known as Tippu
Tib. Trading first into Katanga, he shifted his center of operations further
north into the Congo rain forest when ivory started becoming scarce. In
the Maniema area of the upper Congo River, he created a state using slave
warriors and slave officials and rapidly extended his influence further north
to Stanley Falls.

By 1840, Zanzibar had become so wealthy that Said moved his capital to
the island. He was also increasingly recognized diplomatically by European
states. The United States established a consulate in 1836, Great Britain in
1840, and France in 1844. Zanzibar development was in many ways a by-
product of the industrial revolution. Cheaper cloth, guns, and industrial
products facilitated commercial penetration of the interior. At the same
time, the industrial revolution expanded the middle classes of Europe and
North America. Hitherto, the major market for ivory was India. African ivory
is softer than Indian ivory and easier to carve. Increasingly, however, Ameri-
cans and Europeans were using ivory for billiard balls, piano keys, and carv-
ings, all staples of middle class life.

The problem with the ivory, however, was that with more and more effi-
cient guns, elephant populations dropped sharply in one area after another.
Increasingly, slaves became the most important item of trade. The availabil-
ity of cheap slave labor influenced slave use all over East Africa. Plantation
agriculture expanded all along the East African coast, producing grain, ses-
amene, and copra for export largely to Zanzibar and the Middle East. Slave
labor was also important in and around the centers of the trade. At its peak,
100,000 enslaved porters were used on the most important caravan route
in Tanzania. They had to be fed and traders and Swahili settlers preferred
foods with which the slaves were familiar. They thus created plantations to
supply them around Tabora, Ujiji, Tippu Tib’s capital at Kasongo, and along
Lake Malawi. Wherever there was a need for labor, there was recourse to
the slave market.

Increasingly, the traders focused on the quest for slaves. They found
them in the interior societies, which were not well equipped to defend
themselves. The tactics they used varied. Where they found a strong state or an ambitious state builder, they sold him guns. Buganda sold both ivory and slaves and used its increasing military power to conquer other areas and become the most powerful state in what is now Uganda. In northwest Zambia, a small Bemba state developed into an effective military machine. In other areas, traders created small states. A number of Yao chiefs created slave-trading chiefdoms. In southern Katanga, a Nyamwezi trader named Msiri gradually entrenched himself in local society, while he traded slaves, copper, and ivory. He then used a small band of well-armed supporters to impose himself on local chiefs and to establish himself as ruler over a large area. He used both tribute and raids to acquire slaves and other trade goods. In an area further north, where there were no states, Tippu Tib created one. Traders encouraged ambitious chiefs to attack their neighbors. In several cases, they stimulated civil wars that destroyed kingdoms. There were a series of state-builders in western Tanzania, of whom the best known, Mirambo, recruited into his army slaves and *ruga-ruga*, men left rootless by the ravages of war.

In the early part of the century, there was a large export trade to Iran, Arab countries, Madagascar, and to the Indian Ocean islands. The abolition of slavery by Britain in 1833 and France in 1848 closed off key markets, though the French continued for some years to bring indentured laborers to Reunion. The British, however, were using diplomacy and naval power to destroy the maritime slave trade. In 1848, Iran banned naval imports of slaves, and in 1857, the Ottomans banned the African slave trade. These acts were not strictly enforced, but other acts followed and the British made slaving a dangerous proposition. In 1873, Sultan Barghash banned slave exports and, soon after, closed slave markets. In 1876, caravans were forbidden to approach the coast. Markets gradually closed down, but this did not stop the trade. Slaves were cheaper, but they could be sold. Risks were great, but slaves were moved overland or in small boats. Alison Smith has written that “the decade between 1880 and 1890 was perhaps more costly in human life than any that had gone before.”

In West Africa, the trade had developed slowly over several centuries and people learned to defend themselves. In East and Central Africa, it all happened too fast. As early as the 1850s, David Livingstone described villages of burned huts, empty of people except dead bodies. The missionaries that entered the area after his appeal for intervention described caravans of plaintive victims. Some of the missions became refuges for people fleeing the slavers or fleeing slavery. Marcia Wright has collected some of these tales, which describe a desperate search by women for protection, many of whom had been sold, exchanged, or captured repeatedly, and had had as many as ten different masters. The final end of the trade came with colonization in the 1890s, though slavery persisted for some years. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Islam and Antislavery.

**Further Readings:** Alpers, Edward A. *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century.* London: Heinemann, 1975; Cooper, Frederick. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of
Jonathan Edwards was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, and was graduated from Yale College in 1720. He preached and taught in New York and Connecticut, finally settling in Northampton, Massachusetts, and assuming a pulpit there as senior minister in 1729. He led successful revivals, but his pastorate was controversial and his congregation requested his resignation in 1748. He was dismissed in 1750 and assumed a pulpit in a frontier settlement, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where Housatonic Indians were among his congregants. In 1757, he was invited to sit as president of the College of New Jersey, but complications caused by a smallpox inoculation led to his death soon after he began his new duties. Some of his writings were published posthumously, and he is usually regarded as one of America's greatest theologians. Readers and scholars have usually concerned themselves with Edwards's philosophically minded theology and his role in theological disputes concerning not only revivals but also the nature of human freedom, but a fuller reckoning considers him as both a slaveholder and a critic of the Atlantic slave trade.

Slaves were available for purchase in New England in the first half of the eighteenth century. The first record of Edwards's purchase of a slave dates from 1731, when he traveled to Newport, Rhode Island, an important entrepôt in the Atlantic slave trade. He owned several slaves in his lifetime. Little is known about them, although the names of several of whom he acquired survive in his papers—Venus, Leah, Joab and Rose Binney, Joseph and Sue, and Titus. Moreover, Edwards explicitly defended the ownership of slaves when one of his fellow Congregational ministers was attacked by his congregation on several grounds, including the man's possession of a slave.

Nonetheless, Edwards laid the groundwork for later abolitionism. First, he criticized the Atlantic slave trade and argued that it should be banned. He recognized the extraordinary cruelty of the trade and he insisted that no one had the right to seize and sell African captives. It may seem paradoxical in the twenty-first century that a defender of slavery criticized the slave trade, but in fact many early abolitionists developed their views initially by objecting to the trade in slaves, then to the institution of slavery itself. Thus Edwards participated in at least the first step of the historical growth of abolitionism. Second, he launched a theological argument that would become influential among Christian abolitionists in the second half of the eighteenth century. He stated that God's allowance of the Israelites'
slavetrading and slaveholding was not an authorization of Christians’ participation in the modern trade. For the dispensation of the New Testament barred the trade. Later abolitionists would develop this argument in debates with their proslavery opponents, who pointed to the Israelites as slavetraders and slaveholders as a justification for trading and owning black people. In a context in which biblical precedents were crucial, the Edwardsian argument against relying on Old Testament guidelines about slavery was a key element in abolitionism. Third, Edwards asseverated that in the millennium (a thousand-year era of peace described in the Book of Revelation) blacks and Indians would be the equals of whites in Christian faith. This pronouncement, which appeared in The History of the Work of Redemption (1757), set equality as a goal and suggested an apocalyptic urgency that later abolitionists would feel quite sharply.

Some of Edwards’s followers, most notably Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (his son), Samuel Hopkins (his literary executor), Levi Hart (a Connecticut congregational minister), and Lemuel Haynes (a black Congregational minister who served in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York), were among the most committed foes of the slave trade and slavery in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. However, some nineteenth-century Edwardsians did support slavery, while others were only mildly antislavery, advocating a gradual diminution of slavery and the removal of free blacks to Liberia. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery; New Divinity.


John Saillant

Edwards, Jonathan, Jr. (1745–1801)

Jonathan Edwards, Jr., son and namesake of the famed New England theologian, Jonathan Edwards, emerged during the War of Independence as a major critic of the slave trade and American slavery. During the war, he co-authored, with Ebenezer Baldwin, a set of articles noting that the patriots rising up against tyranny and oppression were inconsistent in tolerating slavetrading and slaveholding in their own polities. The articles also countered such standard arguments for the legitimacy of slavery as that American slaves had been captives of African wars. In 1788, Edwards, Jr., and other Congregational ministers successfully petitioned the Connecticut legislature to move against the slave trade. After the patriot victory, he published The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave-Trade, and of the Slavery of the Africans (1792), which played an important role in the nearly successful effort to abolish slavery in Connecticut in 1794. His views showed considerable sympathy for the sufferings of slaves, but he also expressed fear and disgust at the prospect of blacks and whites producing mixed-race
children. He favored missions to Africa, which supported the growing feeling that free African Americans should be expatriated to Africa or the West Indies. Edwards did not live to see the founding of the expatriationist **American Colonization Society** (1817), but his writings helped set the stage for it. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery; New Divinity.


*John Saillant*

**Emancipation War of 1831–1832 (Jamaica).** See Baptist War

**The Enlightenment and Antislavery**

Whether as a transitional period bridging the confessional era of early modernity and the secular liberalism of modernity or as an epoch in its own right, the Enlightenment has been an unusually demanding historical category to define. The difficulty of conceptualizing the Enlightenment becomes ironic in light of the fact that eighteenth-century European culture seemed distinctly aware of having entered a new era. The wars of religion had drawn to a close; certainty was being pursued along lines that favored reason against tradition; and fresh conceptions of humanity were beginning to replace religious dogmas of ingrained sinfulness. The concomitant emergence of individual liberties corresponded to a radical redrawing of the social order in some locales.

Skepticism toward claims of inherited authority, sacred or political, originated as a philosophical method in the mid-seventeenth century as a way to arrive at truths as indisputable as those of geometry. Although the geometric method may not have been entirely successful in setting social values within a framework guaranteeing rigorous certainty, the appeal to reason characteristic of seventeenth-century thought cast a shadow of suspicion over various institutions' claims to uncritical obedience. Directed principally at monarchical authority, assertions of personal autonomy nevertheless put various forms of hierarchical social order into question.

More than most other epochs, the Enlightenment was marked by a general sense of being a new era, with breakthroughs in science and politics adding to a sense of excitement in the world of ideas. With much of the creativity occurring outside of academic institutions, freedom from authoritarian restraints and methodological boundaries facilitated a productivity not easily contained within the modern disciplinary divisions of philosophy, anthropology, history, and the like. The construction of social institutions was one topic that drew concerted efforts from polymaths and specialists alike.

Among the more vexed issues during the long eighteenth century was the question of equality of persons. Inequality among peoples having been recognized as one of the residual injustices of the former social order, the construction of an intentionally optimistic anthropology gave new emphasis to questions of natural and cultural differences within humanity. Seeking as scientific an understanding of the human condition as possible,
philosophers freed from the restraints of revealed religion began to wrestle with the possibility of human freedom in both individual and social realms. When applied to individual experience, freedom was most readily understood as the condition for rational moral conduct. On the social level, the idea of freedom raised a question about relative degrees of autonomy within an orderly community: Granting that individual freedom is necessarily subordinated to the needs of the commonwealth, are there any legitimate social conditions under which a person might have no freedom at all?

The consensus answer to this question was predictably in the negative, but correcting the scandal of slavery, a necessary step in moving human freedom from the individual level to the societal one, demanded a more activist rhetoric than philosophers had tended to employ. Yet it was philosopher-statesmen, whose thought may have been derivative but whose public work gave them positions of political influence, who inaugurated the long process toward universal emancipation.

**Principles**

With methods borrowed from mathematics and influenced by Newtonian physics and optics, “philosophical” in the sense of “scientific” became a general rubric for early-modern social theory. Unity of knowledge and confidence in the potential for rational certainty were unquestionable axioms underlying all serious inquiry. The first steps toward the ethical naturalism of the nineteenth century were taken in these attempts to ground normative claims in empirical observation of the natural world and of humans unrestrained by cultural conventions. The “state of nature” evoked by Thomas Hobbes in chapter 13 of *Leviathan* asserted the essential equality of all humans, traits that would be ennobled a century later in the “noble savage” associated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s idealization of Native Americans.

In tandem with the qualified romanticization of indigenous peoples came an awakened sense of the distinction of natural and cultural realms, a distant legacy of the classical division of experience into *nomos* (law) and *physis* (nature). Scientific laws began to be recognized as interpretive constructions intended to clarify an unchangeable natural order, independent of cultural norms, which, having been human products in the first place, remained continually subject to adjustment and even replacement by institutional or revolutionary means. If human nature could be understood “scientifically” (in the above sense), then the necessary conditions for a full human life (such as freedom) could be established in a form invulnerable to social customs.

Whether in the realm of ideas or the political environment, leading figures of the Enlightenment offered bold reappraisals of an order so entrenched by tradition as to have been beyond questioning. The questioning spirit exemplified in the methodological skepticism of seventeenth-century philosophers found new footing in the critical scrutiny which thinkers in the eighteenth century applied to social institutions. Conceptual foundations of long-standing privileges, such as the idea of the divine right of kings, were exposed under the light of reason and
dismissed along with other notions regarded as relics of archaic religiosity. Confidence in the seemingly certain triumph of rationality over “superstition” (identified rather loosely with divine revelation) demanded that any claims to truth be tested according to the rigorous criteria of empirical science. And ideas that failed that standard of verification were to be dismissed unless (as in the case of certain religious constraints on morality) they served some useful, and preferably vital, social purpose.

The language and rigor of mathematics, the common idiom of the Rationalists, and their methodological criterion for certainty, never lost their appeal to later pursuers of higher levels of objectivity, and as a result the boundary between the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment is particularly difficult to draw. Historians of philosophy have begun to recognize a unified early-modern period in thought, just as certain historians of political theory tend to see the period from the English Civil War to the French Revolution as a single extended episode in the gestation of the concept of rights.

The language of rights, displacing early-modern doctrines of political duty, rested on new definitions of the human condition, necessary replacements for the seemingly outmoded notions of fallenness (original sin) and divine order of society (through church and monarchy). Obedience to political institutions was accordingly understood as conditional, with the service of the common good the operative factor in determining whether the institution was just or unjust in its demands. Increasingly over time, the criterion for legitimacy lay in the extent to which human dignity was protected and fostered. The discourse of human dignity developed slowly and differently in the separate regions in which Enlightenment thought flourished.

**Great Britain**

In the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), we find an early statement of a social-contract theory of the state that would come to fruition a century later. Hobbes conceives of the state as the collective embodiment of the will of each individual member, with sovereign power concentrated either in a single person or a legislative body. Hobbes narrows the definition of liberty so as to preserve the full sovereignty of the ruler, and as a result no person can claim to possess the same degree of liberty that the state holds. Nevertheless, a person taken in captivity, and thus deprived of the freedom to accept the sovereignty to which he or she is subject, is entitled to escape by any means whatever (Leviathan 2.2.21).

A more direct advocate of individual liberty, John Locke (1632–1704) propounds a definition of the (secular) state as a protector of the freedom and happiness of its citizens, ultimately the true sovereigns in a democratic government. Condemning slavery as a “vile and miserable estate,” Locke argues in the first of his *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) that ownership of persons is contrary to the English spirit. Holding, moreover, that freedom and equality are the property of all persons in the “state of nature,” Locke asserts that “The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges everyone, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought
to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions” (Second Treatise, §6). Locke sees slavery as a violation of the “freedom of nature” that is bound only to the law of nature. To relinquish such freedom is to make life unworthy of living (§§22–23).

Nevertheless, Locke was also the author of rules for governing the American colony of Carolina (still undivided), which protected the rights of slaveowners, and he himself was an investor in the Royal African Company, which held a virtual monopoly on trade in African slaves. The contradiction between the ideal and the actual state of affairs is resolved, not altogether satisfactorily, by his statement that taking slaves as prisoners and exchanging them in commerce is a matter of fact, while the state of nature is a possibly unrealizable ideal.

The Scotsman Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), an ordained Presbyterian and professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow, held that persons possess a moral sense, alongside the faculties of sense perception, which produces pleasing and unpleasant sensations of particular moral (or immoral) acts. Attributing to all persons a desire for freedom and property, Hutcheson argues that a sense of right and wrong is present in all, and that no person willingly relinquishes freedom. In this view Hutcheson contradicts the Aristotelian view, dominant throughout Western thought, that some persons are slaves by nature, destined for subservient roles on account of their limited capacities. For Hutcheson, humans are more alike in their feelings than in their reasoning abilities, and the feeling of injustice is greater than any rationalization of slavery. Such thought, typical of the “common sense” philosophers in Scotland and England, validated an abhorrence toward an institution that before then may have seemed too entrenched to eradicate.

Another Scotsman, David Hume (1711–76), whose writings extend from a History of England (completed in 1762) to the magisterial Treatise of Human Nature (1740), held hierarchical views of racial differences that could have been used to support (whatever Hume’s actual intentions) the subjugation of persons. In a famous note to a 1753 essay, Hume stated “Negroes and all other species of men ... to be naturally inferior to the whites,” a claim suggesting a hierarchy of races. After 1770, Hume changed his position somewhat, though he still held that blacks were inferior to whites.

Like Hutcheson, Henry Home (commonly known as Lord Kames, 1696–1782) defines humanity as inherently social and benevolent. Arguing (against Hume) that a desire for justice, and a sense of right and wrong, are innate in persons rather than social conventions or constructions, Kames holds that no society can have some members preying upon others, for that diminishes each individual’s “authority as the director of their conduct” (Foundations and Principles of Morality, ch. 3).

France

Considering the fluidity of the concepts of nationality and political identity during the eighteenth century, it is understandable that social thinkers adopted a comparative approach in their explorations of statecraft. They
sought ideal forms of government as well as the pragmatic conditions for the realization of such ideals. One thinker who balanced absolute forms against relative conditions was Charles de Montesquieu (1689–1755), whose *Spirit of the Laws* (1748) was one of the most influential texts of the American founding fathers. On the basis of extensive travels, historical study, and observation of what he calls “the nature of things,” Montesquieu presents his concept of political virtue in a republican setting, defined as a love of homeland and of equality. Political virtue for Montesquieu expresses itself in love of one’s country and of its laws.

While never ambiguous in his preference for democratic rule, Montesquieu recognizes that monarchy and aristocracy are legitimate forms of government, each of which is capable of nurturing political virtue as long as the ruler is guided by a proper sense of honor (a quality Montesquieu finds lacking in despotism). But equality is compromised in the granting of privileges and exceptions that institutionalize a hierarchical ordering of persons. At the same time, he cautions against any radical egalitarianism in which a citizen openly opposes an elected representative. Montesquieu recognizes that republicanism is an organic unity, and political virtue demands adherence to the common good.

According to Montesquieu, the common good is determined by several factors, including economic and climatic conditions, and in some states one finds slavery an established institution. Montesquieu exposes the illegitimacy of the principles with which slavery had been justified and argues that in a democratic government, in which no persons are to be debased and none is to have power over another, slavery has no place whatsoever. Nevertheless, in states with large slave populations, caution is necessary to prevent hardship to the republic as a whole (*Laws*, pt. 3, bk. 15, ch. 18). Manifesting his characteristic spirit of moderation, Montesquieu enjoys the moral luxury of condemning slavery in general, while allowing it under particular conditions.

A huge step forward within only two decades, the social program crafted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) idealizes the primordial state of nature, diagnoses the causes of the inequality of his own time, and presents a solution that promises universal freedom. Intrigued by the not-yet-romanticized depictions of indigenous peoples, Rousseau extrapolated a state of nature in which all individuals, free of cultural restraints, enjoyed some primitive degree of freedom. Competitive tendencies and the exercise of force over others resulted in the social stratification Rousseau saw in the world around him, inequalities he felt could only be corrected by a return to a second state of nature. Moral or political inequality, in Rousseau’s view (in contrast to natural inequality, or innate differences in ability), is found in a number of forms, the most egregious being that of slavery insofar as it reduces persons to property. Seeing the only corrective to the violence and corruption of culture in a return to a second state of nature, Rousseau advocates a collective sovereignty in which the “general will” holds the only coercive power and within which all individuals enjoy the greatest possible freedom. In Rousseau’s ideal world, moral and political equality not only
replaces social inequality but also compensates for the natural inequality that allowed for the dominance of one person over another in the original state of nature.

Germany

The desire for order led thinkers like Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) to attempt to reconcile traditional concepts of divine justice and omnipotence with the experience of evil, attempts which encouraged complacency rather than activism. Acknowledging that there are evils in the world—metaphysical (incompleteness of all creatures), physical (pain and suffering), and moral (sin)—Leibniz claims that these have not been divinely willed, but rather are permitted for the sake of future goodness and perfection. Hence human bondage is a recognized evil, but also a condition motivating free persons to strive so as to empower all with freedom. Accusations of moral passivity, though common at the time, are not entirely accurate for Leibniz; but on the other hand, he was also no social revolutionary.

Mediating positions between traditional religion and revolutionary secularism were proposed throughout the eighteenth century. For example, in the German Enlightenment, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), saw biblical revelation as God's manual for conduct, the precepts of which might be explained by human reason but could only be demonstrated in moral action. A common theme among German authors in the latter half of the century was the “education of humanity,” generally understood not as a formal pedagogical agenda but as a program for recognizing and developing the moral worth of persons.

Enlightenment thought reached its crest in the work of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who inaugurated a new era in philosophy and is said by some to have begun an equally distinctive tradition in German political theory. Kant's assumption that freedom and equality are necessary conditions for authentic moral activity is not hedged by theoretical qualifications that one is free within one's station in life, be it servile or sovereign. Rather, Kant insists that all persons are to be free and equal within society and possess within themselves full moral autonomy. The proper work of a state is to ensure and protect the freedom and equality of its members, and even the citizens of a nation conquered in war are not to be subjected to slavery (Metaphysics of Morals, §58).

In a number of works Kant displays an optimistic view of history, one that saw the rise of constitutional democracy throughout the world as the inevitable progress of human freedom and equality. The expansion of popular education, together with the extension of freedom and equality, guaranteed a new era, in Kant's view, in the moral goodness of humanity. With particular regard to slavery, some of that potential for goodness was realized in the century after Kant's death.

Ralph Keen
Equiano, Olaudah (c. 1745–1797)

Olaudah Equiano was an emancipated African, abolitionist, writer, and explorer who became famous for his 1789 autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Equiano gained fame in the Atlantic World for his ardent opposition to the transatlantic slave trade and to slavery. Equiano wrote *The Narrative* to illuminate for European audiences the experiences of an enslaved African. He hoped that raising awareness about the inhumane slave trade would lead to its demise. Equiano’s objectives were achieved when English-speaking anti-slavery groups and abolitionists adopted his detailed autobiography to demonstrate vividly the evils of the transatlantic slave trade and the plantation slavery of the Americas. However, there was much controversy over Equiano’s narrative. Several men sought to discredit the narrative, accusing Equiano of lying about his African birth. This dispute continues in related current scholarship.

Equiano wrote an elegant and profitable narrative despite never having had a formal education. According to Equiano, he was born in Essaka, present-day Nigeria, in 1745. At the age of eleven, he was kidnapped and sold into the British slave trade. Slave traders initially brought Equiano to Barbados, but he was later sold in Virginia and was given the name Gustavus
Vassa. In 1766, he acquired freedom on the island of Montserrat. After emancipation, Equiano hired himself out as a seaman and worked for a brief time on a plantation scheme on the Mosquito Coast, present-day Nicaragua. Over the course of his life, Equiano traveled to North America, the circum-Caribbean, Europe, and the North Pole.

Although Equiano did not live to see the British slave trade abolished in 1807, both he and his autobiography were key forces in swaying the British public against the slave trade. Equiano published nine successful editions of The Narrative. Each edition expanded readership including new subscriptions from very influential politicians, aristocrats, religious authorities, and others in Great Britain and America. Many readers were deeply moved by Equiano’s ordeals as a slave and regretted British complicity in it. Equiano revealed the details of his capture and enslavement in Africa as a child, the horrors of the Middle Passage, and his work as an enslaved sailor. While Equiano was not condemned to plantation slave labor, he witnessed the ghastly living conditions forced on the enslaved onboard ship, on plantation estates, and in urban settings in the Americas. Equiano’s devotion to Christianity—he was baptized in 1759—made his narrative even more credible to a broad British audience. Equiano expressed his desire to return to West Africa in The Narrative, and he frequently referred to many of the enslaved as his countrymen. In 1779, Equiano requested permission from the Bishop of London to accompany Governor Macnamara’s mission to West Africa. Equiano’s role in the mission was to Christianize West Africans, but he was denied the opportunity. In 1786, Equiano joined Henry Smeathmen’s multiracial mission to settle London’s black poor at Sierra Leone. The Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor approved the mission. However, in 1787 he was dismissed from the mission. Equiano believed that West Africans had viable economic and commercial alternatives to continued participation in the slave trade as a source of wealth. Rejection did not stop Equiano from accomplishing his personal religious and political goals. He continued his protest against the slave trade and slavery into the 1790s. He assisted various settlement missions to Sierra Leone from England, and he completed his autobiography.

Equiano long promoted the benefits of interracial relationships and, in 1792, he married an English woman, Susanna Cullen. They had two daughters, Ann Mary and Joanna Vassa. Joanna outlived her family and inherited Equiano’s considerable estate in 1816.

Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in

Slavery had been important in Ethiopia from its earliest days into the twentieth century. Slaves were used domestically in the military, harems, agriculture, mining, and government, while many others were sold in foreign markets. Ethiopian slaves could be found in Arabia even before the birth of Islam in the seventh century. Ethiopian girls were highly prized at Constantinople, the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere. Some slaves were dispatched to India where they served in different capacities, including as soldiers. There was still a market for them in Hijaz, Arabia, until slavery was abolished in Ethiopia in the twentieth century.

Why did slavery persist for such a long time in Ethiopia despite the institution being proscribed during the first half of the nineteenth century by European Powers? Why did it endure beyond the First World War in some parts of Africa, despite the European claim to “civilizing” Africa by ending slavery there? What efforts did the Ethiopian rulers themselves make to end this practice?

Nadine Hunt

Initial efforts to abolish slavery in Ethiopia go as far back as the early 1850s when emperor Teodros outlawed the slave trade in his country, however, without much effect. Only the presence of the British in the Red Sea resulted in any real pressure on the illegal trade. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Ethiopia provided an ever increasing number of slaves for the slave trade as the geographical focus of the trade had shifted from the Atlantic basin to Ethiopia, the Nile basin and East Africa down to Mozambique. The nineteenth century witnessed unprecedented growth in slavery in the country, especially in southern Oromo towns, which expanded as the influx of slaves grew. Even in the Christian highlands, especially in the province of Shoa, the number of slaves was quite large by mid-century. From governors to the more humble farmers throughout the country, one could find slaves of both sexes in almost every house. The aristocracy, quite naturally, had the largest number of slaves.

The difficult economic situation in Ethiopia in the late 1910s forced government officials and their followers, most of whom were unpaid and forced to live off the land, to turn to slave raiding, which depopulated some areas of southwest Ethiopia. Yet, the British did little to counteract this turn of events because they did not wish to weaken the local government, which was considered to be too feeble to attack the slave trade on its own. Many Ethiopians rejected abolition because it violated age-old traditions and, anyway, could not be easily enforced throughout the country without likely provoking an uprising. Slavery was deeply entrenched in the social system and many from wealthy aristocrats to small farmers benefited from it. Moreover, it sometimes masqueraded as forced labor, contract labor and debt bondage, making it all the more difficult to extirpate. Rather than setting a good example, Lej Yyasu, the heir of King Menelik II who had died in 1913 and who would be deposed in 1916, had, in fact, amassed a great number of slaves for himself. Not surprisingly, Menelik’s abolition decrees accomplished very little, if anything. By the 1920s, the many slaves imported from Ethiopia continued to be sold openly in Hijaz slave markets in Saudi Arabia.

In 1919, when Ras Tafari, the future Emperor Haile Selassie, was one of the three regents of Ethiopia, the country’s application to join the League of Nations was rejected because slavery was still legal within its boundaries. Indeed, slave raiding and trading remained rampant in the western and southwestern parts of the country. Nevertheless, by 1923, Ethiopia had been unanimously accepted into the League because it had supposedly abolished the slave trade. Ras Tafari, who wanted to bequeath Ethiopia a legacy of pride and national purpose as a modernizing nation, outlawed slave-raiding across the Ethiopian-Sudanese borders. In March 1924, he went further still and emancipated all current slaves and their children and established government bureaus to facilitate this process. These laws were not necessarily enforced, and it is very misleading to claim that Ethiopia abolished slavery in 1924; far from achieving abolition, these measures often simply drove the trade and raiding underground.

Other forces also prompted the passing of these laws. For example, Ethiopia applied for admission to the League in 1923 with the support of the French because it hoped to safeguard its independence against British and
Italian intrigues. It desperately sought to remove any pretexts that could be used to compromise its sovereignty. The **Anti-Slavery Society** had succeeded in bringing the issue of international labor abuse before the League of Nations. The League appointed the Temporary Slavery Commission in 1924 to inquire into slavery worldwide. The British, who kept a presence in Ethiopia and had a consul in Maji, revealed little information on slavery and slave trading in Ethiopia as demanded by the League.

Despite apparent measures to the contrary, slavery continued to be legal in Ethiopia even with its signing of the international **Slavery Convention of 1926**, which defined slavery as the “status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.” This convention had been established amid multiple compromises and concessions among various European Powers, which effectively neutralized any of its powers of enforcement. It was no more effective than had been the 1924 reforms in Ethiopia, which had been designed to simply deflect criticism from the Ethiopian government. In 1931, Haile Selassie, newly crowned as emperor, invited the Anti-Slavery Society to send a delegation for advice and consultation purposes. This was yet another move motivated by Ethiopian desire to maintain its independence. British advice in 1932 led to little beyond a promise from Selassie to end slavery within a couple of decades. In the meantime, slavery as well as slave-raiding and trading continued, especially in the south-western provinces, the main sources for slaves destined for local or foreign markets in Arabia. Selassie went on to establish a new Slavery Department with an Englishman as adviser.

Only on the eve of the Italian invasion did Selassie move against slavery. By then, however, it was too late, for the Italians justified their aggression against Ethiopia in 1935–36 on the basis of ending slavery. They claimed to have liberated slaves, especially in the Oromo-Sidamo areas, and their occupation, despite its cruelties, did lead many tenants to escape the Ethiopian system of bondage. After the defeat of the Italians by the Allied Forces in 1941 and the restoration of Selassie to the Ethiopian throne, it was no longer possible to continue with the old slavery and servitude. Haile Selassie issued a Proclamation on August 27, 1942 abolishing slavery. The Proclamation spelled out alternative punishments, including possible death, for anyone convicted of transporting or trading in slaves. This measure finally concluded Ethiopia's long struggle to abolish slavery. **See also** Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; East African Slave Trade; North Africa and Abolition.


**Abdin Chande**

**Evangelical Protestantism.** See Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism

**Exodus.** See Book of Exodus
Federalists and Antislavery

The relationship between the Federalist Party and opposition to slavery was complicated and ambiguous. Many leading Federalists worked for slavery’s abolition, and the antebellum generation of abolitionists drew inspiration and nourishment from Federalism. But other Federalists could hardly be called abolitionists, and they and their traditions also nurtured antiabolitionism in the antebellum era.

In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, Northern Federalists joined, and at times led, efforts to abolish slavery. Their efforts and success varied from state to state. Among the most effective were New York’s Federalists, who formed the vanguard in securing a gradual abolition law in 1799 and in defending African-Americans’ rights thereafter. Connecticut Federalism boasted the likes of Theodore Dwight, brother of Yale president Timothy Dwight. Theodore advocated the immediate abolition of slavery in the late eighteenth century and was a leading Federalist editor in the early nineteenth century.

But Massachusetts was the heart of Federalism, and most Massachusetts Federalists espoused a more political form of antislavery. There was a wing of the party, mostly comprised of preachers and some editors, that offered a moral critique of Southern slavery. But Federalist politicians in Massachusetts reviled slavery largely because it inflated the political power of their partisan rivals. If the Federalists’ power base was New England, the Republicans’ base was in the South. Out of national power after 1801, New England Federalists railed against “Virginia influence” in the federal government. That influence, they argued, was augmented by the Constitution’s clause granting representation in Congress and the Electoral College for three fifths of each slave inhabitant of the state in which they lived. Accordingly, as Republican policies heightened Federalist partisan and sectional grievances, their opposition to “slave representation” became more pronounced. It reached its zenith during the War of 1812, as the people joined the politicians in calling for the abolition of slave representation.

The Federalists thus kept slavery on the table in national politics. But the effectiveness of New England Federalists’ sectionalist appeals in politics
prefigured the Free Soil and Republican parties more than the antebellum abolitionists. Yet Federalism echoed in the program and rhetoric of those abolitionists. Both New England Federalists and abolitionists decried the Constitution's empowerment of slaveholders. They both urged Yankees to stand firm against slaveholders in defense of Northern rights. And the abolitionists carried on the religious Federalists' characterization of slavery as a national sin.

This was so partly because Federalism shaped many individual abolitionists. A teenage William Lloyd Garrison, for instance, served as an apprentice to Ephraim W. Allen, a leading Federalist printer in Newburyport, Massachusetts. In Allen's employ, Garrison immersed himself in Federalist political writings, which gave him a religious and sectional vision of the South and slavery, a deep ambivalence at best about the Constitution and Union, and some strident language in which to express such a worldview. In 1814, for instance, Allen's newspaper printed an article arguing that if New England's sufferings under the Republicans had "been foreshown to the men of New-England" when they helped draft and ratify the Constitution, "they would as soon have made a covenant with death, as a covenant of union with the states which have thus wantonly and cruelly oppressed them."

Other antebellum abolitionists also had deep roots in New England Federalism. The very names of two important abolitionists proclaimed these connections. The "P" in Elijah P. Lovejoy stood for "Parish," his name being a memorial to Elijah Parish, a Federalist preacher and sectional firebrand whose sermons scourged the South for the sin of slavery. Theodore Dwight Weld, like Lovejoy the son of a Congregationalist minister, was named after Theodore Dwight.

Multiple links of this sort are suggestive. But it was not until they came into contact with other influences that most of these people became abolitionists. Lovejoy, for instance, entered into an array of reform causes in the late 1820s and early 1830s. But he did not move toward abolitionism until he underwent evangelical conversion. When Garrison left Allen's employ in 1826, he pursued all manner of Christian reform activities. It was a chance meeting with Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lundy in 1828 to which Garrison attributed his "conversion to abolitionism." The opposition of free people of color to the American Colonization Society pushed him beyond the colonizationist bias Allen helped instill in him. The immediatist Garrison had transcended his Federalist heritage in many respects, a process made possible by other influences.

Garrison's experience was not unique; Federalism made more colonizationists than abolitionists. This was true especially of the Congregationalist ministry, who continued to see the American Colonization Society as fully in keeping with their emphasis on godly reform and benevolence, promising gradual abolition without upheaval. Thus, even as abolitionists appropriated the ministers' moral urgency and religious rhetoric, they found themselves at odds with their more moderate position.

Abolitionists also contended with outright opposition from some of the remnants and descendants of Federalism, for this tradition produced at least
as many antiabolitionists as abolitionists. For instance, in 1835, leading Massachusetts Federalist Harrison Gray Otis denounced the abolitionists as revolutionaries. Garrison, who had once idolized Otis, accused him of apostasy from the Federalist cause, but Otis represented Federalist conservatism and was far from alone. Sidney Edwards Morse, author of an important pamphlet during the War of 1812 attacking the expansion of Southern territory and power, emerged in antebellum years as a powerful opponent of the Garrisonians. Caleb Cushing, an acquaintance of Garrison’s from Newburyport, prided himself on his moderate stance on questions related to slavery. As Attorney General of the United States in the 1850s, he enforced the Fugitive Slave Law and defended the Dred Scott decision. He carried forward the Federalists’ emphasis on order.

The Federalists’ influence on antislavery, then, was more than many have realized but was also complex. Their tendency to emphasize the political aspects of slavery had wide appeal during their time but did not entitle most of them to be called abolitionists. Neither was the New England Federalists’ influence on the next generation of antislavery simple or easily discerned. Yet the Federalist echoes were there nonetheless. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery; Garrisonians.


Matthew Mason

Fee, John Gregg (1816–1901)

John G. Fee is the best-known abolitionist to be born—and remain—in the South where he founded Berea College in Kentucky in 1866, an antislavery, anti-sectarian, and fully integrated school open to the poor, blacks, and women. In addition to an antislavery manual written in 1854, Fee also
wrote an autobiography, a tract on the sinfulness of slave-holding, the folly of colonization as a plan of emancipation, and a reminder to Christians of their duty to eschew fellowship with slaveholders. His writings and publications provide insight into race relations and evangelical abolitionism in the United States during the nineteenth century.

Fee was born in Bracken County, Kentucky. John Fee, Jr., his father, was a slaveholder who eventually disinherited him because of his support for abolitionism. His mother, Sarah Gregg, was descended from non-slaveholding Pennsylvania Quakers. Fee’s conversion to Christianity occurred when Joseph Corliss, a Methodist teacher, started a subscription school in 1830 and boarded in the Fee home. Determined to become a minister, Fee attended nearby Augusta College and then went to Miami University (Ohio). In 1842, Fee entered Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati where he was converted to abolitionism. He married abolitionist Matilda Hamilton in 1844. In 1848, he received a commission of $200 from the American Missionary Association to organize antislavery churches in Kentucky and committed himself to Congregationalism. Determined to establish a colony for freed slaves and an antislavery school, he founded the village of Berea, Madison County, Kentucky, in 1854 on land owned by fellow abolitionist Cassius M. Clay. Provoked by Fee’s antislavery rhetoric and the fears ignited by John Brown’s raid, proslavery mobs finally drove Fee and his supporters into exile in Ohio.

In 1864, he returned to Kentucky and began a ministry among the freedpeople at Camp Nelson, located in Jessamine County and established in 1863. When Kentucky blacks began to be recruited into the Union Army in 1864, the camp became a processing center as well as a munitions supply depot. Fee was instrumental in getting Camp Nelson declared a refugee camp for slave women and children related to Union soldiers. Dividing his time between Camp Nelson and Berea, Fee oversaw the chartering of Berea College in 1866, which was supported by the American Missionary Association. The first college class was enrolled in 1869. Influenced by his experiences at Camp Nelson, Fee founded Berea College on ideals of racial equality and social justice. Berea College remained racially integrated until the passage of the Day Law in 1904, which prohibited racially mixed schools in Kentucky.


Jayne R. Beilke

Field Order No. 15

Abolitionists referred often to the debt that slaveholders owed their bondsmen and women for centuries of uncompensated labor. As the Civil
War drew to a close, Union General William T. Sherman issued Field Order No. 15—an order cited repeatedly by reparationists as the origin of the U.S. government’s promise of “forty acres and a mule.” Proponents of reparations have argued that the government reneged on Sherman’s wartime pledge to compensate the ex-slaves with land and farm animals. Reparationists continue to cite “forty acres and a mule” as justification for their appeals for a broad range of compensation—from cash payments to tax credits—for the descendants of America’s 4 million black slaves.

On January 16, 1865, three months before Appomattox, Sherman issued his famous Special Field Order No. 15. This order set aside “the islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John’s River, Florida,” for the exclusive settlement of slave refugees. Sherman instructed General Rufus Saxton to grant each head of a black family not more than forty acres of land and to “furnish . . . subject to the approval of the President of the United States, a possessory title.”

By June 1865, Saxton reported that approximately 40,000 blacks had settled on about 400,000 acres of land on what became known as the Sherman Reservation. Sherman authorized Saxton to loan the black families farm animals—decrepit creatures too broken down for military service. These presumably were the “mules” intended to work the proverbial “forty acres.” In the summer and fall of 1865, however, President Andrew Johnson essentially reversed the government’s policy of granting “forty acres and a mule” to the freedpeople. He pardoned former Confederates and ordered the restoration of all property except that sold under a court decree. Few of the freedpeople who had claimed farms in the Sherman Reservation were allowed to retain their land.

Later events—creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen’s Bureau) in March 1865 and the passage of the Southern Homestead Act in June 1866—further complicated the role of the Federal government in distributing land and farm animals to the freedpeople. The government authorized the Freedmen’s Bureau to lease, not grant outright, “not more than forty acres” of abandoned or confiscated lands to freedmen with the option to “purchase the land and receive such title thereto as the United States can convey.” The Homestead Act set aside public land in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi, for purchase by the freedpeople for a $5 fee. The available land, however, was generally of inferior quality and the freedmen lacked sufficient capital to purchase implements and to farm the land properly. When, in 1876, Congress repealed the Homestead Act, blacks cultivated only several thousands acres, mostly in Florida.

For his part, Sherman denied any role in misleading the freedpeople in his Field Order No. 15. In his memoirs Sherman recalled that “the military authorities at that day . . . had a perfect right to grant the possession of any vacant land to which they could extend military protection, but we did not undertake to give a fee-simple title; and all that was designed by these special field orders was to make temporary provisions for the freedmen and their families during the rest of the war, or until Congress should take
action in the premises.” Sherman added that Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton approved his field order before he announced it.

Though some Radical Republicans, including Thaddeus Stevens and George W. Julian, supported confiscation of Southern plantations with hopes of reforming the South’s social and economic system, most nineteenth-century Americans held private property too sacred to endorse widespread land redistribution. In the end, Congress failed to pass legislation certifying Sherman’s field order—a military order designed to meet the exigencies of war, not peace. Today reparationists point to Sherman’s Field Order No. 15 and “forty acres and a mule” as symbols of the government’s broken promises and the ex-slaves’ shattered dreams.


*John David Smith*

**Finney, Charles Grandison (1792–1875)**

Charles Grandison Finney was a Protestant evangelist whose dynamic preaching style and liberal theology galvanized the antislavery movement in the antebellum North. Born in Litchfield County, Connecticut, Finney moved to western New York as a child where he remained and eventually trained in law. Converted to evangelical Protestantism in 1821, he turned his energies toward the ministry. In 1826, Finney began a series of emotional religious revivals across upstate New York that earned the region the nickname, the “burned-over district.” Because abolitionist efforts increased dramatically following these spiritual campaigns, Finney is often credited with inspiring the entire movement. His influence, however, was indirect. Rather than participating directly in abolitionist activities, he provided antislavery activists with a theological foundation for their views.

Finney’s importance to the antislavery movement lay in his theology and his remarkable ability to convert individuals to evangelical faith. Repudiating the orthodox Calvinist doctrine that claimed human beings were passive recipients of God’s saving grace, Finney emphasized the individual’s own ability to obtain salvation. Finney employed various persuasive tactics to gain thousands of converts. These “new measures” included holding protracted meetings, demanding conversion immediately, allowing women to pray publicly, and inviting nonbelievers to sit on the “anxious bench” where they could contemplate their sins.

Finney’s belief that individuals could achieve sanctification, or holiness and perfection, in this life sparked an enthusiastic response that bore fruit for the antislavery movement. Believing they could perfect society and, thereby, bring about Christ’s millennial reign, Finney’s followers embraced numerous benevolent and reform efforts including temperance,
anti-Sabbatarianism, anti-Masonry, and abolitionism. According to Finney, slavery was a national sin that contravened God's moral law. After Finney's 1830–31 Rochester revival, many antislavery evangelicals embraced immediate emancipation.

While Finney himself was no friend to ideas of racial equality, he supported his associates who were active in the abolition movement. At the same time that he required separate seating for African-Americans at his New York City church, Chatham Street Chapel, he refused slaveholders communion. In 1833, he allowed his friends, New York City businessmen and ardent reformers, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, to use Chatham Street Chapel for a meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society. The Chapel subsequently became home to abolitionist activities and the target of antiabolitionist violence. Finney, however, feared that radicalism would disrupt his primary mission of converting souls.

In 1835, Finney continued his indirect influence on abolitionism by accepting a professorship in theology at reform-minded Oberlin College in Ohio. At Oberlin, Finney offered a voice of moderation to the antislavery movement, admonishing seminary students that they best served the cause by leading sinners, including slaveholders, to Christ. His views brought him into conflict with his most famous convert, radical abolitionist, Theodore Dwight Weld, who envisioned seminary as a training ground for antislavery reformers. During his thirty-year tenure at Oberlin, first as professor and later as president, Finney never wavered in his belief that spiritual revival offered the best hope for abolition. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism.


Dianne Wheaton Cappiello

First Confiscation Act. See Confiscation Acts

First Great Awakening and Antislavery

In the middle third of the eighteenth century, waves of revivals spread through the British North American colonies. Ministers as disparate as the theologically sophisticated Jonathan Edwards and the fervently histrionic George Whitefield—the first a New England Congregationalist, the second a Church of England missionary—led prayer meetings in which people felt their religion deeply and sometimes experienced saving grace on the spot. These revivals, particularly such excesses as believers crying out and fainting away, were criticized by less enthusiastic ministers of the time. They chided that the outpourings of the spirit were too quick and shallow to indicate true faith, and they re-asserted traditional means such as prayer, reading the Bible, and attending services as better preparation for receiving
grace. Some modern historians have expressed skepticism in another form, asking whether there were enough revivals and conversions to constitute a "Great Awakening." The majority view, however, is that the revivals were significant in American history. These revivals intersected with the history of abolitionism at several points.

One intersection was institutional, relating to the role of blacks in Christian denominations. Much of African-American religious history from the middle of the eighteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century was rooted in the First Great Awakening. Revivalists—Edwards and Whitefield were exemplary—preached to whites, blacks, and Native Americans. Both ministers noted conversions among their black auditors. Yet although some blacks, both slave and free, joined Congregational or Anglican churches, the First Great Awakening involved the growth and spread of denominations that would soon attract many African-American members. The Baptists and Methodists became the most important evangelicals, and Methodists were among the most active exhorters to slaves both in North America and in the West Indies. It was often as evangelical lay exhorters or prayer leaders that black men and a few black women gained leadership roles in these denominations in the eighteenth century. Historians have often asserted that churches emphasizing immediate conversion more than preparation through traditional means readily gained more black members. The black church population and the evangelical denominations increased together in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The Silver Bluff Church, Aiken County, South Carolina, for instance, was the first African-American Baptist Church. After having gathered the members in 1774 or 1775, David George, with some congregants, fled to Savannah for the protection of a British camp in the War of Independence; then in 1782 he departed for Nova Scotia, where he formed another black Baptist church. Most of the black Nova Scotians (usually called black loyalists) had freed themselves from slavery by seeking British protection during the war. About 1,200 of them furthered their quest for freedom by migrating to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in the early 1790s. George was among the emigrants, and he formed another black Baptist church in Africa. He traveled from Sierra Leone to England, where his recollections of slaveholders' cruel treatment were recorded and published. Moreover, independent black denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church grew out of the denominations that had grown strong in the First Great Awakening. Leading spokesmen for black rights such as Richard Allen and Absalom Jones were ministers in these churches.

The second intersection was theological. The theology of the First Great Awakening was Calvinism. Revivalism made Calvinism more accessible to ordinary people, and experiences of the outpouring of the spirit added a more loving face to the stern God of predestinarian religion. Most of the early black authors who criticized slaveholding—Jupiter Hammon, James Albert Ukasaw Gronniosaw, Lemuel Haynes, Phillis Wheatley, John Marrant, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, and Olaudah Equiano—were Calvinists. The theological views of several early African-American spokesmen,
such as Prince Hall and Richard Allen, cannot be determined today with available evidence, but in Hall, for instance, we see enough interest in Calvinist theologians like Jonathan Edwards to motivate a thirty-five-page commentary in the black man’s hand.

With this Calvinist inspiration, black abolitionists transposed to black people at large the story of the suffering sinner who at last received saving grace in a revival meeting. God had predetermined the sufferings of blacks in the slave trade and slavery just as he had mandated the trials of the Jews in captivity and he had demanded the crucifixion of Jesus as expiation for sin. The sufferings were trials of God’s faithful and they were intended to reveal his glory in judging and his mercy in forgiving. God would gather his faithful unto him—in Calvinist-inspired black religion this meant not only grace and salvation, but also civic freedom with all its benefits. The black arch-Calvinist Lemuel Haynes, who argued for both predestination and civic freedom, exhibited this faith. For some black Christians like John Marrant, in the wake of the First Great Awakening it meant establishing themselves in Africa. For instance, the black Methodists called Huntingdonians because of the encourage and support given them by the Calvinist Lady Huntingdon of England were members of a sect that had left both the Church of England and the Wesleyan Methodists over the freedom of the will. Huntingdonians were strict predestinarians. Marrant attended one of George Whitefield’s revivals during the missionary’s 1769–1770 tour. Crying out and falling to the ground, Marrant converted. He was soon in service in the British navy, and then traveled to England, where he exhorted in London and received holy orders in a Huntingdonian chapel. He became a popular preacher among black and white Bostonians, claiming that blacks were among God’s chosen people, predestined to be tried in the slave trade and slavery as well as to reestablish a holy society in Africa. Marrant himself died just before the 1,200 black Nova Scotians migrated to Sierra Leone, but indications of the power of his ideas included the exodus of his entire congregation to Freetown and the strong role of the black Huntingdonians in Africa in demanding black rights in the faces of the imperial officials and English investors in the colony. Thus the First Great Awakening affected the institutions and the beliefs of black Christians in North America, the West Indies, Sierra Leone, and England. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery.


*John Saillant*

**Fitzhugh, George (1806–1881)**

One of the first sociologists in the United States was also one of the most famous proslavery advocates in the antebellum period. George Fitzhugh of...
Virginia argued that slavery was a positive good, that it was superior to Northern free labor, and that Southern slaves were better off than Northern workers. In fact, Fitzhugh believed that slavery was such a superior social system that many white workers ought to be enslaved as well. His bold defense of slavery made Fitzhugh a pariah in the North and spurred abolitionists to action responding to his writings.

Born in Prince William County, Virginia, in 1806, Fitzhugh grew up in a society that seemed to be in decline. Generations of planting tobacco on the same land had led to soil exhaustion, and many Virginians were choosing to move to newly opened areas to the west. Impressed by the writings of the agrarian philosopher John Taylor, who had argued that the soil could be replenished through scientific agriculture, Fitzhugh held to the belief that Southern agriculture and Southern slavery produced a society in which ignorance, crime, and poverty were unknown. This ideal served as the foundation for his defense of slavery and he contrasted it with the baleful conditions in modern industrial society.

A lawyer by profession, Fitzhugh struggled financially in his rural practice. He married well and lived largely off of his wife's inheritance, a small plantation on the Rappahannock River. Although he continued to practice law, he was not successful, in large part because he disliked the law and hated the routine of a regular practice. Fitzhugh also despised most of his clients and refused to listen to them. He found the politics of slavery much more to his liking, especially after the abolitionists began to attack the South's peculiar institution. Throughout the 1840s, Fitzhugh read the works of abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and formed friendships with such defenders of slavery as George Frederick Holmes and James D. B. DeBow. He also read the works of Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian who criticized not only abolitionism, but modern society as a whole. Carlyle believed that the modern world had erred in making labor a commodity and idealized pre-modern society. With the ideals of Taylor and Carlyle in his mind, Fitzhugh set out to defend the South and slavery.

Fitzhugh published proslavery pamphlets in the early 1850s and followed these with his first book, Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society, in 1854. In this work, he attacked the American view that all men were created equal, arguing that human society was organic and that inequality was natural. Northern industrial society brought individualism and notions of equality and liberty that were dangerous and, if left unchecked, would destroy God's natural order. Unrestrained selfishness was at the heart of modern society and unchecked it would bring chaos and anarchy. These arguments were taken even further in Fitzhugh's most famous book, Cannibals All! or Slaves Without Masters, published in 1857. There, he attacked the ideal of progress and the American ethic of individualism. Fitzhugh argued that Northern workers were worse off than slaves, being exploited by the capitalists who took their profits and left the poor to fend for themselves. Northerners believed that they were free, but were actually slaves. They were wage slaves, slaves without masters. True freedom came not from free labor, but from a paternalism like that found in the South. According to Fitzhugh, under Southern slavery, the masters cared for their
workers, treated them well, fed them well, and saw to their needs. Southern slaves, he asserted, “are the happiest, and in some sense, the freest people in the world.”

Although few Southerners agreed with Fitzhugh’s most radical ideas, Northern abolitionists argued that he was representative of the South. For many in the North, Fitzhugh was the symbol of Southern proslavery views and that he was a typical Southerner. Indeed, Southerners did applaud his books, but few of them were ready to support all that he argued. While they agreed with his arguments on behalf of slavery and believed that their slaves were happy and well cared for, few of them were ready to argue that the North was so bad, and still fewer supported the idea that any whites should be enslaved. In the end, Fitzhugh served to heighten the sectional tensions of the 1850s. His radicalism allowed abolitionists to paint all Southern defenders of slavery as extremists. His arguments against modernity fit well with Northern fears of the Slave Power conspiracy and made it more difficult to find common ground to avert civil war.

Probably the most famous apologist for slavery, he is best remembered for his attacks on capitalism, and some of his criticisms of industrial society later would be renewed by socialists. When the Civil War began, it destroyed Southern slavery and dashed Fitzhugh’s idealistic dreams of paternalism. But he quickly found new friends, taking a job as a judge in the Freedmen’s Bureau, and eventually coming to embrace industrial capitalism. By the time of his death in 1881, he believed that modern capitalism brought monopoly, a system that truly expressed the inequality that he believed was natural to humanity. See also Slave Power Argument.


A. James Fuller

Foster, Abby Kelley (1811–1887)

Abby Kelley was born in 1811 in Massachusetts and was raised in the Quaker faith. As a Quaker, she developed her sense of “independent thinking” and a strong moral commitment to human rights. While teaching, she was inspired by William Lloyd Garrison and became committed to the abolitionist movement. In 1838, she gave her first public speech at an antislavery convention in Philadelphia. During a period in history when white women were often relegated to political silence, she became known as one of the more radical and fearless orators and a major fundraiser who helped to propel the abolitionist movement’s causes forward.

During the 1840s while living in the Western Reserve, she established the Western Antislavery Society. In her ongoing work, she also helped to establish The Antislavery Bugle. That same year she married fellow Quaker and abolitionist Stephen Foster, and they moved to their sprawling lovely home known as Liberty Farm in Massachusetts. The Foster homestead became a
major regional link in the Underground Railroad as they assisted numerous slaves escaping to the North and Canada.

Abby Kelley and her husband added one child to their union, a daughter, while continuing their work as key activists and speakers on the antislavery circuit. In addition, Abby Kelley spoke passionately for equal rights for women. She was an important organizer of the women’s suffrage movement and brought many of the movement’s then little known women to the forefront including Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony. Labeled by some opponents as "Jezebel," and often verbally attacked and physically threatened, she was never silenced nor intimidated and continued working for human equality until late in life when illness finally slowed her activism. Abby Kelley Foster died in 1887.


Iris Hunter

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790)

Printer, reformer, statesman, and scientist, Ben Franklin was also a Northern slaveholder and, at the end of his life, an abolitionist. Franklin is known to have owned at least five slaves—Peter, Jemima, George, Othello, and King—none of whom he liberated before their deaths. For much of his life, in fact, Franklin accommodated to slavery. As a young printer who assumed control of The Pennsylvania Gazette in 1729, Franklin consistently published runaway slave advertisements. Over 1,200 such notices appeared in the paper by 1790, creating a steady stream of revenue for Franklin and his successors. Franklin and his wife, Deborah, first purchased slaves in the late 1740s. Franklin’s slaves worked as body servants, valets, and maids. By doing such menial yet necessary work, Franklin’s slaves allowed their master to serve in public roles. Franklin’s slaves also served as status symbols, and Franklin brought some of them on travels to England and France. As late as the 1770s, as a colonial agent of Georgia, Franklin would support a colony’s right to import bondpeople.

Slavery and race loomed larger in Franklin’s thought during the 1750s and 1760s. In 1751, Franklin penned “Observations on the Increase of Mankind,” which offered a broad critique of slavery as the future basis of Anglo-American society, while also suggesting that British immigrants should remain the bulwark of colonial culture. Slavery was inefficient, Franklin wrote, and even dangerous, for African-descended people were, as he put it, “by nature thief[s].” Franklin printed the essay in 1755. In a later edition, he softened his racist views somewhat, noting that slavery itself—and not African-descended people’s essential natures—must be blamed for their insurgent actions. During the late 1750s and early 1760s, Franklin also became a key supporter of the Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray, a British missionary group dedicated to the catechizing and educating of blacks in the British colonies. He and his wife allowed their slave, Othello, to attend such a school in Philadelphia. Franklin even admitted that the schools
compelled him to have "a higher opinion of the natural capacities of the black race than I had ever before entertained."

While Franklin was not an active abolitionist until the 1780s, he did have a long association with antislavery advocates. As a young printer, Franklin published abolitionist works by both Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay, members of the Religious Society of Friends in Philadelphia, known commonly as the Quakers. And during the 1770s, Franklin corresponded with one of the most dedicated colonial abolitionists, Anthony Benezet, who prodded Franklin to support international slave-trading bans, among other abolitionist policies.

In 1787, Franklin joined the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS), the world's inaugural abolitionist group. Though now in his eighties, Franklin was more than a figurehead. He served as the group's president and eagerly corresponded with statesmen in America and Europe, urging them to support gradual abolitionism. While Franklin did not present a PAS petition against the slave trade to the constitutional convention meeting in Philadelphia in 1787 (for fear it would create sectional tensions), he did sign and present the group's 1790 abolitionist memorial to the First Federal Congress. When congressmen from Georgia and South Carolina loudly complained about the petition's call to ban the slave trade before 1808, Franklin produced an antislavery essay parodying proslavery supporters. Published in the Federal Gazette in March 1790, it was Franklin's last major essay of any kind. In this sense, Franklin was a key representative of first generation gradual abolitionism in American culture, for while he had once accommodated to bondage, he eventually viewed emancipation as part of America's revolutionary promise.


Richard Newman

**Free Blacks in the Post-Emancipation Societies**

The consideration of free black communities in the North as examples of post-emancipation societies involves the conjunction of two fields of
scholarship that, until recently, have operated largely independent of one another. The first of these is the study of structure of societies shortly after the abolition of slavery, typically focusing on the Caribbean, the American South, and colonial Africa, and covering the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The second field is the study of free black communities in the Northern part of the United States, an endeavor defined by its contrast to the continued existence of slavery elsewhere in the nation and centered on the period between 1780 and 1865. To best illuminate the fruitful union of these two fields, then, this essay shall first sketch the characteristics of postemancipation societies as conventionally defined, then proceed to examine the ways in which such characteristics played out in the American North in the decades before the U.S. Civil War. Any direct equation of the experience of free blacks in the American North with that of free blacks in regions such as the Caribbean would be, of course, too extreme. On the other hand, to ignore the structural parallels illuminated by a more tempered comparison would be to effectively ignore many of the challenges faced by Northern free black communities as well as many of the lessons to be learned from comparative scholarship. By using a comparative perspective, yet keeping in mind the unique circumstances of emancipation and its aftermath in the American North, we can ultimately learn much about the larger lineaments of the experience of free blacks in the years between liberation and the Civil War.

The conventional treatments of postemancipation societies have dealt with—to borrow Ira Berlin’s terminology—“slave societies” as opposed to “societies with slaves,” that is, to societies that have their primary economic livelihood oriented around production by enslaved individuals. All such societies began their dependence on slave labor as part of their role in the colonial holdings of major European powers. The Caribbean (e.g., Barbados, Guiana, Haiti), the American South (e.g., Virginia, the Carolinas, Louisiana), and Africa (e.g., Kenya, Zanzibar), are all examples of this phenomenon. Such societies had the most obvious challenges to face in the aftermath of emancipation. What shall be the citizenship status of those newly liberated? Should property be redistributed to provide for the livelihood of former slaves? Where shall the labor now come from for the massive plantations? What shall be the wages and conditions of that labor? All of these questions and more faced any society making the transition from slavery to freedom.

Two fundamentally different perspectives defined the debates in every case of post-emancipation societies. On the one hand, former slaves were keenly interested in obtaining both citizenship and enough land to supply an independent living. In general, they did not wish to work for their former masters, even if the working conditions and remuneration were better than in their previous role; being independent was of paramount importance. Being able to obtain land—ideally to own, but alternatively to lease—was thus vital to escaping the dependency of wage labor. Furthermore, former slaves realized that individual masters and plantation owners held power in large part by controlling the legislature either directly or indirectly. Gaining full citizenship and the vote, then, became a necessary precondition to securing all benefits—property, civil rights, labor conditions, fair taxation—
since those voted into the legislature created the legal framework that allowed or forbade any given set of social and economic practices.

On the other hand, for wealthy former slaveholders, the chief question after emancipation was the same as it had been at the outset of slavery—how to create and maintain a disciplined and dependent labor force that would do the actual work of producing sugar cane, rice, tobacco, cotton, indigo, or whatever other profitable crop had formerly driven the slave system. All other considerations—civic status, property distribution, civil rights, family systems—were shaped by this core imperative. Typically, the principal concern of labor led this elite to work against any significant degree of small landholders and enfranchisement since this would provide former slaves with an alternative to working on large plantations and the possibility of dismantling the plantation system altogether.

In sketching the fundamental dynamics between these two perspectives, three central concerns emerge: labor, citizenship, and property. There were, of course, other important aspects of life for both former owners and former slaves: religion, family, civil rights, commerce, and culture. And even the three aspects selected here for special attention were never wholly distinct, since obtaining goals in one area usually required specific actions in another area. Nonetheless, these three critical aspects of establishing a society after the abolition of slavery best expose the core struggles between the former masters and slaves.

At the foundation of the entire slave economy and all of the social and political apparatus accompanying it was one central concern: cheap and pliant labor. All of the staple crops of the new world required intensive physical labor. Moreover, such crops flourished in environments where the heat and humidity nourished diseases that alone yielded high mortality. Combined with long hours of forced labor and poor nutrition, life expectancy was often very short. In most regions, planters found it difficult to recruit white indentured servants once word got back to Europe about the incredibly harsh conditions in the colonies. To supply the insatiable demand for manual labor, colonies entered into a complex relationship with trading fleets, merchants, slave traders, and a range of coastal African tribes, all aimed at creating and maintaining a slave trade that would eventually result in millions of Africans being taken from their homes and shipped overseas.

When slavery ended in these societies, plantation owners continued to need a cheap and disciplined labor force to cultivate the crops. In many cases, the abolition of slavery had been initiated from outside the society—British Parliament’s emancipation, for example, or the Union’s victory over the Confederacy. In such circumstances, there was little local support from white elites for changing either their plantation system or the social and political practices necessary to uphold it. They still wanted the enormous profits facilitated by slavery, and they were still willing to subjugate non-whites to accomplish that end.

For their part, former slaves struggled to change the labor relations in order to secure more independence. In addition to seeking control of their own work schedule and a more equitable distribution of profits, many families wished to be able to keep wives and children out of the fields. Since
planters remained dependent on their labor, former slaves in some locales managed to gain temporary advantages in the struggle over labor conditions. In the long run, however, planters generally were able to use the legislature, the police, and the courts to their own advantage.

By the mid-nineteenth century, many plantation owners came up with a solution to the problem posed by a labor force demanding better working conditions: secure an alternative labor source. In the British Caribbean, for example, large landholders imported roughly 100,000 laborers from India from the 1830s to 1860s; by the end of the century this number exceeded half a million. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, roughly 100,000 Chinese workers were transported to Peru, and a greater number to Cuba. The effect of this massive importation of foreign laborers was to flood the labor market, effectively undercutting any negotiating power that the freedpeople might have had.

Citizenship was often tied to property ownership. As a result, although emancipated blacks now had the legal right to vote, property qualifications tied to suffrage disfranchised the overwhelming majority of former slaves. Such was the case in the British colonies of Barbados, Grenada, Guiana, and St. Vincent, where the people voting in an election often numbered less than one percent of the total population. By preventing former slaves from gaining influence in the legislature, land reform was stymied and planters retained a dependent labor force.

Free black communities in the antebellum North shared many of the characteristics found in post-emancipation slave societies. Of course, states like Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania were "societies with slaves," not "slave societies," since the role of slave labor in them was contributory, not definitional. Thus their emancipation was noticeably different in impact from that in Haiti, Guiana, or the American South. Yet similarities to slave societies reckoning with emancipation can be found in the American North.

As in Haiti, the very process of emancipation in the American North arose in part from the tension between late eighteenth-century ideals of liberty and citizenship and the existence of chattel slavery that denied both. In the political model of "classical republicanism" or "civic humanism" that informed so much of Revolutionary thought, individual virtue and self-sacrifice for the larger polity were paramount goals. Leaving aside the considerations of those in chains, many white Americans thought that the presence of chattel slavery worked to corrupt the morals of free citizens and to turn their mind more to profit than polity.

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, then, many Northern states passed legislation calling for "gradual emancipation." Rather than liberating slaves all at once, states such as Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island enacted gradual emancipation which freed children born to enslaved mothers after they attained a certain age. In this way the North might relieve itself of the moral onus of slavery while minimizing abolition's economic impact.

The phrase "gradual emancipation" tended, however, to belie the irony of the process. Even in areas where a consciousness of slavery's ills was
salient, white Northerners resisted the idea that black Americans might actually become fully free and enfranchised. New York affords a useful example. On the one hand, the state adopted manumission and prohibited slave importation in 1785. Yet, only by 1799 did the legislature pass gradual emancipation, and another generation would pass before it enacted full emancipation on July 4, 1827. White New Yorkers only very slowly accepted a fully free black population in their midst—and even then a heavy property qualification disfranchised the vast majority of black men.

Blacks’ experience with emancipation and its aftermath in the American North varied significantly from that of the freedpeople in the slave societies of the Caribbean and the South. While slave labor had been important in the North during the colonial era and in the years after the Revolution, its function had always been to supplement overwhelmingly dominant white labor, save for the possible exception of New York City where the presence of slave labor was more essential. Thus, while emancipation in the North was contested and was not a simplistic, pro forma exercise, it did not precipitate the economic and political disruptions that it would in slave societies. Black labor—from the menial to the skilled, and from the agrarian to the more urban—would also remain available. Whereas blacks over the decades in the post-emancipation North tended to migrate to cities and towns, this pattern did not damage the North’s agrarian economy for adequate white labor was present to meet its needs. The agricultural revolutions in the antebellum North occurred without any significant reliance on black labor. Property was also difficult for cash-starved blacks to secure, and those who remained in the countryside commonly did so as day laborers and hired hands.

Black labor was important in the urban North over the decades after the Revolution, especially in domestic service and in the more menial work of sawyers, chimney sweeps, launderers, and barbers. But the economies of antebellum Northern towns and cities became increasingly dominated by manufacturing by the mid-nineteenth century. Blacks were near totally excluded from this expanding industrial economy. This expansion was fuelled by labor from white natives migrating to cities and from European immigrants, especially the Irish and Germans. While planters in post-emancipation slave societies often determined to recruit cheap and dependent labor such as coolies from Asia to replace problematic indigenous black labor, no such intensive recruiting was necessary for economic powers in the antebellum North. Unlike the longstanding plantation economies of the Caribbean and the South, the urban and industrial economies of the antebellum North grew for the first time as a result of the enormous influx of migrants and immigrants into the cities. Not only did these economies not have any foundation in or reliance on black labor, but manufacturers did not have to recruit their laborers aggressively, for Irish famine as well as social and political turmoil in northern Europe generated hundreds of thousands of immigrants who could be speeded to the North by increasingly cheap, swift, and commodious vessels. White laborers were so secure in their control over manufacturing employment that they refused to labor with any blacks and would leave en masse if any employer was foolish
enough to employ them. The only avenue to industrial employment for antebellum blacks would be a very temporary one as strikebreakers. Indeed, the numbers of Irish immigrating to cities such as New York and Boston were so great by the 1820s that they later even supplanted blacks in one of their most seemingly secure employment niches—domestic service. By the 1830s, black labor was becoming, if anything, even more marginal in the antebellum North. The pitched negotiations and struggles that occurred between planters and other economic powers in post-emancipation societies simply were not present in the North where the economic significance of blacks was not nearly as great.

Politically, blacks were largely disfranchised in the North by the 1820s. This development, however, was not due nearly so much to any fear of the political dominance blacks might achieve as it was to the sweeping unwillingness of the vast majority of white men to participate with blacks on any basis whatsoever of political equality. Derided increasingly by the 1820s and after as a people innately inferior to whites and incapable of exercising freedom and the franchise responsibly, blacks were effectively neutralized in northern electoral politics by a dominant and triumphant white nationalism.

Thus, while some similarities might exist between the experiences of blacks in the post-emancipation North and those in former slave societies, the dominant characterization is one of pronounced contrast.


Jeffrey Mullins

Free Produce Movement

The free produce movement boycotted any products made by slave labor and lasted from the 1790s until the 1860s. Free produce proponents believed that consumers who purchased slave produce ensured the economic viability of slavery. Free produce activists maintained that purchasers of slave goods were as culpable as slaveholders for the survival and growth of the institution.

The movement began among individual members of the Society of Friends (or Quakers) in the late-eighteenth century. As pacifists and believers in the spiritual equality of all humankind, Quakers were among the first religious sects to oppose slavery, and by the 1770s and early 1780s, they had eliminated slaveholding among their members. In the decades that followed, a growing number of Quakers—inspired by radical Friends such as John Woolman and Anthony Benezet—argued that merely opposing slave ownership was not enough. For these Quakers, the consumption of slave labor products was akin to the use of “prize goods,” or products obtained through acts of war, which pacifist Quakers had long refused to trade or use. The transatlantic reach of the Quaker community ensured that these ideas found an audience in both the United States and Great Britain. In 1787, British Friends, in alliance with leading abolitionists, established the London Abolition Committee to end British involvement in the international slave trade. Six years later, the committee endorsed the tactic of
abstention from slave-produced sugar and rum. Abolitionist Thomas Clarkson optimistically estimated that 300,000 Britons had joined this early free produce campaign.

But it was in the United States that the free produce movement found its widest support. In the 1810s and 1820s, Quaker minister Elias Hicks urged his coreligionists to boycott all slave produce, and in 1826 Quaker abolitionists established the first formal free produce organization in Wilmington, Delaware. In Baltimore that same year, Quaker Benjamin Lundy opened a store that sold goods produced exclusively by free labor. In 1827, Philadelphia Quakers and like-minded antislavery activists established the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania, and in 1838, free produce supporters from a variety of Northern states met in Philadelphia as the American Free Produce Association. The leaders of these organizations hoped to establish alternative production and distribution networks that were untainted by slavery, and they soon set to work identifying and promoting sources of free labor produced staples (or appropriate alternatives) in the South and throughout the world. Activists also established free produce retail outlets and mail order services in Pennsylvania, New York, New England, Ohio, and Indiana. The most ambitious free produce effort took place in the early-1850s when Philadelphia Quaker George W. Taylor established a textile mill so as to increase the quality and supply of free labor cotton goods. Free produce organizations promoted their cause through a variety of broadsides, pamphlets, and journals, the most important of which was the Non-Slaveholder, published in Philadelphia between 1846 and 1854.

In addition to the Quakers who supported free produce because it offered a non-violent and legal way to undermine slavery, some African-American abolitionists embraced the concept. In 1830, African Americans in Philadelphia established their own organization, the Colored Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania, with a corresponding female organization created the following year. A number of African Americans also launched free produce stores, including Lydia White, who opened her Philadelphia establishment in 1830 and stayed in business for sixteen years, and William Whipper who began his Philadelphia grocery store in 1834. Other black abolitionists, such as the New York-based Presbyterian minister Henry Highland Garnet, promoted the cultivation of free labor products to end Northern and British dependence on slave-produced goods. In 1858, Garnet established the African Civilization Society in cooperation with British abolitionists to promote the voluntary migration of black Americans to the Niger Valley where they would teach native Africans Christianity and grow cotton to sell to British and American manufacturers. Though denounced by many black abolitionists as another colonization scheme designed to remove African-Americans from the United States, Garnet argued that finding alternative free labor cotton sources would strike a decisive blow against slavery.

Female antislavery activists also played a central role in the free produce movement from its outset. In a culture that viewed women as the primary source of moral virtue, and, more practically, as the principal consumers of domestic goods, the success of any free produce campaign depended upon female participation. Accordingly, many free produce publications (and
female abolitionists such as Abby Kelley Foster and Lucretia Mott) urged women to eschew slave products. Despite such endorsements, the free produce movement failed to garner continuing support. Indeed, by the late 1840s, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison openly ridiculed the scheme, arguing that it was at best an impractical distraction from more important abolitionist work and, at worst, it salved the consciences of selfish Northerners at the expense of slaves who failed to benefit. The lack of broader abolitionist support hastened the collapse of the American Free Produce Association in 1847, though an exclusively Quaker organization survived to 1856. Nevertheless, a market consisting primarily of Quakers and small numbers of African Americans was too limited to enable supporters to forge a sustainable free produce supply, production, and distribution network. Lacking economies of scale, free produce merchants could offer only higher cost, lower quality goods that had little appeal to a broader buying public. Garrison was certainly correct. The free produce movement was impractical, not because the idea lacked merit (as prior and subsequent consumer boycott campaigns have revealed), but because slavery had so deeply penetrated all aspects of the transatlantic economy.


A. Glenn Crothers

Freedmen’s Aid Societies

Freedmen’s Aid Societies were founded during the United States Civil War throughout the Northeast and Midwest to assist the hundreds of thousands of former slaves who had fled into the North or lived in territory occupied by the Union army. Many of the leaders and members of these Societies had been abolitionists before the war, although not all. Nearly half of the membership had not been active in antislavery at all before the war.

The main objective of the Societies was the education of the freedmen. At the war’s end, there were nearly four million freedmen. Few had any education, only 5 percent were literate, and the Freedmen’s Aid Societies felt that the best service they could provide was to prepare these former slaves to become productive citizens. As Union soldiers moved into Confederate territory, they were soon followed by Society members, mostly women, who established schools for freedmen. The Societies had sent more than nine hundred teachers into the former Confederate states, and others operated schools for those freedmen who had escaped into the North. After the war, the Freedmen’s Bureau constructed school buildings while the
Aid Societies provided the teachers. Local whites often threatened or socially ostracized these teachers. The vision of the Aid Societies went beyond basic education. An important legacy of the Societies can be found in many of the South’s traditional black colleges, such as Atlanta University, which was founded in 1865.

Although best known for their work in providing education for former slaves at the end of the war, the Societies were very active during that conflict, supplying basic material aid to African-American refugees such as food, shelter, and medical care. They helped ex-slaves find work and negotiate fair wages. The Union army was unable and in many cases unwilling to care for these refugees, officially referred to as “contraband” by the army and newspapers. The Freedmen’s Aid Societies offered the only institutional help available to former slaves.

The war all but cut off the supply of cotton to the textile manufacturers of the North. As the Union army occupied the cotton growing regions of the South, the demand for cotton could not be met. Many freed slaves were put back to work on plantations, some even on the ones they had fled. These plantations were managed by the army or their former owners. The freedmen worked for wages that most never received. Many Freedmen’s Aid Societies sent members to act as labor superintendents in a futile effort to ensure fair treatment.

The Freedmen’s Aid Societies successfully lobbied the Union government on behalf of former slaves. It was through their efforts that the Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission was created in 1863, the chief accomplishment of which was the Freedmen’s Bureau. The Societies also influenced the choice of officers to manage occupied Southern territory.

The services offered by the Freedmen’s Aid Societies were replaced by the Freedmen’s Bureau and state agencies of the Reconstruction governments in the decade following the war. Even though their influence as a whole was diminished, some individual members continued to work with the freedmen for the rest of their lives. See also Reconstruction Acts in the United States.


Wesley Moody

Freedmen’s Bureau

By the spring of 1865, the Union army controlled much of the former Confederacy, a military triumph, but an administrative burden. In addition to the vast acreage in Union hands, much of it abandoned, the former slaves needed help in adjusting to their new circumstances, finding either land or work, and, more immediately, with sustenance and shelter. In order to deal with these issues, Congress passed legislation creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, quickly shortened to the Freedmen’s Bureau. President Abraham Lincoln signed the law on March 3, 1865.
On May 12, 1865, Major General Oliver Otis Howard became the commissioner of the Bureau. A native of Maine and a graduate of both Bowdoin College and the United States Military Academy, Howard's antislavery leanings began at an early age when he spent considerable time with Edward Johnson, an African American who worked for Howard's father. Howard's combination of religious conviction and antislavery feelings made him, in the eyes of most, the ideal candidate to head the Freedmen's Bureau. Initially the Bureau had no budget or funding other than rent received from the abandoned lands under their control, so Howard staffed the Bureau with military officers.

Howard and his men viewed the Bureau as largely a stopgap measure necessary only until the free labor system could take hold in the former slave states. Howard viewed the written contract between laborers and the owners of capital as the way to ensure a smooth transition to free labor, and he directed the Bureau's agents immediately to begin arranging these contracts between freedmen and planters. In addition to coordinating these contracts and enforcing their terms, the Freedmen's Bureau provided clothing and food to those in need, whether they were white or black. The Bureau also helped establish schools for the newly freed people, set up hospitals, and helped former soldiers obtain their bounties.

As President Andrew Johnson grew more accustomed to the office of the presidency, he began to make policy changes that dramatically affected the Freedmen's Bureau and its charges. Initially, lands that had been abandoned during the war were seized by the government and placed under the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau had begun dividing the abandoned lands up among the former slaves, but Johnson instead ordered that the abandoned
lands be restored to their former owners. Howard opposed the measure and unsuccessfully attempted to retain the abandoned lands for the freedpeople.

The Bureau, with only 900 men on staff at its peak, was far too small to adequately cover the vast area of the former Confederacy. Additionally, while Howard and his men were dedicated to helping the freedmen, their low opinions of the capabilities of the former slaves limited their ability to be truly effective advocates. An overriding fear that the former slaves would become too dependent on government help led the Bureau to offer far less support than they could have.

The agency was short-lived. As early as 1868, the Bureau began to phase out the services they offered and ceased to provide any programs by 1872. While the Bureau had provided some needed assistance to the freedpeople after the Civil War, it was largely a disappointment to the former slaves who felt the Bureau held them back as much as it helped them up. See also Freedmen’s Aid Societies; Reconstruction Acts in the United States.


Jared Peatman

Freedom Suits in North America

Freedom suits, or cases in which a slave sues his or her master for freedom, have been an important, yet not always successful route to freedom for slaves in North America. Most freedom suits did not challenge slavery as an institution, but instead just sought freedom for an individual slave who was illegally enslaved. Under the English Common Law tradition that most states followed, slaves usually contested their enslavement by a plea of trespass, arguing that they had been injured by their owner. The owners would then respond by contending that they could not injure a slave as the enslaved was the owner’s property. The court would then have to decide if injury took place and subsequently whether the person was a slave or not. The success, frequency, and style of freedom suit depended upon local law and the social, economic, and cultural environment.

Freedom suits sat at the nexus of two primary American ideals: the owner’s right to unfettered control of his/her property and the slave’s right to liberty. The general ideal of liberty as found in the Declaration of Independence sometimes led to freedom for slaves. A few states

![Dred Scott. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.](image)
such as Louisiana and Missouri restricted slaves' access to the courts, except in the case of freedom suits. Other states, like Massachusetts and New Hampshire, ended slavery as a result of freedom suits. The protection of slave owners' property pressed other states, however, to curb slaves' rights to the court altogether.

Due to the federal system in the United States and the influence of the common law tradition, most slave law operated under local conditions. The landmark case, Somerset v. Stewart (1772; see Somerset Decision), decided that slave law depended on local legal sanction. As a result, state law dictated whether slavery existed or not and defined the body of laws around the institution. Thus, slaves in different states and colonies had very different legal rights. Slaves' access to rights generally mirrors the social and economic environment of the locality. Places more reliant upon slave labor tended to insist upon oppressive laws that sometimes made freedom suits a near impossibility. In contrast, localities with less reliance on slave labor could liberalize their law to endow slaves with some civil rights and provide some access to the courts.

In Massachusetts, for example, freedom suits were very successful because the state recognized broad legal rights for slaves. Slaves could sue, be witnesses, own property, and enter into contracts. Slaves took advantage of this situation and sued for their freedom in the relatively friendly era of the American Revolution. While many of these cases brought freedom to individuals, two cases, Walker v. Jennison (1781–1783) and Brom and Bett v. Ashley (1782), actually ended slavery in the state. Both cases argued that the 1780 Massachusetts State Constitution did not support slavery because in its preamble it declared all men “free and equal” and because no positive law enabled slavery. When Walker won his final case in 1783 at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, slavery was legally dead in the state.

In contrast, South Carolina law provided very little space for slaves to become free and had only three freedom suits, all occurring between 1770 and 1800. South Carolina law gave less recognition to slaves' legal rights than any other state, and consequently slaves rarely brought suits.

Many Virginia slaves used freedom suits as a route to freedom, but the opening was limited to the Revolutionary era. Virginia lawmakers debated ending slavery in their state during the Revolutionary era and opened up the courts to slaves who could prove free lineage. In order to bring a successful case, slaves had to prove that they had a maternal ancestor who had been free. Hundreds of slaves came to the courts with evidence of free ancestry and became free. By the nineteenth century, however, Virginia began curbing the rights of slaves to the courts and virtually stopped the flow of freedom suits.

Louisiana provided yet another type of environment for freedom suits as a former colony under Spain and France. Under Spanish rule, the law was fundamentally unlike that in most English colonies because it recognized that slavery was not “the natural condition of man” and that slaves should have an avenue to freedom as long as the owners were compensated for their property loss. Colonial Louisiana slaves had a right to gain their freedom and sue for it if they paid for it. Once under the United States,
Louisiana law became as oppressive toward slaves as the other deep South states except for one important distinction: the Civil Code of the State of Louisiana, a holdover from French rule, explicitly allowed slaves to enter into a contract for freedom and to sue for their freedom. This law allowed the slaves to evade the necessity under common law of beginning an action of trespass as a way to become free. Instead, slaves might sue on the grounds that their right to be free had been taken away. Hundreds of slaves took advantage of this opening in the law and became free. In the 1830s and 1840s, Louisiana’s close relationship to the “free” nation of France provided a common opening for freedom, as many slaves sued on the basis of having traveled in France.

Another variation in freedom suits came from Missouri whose relevant laws changed from when it was a territory under Congressional oversight. An 1807 territorial statute granted slaves the specific right to sue for their freedom. The statute was reinstated when Missouri became a state. Just as slaves in Massachusetts had learned, however, the legal environment had to be right for freedom suits to succeed. Missouri had its own “golden age” of freedom suits between 1824 and 1844, after the Supreme Court set the favorable precedent “once free, always free” in Winny v. Whitesides (1824). This doctrine translated into freedom for slaves who traveled into a free state. After a visit to a free state, Missouri courts would no longer recognize the owner’s right to the person. This precedent held fast until Dred Scott v. Sandford was brought before the United States Supreme Court in 1857.

During the antebellum era, abolitionists throughout the United States used freedom suits as a way to test the boundaries of freedom. In particular, abolitionists tried to advocate for the freedom of men and women whose owners traveled North with them. They pressed free states to grant freedom to slaves who legally entered free territory for extended periods of time. These cases began at the same time as the militant abolitionist movement took hold in the 1830s. The plaintiffs and their abolitionist advocates tested the conflicting laws in different regions of the United States. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court made the first bold statement in Commonwealth v. Aves (1836) where Justice Lemuel Shaw argued that slavery, like bigamy, was so repugnant that his state did not have to recognize the laws of another state where it did exist. Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New York soon followed with court decisions and statutes that did not allow owners to maintain their right to slave property when traveling in their states. Southern states with more open legal systems, such as Kentucky, Missouri, and Louisiana, also witnessed successful freedom suits for slaves traveling to free states. One of these cases was heard before the Supreme Court: Dred Scott v. Sandford.

Just as Aves advanced slave law well beyond the freedom of one young female plaintiff, Dred Scott’s famous case meant much more than a denial of freedom for Scott and his family. Dred Scott filed his freedom suit in 1846 because he had spent extended periods of time in the free territories of Wisconsin and Illinois. The case wound its way through the appeal system with Scott losing more cases than winning. Abolitionists took over his case once it reached the federal level, culminating in a battle in the United
States Supreme Court. In a 7–2 decision, the court denied Scott his freedom. The decision written by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney effectively demolished personal liberty laws for slaves throughout the United States. The decision declared that no black person could be a citizen of the United States. The court also stated that it was unconstitutional to restrict slavery in particular territories. The decision was one of many events in the late 1850s that helped polarize the United States, pressing the nation toward Civil War.


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**Freemasonry and Antislavery**

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that took hold in the American colonies before the American Revolution, and later reflected the bitter divide in the young nation over the slavery issue in the nineteenth century. Freemasonry itself had its foundation in the stonemason guilds in Europe during the Middle Ages. The organization linked itself to the building of King Solomon’s Temple that was found in the Bible’s First Book of Kings. Its members follow the principle of fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, and moral life principles. Prospective members have to be initiated through a series of degrees based on principles and stories found in the Old Testament of the Bible. The fraternity emphasizes itself not as a religion, but as an organization promoting brotherhood. It is not uncommon to find lodges in municipalities, businesses, and military units.

By the nineteenth century, masons and their lodges were scattered throughout the fabric of American society. Each state had its own Grand Lodge as a governing body. American territorial growth into western lands led to the extension of the Masonic brotherhood into the new states of the Union. The Masonic use of secret handshakes and passwords provided a method where information and individuals could secretly passed along without attracting attention. This secrecy fostered the suspicion that freemasonry threatened democratic principles. By the 1820s, a political reform movement was directed against the Masonic movement and its members’ prominence in many political institutions. The Anti-Masonic Party was created in New York as a response to a supposed killing of a Masonic critic. This political party briefly became a factor in elections in the northeastern
United States, and served as a launching pad for such politicians as Thaddeus Stevens.

Despite claims that their fraternity did not discriminate members based on their racial background, nearly all U.S. Grand Lodge affiliated lodges were white-only. However, African Americans had started their own lodge in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1784. This lodge, African Lodge Number 459, consisted of African American Masons who had previously been members of an Irish military lodge while Boston was occupied by the British army. These African Americans were led by Prince Hall, who was later master of this lodge. Hall used his lodge to push for a free school for African-American children within the city. In addition, he and other lodge members provided a network of contacts to provide aid and support to the local African-American community and runaway slaves from the Southern United States. African-American or Prince Hall lodges never extended to the Southern states due to the fear of slave revolts. After 1866, however, Prince Hall lodges began to appear in Southern cities and society. See also Hall, Prince, Black Freemasonry, and Antislavery.


*William H. Brown*

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**French Colonies, Emancipation of (February 4, 1794)**

February 4, 1794, is a pivotal date in the history of slavery and freedom in the Americas. On that day, the French National Convention officially recognized the emancipation of the slaves in the French colony of Saint Domingue—present-day Haiti. The Convention extended immediate emancipation as well throughout the French colonies of the Americas including Martinique, Guadeloupe, and smaller colonies. Cyril James celebrated February 4 in his magisterial *Black Jacobins* (1938) as embodying a vast expansion of freedom in the Atlantic world, as one of the great achievements of the French Revolution of 1789, and as demonstrating the willingness of the French to reconcile their ideals, as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, with their foreign and domestic policies.

The mass emancipation of February 4, 1794, did not occur in a vacuum. In fact, it followed close on the heels of the general emancipation measure implemented by Léger F. Sonthonax, a French civil commissioner sent out by the French National Assembly to restore order in Saint Domingue. At Cape François in Saint Domingue on August 29, 1793, Sonthonax had acted on his own authority because he anticipated a conspiracy of the dispossessed French colonials to ally with English royalists. France had declared war on much of monarchical Europe in 1792, and by early 1793 Sonthonax was busy constructing fortifications in the thirteen ports of Saint Domingue.
to prevent an English conquest of the island. As had happened so often in the past, the English had decided to seize the colonies of the European colonial powers in the Americas rather than commit ground troops to the continent of Europe.

Sonthonax was correct. The planters of Saint Domingue were busy plotting with the Spaniards of Santo Domingo and the British of London who intended to hand the colony over to the enemies of France. By early 1793, the future of French Saint Domingue seemed sealed; metropolitan France was preoccupied with its own war against Prussia and Austria on the continent, and the French could ill-afford to send troops to defend its turbulent colony. The black revolution on Saint Domingue had begun on the night of August 22, 1791, three years previously, and the only question facing Sonthonax was whether the black Africans or the British, Spaniards, and French royalists would dominate the colony. The commanders of the English expedition sent against Saint Domingue in 1793 looked forward to the easy conquest of the French part of the island and the acquisition of the sugar, coffee, cotton, and indigo plantations.

Yet Sonthonax still had a card to play. The slave uprising of August 22, 1791 had been the first, concerted large-scale slave insurrection in the West Indies. Initially it had involved perhaps as many as 100,000 insurgents in the colony’s north province alone. The National Assembly had sent a few thousand regular French troops against the blacks, but the troops were confounded by the insurgents’ guerilla tactics, decimated by malaria and yellow fever, and were unfamiliar with the terrain, unlike the blacks led by Jean Francois, Georges Biassou, and Toussaint L’Ouverture. In June 1793, the white planters, under the leadership of Thomas F. Galbaud, had organized a coup against civil commissioner Sonthonax. Faced with defeat, Sonthonax responded by offering the black insurgents French recognition of their freedom in exchange for their alliance against the white slaveholders. On June 20, the conflict between the patriots and royalists climaxed in a pitched battle at Cape Francois, where Sonthonax’s forces defeated the royalists. This momentous defeat precipitated an exodus of planters from the colony, many of whom fled to the United States or other islands in the Caribbean.

Given the tensions in France and Saint Domingue, the emancipation acts of August 29, 1793 and February 4, 1794 did not seem surprising. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen had set the stage for a struggle over the meaning of words such as citizen and equality in societies that were divided formally on the bases of classes (or estates) and between slave and free. The United States had confronted similar problems during its own revolution; about 200,000 slaves in the Southern states had achieved freedom through acts of private manumission and through flight during the turmoil occasioned by large armies fighting across the Southern states. In the North, several state governments had implemented gradual emancipation laws. The French context was much like that of the United States, but the outbreak of war in Europe and its extension to the West Indies dramatically altered that context, raising the question whether sovereignty or slavery would be the primary French objective. Facing an English assault on
the French colonies, Sonthonax resolved the question by forming an alliance with the black revolution against the reactionaries and royalists of Europe and their white allies in Saint Domingue.

The French National Assembly had moved toward allowing more freedom and equality for free people of color in Saint Domingue since the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1787. The National Assembly had not decided to implement slave emancipation, but its members did extend the protection of the laws to the free coloreds as a means of promoting their loyalty to France. The free coloreds of Saint Domingue had emerged as a separate caste during the previous century and by 1789, they constituted a mid-level class of often wealthy and well-educated landowners and slave masters who chafed under their restricted freedom and denial of civil equality with the white upper class. The free coloreds were an elite waiting for power, but they were often targets for poor whites who jealously guarded their status as aristocrats of the skin. But the free coloreds saw opportunity in the French Revolution, and they sent representatives to Paris demanding civil rights and equality and representation in the National Assembly.

The large plantation owners of Saint Domingue had always dominated the government of Saint Domingue and had sent agents to represent them in Paris. But the large sugar planters resented demands from free coloreds that they share power with them. The issue came to a head between January and May 1791 when two free colored leaders, Vincent Ogé and Marc Chavannes, organized a rebellion against aristocratic white rule in Saint Domingue. Ogé and Chavannes were defeated, captured, and tortured. But their brutal execution made them martyrs in France and led to the unilateral extension of civil equality to the free coloreds who were born of free parents, a compromise which meant a limited grant of freedom to the colored elite. But as Saint Domingue and France watched this drama unfold, enslaved Africans in the colony mobilized their own assault against the centers of white power in Saint Domingue.

Preoccupied with their own struggles, whites and coloreds of Saint Domingue ignored the ample signs of political activity among the African and Afro-Creole populations. The insurgency that broke out on August 22, 1791 was well planned and systematically executed. Revolutionary ideology had been arriving in the colony since 1778 when France signed an alliance with the United States and the ports of Saint Domingue had first been thrown open to American shipping. Even though few Africans were literate, some white observers claimed that they had seen abolitionist texts circulating among the slaves; and they claimed that literate slaves read incendiary tracts out loud to the black insurgents, inflaming their minds with a heady brew of liberty, equality and fraternity.

During the Wars of the American Revolution, significant numbers of free coloreds had fought with the Americans against the English enemy. Free colored soldiers were especially numerous at the siege of Savannah, including Henri Christophe and others, who would become some of the most dynamic leaders of the Haitian Revolution. Equally important, free colored and black seamen frequented the thirteen ports of Saint Domingue, and numbers of them channeled new ideas of change, freedom, and equality
into the colony. Africans who had fled enslavement had also established maroon villages in the mountainous interior of the island and kept the idea of freedom alive among the slave population. By 1791, that population had reached a half million manacled Africans, a number far in excess of the whites or free coloreds. Maroon Africans raided the plantations for food and women and were instrumental at sustaining the Haitian Revolution at various stages over its long course.

On August 29, 1793 Leger Sontthonax reached out for allies among the African population of Saint Domingue, and on February 4, 1794, the French National Convention followed suit. These were pivotal decisions in the history of slavery and freedom in the Atlantic world; once the French had marshaled help from the Africans and promised them freedom in exchange for their assistance, other colonial powers had to weigh doing the same. For example, such armies of former slaves would prove decisive in the Latin American Wars of Independence after 1815. Following the pivotal events of August 1793 and February 1794, slavery and freedom would never again be the same in the Americas and Atlantic world. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of; Haitian Revolution; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


*Tim Matthewson*

**French Defeat in Saint Domingue in 1803.** See Saint Domingue, French Defeat in

**Fugitive Slave Law (1850)**

The return of fugitive slaves from the South was one of the most important causes of tension between the North and the South in the antebellum era. Article Four, Section Two, Clause Three of the *United States Constitution* stated that fugitives from justice or service were to be turned over to the state or person asking for their return. This process worked only when there was comity between the states, a willingness to honor each other's laws and return fugitives to the offended state. To help ensure comity Congress passed a fugitive slave law in 1793. Under the terms of the 1793 law, a Southern slaveholder who wished to recapture a fugitive slave had to go north himself or send one of his agents to track down the fugitive and arrest him or her. Then the slaveholder or his agent had to go before a judge in federal circuit court to obtain a certificate so that he could return the slave to the original state from which the fugitive had fled.
This process was laborious and expensive and contributed to the rising number of fugitive slaves in the antebellum North. Further complicating matters was the rise of the abolition movement and the Underground Railroad, which provided assistance to Southern slaves as they fled northward. In the 1840s, Northern state legislatures also began to enact personal liberty laws to protect free blacks who lived in their states. Who was a free black and who was a fugitive slave became a difficult question to prove, especially if a free black lost his or her freedom papers. As a result of these developments, comity between Northern and Southern states began to collapse.

Southern slaveholders desired a tougher fugitive slave law that would help them reclaim their runaway slaves. Senator James Mason of Virginia introduced legislation for a new fugitive slave law on January 4, 1850. It quickly became caught up in the tangle of legislation that would form the Compromise of 1850. It was not until September 18, 1850 that President Millard Fillmore signed the bill. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was one of the provisions of the Compromise of 1850, and it proved to be the most controversial element of that sectional compromise.

What made the new law so controversial was that it put the federal government on the side of the slaveholder in helping him to recapture his runaway slave property. If a slaveholder believed that one of his slaves had run away, he would report the disappearance, along with a description of the runaway, to a court in his home state. Other courts, federal or state, along with commissioners appointed by the federal courts, or federal marshals, had to accept this statement as the slaveholder's testimony. The slaveholder,
or his agent, could either obtain a warrant for the fugitive's arrest or track down the fugitive himself in a free state, arrest the runaway slave, and present him or her to a federal judge or commissioner. If the slaveholder could prove this runaway was his slave, he received a certificate from the judge or commissioner and took his property home with him. The slave could neither testify on his or her own behalf, nor did the alleged runaway enjoy the right of habeas corpus. If a person in the free states tried to assist or hide a runaway slave, or prevent the runaway's recapture, and that person knew the runaway to be a fugitive slave, then that Northerner could be arrested, tried, and if found guilty, fined $1,000, and sentenced to six months in jail. If a marshal asked for assistance in the effort to recapture a fugitive slave, and a person refused his request, then that person could be charged with obstruction and suffer the penalties of fine and/or imprisonment. Commissioners were the only federal employees who benefited materially from this process. They received ten dollars if the alleged runaway was found guilty and returned to slavery, but only five dollars if the alleged runaway was found not guilty. The claimant paid the commissioner's fee. Clearly, there was a financial reward for finding alleged runaways guilty and returning them to slavery.

The harsh provisions of this act shocked the sensibilities of many Northerners. For the first time, Northerners were made complicit in the recapture of fugitive slaves. To assist runaway slaves in their flight to freedom put white and free black Northerners at risk for being prosecuted by federal courts. Civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, habeas corpus, and the liberty of conscience, all appeared to be under attack by the new law. These liberties applied not only to runaway slaves, but also Northern whites. Northern free blacks faced the threat of being kidnapped if they resembled an alleged runaway slave or if they lacked their freedom papers. Many runaway slaves began to flee to Canada to put them beyond the reach of the new law.

When the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 went into effect, Northerners were brought face-to-face with slavery. Slaveholders and their agents began to head north, searching for fugitive slaves. Runaway slaves began to be captured and sent back to the South. One of the most spectacular, and controversial, cases involved Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave from Virginia who had escaped to Boston. He was arrested and placed in prison awaiting his hearing. Black and white Bostonians attempted to free him from jail, but they failed. One marshal died in the raid. The mood in Boston was ugly. Tens of thousands of city residents lined the streets to protest Burns's rendition to Virginia. It took hundreds of well-armed soldiers and marines to accomplish this mission. Episodes such as the rendition of Anthony Burns in 1854, when combined with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of that year, led growing numbers of Northerners to believe that a Slave Power Conspiracy existed and was turning the national government to the benefit of Southern slaveholders. As a result, more Northerners became sympathetic to the cause of antislavery. The publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1851, which offered the Northern public a view of Southern slavery in the form of a sentimental novel, also
helped turn Northern opinion against the law. Northerners were deeply affected by such scenes as Eliza fleeing across the Ohio River from slave-catchers and their hounds. The final straw, though, was the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857), which stated that Congress could not regulate slavery in the federal territories, and which also declared unconstitutional both popular sovereignty and the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Northern state legislatures began to pass personal liberty laws to protect fugitive slaves in defiance of both the 1850 law and the *Dred Scott* decision. As a result, sectional tensions increased between North and South, tensions that finally boiled over in 1860–1861 into secession and civil war. See also Freedom Suits in North America; Slave Power Argument.


*James C. Foley*
Gabriel’s Conspiracy (1800)

The enslaved revolutionary known only as Gabriel was born in 1776 near Richmond, Virginia, at Brookfield, the Henrico County plantation of Thomas Prosser. By Virginia standards, Brookfield was a large plantation, with a population of approximately fifty laborers. The identity of Gabriel's parents is lost to history, but he had two older brothers, Martin and Solomon. Most likely, Gabriel's father was a blacksmith, the occupation chosen for Gabriel and Solomon. Status as a craft artisan provided the young blacksmith with considerable standing in the slave community, as did his ability to read and write. By the mid-1790s, as he approached the age of twenty, Gabriel stood “six feet two or three inches high.” A long and “bony face, well made,” was marred by the loss of two front teeth and “two or three scars on his head.” In later years, a legend arose which held that Gabriel wore his hair long in naive imitation of Samson, in hopes that his locks would give him extraordinary strength. Contemporary descriptions say only that his hair was cut short and was as dark as his complexion. According to journalist James T. Callender, blacks and whites alike regarded him as “a fellow of courage and intellect above his rank in life.”

In the fall of 1798, Gabriel’s old master died, and ownership of Brookfield passed to twenty-two-year-old Thomas Henry Prosser, who maximized his profits by hiring out his surplus slaves. Despite all of the work to be done at Brookfield, Gabriel spent a considerable part of each month smithing in Richmond for white artisans. Although still a slave under Virginia law, Gabriel enjoyed a rough form of freedom. Indeed, his ties to the plantation became so tenuous that several historians have identified him as a free man. Emboldened by this quasi-liberty, in September 1799 Gabriel moved toward overt rebellion. Caught in the act of stealing a pig by a white neighbor, Gabriel wrestled the man to the ground and bit off the better “part of his left Ear.” Under Virginia law, slaves were not tried as whites. They were prosecuted under a colonial statute of 1692 that created special segregated tribunals composed of five justices of the peace. Gabriel was formally charged with attacking a white man, a capital crime. Although found guilty, Gabriel
escaped the gallows by pleading “benefit of clergy,” which allowed him to avoid hanging in exchange for being branded on the thumb with a small cross as he was able to recite a verse from the Bible.

Gabriel’s branding and incarceration served as a brutal reminder that despite his literacy and privileged status, he remained a slave. By the early spring of 1800, his fury began to turn into a carefully considered plan to bring about his freedom, as well as the end of slavery in Virginia. Slaves and free blacks from Henrico County would gather at Brookfield on the evening of August 30 to march on Richmond. If Governor James Monroe and the town leaders agreed to Gabriel’s demands for black liberty and an equitable distribution of the property, the slave general intended to “hoist a white flag” and drink a toast “with the merchants of the city.”

The conspiracy matured in the context of Atlantic and political affairs of the late 1790s. Since 1793, large numbers of refugees from the slave rebellion in French Saint Domingue had arrived in Virginia, many of them bringing their bondservants with them. Monroe worried that the “scenes which are acted in Saint Domingue, must produce an effect on all the people of colour” in the Chesapeake. But if the uprising in the Caribbean helped to inspire mainland rebels, it was the divisive election of 1800 that provided Gabriel with his opportunity. Rumors about Richmond held that if Jefferson was victorious the Federalists would not relinquish power, and one Federalist newspaper predicted an “ultimate appeal to arms by the two great parties.” Most likely, Gabriel not only hoped to exploit this fissure among white elites, but also to throw his lot in with whichever side would benefit the slaves the most in the coming civil conflict.

The planned uprising collapsed just before sunset on the appointed day, when a severe thunderstorm hit the Richmond area. The chaos of the storm convinced two Henrico slaves that the revolt could not succeed. They informed their owner of the conspiracy, and he hurried word to Monroe. After hiding along the James River for nearly two weeks, Gabriel risked boarding the schooner Mary. Captain Richardson Taylor, a recent convert to Methodism, spirited Gabriel downriver to Norfolk. There Gabriel was betrayed by an enslaved crewman, who had heard of Monroe’s $300 reward for Gabriel’s capture. Returned to Richmond under heavy guard, Gabriel was quickly tried and found guilty of “conspiracy and insurrection.” On October 10, 1800, the young revolutionary died on the town gallows near Fifteenth and Broad Streets. He was twenty-four. In all, twenty-six slaves, including Gabriel and his two brothers, were hanged for their part in the conspiracy. Eight more rebels were transported to Spanish New Orleans; at least thirty-two others were found not guilty. Reliable sources placed the number of slaves who knew of the plot to be between five and six hundred.

In the aftermath, as was the case with most slave conspiracies, white authorities, as one newspaper put it, moved to “re-enact all those rigorous laws” that had been allowed to lapse after the Revolution. In late 1802, Monroe established the Public Guard of Richmond, a nighttime police force designed to protect the public buildings and militia arsenals. The state Assembly passed a law ending the right of masters to hire out their surplus
slaves, and in 1806 the legislature amended the state’s Manumission Act of 1782 by requiring liberated bondpeople to leave Virginia or face re-enslavement. See also Manumission; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in; Turner, Nat; Vesey’s Conspiracy.


*Douglas R. Egerton*

**Gandhi, Mohandas (1869–1948)**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was instrumental in advancing many monumental political and social changes in India and around the world. In particular, he undertook to free India and other nations from colonial restrictions to their full exercise of religious, political, and economic freedom. Gandhi’s dedication to national freedom was so great it prompted Albert Einstein to proclaim that “generations to come shall marvel that someone so divine has ever walked the face of the earth.” Gandhi believed India’s caste system and apartheid in South Africa were forms of slavery. Even though he remained a devout Hindu for his entire life, he was very well read in all religions and respected them. He disagreed with traditional Hindustan theology, which asserted that the ancient Hindu texts supported the Caste System and principles of slavery. Instead, Gandhi believed that certain aspects of the Vedas (ancient Hindu scriptures) had been taken out of context and misapplied. He felt that British occupation in India had only reinforced and kept the idea of caste and social immobility in place.

Gandhi had been deeply influenced by his experiences in Britain where he attended law school in the late 1880s and was later admitted to the bar. After returning to India in 1891 for a brief period, Gandhi took a position with an Indian law firm, which sent him to South Africa. Many persons of color had been denied social, economic, and political mobility in South Africa. Gandhi saw this as a form of slavery and became very involved in the Civil Rights movement there. Gandhi formed the Natal Indian Congress in South Africa and named himself Secretary in 1894. Gandhi was a tremendous political force there throughout the decade of the 1890s, and he traveled extensively between Africa and Asia. Ironically, Gandhi had advocated the support of the British in both World War I and the South African War. Gandhi believed in a civilized, organized, and non-violent society and would become instrumental in the end of British occupation in both countries. Especially during the 1920s and up to his assassination in 1948, Gandhi actively sought an end to the class of untouchables in India. This class was the lowest in India. Those consigned to it were only allowed to work low skilled jobs, failed to have access to education, politics, or good health care and were, in effect, abandoned to a form of slavery.
One of Gandhi's most successful demonstrations came in late 1929 when he asked the British government to relinquish control of India. When they refused, Gandhi lead several hundred thousand persons to the sea to protest occupation and the British tax on salt. The demonstration resulted in the arrest and jailing of over 60,000 people. The British government eventually negotiated with Gandhi for the release of the prisoners, but Gandhi remained disappointed because he had failed to address the privileges of Indian princes and the debasement of the untouchables. Gandhi argued that British occupation in India had sustained both the privileged classes and the containment of the Untouchables.

Gandhi, although his legend has continued to grow and increase in popularity, was not without criticism in his lifetime or after his death in 1948. Some criticism came from factions within India and what is now Pakistan because they believed that Gandhi was undermining their political rights. Some Muslims believed he was impartially biased toward Hindus, while others believed he was too lenient toward the followers in Islam. Gandhi was often viewed as an extremist in his idea of nonviolence even toward Nazi Germany during World War II. Gandhi's philosophies and views toward class, race, the Caste System, and apartheid and how those items relates to slavery or types of slavery have influenced millions of persons for decades. Such leaders as Nelson Mandela, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and the Dalai Lama were all tremendously influenced by Gandhi's thought as it relates to the movement of antislavery. See also Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in; Sri Lanka, Antislavery in.


Steve Napier

Garnet, Henry Highland (1815–1882)

Throughout the antebellum era Henry Highland Garnet was among the most radical of black abolitionists. Born in 1815, Garnet escaped slavery as a boy when his family fled Maryland. Two childhood events helped shape his growing defiance toward whites. When Garnet was fourteen, slave catchers seized his sister, prompting him to buy a knife to defend his family. Five years later, he discharged a shotgun in self-defense against a white mob. In his mid-twenties, Garnet accepted a Presbyterian pastorate in Troy, New York, which served as a platform for his antislavery work. He assumed a leading role in the black convention movement and spearheaded
organizing in the 1840s and 1850s for African Americans to regain the suffrage in New York.

In 1840, Garnet helped establish the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society when he became dissatisfied with William Lloyd Garrison's unwillingness to use politics in fighting slavery. Garnet became nationally prominent in 1843 when he delivered a controversial speech before the National Convention of Colored Citizens in Buffalo, New York. In his address, he called on Southern slaves to stage work stoppages and insurrections against their masters. Slaves had nothing to lose and everything to gain, he argued. Not only was resistance a moral duty, but God required that they refuse to submit further to their oppressors. To fail to oppose them, Garnet emphasized, was to offend and anger God. Resistance was the only path for them to secure their liberty. Frederick Douglass immediately condemned Garnet's speech as too inflammatory, which sparked a personal rivalry between them that would span two decades.

In the early 1850s, Garnet lectured in Great Britain, lobbying for an economic boycott of slave-manufactured goods. After a three-year missionary stint in Jamaica, he returned to America and settled in New York City where he became minister of Shiloh Presbyterian Church. Garnet had also by then become an advocate of overseas emigration. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 had made free blacks more receptive to relocating outside the United States. In 1858, Garnet and Martin Delany cofounded the African Civilization Society, which promoted the voluntary colonization of African Americans in Africa. Through the society, Garnet sought to: destroy slavery and the slave trade; end prejudice through black economic advance; disseminate Christianity in Africa; encourage the cultivation of free labor cotton in Africa in order to undermine the Southern economy; and build an independent black state as a bulwark of black nationalism. With the advent of the Civil War, Garnet shifted his priorities, supporting the Union and the Republicans and lobbying for the use of black troops, and after 1862, recruiting them. In 1864, he moved to Washington, D.C., to pastor the prestigious Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. His stature led to an invitation to speak before the U.S. House of Representatives.

On February 14, 1865, Garnet became the first African American to address Congress. In his discourse, over which he reviewed the many long decades of black struggles against slavery and injustice, he called for the enfranchisement and equal treatment of black Americans as the Civil War was ending. Garnet receded from the spotlight after the war, returning to a New York church at which he had served as pastor earlier. In 1881, President Garfield appointed Garnet as minister resident to Liberia. Although advanced in years and declining in health, Garnet accepted the diplomatic post, intent on strengthening the economic ties between the two countries. He arrived in Liberia at year's end, but died less than seven weeks later on February 13, 1882. After sixty-six years, Garnet died in Africa, the place he had yearned for since his youth. See also Garrisonians.

Shawn Mosher

Garrison, William Lloyd (1805–1879)

Through his indefatigable activities as an editor and reformer, William Lloyd Garrison became one of the most outspoken and radical abolitionists of the antebellum United States.

Born in 1805 as the fourth child to a merchant seaman, Abijah Garrison, and a housekeeper, Frances Lloyd, William’s early years were spent in an impoverished and unstable but religiously pious household in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Abijah’s drinking led him to abandon his family in 1808, at the height of the economic dislocation caused by the 1807 Embargo Act. William’s mother, a devout Baptist familiarly called “Fanny,” moved the family several times while searching for work and suitable apprenticeships for her sons. In 1818, she left William in the care of the editor of the Newburyport Herald, Ephraim Allen, who instructed Garrison in the techniques of the print trade that he would use in his antislavery crusade.

When his apprenticeship ended in 1826, William became editor of the Free Press, also in Newburyport, and subsequently traveled to edit a series of newspapers in Massachusetts and Vermont. As an editor, Garrison was adept at spotting literary talent, publishing the first works of the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier. As a businessman, Garrison was a failure; each of the papers he edited during this period folded soon after his arrival, for Garrison cared less about holding an audience of readers than in preaching to them through his press. Garrison looked on electoral politics with disdain at a time of vast, though white and male, voter participation, telling readers that politics was an activity corrupting to observant Christians. Readers soon refused to pay for such editorials, and Garrison’s early journalism career was populated by failures.

His fortunes were reversed, however, by two events, both in 1828. Garrison joined a newspaper in Boston called the National Philanthropist that advocated a broad set of anti-gambling, religious, and pacifist reforms. He also was invited to Baltimore by the Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lundy to coedit a weekly paper called the Genius of Universal Emancipation. This introduction to radical abolitionism—calling for immediate rather than gradual emancipation—landed Garrison in Baltimore’s city jail in 1830. He was convicted for libeling a prominent Boston merchant, Francis Todd; Garrison said that Todd was engaged in the interstate slave trade and called him a “murderer.” Convicted and unable—or unwilling—to pay a fine, Garrison was held in Baltimore’s city jail for forty-nine days. From there, he labored to write a pamphlet and send out regular dispatches condemning slavery, calling for immediate abolition, and drawing attention to his plight; his quasi-martyrdom propelled him to prominence among abolitionists throughout the Northeast, and his imprisonment ended when the New York merchant brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan paid his fine.
Garrison spent the following months delivering lectures throughout the region, a minor celebrity honing his religious message. Slavery, he believed, was so offensive to God that it required vehement, but peaceful, opposition on the part of all Christians, who had to seek immediate liberation for the enslaved and penitence from their oppressors. This view put Garrison at odds with the prevailing goals of the abolitionist movement: gradual emancipation and relocation. The American Colonization Society, which sought to resettle free blacks in Africa, would merely create a country more suitable for slavery, Garrison believed, by banishing free blacks and making slavery a normative condition.

To carry his message, Garrison founded a newspaper called The Liberator in 1830 and printed his first edition on January 1, 1831. His opening editorial proclaimed, ‘I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch and I will be heard.’ The paper’s motto was, ‘Our country is the world… Our countrymen are mankind.’ Financially supported by free blacks and religious whites in Northern cities, The Liberator eventually swelled to 30,000 subscriptions and made Garrison the leader of a movement then in the early stages of defining itself. Garrison gained respect in abolitionist circles and became a target for Southern slaveholders who peppered him with death threats.

Nevertheless Garrison’s influence grew. In 1832, he cofounded the New England Anti-Slavery Society; it called for immediate abolition and an end to social and legal distinctions among races. That same year, he penned a pamphlet that attacked the American Colonization Society, Thoughts on African Colonization, and took an increasingly harsh and confrontational tone in his newspaper that garnered him further attention as he led a multi-front attack on slavery.

In 1833, Garrison sailed to Great Britain, meeting there with veteran abolitionists Thomas Buxton, Daniel O’Connell, George Thompson, and William Wilberforce. Garrison had come to view the antislavery cause as a global one, and sought both moral and financial support from British for his mission at home.

In December 1833, Garrison and fifty others founded the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia, making common cause among Quaker abolitionists John Greenleaf Whittier and Lucretia Mott, religious evangelicals Joshua Leavitt, William Jay, and Samuel Sewall, and free blacks such as Robert Purvis. The organization’s Declaration of Sentiments, authored by Garrison himself, made clear that it aspired to be something wholly new to the American political landscape: a racially- and gender-integrated network of pacifist activists who sought the establishment of smaller grassroots societies, newspapers, and campaigns to aid them in wiping slavery away. Instead of working by the ballot or through legislatures, they appealed to individuals’ consciences through the religious revivalism of the period and what they called “moral suasion.”

Proslavery partisans did not sit idly by as Garrison and his allies made their attacks. Garrison was harassed by a mob in Boston in 1835, while copies of his newspaper were confiscated and sometimes burned in Southern post offices. Within the abolitionist movement, Garrison’s disdain for
politics provoked a fissure within the American Anti-Slavery Society; his views on clerical authority, the Scriptures, and women’s rights put him in opposition to many of his most prominent fellow abolitionists who feared that such positions would cost them public support.

The division that began in the mid-1830s between Garrisonians favoring a holistic moral shift in American society and anti-Garrisonians focused solely on slavery provoked, in 1840, the formation of the splinter American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Secession, experienced within Garrison’s pared-down American Anti-Slavery Society, led him to advocate for Northern secession; The Liberator’s masthead urged, “No Union with Slaveholders.” Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, Garrison represented the wing of abolitionism that would sacrifice the union to escape what they saw as slavery’s broad taint. When he burned a copy of the Constitution in 1854, Garrison only cemented this position, making himself gradually more marginal in the political struggles of the decade (see United States Constitution and Antislavery).

Yet Garrison did shift positions, embracing Abraham Lincoln’s affirmation of the Union in 1860 and defending the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, in spite of its narrow limitations. This put Garrison on the more conservative side of many of his antebellum allies, including Wendell Phillips. While Phillips sought political equality for blacks, Garrison insisted that political rights were privileges that could be conditioned on educational and behavioral standards and tests. With emancipation in 1865, Garrison saw his work as done; he closed The Liberator and left the American Anti-Slavery Society after failing to disband it. Apart from a few pamphlets and articles, Garrison was largely silent in the 1860s and 1870s and died in New York City, leaving a still debated legacy over his historical importance and influence in the causus belli of the Civil War.


Brian Murphy

Garrisonians

Named after the antislavery activist William Lloyd Garrison, Garrisonians were members of a radical and relatively small segment of the abolitionist movement that emerged in the early 1830s. Its adherents rejected compromise with slave owners and called for an immediate end to slavery. Based mainly in Boston, they included prominent abolitionists such as Maria Weston Chapman, Henry C. Wright, Wendell Phillips, Samuel J. May, Parker Pillsbury, and most notably the group’s leader William Lloyd Garrison. Garrisonian abolitionists were predominantly pious non-denominational Christians or practitioners of less-organized and non-hierarchical forms of Christianity including the Quakers and the Unitarians. While Garrisonian
attitudes toward the role of women in the anti-slavery movement evolved, they generally were the most inclusive of abolitionists. This impulse stemmed from the many Quakers in the group who favored gender egalitarianism as well as the influence of Garrison's many female supporters. As a result, Garrisonian women played a central part within this wing of American abolitionism.

Most Garrisonians refused to participate directly in politics because they viewed the American political system as a process that was rooted in human bondage and bound to compromise with the evil institution: some went so far as to argue that the United States Constitution itself was an inherently proslavery document. Therefore, voting or other political activities rendered individuals personally complicit in the sin of slavery. By the early 1840s, Garrison himself believed that the Northern states should secede from the South if its elite insisted on upholding a slave system. However, Garrisonians argued against violence as a means to achieve their goals because they considered such behavior un-Christian.

Instead, they argued that an end to slavery could best be accomplished through the moral suasion of women and men. In January 1831, Garrison began publishing a weekly newspaper entitled *The Liberator*, which was the central mouthpiece through which Garrisonian abolitionists spread their message until December 1865, when the newspaper concluded its uninterrupted run. While Garrison was the principal contributor to the production of the newspaper, Chapman and May, among many others, frequently played important supporting roles in its production and distribution. Consequently, *The Liberator* was effective in uniting Garrisonians by giving them a project to work on together.

As a result of their radical, uncompromising, and vocal views on both slavery and how best to end it, Garrisonians often found themselves at odds with their fellow abolitionists. These conflicts became particularly intense during the early 1840s, when Garrisonians gained control of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) after a bitter convention of the Society in New York City in July 1840 at which a female supporter of the Garrisonian faction, Abby Kelley Foster, was elected to the executive. In response to this transgression of gender roles, in addition to a number of other disputes plaguing the organization, the dissidents broke away from the AASS and formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS). However, the inclusiveness frequently demonstrated by Garrisonians, particularly towards women, had limitations. While Garrison and his supporters encouraged black antislavery activists, especially ex-slaves, to speak at their rallies, they were not comfortable with African American abolitionists such as...
Frederick Douglass, editing their own newspapers. Partially as a result of the condescending attitude that Garrisonians showed toward black abolitionists, Douglass distanced himself from the group during the 1840s and 1850s. Yet many of the prominent black abolitionists in the Boston area including John T. Hilton, Lewis Hayden, William Wells Brown, and Charles Lenox Remond were ardent Garrisonians.

Opposed to participation in politics, Garrison and his supporters largely were unsupportive of the 1840 and 1844 antislavery Liberty Party presidential campaigns of James G. Birney. Despite frequent disputes among Garrisonians, they largely remained united in their support of Garrison's crusade to end slavery, often describing him in religious terms. However, with the rise of the Republican Party in the 1850s, the non-political abolitionism advocated by Garrisonians became less relevant to the debate over slavery in America. As a result, Garrison and his supporters were often less antagonistic towards the Republican Party than they had been towards the Liberty Party. In addition, Garrisonian opposition to the use of violence became less extreme in the 1840s and 1850s, showing sympathy for militant antislavery activism in Bleeding Kansas and John Brown's uprising.

Garrisonians represented a far more important part of the abolitionist movement than their modest base of support would suggest. William Lloyd Garrison and his supporters wielded considerable influence in the debate over slavery in the United States. Furthermore, the prominent positions female abolitionists were able to take within Garrison's inner circle allowed women to challenge prescribed antebellum gender roles. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Whig Party and Antislavery.


David M. Greenspoon

Gender and Slave Emancipation

The historiography on slave emancipation for a long time assumed that emancipation came equally to all slaves and that the project of emancipation was one that although founded in hierarchies of class expectations, nonetheless liberated men and women into a gender neutral civil sphere. Scholars understood slave emancipation primarily through the lenses of political economy. Major narratives of emancipation centered on the transition from economies centered on the ownership of people, to ones centered on the sale of labor power, and governed by wage contracts. Historians analyzed battles over land holding, citizenship, and labor, most often assuming that the individuals being liberated were men. Earlier histories of emancipation assumed that the gender of the individual being freed was irrelevant to the overarching issues of freedom and labor: the question of how women
and men might have been differentially or even similarly affected by emancipation was unexamined.

Building on the new focus on women and slavery, Jacqueline Jones's 1985 *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, took the private sphere seriously as a focus of study and thus placed gender relations within the household on the agenda of slave emancipation studies. It was only in the 1990s, however, that scholars began to explore how the very conceptual categories of emancipation were framed by ideologies of gender.

Scholars are now analyzing the ways in which ideas about femininity and masculinity shaped the very project of emancipation. Studies of gender and emancipation have concentrated on the long nineteenth-century. Historians working on areas and emancipations as diverse as Britain, Cuba, Jamaica, the British Cape Colony and French West Africa, demonstrate that slave emancipation was always structured by gender concerns and ideologies, and in turn helped to inaugurate new ideas about femininity and masculinity. The era of slave emancipation inaugurated great contestations over cultural and social practice around family relationships, the organization of labor and political life and ideas of femininity and masculinity were central to all these arenas. The study of gender has therefore introduced new themes into the history of slave emancipation including sexuality, masculinity, and the twinned histories of race and gender.

Different factors contributed to the gendering of slave emancipation. Freed people brought to the experience expectations of men and women's roles within the family and the work place, in part shaped by their experiences as slaves of others. Abolitionists understood emancipation as a gendered project in which women would be "liberated" into a patriarchal family while freed men would exercise patriarchal familial and political rights. Missionaries and other actors also sought to inculcate among freed people beliefs in the sanctity of marriage and the importance of the nuclear family.

Ideas and practices of race and class also shaped gender ideologies. While abolitionists and government officials promoted on the one hand the reorganization of the freed family within the discourse of the bourgeois nuclear family, they also wanted freed women to labor when required to do so. For freed women, the choice not to labor in conditions akin to servitude was, in contrast, a major indicator of liberty. While labor has long been a hallmark of studies of emancipation, historians have assumed that the tensions over who would work and for whom involved only the wage nexus.

The British project of emancipation was a relatively organized affair. Under pressure from abolitionists, and in the wake of major slave revolts, the British government orchestrated apprenticeship (1834-38) and then the final abolition of slavery. Abolition in the British Empire thus occurred precisely when anxieties about women and labor dominated English debates about industrialization at home. Abolitionists, and to some extent slaves themselves, understood that emancipation would reorder the familial sphere into one in which men had authority over their wives and children. Unlike in England however, where working class women predominated in the first wave of factory labor, freed women in British colonies sought to
withdraw from waged work and attempted to find avenues for self-employment as laundresses or in independent market-gardening. In places like Brazil and the British Caribbean, while notions of masculine authority inspired and helped guide the project of emancipation, men's power over women was also limited by the economic dependence of families on women's work.

Historians of gender have pointed out that struggles over labor always took place on the terrain of gender and that men and women experienced labor relations very differently. For example, one reason for freed women's refusal to work on plantations in the British West Indies or on settlers' farms in the British Cape Colony in the 1840s and onwards arose from women's experiences of sexual and other abuse at the hands of former masters. A seemingly economic fact, the withdrawal of labor, thus can only be understood in the context of gendered experiences of slavery and of gendered expectations of freedom. For many former slaves, freedom precisely entailed liberation from rape by former masters.

For slaves across the nineteenth century Atlantic World, emancipation also meant a profound ideological and experiential transformation from being a person whose political identity was not acknowledged to being a citizen. In the case of Haiti, for example, emancipation came through military force. Men's role as soldiers thus became bound up with their rights as citizens. The discourse on citizenship and freedom was thus framed through masculine entitlement in ways that made it very difficult for women to access political rights. Attention to gender demonstrates that individuals' incorporation into the body politic was of course disrupted for women and confirmed for men by the gendered assumptions of liberal political theory.

As Carole Pateman has shown, liberal contract theory assumed that the individual making contracts was a man and that he derived this authority from his status as head of a nuclear family. The abolitionist attack on slavery, inspired by contract theory, likewise was founded in gendered conceptions of the relationship between the family and the state, between the private and the public sphere. Abolitionist rhetoric assumed the existence of the patriarchal nuclear family and of men and women's discrete places within that structure. Abolitionist rhetoric, particularly in the British Empire and the United States, focused on the slave woman as the epitome of the individual who was without power over their person. This discourse on the denial of women's rights created an ideological space for women to claim their rights as freed people. Yet, such a joining of slave emancipation with women's emancipation, while advocated in the course of the nineteenth-century by female abolitionists, confronted another pillar of antislavery discourse.

Abolitionists argued that slavery denied men the masculine right of exerting control over his family members, including his wife and children. The ending of slavery would thus restore former slave men's right to full masculinity. This masculinity was seen to derive in part from men's authority over women and children in the domestic sphere. This acknowledgement of gendered tensions within the political imagination of abolitionist discourses
and emancipation legislation has prompted historians to further examine the discrete experiences of men and women as they navigated the post-emancipation world. The conventional narratives of slave emancipation as centered on labor, contract, and politics, have to be reenvisaged once one takes gender into account. Historians have both brought new perspectives to older narratives of emancipation and introduced new themes and analyses. See also Gender Relations with Abolitionism; Women’s Antislavery Societies.


*Pamela Scully*

**Gender Relations within Abolitionism**

The antislavery movement was influenced by a complex interaction between racial and gender reform. Some abolitionists, generally those associated with the radical, Garrisonian wing of the movement, were concerned not only with the public fight against black slavery. Appalled by the abuses of domestic life under slavery, these abolitionists were also deeply concerned with family and gender relations, and the advancement and reform of marriage—in free as well as slave society—which were central to their reforming mission. Few in number, radical abolitionists were social and intellectual pioneers, who significantly affected the ideology and practice of abolitionism and sought to demonstrate the possibilities of radical social reform. As abolitionists Lucy Stone and British-born Henry Browne Blackwell vowed at their wedding in 1855, marriage should be an “equal and permanent relationship.” Certain that public and private reform were interdependent, and convinced that marriage was the most important of all human relationships, radical abolitionists carried matters of marriage and family into public discourse.

Radical abolitionists’ efforts to restructure gender relations grew in part from their public activities against slavery. By stepping beyond the domestic circle and joining their male coadjutors in opposing slavery, feminist-abolitionists tested the boundaries of “women’s sphere.” While their activism was informed by the ascendant nineteenth-century ideology of domesticity, and although they accepted the prevailing view that women were blessed with particular moral insights, these abolitionists refuted the notion that women should only exercise their moral authority within the confines of the private sphere. A realization that the mistreatment of women in public life was paralleled by inequalities in private life was one imperative driving some abolitionists’ determination to reform the ideology and practice of marriage.
Among the most radical of abolitionist marriages was that between Abby Kelley Foster and Stephen Symonds Foster. Foster, already notorious for his practice of interrupting church services to denounce the clergy as a “brotherhood of thieves,” found his match in Kelley, who had earned a reputation as a feisty opponent of slavery and advocate of women’s rights. Prior to their wedding in 1845, Foster and Kelley self-consciously negotiated the terms under which their marriage would function. In practice, their marriage was certainly unconventional by the standards of antebellum America. Reversing the prevailing view that wives should confine themselves to the private sphere, Kelley continued in her role as a public reformer, while Foster largely retreated to the private sphere.

Not all radical abolitionists’ marriages were characterized by such a dramatic reversal of roles. William Lloyd Garrison defended women’s right to participate in the public sphere and welcomed women’s contributions to the antislavery struggle. In many respects, however, his marriage conformed to the prevailing ideology, as he was a very public figure, while his wife, Helen, was largely occupied with domestic duties. The marriage of Ann and Wendell Phillips also appeared conventional, insofar as in the period after her marriage Ann largely abstained from participating publicly in the antislavery movement. Yet while their marriage appeared to conform to the prevailing ideal of the separate spheres, Ann Phillips’s confinement to the private sphere was more a consequence of her ill health, rather than a conscious decision to retire from public life. And while she was unable to participate in the public fight against slavery, she continued to take an active interest in the cause, and, like Helen Garrison, encouraged her husband’s activism.

Like other radical abolitionists, Ann and Wendell Phillips valued intimacy, both emotional and physical. Radical abolitionists believed that those values, which Southern slaves often found difficult to maintain due to the brutalities of slavery, and the sometimes precarious nature of slave marriages, were fundamental to companionate marriage. They maintained that mutual affection and intimacy, rather than power, should be at the heart of true marriage.

Inevitably, abolitionists seeking to restructure family life provoked the ire of their opponents, in the North as well as the South. Women such as Kelley, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone, were accused of abrogating their domestic obligations and seeking to overthrow familial relations throughout the nation. Critics of abolitionist women worried that women who entered the public sphere and debated divisive issues such as slavery would forfeit the moral insights that women should bring to bear in their marriages. Domestic writers such as Catharine Beecher believed that rather than involving themselves in public reformism, women should seek to effect change through the persuasion of their husbands, within the confines of the domestic sphere. By stepping beyond the private sphere, and by promoting a model of marriage that rested on the principle of equality, radical abolitionist women had allegedly betrayed the principles of “true womanhood.”

Radical abolitionist husbands, too, attracted considerable opprobrium. One common response was to impugn their masculine credentials: “Hen-pecked”
abolitionist men, it was claimed, “ought to wear petticoats.” But men such as Foster, Blackwell, and Henry B. Stanton were not deterred. Determined to live up to a masculine ideal that contrasted to the patriarchal model that dominated Southern plantation society, radical abolitionist men instead prized intimacy and equality and defended their wives' forays into the public sphere.

Abolitionists committed to the reform of family and gender relations took a keen interest in the practice of child rearing. Extending the principles of “republican motherhood,” and designating an active parental role for husbands, radical abolitionists believed that a loving and peaceful domestic environment could help ensure that children embraced Christian and reformist values. Such an environment, moreover, was a stark contrast to the situation that existed in the slave states, where, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton put it, children were “conceived in the midst of hate, sin, and discord,” and “nurtured in abuse and injustice.” Fulfilling their parents’ wishes, a number of abolitionists’ children took an active interest in reformism, including racial and gender reform.

In an era in which the notions of private and public were in flux, radical abolitionists considered their marriages as public statements, which linked their commitment to family and gender reform. Radical abolitionists’ attempts to reform marital and gender relations were at best only partly successful. But they did identify and address inequalities in gender relations, and their idealized archetype of marriage and family was both a dramatic contrast to the abuses that occurred under slavery, as well as a model upon which subsequent generations of reformers could build. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Women’s Antislavery Societies.


Chris Dixon

**Georgia Trustees (1732–1751)**

A set of paternalistic British Trustees, who were granted administrative control over the colony of Georgia by royal charter, attempted for nearly two decades to restrict the spread of black slavery to the Southern frontier. These founders of Georgia, initially numbering twenty-one, were all prominent in English society—including ten members of the House of Commons, two members of the House of Lords, and five ministers of the Church of England. They had all been linked at some point to the Associates of Dr. Bray, a colonial missionary organization, and were intimately connected with the philanthropic projects of their day. The two most influential members, John Viscount Percival (later Earl of Egmont) and James Edward Oglethorpe, lavished considerable amounts of time, energy, and money upon the Georgia mission to relocate thousands of disadvantaged people to a new productive utopia across the Atlantic.

The Trustees used their parliamentary influence to prohibit the institution of slavery within the boundaries of Georgia between 1735 and 1750, which
made the colony unique among contemporary American provinces—all of which had legalized slavery and contained varying numbers of bondspeople. This opposition to slavery issued from concerns for security rather than morality, although several of the Trustees believed the institution of slavery was contrary to the Gospel and the fundamental law of England. The Trustees argued that the presence of enslaved Africans would facilitate Spanish assaults from Florida, or Indian raids from the West, and therefore endanger the safety of Georgia and the South Carolinian border. They also believed that slaves would compromise the moral fiber of their carefully selected colonists, rendering them idle and ungodly. The Trustees designed Georgia to become a province populated by hardworking yeomen-militiamen and accordingly banned not only slaves but large landholdings, lawyers, and rum as well.

The Trustees soon faced considerable opposition from settlers who felt constrained by these prohibitions. An increasing number of colonists, influenced by the mounting prosperity of planters in neighboring South Carolina, campaigned from the late 1730s for the legalization of slavery. Their calls for the introduction of bondspeople were unashamedly economic: they argued that West Africans were the only laborers who could guarantee agricultural prosperity in the lowcountry environment, and that the military threat from Florida had been negated by the successful repulsion of a Spanish invasion in 1742. Their position was reinforced by the support of influential South Carolinians and even the evangelist George Whitefield.

Although some Georgia settlers supported antislavery laws, including communities of Highland Scots and Lutheran Salzburgers, the Trustees’ position became increasingly untenable in the late 1740s, by which time bondspeople were already being surreptitiously employed in the province. On January 1, 1751, slavery was formally legalized, and though the Trustees continued to insist upon greater limitations on the ratio of blacks to whites than existed in South Carolina’s slave codes, the expiration of their royal charter in 1752 paved the way for Georgia to launch an economy and society dominated by African slave labor.


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**German Coast (Louisiana) Insurrection of 1811**

On January 20, 1811, Governor William Claiborne wrote to Thomas Jefferson regarding a slave rebellion that had just taken place north of New Orleans, in the German Coast county of Lower Louisiana, “We have lately experienced much alarm in consequence of an Insurrection among the Slaves in this vicinity. It at first assumed a menacing aspect; but was very soon quelled by the prompt and decisive movements of the armed force of the United States, and the Body of the Militia.” Stressing the swiftness of the repression, Governor William Claiborne minimized the actual scope of the
slave rebellion and described the rebels as mere desperate brigands. Across the United States though, the rebellion became known as “the miniature representation of the horrors of Santo Domingo,” and alarming accounts of the rebellion were printed in American newspapers North and South. The Territory of Orleans, which was soon to be admitted as an American state, had experienced its largest slave rebellion to date. Again and again, this momentous event has been labeled as one of the largest slave revolts in United States history. Yet, information regarding the rebellion itself remains scattered and at best superficial.

Four days before William Claiborne’s reassuring letter was penned, Jean, a teenage slave, had narrowly escaped capital punishment. He had, “with force and arms, [made] or [caused] to be made an insurrection in the Territory of Orleans.” The St. Charles parish authorities had sentenced him to attend the execution of his fellow slave, Gery, convicted the day before, and to receive a punishment of thirty lashes in the public jail. Jean was among the yet-undetermined number of slaves—between one hundred and fifty and five hundred—who had risen up in arms in the two densely populated sugar parishes of St. Charles and St. John the Baptist, about thirty miles upriver from New Orleans.

The parish of St. John the Baptist, where the revolt started, had a slave population of 1,500. Plantations were moderately large in size—an average of twelve slaves per plantation—and were relatively larger on the left bank of the Mississippi River. The largest plantation, which had a slave population of about ninety slaves, was that of Manuel Andry. It was there that the revolt erupted. Just south of St. John the Baptist, the St. Charles parish had a slave population of 2,300, which made it the parish with the largest concentration of slaves in the Territory of Orleans. There were, on average, twenty slaves per plantation. On the left bank of the parish, however, most slaves lived on much larger plantations, which averaged more than fifty slaves. Throughout the parish, there were four slaves for each white inhabitant, a factor largely contributing to the sense of hysteria provoked by the slave rebellion. The two parishes had recently received large groups of new African slaves and the slave labor force of the sugar plantations had markedly increased. The Pointe Coupee Rebellion of 1795 had taken place a long way away from the capital, but now the danger seemed to lay at the threshold of the city and faubourgs where in excess of thirteen thousand slaves lived.

Louisiana planters had long been used to the problem of slave resistance, but revolt on this scale was unheard of, and it was all the more disquieting as Louisiana had become increasingly dependent upon the labor of its slave population. To make matters worse, it was often deplored that police forces were unable to effectively control the activities and whereabouts of slaves. In the late-eighteenth century, James Pitot, a Frenchman who had recently arrived in Louisiana, observed that “the patrols are insignificant; the garrison is inconsequential; the militia not in uniform . . . Negroes, less subject to authority and more able to move around without supervision on the main roads and in town, are in a position to learn the ways of corruption . . . and the anxious owner lives in a state of war with his slaves.” In 1811,
many planters would have still agreed with this characterization. William Claiborne was apparently convinced of the existence of such a state of war; no sooner had the slave rebellion been crushed, then he called for the complete overhaul of the militia.

The insurrection was led by a mulatto slave driver named Charles Deslondes, who was born in Saint Domingue. As in Saint Domingue, the insurrection started with the sound of drums which issued from the plantation of Manuel Andry on the evening of January 8, 1811. Manuel Andry was wounded and his son was killed; the slaves took the ammunition they could find and then marched to other plantations in the two parishes of the German Coast. Whites fled to New Orleans, where the City Guard was ordered to patrol the streets and check for any signs of possible insurrection. The slave rebels were joined by bands of runaway slaves but their progression was brutally checked two days later by regular soldiers, volunteer corps, and militiamen. All in all, sixty-six slaves were killed during the repression, twenty-two were imprisoned, and nineteen were reported missing. Of all the slaves arrested, twenty-two were executed, including Charles Deslondes. The brutality of the repression called to mind the similarly brutal suppression of the Pointe Coupée rebellion a few years earlier.

The German Coast insurrection laid bare the tensions interwoven in the slave and African American community. Unlike the Pointe Coupée conspiracy, free people of color were not involved in the plot and did not support the forced abolition of slavery. On the contrary, they were praised for their participation in suppressing the revolt. In addition, the authorities felt confident enough to assert also that “Great fidelity has been evinced by the Slaves towards their master in the most trying circumstances.” Such self-confidence was, of course, grossly overrated, but some slaves did indeed fight the rebels to defend their masters' plantations. Bazile, for instance, a mulatto belonging to the estate of the deceased Meuillon, was praised for fighting the rebels who had set fire to his master's house.

The structure and causes of the German Coast insurrection are maybe best understood when compared with the Pointe Coupée Rebellion of 1795. Both rebellions took place in times when the Louisiana slave demography was being dramatically altered. The 1780s saw the arrival of shipload after shipload of African slaves from two of the Caribbean’s most active slave ports: Kingston and Roseau. The 1800s was a period marked, in particular, by the brisk reexport trade in slaves from Cuba and Charleston and by the arrival of refugee slaves from Saint Domingue and Cuba. Plantation demography was destabilized each time, and rebellious strains came to the fore. The Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy was blamed in part on the arrival of too many slaves from the Caribbean, which led planters and authorities to call for a total suspension of the slave trade. William Claiborne similarly appraised the German Coast insurrection and called for checks on the influx of slaves from other American states. But the similarities end there. Planters did not agree with Governor Claiborne and did not petition for the imposition of new checks on the slave trade; they needed as many slaves as possible to develop their new, prosperous cotton and sugar plantations. Planters would continue importing large numbers of slaves, no matter what.
To do that safely and avert further insurrections, they needed, however, to reform existing modes of slave control. The reorganization of the militia and the several plans for the creation of a gendarmerie for the city, suburbs, and other districts of New Orleans who would be in charge of arresting runaway slaves and controlling slaves in general were two clear steps in that direction. The failure of the German Coast insurrection did not mean the end of slave resistance, but it signaled to planters that a slave society needed adequate and reliable forces capable of controlling the slaves and deterring rebellion. It served to unite planters at the same time as it tested the rebellious resolve of the slave population. See also Gabriel’s Conspiracy; Turner, Nat; Vesey’s Conspiracy.


Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec

Germantown Antislavery Petition (1688)

Written at a Quaker meeting in Germantown, Pennsylvania, on April 18, 1688, the petition is believed to be the first public protest against slavery in British North America. The four Quaker men who signed the petition—Francis Daniel Pastorius, Gerret Hendericks, Derick op de Graef, and Abraham op de Graef—were recent immigrants from Germany who had settled in Pennsylvania to escape religious persecution. Founded in 1681 by Quaker leader William Penn, Pennsylvania granted freedom of conscience to Protestant Christians of any denomination, earning it the byname of the “holy experiment.” The Germantown petition denounced the incongruities between the spiritual and social aspirations of the Quaker founders and the inhuman institution of slavery practiced by many Quakers. Recognizing the profound moral, social, and political ramifications of this issue, the monthly and quarterly Quaker meetings shifted the petition to the Yearly Meeting, the highest policy-making authority, which ultimately dismissed it. Although the petition had no immediate effect on the Quakers’ stance toward slavery, the protest is notable for presaging their strong antislavery commitment.

George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), had admonished slaveholders in America to free slaves after a number of years and to ensure proper religious instruction. Removed from their own experience of oppression in England, however, many American Quakers kept slaves for life. Except for Pastorius, the signers of the Germantown protest were Mennonites who had only recently converted to Quakerism. In sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Europe, Anabaptist groups such as the Mennonites had
suffered severe persecution, including torture and public executions. While no longer fearing for their lives in the late-seventeenth century, radical Protestants such as the Mennonites were still barred from a free exercise of their religion and a full participation in civic life. In America, however, slavery dashed these immigrants’ utopian hopes for a society free from the moral and social vices of Europe.

While most of the early Germantown settlers had little formal education, Pastorius had a legal degree and years of classical training. He was the only German Quaker able to compose a formal petition in English. Pastorius was grounded in the Pietistic renewal of Lutheranism in Germany and joined the Society of Friends after his arrival in Pennsylvania. Both Pietism and Quakerism sought to reform orthodox Protestantism through an emphasis on the workings of the spirit within each individual and the primacy of personal conscience over religious and secular authority. They are evident in the petition—a handwritten, two-page document—which appealed to Christian principles in general and Quaker ethics in particular. Throughout, the protest admonished readers to apply the “Golden Rule,” the biblical injunction to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” to the problem of slavery. Instead of asking white Christians to imagine slavery theoretically, the document recalled the dread most Europeans felt about the common occurrence of enslavement by Turkish pirates. The petition also applied this mirroring technique to the possibility of slave insurrections: since Europeans would defend their precious liberty by any means possible, why should enslaved Africans not be allowed to do the same?

The protest furthermore listed a series of abominations originating in the slave trade, particularly that the separation of husbands and wives resulted in adultery. Following the Quaker doctrine against trading in stolen goods, Pastorius repeatedly described slavery as the robbing of humans. The petition worked most effectively in pointing out the inconsistency between the founding principles of Pennsylvania and the practice of slavery: “In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sacke; and here there are those oppressed w’ch are of black Colour.” In another line of reasoning, the document asked Quakers to consider their own reputation, especially among their critics. The petitioners lamented that slavery might prevent other religious dissenters from coming to Pennsylvania. Finally, the petition insisted that slavery is an issue that precludes moral ambiguity, asking the community to “consider well this thing, if it is good or bad?” In reducing the problem to a simple moral choice, the petition did not allow for equivocation or economic justification. Yet the Quakers’ response to this test of their collective conscience admitted no such moral clarity. According to the minutes, the members of the Yearly Meeting at Burlington judged the issue too complex to be dealt with, “It having so General a Relation to many other Parts, and therefore at present they forebear It.” See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism.

Godwyn, Morgan (1640 – c. 1695)

Not literally an abolitionist, Morgan Godwyn wrote that slavery was an acceptable form of social subordination and that Christianity would render slaves docile and tractable. Such ideas reappeared in the slave states in antebellum America. However, Godwyn was the most daring and persistent critic of slaveholders in the seventeenth-century Anglo-American world. In effect, he criticized the current forms of slaveholding so thoroughly that virtually nothing would have been left of the institution had his recommendations been followed.

After taking a degree and receiving holy orders in England, Godwyn preached in Virginia and Barbados from about 1666 to about 1680. Although the evidence is incomplete, he seems to have come into conflict with local slaveholders and politicians over their treatment of slaves, particularly cruel punishments, sale of children away from parents, and the unwillingness of masters to allow ministers to bring Christianity to the unfree. Some of the clearest commentary on the abuse of slaves, as well as the racist opinions of English settlers, appears in writings that Godwyn began publishing in 1685. Mistreatment of blacks in England itself also caught his attention. He hoped for an amelioration of the conditions of slaves’ lives, as well as an improvement of Christian faith and practice, especially within the Church of England. Like abolitionists of a century later, he believed that the leaders of Parliament and of the Church of England possessed the political or moral authority to counter the slaveholders.

Godwyn represents a transition in Anglo-American thought that reached its conclusion about a century after he flourished. Some came to believe that in theory slavery was not inconsistent with divine law and that slavery had seemed legitimate both to Jews of the pre-Christian era and to Christians themselves. Yet this legitimacy could be understood as contingent upon good and fair treatment of slaves, as well as on proper interpretation of the New Testament. As this transition between a provisional acceptance of slavery and an abolitionist insistence on its illegitimacy occurred, thinkers like Godwyn eviscerated defenses of slavetrading and slaveholding by pointing out the great distance between the legitimate and the current forms of enslavement.


John Saillant

Gradual Emancipation

Between 1780 and 1888, slavery ended in more than two dozen societies in the Western Hemisphere. A growing number of government officials and
interest groups who were influenced by Enlightenment ideas that emphasized a rationalist vision of the world, a developing sense of cultural relativism, new currents in religious thought that deemed slavery a sin against humanity, and economic theory that considered slavery an anachronism which could not compete with free labor, concluded that slavery was no longer a legitimate institution.

Yet, in the North of the United States, Canada, the British, French, and Danish West Indies, the Spanish American republics, Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, emancipation enacted gradually—or, gradual emancipation—was the dominant pattern. Many factors contributed to the slow pace of emancipation including resistance by slaveholders, an attachment to property rights, the fear of social disorder, widespread confidence in the efficacy of piecemeal reform, a concern by metropolitan elites in the colonial empires that abolition would disrupt imperial relations, the enormous wealth generated by slave labor, and a pervasive racism directed toward Africans in the Americas. Thus, with few exceptions, gradual emancipation was promulgated only after years of debate and important concessions to slaveholders' demands.

Gradual emancipation made inroads earliest in the Northern states of the United States. During the Revolutionary era, religious groups such as the Quakers and evangelical Protestants concluded that slavery was contrary to God's will. They and others who considered America as the last refuge of freedom came to view the system as the antithesis of the Revolution's fundamental aims. In addition, African Americans increasingly demanded freedom.

With antislavery activism and support for the Revolution fully intertwined, slavery gradually moved toward extinction in the North. In comparison with the United States South, relatively few Northerners depended upon slaves for their social standing, political power, or economic well-being, and there were too few slaves to threaten white supremacy once emancipation occurred. Moreover, an extensive system of free labor not only made slavery less necessary, but also led many white wage laborers to oppose cheaper slave labor.

In 1780, Pennsylvania enacted the first emancipation law in the Western Hemisphere, which proved to be the most restrictive passed in the North between 1780 and 1784. Intended to avoid a disruptive end of slavery and economic loss for slaveholders, the law did not free a single slave. All slaves born before the law went into effect were to continue to be held in lifetime bondage, and all children born of a slave after 1780 would not be freed until they reached age twenty-eight. In fact, the last slave in Pennsylvania was not freed until 1847.

Despite its severe limitations, the Pennsylvania law encouraged the antislavery forces in other Northern states during the Revolution. The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 did not mention slavery, but its declaration that all men were born free and enjoyed equal rights became the basis for a freedom suit that judicially abolished the institution. However, that decision, the Jennison case, in fact produced gradual emancipation, for slavery after Jennison had no legal foundation in the state and any individual who
challenged his or her enslavement would win. By the early 1790s, slavery had all but disappeared in Massachusetts.

The pattern of emancipation was similar in New Hampshire, where the 1783 constitution’s statement that all men were born equal and independent and enjoyed natural rights, was sufficiently unclear with regard to slavery that nearly a decade later 150 slaves still resided in the state, although by then more than 600 had been freed. Vermont was the exception to the pattern of gradual emancipation in the North. Its 1777 constitution, which embodied the principle of “higher law” justice, explicitly abolished slavery.

Unlike in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire, the Rhode Island legislature passed a gradual emancipation law in 1783 but, at the same time, continued the slave trade. The law protected slaveholders’ interests by making all children of slaves born after 1783 apprentices; girls could not be freed until age eighteen and boys at age twenty-one. Until that time, masters could rid themselves of the expense of sustaining these children by freeing their mothers and having their communities support the children.

In Connecticut, Revolutionary ideology also prompted legislative action against slavery. After rejecting three emancipation bills between 1777 and 1780, the legislature passed a law in 1784 that provided for black and mulatto children born after that year to be freed at age twenty-eight. Although a 1794 bill that would have ended slavery the following year was defeated, in 1797 the legislature reduced the age of manumission to twenty-one years of age. However, the state did not enact total abolition until 1848.

Among the Northern states, New York and New Jersey, which had the region’s largest slave populations, were the last to enact gradual emancipation laws. During the 1780s, the influence of Revolutionary ideals moved the New York legislature to allow slaveholders to manumit their slaves without posting bond and to establish a uniform system of justice for blacks and whites. The creation of the New York Manumission Society reflected growing antislavery sentiment in the state, but slaveholders represented a large minority of its members and officers. Indeed, it consciously refrained from directly attacking slavery in New York and preferred to reform the institution and achieve emancipation with a minimum of disruption. Thus, an effort to abolish slavery in 1785 failed.

The gradual emancipation act of 1799 provided significant safeguards for slaveholders. All slave children were required to serve the masters of their mothers until males were twenty-eight and females were twenty-five, and masters could abandon these children a year after their birth. In addition, the fact that masters were paid by the state for every child over one year of age whom they kept amounted to compensated emancipation. Consequently, most slaves remained in bondage for many years; only in 1817 could African Americans born before 1799 have any realistic hope of soon being freed. Slavery in fact was not abolished in New York until July 4, 1827.

Emancipation occurred even more gradually in New Jersey. Antislavery groups labored for nearly twenty years before an emancipation act was finally passed in 1804. This law was extremely gradual in its effect, and
explicitly protected slaveholders' property rights. Indeed, no slaves were freed at the time, and masters retained the right to the services of young slaves. Much as in New York, owners could assign children to overseers of the poor, and these children could then be reassigned to their masters, who were paid a monthly allowance by the state. Male slaves were to be freed at age twenty-five and females at twenty-one, but if females bore children, masters owned them until they reached a working age.

With a weak antislavery movement, interest in total abolition did not revive until the 1830s, and the state did not formally abolish slavery until the following decade. Even then, the remaining slaves were still subject to a form of servitude. Indeed, a small number of slaves were not freed until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

All in all, the Northern states generally moved slowly and cautiously toward emancipation, even where there were often relatively few slaves. This was also the case in Lower Canada, where fewer than fifty slaves resided, and in Upper Canada, where there were fewer than 100 slaves. Indeed, emancipation laws passed there provided freedom only for those born in or after 1793 and only once they reached their age of majority at twenty-five. A security against former slaves becoming a public charge was also required to be posted.

From 1780 through 1830, antislavery Americans generally employed gradualist rhetoric and tactics and achieved limited success in their efforts to end slavery throughout the nation. At the Philadelphia convention in 1786, the Founding Fathers chose national unity over liberty because they wanted to avoid secession by the Lower South delegates, were convinced that the Revolution's goals were inextricably linked to the sanctity of private property, and were hopeful that slavery would gradually die out. Likewise, during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the organized antislavery movement—most notably represented by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society—was decidedly gradualist in tone and philosophy. The Pennsylvania organization was led by elites who sought gradual emancipation through lawsuits, legislative action, and petitioning on behalf of African Americans. From the 1790s through the 1820s, the American Convention of Abolition Societies, which was largely dominated by the New York and Pennsylvania groups, served as a clearinghouse for gradual emancipation efforts and sought to pressure government leaders to ameliorate the slave trade and to end slavery in the District of Columbia.

Another form of gradualism was espoused by many Northern antislavery colonizationists during the 1820s and 1830s. These colonizationists hoped that by persuading masters to free their slaves and send them to Liberia, slavery could eventually be eradicated. Most slaveholders, however, resented the antislavery pronouncements of these colonizationists, and by the 1830s Southern whites, as well as Northern free blacks, had turned against the movement.

By the 1840s, a growing number of antislavery Northerners had embraced yet another form of gradualism. Those who supported the Wilmot Proviso, which sought to prohibit slavery in the vast area that would be purchased from Mexico at the end of the Mexican War, hoped that this
bill would effectively contain slavery in the South and thereby, they believed, moving it toward extinction. Large numbers of Free Soilers and, by the mid-1850s, Republicans, embraced this gradualist approach, which they believed would ultimately convince non-slaveholding Southerners to abolish slavery in their states. In the final analysis, slavery in the United States was not destroyed until the Union armies defeated the Confederacy, thus enabling the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect throughout the South in 1865.

British abolitionists in the 1790s who sought to end the importation of slaves into the British West Indies, much like those Americans who later attempted to halt the spread of slavery into the western territories, disavowed any intention of interfering with slavery where it had long existed and mistakenly assumed their actions would soon lead to the eradication of slavery. In fact, the road to emancipation in the British West Indies was both long and difficult.

Vigorous opposition to emancipation by West Indian planters, as well as the British government's reluctance to risk disruption of the existing system of imperial rule by forcing emancipation on the colonies, combined to slow the move toward eradicating slavery. Following major slave rebellions in Jamaica and other islands, the British government abolished slavery in 1834. However, the planters had resisted so strenuously that Parliament agreed to compensate them generously and to establish a six-year apprenticeship for the former slaves, which perpetuated various methods of exploitation. Nevertheless, bitter apprenticeship strikes and other forms of unrest ultimately brought the system to a premature end in 1838.

British emancipation influenced the policies of the French and the Danish in the Caribbean. Much as in the British West Indies, ferocious planter opposition to emancipation forced these governments to provide compensation for slaveholders when slavery finally ended in 1848. Sustained agitation by the French and Danish ex-slaves, however, prevented the creation of an apprenticeship system prior to freedom. Likewise, when the Dutch, following years of debate, freed the remaining slaves in Surinam and their Caribbean islands in 1863, no effort was made to limit the former slaves' freedom.

Although the number of slaves in the Spanish American republics was approximately the same as in the Northern United States and the process of gradual emancipation lasted nearly as long in Venezuela and Peru as it did in New Jersey, the wars of liberation in Latin America had a greater impact on slavery than did the American Revolution. Much as in the United States North, slaveholder resistance, concern for property rights, racial prejudice, and delays in translating the rhetoric of liberation into effective antislavery action slowed the movement toward abolition in Latin America. Even where there were relatively few slaves, such as in Chile, attempts at gradual emancipation encountered stiff opposition; this delayed the eradication of slavery in that country for more than a decade.

Moreover, while so-called free womb laws freed the children of slaves in the Spanish American republics, long-term apprenticeships under their old masters were often imposed on the libertos, or manumisos. Because no
slave born prior to the decrees of the 1820s was actually freed, slavery con-
tinued, albeit with declining numbers, well into the 1840s and 1850s in
most of the republics. The experience of Venezuela, Columbia, and Ecuador,
which formed a unified confederation following independence, was
quite typical. In 1821, the confederation freed all slaves born after that year
and established local juntas to purchase the freedom of slaves born prior to
1821. But the dissolution of the confederation weakened the abolitionist
movement, and slaveholders were able to postpone emancipation until the
1850s, when they received compensation.

The Peruvian experience was quite similar. The liberating army decreed
gradual emancipation in the free birth act of 1828, but apprenticeship laws
forced the *libertos* to work for their masters during the next twenty years.
When slavery was finally abolished in 1854, compensation was provided for
the owners. Other republics followed much the same pattern. For example,
in 1831 Bolivia declared all slaves born since independence in 1825 to be
free, but slavery did not in fact end until 1851. Likewise, Uruguay enacted a
free womb law in 1825 but slavery lasted until 1842; and, while Argentina's
free birth law of 1813 was the first enacted in Spanish America, total abolition
was not accomplished until forty years later. The few slaves held in
Central America were freed, with compensation provided for masters, in
1824, but in Mexico all slaves were not freed until nearly a decade after in-
dependence was achieved in the early 1820s.

In the lucrative Spanish colony of **Cuba**, the large slave population was
not freed until the 1880s. Not only was the Spanish government generally
controlled by groups that were either indifferent or hostile to abolition, but
even Cuban liberals tended to favor only a very gradual emancipation. Not
until the first Spanish republic was created in 1868 did the government seri-
ously consider emancipation. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Cuban
rebellion in the same year prevented any action. Finally, in 1870 Moret's
Law freed all slaves born after its enactment as well as those over 65 years
of age, and apprenticed, with no wages, all *patrocinados* under age 22. In
fact, Moret's Law was merely a step toward gradual emancipation, for it did
not alter the essential nature of slavery and was difficult to implement in
the midst of the Cuban rebellion. The law was not fully applied until 1880.
Much as in the British and French West Indies earlier in the century, the for-
ermer slaves in Cuba strenuously opposed apprenticeship and demanded im-
mediate abolition. In 1886, this agitation led the Spanish government to
end the apprenticeship system two years before it was slated to expire and
to free the remaining slaves.

Because slavery had never taken deep root in Puerto Rico and no insurrec-
tion against Spanish rule had occurred there, Moret's Law went into effect
sooner than in Cuba. Thus, emancipation, with compensation for slavehold-
ers, was effected by a series of enabling decrees in 1872 and 1873.

In Brazil, slavery was so deeply rooted that antislavery sentiment de-
veloped much later than elsewhere in **Latin America**. Finally, the American
Civil War and mounting international pressure led Brazilians to adopt a law
of free birth in 1871, with a provision for apprenticeship until age 21. A
state-supported emancipation fund was established to purchase freedom for
slaves born before 1872. But not until 1880, did a popular antislavery move-
ment, which included many free blacks and mulattoes, effectively challenge
slavery. Although slave owners responded by passing a harsh fugitive slave
law in 1885, antislavery pressure continued to mount. A mass exodus of
slaves from the plantations into safe havens in the cities ultimately
prompted the government in 1888 to decree the immediate and total aboli-
tion of slavery. At last, slavery had been eradicated throughout the Western
Hemisphere.

With relatively few exceptions, the process of emancipation in Western
Hemisphere societies extended over many years. Those who advocated
emancipation not only encountered stiff resistance from the slaveholders,
but they often shared with many others in their societies a concern for
property rights, an abiding fear of disruption and conflict, and a deep-seated
racial prejudice. Even when gradual emancipation laws were enacted, their
implementation was often uneven and prolonged. Apprenticeship systems
frequently followed emancipation, thus denying the former slaves real free-
dom. Ultimately, those who were placed in apprenticeship, along with free
blacks, mulattoes, and others still held in bondage, joined with antislavery
whites to force an end to both the slavery and apprenticeship systems. See
also Immediate Emancipation; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in.

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Hugh Davis

Grimké, Angelina Emily (1805–1879)

Angelina Emily Grimké was born in Charleston, South Carolina, of French
Huguenot descent in 1805. She was a member of a prominent slaveholding
South Carolina family, and her father was a justice of the South Carolina
Supreme Court. At his death, her father owned fifty slaves and two planta-
tions. So, Grimké knew firsthand about slave life in Charleston.

Yet, from these inauspicious beginnings Angelina Grimké became a lead-
ing abolitionist and proponent of women’s rights. She and her older sister,
Sarah Grimké, are believed to have been the first women to publicly speak
against slavery. Angelina’s appetite for reform influenced all aspects of her
life; she left the Episcopal Church for the Presbyterian Church and eventually
the Society of Friends (Quakers).

In November 1829, Angelina left Charleston and followed her sister to
Philadelphia. There they united with the Orthodox Branch (the more
conservative wing) of the Society of Friends. Although Orthodox Quakers did not own slaves and opposed slavery, they also opposed Quaker participation in public life and in the antislavery movement.

In Philadelphia, Grimké struggled with the Orthodox position as she sought to further her education and to find her life's work. By 1835, she was reading abolitionist newspapers and, despite the opposition of her Quaker friends, attending abolitionist meetings. On August 30, 1835, she wrote William Lloyd Garrison a letter that changed her life forever. In that era, women did not write to men they did not know. Yet Grimké wrote commending Garrison's plea for a fair hearing for the abolitionist perspective. Abolitionist lectures frequently led to riots, making it difficult to reach audiences. Garrison published her “soul-thrilling epistle” about slavery in The Liberator.

In Philadelphia, the Grimké sisters also championed the rights of the free African Americans who made up ten percent of the population, but were treated as second-class citizens even in Quaker meetings. They participated in the Free Produce Movement effort to boycott slave produced goods and developed ties with Lucretia Mott, Abba Alcott (mother of Louisa May Alcott), and with such leading African American women such as Charlotte, Sarah, and Marguerite Forten and Harriet Purvis.

During the summer of 1836, Grimké wrote an "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South." The American Anti-Slavery Society printed the moving "Appeal" and it became a mainstay of the abolitionist movement. The mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, however, told her mother that he could not guarantee Grimké’s safety if she returned to Charleston. As a result, Grimké never saw her mother or Charleston again.

In the fall of 1836, the Grimké sisters crossed another divide when they traveled to New York City to speak against slavery. They were breaking barriers for women while they sought to permanently rid the country of slavery. In December, they began their speaking tour. They worked without pay for the American Anti-Slavery Society. Theodore Weld, another member, edited the Society’s publication, The Emancipator. A respected lecturer and writer, Weld attracted the attention of the Grimkés.

Angelina Grimké and her sister were heckled, threatened, and criticized for their views and for enunciating them in public. In the nineteenth century, most people did not consider public speaking women’s work. As a result, life in the public sphere and within the abolitionist movement was difficult for the Grimkés. Opposition to their public roles strengthened the sisters' feminist leanings as they advocated rights for African Americans and women.
In 1837, Angelina and Sarah Grimké moved to Boston and began a speaking tour in Massachusetts. Opponents attacked their speaking as “unnatural” for women. Some contended that they equally advocated women’s rights and abolition. Rather, Angelina Grimké emphasized women’s moral responsibilities, while her sister Sarah was more forthright in her call for women’s rights. During 1837, Weld attended the sisters’ lectures, visited with them, and corresponded with them. In February 1838, he wrote Angelina and stated his love for her, after which they became engaged.

Grimké was the first woman in the United States to address a state legislature. On February 21 and 23, 1838, she addressed a committee of the Massachusetts state legislature opposing slavery in the District of Columbia. Grimké eloquently described herself as a “repentant slaveholder” who was “exiled from the land of my birth by the sound of the lash, and the piteous cry of the slave.” A series of lectures at the Odeon followed these groundbreaking addresses. Before and during the lecture series, Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld planned their wedding.

On May 14, 1838, abolitionists dedicated Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia. That evening, between thirty and forty interracial guests attended the wedding of Grimké and Weld. No minister officiated as the Quaker Grimké and the Presbyterian Weld exchanged vows they had written. William Lloyd Garrison was one of the guests. Two days later, Angelina Grimké Weld spoke in the newly dedicated Pennsylvania Hall. Protestors shouted insults. As Grimké spoke of the horrors of slavery and her first-hand experience, the mob outside threw bricks and rocks through the windows. Though she never faltered, this address was another turning point for Grimké. Arsonists burned the building the next day and Grimké did not again speak in public for twenty-five years.

The Welds and Sarah Grimké lived in Fort Lee, New Jersey. The sisters aided Weld’s research for the monumental study, American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses, published in 1839. When their mother died that year, the Grimké sisters freed the four slaves she had owned. The Welds had three children, Charles Stuart Faucheraud Weld, Theodore Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké Weld.

In 1840, the Welds purchased a farm in Belleville, New Jersey. By 1848, they had found a new calling as they began operating Belleville School. In 1853, a number of families joined together to form the Raritan Bay Union, a cooperative community. They invited the Welds and Sarah to join the union and open a school, Eagleswood. The Welds accepted and, after a year, Sarah joined them. Although the union failed, the school succeeded. Eagleswood was an innovative, coeducational school with an advanced curriculum. Students were encouraged to ask questions and to learn by experience.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Welds resumed speaking. Their older son became a conscientious objector and refused to fight, and the younger son developed an incurable disease and had to be institutionalized. On her twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Angelina Grimké Weld addressed the National Convention of the Woman’s League. Grimké also submitted a resolution urging federal soldiers in this “Second Revolution” to secure freedom for all. The League collected 400,000 signatures asking the U.S.
Congress to immediately free the slaves. In 1863, that petition helped bring about the **Thirteenth Amendment** to the United States Constitution.

In 1863, the Welds and Sarah Grimké returned to Massachusetts, taught at a school in Lexington, and worked to support the rights of the freedmen. In 1868, they learned of a brilliant African American student at Lincoln College named Archibald Grimké. The Welds wrote him and learned that he was the son of Angelina’s brother Henry and a slave named Nancy Weston. An abolitionist teacher in Charleston had arranged for Archibald and his brother, Frank, to attend Lincoln College. Angelina and Sarah embraced these unknown nephews and contributed to their education and to their other family members who remained in Charleston. Archibald Grimké became a prominent lawyer and leader in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He named his only daughter, Angelina Weld Grimké.

In 1870, the sisters again made history as they and other women organized and voted in a town election. Although their ballots were not counted, this was the first time women in Massachusetts went to the polls. Sarah Grimké died on December 23, 1873 and Angelina on October 26, 1879. Theodore Weld lived until 1895. The woman who dared much for causes so close to her heart lies in an unmarked grave. Yet, her legacy lives as Americans continue the fight for racial justice and women’s rights. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Grimké, Charlotte Forten.


*Alexia Helsley*

**Grimké, Charlotte Forten (1837–1914)**

Charlotte Forten was born in 1837 and was the granddaughter of James Forten, Sr., an affluent member of Philadelphia’s black upper class. James and other Forten family members were key organizers of the antislavery movement: their home served as the meeting place where the **American Anti-Slavery Society** was founded in 1833. Charlotte thus matured in a household deeply imbued with the understanding that slavery was immoral and that she would be expected to find her niche in the movement to abolish it and foster racial egalitarianism in America. As a gifted adolescent, she wrote antislavery poetry, which was published in such antislavery newspapers as the *Liberator* and the *Anglo African*. Charlotte chose to attend college so she might teach and help to eradicate the ills wrought by slavery upon African Americans. She graduated from college in 1856, and by 1863 she had become one of the first African American teachers in the pioneering experiment to educate former slaves at the captured town of **Port Royal**, South Carolina. She, along with other “Gideonites”—dedicated teachers who were also ardent evangelicals and abolitionists—labored through 1865 to educate newly freed slaves for independence and eventual
land ownership, a hope that would be bitterly quashed by mid-summer 1865. After almost two years of diligent work, Charlotte was forced to resign due to illness.

Although unable to continue with the “Port Royal Experiment,” Charlotte did continue her mission of activism while also working for the U.S. Treasury Department. In 1878, she married the Reverend Francis Grimké, the African American nephew of the renowned abolitionist sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimké. Together, Charlotte and her husband continued in the tradition of their heritage denouncing racism and oppression and promoting equality. Charlotte Forten Grimké died in 1914. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism.


Iris Hunter

**Grotius, Hugo (1583–1645)**

Received at the French court when he was only 15, Hugo Grotius (Huig van Groot) was introduced to diplomatic affairs at an early age. Grotius’s legal career included several positions in government service in Holland. All this ended abruptly in 1618 when Grotius advocated religious tolerance in a theological dispute (in opposition to the intolerant monarch who had been his patron) and found himself sentenced to life imprisonment as a result. He escaped to France in 1621 and spent most of the rest of his life in Paris and Hamburg, for a decade serving as Swedish ambassador to France.

A humanist polymath who studied ancient history during the Wars of Religion, Grotius saw with rare insight that warfare and diplomacy alike can be successful only with an awareness of the differences and commonalities among nations. Generally considered one of the founders of international jurisprudence, Grotius combined historical erudition with political sagacity in *On the Law of War and Peace* (*De jure belli et pacis*, 1625). In prose that is alternately ponderous and insightful, Grotius develops a philosophical anthropology upon which he offers normative principles for successful statecraft.

Central to Grotius’s thought, and possibly original in the juristic genre, is the importance placed on long-term happiness for persons and states. Grotius sees such felicity at both the individual and collective levels as an ideal that can be realized by restraint of those passions, which have tended to incite violence. Steering a course between pacifism and militarism, Grotius sees warfare and its equivalents rooted in the law of nature and supported by biblical authority, but only under specific conditions. Among the prohibited reasons for waging war, in Grotius’s view, is the belief of one people that another people is inferior and suited for slavery. Grotius considers no humans to be slaves by nature.
Equally critical and unquestionably innovative for early modern social thought is Grotius’s conception of rights as opposed to duties or privileges. In Grotius’s thought, individuals possess rights and can in principle transfer them to others, either in voluntary servitude by persons or submission to rulers on the part of a people. Although in either case autonomy is relinquished to another party, Grotius understands the transfer of power over persons to be conditional on the preservation of each person’s happiness. Hence rights, once transferred, are in theory reclaimable, although he stops short of asserting that they may be regained in practice.

Grotius’s attitude to slavery is most fully articulated in II.5 of *On the Law of War and Peace*, a chapter identifying various levels of subordination within families and social institutions. Drawing his examples from Aristotelian political thought as well as Roman law and history, Grotius advances a hierarchical view of social organization that ranges from full sovereignty residing in the head of a household to total subjugation in the person who has voluntarily submitted to servitude. Grotius attributes relative degrees of independence and authority to wives, children, and temporarily indentured servants, in effect imposing restraints on the ostensibly absolute powers of the patriarch. On the basis of various passages in his work, especially those referring to the various forms of slavery found in the Bible, Grotius has been regarded as condoning slavery; yet although he might at best hold a marginal place among abolitionists, his doctrine of rights suggests that he could never have accepted the reduction of any person to the level of mere property. See also Bible and Slavery.


Ralph Keen

**Gypsies.** See Roma and Emancipation
Haile Selassie. See Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in
Haitian Revolution (1791–1804)

The insurgency of the African slaves on the French West Indian colony of St. Domingue (present-day Haiti) was one of the major events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Haitian Revolution marked a critical juncture in attitudes and policies toward slavery and race in the Atlantic world. The black revolution signaled the emergence of Afro-America on the scene of international politics. It was the first anticolonial racial war, and it was also the first instance of immediate mass emancipation in a slave society. It was the first—and only—slave revolt to culminate in a modern independent state, and it resulted in the second republic to win its independence in the Americas. It established a precedent for U.S. military intervention in the Caribbean, and it legitimated the proslavery orientation of American foreign policy.

The Haitian Revolution precipitated the collapse of French power in the Western Hemisphere and helped solidify the domination of U.S. slaveholders over the Old Southwest by creating the opportunity for the Louisiana Purchase (1803). The Haitian insurgents defeated the Spanish (1793–1795), British (1793–1798), and French (1802–1803) armies sent against them, and the insurgents destroyed the power of the plantation owners in the island itself (1793). From the perspective of the slaveholders, who backed the European expeditions against the rebels, the black revolution was not about freedom and equality; instead blacks sought revenge, and their relentless destruction would result in economic ruin and the annihilation of the white property owners. Despite the prodigious efforts of slaveholders in the British, French, and Spanish islands, and the metropolitan governments of Europe, the Haitians did achieve their freedom and independence, which was declared by Jean Jacques Dessalines on January 1, 1804. But the movement for independence did not appear until late in the Haitian Revolution; it was not until the French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, ordered the restoration of slavery in the French islands in 1802 that the blacks and free coloreds formed an alliance against the French whites and drove them
from the colony and declared independence, events critical to the later emancipation of slaves in the Americas.

During the Age of Revolution, 1776–1823, abolitionists and slaveholders fought their first great struggles over the slave trade and slavery in the Atlantic world. These epic struggles were main themes of the American and French Revolutions, the Napoleonic wars, and the Latin American wars of independence. A principal consequence of these struggles was the emancipation of hundreds of thousands of slaves and to narrow the geographical expanse of the near universal institution of slavery in the Americas while enlarging the “free soil” regions of the Atlantic World. The Haitian Revolution was integral to these broader struggles, and many of the most important leaders of the Haitian Revolution—André Rigaud, Henri Christophe, Jean-Baptiste Chavannes—would serve first as soldiers against the British during the American Revolution.

From an ideological point of view, the Haitian slave revolution spoke to both the defenders and opponents of slavery, providing both sides with ideological armor that helped them combat or support calls for emancipation in the United States and the Americas. After 1791, the antislavery movement found itself confronted with charges that it promoted anarchy by calling publicly for freedom for the blacks and encouraged slave violence. Antislavery advocates found that the unwelcome spread of violence in the Americas dampened the ardor of Americans for emancipation of the slaves; politically, antislavery kept a safe distance from the black rebels, objected to black violence, and some even expressed the hope that the blacks would be defeated. The Haitian slave revolution deeply influenced international politics. Thus, as a war measure against England, the French National Convention emancipated the slaves of their empire throughout the Americas on February 4, 1794, as they sought African allies in their wars against the enemy and recruited slaves as soldiers or allies. In 1805–1807, the British, currently at war with France, adopted their own wartime antislavery measure by abolishing the slave trade to the colonies of their enemies and to their own colonies. Responding to the collapse of French power in St. Domingue and the elimination of French competition in the slave trade in 1803, the British initiated what became a crusade against the international slave trade, a dominant theme of British foreign policy in the nineteenth century.

Following Haiti’s declaration of independence on January 1, 1804, the new republic was ostracized by the Atlantic powers. Despite the isolation of Haiti, the great leaders of their revolution, such as Toussaint L’Ouverture, Henri Christophe, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and others, sought to maintain sugar production. But the black cultivators were not interested in changing one set of white masters for new sets of black or colored masters. Subsequent to independence, the African and African Creole populations drifted into the island’s mountainous interior where they cultivated their own garden plots, much as the maroon Africans had done during the centuries of white rule. Haiti achieved a thorough-going peasant society that celebrated individual freedom, independence, land ownership, and faith. For the first time, Haitians achieved a self-sustaining population,
a population that grew by natural increase rather than by importations from Africa. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of; St. Domingue, French Defeat in.


Tim Matthewson

**Hale, John Parker (1806–1873)**

John Parker Hale was born in Rochester, New Hampshire, on March 31, 1806. His father died when he was thirteen, and his mother moved the family to Maine. He was educated at Phillips Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, and attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, graduating in 1827. He then studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1830, establishing his law practice in Dover, New Hampshire.

Hale served in the New Hampshire state house of representatives in 1832 and was appointed United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire by President Andrew Jackson in 1834. He served as U.S. Attorney until 1841, when President John Tyler replaced him. In 1842, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat. In the House, he opposed both the annexation of Texas because of the additional territory it would provide for slavery and the gag rule by which the House refused to consider antislavery petitions. Both positions were contrary to those taken by the Democratic Party and, as a result, Hale was denied renomination when his term ended. His political career did not end, however, as he received a great deal of support from opponents of slavery for his strong stand. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1846 through an alliance between the _Liberty Party_ and antislavery Democrats in New Hampshire. He was the first avowedly antislavery senator. Hale and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio emerged as leaders of the firmly antislavery Liberty Party by 1848 and also as advocates of a “broad platform” for the party that would form alliances with other reform groups and antislavery factions in the Democratic and Whig parties rather than run candidates solely on an antislavery platform.

Hale was nominated for president on the Liberty Party ticket, but withdrew in favor of former president Martin Van Buren in 1848. The resultant alliance between the Liberty party and Van Buren’s “Barnburner” faction of the New York State Democratic Party led directly to the formation of the
Free Soil Party. In 1852, Hale was the Free Soil candidate for president, winning just under 160,000 votes, more than 100,000 less than Van Buren had received four years earlier.

In 1855, Hale returned to the Senate from New Hampshire to fill the seat of Charles G. Atherton, who had died. He won reelection in his own right in 1858, serving as chair of the Committee on Naval Affairs and the Committee on the District of Columbia. In March 1865, he was appointed minister to Spain by President Abraham Lincoln and served there until 1869. One of his daughters, Lucy, was engaged to John Wilkes Booth at the time of Lincoln's assassination, but no connection between her or her family and the assassination was ever suggested. Hale died in Dover, New Hampshire, on November 19, 1873. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Whig Party and Antislavery.


*William H. Mulligan, Jr.*

**Hall, Prince (c. 1735—1807), Black Freemasonry, and Antislavery**

Born in or about 1735, Prince Hall was likely a slave in the household of William Hall in Boston, Massachusetts, until he was manumitted by Hall in 1770. Prince Hall worked as a leather dresser and merchant and was the principal in the founding of African Lodge #459, the world's first duly chartered Masonic Lodge comprised exclusively of persons of African descent. Prince Hall and the lodge were also distinguished by their pronounced opposition to slavery. While Freemasonry's core tenets of universal fellowship and benevolence could be arrayed against slavery, no lodge of white Masons adopted any similar antislavery position.

Prince Hall deployed the democratic ideology of the American Revolution to attack slavery and racial injustice. In January 1777, Hall, Lancaster Hill, Peter Bess, and other black men in Boston sent a petition to the Massachusetts legislature, requesting the abolition of slavery. In 1787, Hall and numerous other black residents again petitioned the Commonwealth either to provide public education for black children or else to cease taxing blacks. In 1788, Hall and twenty-two other African American Masons signed and sent a petition to the state legislature imploring it to intervene on the behalf of three free African American men who had been kidnapped and transported out of Boston to be sold as slaves in the West Indies. One of the kidnaps was a member of African Lodge. On March 26, 1788, the Massachusetts legislature acted; it made kidnapping of Africans in Massachusetts unlawful and provided grounds for compensation to the affected families. This petition was key to the state's ensuing abolition of the slave trade in the same year.

The seed of black Freemasonry in North America was planted in 1775 in Boston when Hall and thirteen local black men were initiated into an Irish Regimental military lodge. This action granted permission to Hall and the others to meet and bury their dead as Masons among themselves, but they
did not constitute a lodge and were thus unable to admit any new members to their assembly. By 1787, however, Prince Hall had secured a charter from the Grand Lodge of England, which designated them African Lodge #459. Over the ensuing years, black masonry grew slowly but steadily in the Northeast. By 1814, African Lodge #459 had chartered one lodge in Providence, Rhode Island, and four in Philadelphia. In 1808, the first African Grand Lodge was formed in Boston and, in 1815, the African Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was constituted. Some applications by free black men had been submitted to white lodges in these states and others and were rejected, sometimes on the grounds that a man must be “freeborn” to become a Mason, a policy that the Grand Lodge of England would explicitly reject in 1838. While prevailing racial attitudes certainly informed the reluctance of white American Masons to embrace black men as equal Masonic brothers, no evidence exists that Prince Hall or any other masters of black lodges ever approached white grand lodges seeking admission of their black lodge into the larger, dominant white Masonic structure. Prince Hall and his followers were well satisfied with the legitimacy of their lodges and their knowledge of the Craft’s rituals and procedures and confidently established a Masonry for black men.

Two “Charges” which Prince Hall presented to African Lodge #459 in 1792 and 1797 vividly evinced his antislavery and that of black Freemasonry as a whole. In 1792, Hall argued that the core duties of a Mason were to love God and to practice “love and benevolence to all the whole family of mankind, as God’s make and creation.” Thus, “he that despises a black man for the sake of his colour, reproacheth his Maker.” In 1797, he upheld the African influences upon the rise of Masonry and Christianity. He condemned the disgraceful and violent discrimination blacks confronted daily in Boston while forbidding his brothers from displaying any “slavish fear of man.” Finally, he praised his “African brethren” in St. Domingue for rebelling against their enslavement and overthrowing their brutal masters. “Thus doth Ethiopia begin to stretch forth her hand, from a sink of slavery to freedom and equality,” he exclaimed. For Hall and his black brothers, slavery was utterly incompatible with the ideals and practices of Freemasonry. In the decades before the Civil War, many local lodges and leading black Masons, including John Telemachus Hilton, David Walker, Benjamin Hughes, Thomas Paul, Lewis Hayden, and Martin Delany, would spearhead the fight against slavery and racial injustice. In honor of their founder, who died in December 1807, most black Masons would in 1847 denominate themselves Prince Hall Masons. See also Freemasonry and Antislavery.


Peter P. Hinks
Hart, Levi (1738–1808)

Levi Hart was one of the New Divinity theologians who developed Calvinist theology in America in the last third of the eighteenth century. The New Divinity emphasized that God mandated benevolent social relations, which Hart and his peers viewed as violated by the slave trade and slavery. In mid-eighteenth-century Connecticut, Hart saw both enslaved and free blacks. Furthermore, in the 1770s he preached to men serving in the War of Independence both in the Continental Army and the local militias, and among those men were blacks, both enslaved and free. Hart’s close theological relationship with the antislavery Samuel Hopkins certainly roused his protest. Hart’s publications and manuscripts of the 1770s contain criticisms of the slave trade and slavery, as well as suggestions for freeing blacks. Like most abolitionists of his generation, Hart wove religious and political themes into his antislavery arguments. The liberty of humankind from both sin and slavery was, he claimed, the goal of God’s plan. The slave trade was inhumane, the opposite of social benevolence, he added. American slavery was, he argued, oppressive and tyrannical—ironically, the very sort of domination against which colonials were rebelling in the 1770s—and thus was constantly undermining the public good. He published these claims in Liberty Described and Recommended (1775). A year earlier he had penned a proposal to outlaw slavery in Connecticut, “Some Thoughts on the Subject of Freeing the Negro Slaves in the Colony of Connecticut,” but it remained unpublished in his lifetime. In 1788, Hart and other Congregational ministers successfully petitioned the Connecticut legislature to move against the slave trade. See also Congregationalism and Antislavery, Edwards, Jonathan; Edwards, Jonathan, Jr.


John Saillant

Haynes, Lemuel (1753–1833)

Lemuel Haynes’s origins are obscure, but he and his contemporaries believed that he was the son of a white woman and an African man. He was abandoned shortly after birth in West Hartford, Connecticut. As an indentured servant, he matured in Granville, Massachusetts, joining the Minutemen in 1774 when his term of service expired, and then the Continental Army in 1775. His first abolitionist writings date from these years. After his military service, he studied for the ministry and filled pulpits in Connecticut, Vermont, and New York. He was principally associated with Rutland, Vermont, where he preached from 1788 to 1818 and where some of his sermons and addresses were published. In politics he was a Federalist, loyal to the party of George Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton. In religion he was a member of the New Divinity movement, the school that extended the Calvinist theology of Jonathan Edwards after the divine’s death in 1758. Haynes became embroiled in political and theological
disputes between 1805 and 1818, which cost him his pastorate in Rutland as his congregation turned against his political views. Yet he distinguished himself as a defender of Calvinism and continued to preach and write in his later years, although he never regained a permanent pulpit.

“Liberty Further Extended” (1776) opened with the phrase from the Declaration of Independence proclaiming the self-evident truths of human equality and equal rights and was Haynes’s sharpest critique of the slave trade and slavery. It was never published in his lifetime, but, like a number of his manuscripts, was preserved by whites with whom he associated. He used information from contemporary abolitionist publications, New Testament notions of universal brotherhood, and the republican ideas of the Revolution to strip the slave trade and slavery of their legitimacy. His later writings were less overtly abolitionist; rather, they developed the parts of Calvinist theology and republican thought that Haynes believed would combat slavery and racial equality as well as promoting a free and integrated Christian polity. He argued that both slavery and freedom were providential—the former designed by God to reveal the beauty and value of the latter—and that the republic should be characterized by affectionate and charitable relations between virtuous blacks and whites. His anti-slavery arguments were vigorous, but insofar as they relied on Calvinism and republicanism, they were irrelevant to the antebellum abolitionist movement, black as well as white. The religious inspiration of antebellum abolitionism was free-will Christianity, not Calvinism, and Haynes’s notions of interracial benevolence seemed utopian by 1830. Having abandoned affection and benevolence across racial lines, many antebellum foes of slavery were willing to accept separation between the races in postslavery society. Haynes was briefly praised as an exemplary black man by white abolitionists around 1830, but he died a forgotten man. Only a surge of scholarly writing around the turn of the twenty-first century on early African American history and religion reestablished him as an important American abolitionist.


*John Saillant*

**Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770–1831)**

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a German philosopher, is best known for his works on phenomenology, logic, and world history. As an individual, he was not overly instrumental in pushing to the fore the various forms of continental antislavery thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In general, both influenced by and responding to Kantian idealism, Hegel’s work was largely rational and presented a linear understanding of history, science, and political philosophy. Karl Marx was influenced by Hegel’s teleological view of social development and of history, though he certainly put an emphasis on materialism that Hegel did not.

Hegel opposed the institution of slavery on philosophical grounds. The fact that slavery was based on and promulgated by forced hierarchical relationships of dependence—a master-slave dynamic—was extremely problematic
for Hegel. His principal objection was a clear one: He argued that slavery limited individual freedom, and in so doing proved to be a dialectical relationship that limited realizations of the free consciousness of both those held in bondage and those who held them. Here, Hegel argues, slavery is predominantly problematic at the individual level. As he explains in The Phenomenology of Spirit (1807), slavery establishes a relation of codependence, and as such is damaging to both slave and master alike—and, to this end, places limitations on both. This was indeed an important and complex idea for its time, especially considering that contemporaneous late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century writings drew largely on the British tradition of political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Smith, and their cohorts in arguing that slavery was predominantly harmful to just the slave alone.

Aside from the level of individual consciousness, Hegel was critical of slavery on political grounds as well. He argued that slavery indicated less developed social organization. His writings on Africa from later in his career perhaps best exemplify his articulation of this point. Hegel was severely critical of Africa, stating that it was “no historical part of the world.” Though the extent to which his arguments are specifically racist per se is debatable, Hegel’s contentions that Africa lacked a history is not devoid of considerations of race and certainly fueled later racist arguments justifying the continuation of slavery in the Americas. Because Hegel’s appreciation of history and political geography are undeniably teleological, with Europe at the height of his scheme, his depictions of Africa and Africans have been problematic to say the least for many scholars and for various reasons. Paradoxically, and despite the fact that Hegel was a general opponent of slavery, it was his writings on Africa and Africans that, after his death, were frequently used to justify not only the transatlantic slave trade, but the continuance of slavery as an institution. Hegel’s lasting contribution to antislavery and abolitionist thought was thus rather limited.


Noah Butler

Helots

The Helots were Greeks who lived for centuries in involuntary servitude to ancient Sparta. They consisted of two main groups, the Messenian and the Laconian Helots. Their forced assumption of hard and menial labor in this society made it possible for their masters to specialize in military skills. Their potential to threaten the stability of Spartan society, a potential which increased as their numbers grew faster than those of the Spartans, remained a major political consideration for Sparta and restrained their impulse to expand territorially. Though repression of the Helots was at times ferocious, their desire to free themselves remained alive until the Messenian Helots were actually freed by the invasion of the Theban general Epaminondas in 370 B.C.E. The other group, the Laconian Helots, remained under Spartan control until the Romans conquered Greece.
Since the military-minded Spartans wrote little about themselves, most of the surviving written evidence about their culture and the Helots comes from Herodotus and the Athenian historians Thucydides and Xenophon. From these sources, it appears that the Spartans, who descended from the Dorians who had invaded Greece in the Late Bronze Age, had subjugated other peoples upon their arrival. With the conquest of Messenia near the close of the ninth century B.C.E., the Spartans, who had earlier enslaved the inhabitants of Laconia, secured another large body of captives. They deployed their labor under a system of serfdom in which the conquered Hellenes worked the plots of land apportioned to their individual conquerors. Though strictly regulated and controlled, these Messenian Helots (the Greek word seems to mean “prisoner”) never forgot the liberty of their ancestors. As the Spartans recognized, they looked for an opportunity to regain their freedom. They were sometimes joined in rebellion by the Laconian Helots, their neighbors to the east in the Peloponnesian peninsula, and at least once by the Perioikoi, a group of free, but generally obedient, subjects of Sparta. The most notable Helot revolt occurred in 464 B.C.E. Following a devastating earthquake, the Spartans were vulnerable to attack and the Helots rose up. Although the Spartans succeeded in suppressing the rebellion, the event demonstrated the threat of the Helots and reminded their masters of the urgency of maintaining control at home. Spartan vigilance could take extreme forms: one group of young Spartans called the Krypteia was delegated to assassinate potential leaders among the Helots.

The Helots performed the ordinary, arduous labor in Spartan society. Sparta’s food supply was dependent upon Helot farming, and the Spartans seem to have encouraged them to build families to replenish this agricultural labor. Some Helots found it possible to purchase their freedom, and some Helots even served as Spartan soldiers. However, the core relationship between the Helots and the Spartans remained premised on force throughout the era of the Helots’ subjugation—that of armed military might posed by the Spartans, while the Helots countered with their superior numbers. See also Classical Greek Antislavery.


Robert W. Haynes

Helper, Hinton Rowan (1829–1901)

Hinton Helper was born in Mocksville, Rowan County, North Carolina, an area where slavery had neither the presence nor influence that it did in the eastern regions of the state. He attended the Mocksville Academy and displayed an early aptitude for writing. This aptitude would serve him well as the United States Civil War approached for he would become an important Republican oracle and help found and lead the party in Baltimore.
Helper detested slavery not because he viewed it as an immoral or sinful institution, but—like Gamaliel Bailey—because he believed it threatened to degrade free white labor. Hence he spent little time in the South and usually moved between Baltimore and New York City. He loved to travel and wrote about his experiences in California in 1850 in his first book, *The Land of Gold*, published in 1852. He loathed what he saw there. Helper, an arch Anglo-Saxon supremacist, was deeply offended by the polyglot population he found there. He attacked Native Americans, Mexicans (in fact, all Latins), Catholics, and Asians, but especially the black man, of whom some 8,000 were in the gold mining industry. Helper feared that racial mixing or miscegenation as it was then called would produce a mongrel population, which in turn would ruin the prospects for American economic development. He did not wish to see the rest of the Western territories become another California or American South. He articulated some of late-antebellum America’s most virulent racism.

Gripped with this fear of America’s “mongrelization,” Helper wrote his second and most famous book, *The Impending Crisis of the South and How to Meet It*, first published in 1857. The work vehemently attacked the South, the Democratic Party, and the black man. He used the 1850 Federal Census to concoct a series of distorted statistics to claim that the South was an economic drag on the nation and that this “fact” was due wholly to its reliance on Negro slavery. Helper skewed statistics by, for example, comparing a Northern state where some product or crop was produced very successfully with a Southern state where it was not an important product. He would thus use this evidence to deduce the unprofitability of slavery. He ended his work by calling for an annual federal tax of $60.00 on each slave, the money to fund black colonization outside of the United States.

Helper’s book enjoyed rapid and enormous political influence with leading members of the Republican Party, such as John Sherman, Salmon P. Chase, and Abraham Lincoln, and it quickly became the bible of the new party. Numerous publishers refused to produce it because of its incendiary nature, but once available, it became an instant success. During the campaign of 1860, Horace Greeley’s *New York Tribune* alone printed some 140,000 copies, a prodigious amount for that time period. The book caused such a furor in Congress during the 1859 speaker of the house contest—when sixty-eight Republican congressmen endorsed it—that the nation’s attention became even more focused on Helper’s book. It played an instrumental role in rallying the North against the South on the eve of the Civil War.

In 1860, Lincoln appointed Helper consul to Argentina, where, ironically, he met and wed a Catholic Argentinian. During Reconstruction, he continued to write, turning out two of the most vicious attacks on the black man ever written, *Nojoque, a Question for a Continent*, and *The Negroes in Negroland*, in which he called for the extermination of the black race. Helper was obsessed with race and ethnicity and is a paradigm of the nineteenth-century American strain of racist ethnocentrism. His earlier fame gone and living alone, he committed suicide in Washington, D.C., in 1901. See also Radical Republicans.
Heyrick, Elizabeth Coltman (1769–1831)

Elizabeth Heyrick was the author of the first full articulation of the necessity for immediate abolition of slavery. Her father, a successful manufacturer in Leicester, England, and her mother, who had an avid interest in literature, raised their children in an environment replete with radical influences. In 1789, at the age of nineteen, she married a lawyer and distant relative of the Macauly family, John Heyrick. Her husband joined the military, leading to a peripatetic and stormy personal life for the couple, until her husband's early and sudden death in 1797. Soon after this event, Elizabeth became a Quaker by conviction. She lived comfortably in her parents' house, and turned her attention to social causes. From a modest beginning focused on opposing the cruelty of bull-baiting, she began to engage a full range of issues, including education, prison reform, and fair remuneration for labor. Beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Heyrick by her death in 1831 had produced over twenty pamphlets. In the 1820s, she especially assailed slavery, producing four powerful antislavery pamphlets in 1824 alone, and seven overall in the decade.

Her most important work was the 1824 pamphlet “Immediate not Gradual Abolition.” Refusing “accommodation and conciliation” as “deluded,” Heyrick argued for a divine, not human, basis for the struggle against slavery. Noting that slavery “is a question in which we are all implicated . . . all guilty,” she contended that the rights of the slave trumped those of their putative “owners,” so that any compensation upon abolition was due the slaves, not the sinning masters. She anticipated Garrisonian righteousness when she declared “Truth and justice, make their best way in the world, when they appear in bold and simple majesty; their demands are more willingly conceded when they are most fearlessly claimed.” She endorsed free-labor produce as a means by which all citizens, but especially women, could participate in ending slavery’s manifest evil. She also underscored the human equality and finely honed intelligence of enslaved persons, asserting that they required no paternalistic transition or preparation for freedom.

Heyrick’s efforts were not isolated; her voice was part of an early organizational effort on the part of British women against slavery. Adopting Heyrick’s philosophic breakthrough and strongly moral tone, a number of women’s antislavery groups declared for immediate abolition, even though this put them at loggerheads with the male societies for which they were supposed to be mere auxiliaries. This enthusiastic reception by her sisters in struggle contrasted strongly with the ridicule and dismissal her ideas received from leading British men, even fellow Quakers, in the antislavery movement in the mid-1820s. They saw immediatism as too socially risky and financially impractical. By the time they adopted her ideas, they had forgotten the source—a pattern all too often noted in women’s history.
Heyrick's North American reception was more auspicious, however. "Immediate not Gradual Abolition" was published in Philadelphia, where Benjamin Lundy ensured it a national audience outside of Quaker circles by republishing it in the Genius of Universal Emancipation. While he had some reservations, he endorsed both the passion of Heyrick's rhetoric and the trajectory of her ideas. Once the nascent black press in the United States and William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator in 1831 made immediatism better known, American female abolitionists often acknowledged Heyrick's deep impress on the movement. Lucretia Mott, Lydia Maria Child, and the Grimké sisters, along with prominent men like William Jay and Wendell Phillips, lauded her. Heyrick's pivotal example encouraged women to self-confidence in their moral sense, their intellect, and their capacity to participate integrally in the antislavery cause.

Elizabeth Heyrick's writings, especially those from the 1820s against slavery, evinced the breadth of her learning. Having read the English economist, Ricardo, and admired the radical Luddites' smashing of industrial machinery, Heyrick extended their thought to forge connections between political economy and systemic systems of oppression like slavery. While she did not extend her analysis to women's rights, her sudden death (likely of an aneurysm) in 1831 cut short such possible directions. She is a figure worthy of further scholarly attention and popular visibility. See also Garrisonians; Gradual Emancipation; Immediate Emancipation.


Jennifer Rycenga

Hibernian (Irish) Anti-Slavery Society

The Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1837 by a group of reform-minded Irishmen of Quaker origins, who were active in a number of social and reform campaigns. The three principals were James Haughton, a successful corn merchant, who was chairman; Richard Davis Webb, a printer and publisher; and Richard Allen of Dublin, a cloth merchant, who served as secretary. Both Haughton and Webb eventually left the Society of Friends. In 1838, the Society took a strong stand against the continuation of apprenticeship in the British West Indies, where it had become a new form
of slavery. The Society representatives attended the London antislavery conventions of 1838 and 1840. It supported William Lloyd Garrison and his allies on the question of seating women as delegates at the London convention. The Society, and Irish antislavery advocates, generally supported the Garrisonian wing of abolition in the United States with its emphasis on immediatism and moral suasion. One of the goals of the Society, as stated by James Haughton, was to "put an end to the unholy alliance between Irishmen and slaveholders in America." In 1841, the Society organized an Address to America calling on Irish Americans to join antislavery efforts in their country. Haughton and Webb drafted the address, and the first signers were Daniel O'Connell and Father Mathew, two of the great Irish Catholic figures of the era. Another 60,000 Irishmen joined them. African American abolitionist Charles Lenox Remond carried the address to the United States. In 1859, the society campaigned against "coolie" immigration in the West Indies, seeing it as yet another effort to introduce unfree labor. The American Civil War posed serious problems for the Society whose members were deeply committed to non-violence. The Society was considered the most ardent in Europe in its antislavery efforts and activities.


William H. Mulligan, Jr.

Higher Law and Antislavery

In its simplest formulation, "higher law" refers to a moralistic argument advanced by Northern abolitionists opposed to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, one of the key pieces of legislation contained in the Compromise of 1850. Intended to appease Southern slaveholders after the admission of California as a free state, abolitionists were outraged that the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law required citizens of the Northern free states to assist in the apprehension of runaway slaves. This privileging of slaveholders' property rights over Northerners' religious and moral convictions convinced many abolitionists that the federal government no longer protected basic civil liberties, and that continued obedience to the Constitution made them complicitous in perpetuating the institution of slavery. Presupposing that slavery was morally incompatible with divine law, higher law advocates argued that the religious imperative to respect God's ultimate authority and to obey His commandments released individuals from any ethical duty to obey immoral civil laws.

The relatively similar rhetoric of abolitionists' higher law arguments masks a broad range of underlying philosophical and theological foundations, as
well as vastly different understandings of the moral authority and legitimacy of the federal government and its Constitution. Antebellum-era higher law arguments were often premised on moral intuitionism, a subjectively valid means of ascertaining divine law developed simultaneously, but separately, within evangelical Protestant theology, Quaker pietism, and Romantic philosophy. The eighteenth century, however, produced a number of rationalist (as opposed to intuitionist) higher law arguments grounded in the natural philosophy of the Enlightenment. In 1772, the English abolitionist Granville Sharp asserted, “No legislation on Earth ... can alter the Nature of Things, or make that to be lawful, which is contrary to the law of God.” For Sharp, evidence of the existence of divine law was best ascertained through the objective, empirical study of Nature. This rationalist understanding of higher law found later expression in the key political documents of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. The “laws of nature and of nature’s God,” in Jefferson’s memorable phrase, provided the philosophical foundation for the Declaration’s assertions of “self-evident” truths and “inalienable” human rights. Premised on a belief in the existence of a rational Creator and on an authoritative, yet rationally ascertainable Providence or divine will, natural law functioned as higher law within the framework of eighteenth century Enlightenment philosophy.

The civil liberties articulated in the Bill of Rights and ratified in the first eight Amendments (the freedoms of conscience, speech, press, and assembly; the right to bear arms, to due process, etc.), led many Americans to view the United States Constitution as a complex symbol of the identity between the nation’s civil laws and divine or natural higher law. For this reason, few Americans other than the most radical abolitionists ever entirely repudiated the moral authority of the Constitution when advancing higher law arguments. William Henry Seward, an abolitionist Whig senator from upstate New York and author of the best known statement of higher law doctrine, asserted in his March 11, 1850 Senate speech that “[A] higher law than the Constitution regulates our authority” over the Western territories. Nowhere in the speech, however, delivered during debate over the expansion of slavery into the newly acquired Mexican territories, did Seward disavow or call for the disavowal of the Constitution. A committed Free Soiler and a devout evangelical Protestant, Seward’s appeal to higher law should be understood as a call to return the nation to its moral foundations, as expressed originally in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution, rather than as a repudiation of the moral authority of these documents. For Seward, as for many moderate abolitionists, the crises of the 1850s were attributable not to manifest flaws in the Constitution but to the disingenuous and politically dangerous attempts by John C. Calhoun and other Southern ideologues to reconstruct the Constitution as a militantly proslavery document.

Seward’s continued faith in the Constitution, as well as his abolitionist appeal to higher law, were consistent with, and likely influenced by, the perfectionist higher law doctrine formulated in the late 1830s by Charles Grandison Finney, the leading evangelical Protestant preacher of the
Perfectionism demanded of evangelical Christians that they rid themselves of sin and morally reform American society in accordance with God's laws. For Finney, as for many Northern evangelicals, slavery symbolized the widespread moral corruption of American society and provided the clearest example of civil laws deemed incompatible with divine law. After passage in 1839 of an Ohio fugitive slave law, Finney presented a series of higher law resolutions to the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. "We regard it, as a settled principle of both common and Constitutional law," Finney affirmed, "that no human legislation can annul, or set aside, the law or authority of God." "Whatever is contrary to the law of God," Finney added, "is not law." Alternately, however, Finney insisted that Americans were obligated to obey those civil laws, including the articles of the United States Constitution, which remained in accord with divine law.

Finney's enormous popularity, as well as his later prominence as president of Oberlin College, a hotbed of abolitionist activism, undoubtedly contributed to the popularization of higher law doctrine. Nevertheless, Finney's political moderation, which grew out of his belief that revivalism and moral reformation, not civil disobedience, were the primary agents of social change, led many abolitionists to embrace William Lloyd Garrison's far more radical formulation of higher law doctrine, which condemned the federal government and the Constitution as morally corrupt institutions. As early as 1832, just one year after he began publication of The Liberator, Garrison denounced the Constitution as "the most bloody and heaven-daring arrangement ever made for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villainy ever exhibited on earth." In 1843, Garrison more succinctly described the Constitution as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell," and on July 4, 1854 he burned a copy of the Constitution in public protest. Bound up with the radical abolitionist doctrine of immediatism, Garrison articulated an uncompromising higher law argument that demanded an absolute repudiation of the sinfulness of slavery and of the moral complicity of the nation's political institutions.

Influenced by Quaker pietism, Garrison counterbalanced his radical abolitionist doctrine with an equally firm commitment to pacifism and to non-violent forms of social protest. The political passions of the 1850s, however, produced another group of radical abolitionists committed to a higher law doctrine that sanctioned violence as a legitimate means of combating slavery. The best known of these militant higher law advocates was the radical Unitarian minister Theodore Parker. Passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act led Parker to author a classic statement of higher law doctrine. Premising his argument on Romantic philosophy, specifically German post-Kantian idealism, Parker asserted, "So far as the statutes of man are just—conformable to the moral Nature of man, and the constitution of the Universe, they are entitled to obedience by citizens of the country where they are made and known. But so far as they are unjust they have no claims to be obeyed; it is a sin to obey them." Parker's understanding of the implications of his higher law doctrine led him to openly support John Brown's failed raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, which Brown and his followers hoped would instigate a violent slave insurrection throughout the South.
Until his premature death in 1859, violence remained a recurring theme in Parker's abolitionist writings.

Despite their rhetorical similarities, Seward, Finney, Garrison, and Parker articulated antebellum-era higher law arguments that contained vastly different interpretations of the moral authority of the federal government and the United States Constitution, and that advocated very dissimilar means for practically applying higher law doctrine to abolitionist protest. In each case, the specific content of each author's respective higher law doctrine was intimately related to the theological or philosophical system through which he viewed the world, and with that author's broader political commitments. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Immediate Emancipation; Unitarianism and Antislavery; United States Constitution and Antislavery; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Neil Brody Miller

Hiring-Out and Challenges to Slavery

The hiring-out of slaves has long been, and continues to be, a subject of considerable debate among historians. Some scholars contend that hiring-out challenged slavery because hired-out slaves engaged in “semi-free” activities or because the practice was a manifestation of slavery's incompatibility with certain environments. Other historians assert that hiring-out did not challenge slavery at all, or that it did so only in particular circumstances and in regard to specific types of hired-out slaves.

Particular facets of hiring-out enabled some hired-out slaves to enjoy a degree of autonomy greater than that experienced by slaves without these privileges. Some employers of hired-out slaves paid board money with which the slaves procured their own meals and lodging, and so avoided housing the slaves on their premises. Also, some employers gave hired-out slaves overwork payments, that is, cash for the performance of labor beyond the contracted amount, as an incentive toward greater levels of production. Typically, hired-out slaves used this cash for discretionary expenses such as consumption and personal entertainment, or for savings. Such hired-out slaves commonly had more mobility than other slaves; they traveled between their residence and their employment each day, socialized at night, and, in the case of slave draymen, for example, had jobs which
required them to move over a broad geographical area. Despite some whites’ opposition to cash disbursements to hired-out slaves, the payments continued, as white employers were not inclined to alter a practice that both facilitated their use and management of slave labor, and sustained the profitability of their operations. Self-hired-out slaves had even more individual discretion than most other hired-out slaves. Self-hired-out slaves were not hired out by their owner to an employer of the owner’s choosing, but rather made their own working arrangements and received cash payments directly from employers. In return, self-hired-out slaves remitted to their owner a stipulated sum of money from what they earned. In some instances, self-hired-out slaves challenged slavery by earning enough money to accumulate property, purchase the freedom of loved ones, and purchase their own freedom. Most self-hired-out slaves were painters, carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, or other types of skilled workers.

Although it was contrary to law and elicited complaints from skilled whites who competed for work with such slaves, self-hiring-out remained pervasive because white owners of self-hired-out slaves derived numerous benefits from the practice. Also, fines imposed upon whites who allowed their slaves to hire out their own time were rather lenient. Receipt of cash in the form of bonus money and overwork payments, mobility, discretion in arrangement of living and working situations, and purchase of freedom lead some historians to liken the lives of hired-out slaves to those of free persons, and to assert that hired-out slaves’ experiences were located somewhere between slavery and freedom. These historians, particularly Clement Eaton, Lynda Morgan, and Richard Wade, among others, conclude, therefore, that hiring-out challenged slavery’s long-term institutional viability. Significantly, however, these historians focus on cities, and on hired-out, skilled men and boys, by 1860 estimated to number in the thousands in Virginia’s major urban centers of Richmond, Lynchburg, and Petersburg. Consideration of hired-out slave women and children in rural areas, rather than only skilled men and boys in cities, has led other historians to diverge from the premise that hiring-out challenged slavery. Only skilled male slaves, these scholars contend, had even the hope of challenging slavery by gaining privileges like cash or mobility. Rather, these historians assert, most hired-out slaves endured exploitation, separations, low standards of living, and virtually no opportunities for manumission or self-purchase. Hiring-out, moreover, gave larger numbers of whites access to slave labor, and provided slavery with the flexibility it required to survive in diversifying economies. This was especially the case in rural, mixed-farming regions such as Fauquier and Loudoun Counties in Virginia, where several hundred slaves were hired out in 1860 alone. For these historians, hiring-out did not challenge slavery.

Most recent scholarly investigations of hiring-out continue to be characterized by attention to variables of setting (i.e., urban, rural, agricultural, industrial, or household), and whether men, women, the young, or elderly were the hired-out. Yet historians remain divided on whether hiring-out challenged slavery or sustained it. A recent investigation of urban slavery acknowledges hired-out slaves’ opportunities for autonomous activities, but
asserts that slavery, facilitated by hiring-out, sustained the city's economic development. Conversely, another historian writes that hired-out slaves evaded their owners’ supervision and control, which facilitated hired-out slaves' acts of rebellion. Similarly, while another inquiry acknowledges the role of hiring-out in the westward expansion of slavery and in placing slaves in the hands of non-slaveowners, it emphasizes hired-out slaves' challenge to slavery by bringing owners and hirers into conflict with each other, fracturing the white racial solidarity upon which slavery rested. Several decades of conflicting conclusions, along with research currently underway, suggests that hiring-out challenged slavery in certain settings and with respect to certain hired-out slaves, but reinforced the institution in other settings. Studies of skilled males in cities have concluded that hiring-out rendered slaves “virtually free,” “quasi-free,” or “semi-free.” On the other hand, consideration of all hired-out slaves and their varied locales, rather than only urban, skilled males, has often revealed that hiring-out did not always challenge slavery or bring benefits to slaves, but rather strengthened slavery and worsened the hired-out slaves' conditions. Present research on hiring-out stresses all white class, ethnic, occupational, and other groups involved in hiring-out, and concludes that while hiring-out may have afforded skilled males in cities opportunities to challenge slavery’s limitations, it fortified slavery in other settings, in part by transcending potential fault lines in white society. Ultimately, the precise focus of hiring-out research has determined, and will continue to determine, the extent to which hiring-out challenged slavery.


**John J. Zaborney**

**Historiography of American Abolitionism and Antislavery**

A vast literature exists on the subjects of abolitionism and antislavery in the United States. From the beginning of antislavery action in North America, black and white men and women participated. But most of this literature, dating to the mid-nineteenth century, focuses on white men who, during the three decades prior to the United States Civil War, advocated the immediate abolition of slavery. Systematic study of black abolitionists and abolitionist women did not begin until the 1930s and 1960s, respectively.

**Immediate Abolitionism Versus Antislavery**

Historians have always distinguished between conservative *gradual* abolitionists, who would have allowed slavery to persist for many years, and the radical *immediate* abolitionists who demanded that human bondage be
ended quickly. However, prior to the 1960s, historians did not clearly distinguish between immediate abolitionists and non-extensionists, who merely sought to prevent the territorial extension of slavery. This made it difficult to understand who immediatists and non-extensionists were and for what they stood. Also, although immediatists united in opposing gradualism, the colonization of former slaves in Africa, and simple non-extensionism, they disagreed among themselves concerning the correct definition of abolitionist. William Lloyd Garrison, the most famous of the immediatists, denied that anyone who accepted the United States Constitution could be an abolitionist. Yet a large majority of immediatists recognized the authority of the Constitution.

In response to these problems, historians during the 1960s and 1970s developed a precise definition of abolitionists as individuals who, on the basis of moral principle, advocated immediate emancipation and equal rights for African Americans without colonizing them beyond the borders of the United States. Historians defined abolitionists narrowly as members of anti-slavery societies, religious denominations, and political organizations devoted to these goals. This precise distinction between immediate abolitionists and non-abolitionist antislavery groups has been extremely helpful in understanding abolitionism as it existed during the three decades prior to the Civil War. But the definition’s narrowness makes it misleading in several respects. Because immediatism arose in the United States during the late 1820s, the definition excludes those who earlier sought gradually to abolish slavery and promote racial justice. The definition also excludes antislavery politicians, such as Charles Sumner, who despite their immediatist connections had to honor conventional interpretations of the United States Constitution that placed slavery exclusively under state control. Most important, the definition excludes slave rebels and other practical black southern abolitionists. Consequently, since the 1980s, historians have become more flexible in using the term abolitionist, relying on context and intent as well as affiliation.

**Changing Interpretations of Immediatism**

The pre-Civil-War immediate abolitionists—particularly white immediatists—have attracted so much attention for so long in part because they wrote so much. They published numerous books, tracts, newspapers, magazines, almanacs, collections of letters and speeches, biographies, and memoirs. Garrison and his associates’ private papers have been accessible for so long that they have had inordinate influence on how historians perceive the movement.

After the Civil War, aging immediatists and their children produced the first retrospective studies of American abolitionism. They minimized the role of black abolitionists, described immediatism as a religious endeavor, recounted factional divisions in the movement, and portrayed themselves or their parents as the heroes of the antislavery struggle. In their view, immediate abolitionists were catalysts of civil war in 1861 and general emancipation in 1865. In their monumental biography of their father, William Lloyd
Garrison, 1805–1889: The Story of His Life Told by His Children (1885–89), Wendell P. Garrison and Francis J. Garrison perpetuated the assumption that Garrison and his associates were the only true abolitionists. They, thereby, influenced the early professional American historians of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Among these historians, Hermann von Holst, John Bach McMaster, James Ford Rhodes, and James Schouler each produced multi-volume histories of the Civil War era that portrayed immediatists positively. Von Holst, McMaster, Rhodes, and Schouler accepted a racist stereotype of African Americans. But, as nationalists and democrats, they lauded immediatists as moral leaders who destroyed a threat to the republic. Rhodes, for example, credited Garrison and his associates for making slavery "a topic of discussion at every Northern fireside," for the formation of the Republican Party in 1854, and for the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1860.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, "revisionist" historians described immediatists much more negatively. Several factors, including antiwar sentiment engendered by the brutality of World War I and the reactionary politics of the 1920s, contributed to this reversal. The writings of Ulrich B. Phillips, a white Southerner who for four decades taught history at the University of Michigan, had special importance. In American Negro Slavery (1918), Phillips describes slavery as a benevolent institution gradually civilizing people of African descent. White southerners, he maintains, would have peacefully freed the slaves had not immediatists caused a needless civil war. In Phillips’s account, immediatists were not heroes but irresponsible fanatics who pushed the United States into a tragic war. This negative interpretation persisted into the 1950s as influential historians argued that the Civil War could and should have been avoided. James G. Randall in The Civil War and Reconstruction (1937) and Avery O. Craven in The Coming of the Civil War (1942) contend that Northern immediatists and their political antislavery allies raised irrational fears that prevented white Southerners from dealing with slavery.

The focus of investigation regarding antislavery in America became what motivated white Northerners to become immediate abolitionists? If, as Phillips maintained, enslaved black people were generally content, and paternalistic masters rarely mistreated them, why did Northern abolitionists by 1830 insist on immediate abolition at the risk of sectional discord and terrible war? If it were not an evil slave system that motivated abolitionists, what led them to make such strident demands? For decades, historians searched for answers to these misguided questions. They assumed that something unrelated to slavery motivated a few Northerners to lash out against the South.

In this search historians produced many insightful accounts of Northern social, economic, cultural, and psychological forces involved in shaping immediatism. Of special significance is Gilbert H. Barnes’s Antislavery Impulse (1933), which emphasizes how evangelical revivalism produced Northerners who believed compromise with slavery endangered their souls. Other studies trace the immediatist impulse to New England culture and its westward expansion. During the 1970s and 1980s, Bertram Wyatt-Brown
and Lawrence J. Friedman related the childhood experiences of Northern evangelicals to the emergence of immediatism. More in line with the revisionists is David Donald's contention in *Lincoln Reconsidered* (1955) that "status anxiety" among a displaced and neurotic New England social elite produced the movement. According to Donald, socially insecure Yankees exploited the slavery issue to re-establish "the traditional values of their class at home" or to assuage irrational feelings of guilt.

During the 1960s, the civil rights movement encouraged a resurgence of positive assessments of the abolitionists in general and an expansion of interest in black abolitionists. Kenneth M. Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* (1956) supported these tendencies. Stampp refuted Phillips's benign portrait of slavery by depicting the system's brutality and the prevalence of black resistance. The realizations that slavery was indeed evil and that the enslaved were not content led "neo-abolitionist" historians to portray immediate abolitionists as psychologically healthy, middle-class (usually white) liberals, who pioneered the struggle for black equality. Louis Filler's *Crusade against Slavery* (1960) provides a comprehensive and positive history of the movement, and James B. McPherson's *The Struggle for Equality* (1964) portrays immediatists as having a positive impact on racial issues during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Historians continued to seek motivation for immediatism in Northern white culture, but it now seemed that—rather than constituting a displaced social elite—the immediatists and their political allies represented a rising Northern entrepreneurial class that embodied modernizing values associated with industrialization. Their commitment to wage labor, social mobility, individualism, and education conflicted with the traditional values associated with the South's rural culture and slave-labor economy.

By the late 1960s, most historians of the sectional conflict had ceased portraying immediate abolitionists as irresponsible fanatics who fomented a needless Civil War. Instead, contemporary racial polarization and disillusionment with reform led scholars to analyze the degree of white immediatist commitment to racial justice, the respective roles of conservatism and radicalism in the movement, and the relevance of abolitionism to the sectional conflict that produced the Civil War. Leon F. Litwack and the scholarly team of Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease observed that white immediatists were not immune to racial prejudice, that they alienated black abolitionists, and that they undermined their own efforts.

The debate over the character of white immediatists took two forms. The first divided the movement into conservative and radical factions. In 1933, Barnes contended that Garrison and his New England associates were radicals whose moral absolutism and harsh rhetoric destroyed their effectiveness. According to Barnes and his colleague Dwight L. Dumond, a larger and more conservative group of evangelical abolitionists led by Theodore Weld and Arthur and Lewis Tappan was more effective. In a belated response to this interpretation, Aileen S. Kraditor and James Brewer Stewart contended during the late 1960s that, contrary to Barnes, Garrison's radical critique of American Society and his sophisticated methods of agitation, rather than the evangelicals' compromised approach, accounted for the
immediatists' influence. Lewis Perry's *Radical Abolitionism* (1973) investigates the nature of Garrisonian radicalism.

The second form of the debate centered on a denial that any white immediatist was radical. During the 1970s, several historians who portrayed all white abolitionists as conservatives worried that a variety of sins, including slaveholding, would destroy the Northern social structure. This interpretation of white immediatists accompanied an effort, lasting from the 1960s into the 1980s, to disengage abolitionists from the sectional conflict over slavery. During the 1970s, Merton L. Dillon and Stewart wrote general histories of American abolitionism that, while demonstrating the influence of the movement, concluded that it did not lead to emancipation in 1865. Others, such as Ronald G. Walters in *The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (1976) went further, describing immediatism as a Northern culture in which the South and slavery had only symbolic value. Abolitionist studies turned inward, seeking to understand what it meant or felt like to be an immediatist, rather than how the immediatists affected the course of American history. Scholars described immediatism as a surrogate religion, as a component of community development, as a context for understanding antebellum perceptions of gender, and as an attempt at social control in the North by using the South as a negative example. White immediatists appeared to have sought only to save themselves from moral corruption. In historical literature they went from being charged with causing a needless war to being regarded as irrelevant. Writing in 1981, historian Lawrence J. Friedman declared, “Sectional conflict, Civil War, and legal emancipation would probably have occurred even if there had been no active abolition movement.”

Several historians, however, refused to write off white immediatists as ineffective introverts. In 1984, John R. McKivigan’s *The War against Proslavery Religion* showed how they “contributed to moving the [Northern] churches closer to abolitionist principle and practices by the coming of the Civil War.” During the early 1990s, there began a reevaluation of American abolitionism that continues into the twenty-first century. New studies emphasize interaction between black and white abolitionists, between abolitionism and slaves, and abolitionism and the *Underground Railroad*. There is expanded interest in early abolitionism, in the relationship between immediatism and feminism, and how gender affected the antislavery movement.

**Black Abolitionists**

Although historians have always been aware of formal black participation in abolitionism, Herbert Aptheker in his 1941 article, “The Negro in the Abolitionist Movement,” produced the first systematic study of the subject. Years later Benjamin Quarles’s *Black Abolitionists* (1969) portrayed African Americans as a crucial part of a biracial antislavery effort. But, from the mid-1960s well into the 1980s, such historians as Litwack, Pease and Pease, and Freidman regarded black abolitionists as tangential to, and in conflict with, what they implicitly regarded as a white undertaking. In their view,
racially biased white abolitionists frustrated black aspirations and forced them to organize independently.

In contrast, historians since the 1980s emphasize how, despite white prejudices, black and white immediatists interacted positively and how African Americans helped shape the entire movement. In Building Antislavery Walls (1983) R.J.M. Blackett places black immediatists in an Atlantic context. Aptheker’s Anti-Racism in U.S. History (1992) and Paul Goodman’s In One Blood (1998) emphasize the ability of white abolitionists to overcome to a degree their racism. Donald M. Jacobs describes cooperation among black and white immediatists in Boston, and Clara Merrit DeBoer describes the role of black men in the aggressively abolitionist American Missionary Association. In 1990, McKivigan explored the interracial friendship between Frederick Douglass and white abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith. John Stauffer has gone on to analyze a wider friendship among several black and white abolitionists, including Douglass and Smith. Meanwhile, books by Harry Reed, James Oliver Horton and Lois Horton, and Patrick Rael, show how immediatism developed in the contexts of Northern black community and culture. In The Transformation of American Abolitionism (2002) Richard S. Newman attributes the rise of immediatism in the United States to the influence of black abolitionists on white abolitionists during the 1820s.

Early Abolitionism in the United States

Despite recurrent claims to the contrary, historians have never neglected abolitionism in the United States prior to the rise of immediatism, traditionally linked to Garrison’s initiation of his weekly Liberator in 1831. Albert Bushnell Hart’s Slavery and Abolition, 1831–1841 (1906) devotes a chapter to abolitionism during the Revolutionary and Early National periods of American history. General histories of the antislavery movement have continued to follow this pattern. Histories of Quakers and slavery have always extended back into the early 1700s, and there has been an extended debate concerning the size and influence of early antislavery societies in the upper South. While historians concentrate attention on the three decades prior to the Civil War, significant work on the earlier period continues to be published.

Abolitionists, Slaves, and Slave Abolitionists

Another recent development in abolitionist historiography is interest in the relationship between Northern abolitionists and slaves. Scholarly investigation of their most famous link, the Underground Railroad, has fluctuated over the past century. Wilbur H. Siebert’s *Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (1898) relies on the reminiscences of white abolitionists to portray a white-led, clandestine slave escape network in which slaves took little initiative. Larry Gara’s *Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (1961) debunks Siebert’s interpretation, describing pervasive white abolitionist involvement in slave escapes and organized escape networks themselves as fabricated myths. Gara was so persuasive that for several decades histories of American abolitionism neglected the Underground Railroad. But, as some scholars reacted against portrayals of immediatists as inconsequential, they turned to the Underground Railroad and other ways in which Northern abolitionists interacted with slaves.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Aptheker, Dillon, James L. Huston, and John Ashworth emphasized the role of slaves in shaping immediatism. Ashworth followed Aptheker in noting that, had not enslaved African Americans struggled against their masters, a Northern antislavery movement would have been inconceivable. Huston found the antislavery impulse not in religious faith, but in the observation by Northerners of the brutality of slavery. Dillon’s *Slavery Attacked* (1990) contends that rising slave unrest during the late 1830s and early 1840s pushed immediatists to advocate an abolitionist-slave alliance.

Investigations of abolitionist-slave contacts, as well as mounting popular interest, led to a great revival of scholarship directed at the Underground Railroad as a facet of abolitionism. In 1995, Stanley Harrold discussed the roles in immediatist reform culture of both slave rebels and Northerners who went south to help slaves escape. David C. Cecelski in 1994 and Kathryn Grover in 2001 described the operation of a maritime slave escape route from various points on the South Atlantic Coast northward. Grover’s *The Fugitive’s Gibraltar* demonstrates how biracial efforts to help fugitives in New Bedford shaped immediatism in that port city. Among several recent books on the Underground Railroad in the Ohio River valley is Keith P. Griffler’s *Front Line of Freedom* (2004). It argues that black communities on the north shore of the river pioneered assistance to escaping slaves during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and that by the late 1830s, white abolitionists had begun to add an organizational framework. In *Bound for Canaan* (2005), Fergus M. Bordewich provides the first comprehensive view of the Underground Railroad since Siebert’s. He traces the origins of aid to escaping slaves to Quakers in North Carolina and Pennsylvania during the early 1800s, and, more precisely than Griffler, contends that extensive organized grass roots networks emerged during the late 1830s.

For over 100 years, abolitionists and others contemplated the possibility that slavery might end in a servile insurrection. In 1979, Eugene D. Genovese’s *From Rebellion to Revolution* implied that insurrectionary slaves were indeed
abolitionists. The ideology of the American and French revolutions, Geno-
vese contends, inspired slave rebels not merely to seek freedom for them-
selves, but to destroy the slave system. Although there are major
exceptions to this generalization, historian Douglas R. Egerton portrays as
abolitionists Gabriel, who led an 1800 Virginia slave conspiracy, and Den-
mark Vesey, who in 1822 led a similar conspiracy in Charleston, South
Carolina.

A theme in abolitionist historiography that links Northern abolitionists
and slave rebels concerns the role of violence and nonviolence in the anti-
slavery movement. Since John Demos addressed the issue in 1964, histori-
ans have evaluated the relative strength of these tactics, the roots of
abolitionist nonviolence, and the tendency of abolitionists to advocate force-
ful action. In a 1970 article, Robert H. Abzug links the rise of immediatism
to slave revolt, contending that Nat Turner’s 1831 uprising so frightened
Northern abolitionists that they called for immediate peaceful emancipation
in order to avoid bloodshed in the South. The most thorough analysis of ab-
olitionist nonviolence is Carlton Mabee’s Black Freedom (1970). Although
Mabee notes violent tendencies within the movement, he describes immedi-
atists as similar in their commitment to peaceful means to the nonviolent
civil rights advocates of the 1950s and 1960s.

Since 1970, however, historians have become increasingly interested in
immediatist violence. Demos contended that a violent turn in the broader
sectional struggle after 1850 encouraged some immediatists to advocate
slave revolt and other violent means. But in 1974, Pease and Pease credited
(or blamed) black abolitionists of the 1840s with preceding their white
associates in advocating violence. Friedman, while accepting the view that
abolitionists became more likely to advocate violent means after 1850,
emphasized that they were always ambivalent concerning means. In 1990,
Dillon placed the turning point at about 1840 as Northern immediatists
responded to reports of slave unrest. Yet some abolitionists—both black
and white—advocated slave revolt earlier than 1840. If slave rebels are
included among abolitionists, antislavery violence existed within the move-
ment during the eighteenth century.

Abolitionist Women

A few prominent women, like a few prominent African Americans, have
always been included in histories of the antislavery movement. Lucretia
Mott, Angelina Grimké Weld, Sarah Grimké, Sojourner Truth, and
Harriet Tubman are among the more famous American abolitionists. Women
had particular influence among Garrisonians, and no history of that group
neglects Lydia Maria Child, Maria Weston Chapman, and Abby Kelley
Foster. Biographies of such women have long been available and new ones
continue to be published.

In 1968, Alma Lutz in Crusade for Freedom: Women of the Antislavery
Movement pioneered the history of abolitionist women as a group. Ten
years later, sophisticated studies began to appear. In The Slavery of Sex:
Feminist-Abolitionists in America (1978), Blanche Glassman Hersh begins

During the 1990s, several historians filled in gaps left by earlier studies. Wendy Hamand Venet’s *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets* (1991) explores the role of abolitionist women during the Civil War. Shirley J. Yee’s *Black Women Abolitionists* (1992) is the first book-length study of this group. Debra Gold Hansen’s *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (1993) describes the same sort of internal racial conflict among a group of abolitionist women that historians during the 1970s and 1980s found among abolitionists generally. More comprehensive and more in line with current scholarship is Julie Roy Jeffrey’s *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (1998). Although Jeffrey includes many elite women in her study, her book provides a panoramic view of how women contributed to a diverse movement.

**Antislavery**

Studies of abolitionism may be considered part of a broader field covering all efforts to oppose and limit slavery, including colonization, nonextentionism, and various political antislavery organizations. David Brion Davis in *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (1966) and *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (1975) provides the broadest context of all for understanding antislavery and abolition not only in the United States but in the Atlantic World.


Free Hearts, Free Homes (2003), establishes that women who engaged in antislavery politics were more likely than their male counterparts to have views similar to abolitionists. James B. McPherson in The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (1964) describes the uneasy relationship between abolitionists and the Republican Party on issues of wartime emancipation and black rights. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Gradual Emancipation; Immediate Emancipation; Radical Republicans.


Stanley Harrold

Hopkins, Samuel (1721–1803)

Samuel Hopkins was born in Waterbury, Connecticut and was graduated from Yale College in 1741. He served a congregation in western Massachusetts and became an intimate of Jonathan Edwards, whose manuscripts he obtained after Edwards’s death in 1758. A number of theological works followed, capped by the System of Doctrines (1793). Hopkins became the leading expositor of American Calvinism, and the theology he developed came to be known as the New Divinity. His views were controversial. In 1769, he assumed a pulpit in Newport, Rhode Island, an important entrepôt in the Atlantic slave trade. He became one of the leading abolitionists in the Anglo-American world, not only uniting the slaves’ cause and the patriots’ cause in the War of Independence, but also corresponding with British abolitionists like Granville Sharp. Hopkins addressed the iniquity of the slave trade and slavery in works like A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans (1776), A Discourse upon the Slave Trade (1793), and A Treatise on the Millennium (1793). A number of those connected with Hopkins either personally or theologically became active in improving the lives of African Americans or arguing against the slave trade and slavery. Most notable are Susanna Anthony, Levi Hart, Lemuel Haynes, Sarah Osborne, and Ezra Stiles. Moreover, Hopkins was involved in charitable organizations like the African Union Society, and he was respected as a preacher by black Rhode Islanders.

Hopkins’s reaction against the slave trade he witnessed in Newport was visceral, but his critique of it was theologically sophisticated. In his
theological works, he had defined true virtue, or the fruits of grace, as disinterested benevolence and love of God and of humankind, with no regard for oneself. His formulations of such benevolence tended to emphasize neighborliness and kindness to one’s compatriots. The confrontation with the miseries inflicted by the slave trade led him to ask whether blacks and whites were, in the Christian understanding, neighbors and compatriots. Yes was his answer, so forms of racial oppression like the slave trade and slavery were immoral. His own life in Newport was disrupted by the Revolution, and he soon perceived that both slave and patriot were chafing under despotism and tyranny. In his apocalyptic writings, Hopkins elevated abolition to the highest level of moral urgency he comprehended. He wrote that the slave trade and slavery characterized the sixth vial mentioned in the Book of Revelation, the darkest time for believers, while their abolition would be one of the steps leading to the seventh vial, the kingdom of God. Hopkins believed that Africans would become Christian in the millennium, so he promoted the education of black men as ministers and their migration to Africa as evangelists. Yet, however tentatively, Hopkins raised the prospect of colonization, a movement that would be institutionalized in the American Colonization Society in 1817 and in the expatriation of some African Americans to Liberia beginning in the 1820s. See also Bible and Slavery.


John Saillant

“Hottentot Venus.” See Baartman, Sara

Human Rights and the Abolition of Slavery

Few human institutions are as antithetical to human rights as is slavery. Even before there was widespread consensus on the definition of human rights, nations agreed that slavery was both morally and legally wrong under international law. The 1815 Declaration Relative to the Universal Abolition of the Slave Trade was the first major international effort to condemn the slave trade, and it is estimated that between the years 1815 and 1957 over 300 international agreements intended to end the slave trade were promulgated. Over the course of its short existence, the League of Nations focused on eliminating the practice of slavery, culminating in the Slavery Convention of 1926, which called on contracting parties to completely abolish the slave trade.

In the post-World War II era, the United Nations played a particularly critical role in creating and implementing formal protections for human rights. While the slave trade diminished, and it was not in the forefront of
the discussion about human rights in many ways, it was also widely accepted that enslaving a human being violated most rights recognized in the Declaration on Human Rights and subsequent treaties. At the same time that the United Nations was created, regional human rights institutions evolved in Latin America and Europe, and the founding documents of these bodies also clearly prohibited slavery. Slavery ran contrary to the most basic notions of personal freedom and choice embodied in the founding documents of these institutions including the rights to life, to move freely, to work, to have choice in marriage, and to be free from arbitrary detention.

The 1953 Protocol Amending the Slavery Convention and the 1957 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (the “Supplementary Convention”) specifically addressed the practices that contributed to slavery and resolved to abolish them. The Supplementary Convention not only outlawed traditional forms of slavery, but also many of the institutions and practices that create “servile status,” such as debt bondage, serfdom, and forced marriage. Changing these social practices is essential to ending the practice of slavery because contemporary forms of slavery are often closely linked to them. The term “slave-like” practices embodies those types of customs that, while not necessarily resulting in legal ownership of a person, result in the same de facto condition. The International Labor Organization has worked to end all forced labor since the 1930s.

As a result of these treaties, the International Court of Justice stated in 1971 that protection from slavery is an *erga omnes* obligation, a duty that is owed by all to all, under international law. As one of the very few officially recognized *erga omnes* duties, all states have an obligation to prevent slavery.

In spite of all of these provisions, slavery is still common in many parts of the world. The modern slave trade is conducted largely through trafficking in persons, especially women and children who have become a central concern of the human rights movement in recent years. This new slave trade is different from the traditional model wherein people were usually taken from their homes against their will. Many modern-day slaves leave home voluntarily, but with the belief that they are being taken to work in menial jobs or even to marry. Even this is not universally true, especially for many children who are kidnapped from their families or encouraged by their families to leave for job offers that turn out to be forced servitude.

The forms that modern slavery takes are also diverse. Some societies require that girls and women marry without their consent, which can often result in forced servitude, and in others slaves are inherited as property. Sexual slavery is common, both for women and children, as is domestic servitude, indentured servitude, and forced recruitment into the military. It is estimated that over 8.4 million children are currently enslaved through trafficking, debt bondage, and other forms of forced labor, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, and other illicit activities.

Recent human rights treaties—such as the 2001 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational
Organized Crime—have tried to curb the practice of trafficking in persons by encouraging both sender and recipient countries to work to eliminate the incentives and opportunities that allow for trafficking. Additionally, recent agreements including the 2005 Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights have also targeted transnational corporations, which have been linked, both directly and indirectly, to slavery and slave-like practices. Modern human rights law condemns not only the use of these practices, but also knowingly benefiting from such practices.

Enforcement of these standards, however, is extremely difficult under international law. People trapped in this bondage are often unaware of any methods of recourse, or are prevented from utilizing them. In addition, there is no standing for individuals in the International Court of Justice, and the other United Nations mechanisms for the protection of human rights are unable to provide adequate protections. Similarly, regional protection mechanisms, though widely considered more effective, are insufficient to protect large populations if there is no will on the part of the national government to end these practices.


*Kathy Zeisel*
Ideological Origins of Antislavery Thought

Antislavery thought is often described as an “impulse,” “appeal,” “inclination,” “tendency,” or “sentiment” in the intellectual history of the West. However described, the development of the antislavery principle was a momentous occurrence in the history of Western thought, leading to a variety of political, social, economic, and juridical actions, all reflecting the supposition that human chattel slavery, in all its forms and wherever manifested, must be abolished and its badges and indicia permanently eliminated from human relationships. Metaphorical descriptions, particularly the “impulse” metaphor, are very helpful in gaining an understanding of the development of antislavery thought, but they are also somewhat misleading because they oversimplify what was in fact a complex, multifaceted, interlocking, and sometimes contradictory set of discourses and events. It was not just one “impulse” or “stream” of thought that led to the universal consensus that slavery must be abolished, but rather several clusters of ideas, each of these clusters leading to one or more antislavery “impulses,” “appeals,” or “tendencies.” Beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these “impulses” eventually coalesced into a coherent, well-defined, identifiable current of thought. The task of this entry is to identify the clusters of ideas that gave rise to the current of thought that we now call abolitionism, and to illuminate their sources and histories.

The sources for the ideological history of antislavery opinion can be roughly organized into three broad groupings: (1) theological, (2) philosophical, and (3) jurisprudential. Our organization of the topic using these classifications is only approximate because the groupings we suggest are not mutually exclusive nor are they self-contained. There is great overlap and symphysis between them. In tracing the historical origins of antislavery thought, we will see that each of the clusters of ideas we will identify often combine to give rise to a concrete “impulse,” e.g., an impulse for political and social equality, or a humanitarian impulse, or an impulse for democratic freedom, or an impulse for progress and happiness in society. These are the
impulses that make up antislavery thought. The sources for each of these particular impulses will be found, more or less, in one of the three groupings we have identified.

To begin, the mainstream historical scholarship identifies seven main clusters of ideas, articulated in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which led to the antislavery position. Three of these idea clusters can be placed in the theological grouping: (1) salvation; (2) benevolence; and (3) equality. The first of these idea clusters, the idea of salvation, is based upon Christian notions of heavenly reward and eternal salvation for those who lead pious and virtuous lives. Connected with this is the concomitant belief that slavery is impious and sinful, leading to the certain damnation of the slaveholder and the slave trader, and, perhaps, in the words of the historian David Brion Davis, to the destruction of “the true destiny of the human race.” The most important exponents of these ideas, and perhaps the earliest antislavery activists, were British and American Protestants, particularly the Nonconformist Evangelicals, the Rational Dissenters (later known as the Unitarians) and the Society of Friends, known as the Quakers. Each of these religious groups shared a millennial vision of the world that embodied a “latent egalitarianism” growing out of the conviction that all human beings must constantly struggle against sin. Slavery by its nature deprived a certain segment of the human community of that opportunity. Therefore all believers, in their view, should work to abolish slavery.

The second set of ideas comprises the ethic of benevolence, also largely derived from Christian sources, particularly evangelical interpretations of the Bible. These sources assert that there is a religious duty to relieve the suffering of less fortunate segments of society, including the poor, the imprisoned, innocent victims of misfortune, and those suffering from disease. In the West, Christian understandings of the virtues of compassion and love are the driving forces behind this ethic. It must be noted that there are strong philosophical roots for the idea of benevolence as well, drawn from utilitarian sources and from the principles of natural law. Yet, the theological assertions of the evangelical Protestant sects probably had the most influence on the development of this ethic and, for this reason, it is included in the theological grouping.

In the late-eighteenth century, the manumission of slaves represented the highest expression of the ethic of benevolence. Political activists motivated by these ideas, particularly British Protestants writing and engaging in law reform activities during that time, became major actors in achieving the legal abolition of slavery in Great Britain and the formulation of a vigorous antislavery British foreign policy in the early nineteenth century. The British Protestant view of benevolence is a direct intellectual forbearer of the widely held nineteenth century British official view that England possessed a humanitarian duty to bring “civilization” to the non-Christian and non-European populations of the world. Allowing slavery and slave-trading to continue to exist was seen as starkly incompatible with this notion. The British, then, promoted themselves as leaders in a world-wide antislavery effort.

The third theological idea cluster is the idea of equality, drawn from the interpretation of biblical texts that suggest the equality of human beings
before God. John Locke, a philosopher and not a theologian, was a major proponent of this idea, basing his arguments upon interpretations of well-known passages in Genesis and the New Testament. There were other Enlightenment philosophers who also advanced the idea of human equality, although they did not attribute the idea to theological sources and they did not always condemn slavery. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is perhaps the best known exponent of these ideas and will be discussed later with other Enlightenment philosophers as part of our discussion of the “libertarian” and “egalitarian” impulses in antislavery thought. Even though the idea of equality could very well be included in the philosophical group, we include it in the theological group because its ideological origins are, in significant part, based upon religious sources, chiefly biblical interpretations and evangelical conceptions of the relationship between God and humankind.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth clusters of antislavery ideas come out of Western philosophical traditions. The fourth cluster posits the idea of liberty—that human beings are universally entitled to enjoy individual autonomy and to be free from subjection to harm at the hands of any other human being or government. Baron Charles de Secondat Montesquieu, the French philosopher, was a very important exponent of this cluster of ideas, although there were other philosophers, particularly Thomas Hobbes, Francis Hutcheson, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the French philosophers who also made great contributions to the antislavery understanding of the idea of liberty. This cluster of ideas is a powerful one, and it tends to dominate all of the other sources of antislavery thought.

The fifth cluster of ideas is perhaps the oldest of the philosophical traditions we will consider. It is best described as the natural law or naturalist tradition. Cicero described natural law as “right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions.” Natural law theorists argue that these “commands” and “prohibitions” transcend and are prior to any human law. There are two main branches of this tradition; one relies on historical sources and emphasizes the primacy of reason in discovering the law, and the other, while also emphasizing reason, relies principally on sacred texts. This second branch offers some warrant for including natural law in the theological grouping, as it is a major component of Roman Catholic religious doctrine. These teachings, based upon the great synthesis of biblical sources and Greek, Roman, and Islamic philosophical writings forged by St. Thomas Aquinas, eventually led later theologians, philosophers, and jurists to the somewhat tentative conclusion that slavery is contrary to the natural law. Even though this conclusion was important, it is contested and we have not included natural law in the theological grouping because, as we shall see, the other major branch of natural law theory, relying upon purely secular historical sources, was of even greater influence in shaping the development of the libertarian and revolutionary impulses in antislavery thought.

The sixth cluster of ideas is a little more difficult to classify and describe, but it is an extremely important component of antislavery thought. It revolves around the utilitarian principle that all human beings are entitled
to have happiness in their lives. Any decent system of morality or law should thus seek to maximize that happiness and well-being and minimize unhappiness or pain for society as a whole. The utilitarian philosophers, particularly Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, concluded that slavery was inimical to a well-reasoned utilitarian calculus for society because the pain, unhappiness, suffering, and degradation caused by slavery greatly outweighed any benefits that might be achieved in allowing it to continue.

Finally, the seventh cluster of ideas is best described as jurisprudential. It is a combination of a number of complex notions, including early modern and modern understandings of natural law and the idea that human progress and development, including notions of resistance and revolution, when necessary, are important components of a mature society, to be recognized by the law. This imperative would naturally lead a legislator or judge to conclude that, as a matter of positive law, slavery should not be allowed to exist. Discourse on the law by leading eighteenth-century legal scholars, revolutionaries, and judges, particularly Montesquieu, the English legal commentator Sir William Blackstone, the American revolutionaries Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, and Lord Mansfield, a leading English judge, forcefully advanced these ideas. The arguments of these jurists and revolutionaries also found their way into the writing, speech making, and actions of British and American antislavery activists, including Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass. These activists, and the judges and jurisprudential theorists who agreed with them, were largely responsible for translating antislavery thought into concrete abolitionist political, military, and juridical actions by governments.

**The Humanitarian Impulse**

The humanitarian impulse in antislavery thought is firmly rooted in religious tenets, especially the concepts of sin and salvation. The earliest proponents of antislavery ideas in the West were the radical sectarians, evangelicals, andmillennialists of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Until the appearance of these radical sects, Christian theologians had not articulated a firm and unequivocal denunciation of slavery. As David Brion Davis observes, St. Thomas Aquinas, while arguing that slavery was indeed against the law of nature, found ways to justify the institution as a practical necessity. He appeared to support Aristotle’s famous dictum that "... from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule" and that the slave is nothing more than "a human tool." Similarly, the Calvinist and Lutheran views of Christian liberty did not alter their view that some men are born free and others slaves.

A number of religious sects in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England began to adopt radical antislavery positions in their effort to "save" the souls of their slaveholding parishioners. Many of these sects died out, but the Quakers, the most successful of them, survived and flourished by combining pragmatism and realism with theological perfectionism and a communalitarian outlook on their role in political and economic life. Although
many Quaker businessmen and planters initially prospered from involvement in slaveholding and slave trading, the Society eventually came to adopt a rigorous antislavery code for its members. Quaker antislavery positions, uncompromising and trendsetting, eventually helped prompt abolition in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in America and the Atlantic World.

Benevolence, another important source of humanitarianism, is deeply rooted in religious conceptions of charity and piety. It has long been emphasized among Christian theologians and ordinary believers since the time of Paul. Two related theological developments in the eighteenth century led to its application to the problem of slavery. The first was the rise and acceptance of latitudinarian theology and the other was the development of the doctrine of Providence, which argued for a progressive view of society and government, based on revelation. The influence of benevolence upon humanitarianism in antislavery thought is largely the product of these two developments.

In the seventeenth century, some British Protestants based their faith more on human nature and conduct than on theological principles or the teaching of modern science. These thinkers came to be known as “latitudinarians.” Their faith in human nature led to the belief that man was inherently good and could naturally improve his moral condition. Protestant thought at that time was dominated by Calvinist thinking, which viewed man’s natural state as rooted in depravity and evil. Unlike the Calvinists, the latitudinarians believed that man could overcome evil through reason, and they indicted slavery as an affront to reason. The latitudinarian attitude also helped to give rise to the “moral sense” movement, expressed in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and holding that slavery must be condemned as an obstacle to rational progress, requiring good men and women to act virtuously and work to emancipate slaves.

The latitudinarian view of history readily merged with the more enlightened understanding of revelation that God sought the progressive improvement of human institutions. This larger notion viewed revelation as part of a grand providential scheme for human society. The leading exponent of these ideas was Edmund Burke, a progressive reformer who insisted on moral government informed by revelation. Although he was passionately opposed to the radical anticlericalism of the French Revolution, Burke had a genuine concern for the welfare of oppressed people. He proposed adoption of a code that would require extensive humanitarian regulation of the slave trade and protections for slaves in the British colonies. In Burke’s view, it was the government’s obligation to be benevolent and humane in relation to the slave trade and to enact laws and establish progressive programs that would further the “providential design,” leading inexorably to the cessation of the slave trade and the gradual elimination of slavery. The gradualist approach in antislavery thought, championed by Edmund Burke, was one of the hallmarks of the humanitarian impulse.

**The Libertarian Impulse**

The idea of universal liberty for all men and women did not originate with the downtrodden and penniless peasants of continental Europe, or
with the oppressed black slaves of Haiti and Jamaica, or in the squalid back alleys of the newly formed industrial areas of London, Liverpool, or Manchester. In Europe, the claims for liberty were instead the product of the grievances of a disaffected aristocratic gentry in France, a gentry that found itself oppressed by the increasingly hegemonic actions of a bankrupt and decadent monarchy and a subservient and absolutist Catholic clergy that sought only to reproduce and enrich themselves, at everyone else's expense. Similarly, in the American colonies, the landed colonial gentry's bitter resentment and resistance to the imperial and rapacious policies of the English Crown resulted in strident assertions seeking the guarantee of universal liberty for all citizens. While the haunting specter of a brutal and widespread system of chattel slavery of Africans in the French colonial possessions and in America belied these calls for liberty, the calls nevertheless claimed a universal applicability to men. Such assertions profoundly influenced the development of antislavery thought.

Actually, the first important philosopher to have an impact in this area was John Locke (1632–1704). His writings influenced the upheaval in France. Locke published a number of works that treated the issues of liberty and equality in some depth, but, on the question of slavery, his most significant comments are to be found in his *Two Treatises of Government*, first published in 1690. In perhaps one of the most famous comments ever penned in the English language on the issue of slavery, Locke, in his *First Treatise of Government*, observed that: "Slavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man, and so directly opposite to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation; that 'tis hardly to be conceived, that an Englishman, much less a Gentleman, should plead for 't." Locke argued for a natural liberty that was universal and that shaped the contours of the individual's relationship with government and other members of society. Locke did not unequivocally condemn all forms of slavery, and, in actuality, his conception of liberty, like the American colonists', was not truly universal. His bedrock conception of individual autonomy and social contract would undergird, however, later antislavery thought.

The French aristocracy produced two original thinkers, Charles de Secondat Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), who also supplied much of the ideological foundation for the libertarian impulse in antislavery thought. Both were members of a larger group of philosophers, scientists, novelists, and essayists known as the *philosophes*. The *philosophes*, led by Diderot, published the *Encyclopédie*, one of the great intellectual productions of the Enlightenment. It was influential in both revolutionary and antislavery movements. Yet it was the ideas of Montesquieu and Rousseau that led the way. While both made apologies for the enslavement of Africans, justifying it with racist stereotypes and popular but mistaken ideas about their greater adaptability to tropical climates, their penetrating arguments for human self-determination reinforced the "libertarian impulse" in antislavery thought.

In *L’esprit de Lois*, Montesquieu directly addressed the issue of slavery. He first rejected Aristotelian justifications that slavery is a natural condition to be found in human affairs. He ironically suggested that an acknowledgment
by slaveholders that their slaves were also human would be inconsistent with slaveholders' status as good Christians. He also proposed sarcastically that societies assign slave status to ninety percent of the population by lot, and this segment would then faithfully serve the other ten percent. Slavery was, by its own nature, bad, he concluded. This was a radical departure from traditional natural law theory on slavery. He then attacked the two other justifications for slavery commonly offered at that time; first, that slavery could be legally imposed on prisoners of war and others captured by a victorious commander after military hostilities, and, secondly, that slavery could result from a civil contract, voluntarily entered into by the master and slave at the outset of the relationship. These arguments issued from Pufendorf and other well-known seventeenth and eighteenth century continental legal scholars. Montesquieu argued that the killing of prisoners of war was unlawful homicide and that their enslavement was thus also invalid and irrational. He further argued that voluntary self-sale into slavery was repugnant to all forms of reason. William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* relied extensively on Montesquieu's arguments against slavery and thus deepened their influence in England and its colonies.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau condemned the gross inequality of condition and status existing between, on the one hand, the officials of church and state in Europe and, on the other hand, the poor and disenfranchised masses of the continent. In his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality in Men* (1755) and *The Social Contract* (1762), he rebuked despotic governments' intent only on popular subjugation. Thus, the first line in *The Social Contract* proclaimed: "Men are born free, but everywhere they are in chains." Rousseau was a universalist, concerned with the emancipation of all mankind, and he mandated the abolition of chattel slavery. Like Montesquieu, Rousseau reformulated natural law principles to prove that slavery was morally and ethically untenable. Rousseau contributed to the *Encyclopedie* and his ideas animated the French Revolution and emerging antislavery thought.

**The Utilitarian Impulse**

The utilitarian impulse in antislavery thought was central to convincing many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century figures that slavery must be abolished. Utilitarian arguments were consistently advanced by most major proponents of abolition then in the Americas and in Europe. Utilitarianism contends that the only goods in human behavior are those goods that maximize happiness or well-being. The utilitarian therefore sees moral, ethical, and legal decision-making as exclusively informed by a calculation of whether a proposed action or rule will maximize welfare or instead lead to unhappiness and pain. The utilitarian is not just concerned with the welfare of the individual. The utilitarian calculus, seeking "the greatest good for the greatest number," is applied to achieve solutions to large and sometimes intractable societal problems as well.

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, the two most eminent utilitarians of the nineteenth century, both concluded that, on utilitarian precepts, slavery must be abolished. Bentham rejected natural law theories that men
were universally endowed with inalienable rights. In a famous remark, he observed that the idea of natural human rights was “nonsense on stilts.” Yet Bentham was a tireless social reformer. He successfully pursued reforms in the judicial and prison systems and advocated humane and rational legislation which included vigorous opposition to slavery. Bentham observed that the brutalization of hundreds of thousands of innocent people for the pleasure of a few was not in society’s best interest. He concluded that in a rational society, “everybody should count for one, nobody for more than one.” John Stuart Mill, a student of Bentham, greatly improved upon this idea and other aspects of Bentham’s thinking. In his two major works, *Utilitarianism* and *On Liberty*, Mill argued that recognizing the social right to equality of treatment will improve the common good and advance the well-being of all.

The Scottish moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson was another early utilitarian opponent of slavery. Hutcheson, a powerful influence on Adam Smith, David Hume, and Bentham, published two key works, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *A System of Moral Philosophy*, published in 1755 after his death. Hutcheson is best known for his designation of a “moral sense,” a theory that contemporary philosophical accounts of human pleasure and pain were too narrowly focused and failed to comprehend the spectrum of human senses. He identified a sixth and seventh sense—a sense of beauty and of morality—which activated pleasure and pain, enabled moral evaluations, and united the concepts of happiness and benevolence. Human nature desired happiness, and this will inexorably led to a moral concern for one’s fellow human beings. Slavery offended the moral sense, he argued, and generalized unhappiness in society. Hutcheson also argued for natural human equality, and, unlike many other philosophers and theologians of the time, he concluded that there was no inherent difference between Africans and other members of the human race.

*The Egalitarian Impulse*

The idea of equality and antislavery has actually had a very uneasy relationship, particularly in the United States. Yet egalitarianism is a prominent aspect of Western antislavery thought and enormously influenced the course of abolitionism throughout the world. The idea of equality—especially of all before God—in Western tradition is rooted in core texts of Hebrew and Christian Scripture. St. Thomas Aquinas elaborated that all human beings are equal, as a matter of natural law, even though in his view, slavery could be justified as a device sanctioned by the positive law and thus lawfully imposed through certain civil disabilities. Post-Calvinist Protestant understandings of the New Testament and Christ’s teachings fostered new evangelical ideas in England about universal human equality in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. While slavery had disappeared in Europe, it was not because of egalitarian religious teachings by the Protestant Evangelicals or the Roman Catholic Church. In point of fact, the Hebrew Bible explicitly accepts the existence of chattel slavery as a fact of human life and
the New Testament largely accepts it as well. Jesus said nothing whatsoever about chattel slavery. The Pauline texts, if anything, seem to offer weak support for continuance of the institution of slavery. The Protestant Evangelicals seemed only concerned with the souls of the slaveholders, and there was never any overarching desire on their part to create an egalitarian society in Europe or in its colonies in the New World. If there was concern for the plight of the slaves, it was chiefly founded upon humanitarian motives arising out of Christian notions of charity and love.

Eighteenth-century philosophical writing brought the notion of universal human equality to the forefront of the discourse on slavery. The impact of these philosophical writings on evolving Western conceptions of equality and antislavery cannot be overestimated and was much more direct than the influence of theological egalitarianism and humanitarianism. Yet, the development of egalitarianism in antislavery was plagued by fits and starts and the course of the American and French Revolutions, as well as the American Civil War, would affect it profoundly.

John Locke was the first important philosopher to have an impact on conceptions of equality. Locke’s *Two Treatises* argue for an egalitarian vision of society, particularly since the *First Treatise* is a point-by-point refutation of Sir Robert Filmer’s argument for absolutist monarchical government. In the *Second Treatise*, the most influential of the treatises, Locke painstakingly expounded a theory of the relation between the governed and the government. This relationship was based on the social contract, which posited that men living in an original state of nature shared perfect freedom and equality. Locke did not unequivocally condemn all forms of slavery. Yet it is clear that he opposed the Aristotelian idea of certain peoples being fitted by nature for slavery. So holding opened the door for egalitarianism. In rejecting the Aristotelian position, he greatly narrowed the range of permissible forms of slavery. He concluded that slavery could only occur as an outcome of just war: those vanquished in war might legitimately enter into slavery in order to save their lives. In his view, life as a slave would be preferable to death at the hands of the victor in a just war. But even in these circumstances, Locke constrained permissible slavery very narrowly.

Locke has been vigorously criticized and accused of hypocrisy because he invested in the Royal African Company, a large and successful slave-trading company, and turned a considerable profit from these investments. He also served for three years as secretary to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, a colonial board of overseers, and, in that capacity, he played a significant role in drafting the Carolina Constitutions, which allowed for the enslavement of Africans. The constitutions, despite some concern for the religious freedom and the souls of the slaves, fundamentally endorsed inequality. Nevertheless, Locke’s explication of an egalitarian theory of natural rights founded on his conception of a social contract greatly impelled egalitarianism in antislavery thought.

Rousseau was as influential as, if not more so than, Locke, particularly with respect to influence on the leaders of the great political upheavals that occurred in the latter half of the eighteenth century—the American, French,
The Haitian Revolution is particularly significant because it was essentially a revolt led by African slaves. In his *Discourse* and *The Social Contract*, Rousseau repeated Montesquieu’s arguments against self-sale and the enslavement of captives in war. But he was much more radical than Montesquieu had ever been. He connected the loss of natural equality, a concept apparently honored in pre-modern societies, with the loss of liberty, leading to the potential enslavement of all of humankind. Rousseau thus was the first philosopher to effectively unite the libertarian impulse with the egalitarian impulse in antislavery thought. After the publication of *The Social Contract*, his arguments were soon supported and improved upon by another passionate French antislavery writer, the Abbé Raynal. In 1770, Raynal published his *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indies*. In it, he painted a sympathetic portrait of the African, depicting him as a virtuous and innocent victim of a depraved and savage European society. Rousseau and his successors skillfully used antislavery metaphors to convince their readers that revolutionary change was necessary to fundamentally restructure government, and the radical call for “Liberté, Égalité, et Fraternité” would fire the French Revolution.

The Revolutionary Impulse

On September 8, 1848, Frederick Douglass published an open letter entitled “To My Old Master, Thomas Auld” in his newspaper, *The North Star*. In the letter, Douglass described his earlier captivity as a slave in Maryland and how, after witnessing a horrific beating of a slave woman, he learned from the older slaves that he could escape to a better life in the North. Douglass did in fact escape, and in writing the open letter, he encouraged others in the South to plot similar plans of escape.

Douglass’s account is a good introduction to the seventh impulse in antislavery thought. The previous six impulses all depended upon vigorous rational discourse for their development, a discourse offered by non-slaves and designed to change minds of free people through the use of reason and argumentation. The seventh antislavery impulse, denominated here as the revolutionary impulse, is fundamentally distinct from these other lines of thought. It is a cluster of ideas and arguments that champions active resistance and even revolution, sometimes by the slaves themselves, as the best means to eliminate the inhumanity of slavery. It insists on action rather than argumentation. It embodies a vibrant optimism about life and a faith in the vitality and the limitless potential for improvement of the human condition through progressive, devout, and virtuous living.

Douglass appealed to the same sentiment that the American revolutionaries relied upon in crafting the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This sentiment holds that it is the natural and legal right of all human beings to disobey the positive law and resist it, however, if necessary to throw off injustice, oppression, and tyranny. Although Douglass may have been one of the most eloquent advocates of this revolutionary impulse in antislavery,
he certainly was not the first to advocate that slaves should take matters into their own hands. Leading historians trace this line of thought back to the philosophical assertions and actions of the Stoics and the Cynics, in the third century B.C.E., and to the heroic story of the slave revolt led by the Thracian gladiator *Spartacus*, against the Romans, in the first century B.C.E. A number of antislavery thinkers and theologians revived this line of thought in the middle of the eighteenth century after realizing that philosophical and theological discourse was not sufficiently effective in combating the evils of chattel slavery and the slave trade.

Granville Sharp was perhaps the most important of these early activists. Moved by a chance encounter with a slave who had been badly beaten by his owner, Sharp organized and supported litigation in England seeking to free slaves held by people in England. For many years his efforts met with failure after failure, but in 1772, they finally bore fruit with the decision in the now-famous case known as the *Somerset Decision*. The facts of the case were compelling: Charles Stuart, a white West Indian businessman, brought Somersett, his African slave, to England from Jamaica on a ship. Somersett escaped and, when he was recaptured, he was imprisoned on the ship for return to Jamaica for sale. Sharp learned of Somersett’s plight and sued on his behalf in the Court of King’s Bench. The lawsuit sought the issuance of a writ of *habeas corpus*, commanding the ship captain to produce Somersett and justify his detention. The writ of *habeas corpus* is known as the “Great Writ of Liberty” in English law and Lord Mansfield, the Chief Justice of the court and the judge hearing the case, did not disappoint. He declared that the practice of slavery was so odious and morally reprehensible, that only clear, unambiguous, and positive law could justify it. Since there was no such law in England, Somersett had to be set free. Although a narrow interpretation of the court’s opinion would justify the conclusion that Mansfield had not in fact declared English slavery to be illegal, the decision was widely interpreted that way, particularly in the United States, and some modern legal historians have argued that the decision spelled the beginning of the end for chattel slavery and the slave trade in the West. Other scholars have even argued that it was one of several important antislavery catalysts for the American Revolution. All of this emanated from the activism of Granville Sharp and his compatriots.

Other “abolitionists,” as they came to be called, soon joined the fray and they began to exert significant antislavery influence on the actions of colonial and home-country legislatures and courts. Abolitionist organizations were established in Europe and America, and abolitionists in England, led by John Wesley, a Methodist minister, and William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament, galvanized public opinion and in 1807 secured the passage of legislation outlawing the slave trade. In the same year, the American Congress passed a law prohibiting American citizens from participating in the slave trade.

In 1793, *Toussaint L’Ouverture* launched a revolt for the liberation of the French colony, Saint Domingue, that would last for ten years. He died in a French prison in 1803, but the forces he set in motion eventually achieved success and declared the independent Republic of Haiti in 1804.
after French troops had finally fled the island. Although other nations did not initially recognize Haiti and although it immediately fell victim to debilitating internecine struggles, this revolution astounded the world and it inspired Simón Bolívar to pledge to free the slaves of Venezuela and give him quarter as he planned for these rebellions.

Abolitionists and their organizations in America also continued to press the struggle against slavery, publishing pamphlets, giving speeches, funding the activities of freed slaves, and seeking to influence the passage of legislation. Their activities laid the groundwork for many of the methods employed by social protest movements today. There were many American abolitionists who contributed to the antislavery cause in the United States in the nineteenth century, but pre-eminent among them were two, William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Tubman.

Garrison became interested in antislavery by the late 1820s and first allied with the American Colonization Society, an organization that promoted freeing slaves and removing them—along with free blacks—to Africa as a way to very gradually end slavery in the United States. He soon became disillusioned with this strategy, indicting it as pro-slavery and embodying the sin of racial prejudice. A few years later he began publishing an abolitionist newspaper called The Liberator. Within 10 years Garrison became the best known and most impassioned proponent for abolitionism in America. He inspired and collaborated with many of the most important figures in the abolitionist movement including Frederick Douglass.

Harriet Tubman came to abolitionism by a very different route. She was a former slave who dedicated herself to helping others escape from slavery. Her actions were much more direct than Douglass’s; indeed she was a paradigm of the revolutionary impulse in antislavery thought. Escaping enslavement in 1849, over the next few years, she returned to rescue her sister, her nieces, and her aging parents. Afterwards, she returned repeatedly, making as many as nineteen trips and rescuing over 300 blacks from slavery in the South. Eventually a price was placed on her head, but she was never apprehended by the proslavery forces, and she became known as “The Moses of Her People.” She later worked for the Union Army during the Civil War as a spy. Her methods of avoiding capture and her steely determination and wit became legend among her antislavery supporters. The militant and activist tradition established by Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, John Brown and numerous other antislavery resistors was probably the most resilient and enduring component of antislavery thought. The tradition of resistance they established contributed immeasurably to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the early twentieth century, antilynching and protenant efforts in the South, and eventually to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the modern civil rights movement. Direct action was as important as ideology, if not more so. See also Garrisonians; Gradual Emancipation; Immediate Emancipation.

Immediate Emancipation

The demand for an immediate end to racial slavery was manifested widely beginning in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The movement that was established upon that basic precept was transatlantic in scope (Great Britain and the United States especially), and comprised agitators of all stripes—men and women, white and black. Indeed, because of the catholic nature of the activism on behalf of immediate emancipation of slaves, the history of that doctrine is best told as a story of the key figures who helped develop and spread it.

When Massachusetts native William Lloyd Garrison emerged from Baltimore Jail on June 5, 1830, the twenty-four-year-old journeyman newspaper editor—most recently as coeditor, with the Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lundy, of the Baltimore-based antislavery press, the Genius of Universal Emancipation—was ever more determined to combat American social iniquities: human enslavement and anti-black prejudices in particular. To be sure, Garrison was already an outspoken journalist before he served a nearly two-month prison term, as evidenced by his scathing comments in the Genius concerning the involvement of ship owner and fellow Bay stater Francis Todd in the domestic slave trade that initiated the criminal charges (libel) responsible for Garrison’s imprisonment. His incarceration, however, was not cause for his conversion to what he called the “immediate and complete emancipation of slaves,” to which he was committed prior to his
employment with the *Genius* in September 1829. Rather, Garrison's confinement cemented his adherence to that cause and increased the intensity and urgency of his abolitionist appeal. Nor is this a scholar's interpretation, for he indicated as much while behind prison bars. "A few white victims," proclaimed this self-styled martyr, "must be sacrificed to open the eyes of the nation, and to show the tyranny of our laws. I am willing to be persecuted, imprisoned and bound for advocating African rights, and I should deserve to be a slave myself, if I shrunk from that duty or danger." Garrison's liberation would mark the opening salvo of an unrelenting and radical campaign on behalf of African Americans (enslaved and free), as well as against slaveholders and racially prejudiced whites, best exemplified in his vehement and vituperative abolitionist weekly, *The Liberator*, inaugurated from its Boston publishing headquarters on January 1, 1831.

Although Garrison did not originate the doctrine of immediate emancipation, his espousal represented a fundamental shift from earlier exponents. "A belief in the slave's right to immediate freedom," according to historian David Brion Davis, "was at least implicit in much of the antislavery writing of the eighteenth century." Unlike his humanitarian predecessors (secular and sacred), Garrison's intellectual worldview was not defined or limited by the belief that societal change must occur slowly and indirectly, or the concomitant fear that sudden change would disrupt the social order and deter historical progress. That Garrison and his small cadre of abolitionist allies thought differently from the outset of their organized movement (first through the regional *New England Anti-Slavery Society*, founded in 1832, then, the national *American Anti-Slavery Society*, established in 1833), is indicated by the cumbersome phrase that they championed. Although immediatism eventually became the clarion call for antebellum American abolitionists, the principles epitomized by that watchword signified a clear and decisive break with past and contemporaneous antislavery alternatives. The activists who agitated for the immediate, uncompensated emancipation of slaves without expatriation rejected as a halfway measure the tenet of gradualism embodied in such late-eighteenth-century organizations as the *Pennsylvania Abolition Society* and the *New York Manumission Society*; utterly renounced as deceptively philanthropic if not sinister the program of voluntary emancipation of slaves by slaveholders and their subsequent colonization in West Africa offered by the *American Colonization Society* as a safe and gradual solution to the nation's growing black population—slave as well as free; and repudiated the idea of monetary compensation for slaveholders (which the parliamentary Emancipation Act of 1833 extended to British West Indian slave owners in return for the loss of their bondsmen, and the United States Constitution mandated in the Fifth Amendment), for to do otherwise was tantamount to a recognition of the rightfulness of property in humans.

Despite the significant role that Garrison played in the transformation of American abolitionism from a gradualist to an immediatist phase, he alone was not responsible for that change. That is, just as Garrison reshaped antislavery reform in the country, he himself was influenced by slavery's foes at home and abroad. Indeed, several years before Garrison adopted an
unyielding antislavery stance, the Leicester, England, Quaker abolitionist, Elizabeth Heyrick, unleashed an immediatist broadside that would reverberate across the Atlantic. In 1824, Heyrick anonymously authored the pamphlet, *Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation*, exposing for readers what she considered the misguided and derelict approach to the issue of British colonial slavery within Parliament and among leading antislavery advocates. In no uncertain terms, Heyrick condemned gradualism as “the grand marplot of human virtue and happiness;—the very masterpiece of satanic policy.” Calling the struggle against slavery a “holy war,” and dismissing planters’ claims to slave property as unnatural and irreligious, there was but one just and humane remedy for this pamphleteer—immediate emancipation. Such a course, argued Heyrick, would not only restore to slaves what was rightfully theirs (liberty), but would also remove that which slaveholders most feared: slave insurrections. To achieve this, she called upon not just the politically influential, but all Britons; she recommended not a popular petition drive, but a massive consumer boycott of slave-grown produce (West Indian sugar in particular).

Conscience revolt against slavery and the belief that all individuals were implicated in slavery’s perpetuation underlay Heyrick’s forceful polemic and animated the transatlantic movement for immediate emancipation. Among the most truculent expressions of the inhumanity of slavery and the absolute sinfulness of slaveholding, however, appeared several years before Heyrick’s work helped redefine British antislavery efforts. Published in 1816, *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* asserted many of the religious and moral arguments that American abolitionists deployed, beginning in the 1830s, to justify and propagandize a nationwide immediatist campaign. The English Presbyterian minister residing in western Virginia who authored that tract, George Bourne, also defended his antislavery positions in a style most characteristic of William Lloyd Garrison’s fiery writing. Aiming his rhetorical barbs at supposed Christian slaveholders, Bourne variably denounced them as thieves or man-stealers, and unequivocally as sinners; concerning slaveholding clergymen and church officials, Bourne adjudged them not simply as hypocrites, but as subverters of Holy Scripture. Yet, regardless of worldly status, “no slaveholder,” he declared, “is innocent . . . he is an unjust, cruel, criminal Kidnapper, who is guilty of the most atrocious transgression against God and Man.” The same applied to ministers who abetted slave ownership among the laity—indirectly by their refusal to censure it, and directly by their enlistment of the Bible to sanction it. Indeed, for Bourne, human enslavement “is so entirely corrupt that it admits of no cure, but by a total and immediate, abolition. For a gradual emancipation is a virtual recognition of the right, and establishes the rectitude of the practice.” “If it be just for one moment,” he concluded, “it is hallowed for ever; and if it be inequitable, not a day should it be tolerated.” That such uncompromising language greatly influenced Garrison is undeniable; the editor himself stated in the March 17, 1832, issue of *The Liberator* that, “Next to the Bible, we are indebted to this work for our views of the system of slavery.”

Heyrick’s and Bourne’s respective publications provided American abolitionists with inspiration and the argumentative tools to defend the
immediatist cause. Although their work was pivotal in the history of anti-slavery thought and in the emergence of a more aggressive phase of abolitionism, those pamphlets alone did not establish the *raison d'être* for the immediatist turn in antislavery reform. Rather, the crucial component mobilizing American abolitionists was rooted in broader socio-cultural developments, particularly the outburst of evangelical Christian activity during the first four decades of the nineteenth century. This period of religious ferment, often called the “Second Great Awakening,” resulted not simply in increased levels of church attendance, but most dramatically in the redirection of the spiritual lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans. Religious rebirth, however, had worldly repercussions, for the evangelical faith as dispensed by such preachers as upstate New Yorker Charles G. Finney, and New Englander Lyman Beecher, was directed inward (at one’s soul) and outward (at the individual body as well as the body politic).

Because of theological revisions, and in some instances outright rejection, of the tenets of Orthodox Calvinism, the Second Great Awakening’s emphasis on moral agency and accountability enabled individuals to achieve salvation, rather than receive it as a gift from God. The corollary to this was the demand that individuals immediately recognize and repent for their own sins. Once cleansed, the converted abandoned lives of selfishness, leading instead selfless existences dedicated to social usefulness and benevolence. Although rebirth occurred at religious revivals, evangelical Christianity received secular expression through voluntary associations—those institutions (for example, temperance, peace, and bible and tract societies) dedicated to moral and social uplift. Involvement in benevolent pursuits allowed the regenerate to wage personal warfare against sin among like-minded individuals collectively striving for the perfection of self and society and, according to a millennial desire, to usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth. To be sure, not all of the reborn entered the ranks of humanitarianism; and of the active minority who participated in interdenominational reform organizations, but a small segment gave witness to immediate emancipation.

Since immediatist abolitionists were originally so few, conversion to immediate emancipation (itself a religious experience replicating evangelical rebirth) marked one as a visible Saint. Yet, because many abolitionists derived their belief systems from evangelicalism, and based their reformist approaches and vocabularies on that model, the surrogate religion that immediatism became was similarly open to any who repented and renounced the sin of slavery. Recognition of slavery’s sinfulness, however, was hardly limited to slaveholders, for all Americans, according to these abolitionists, were guilty by association. That is, since the United States Constitution, as immediatists contended, recognized and protected slavery, the South’s “peculiar institution” was anything but that—it was indisputably a national institution and a national sin. It was such “change[s] of disposition,” to borrow the historian Anne C. Loveland’s apt phrase, that distanced antebellum abolitionists from their antislavery predecessors and, as it became apparent, their fellow countrymen. At the forefront of that shift was William Lloyd Garrison, immediatism’s messianic minister.
In the period from Garrison’s prison release in the summer of 1830 until *The Liberator* was launched on New Year’s Day, 1831, the unemployed editor lectured to reform-minded audiences throughout the North. Garrison hoped that his speaking tour would raise the necessary funds to support a new publication dedicated to his special brand of immediatism and simultaneously lay the necessary groundwork for the creation of a national abolitionist organization. To be sure, Garrison was not greeted with outright hostility, nor did he experience its antithesis. The inroads that were made, however, as well as the opposition that blocked abolitionism’s progress, ultimately convinced the young activist that his immediatist quest must recommence not in the nation’s capital—as he initially anticipated—but in Boston, Massachusetts.

Because Garrison espied among New Englanders “contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave owners themselves;” he resolved himself “to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of liberty.” Garrison further stressed in the first issue of *The Liberator* that the free states presented a most difficult challenge; it was there that a “greater revolution in public sentiment” was most needed. Yet, despite this rather grim portrayal, New England also possessed remarkable promise. After one lecture in Boston, Garrison continued his discussion with a few of the attendees late into the evening. “That night,” Unitarian minister Samuel J. May recalled years later, “my soul was baptized in his spirit, and ever since I have been a disciple and fellow-laborer of William Lloyd Garrison.”

For Garrison, immediatism was less a plan of action than a doctrine of common humanity and a revelation of inherent black equality (insights that prompted May to declare Garrison “a prophet”). Thus, such questions confronted by historians as whether immediatism meant gradual emancipation immediately begun or immediate emancipation gradually achieved are misdirected. Indeed, from Garrison’s viewpoint, time was of the essence; a timeline, however, was less essential. The demand for the immediate abolition of slavery was an urgent one because redeemed proponents contested for the souls of slaveholders and slaves on the one hand, and for the fate of the nation and its inhabitants more generally on the other. Most importantly—and pressingly—immediatists, ever aware of their countrymen’s hypocrisy of proudly proclaiming their freedom and boasting of their libertarian heritage while millions remained enslaved, feared for that moment when slaves revolted for what naturally belonged to them and against those who had oppressed them for so long.

Although Elizabeth Heyrick and George Bourne also warned readers of the ever-present danger of violent insurrection should slaves remain in bondage, the potential of widespread slave uprisings appeared increasingly imminent after a free black used-clothing dealer from Boston, David Walker, issued his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in particular, and very expressly, to those of the United States of America* in the fall of 1829. Although previously anonymous, if not nonexistent, to white Americans, Walker’s fervid protest (against slavery, antiblack biases, the country’s sham equalitarianism) quickly made his presence known to the majority
population, for with the forcefulness of a thunderclap, the author’s prediction and encouragement of racial warfare horrified slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike: “I tell you Americans!” proclaimed Walker, “that unless you speedily alter your course, you and your Country are gone!!!!” Garrison, who reviewed the work in the Genius and returned to its contents several times in The Liberator, took heed of such a prophecy and shared Walker’s notion of divine retribution for slavery’s continuance. Yet, unlike (and partially because of) Walker’s warlike solution, Garrison passionately and stridently struggled for the immediatist answer: the pacifistic means to avoid an apocalyptic end.

That Garrison never established a firm date (or any date for that matter) for the abolition of slavery was based on his refusal to recognize slavery’s legitimacy and his faith in immediatism’s regenerative capabilities. Although an emancipation schedule largely represented a compromise with sin, such a scheme, in his opinion, was more simply deemed unnecessary. For the evangelically inspired Garrison, immediatism was powerful and persuasive because it could and, as it was originally believed, would purify slaveholding consciences and cleanse racist souls. The emancipation of slaves and of white Americans, as well as national absolution, would immediately occur once the sin of slavery and the attendant evil of antiblack prejudices were recognized and duly repented. Perhaps this was an impractical and naïve approach to some in hindsight, but Garrison and many other abolitionists thought differently when they organized nationally in 1833. Their expectations were practical, and the evangelical Christian example only buttressed them. Yet, what immediatists considered logical was unthinkable, impossible, and fanatical to the vast majority of their contemporaries. See also First Great Awakening and Antislavery; Garrisonians; Gradual Emancipation.


Imperialism and Antislavery

During the first centuries of European expansion, slavery and the slave trade were central to the European colonial enterprise. The fifteenth-century Portuguese wanted gold more than slaves, but from the first, the
sale of slaves underwrote the voyages of exploration. The slave trade increased with the demand for slaves to work sugar plantations on Atlantic islands like Madeira and Sao Thomé and then in Brazil. Slaves were important wherever labor was in short supply, but particularly on islands that were unpopulated or where existing populations were decimated by European diseases. By the eighteenth century, the West Indies included the most productive colonies of a number of European powers, valuable in their own right, but crucial also to the North American colonies, which provided salted fish, grain, and timber just as the slave trade provided a market for Indian cotton.

The development of an antislavery movement in Great Britain, the United States, and continental Europe radically changed this. Within a century, all of these areas went from tacit acceptance of the trade in slaves to rejection of slavery and acceptance of a free trade ideology. For Britain, abolition introduced a new motif for foreign policy. Having denied itself the profits of the slave trade, it was determined to restrict the slaving operations of others. British diplomatic pressure induced other European powers to abolish the slave trade. The French abolition was effective only after the July revolution of 1830. Portuguese and Spanish ships continued the trade into the 1860s. In the late 1830s, Britain’s goal shifted to treaties that gave the Royal Navy the right to stop and search ships flying other flags. Through much of the century, British pressure was extended both to American societies like Cuba and Brazil that continued to use slave labor to produce sugar, to Muslim states in the Middle East, and to African states on both Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts. The British Navy enforced British policy, using its base in Sierra Leone to intercept slaving vessels. Freetown was the base for the International Prize Court, to which slave ships had to be taken.

The struggle against the slave trade also often provided an opening wedge for British imperial interests. British consular officials in many parts of the world played a major role both in collecting information and in pressing Britain’s trading partners to follow Britain’s lead. The struggle against the slave trade justified the appointment of consuls in the Bights of Benin and Biafra and in Zanzibar. These consuls then often used their influence to protect and encourage British commerce. The British consul to Zanzibar became the second most powerful figure in the Sultanate. Freed slaves settled in Sierra Leone became one of the best-educated groups in the British Empire and played a major role during the nineteenth century in extending British trade and in Christian missions and colonial administration.

Abolition often destroyed ongoing and productive economic systems. This was particularly striking with sugar. In the West Indies and in the Indian Ocean, emancipation led to a rapid decline in sugar production. Former slaves were not willing to work the long hours they were used to under slavery. Where free land was available, they often withdrew from plantation labor, devoting themselves to subsistence production, or at a minimum withdrew women from sugar production. On the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, the slave population was totally replaced within a decade by Indian indentured labor. Indian labor was also important in
expanding new areas of production in Trinidad, Guyana, and Natal. While West Indian sugar production dropped sharply, slave labor remained productive in Brazil and Cuba, though eventually, British pressure led to an end first of the slave trade to them, and then of slavery itself. Though abolition had a deleterious effect on key economic systems, the dynamism of the industrial revolution was such that it did not slow overall growth and may have contributed to growth in some areas. Even the sugar industry learned to adapt. The hunger for raw materials and commodities in the nineteenth century actually spurred rapid and continuous growth. It did, however, constrain the growth of empire in both Asia and Africa, though in the long run the inequities of power were such that European expansion continued on a new basis.

Questions of slavery were posed in almost all parts of the colonial world. India was not affected by the 1833 abolition law because it was owned by the East India Company and not by the British crown. Nevertheless, it had replaced the West Indies as Britain’s most important colony and was very much in the public eye. Pressure from abolitionists in Parliament led the East India Company to distance the state from slavery. Under an 1843 law, the courts could not recognize claims to slaves in any way. This was a formula later used in Africa. After Britain took control of India, an 1860 law abolished abolition, slave trading, and slave-holding. Slavery gradually disappeared, but other forms of bondage persisted, to which the British administration turned a blind eye. When the British moved into Burma and Malaya, they took action slowly and on a piecemeal basis. The last Malayan state to abolish slavery did so only in 1915, and it was abolished in eastern Burma only in 1926. In all of these areas, there was a concern neither to offend local slave-holding elites nor to disrupt slave-based systems of production.

The Dutch abolished slavery in their West Indian colonies in 1863, but they were reluctant to do so in their much more valuable colony in the East Indies. From 1860, slave-holding was abolished for Europeans and Chinese, but the abolition of slavery in other population groups began only in the mid-1870s and proceeded slowly for a generation. The French abolished slavery in Cambodia three times, but only in 1897 was abolition effective. Slave-raiding pirates were important along the China-Indochina coast and in Indonesia. Only toward the end of the nineteenth century did various European navies shut down their operations.

In the Middle East, the British pressured the Ottomans and Persians to end their slave trades. Militantly Muslim areas of the Arabian Peninsula like the Hijaz and the Persian Gulf states greatly resented these pressures. In some areas modernizing elites saw abolition as a way to reform their society. Others simply saw it as a way to parry British or French imperialism. In Tunisia, slavery was abolished in 1846 by the modernizing Ahmed Bey, though it did not disappear. By contrast, slavery was effectively abolished in the interior of Algeria only in 1906. In other areas where European sovereignty was established—Egypt in 1881, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine after World War I—abolition was implemented largely with swiftness and thoroughness. In Morocco, where the French faced substantial resistance and ruled through a protectorate, abolition progressed more slowly.
The constraints posed by indigenous slavery were most clear in Africa. Europe’s trade with Africa dropped sharply though an increase in the commodity trade had begun in the 1790s. The commodity trade, often called “legitimate trade,” absorbed some of the slaves who might earlier have been exported. They were used to produce the palm oil and peanuts that Europeans were buying. European colonies there at that time were few, but merchants and administrators were anxious to maintain and expand them. They recognized that an openly abolitionist policy would alienate African rulers who feared loss of their slaves. Their anxiety was increased by the fact that the colonies they held were small: two island towns on the Senegalese coast, Bathurst in the mouth of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, some forts along the Gold Coast, Libreville, and Lagos after 1861. The only real colonies in the first half of the nineteenth century were Angola and the Cape Colony. British abolition in 1833 and French in 1848 threatened their colonies. Colonial governors could not allow recognition of slavery in areas under direct European control, but they did their best to limit the applicability of those laws. Runaway slaves were often expelled and slaves entering town in the entourage of friendly chiefs were not allowed to seek asylum. The French would expel slaves as vagrants if a master made a claim, and generally the master was informed when the slave would be expelled.

The problem was compounded after the late 1870s as European powers tried to divide the continent. Europe’s representatives in Africa had small budgets and often went way beyond what they were authorized to do. Thus, they used armies made up largely of African soldiers recruited from among slaves and recently freed slaves. They were also allied to African rulers, who were often large slaveholders and were interested in combat largely to increase their slave holdings. As a result, European military leaders openly tolerated the taking and distribution of prisoners and the continuation of slavery.

With colonization, European powers moved quickly to stop slave-raiding and slave-trading, which seriously inhibited economic development. They were sometimes ambivalent about slavery. Many feared that slaves would stop working if freed. Others thought that freed slaves would provide a more mobile labor force. In many areas, the state applied the earlier policy in India and simply stopped recognizing slaves. In some areas, most notably French West Africa, this lead to a massive exodus. The British tended to be more cautious, not actually abolishing slavery in Nigeria or the Sudan until 1936. In some societies, slavery quickly disappeared. In others, there was a slow process of change in which slaves and masters renegotiated relationships. The obligations of slaves were steadily reduced and increased numbers migrated to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Indentured Labor and Emancipation

The abolition of slavery occurred at different times among the various countries in which it existed: 1838 in the British colonies, 1865 in the United States, 1888 in Brazil, and 1886 in Cuba. Some ex-slaves, reluctant to work on the old plantations, obtained land and established “free villages.” In the post-emancipation era, those blacks who opted to return to the estates demanded adequate compensation. The labor supply was often insufficient, however, to support post-emancipation economies.

An expanding world economy supported by European capitalism resulted in heavy demands for labor. Free labor migration was incapable of adequately satisfying that demand. There were other forms of unfree labor that continued after slavery’s abolition. These included bondage in India, pawnship in Africa, debt servitude in South-East Asia and peonage and indentured labor in the Americas. Some abolitionists viewed indentured African and Asian labor as a legal and suitable alternative to slavery.

On the Asian continent, China, India, Java, and Japan proved to be a viable source of unfree labor. There were minor differences in recruitment from countries such as China and India. For instance, persons were bought and sold in the Chinese “coolie” trade, while in India it was supposed to be a system of voluntary migration. A lapse in China’s monitoring of this trade resulted in the Chinese in Cuba being treated as slaves. Subsequently, in 1874, the government of China decided to ban the exportation of its indentured workers.

The indentured labor system was implemented in Natal in South Africa (1860s) and Caribbean colonies such as Trinidad (1845), British Guiana (1838), St. Lucia (1858), Grenada (1856), St. Vincent (1861), Jamaica (1845), and Cuba (1847). This was a necessary measure to ensure uninterrupted labor was provided for the expanding sugar production. The inducement of a free return passage after contractual duties had been satisfied proved to be a success in attracting workers. Despite the absence of the horrors of the Middle Passage and brutal physical punishments, the recruitment, exploitation, and oppression during the indentureship era has been aptly described by Hugh Tinker as a “new system of slavery.” This was particularly true in India where there were repeated instances of coercion, kidnapping, and trickery. Likewise, the French-controlled indentured system was a disguised slave trade until 1862 that continued to provide slaves from East Africa to Europe. The famine, poverty, and social misery in Asia served to encourage many indentured emigrants to endure hardships in their new homeland in the hope of a better life in the near future.

From 1846 to 1932, an estimated 28 million Indians departed India as indentured laborers to work in colonies requiring manual labor. Indians did not work solely on sugar plantations. In the Caribbean, indentured laborers were employed on the coffee, cocoa, and coconut estates. Furthermore,
laborers from India worked on rubber plantations in Malaya, tea plantations in Ceylon, gold mines in South Africa, and railways in North America.

From 1838 to 1917, under the indentureship system, approximately 420,000 Indians were imported to the British West Indies. The Colonial Office in Britain became concerned about the high mortality rates and intolerable working conditions of the initial migrants. This subsequently led to the imposition, in September 1838, of one-month verbal contracts and one-year written contracts. It also fostered the existence of a type of free wage labor system. However, the economic crisis of the late 1840s meant an irregular flow of labor would be unreliable and unprofitable. Thus, the planters persuaded the Colonial Office to adopt a different system in which labor would be guaranteed and sugar production would not be in jeopardy. This meant stricter terms of indenture, penalties for breach of labor contracts, and bounties for reindentures. Furthermore, the planters utilized colonial measures to fund immigration.

Undoubtedly, the abolition of slavery and emancipation of slaves placed considerable pressure on the global free-market, which was unable to meet the enormous demand for unskilled labor. Contract labor was able to partially satisfy this insatiable demand from capitalist enterprises and prevent a collapse of the economic system. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Indian Subcontinent and Antislavery.


Jerome Teelucksingh

Indian-Mestizo Captives, Liberation of

Twenty-nine years before the first African slaves were sold in Jamestown, Virginia, Spanish slave hunters had crossed the Rio Grande, near what is today Del Rio, Texas, in search of Indians to seize and enslave. Some of these offending Indians were kept as personal servants while several others were shipped back to Mexico City as gifts. The resulting servitude practices splintered and spread throughout expansive Southwestern regions. These servitude conventions were complex and may have evolved into distinct kin-based captivities. Yet, at times, these same captivities could also resemble the brutal regimen of black chattel slavery. Routinely, Indian servants were kept in New Mexican homesteads as domestic servants, farmhands, or as livestock shepherds. The trade was reciprocal in that both New Mexicans and Indians took captives from one another, but strong evidence suggests that New Mexicans were much more aggressive and successful in their raiding activities than their native counterparts. By 1860, human servitude in the Southwest had also entangled poverty-stricken mestizos and become a transnational institution deeply etched into borderland customs.

The U.S. Congress had been aware of servitude customs in New Mexico since the late 1840s. But it was not until the Reconstruction era after the American Civil War that Republicans had decisively begun to
challenge these practices. The strong similarities between black and Indian-Mestizo servitude were evident to officials in Washington, D.C. For example, in debate, Republicans continually spoke of the two institutions in comparative terms. Leading senators recognized that the New Mexican slave trade was “involuntary and compelled” because Indians were “captured and forcibly held in servitude.” Often times, the treatment and conditions of servants turned on the whims of their captors, who could trade the services of their captives at-will as they would a “mule or horse.” Invoking their power to create ameliorative legislation under Section 2 of the Thirteenth Amendment, Congress passed the 1867 Anti-Peonage Act to abolish New Mexico’s servitude customs. Congress believed these pernicious customs were incompatible with emerging American institutions like free labor and universal emancipation.

Early attempts to suppress the trade via ransoming strategies, military interdictions, and the court system proved only moderately successful. Perhaps the most comprehensive effort to abolish Indian-Mestizo servitude in New Mexico ran from 1867–1868. In these two years, the government relied principally on civilian interdiction teams and ad hoc field liberations as the foundation of their emancipation efforts. With statutes in hand, New Mexican officials cobbled together a modest enforcement program aimed at liberating enslaved Indians. In July 1867, Territorial Supreme Court Justices hired Sam Ellison and E.D. Thompson as the first federal peonage commissioners. While these commissioners had the statutory power to request troops to support their investigations, the army was not always reliable or available. Often, Ellison and Thompson worked in isolation amidst a New Mexican population that was suspicious and resentful of their mission. From time to time, these commissioners worked in tandem with federal marshals to execute arrest warrants on New Mexican slave owners. But it appears that Ellison and Thompson were successful in resolving only a few cases of Indian-Mestizo slaving. Federal records indicate that Commissioner Ellison claimed payment for emancipating twenty-one persons, and Commissioner Thompson was reimbursed for freeing only five persons.

Perhaps concerned about Ellison and Thompson’s lack of enthusiasm and progress, the New Mexican Supreme Court appointed William W. Griffin as the third peonage commissioner in March 1868. Pursuant to his appointment, Griffin aggressively investigated incidents of Indian-Mestizo enslavement in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Taos counties. But Griffin was continually hamstrung by the lack of logistical support. Nonetheless, he, along with the United States Marshal’s Office, immediately began to serve arrest warrants on several individuals suspected of holding Indian slaves. In July 1868, Commissioner Griffin and United States Attorney Stephen B. Elkins attempted to secure indictments against approximately 220 individuals bound over for trial in the federal district court in Santa Fe. The defendants represented a broad cross-section of prominent New Mexicans including Anglo women, Roman Catholic priests, land grant owners, former territorial legislators, and other political office holders. But the legal tide turned abruptly against Elkins and Griffin. After deliberating, the New Mexican grand jury found that the detention of Indians by these defendants was illegal under the 1866 Civil Rights Act. But the grand
jury also concluded that the defendants had not held these Indians “mali-
ciously.” Thus, the grand jury refused to issue indictments against them and all 220 defendants were released from federal custody.

Despite the use of civilian interdiction teams, Indian-Mestizo captivities continued to occur during and after Griffin’s work. It may be that the trade had expanded beyond Griffin’s means to combat it. Any serious plan to abolish the trade would have required interdicting the trafficking networks that channeled captives into custodial households. The fact that Indians continued to be taken into custodial households during Griffin’s investigations had ended suggests that Griffin’s work had had only a minimal effect.

The involvement of civil authorities in abolishing New Mexico’s slave trade had slowed dramatically by the late 1860s. Both Elkins and Griffin had left their posts as federal liberators to pursue more lucrative private ventures. The enslavement of Indians and Mestizos persisted throughout New Mexico. Recognizing that the trade persisted, Congress passed a bill authorizing Lieutenant General William T. Sherman to abolish the peonage of Navajo women and children. But transferring the responsibility for abrogating the slave trade to military authorities created only confusion. The military, unsure of its precise mission, restricted its duties to helping reunite Indian children with their parents rather then liberating captives still enslaved throughout New Mexico. Other than fleeting attempts, serious governmental efforts to emancipate Indian slaves and peon-servants might have ended as early as 1871. In the end, a lack of resources, pernicious servitude customs, and the selfish ambitions of federal officers collectively eroded the egalitarian resolve that might have earmarked their initial liberation work and eventuated the premature death of government efforts to abolish the Indian-Mestizo slave trade in New Mexico. See also Radical Republicans.


Robert F. Castro

Indian Subcontinent, Antislavery in

As in most parts of the ancient world, slavery seems to have been a recognized institution in ancient Indian Society. Indeed, forms of unfree labor—from domestic and agricultural chattel slavery, through debt peonage, to the
caste system—characterized the economic and social landscape of Hindu and Muslim India even before the imposition of the British “Raj.”

Chattel slavery in India, of course, never approached the brutal limits of its counterpart in the Caribbean; but contrary to some claims, the enslaved in India were treated as commodities that could be bought and sold. Enslaved people in India were used in a variety of occupations ranging from the agricultural and the menial to service as domestics in the palaces of rulers as well as in the establishments of aristocrats and priests. People were reduced to slavery in a variety of ways, including as a result of indebtedness.

Individual manumission was an on-going feature of Indian slavery, but the abolition of the institution itself was a gradual process. Actual legislation against slavery in India was a nineteenth-century phenomenon and was influenced by the 1833 British Abolition Act. The Act did not immediately apply to India. Section 64 excluded Ceylon (Sri Lanka), St Helena, and territories under the rule of the East India Company (British India). The implementation of the Act in British colonies in the Caribbean in 1834, therefore, caused the increase in the agitation for the ending of slavery in all sections of the empire, including India. The exclusionary section was later repealed and the abolition legislation (specifically section 1 of 5 & 6 Vic. C 101) was applied to officers of the East India Company who were forbidden to be involved in the purchase of enslaved people. This still did not abolish slavery immediately, however. It took subsequent state actions. In 1843, the government under the auspices of Governor General Lord Ellenborough passed Act V withdrawing official support for the system of slavery. Courts also discontinued the practice of enforcing property rights of enslavers. Actual practice lagged behind official decree, however. Not until increasing urbanization, political organization, and emigration and ideological changes took place did actual emancipation begin. The Indian Penal Code of 1860 made the enslavement of humans a criminal offense, thereby abolishing slavery—at least on paper—for slavery continued in parts of the subcontinent, and other systems of bondage such as the caste system (which imposed severe disabilities by virtue of “low” birth on low castes), were left firmly in place. See also Buddhism and Antislavery; Islam and Antislavery; Sri Lanka, Antislavery in.


Verene Shepherd

Inkle and Yarico, Tale of

Loosely based on a factual account in Richard Ligon’s A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes (London, 1657), the tale of Inkle and
Yarico became one of the best known and most compelling antislavery narratives of the eighteenth century. Its fame was due to its imaginative reworking by Richard Steele in an early issue (no. 11) of *The Spectator* (London, 1711), a periodical that was reprinted countless times in Great Britain and North America and translated into all of the major European languages. In Steele’s version of the story, Inkle is a young and ambitious English merchant, who goes ashore “on the main of America, in search of provisions.” His shipmates are unexpectedly set upon and slain by the natives, but he escapes into the forest, where he is befriended and hidden in a cave by Yarico, a beautiful “Indian maid.” The two become lovers, and he soon expresses his desire to bring her home to England with him, “where she would be clothed in such silks as his waistcoat was made of, and be carried in houses drawn by horses, without being exposed to wind or weather.” They escape when she signals a British vessel off the coast. Their first port of call en route to England is Barbados. Upon landing there, Inkle immediately sells Yarico into slavery, doubling the price tag when he learns that she is with child by him.

It has been estimated that, following Steele’s popularization of the tale, there were more than sixty different later retellings, taking the form of poetic epistles, dramas, mime, ballet, and sequels. Among the best known was the comic opera by George Colman the Younger, with music by Samuel Arnold (1787), which was widely performed in Great Britain and North America. In giving the piece a happy ending in which the main couple are reconciled and married, Colman responded to the sentimentalism of his age. The English abolitionist writer, John Thelwall, also wrote a related anti-slavery farce, *Incle [sic] and Yarico* in about 1787. During the eighteenth century, the tale of Inkle and Yarico was most in vogue in England, France, and Germany, though it continued to be told well into the nineteenth century across the Caribbean and in the United States, where it was eventually subsumed by the indigenous story of Pocahontas. For its era, the tale graphically illustrated the callousness and mercenary propulsion of the slave trade, as also the inherent nobility and human feelings of the enslaved. Charles James Fox, who later proposed the successful motion in Parliament to abolish slavery from Great Britain, poetically described Inkle as one who was willing to “barter love for gold,” and Yarico as a pathetic victim “to fierce barbarians vilely sold.” Significantly, in many renditions of the tale, Yarico is depicted as an African rather than a Native American. *See also* Literature and Abolition.


*Frank Felsenstein*
Internal Slave Trade and Antislavery

Following Congressional action to make the importation of slaves to the United States illegal in 1808, the movement of slaves within American borders became an increasingly controversial topic in politics and popular culture in the period leading up to the Civil War. The close of the slave trade coincided with the development of short-staple cotton agriculture in the Lower South and Southwest. This brought about a movement of slaves from the Upper South to such new states as Alabama and Mississippi, creating an important source of revenue for slaveholders and slave traders. It also brought about a massive movement of slaves that has been described as nothing short of a “Second Middle Passage” for slave families and communities. Estimates indicate that between the ratification of the Constitution and the Civil War, approximately one million slaves moved from the Upper to the Lower South, approximately two thirds of whom were sold through a network of traders and slave markets which made up America’s domestic slave trade. The trade in slaves made up roughly fifteen per cent of the South’s economy in the antebellum period, a figure that does not account for the many slaves smuggled into the country long after the 1808 importation ban was established.

Slaveholders claimed that the trade was an odious, if necessary, part of life in the Old South. Even proslavery polemicists characterized the slave traders as one of the most detestable groups in Southern society. But to antislavery activists, the domestic slave trade represented the most egregious aspect of the peculiar institution. With the publication of tracts such as Theodore Dwight Weld’s American Slavery as It Is (1839) and Harriet Jacob’s autobiography, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861), the antislavery movement focused its growing energies on the slave trade as representing all that was immoral and irreligious about American slaveholding. The constant threat of sale also provided a potent and pervasive theme in more sentimental antislavery literature. For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s popular Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) depicted the sale of slaves as an inherently immoral act that broke up black families, exposed slaves to the harshness of life in the Lower South, and disconnected children from their parents. Stowe’s effort to reveal how slavery destroyed familial life struck a chord with Northern readers at a time when Americans viewed the family as the bedrock of stability and a foundation of communal life. These works incurred the wrath of slaveholders, who fought to suppress the distribution of antislavery tracts in their states, and pushed for the congressional suppression of antislavery petitions, which came to be known as the “Gag Rule” (1836). Abolitionist pressure and slaveholder reactions created a politically charged environment that spurred a growing sense among Northerners in the 1850s that Southerners would stop at nothing to use the federal government to protect their property. As antislavery rhetoric won a wider audience within the Northern electorate, the internal slave trade became a central symbol of the slaveholder’s unrestrained power. See also Literature and Abolition.


Erik Mathisen

Ireland, Antislavery in

While African slavery was not extensive in Ireland, there was a black community of sailors, servants, and entertainers—both slave and free—brought to Ireland by sea captains, soldiers, and businessmen returning from parts of the British Empire that had slavery. Advertisements of slaves for sale or for runaways occasionally appeared in Irish newspapers. There were unsuccessful efforts to establish slave trading companies in Limerick (1784) and Belfast (1786) and a somewhat more successful, but ultimately failed, effort in Dublin. The Belfast shipbuilding industry was involved in building and outfitting ships for the slave trade and Irish merchants provided provisions for slave plantations in the Caribbean and Southern United States. In addition, the Irish sugar refining industry was tied into the slave system. As part of the British Imperial economy, Ireland could not avoid involvement in slavery and the slave trade and it would be a mistake to think of Ireland as completely insulated from the effects of African slavery. The Irish party in Parliament at Westminster, led by Daniel O'Connell, largely supported the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies.

There were organized antislavery groups in Ireland, and advocates of a wide variety of other reforms also supported the abolition of slavery. Among the earliest antislavery organizations were the Hibernian Negro's Friend Society and the Dublin Negro's Friend Society established in 1829. A slightly later and more active organization was the Hibernian Antislavery Society founded in 1837 by James Haughton (1795–1873), Richard Allen (1803–1886) of Dublin, and Richard Davis Webb (1805–1872). Allen, a merchant, also founded the Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette and used its pages, as well as numerous letters to the editors of other publications, to espouse a range of reform issues, antislavery being chief among them. Haughton, a corn merchant, was a correspondent for Garrison's The Liberator and also contributed antislavery and other reform essays to numerous Irish publications on a regular basis. Webb was a printer and publisher and was the most visible and active of the Irish antislavery advocates. He was a close friend of American abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison, and served as the connection between American and Irish antislavery efforts. He was also a friend of Daniel O'Connell, "the Liberator" and great political figure in Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century, and Father Theobald Mathew, best known as the leading temperance reformer in Ireland, but also an opponent of slavery and advocate of a wide range of reforms.

Quakers, or those of Quaker origins, were by far the largest group among Irish antislavery advocates despite their small number among the
total population. In addition to Allen, Haughton, and Webb, William Bell (1797–1871), a Belfast Quaker, tried on numerous occasions to rescue slaves who were seamen on ships in Belfast and published *The Irish Friend* from 1837 to 1842 before emigrating to the United States, where he continued his antislavery activities. Hannah Wakefield (1799–1847) and Henry Wigham (1822–1897) were other Quakers who were especially active in antislavery efforts.

While many in Ireland argued that Ireland’s attention should be focused on its own urgent concerns, which in the early nineteenth century included the repeal of the Act of Union and the securing of full civil and political rights for the Catholic majority, the great Irish Catholic leader Daniel O’Connell spoke forcefully and consistently against slavery and tried to gain support for antislavery efforts from the Irish in the United States. In 1841, a black American abolitionist, Charles Lenox Remond, visited Ireland and spoke highly of Ireland’s potential contribution to the antislavery movement. That same year, O’Connell was the first signer, with Father Mathew, of the “Great Irish Address,” a call for Irish Americans to oppose slavery and which was ultimately signed by 60,000 people organized by the Hibernian Antislavery Society. Remond carried the address to the United States and presented it at an antislavery meeting at Boston’s Faneuil Hall later in 1840.

O’Connell’s repeated appeals to the Irish in America to join the antislavery movement were rebuffed by Irish American leaders, most notably Archbishop John Hughes of New York. John Mitchel and his Young Ireland group also opposed O’Connell’s emphasis on antislavery. Despite his failure to develop support among Irish Americans for the antislavery movement, O’Connell was widely hailed and admired by American abolitionists for his forceful and consistent opposition to slavery, both through correspondence, public speeches, and in Parliament. Wendell Philips delivered a major address at the O’Connell Celebration in Boston in 1870, praising O’Connell for his broad, inclusive vision of human liberation.

In 1845, Frederick Douglass toured the British Isles, including four months in Ireland, and Richard Davis Webb brought out an Irish edition of Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. In addition to speaking against slavery, Douglass also advocated temperance reform while in Ireland. Moreover, he linked the Irish struggle for liberation with antislavery efforts, suggesting that highlighting the injustice of oppression in both cases would hasten the time of liberation.

Irish opponents of slavery tended to support William Lloyd Garrison and his allies in the internal disputes that afflicted the movement. With the Garrisonians, the Irish delegates to the London conference, for example, supported the seating of women delegates. Richard Davis Webb served as a point of contact and kept the Irish antislavery community apprized of developments in the United States. After the defeat of efforts to increase “coolie” immigration into the British Caribbean colonies and the elimination of slavery in the United States, those involved in antislavery activities in Ireland shifted their focus to the other reforms they had advocated.

**Further Readings:** Ferreira, Patricia. “All But ‘A Black Skin and Wooly Hair’: Frederick Douglass’s Witness of the Irish Famine,” *American Studies International*
Islam and Antislavery

As religions that claim descent from Abraham and from Judaism, Islam and Christianity have a great deal in common. Central to both is the idea of a universal God, whose law is valid for everyone and who is concerned with all of humanity. For most of their history, they expressed their concern for slaves in different ways. Islam is more explicit than Christianity in delimiting who can be enslaved and how those slaves should be treated. Mohammed commanded the submission of all to God. Islam means submission, but all believers were and are equal in the eyes of God. Islamic jurisprudence was based on the idea that the natural condition of the person was freedom. It is this presumption that makes the act of submission to God meaningful. One submits of one’s own free will, but to be free was often defined as not being a slave. Slavery existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. The Prophet Mohammed’s response to slavery was to accept it, but to regulate it and to encourage manumission.

The first principle was that slaves should be treated well. The Qur’an mentions slaves along with parents, kinsmen, and orphans as beings the believer should treat with kindness. The way a man treated his slaves was a measure of his piety. He was enjoined to feed and clothe them, to give them a Muslim education, to grant them the right to marry, and to enjoy the protection of Muslim law. The Master had to provide the slave with adequate medical treatment and to take care of the slave in old age. He was forbidden to overwork or mutilate the slave and could be forced to fulfill his obligations. If he did not do so, he could be forced by the cadi (magistrate) to sell or to liberate the slave.

The freeing of slaves was a pious act that God would reward. It was an appropriate use of alms. It was also explicitly mandated as an act of expiation for certain crimes. The notion that freeing a slave would help the liberator enter paradise led to a tradition of deathbed manumissions. A large percentage of slaves, perhaps a majority in the Arab world, were women held as concubines. A man could have sexual relations with a female slave, but not if he had agreed to her marriage to someone else. He could not force his female slaves to become prostitutes or to have sexual relations with another man. Islam insisted that all of the children born of a free man and a slave woman inherited their father’s status and had equal rights of...
inheritance with the children of wives. The concubine who gave birth to her master’s child became an umm al-Walad. She could not be sold and was freed upon the death of her master.

Most important, Islam tightly restricted the process of enslavement. There were only two approved sources of slaves, birth and capture in jihad. People could not sell themselves or their children into slavery and could not be enslaved for debt. There were, however, limits to what could be considered a jihad. Jihad means struggle. The jihad of the sword could be conducted only after two prerequisites had been met. First, the would-be jihadist had to conduct the “jihad of the word,” in which he asked the potential object to submit. Second, he had to purify himself and make sure that he was not making war for selfish or greedy reasons. Muslims often pray before combat to purify themselves. Under no conditions were believers or those who had submitted to believers to be enslaved. This was clearly articulated by the sixteenth century Timbuctou jurist, Ahmad Baba (1556–1627). When Moroccan troops crossed the Sahara desert in 1591 and defeated the Songhay Empire, they deported to Morocco much of the Timbuctou clerical elite, including Ahmad Baba. Upon his return to Timbuctou, Ahmad Baba wrote a legal treatise, the Miraj, in which he argued that under all conditions it was illegal to enslave other Muslims or dhimmis, people who had submitted to the authority of a Muslim state. He also insisted that before a slave could be sold, the seller had to prove that the slave was legitimately enslaved. Finally, he attacked the idea that the curse of Ham consigned dark-skinned peoples to the service of white people. In writing this, Ahmad Baba was calling into question much of the slaving that was feeding the trans-Saharan slave trade.

Like Christians, Muslims often did not live up to the principles of their religion. In conflicts between Sufi and Sunni Muslims in Asia, captives were often taken. In Africa, these teachings were widely ignored. In a simplification of Muslim law, many slavers reasoned that if the Qu’ran prohibited the enslavement of Muslims, it legitimated the enslavement of others. In fact, even Muslims were not always safe, and the treatment of slaves, particularly those being traded, usually did not conform to Muslim principles. The prohibition on the enslaving of Muslims had one negative effect: it forced them to seek slaves outside of the Muslim world. Those they sought were primarily female and desired for the harems of the wealthy and powerful. They came from the area around the Black Sea, from central Asia and from Africa. This demand and a parallel demand for eunuchs and slave soldiers fueled a millennium-long trade from these areas. The closing off of other sources meant that those slaves were coming mostly from Africa in the nineteenth century.

Some scholars have asked why Islam did not develop an abolition movement. Two answers can be given. One is that the humane regulations in Islam meant that most Muslims saw the institution as moral and acceptable. This reality was striking in Turkey. Late-nineteenth-century modernizers wanted to reform Turkish society to make it more able to defend itself against European demands. Many of them were sympathetic to an end of the exploitation of slave labor, but slavery also reproduced a good part of
the Ottoman elite. This was true both of female slaves who produced much of the elite, but also of male slaves who were taken into the houses of powerful pashas, educated, and trained for bureaucratic service. It was very difficult for Ottoman reformers to be convinced that an institution that produced much of their elite was immoral.

Nevertheless, for these reformers and others alike, there was a need for reform. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Muslims in the Middle East, on the Indian subcontinent, in Southeast Asia, and in Africa were being threatened by Europe. The Ottoman Empire was the sick man of Europe, forced to yield to expanding European powers and nationalist movements. The British in India and the Dutch in Indonesia were expanding their control of Muslim societies. In addition, Britain was putting pressure on different Muslim states to end the slave trade. The abolition of slavery in the British empire in 1833 and subsequent antislavery measures in India made clear Britain’s long-term objectives. In Algeria, French occupation in 1830 meant an end to the slave trade in the coastal zone.

In 1854, under British pressure, Egypt banned public slave markets. In 1847, the Ottomans abolished the import of slaves from Circassia and Georgia in the Caucasus and from Africa in 1857. The slave trade did not end, but slaves were moved in ways less visible to Europeans. In 1869, however, the Khedive Ismail responded to reports of devastation caused by the slave trade in the southern Sudan, nominally under his rule, by appointing the British explorer, Sir Samuel Baker, to lead an expedition to the area and destroy the slavers. Baker was succeeded as Governor of Equatoria by Colonel Charles Gordon. In 1877, he became governor-general of the whole Sudan. These appointments reflected Khedive Ismail’s desire for British support and investment, and perhaps a genuine commitment to suppression of the trade. Ismail was only nervous about the attitudes of Egyptian Muslims. The efforts to eliminate the slavers were not successful, but Egypt did sign a convention with Britain in 1877 in which Egypt promised to stop the import, export, and transit of African slaves. The most powerful of the Sudanese slavers, Zubayr Pasha, was called to Cairo in 1874 and arrested. The trade in white slaves, mostly Circassian women, was banned in 1883 and sales of private slaves were banned in 1884. Gordon had some transient success, but that success helped fuel the Mahdist rising in which he was killed in 1885.

The slavery issue was made more intense by increased commercial prosperity in the Middle East, which increased the import of slaves during the very period when rulers were trying to limit them. Between 1840 and 1860 slave imports tripled. In 1880, the Ottomans banned the export and import of black slaves and promised to enforce the 1857 edict. In Zanzibar, also anxious for Britain’s good will, the Sultan banned the import of slaves into his Arab domains in 1845. In 1876, Zanzibar finally prohibited slave caravans to enter, equip, or travel through his domains. The Shah of Persia had in 1848 reluctantly banned the trade by sea of African slaves and three years later granted the British the right to stop and search Persian vessels.

Those who yielded to British pressure did so out of fear of the British military or desire for British investment, but there were very different
responses from the Islamic community. One was outright opposition. There seems, however, to have been relatively little of this. Certainly, the appointment of Christian representatives in the Sudan was a major factor in the Mahdist rising, and the slavers were a major part of the coalition that rallied behind the Mahdi. Ironically, the Mahdi's victory isolated the Sudan and made the export of slaves very difficult. The most vigorous protests were in the Hijaz, the location of the Holy Places of Islam. The pilgrimage to Mecca was accompanied by a slave trade that provided slaves for the date groves of Hijaz, the coffee plantations of Yemen, and the pearl fisheries of the Persian Gulf, as well as a trade that dispersed all over the Muslim world. Resentment of Ottoman restrictions on the slave trade was probably the cause of a revolt of the Hijaz in the 1850s. When a British consul was appointed in 1874 and accorded the right to demand manumission for slaves taking refuge at the consulate, that prerogative became an issue. Freed slaves often had to be smuggled out of the city. The defense of slavery was undoubtedly a factor in resistance to colonial rulers, though the most important revolt in early colonial Nigeria, the Satiru revolt of 1906, was a revolt of slaves, not slaveholders.

A second response was very different. Reform-minded Muslims increasingly became convinced that slavery and the slave trade were hindrances to economic growth. Many of them searched Islamic thought to find sanctions for reform. Al-Nasiri, a Moroccan historian wrote, “The basic human condition is freedom and the absence of any reason for being enslaved. Those who put the claim for non-freedom are making a claim in opposition to basic principle.” The first ruler to seek real reform was Ahmed Bey of Tunis. At a time when other rulers were coping with British pressure to end the trade, Ahmed Bey of Tunis decided that the issue was slavery itself. Recognizing that he needed support from the ulema (wise men), he asked his personal secretary, Ahmed Abi Diyaf to prepare a justification of his act. Abi Diyaf made two basic arguments. First, echoing Ahmed Baba, he argued that many of those exported to Tunis were either Muslims or had submitted to Muslim rulers and were therefore not enslavable. Second, using a case that came before Tunisian courts, he argued that both in the desert crossing and within Tunisian households, slaves were harshly, sometimes brutally treated. His argument from that was that slaves could not be guaranteed the protections accorded by Muslim law and that thus slavery should be abolished. Similar arguments sometimes came from the ulema. In 1847, when the Shah of Iran was refusing British requests to abolish the slave trade, six distinguished clerics were asked what they thought of trading in slaves. All six were negative. One argued that “selling male and female slaves is an abomination ... the worst of men is the seller of men.” Another wrote that “this trade according to the law is one of baseness, to discontinue it is best.”

As colonial regimes became more secure in their control of their Muslim colonies, many of them moved to abolish slavery. Many Muslim states also did so. Soon after the Young Turks seized power in 1908, they converted the Sultan into a constitutional monarch, dispersed the imperial harem, and once again, abolished slaving and slave-trading. When Kemal Ataturk took
power after World War I, the abolition of slavery was a key part of his reform program. Similarly, in Iran, the regime has moved hesitantly toward abolition during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1928, Riza Shah Pahlavi submitted a bill to the legislature providing for total and immediate emancipation of all slaves.

The stronghold of conservative values remained the Arabian Peninsula. By 1960, the dominant power on the Peninsula, Saudi Arabia was being pushed by western powers, by Aramco, the oil company that provided the kingdom most of its wealth, and by the Egypt of Gamal Abdul Nasser to move against slavery. In 1962, Crown Prince Feisal took over the government and defused the issue by proclaiming the abolition of slavery. Like Ahmad Bey, he explained his action in terms of Islamic law: “It is known that Moslem Shari’a urges the manumission of slaves. It is also known that slavery in modern times lacks many of the stipulations imposed by Islam for the justification of slavery.” In the same year, Yemen abolished slavery. Oman followed in 1970. With Mauritanian abolition in 1980, slavery was no longer recognized in any Muslim country. Furthermore, there has not been any movement to restore slavery, though in the 1990s, during the civil war between North and South in the Sudan, the national government authorized local militias to raid regions supporting the Southern guerillas and take prisoners. See also East African Slave Trade; Indian Subcontinent, Antislavery in.


Martin A. Klein
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John W. Blassingame
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James, C.L.R. (1901—1989)

Cyril Lionel Robert James, commonly known as C.L.R. James or Nello, was a writer, political theorist and activist, journalist, and avid cricket spectator. James is best known for his book, The Black Jacobins (1938). In this book, James wrote a comprehensive historical account of the Saint Domingue Revolt, the most successful black revolt in the era of the transatlantic slave trade that liberated enslaved Africans and simultaneously gave birth to the first modern black nation in the Americas, Haiti. James was enthralled with world revolutions and sought to understand why the masses revolted against a political system. Although the book was written early in his career, he had already made contact with a number of Russian revolutionaries and various communist and socialist parties and organizations in England. These people and groups more than likely influenced his writings on the Haitian Revolution.

The Black Jacobins was a symbolic title, because James believed that the Jacobins of the French Revolution and the Black Jacobins of the Haitian Revolution shared universal political goals. Moreover, James was visionary for his comparative approach of the Haitian and French revolutions and his somewhat Atlantic approach in writing history. Like James's Russian colleagues, as well as the peasants of the French Revolution, James showed that the enslaved Africans, free blacks, and mulattos living in Saint Domingue suffered social injustices under the penal slave system. Furthermore, in this book, James illustrated the complex nature of the three-tier color stratification system found in Saint Domingue and prevalent in slave societies in the Caribbean. James revealed the disgruntled attitudes of mulatto men who formed temporary and, in some cases, permanent alliances with the former enslaved and free blacks, bringing down the French planter and ruling class in Saint Domingue. Toussaint L’Ouverture, a former enslaved African, was the hero and the protagonist of the book. James believed that he was largely responsible for the success of the revolution and achieving Haiti’s sovereignty.

James was born on January 4, 1901 in Port of Spain, Trinidad. James’s mother shaped his early education and his passion to write by introducing
him to various English novels and literary works. His father was a schoolmaster. In 1910, James received a scholarship to attend the prestigious Queen’s Royal College in Trinidad. He graduated in 1918 and was hired by the College as a teacher. During his years of service, he met and taught the young Eric Williams. James saw himself as a professional writer, and in 1932, he immigrated to England to pursue his career.

In England, James joined several Marxist organizations and took a special interest in world revolutions. In 1933, he traveled to France to carry out research on the Haitian and French revolutions. When he returned to England, James wrote the play *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, performed for London audiences in 1936. The play starred Paul Robeson, a prominent black actor and political activist. In 1938 James left England for the United States, where he familiarized himself with Marxist circles and writers. He continued to publish and collaborated with Leon Trotsky and Raya Dunayevskaya on various Marxist and socialist projects. He was deported from the United States in 1953, but was later granted entry status in 1968. James lectured at several universities and maintained employment as a faculty member in at Federal City College in Washington, D.C. and its successor, University of the District of Columbia, from 1968 through 1981.

James was admired by his students, readers, and colleagues and tends to be remembered more for his lifetime fight against colonialism, capitalism, and racism. However, James made an early and significant contribution to the historiography of antislavery, abolition, and emancipation in his works, *The Black Jacobins* and *A History of Negro Revolt* (1938). In 1987, James was awarded Trinidad and Tobago’s highest honor, the Trinity Cross. James died in his Brixton apartment on May 31, 1989 and was buried in his native country of Trinidad. See also Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


*Jennifer J. Pierce*

**Jay, John (1745–1829)**

Jay served as a delegate to the New York constitutional convention in 1777. He planned on introducing an amendment calling for the gradual emancipation of slavery, but was called away before he could do so by the death of his mother. Jay’s ally, Governor Morris introduced a similar amendment, which failed. Even when in Europe as minister to Spain, he kept up an interest in the issue. In 1780, he recommended to
longtime friend and New York legislator Egbert Benson that he propose an emancipation bill. On February 10, 1785, Jay and some friends founded the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves. Jay served as the first president and remained a member until his appointment as chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1789. In 1795, Jay became governor of New York. He planned to propose emancipation in his first message, but decided instead to work behind the scenes to introduce it to the legislature. The bill failed the first time, but was reintroduced each session until its ultimate passage in 1799. The bill passed in April 1799 stated that all children born of slave parents after July 4, 1799 would be free. The bill also prohibited the export of slaves. See also Jay, William.


Robert W. Smith

Jay, William (1789–1858)

William Jay, a prominent abolitionist, was born June 16, 1789, in New York City, the second son of John Jay and Sarah Van Brugh Livingston Jay. As a young man he studied with the Reverend Thomas Ellison, and later attended Yale where he graduated in 1808. Jay studied law with John B. Henry of Albany, but could not continue practicing law because of difficulty with his eyesight. He retired to his father’s home in Bedford, New York to recuperate, and married Augusta McVicker in 1812. In 1818, Jay was appointed an associate justice to the Westchester County bench by Governor Daniel Tompkins. He remained on the bench until he was replaced in 1843 at the urging of proslavery Democrats.

While living at his father’s home, Jay became increasingly involved in local reform movements. He was instrumental in the formation of the American Bible Society. He provided founder Elias Boudinot with the draft of a constitution that helped structure the society, which was formed in 1816. Jay continued to support that organization, even against criticism by many high officials in the Episcopal Church. Of particular significance was his ongoing debate with Bishop John Henry Hobart, who was critical of the society’s interdenominational activities. Jay’s reformist writings at this time were primarily concerned with temperance and respecting the Sabbath. But he also wrote Essay on Duelling (1830), decrying the practice as barbaric. The essay was awarded a medal by the Anti-Dueling Society of Savannah.

During this period, 1815–1835, Jay also began to display the deep concerns over slavery that would ultimately draw him into the abolitionist circle. In his private correspondence he was harshly critical of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and expressed his wish that politicians behave morally to stop the westward expansion of slavery. In 1826, Jay was informed that a Westchester County free man, Gilbert Horton, had been arrested in Washington, D.C., and was being held as a runaway slave. Jay called a town meeting and requested the intervention of Governor DeWitt Clinton. It was largely through Jay’s efforts that Horton was released. But
the meeting also generated a petition calling for the abolition of slavery in
the nation’s capital. With the death of John Jay in 1829, William spent the
next four years organizing his father’s writings and letters into his book *The
Life of John Jay* (1833). That same year the New York chapter of the *American
Anti-Slavery Society* was formed. Jay was an early contributor to the
society’s antislavery newspaper, the *Emancipator*, and he offered legal
advice to the fledgling organization, but he did not yet become actively
involved in the society itself.

The years 1834–1835 witnessed increasing violence and criticism
directed against abolitionists, and Jay was drawn more fully into the cause
in response. In 1835, he answered criticism of the American Anti-Slavery
Society by comparing its goals to those of the *American Colonization Soci-
exty*. The work, *Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American
Colonization and American Anti-Slavery Societies*, sold well and was
reprinted in London. His next work, *A View of the Action of the Federal
Government in Behalf of Slavery* (1839), was carefully documented and
revealed abolitionist fears that the federal government was actively promot-
ing slavery and its expansion. This work was also well received and
debated, and saw many reprints. As a jurist, Jay also reviewed Daniel Web-
ster’s invocation of comity in the *Creole Affair*, and published a work criti-
cal of Webster in *The Creole Case and Mr. Webster’s Despatch* (1842).

A committed pacifist, Jay promoted the cause of world peace and served
as president of the American Peace Society from 1848–1858. He saw a dis-
tinct linkage between slavery and war, and worked assiduously to eliminate
both. In 1842, he published *War and Peace*, promoting the idea of stipu-
lated arbitration as a method for peacefully resolving differences between
nations. The work was well hailed by peace advocates, and in England Jay’s
plan was promoted on the floor of Parliament by Richard Cobden. Jay con-
tinued to promote peace when he published *Causes and Consequences of
the Mexican War* (1849). This work was harshly critical of the United States
government, and reveals none of the buoyant optimism of *War and Peace*.

In his later years, Jay continued the battle against slavery and his letters
on such issues as *Henry Clay’s Compromise of 1850* provide valuable
insight into abolitionist thinking. He also became increasingly critical of the
Episcopal Church for its failure to properly address the issue of slavery as a
sin. In 1853, a compilation of Jay’s antislavery works, *Miscellaneous Writ-
ings on Slavery*, was published. That same year he addressed the American
Peace Society and praised Richard Cobden for his promotion of world
peace, while never mentioning his own contribution. Although in failing
health, Jay did travel to England in 1856. He died in October 1858 at sev-
enty years old. In eulogizing Jay, Frederick Douglass proclaimed Jay the fa-
thor of immediatism, and a man who had helped create the foundation of
the modern abolitionist movement.

Owing to health concerns, Jay was not one of the more visible abolition-
ist figures. He often remained at the Jay family home in Bedford, and con-
tributed to the cause through his writings. Like many other members of the
New York abolitionist circle, Jay was conservative and convinced that social
problems were best remedied by recourse to the American institutions of
law, politics, and the church. He never would have removed himself from participation in these institutions as many other members of the antislavery movement did. If these institutions were corrupt, as many asserted, then they needed to be changed, and the only way to change them was through active engagement. Because of these beliefs, Jay frequently clashed with other, more radical elements of the abolitionist movement. However, there were limits to Jay’s engagement. In 1842, Jay was approached to replace James Birney as the presidential candidate for the Liberty Party, an offer Jay ultimately declined. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Immediate Emancipation; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Stephen P. Budney

Jefferson, Thomas and Antislavery

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) is at the center of the most insurmountable paradox in American history. Prior to serving as the nation’s first secretary of state, second vice president, and third president, Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, in which he insisted, “All men are created equal.” Nevertheless, before he died on July 4, 1826, Jefferson owned hundreds of slaves, many of whom were sold to settle his notoriously unruly debts, but only eight of them (all members of the Hemings family) were ever freed (three during his lifetime and five at his death). Sally Hemings was Jefferson’s slave, as well as half sister-in-law and, as a 1998 DNA analysis proved, mother to at least one of his children.

Born the son of a rich Virginia planter and educated with many of the nation’s future leaders at William and Mary College, Jefferson inherited several hundred acres and a keen understanding of the value of slaves. He acquired even more land, the now famous Monticello, through marriage to Martha Wayles Skelton, who died in 1782 shortly before turning thirty-four. Martha Jefferson gave birth to six children, only two of whom reached adulthood. Jefferson never knew life without slaves.

Yet Jefferson’s view of slavery has long been contested. In the infamous Dred Scott v. Sandford majority opinion of 1857, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney confidently observed: “[The Declaration] would seem to embrace the whole human family.... But... the enslaved African race were not intended to be included... the conduct of the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would have been utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted.... They perfectly understood the meaning of the language they used and how it would be understood by others; and they knew that it would not in any part of the civilized world be supposed to embrace the negro race” (60 U.S. 393 [1856]). Before becoming president, Abraham Lincoln, in his 1858 U.S. Senate campaign debate with Stephen Douglas, responded to Taney and the Dred Scott decision: “While Mr. Jefferson was the owner of slaves, as undoubtedly he was, in speaking upon this very subject, he used the strong
language that "he trembled for his country when he remembered that God was just" (Fifth Debate, October 7, 1858). Did Jefferson never intend that "all men" included blacks, as Taney suggested, or was he a reluctant and remorseful slaveowner, as Lincoln suggested?

Among historians, Jefferson's supporters insist that he often wrote or spoke against slavery and even tried, in Congress in 1784, to eliminate the slave trade. Jefferson detractors claim that his antislavery assertions were pitifully few and only appeared in private letters. While some biographers portray Jefferson as a frustrated but tireless proto-abolitionist, still others proclaim he did almost nothing to end slavery. As it turns out, determining Jefferson's stance on slavery is anything but simple.

Jefferson recognized the detestable character of slavery, and he seems to have been at least theoretically bothered by it. His most significant repudiation of the institution can be found in Notes on the State of Virginia, written and rewritten by Jefferson in the 1780s. In Query XVIII of that collection, Jefferson observed, "There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us." Of Jefferson's concerns regarding slavery, none are more quoted than this line from an 1820 letter to a friend: "We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is on one scale, and self-preservation is on the other."

Although Jefferson often advocated freedom for slaves, there is little indication he made much effort toward emancipation. Furthermore, any effort he did make was predicated upon the complete removal of freedmen from the United States. More remarkable than anything he wrote in Notes on the State of Virginia rejecting slavery are his reflections relating to the inferiority of blacks. The pages of Notes are filled with pseudo-scientific descriptions and observations of blacks like the following:

- "the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own specie;"
- "they secrete less by the kidnies . . . which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour"
- "seem to require less sleep [and] . . . will be induced by the slightest amusements"
- "brave, and more adventurous. But . . . from a want of forethought"
- "they are more ardent after their female"
- "their griefs are transient"
- "An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep . . . in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior."

Some historians insist that Jefferson was a product of his age; his racism, like his spelling, was indicative of the times. Opposition to slavery, they say, was socially and legally impossible for a wealthy Virginian. Still other historians disagree, insisting that some among Jefferson's contemporaries did far more to contain or even end slavery.

In 1782, the Virginia legislature passed a law allowing manumitted slaves to remain in the state. That law stood for twenty-three years, during which
time George Washington freed all his slaves in his will. Unlike Jefferson, Washington also refused to break up slave families through sale, “as you would do cattle at a market.” Another fellow Virginian and member of the state council, Robert Carter III, not only freed over 500 slaves, he also provided them with land to farm. Edward Coles, a neighbor of Jefferson, wrote the ex-president in 1814, seeking endorsement for a plan he had to free all his slaves. Jefferson dissuaded Coles, contending slaves were “incapable as children of taking care of themselves” and that emancipated slaves were “pests in society by their idleness.” Ignoring Jefferson’s advice, Coles moved to Illinois where he became the state’s second governor and the man most responsible for keeping Illinois a free state prior to the Civil War. As for Jefferson, he remained a slaveholder all his life, and his antislavery seems to have been little more than rhetoric.


R. Owen Williams

Jerry Rescue (1851)

One of the most important episodes in the history of antebellum antislavery, the Jerry Rescue involved the forcible rescue by Northern abolitionists of a captured fugitive who was being returned to slavery in the South. The incident occurred on October 1, 1851, in Syracuse, New York, which had become by that time a hotbed of abolitionism and reform activity. The rescue constituted deliberate and open defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law that had been passed by the U.S. Congress as part of the Compromise of 1850. Signaling an increasing radicalism and aggressiveness in the abolitionist movement, the Jerry Rescue marked the beginning of a shift away from the moral persuasion and legal reform tactics of the 1840s, advocated most notably by the Garrisonians, towards more open acts of resistance and civil disobedience that would characterize abolitionist agitation in the years leading up to the Civil War.

William Henry, known as “Jerry,” was an escaped slave from Missouri who had lived in Syracuse for about two years, working in a carpentry studio as a cooper. On October 1, federal marshal Henry Allen and his deputies arrested Jerry under the false charge of petty theft. Jerry offered no resistance while the deputies handcuffed him and transported him to the office of U.S. Commissioner Joseph L. Sabine. Only at the Commissioner’s office was Jerry informed that he had been arrested under the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law. His arrest marked the first time a fugitive slave had been captured in Syracuse under that law and accordingly drew much immediate attention.

At the time, many visitors were in Syracuse attending both a county agricultural fair and a local convention of the Liberty Party, the political arm of the abolitionist movement. When news of Jerry’s arrest reached that convention, the abolitionists were outraged and the meeting was immediately
adjourned. Its delegates included prominent philanthropist and abolitionist Gerrit Smith, Unitarian minister Samuel J. May, and Reverend Jermain W. Loguen, a fugitive slave and leader of the Underground Railroad network. Church bells were tolled to alert the members of the local Vigilance Committee to the arrest of a fugitive slave. A crowd of abolitionists, residents, and curious spectators flocked to the Commissioner's office.

Jerry's hearing was delayed while court officials attempted to find a large room to accommodate all the people who had crowded into the office. Not allowed to testify on his own behalf and fearing a guilty verdict, Jerry attempted to escape with the help of some sympathetic members of the crowd. Recaptured by police officers and volunteer agents, he was taken to the police office and placed in a back room under heavy guard with his legs shackled. As the crowd grew to what historians have estimated to be nearly 2,000 people, the local authorities began to fear a riot. Marshal Allen wanted to call out the militia to prevent disorder, but it never arrived.

Early that evening, the local Vigilance Committee met secretly to plan the rescue. By 8:30 p.m., a group of approximately fifty-two abolitionists marched down the street toward the police office carrying a long wooden beam that they then used as a battering ram to destroy the windows and doors of the office. As the abolitionists forced their way into the building, Marshal Allen and the other authorities fled. The crowd carried Jerry into the street, transporting him to a horse and buggy that had been waiting for him. Jerry was taken to a safe house in the city where he waited for four days before he left for Oswego, New York, on the shores of Lake Ontario. He then sailed for Kingston, Canada West (Ontario), where he died of tuberculosis in 1853.

Although abolitionists regarded the rescue of Jerry as the action of virtuous citizens defying an unjust law, most Northerners who desired reconciliation and compromise with the South held the opposite opinion. Indeed, newspapers outside of central New York frequently denounced the rescue as mob rule. Fearing prosecution, many participants in the rescue, including Loguen, fled to Canada West. Thirteen men were eventually arrested. After a number of postponements, the trials of the rescuers began in January 1853. However, only one person, Enoch Reed, was found guilty. He appealed, but died before the appeal was heard. Another rescuer was acquitted, and the remaining cases were postponed, adjourned, and then the charges were dropped against all the other rescuers. In a bold counter move, the abolitionists charged Marshal Allen with kidnapping a citizen of Syracuse. Although a grand jury indicted and tried him in June 1852, Allen was acquitted of the kidnapping charges because the court determined that he was merely enforcing federal law.

In Syracuse, abolitionists held public commemorations of the Jerry rescue every October 1 until the Civil War. They hoped to promote the same spirit of resistance to slavery and the legal system that supported it as the rescuers demonstrated in 1851. The Jerry rescue came to be so celebrated because successful rescues of fugitive slaves were rare in the 1850s; the vast majority of slaves who were captured by federal agents were returned into slavery. See also Canada, Antislavery in.

See also Canada, Antislavery in.

Michelle Orihel

Jews. See American Jews and Antislavery

Jim Crow. See Segregation and Disenfranchisement in the American South

Journalism. See Antislavery Journalism in the United States and Great Britain

Jubilee

Jubilee is mandated by the Sabbath laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai, as found in Leviticus 25. Expanding from the weekly Sabbath of creation or biblical day of rest in Genesis, a Sabbath of every seventh year is commanded, when the land is to lay fallow. After a “week” of Sabbaths years (seven times seven years), a year of Jubilee or Sabbath of Sabbaths years was to be observed. Beginning with the sounding of a ram’s horn on the Day of Atonement in the fiftieth year, the entire society was to change, both in jubilee or sacred festival celebration and in liberation or release.

Along with giving the land a year of rest from being worked, the Jubilee year was to substantially equalize the Israelites’ socio-economic world. This utopian recreation of society, where both excessive wealth and poverty were eliminated, was intended to maintain a more egalitarian society of families, clans, and tribes. Ancestral lands that had changed ownership were to be returned to their original occupants. Debts were to be forgiven (this is sometimes compared to the remission of debts that came with the accession of a new king in Mesopotamia).

The text of Leviticus makes several references to slavery. The laws state that Israelites, during the Sabbath year of the land, must feed their slaves equally to themselves. People of Israelite birth, whom God had permanently freed from slavery in Egypt to become His servants, could not be permanently enslaved. Persons who had been forced by economic reverses, unpaid debts, or bankruptcy to pawn or indenture themselves into servitude or slavery were to be freed in the Jubilee and allowed to regain their lands and homes.

The imagery of the Jubilee is echoed in messianic biblical texts and continues into the present day.

The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of
heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1–3, compare Luke 4:18–19)

In the modern world, the remarkable efforts of proponents—such as Bono of the band U2—of Jubilee 2000, a campaign to cancel the debts of Third World nations, have resulted in the cancellation of some debts owed by African countries to Western nations and banks. The campaign argues that this Jubilee-liberation of African peoples is especially appropriate, since the debts for which they are held responsible were incurred by dictatorships characterized by the very sort of inequality Jubilee is meant to address.


Gordon C. Thomasson

Just War Theory as Justification for Slavery

Just war theory was used to justify slavery in several ways. Just war theory remains one of the more complex justifications for slavery because its original purpose was to prevent war or justify going to war based on a nation's right to self-defense. Only later was it used to justify slavery. When a nation's need for slave labor increased, the likelihood of wars of conquest justified through just war theory increased. Typically, opposing nations each used just war arguments to defend its decision to engage in war. The victor's just war arguments were then used to justify enslaving the opposing side. When slavery and war were linked in this way, the moral implications of slavery were rarely considered because the society had established the morality of the war through just war theory. Just war is then believed to produce just slavery because the slave is seen to have forfeited a right to freedom by engaging in an unjust war.

Just war theory assumed that peace was the natural state of neighboring nations. For each war the theory assumed the existence of an aggressor nation and a nation that was the victim of aggression. By implication one nation was just and the other unjust. However, many scholars point out that while a nation's reasons for going to war are often complex, nations tend to engage in wars that are in their economic interest. They also note that self-defense can be broadly categorized. For instance, wars fought on religious grounds are often a product of the belief that the opposing religion is immoral and therefore a threat to the nation's existence. From this point of view, a war fought on religious grounds is then characterized as a war of self-defense because the existence of the other religion is seen as a threat. While many religions included provisions for slaves who were willing to convert, nations often failed to adhere to these provisions. Judaism, for instance, held provisions that allowed converts who also married into the religion to be freed and absorbed into the society. When just war arguments were used to justify slavery, the institution of slavery was seen as a permanent extension of the state of war.

Just war theory as a justification for slavery increased with the expansion of agricultural societies that required a large supply of cheap labor. Through
the use of slave labor, these societies sustained a surplus of food that allowed them to keep slaves with minimal expense to the slaveholder. Through the use of slave labor, Rome, for instance, was able to transform itself from a subsistence economy with very little surplus to a market economy capable of producing and consuming a large surplus by increasing agricultural productivity on large farms. As Rome's productivity increased, so too did the need for slave labor. While the primary purpose of just war theory was to prevent war, when the theory was used in connection with slavery it increased the profitability of war and, in turn, increased the likelihood of war. When the just war theory was used as a justification for slavery, it allowed the society to remove the social obstacles that might have prevented individuals from justifying slavery because it made slavery part of the war sanctioned by social institutions. See also American Jews and Anti-slavery.


Shelinda Pattison
Keith, George (1638—1716)

George Keith was a Scottish theologian who settled in Pennsylvania in 1689 and wrote the first published tract objecting to slavery in colonial America. Having been born into a Presbyterian family, and studied at Aberdeen University, Keith converted to the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the 1660s, and ended his life as an Anglican rector in the south of England. His changes of denominational allegiance evinced Keith's restless quest for self-improvement and his disputative temperament. His longstanding association with prominent Quakers such as William Penn and Robert Barclay first attracted him to America in the 1680s, where he rapidly became controversial because he insisted that the Philadelphia Society of Friends adhere more rigorously to original Christian teachings. Keith's preaching urged American Quakers to accept a degree of scriptural authority and orthodoxy, although many rejected such ideas as antithetical to their core beliefs in revelation and the Inner Light.

Keith's ideas sharply divided the Quakers of Pennsylvania. The Quaker slaveholding and merchant elite were challenged by the suggestion that their customary authority in Meeting Houses over doctrine and procedure had no root in scripture. Conversely, poorer and marginal Quakers found Keith's ideas to be empowering, and in 1692, labeling themselves “Christian Quakers,” his supporters seceded to form new Meetings. Prosecuted for slander and prohibited from preaching by the colonial elite, Keith returned to Britain in late 1693 only to find London Quakers similarly censuring his views.

One of George Keith's last acts as a Quaker in America was to issue an “Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes,” on August 13, 1693. This short message echoed concerns first raised by a group of Mennonite Quakers in Germantown who circulated a petition in 1688 protesting the unchristian nature of slavery and its incompatibility with the mission of the Society of Friends. Keith's “Exhortation” argues that not just whites, but “Negroes, Blacks, and Taunies are a real part of Mankind,” and that true believers should look beyond their own souls to “liberty both inward and outward.” The tract condemns the evils of slavery
and the slave trade, and urges each Quaker to do what he or she can to limit its spread. While it did not advocate full abolition, it did suggest a series of smaller measures, including urging readers to purchase slaves only with the intent to buy their freedom, to undertake to free bondspeople they already owned, and to pledge to educate black children.

Keith based his opposition to slavery on five premises, all grounded in Scripture. First, he noted that to engage in the slave trade was to deal in stolen goods, and all Quakers were pledged to avoid such un-scriptural conduct. Second, he observed that since no person would want to be reduced to chattel property, slavery thus contravened the Christian directive, "to do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Keith identified a third reason in a biblical passage that insisted that runaway servants were not to be returned to their masters, but were to be harbored and to have the Gospel extended "to them as well as others." Keith's fourth argument cautioned that the involvement of Quakers with the horrors of slavery demeaned Christianity and undermined its global mission. Any cruel slaveholders will face repercussions for their behavior at the hands of the Almighty. Finally, Keith observed that any earthly riches gained through the exploitation of others are corrupted and to be abhorred.

George Keith's antislavery tract, like many other challenges to the institution during the later colonial era, relied heavily upon the Quaker faith and its egalitarian and non-violent principles. Yet Quakers were the largest slaveholders in the Middle Atlantic colonies and played a prominent role in the international slave trade by the end of the seventeenth century. Thus, while the "Exhortation" helped launch antislavery protests, it must also be understood in the context of its own time and place: Keith sought through the manifesto to rally his separatist supporters against the wealthier, more commercially oriented Quaker elite in Philadelphia and to reform Quaker worship and administration. However, the arguments Keith articulated would be central to the Quaker antislavery philosophy which would emerge over the eighteenth century.

Keith returned to America briefly as an Anglican missionary between 1702 and 1704, and successfully converted hundreds of disillusioned Quakers in the Jerseys to Anglicanism, but never returned to the issue of slavery again in published form.


Ben Marsh

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**Kelley, Abby.** See Foster, Abby Kelley

**Kemble, Fanny (1809–1893)**

Frances Ann Kemble was born November 27, 1809 into one of the most famous theater families in England. Her father, Charles Kemble, had joined
the company of his brother, John Phillip, at Covent Garden, and her mother, Maria Theresa, was a famous actress in her own right. Fanny was born in the midst of the “Old Prices Riots,” during which mobs protested nightly against the inflated ticket prices of her uncle’s recently rebuilt Covent Garden Theatre. As a child, Fanny was rebellious and precocious, and her parents tried to tame her by sending her to boarding schools abroad. Fanny’s teachers recognized her intelligence and literary talent, and during her school days she developed a love of theology that influenced her later in life.

When Fanny was sixteen years old, her mother allowed her to be exposed to smallpox, hoping that a mild case would immunize the girl, but Fanny’s case was serious and scarred her for life. The family’s trials continued when, in 1829, Covent Garden was repossessed, and Charles faced a lawsuit for one-sixth of the debt. Maria Theresa began training Fanny in Shakespeare in the hope that the young woman would save the family from ruin.

On October 5, 1829, Fanny debuted in Romeo and Juliet to critical and popular acclaim. She quickly became the most beloved actress in England, and her fame and newfound fortune averted her family’s financial disaster. In 1832, against her wishes her father arranged a two-year tour of the United States. She and Charles arrived in New York on September 4. The American critics praised her, but she hated the nation, citing the rudeness of its citizens. As she continued her tour through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Boston, she gradually warmed to Americans. Fanny eventually decided to marry Pierce Butler, heir to a plantation near Savannah, Georgia.

The couple wed at Christ Church in Philadelphia on June 7, 1834 and moved to a house near the city. Fanny bore daughter Sarah on May 28, 1835. That year she read William Ellery Channing’s abolition tract “Slavery” and decided to write one too. Fanny had been against slavery since her youth and quickly befriended Philadelphia’s famous abolition family, the Sedgewicks. Being married to a man who was set to become the second-largest slaveholder in Georgia strengthened her convictions against the institution. Fanny tried to append an antislavery essay to her book, Journal of America, but her publishers refused, and in 1835, they published the book without the essay.

In 1836, Butler inherited his family’s Georgia Sea Island plantation. He grew increasingly difficult and Fanny decided to leave him and flee to England that year. Butler traveled to England to retrieve her and they moved back to Philadelphia, where their daughter Frances was born in 1838. Maria Theresa died that year, and Fanny was devastated. Butler decided to take her to his plantation to alleviate her grief.

The family arrived on the Butler plantation on December 20, 1838. Fanny arrived believing that her husband’s slaves were well-treated and happy, but the reality of life on the plantation quickly changed her mind. She witnessed horrors wrought against the slaves and decided to take action. Fanny opened a hospital for her husband’s slaves, as well as a nursery. She taught the children hygiene, and gave wages to her personal servants. When she taught a young slave named Aleck the alphabet, she broke the law.
In her journal, she gathered stories of atrocities committed against female slaves at the hands of white men. She was the first writer to condemn slavery as an institution of sexual exploitation, and much of her writings focused on the degradation of both female slaves and white women living on plantations. Upon their return to Philadelphia in the spring of 1839, Fanny threatened to leave Butler unless he manumitted his slaves. Pierce refused and the two became estranged. Editor Lydia Maria Child wanted to serialize Fanny's Georgia journal and publish her correspondence with Elizabeth Sedgwick, but Pierce would not allow it. Meanwhile, Fanny became aware of her husband's infidelities after he dueled with the husband of one of his lovers. She left Butler in 1845, taking her daughters back to England.

She returned to the stage to support her children and eventually organized a successful Shakespearean repertory company. In 1849, Butler formally divorced her on grounds of desertion, and daughters Sarah and Fan moved back to America to live with him. Fanny returned in 1856. Sarah eventually married into a Northern family and continued to agitate against slavery. Daughter Fan, however, remained loyal to the South and to her father, who was arrested in 1861 for disloyalty to the Union.

Fanny published her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* in 1863 to persuade the English to stop supporting the South. The book received good reviews in England. British readers had not read anything like it—a book on the horrors of slavery seen through the eyes of a civilized Englishwoman. The Ladies Emancipation Society of London reprinted several lithographs from the book and distributed them in pamphlets. The American edition was published that same year, and Frederick Law Olmstead, author of his own encounters with late antebellum slavery, endorsed the book.

Later in life, Fanny published *Records of a Girlhood, Records of a Later Life,* and *Further Records.* Daughter Fan tried to block the publication of her mother's memoirs in an unsuccessful effort to discredit her. In her later years Fanny met Henry James and remained friends with him until her death on January 15, 1893. See also Literature and Abolition.


*Susan Fletcher*

**King, Boston (1760–1802)**

Boston King freed himself twice, became a leader of a black Loyalist community of freed slaves in America and then in Africa, and wrote and had published one of the most revealing and poignant memoirs of an individual's struggles in slavery and in freedom. Over the course of his eventful life, King was born into slavery in South Carolina, escaped to British lines
during the American Revolution, was evacuated from New York to **Nova Scotia** in 1783, joined the migration from Nova Scotia to **Sierra Leone** in 1792, and spent two years in England training to be a Methodist missionary before returning to Sierra Leone.

As with so many slaves who freed themselves, in King’s first 25 years, he combined luck, ingenuity, and persistence to escape slavery and to stay free. King was born on the South Carolina plantation of the Waring family; his father was a Christian, a native African, and a leader of the local black community, and his mother was most likely born in America and may have been at least partly American Indian. A favorite of his horse-racing owner, King traveled extensively in the colonies as a stable attendant before being apprenticed to a Charles Town (now Charleston) carpenter. The American Revolution offered the young, resourceful man a chance to escape the abusive carpenter; in 1780, King fled and joined the British army in Charles Town. After a series of adventures, including being accidentally left behind by his regiment, being recaptured and reenslaved by American forces, and a daring nighttime escape during low tide from New Jersey to Staten Island, King was in British-occupied New York City when peace was declared in 1783. He joined the 2,700 others listed in the Book of Negroes whom the British, at their own expense, evacuated to Nova Scotia and promised land and supplies for farming. Like many of the free blacks in Nova Scotia who suffered poverty and hardship, King struggled to make ends meet, though eventually was able to parlay his carpentry skills into a modest living.

But it was King’s inspiration by **Methodism** that led to his remarkable Atlantic-World career. King’s most memorable childhood experience involved a religious revelation during a dream, and he continued to study the Bible as best he could during the American Revolution. However, he did not consider himself fully converted to Christianity until his first few years in Nova Scotia. After that, he began preaching and managed to gain a pulpit. When John Clarkson came to Nova Scotia in 1792 to recruit settlers for the new British-sponsored colony in West Africa, Sierra Leone, King convinced Clarkson to include him as a missionary despite the fact that King’s modest living excluded him from the Sierra Leone Company’s requirements that only very poor people be taken. Though his wife became sick on the journey to Africa and died soon after their arrival, King survived and began his work as a teacher and missionary, with limited success. In 1794, he accepted an invitation to go to England at the Sierra Leone Company’s expense to study; he spent the next two years at a Methodist school in Bristol, during which time he wrote his memoirs, published serially in the *Methodist Magazine*. King then returned to missionary work in Nova Scotia, where he died in 1802.

Along with his amazing success at establishing himself as an educated free man and community leader, King’s main legacy lay in his autobiography. King’s 9,000-word account in some ways typified the abolitionist-sponsored conversion narratives of former slaves; his description of his slavery and freedom is paralleled by the story of his call to Methodism and his growing sense of brotherhood with white Methodists. While compared to the writing in his own letters, the narrative’s language clearly bears the
mark of an editorial hand; yet it conveyed his distinctive sense both of religious inspiration and of passion for freedom which was never surpassed by any other slave narrative. Although not as widely acknowledged at the time of its publication as was that of Olaudah Equiano’s, the memoir offers an eloquent account of one man’s spiritual journey and efforts to gain and keep freedom through the turmoil of the American Revolution, the black Loyalist colony in Nova Scotia, and the free black colony in Sierra Leone.


Andrew M. Schocket

**Koran. See Qur’an and Antislavery**

**Kossuth, Louis (1802–1894)**

Louis Kossuth led Hungary’s failed revolution for independence from Austria in 1848 and 1849. In December 1851, seeking aid for his cause, he began an almost eight-month tour of the United States. But his efforts to obtain military and financial aid for Hungary’s defense failed, in part because Kossuth became entangled in debates about slavery that were engrossing American political culture at the time. When Kossuth refused to stand publicly for or against slavery, both abolitionists and proslavery Southerners accused him of running to the other side, and in July 1852, Kossuth returned to Europe without substantial support.

Kossuth was escorted to America from exile in Turkey aboard a naval steamer, and at first, many observers, including a young Abraham Lincoln in Illinois, cheered this gesture as a fitting show of national support for the revolutions of 1848. Many viewed those struggles as successors to America’s own revolution; Kossuth, who was greeted in many places by parades and throngs of people, was often compared to George Washington. In many cities, he made a triumphal entry, complete with well-attended parades and honorary banquets. Some Americans, particularly hawkish politicians who were part of the nationalistic “Young America” movement, supported Kossuth’s designs because of a desire to expand the global influence of the United States. But although Kossuth was feted repeatedly, he raised few funds. He made even fewer converts to his paradoxical doctrine of “intervention for non-intervention,” by which he hoped the United States would interfere militarily to stop the interference of Austria in Hungarian affairs.

Among the reasons for Kossuth’s lack of success was his uncertain posture toward slavery. Initially, abolitionists hoped, and Southerners suspected, that Kossuth would identify with Northern antislavery forces
coalescing around the Free Soil Party and resistance to the Compromise of 1850. His image as a romantic liberal shaped this presumption, as did his policies as provisional governor of Hungary, which had included the emancipation of serfs. Kossuth was introduced to abolitionists in England while en route to the United States, and antislavery tracts, including Theodore Dwight Weld’s *American Slavery as It Is*, were reportedly placed in his hands.

But speculations about Kossuth’s allegiances were usually premised on the belief that he intended to stay in the United States, and Kossuth made it clear that he came for assistance, not asylum. He avoided divisive issues. Kossuth declared within a week of arriving that he would not meddle with “domestic” concerns, a euphemism that all understood to mean slavery. This professed neutrality, while failing to convince Southerners that Kossuth was not antislavery, enraged Northern abolitionists. His severest critics were the followers of William Lloyd Garrison, who published a lengthy open letter denouncing Kossuth.

In various ways, all participants in the national debate over slavery tried to turn the notoriety of Kossuth to their advantage. Free Soil politicians in Congress tried to link Kossuth’s liberal principles with theirs and thus capitalize on his popularity in the elections of 1852. Harriet Beecher Stowe alluded to him and recent European revolutions in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which was completing its serial publication while Kossuth toured the country. Despite Kossuth’s reticence, Stowe, like other moderate antislavery figures, was optimistic that Hungary’s freedom would augur well for abolitionism. Free African Americans in the North tended to be encouraged by Kossuth’s popularity. Some argued that if his revolution was justified, so were slave insurrections; others used Kossuth’s arguments for national self-determination in their rhetorical attacks on colonization. Although abolitionists never united behind Kossuth, the antislavery connotations they attached to his name impeded his campaign in the South. Near the end of his tour, a frustrated Kossuth thus complained of being placed between the upper and lower millstones of Northern abolitionism and Southern proslavery.


_W. Caleb McDaniel_
Labor Movements and Antislavery

In both Britain and the United States, the attitude of labor reformers toward the abolition of slavery represented a missed opportunity. It might have seemed natural for those seeking to elevate the condition of white working people to focus on alleviating the degradation of enslaved Africans in both the United States and the Caribbean, on the grounds that eliminating slavery would help to decrease some of the stigma associated with manual labor. In fact, many abolitionists explicitly made this connection, arguing that slaveholders were in league with Northern factory owners to promote the chattelization of white workers. In actuality, because the vast majority of abolitionists had a different interpretation than labor reformers about the value of competition in the labor market, they found themselves on opposite sides of this issue, with labor reformers calling their own condition “white slavery” or “wage slavery” and calling for it, rather than chattel slavery, to be the main focus of reformist attentions.

With some notable exceptions, British and American abolitionist leaders were largely drawn from the middle rather than the working classes, and tended to share certain views. Most abolitionists agreed that the meaning of freedom was “self-ownership,” rather than a level economic playing field. They accepted labor-market competition and claimed that poverty spurred workers on to virtues like sobriety and thrift. Moreover, poverty seemed to them an intractable problem that admitted no easy solution, while slavery was clearly a man-made and more easily abolished institution, and thus should have priority. While some abolitionists, impelled by Christian humanitarianism, may have felt that Northern employers should pay a reasonable level of wages, their commitment to freedom of contract led them to oppose labor’s central vehicle for achieving higher wages—labor unions. Abolitionist political economy was notoriously underdeveloped.

In response, labor reformers on both sides of the Atlantic played the race card in the nineteenth century by creating an imagined community of whiteness. This imagined community of whiteness was strengthened in the United States by the affiliation of labor reformers with the antebellum
Democratic Party, which was proslavery and very comfortable with racial inequality. Labor songs and poetry pointed out the hypocrisy of emancipationists, who focused their largesse on black people while white factory children starved and worked themselves to death. This argument was aided by the coincidence in the early 1830s of the English campaign to extirpate slavery in its West Indian colonies with labor reformers' battle for a ten-hour day for children working in factories.

Thus, in Britain, Tory radical Richard Oastler railed against factory masters who reserved their only compassion for black workers whom they had never seen. Referring to work in factories as "wage slavery" emphasized the additional injustice implicated in ignoring workers in the abolitionists' own racial community. Later, Chartists broke up abolitionist meetings in an attempt to reinforce their belief that real slavery was the exclusion of white working men from the suffrage. In America, New England journeyman and labor leader Seth Luther, and New York labor legislator Mike Walsh, compared the plight of the Northern workingmen unfavorably to that of the slaves; Walsh's newspaper, *The Subterranean*, was filled with racial slurs. Catholic writer Orestes Brownson used the analogy between factory work and slavery to damn the entire wage labor system. Some artisans did sign antislavery petitions, but their decision to do so was not supported by the discourse of labor reform.

One of the only labor movements in which any credence was given to abolitionism was the land reform movement. Gerrit Smith, a well-known abolitionist, not only supported the movement to gain homesteads for white workers, but also supplied a number of black workers with free homesteads on his own land in upstate New York. George Henry Evans, the leader of the National Reform Association and the editor of the longest-running antebellum labor newspaper, the *Working Man's Advocate*, had long been an opponent of slavery, going so far as to support the *Haitian Revolution* and Nat Turner's Rebellion. Others in the land reform movement, including antirent leader Thomas Devyr, and labor unionist John Commerford, were more strident Democrats, but Evans's role as the editor of the main land-reforming newspaper meant that movement was able to offer some support for an end to slavery.

The ideological basis of land reform also caused it to harmonize with antislavery. Land reformers promised to alleviate the overcrowding in the labor market. Readily available and affordable land would be a safety valve, alleviating the fear that if the labor market were swamped with freed blacks, the price of labor would plummet. Despite this potential underlying sympathy between abolition and land reform, abolitionists sparred with Evans in their newspapers throughout the late 1840s. Each side tried to convince the other to make its cause a greater priority.

The land reform movement was not the only point of contact between the antislavery movement and labor reform. White working men seeking sympathy for their position could also look to abolitionists like John Collins, who combined abolitionism with communitarianism; Nathaniel P. Rogers, editor of the *Herald of Freedom*, who called for a rethinking of all coercive labor systems; and William Goodell, another antimaterialist abolitionist. By
the 1850s and 1860s, even abolitionists like Harriet Beecher Stowe were using the labor movement’s own racial beliefs and arguments to try to engage Northern working men, by pointing out the light skin color of many enslaved blacks, the result of many generations of amalgamation with slaveholders. If wage slavery was wrong because it fell upon white men, then surely chattel slavery was wrong when it fell upon people who were nearly white. Despite these overtures, and the fact that abolitionists and labor reformers were both seeking to secure for the laborer the value of his labor, abolitionists and labor reformers remained mostly estranged from each other throughout the antebellum period. See also Democratic Party and Abolition.


Jamie Bronstein

Lane Seminary Debates (1834)

Theodore Weld, a student at Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, organized a series of debates regarding slavery in February 1834. Son of a Presbyterian minister, Weld and twenty-four other students had recently transferred to the new school from Oneida Institute, New York. Most of these students were men of some accomplishment and maturity. The debates addressed two main questions: first, whether or not slavery should be immediately abolished; and second, whether Christians should support colonization of American blacks in Africa.

For the times, these were two highly controversial issues. Even those who held antislavery views did not agree upon methods with which to end slavery. The debates, held over two weeks, were moving and far-reaching. They systematically challenged the audience, mostly other students, to thoughtfully examine these issues. The nation tuned-in to the debates through antislavery newspapers. In their remarks, Weld and the former Oneida students revealed the strong influence of revivalist Charles G. Finney and his ideas of moral perfectionism.

Finney had taught students how to generate a conversion experience or change in beliefs. The first step was sharing solid facts that appealed to reason. The second was creating an emotional connection. In these debates, that connection was building empathy for enslaved persons. Student speakers related first-hand experiences observing injustices endured by slaves. Henry Thompson of Kentucky, Andrew Benton of Missouri, and Coleman
Hodges of Virginia spoke of cruelty to slaves that each had witnessed, including separation of families, torture, and murder. Finney had taught that once reason and emotional connection were brought to bear, time and individual reflection could create a sincere change in a person's beliefs.

The issue of colonization, or the plan to deport free blacks to Africa, was also debated. At this time many believed whites and blacks could not live together peacefully in freedom. Some feared numerous free blacks would deprive white Americans of what was often seen as limited resources including jobs, food, and land. In addition, a widely held view of racial inferiority led many people to believe free blacks would remain dependent upon whites. This supposed inferiority was long used to justify racial, hereditary slavery. This pervasive false belief caused racial prejudice in the 1830s and continued to do so for more than a century to come.

Examples of racial equality were often used by antislavery debaters to help dispel this myth. James Bradley, a former slave, spoke of being taken by force from Africa. Yet he rose to manage his master's Kentucky plantation, while saving to purchase his freedom. He was an articulate and forceful example of how a black person, despite adversity, was more than equal to persons of other races.

The debates succeeded in converting nearly all Lane students to support both immediate emancipation and oppose colonization. Following the debates, Lane students formed an antislavery society. They also raised money to support a library and aid Cincinnati blacks. Students also conducted night school and Sunday school for free blacks living in Cincinnati. Some Lane students even resided in free black homes.

The debates, as well as the mission work among black residents, angered authorities at Lane Seminary. The next fall trustees took disciplinary action against the students who organized the debates and then performed mission work among free blacks. As a result, Theodore Weld and William T. Allan and a group of at least seventy-three other Lane students withdrew from the school in the fall of 1834. They became known as the Lane Rebels. Soon the student group issued their own account of events at Lane and "The Statement of Reasons" for withdrawal. It was signed by fifty-one students.

Some Lane Rebels continued to study in nearby Cumminsville and work with Cincinnati's black community. In the fall of 1835, part of the group removed to Oberlin College in northern Ohio. That new school had agreed to accept black students, thanks to pressure from this group. But most significantly, a number of Lane Rebels, including Weld and Allan, went on to devote themselves to the antislavery cause. Lane Rebels eventually fanned out across the North as ministers, speakers, and reformers. Many years of their hard work helped bring about a change in how the public viewed slavery and African Americans. See also American Colonization Society.

Las Casas, Bartolomé de (c. 1474–1566)

Born into a merchant class household in Seville, Spain, in about 1474, Bartolomé de Las Casas achieved international recognition as a Roman Catholic (Dominican) priest, diplomat, historian, spiritual writer, traveler, and advocate for the indigenous peoples in the Spanish colonies of South and Central America. In the face of much opposition, Las Casas, known as the “Protector of the Indians,” worked diligently to change European policies about colonization of the New World and to improve the treatment of its native population.

Bartolomé’s father accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the Caribbean, and the younger Las Casas edited Columbus’s travel journals. Prior to his first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in 1502, Las Casas studied law at the University of Salamanca; this background served him well in his fifty-year struggle for Indian rights. Because of family and personal connections, he received an encomienda (a royal land grant) on Hispaniola (modern Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in 1502. While Spain’s colonial policy did not condone the enslavement of the Indians, the colonists’ demand for tribute from the indigenous people turned into a form of forced labor (repartimiento). The Crown viewed the New World’s conquered peoples as Spanish subjects and generally sought to protect and “Christianize” them. In reality, however, Madrid had little control over what colonial landowners did to the native peoples on their own encomiendas. This abusive situation, combined with the spread of new diseases, caused many deaths among the indigenous tribes of Hispaniola and in much of Latin America.

Around 1507, Las Casas began training as a Roman Catholic priest, since he wanted to participate in the conversion of the indigenous tribes to Christianity. After admission into holy orders in 1510, Bartolomé still retained his encomienda, but the teaching of the Dominicans had a profound influence on him. As a landholder himself, he observed the exploitation of the Indians firsthand and eventually relinquished his claim to land and rejected a social and economic system that was cruel and inhumane.

Two specific events occurred early in Las Casas’s priesthood that changed his views concerning Spanish colonial policy in America. The first event occurred in 1511, on Hispaniola, when Fray Bartolomé heard the Dominican friar, Antonio de Montesinos, deliver a sermon condemning the encomienderos and their exploitation of the native people. Montesinos said “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: You are in mortal sin … for the cruelty and tyranny you use in dealing with these innocent people…. Tell me, by what right or justice do you keep these Indians in such cruel and horrible servitude? … Are these not men? … Have they not rational souls, are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves?” These
words from Montesinos, along with the teaching of other Dominicans (e.g., Vasco de Quiroga, Bernardino de Minaya), eventually led Las Casas to object to the harsh system by which Spanish landowners exploited the Indians.

The second event occurred during the Spanish conquest of Cuba in 1513, when Bartolomé accompanied the Spanish soldiers as a chaplain. During this invasion, he witnessed the brutality of the conquistadors toward the Indians; he felt that all of the colonists needed to share the crisis of conscience he had experienced. He freed the native workers living on his encomienda and sailed back to Spain in 1515, hoping to convince the Spanish government to do away with the encomienda system and improve the conditions of the Indians. This was the first of many diplomatic trips Las Casas made between Spain and the colonies until his final voyage back to Spain in 1547; this journey marks the beginning of his active role in the abolitionist cause.

Las Casas did not object to the colonization of the New World per se, but he tirelessly attempted to persuade the Spanish to work with Indians in humanitarian and peaceful ways. On many of his trips to Spain, Las Casas went before King Charles V of Spain (grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella), other Spanish officials, or representatives of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. On his first trip back to Spain, Las Casas called for an end to the encomiendas and the system of forced labor that existed in Spain’s colonies. Bartolomé enlisted the support of Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, who appointed him as “priest-procurator” of the Indies.

Bartolomé de Las Casas pled his cause in Spain through persuasive speech and writing, but he also returned to the New World and sought to bring about reforms in the colonies. In 1520, Las Casas, with the help of Charles V, founded the first of several free Indian villages in Venezuela as a place where the native population and Spaniards could farm together in peace. This experiment, along with similar ventures in other territories, failed for lack of support from the colonial landowners and uprisings from the Indians. Although he was discouraged when these utopian communities failed, Las Casas did not admit defeat. He did, however, withdraw from his active work, and, in 1523, joined the Dominican order in Santo Domingo, Hispaniola. A ten-year retreat from public activity allowed Bartolomé to reflect on the situation and prepare for three more decades of work as writer, debater, and advocate for fair treatment of the Indians.

Two European decrees advanced Las Casas’s abolitionist efforts. The first came in 1537, when Pope Paul III issued a papal bull (Sublimis Deus), stating that all Indians were rational human beings, capable of receiving the Gospel. The second came in 1542, when King Charles V signed the New Laws (Leyes Nuevas), which were designed to eliminate the encomiendas by limiting them to one generation. Although these new laws exemplified the changing attitude of Europeans toward the Native Americans, the colonists rejected them in practice. Indeed, even as Bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé was unable to enforce the New Laws in his own diocese.

Through his polemical writing and debates, Las Casas advanced the cause of freedom for the Indians. Bartolomé produced four works that focused on the relationship between the colonists and the natives, criticizing what had
happened in the past and suggesting ways to make a better future. He wrote his first work in 1537: *Del único modo de atraer a todos los pueblos a la verdadera religión (Concerning the Only Way of Drawing All Peoples to the True Religion)*. This book contains Las Casas’s ideals on the proper way of converting the Indians through patient persuasion and affection.

The second work, entitled *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias (A Brief Report on the Destruction of the Indians)*, published in 1542, documented the Spanish violence against conquered peoples. In this work, Las Casas estimated the number of indigenous peoples killed during the Spanish conquest of the New World and named the different methods of torture and execution used to control the Indians. He offered this evaluation of the Spaniards:

> Yet into this sheepfold, into this land of meek outcasts there came some Spaniards who immediately behaved like ravening wild beasts, wolves, tigers, or lions that had been starved for many days…. Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits.

Some historians question the reliability of this polemical work, claiming that Las Casas exaggerated the numbers and cruelties or misrepresented the meek nature of the New World’s indigenous peoples—who reacted in a variety of ways to the conquistadors.

The third book, *Apologetica historia*, a defense of his historical interpretation of the Indians, served as the introduction to a fourth, and major, work: *Historia de las Indias (The History of the Indies)*. Las Casas completed these studies in 1562, but requested that they be published posthumously. His *Historia* recorded events of the Spanish conquest and passed judgment upon the Spaniards for their cruelty. In these books, Fray Bartolomé apologized for a suggestion that he made earlier in his public career—viz., that the colonists should use more Africans in their labor force to protect the Indian population from total annihilation. As he retracted his earlier statement, Bartolomé de Las Casas insisted that Africans deserved the same right of self-determination that he sought for the Indians. Indeed, in his *History of the Indies*, Fray Bartolomé argued for the essential unity of all humankind.

Las Casas also participated in a major debate, a *junta* called by Charles V, to consider philosophical, theological, and legal questions about Spain’s conquest and control of the New World colonies. In this debate, which took place in Valladolid, Spain, in 1550–1551, Las Casas faced a worthy opponent, the Spanish philosopher Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. The debate asked whether the Indians were fully human and whether Spain had the legal or moral right to conquer the Indians before they received Christian instruction; both speakers built their arguments with citations from the Bible, early church fathers, and medieval and Renaissance thinkers. Sepúlveda defended the Spanish conquest of the New World as a just war and justified
the harsh treatment of the Indians on the basis of Aristotelian theory, arguing that the Indians were violent and inferior and were, by nature, slaves. Bartolomé claimed that the Indians acted violently in response to mistreatment by the Spaniards. On the basis of medieval legal precedent, Las Casas argued that Spain could not claim authority over the indigenous peoples until they peacefully converted to Christianity. Neither side of the debate claimed a decisive victory, but the Valladolid controversy provided Bartolomé with yet another means of placing human rights before the public eye.

Bartolomé de Las Casas died in 1566, while working in a monastery in Madrid. Throughout his long, controversial career, Las Casas advocated philosophical, theological, and legal concepts that challenged Spain's policies related to the conquest, settlement, and evangelization of the New World. Some liberation theologians have claimed him as a pioneering thinker and activist, while critics have suggested that Las Casas did more harm than good by inciting a determined opposition. Without a doubt, his tireless efforts as writer, diplomat, and missionary advanced the cause of abolition in Latin America and contributed to the modern ideals of human dignity and freedom. See also Just War Theory as Justification for Slavery; Roman Catholic Church and Antislavery and Abolitionism; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in.


Gerald L. Mattingly and Leslie A. Mattingly

**Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in**

The long military struggle for Latin American political independence from Spain, beginning in 1808 and ending with the withdrawal of the Spanish armies from mainland Latin America in 1824, culminated in the creation of the new republics of Latin America. The civil wars across Latin America also fatally weakened the colonial institution of slavery, which had helped to prop up Spanish colonialism. It took some time for all the independent republics to abolish slavery with formal legislative acts, but the death knell had been sounded well before the institution actually disappeared. The wars of national independence fought across Latin America were not in themselves wars of abolition, but these wars began a process that led to the abolition of slavery within the independent countries of Latin America.
The Latin American wars of independence had part of their origin in the age of revolution that preceded them. The American Revolution had provided a powerful example of how to throw off European colonialism, and the French Revolution had spread the ideas of the Enlightenment throughout Europe and beyond. French revolutionary ideas had helped to precipitate the overthrow of slavery in the French colony of Saint Domingue, and this, in turn, led to the independent black republic of Haiti, an evocative symbol of revolutionary change for the Americas. The idea of liberty now was no longer an abstract intellectual term; for the slaves of the Americas, rumors of the Haitian Revolution meant freedom from the hated institution which imprisoned them. For their masters, however, it inspired the fear of slave rebellion and the loss of their slave property.

The leaders of the Latin American independence movements embraced the rhetoric of the Enlightenment to promote their cause. They accused Spain of enslaving the peoples of Latin America and called for freedom from this Spanish colonial servitude. The language of political freedom which gained ground as the civil wars slowly led to the collapse of Spanish colonialism was directed at Spain, but collective and individual freedoms were inextricably connected. Slaves who were persuaded to fight for the freedom of a country in return for personal freedom made the connection very quickly. However much slave owners who had lived off slave labor wanted to retain the institution, in the minds of slaves the catchword of liberty meant individual freedom just as much as it meant collective freedom. Even slaves who were illiterate, and most were, were attuned to the words and rhetoric of the civil wars in which they played such an important part.

Historians do not agree on how many slaves there were in Latin America on the eve of independence, but they agree that outside Brazil and Cuba slave labor was dominant only in selected areas of Latin America. The largest slave numbers were to be found in Brazil, but in the remainder of mainland Latin America, slaves did not exceed 10 percent of the population. Slave populations were concentrated in the cacao and sugar plantations of Venezuela, the coastal regions of Peru and Ecuador, the mining communities and the port towns of what would become Colombia, and the area around Buenos Aires in the Rio de la Plata. They were to be found wherever their labor was deemed essential. In urban areas they dominated as domestic servants and worked at a variety of artisan positions. One recent estimate found approximately 30,000 in the Rio de la Plata, 78,000 in New Granada (Colombia), nearly 65,000 in Venezuela, and less than 90,000 in the Viceroyalty of Peru, of whom up to 6,000 were located in Chile.

Abolition of the Slave Trade in Latin America

As soon as Britain abolished the African slave trade within her own colonial empire in 1807, British politicians and diplomats embarked upon a campaign to persuade other countries to follow Britain’s example so that slave traders could not use flags of these countries to carry on the slave trade. When the Latin American independence movements began, their
leaders were anxious to secure British support, and one way was to embrace the new liberalism of equality by proscribing the Atlantic slave trade. The British government would not accept declarations alone or even legislation. It insisted on including articles banning the slave trade in all treaties it signed with the newly independent countries of Latin America recognizing their independence, seeking to bind these new nations together in a campaign to enforce the abolition of the slave trade. By 1826, Britain had succeeded in signing treaties with Mexico, Colombia, and Buenos Aires, and in each, a standard clause prohibiting the slave trade was included.

Apart from Brazil and Cuba where an illegal slave trade flourished into the second half of the nineteenth century, the most difficult area confronting British diplomacy was Uruguay and the surrounding La Plata region. The British feared a renewal of the slave trade as a means of supplying more slaves to the flourishing plantation areas of southern Brazil. Here it took until 1842 before a treaty including a binding antislave-trade provision was ratified. By checking the possible renewal of the slave trade through the La Plata region, the British government was striking a blow at the continuing slave trade to Brazil. Slaves were also being brought from Uruguay to Buenos Aires from the latter 1820s. Governor Juan Manuel de Rosas reopened the slave trade into Buenos Aires from 1831 to 1833. British pressure again forced a halt, and a new Anglo-Argentine antislave-trade treaty of 1840 effectively suppressed it.

British support for the antislave-trade campaign was occasionally misinterpreted. When a British army invaded and occupied Buenos Aires in 1806, the African slaves in the city apparently believed that their emancipation was at hand. The British general obliged the creole elite in Buenos Aires by issuing a decree saying that he had no intention of abolishing slavery. When, in turn, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires expelled the British, they were assisted by slaves fighting with arms issued by the town council. Slavery would continue in Buenos Aires and Argentina until much later.

Venezuela was the first independence movement to ban the slave trade in a decree issued by the Supreme Junta of Caracas in 1810. The banning of “the vile traffic in slaves” was then included in the first Venezuelan constitution promulgated in 1811. The independence movement in Chile banned the slave trade in the same year and also provided that children of slaves would subsequently be born free, thus beginning a free womb process that would be followed eventually by most of the newly independent Latin American countries. In Chile, this step prompted some slave owners to free their slaves. Some 300 slaves then marched to the government in Santiago, armed with knives, asking the new government for their freedom and offering to defend the new republic. The republican government of Buenos Aires issued an executive decree in 1812, prohibiting the slave trade, and confirmed it in legislation the following year. The constitution of the new state of Cartagena in 1812 included a clause banning the slave trade, although the civil war conditions made enforcement of this provision highly doubtful. Not all of these early antislave-trade declarations remained in force, but the overall effect was to seal the fate of the African slave trade to mainland Latin America and to weaken Latin American slavery.
Just as Simón Bolívar would try to set an example for abolitionists in northern South America, the liberator José de San Martín did the same in the former Viceroyalty of Peru, issuing a decree in Lima in 1821, banning the slave trade and initiating the free womb concept throughout the new republic of Peru. In Mexico the earliest revolutionary leaders went even further, as Miguel Hidalgo proclaimed the abolition of slavery in 1810, which his successor José María Morelos confirmed. The ultimate failure of their social revolution postponed the abolition of slavery in Mexico until after formal independence had been achieved. The cumulative effect of these decrees and early legislative acts was to signal that the demise of slavery throughout Latin America was inevitable, even though it would take much longer to eliminate it completely. Of the mainland Latin American republics, only Chile and Central America abolished slavery immediately following independence. Chile abolished slavery in 1823, the first mainland Latin American republic to do so, and once the Central American Federation had broken away from Mexico and declared its own independence it, too, abolished slavery in 1824. When the Central American Federation dissolved in 1839, none of the Central American successor states reverted to legal systems of slavery. In Santo Domingo, now the Dominican Republic, Haitian occupation forces abolished slavery in 1822.

By 1851, Britain had succeeded in signing antislave-trade treaties with nearly all the newly independent states of Latin America, ensuring that the flags of these nations would not be used in the African slave trade. Latin American willingness to assist Britain in suppressing the slave trade helped to ensure that it would not spread and also cut off the external supply of slaves that the institution had depended upon. Without that supply, slavery could not last long in any of the new nations. That it survived as long as it did is testimony to the lack of any strong antislavery commitment among the ruling classes of the new republics.

Slave Emancipation in Venezuela and Colombia

Following the decree ending the slave trade to the region, the Venezuelan patriot, Francisco Miranda, proclaimed a slave enlistment decree in 1812, seeking to lure slaves to enlist in the republican army by promising them eventual freedom after fighting (and surviving) for four years. Slave owners who feared that the experience of Haiti would be repeated in Venezuela forced Miranda to limit the number of slaves included, but the precedent of recruiting slaves to fight in the civil wars had been set. Both sides, the royalists and the republicans, would use this device and slaves, themselves, would join the armies in an effort to obtain their freedom, just as some would later desert if they saw an opportunity to throw off the legal shackles of slavery. Thousands of slaves utilized the continuing civil wars in northern South America, as they did in other areas of South America, to flee their masters. An estimated 5,000 joined Bolívar’s army in Colombia between 1819 and 1821, and up to a third of recruits in Ecuador were slaves hoping to gain freedom. The civil wars provided the opportunity, but
it was the slaves themselves who seized the chance of fighting with all its attendant risks to escape their past servitude. Many became casualties of the wars, either killed or suffering wounds which would leave them incapacitated in years to come. Slaves and former slaves did much of the fighting throughout Latin America, and their contribution to the independence movements has often been overlooked.

In 1816, Simón Bolívar promised President Pétion of Haiti that in return for the president’s political and financial support in the struggle against Spanish colonialism, he would issue a proclamation declaring freedom for all slaves. In this and subsequent pronouncements, Bolívar repeated his commitment to the abolition of slavery, but he was never able to persuade his countrymen to live up to the promise he had made. He did, however, free his own remaining slaves in 1820 as an example to others. Later, in October 1821, he passed a law freeing the slaves of Spaniards who chose to leave Gran Colombia rather than live in the newly independent republic.

In 1820, Bolívar wrote that “it seems to me madness that a revolution for freedom expects to maintain slavery.” He was unable to resolve the central contradiction of his statement. As the leader of the independence forces in northern South America, Bolívar was trying first of all to seduce slaves to fight for the republican side with offers of freedom following the wars. His real message was that slaves who wanted their freedom would have to fight as republicans to gain it, but time would prove that the eradication of the institution needed even more than the sacrifices of individual slaves. It required clear legislative action. In spite of the ringing declarations of freedom from Bolívar, and the important contribution of slaves and ex-slaves to the republican victory, the institution of slavery survived into the independence period in northern South America.

Bolívar summoned legislators to a Congress at Angostura in 1819 to create a constitution for the newly independent nation of Gran Colombia, encompassing present-day Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. The legislators, many of whom were creole planters and slave owners, refused to ratify Bolívar’s abolition policy. Instead they postponed effective and complete abolition through a series of rhetorical statements affirming eventual slave emancipation. Two years later, in 1821, legislators passed the Cúcuta Slave Law, decreeing the free birth of all children born to slave mothers. This set in motion a process of gradual emancipation with conditions. To ensure compensation to slave owners, the child had to serve the mother’s master for eighteen years. Even then, full legal freedom would only occur if a local board of manumission approved.

Bolívar continued to issue decrees against slavery in the new republic of Gran Colombia, at least four more, in 1822, 1823, 1827, and 1828, but none succeeded in bringing complete emancipation. The slave owners used every method available to them in opposing emancipation and in preserving what was left of an institution they relied upon for labor and wealth. Slave labor, although in slow and steady decline, remained deeply entrenched in the economic and cultural fabric of the society, and those possessing slaves fought the idea of emancipation as long as possible. Although the number of slaves in Caribbean New Granada (Colombia) fell to less than 7,000 by
1835, urban elites still relied upon female slaves for their domestic labor, and the census figures did not include the labor of the children who had ostensibly been freed by the free womb legislation but still were performing servile labor for the slave masters. It remained true throughout the region that the majority of slave women were to be found as domestic laborers in the cities and the majority of slave men worked in rural areas. The failure to achieve genuine emancipation in Gran Colombia meant that with the breakup of the state in 1830 and the emergence of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, the end of the institution was left to the new states to resolve.

Slavery in the new state of Gran Colombia, and after 1830 in the successor states of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, was by then an institution affecting only a small minority of the population. Two of these states, Venezuela and Colombia, along with Peru, however, had possessed the largest slave populations in Spanish South America at the beginning of the independence period. Slave populations had steadily declined due to the end of the African slave trade, the severe disruptions of the civil wars over many years, natural death and the impact of the free womb law of 1821, along with growing opportunities readily seized by slaves to obtain their own freedom. Slavery remained concentrated in the plantation areas of Venezuela and the port towns of the future Colombia. By 1844, less than 2 percent of Venezuela's population still remained slaves. These slaves, however, carried on working as servile laborers and also functioned as sources of financial credit for their often financially overstretched owners. But in the years following independence, fewer slaves were willing to put up with slavery. They became more aggressive in seeking freedom through flight, abandoning plantations to join bands of guerrillas and finding other ways to escape from servitude. Yet, even when slavery as an institution was clearly in its last stages with the number of slaves steadily diminishing, Venezuelan slave owners were unwilling to abolish slavery without adequate compensation. Their demand for compensation held up final abolition in 1854 when the bill was being debated. The formal abolition of slavery in Venezuela occurred on March 24, 1854. Emancipation in New Granada, or Colombia as it became in 1856, had occurred two years earlier at the beginning of 1852.

Slave Emancipation in Peru

Complete emancipation of slavery throughout Peru seemed to be just a matter of time in 1821, following San Martín's declaration that the country itself was free from Spanish colonialism. That declaration proved premature as was the hope for immediate emancipation. Not until 1824 and the final defeat of Spanish forces at the battle of Ayacucho was a republican victory secured. In Peru and in the neighboring Latin American states, complete emancipation of slavery had to wait for another thirty years. No antislavery movement powerful enough to overcome the vested interests of the conservative property-owning elite existed. Peru's slave population at independence amounted to some 50,000 individuals, which was less than 4 percent
of the total population of 1,325,000. Slave labor, therefore, did not play a vital role in the economy as a whole, but it did play a role where the slave population was concentrated: in the plantations of the Peruvian coastal river valleys and around Lima itself. Here, the importance of slaves, as sources of wealth and as symbols of social status, was much greater. Peruvian slave owners succeeded in postponing effective emancipation as long as possible. Peru's experience mirrored that of the neighboring states; emancipation was characterized by gradualism and the preservation of the social structure underpinning slavery even as the institution itself slowly withered away.

Emancipation finally occurred in Peru in 1855, at approximately the same time period as it happened in Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and the Argentine Confederation. All these countries were no doubt influenced by the liberal ideas of the 1848 revolutions in Europe, but in each country there were unique circumstances dictating the timing of emancipation. When it came, slave emancipation in Peru, as in other Latin American countries, was a product of a steadily disintegrating slave structure and the unremitting efforts of the slaves themselves to use every means possible to obtain their own freedom. Flight, legal suits brought before the courts, self-purchase and a variety of challenges to slave owners, both active and passive, slowly undermined what remained of a once dominant colonial institution.

Following his successful invasion of Peru, San Martín proclaimed the law of free womb on August 12, 1821, and later that same year he issued a decree on November 20, prohibiting the slave trade. Further decrees strengthened the trend toward emancipation in Peru, including proclamations of freedom for slaves who joined the patriot army. The arrival in Peru of Bolívar in 1823 to consolidate the independence that San Martín had won reinforced the hopes of the antislavery elements in the country. These were soon disappointed by the absence of any substantive measures to implement the complete abolition of slavery. Neither San Martín nor Bolívar was prepared to risk an open confrontation over abolition with the creole elites who were now in power. The two liberators set in motion policies of gradual emancipation, but that is as far as they would go. Neither contemplated the emancipation of slaves without compensation for the slave owners whose loyalty was essential if republicanism was to succeed. Abolishing slavery without compensation might have quickly converted the creole slave owners back to royalists. The desperate financial state of the new republics precluded the use of scarce funds for solely humanitarian purposes.

After Peru's independence from Spain, writers, politicians, and landowners alike attributed the decay of Peru's agriculture, especially the decline of the coastal plantations, to the lack of slaves. Labor shortages were viewed as the major problem, and rural labor was still equated with slave labor. The country's governing elites continued to make a strong mental connection between agricultural prosperity and the continuation of slave labor. Even as slave numbers declined, the remaining slaves continued to be seen as indispensable in a variety of occupations, both rural and urban.
slave owners, slaves also proved to be a significant financial investment, and they could bring a high rate of return. On rural estates the total value of the slaves often reached a substantial portion of the overall value of the estate. Slaves could serve as collateral for loans and mortgages and they could earn money for their master by being hired out. Because slavery was such a profitable enterprise in many varied ways, in the midst of the political and financial chaos that characterized Peru’s existence in the post-independence period, slave owners and the governing elites firmly opposed immediate abolition. Instead, the Peruvian slave owners focused their energies on trying to re-establish the remnants of Peruvian slavery upon a stronger foundation. Peru’s landowning elites proved strong enough to persuade the government to re-open the slave trade beginning in 1846, permitting the importation of slaves from neighboring American republics for a trial period of six years.

The Peruvian government in 1839, acting in response to pressure from the landowners, modified the free womb provision to ensure that former slaves would not be freed until they reached the age of fifty. Previously, between 1837 and 1842, as the children of the free womb laws reached their age of freedom, Colombia, Uruguay, and Venezuela had raised the age of these “libertos,” as they were termed, to twenty-five, to retain their labor. In each of these cases, the policy of gradual emancipation embodied in the free womb laws was being twisted into a last ditch defense of slavery by the creole slave owners of the new republican states.

No strong abolitionist movement appeared in Peru during the first half of the nineteenth century, but by the middle of the century there were signs of growing repugnance towards the continued existence of slavery, evident in newspaper columns and letters to the editor from individuals. As Peru’s neighboring countries moved towards emancipation in the early 1850s, more Peruvians began to believe they should follow this wider Latin American example not to be seen as uncivilized. The Peruvian government, however, remained obdurate in its defense of slavery, as first Bolivia abolished it in 1851, then Colombia and Ecuador in 1852, the Argentine Confederation in 1853, and finally Venezuela in 1854.

The eruption of a civil war in Peru in 1854 created the context in which Peruvian emancipation took place. President José Echenique, seeking to continue in power, issued a decree on November 18, 1854, encouraging slaves to enlist in his army in what has been described as a “self-serving, opportunistic gesture.” Any slave enlisting and serving for two years would be freed, as would his legitimate wife. The president’s rival, a man named Ramón Castilla, responded in early December with a decree, extending freedom to all slaves. His decree, too, was also self serving and opportunistic, but both decrees followed a well-established tradition going back to the liberators, Bolívar and San Martín, who had lured slaves to fight with promises of freedom. When Castilla became president of Peru in 1855, he found that he had to ratify his promise of emancipation. In order to retain the support of slave owners, he also had to pay compensation. Eventually, over 25,000 remaining slaves were freed with compensation exceeding seven million pesos. The emancipation of Peru’s slaves did not lead to a social revolution.
in the country, nor did it mean any significant improvement in their economic or social status. It did fulfill the long delayed promise of liberation given by both San Martín and Bolívar that Peru’s landowning elite had fought so hard and so long to thwart.

**Slave Emancipation: Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the La Plata Region**

The declaration of independence in Buenos Aires in 1810 coincided with expressions of racial equality, but even in 1810 the Buenos Aires City Council was not willing to contemplate the abolition of slavery. Property rights were viewed by these Buenos Aires creoles as sacrosanct, and slaves were still seen as property. Here, as in northern South America, the outbreak of civil wars that would endure for years created a demand for soldiers that caused the military leaders to look to slaves to fulfill. Beginning in 1813, slave owners were required to sell some of their slaves to the state. The slaves were enlisted in army units and promised their freedom after the fighting had ended. Many died during the fighting, others returned with wounds of varying severity, and still others seized any opportunity they were given to desert and find freedom. The 1813 impressments of slaves into the republican army followed a free womb decree passed by the republican Constituent Assembly of Buenos Aires and opened the door for future forced slave enlistments.

Half of San Martín’s army of liberation, which crossed the Andes in 1816 to free Chile from Spanish rule, consisted of slaves conscripted into military service from Buenos Aires and its surrounding territory, and promised their freedom after the fighting was over. The former slaves who fought in San Martín’s army participated in a remarkable military campaign in which they fought battles in Chile, Peru, and Ecuador, but less than 150 of the original 2,000 or so former slaves actually returned to Argentina following the end of the wars. Desertion, death, and wounds or disease determined the fate of the others.

San Martín was certainly not the only military leader in the southern cone of South America to use slaves in his army. Historians estimate that from 4,000 to 5,000 slaves served with the republican forces in the Río de la Plata region between the years 1813–1818. José Artigas, the caudillo leader in the Banda Oriental (the future Uruguay), encouraged slaves to fight with him, although in reality most were probably fighting for themselves. He was eventually defeated by a Portuguese army that came from Brazil supported by the landowners of the region. With slavery restored in the future territory of Uruguay and the Portuguese triumphant, Artigas fled to Paraguay in 1820. The former slaves who were the core of his army accompanied him to Paraguay and settled in communities there.

Under the dictatorship of Francia, slavery in Paraguay flourished until Francia’s death in 1840 when his own slaves were freed, steps were taken to stop the slave trade, and a free womb law was adopted, guaranteeing the gradual emancipation of the slaves in Paraguay. It took until 1869, however, before Paraguay accepted the abolition of slavery.
In Argentina, the Constitution of the Argentine Confederation of 1853 contained a clause abolishing slavery, but the province of Buenos Aires delayed ratifying the constitution and joining the state until 1861, thereby preserving slavery a little longer. By 1861, however, slavery in all areas of Argentina had effectively ended.

Abolition of Slavery in Mexico

The Hidalgo revolt witnessed the beginnings of the independence movement in Mexico. Following the outbreak of revolution in 1810, Hidalgo broadened the appeal of his revolutionary movement by issuing an emancipation proclamation that caused many more slaves to enlist in Hidalgo’s revolutionary army. Mexico possessed very few slaves on the eve of the Latin American independence movements, perhaps some 6,000 out of a total estimated population of six million. The slaves were concentrated in the port regions of Veracruz and Acapulco and their hinterlands.

The eventual defeat of Hidalgo and his successor, Morelos, did not end the Mexican slaves’ own efforts to procure their freedom. Mexico’s independence from Spain came in 1821, and the Mexican leader of independence, Iturbide, issued a proclamation freeing slaves who had fought on the republican side, one indication that slaves had continued to fight for their freedom throughout the civil wars preceding independence. Although several Mexican states abolished slavery in the mid 1820s, the final Mexican legislation emancipating all slaves in the country came in October 1829, during the brief presidency of Vicente Guerrero, a Mexican of mixed-race background and a veteran of Mexico’s pre-independence civil wars.

This emancipation measure was clearly directed at stopping the immigration of slave owners from the United States into Texas along with their slaves, a migration that would turn Texas into a slave plantation state. The emancipation decree was not enforced immediately, but outside of Texas, it was accepted throughout Mexico. Once Texas seceded from Mexico in 1836 and became the Republic of Texas, slavery was legalized once more and the United States’ annexation of Texas in 1845 recognized Texas as a slave state. Within Mexico, the Constitution of 1857 included an article again abolishing slavery.

Conclusion

With the outbreak of the independence struggle in Latin America, the rhetoric of the Enlightenment embraced by the republican leaders signaled that freedom would come not only collectively for the colonies of Spain, but individually for slaves as well. The rhetoric obscured the reality of a Latin American society where property rights took precedence over slaves’ rights to individual freedom. The creoles who found themselves in power after the elimination of Spain from mainland Latin America put their own self interest ahead of the concept of freedom where slaves were concerned.
Slavery was fatally weakened by the long and damaging civil wars, which characterized the independence period both in the northern and southern parts of South America, as well as in Mexico. Nevertheless, the institution of slavery took a long time to die. The final emancipation of slavery in many Latin American countries did not occur until the 1850s, and even then the social and economic reality for the former slaves was not significantly altered.

The wars of independence did open new opportunities for the slaves to grasp their own freedom by fighting for one side or the other, and, following independence, gradual emancipation was solidified through free womb laws and the abolition of the slave trade. Yet the story of slave emancipation in Latin America is one of a protracted struggle in which the slave owners fought every step of the way to protect their slave property even as slave numbers declined continuously and the institution of slavery slowly, but steadily, disappeared. See also Cuba, Emancipation in; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in; Texas, Annexation of.


David Murray

Lavigerie, Charles (1825–1892)

As an archbishop and then a cardinal of the Catholic Church, Charles Lavigerie was the founder of the modern Catholic antislavery movement. Born in southwestern France, Lavigerie became a priest in 1849. The Catholic Church had since the French Revolution been hostile to progressive movements which it associated with anticlericalism and the effort during the revolution to create a state-controlled church. In 1863, Lavigerie was appointed Bishop of Nancy. As bishop, Lavigerie struggled to disengage the church from reactionary forces in Nancy. In 1867, he was appointed Archbishop of Algiers. In 1868, he founded the Society of Missionaries to Africa, better known from the color of their robes as the White Fathers. Their mission was first defined as carrying the Christian message to Muslim peoples. The white robes were chosen because they resembled Arab robes. They had little success in North Africa, and thus, from 1878, they focused on sub-Saharan Africa, though they maintained an interest in Islam. They quickly became one of the more important Catholic mission orders.

In 1884, Lavigerie became a cardinal. By this time, Lavigerie’s missionaries were confronting the ravages of the slave trade. Many missions in the interlacustrine area and the eastern Congo became armed camps trying to protect those fleeing the violence. Convinced that slaving was an obstacle to
mission work, he devoted his considerable oratorical and organizational talents to creating an antislavery movement in a religious community that had hitherto not been involved. He sought states that could protect the victims, briefly tried to organize a movement of armed volunteers, and pleaded with the Pope to lead an antislavery crusade. Finally, in 1888, the reforming Pope, Leo XIII, gave his approval. That year, Lavigerie made a tour of Europe, starting with an emotional sermon in Paris lashing out at the cruelties of the slave trade and the suffering it caused. Before the year was out, antislavery committees had been formed in every Catholic country he visited. Parish priests all over Europe carried his message to Catholic communities. In Belgium, he met with King Leopold, who was looking for an ideological cover for his effort to colonize the Congo basin. He also forged links with the British abolitionists, but not with the existing French abolition movement. Victor Schoelcher and most early French antislavery people were anticlerical. Lavigerie was too committed to the Catholic Church to be able to work with them. The stimulus Lavigerie gave to the antislavery movement led to the Brussels Conference of 1889–90, which committed European powers to the suppression of the slave trade, though it provided few hard measures to guarantee this. The revitalization of antislavery also created a pressure on colonial regimes to take actions against slavery once they had established control of the areas they had staked out for themselves. Lavigerie died in 1892, but the Société Antiesclavagiste de France (Antislavery Society of France) remained an important force in French colonial politics, and the White Fathers continued to play a role in the mission field. See also Roman Catholic Church and Antislavery and Abolitionism.


Martin A. Klein

League of Nations and Antislavery and Abolition

The League of Nations, established in 1919, played an important role in the campaign to abolish slavery. Article 23 of the League Covenant bound its members to “ensure fair and humane conditions of labor” for men, women, and children, not only in their own countries but also in all countries with which they had commercial and industrial relations, and to secure the “just treatment” of the natives under their rule. The League established the League Permanent Mandates Commission to ensure that the powers, which acquired former enemy territories as the result of the First World War, administered them in the interests of their inhabitants. Among other things, they were to suppress the slave trade and to end slavery as soon as “social conditions” allowed it.

However, the League itself, apart from the Mandates Commission, might never have been drawn into the general campaign for the abolition of slavery had not the Secretary of the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, John (later Sir John) Harris, lobbied members of the League after he had heard that slave raiding and trading were rife in southwestern
Ethiopia. Finding that for political reasons the British government did not intend to take any action, Harris persuaded the delegate for New Zealand, Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, to propose in September 1922 that the Council of the League launch an inquiry into slavery. The League then solicited member governments and asked for information on slavery. When this failed to produce much information, it established the Temporary Slavery Commission to inquire into slavery worldwide. Unable to prevent this, the European colonial powers limited the commission’s evidence to published works and information supplied by governments, or government approved non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The commission consisted of former colonial governors or officials, who had experienced slavery first hand, as well as a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO). A Haitian was included as window dressing. These were “independent experts.” Hitherto, slavery to most Westerners meant only chattel slavery. Chattel slaves were property. They could be bought, sold, and inherited. Their servitude was lifelong and hereditary. Some were state owned, but most were private property and only their owners, or a court, could free them. They were captured, inherited, bought, paid as tribute or given away. Some sold themselves or their children in times of famine. The leading members of the commission knew that the main problem for colonial peoples was not the chattel slavery still legally practiced in parts of Africa and Arabia, but the labor demands of the colonial powers themselves. Against the wishes of the colonial governments, the Temporary Slavery Commission extended the definition of slavery to include debt-bondage, peonage, serfdom, forced marriage, the adoption of children to exploit them, and the forced labor imposed by governments.

As the result of pressure from this commission, and the drawing up of a draft treaty by its British member, Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, the League negotiated the Slavery Convention of 1926. This was followed in 1930 by the negotiation of the Forced Labor Convention by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Its aim was to protect colonial peoples from the various forms of forced labor demanded by their colonial rulers.

The League appointed two more slavery committees, backed by Britain, anxious to display its antislavery zeal. The first, the Committee of Experts on Slavery, met in 1932. This time only the European colonial powers were represented. Its evidence was even more restricted than that of its predecessor, and it was marked by friction particularly between its English and French members. It complained that, owing to the rules of procedure, it did not have enough information, and recommended the appointment of a permanent League Slavery Committee.

The result was the appointment by the League of the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery, which met from 1934 to 1938. It consisted of delegates of the colonial powers, and, as before, its sources were strictly limited to protect the colonial governments. After a halting start, this committee was soon dominated by its British member, Sir George Maxwell. His plan was to collect as much information as possible to concentrate on freeing the remaining chattel slaves, mainly in Ethiopia and parts of Arabia...
where slavery was still legal. He wanted to pass such matters as the exploitation of adopted children, which theoretically ended when the child grew up, and debt bondage, which ended when the debt was paid, to the ILO and more influential League bodies, such as the Social Questions Committee and the Child Protection Committee. When this was achieved, he believed that the committee could be disbanded—its work successfully accomplished. Meanwhile, he insisted on honest reports from the British government and bombarded his colleagues with reports on all aspects of slavery. To the dismay of the Colonial Office, the result was that as Maxwell produced most of the committee’s reports, it seemed that slavery existed mainly in the British Empire. Maxwell had not succeeded in his aims when, to his great disappointment, the outbreak of the Second World War ended all hope of further meetings.

However, the League committees had some impact. The first treaty against slavery in all its forms had been negotiated and ratified by a number of powers. A great deal of information had been collected on the practices that the Temporary Slavery Commission had designated as slavery. Both the French and the British reviewed their antislavery laws. On the downside, Italy used the suppression of slavery to justify its conquest of Ethiopia in 1935.

Slavery was now well and truly in the public arena, and after the war it was taken up by the United Nations, which succeeded the League of Nations.

It should be noted that these committees did not discuss the new forms of slavery and forced labor that were taking shape in the form of gulags in the Soviet Union from the 1920s, or the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Meanwhile, other League bodies dealt with such questions as forced prostitution (sometimes called the White slave trade), and forced recruitment for contract labor from Liberia to the Spanish island of Fernando Po.


_Suzanne Miers_

**League of Nations Covenant, Articles 22 and 23**

The Covenant, or Charter, of the League of Nations embodied the paternalistic colonial worldview of the victorious powers in World War I. Colonized peoples deemed too uncivilized to govern themselves were placed under a League of Nations mandate, to be administered by a League member. Parts of Articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant bear on slavery and the slave trade, and nominal mandate responsibilities for these areas, as well as in colonies.
The League Covenant was hardly ambiguous, and included, in Article 22, a “prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade,” and in Article 23, the following clauses regarding labor:

(a) [colonial and mandate powers] will endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for men, women, and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and for that purpose will establish and maintain the necessary international organizations; (b) undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control; (c) will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children.

The League’s enforcement actions in many of these areas were almost non-existent, as the interests of its members who were colonial powers in commerce, tax revenues, and political stability outweighed almost all other considerations. Great Britain, for example, did not act to end slavery in the interior of Sierra Leone until 1928. The colonial head, hut, and other taxes which natives usually had to pay in the coin of the realm forced colonized peoples to work for European enterprises—the only source of such legal tender—in de facto slavery for less than subsistence wages in order to avoid jail. None of the European colonial powers did much more than pay lip service to their covenant obligations in their own colonies or mandates.

Only one League member, Liberia, came under systematic investigation and censure for its failure to uphold the covenant. Local and national elites in Liberia had, if anything, expanded labor abuses through exploiting the traditional pawning or indenture system while eroding the protections of traditional practices. Tribal and village labor quotas resulted in widespread corvee labor and individual forced recruitment for tasks such as porterage which included carrying outsiders through the interior in hammocks, and road-building. Forced labor was also required for development of farms and plantations for district commissioners and other members of the Americo-Liberian elite, often during the crucial peak labor demand of the village farming season, so that starvation often followed such coerced labor. Overseers of such labor, having quotas to meet, were essentially unsupervised; consequently, violence and many other abuses commonly occurred. With the United States-promoted 1926 contract between the Monrovia government and the American Firestone Rubber Company, demand for forced labor outside the local economy increased dramatically. Chiefs coerced the powerless, rivals, alcoholics, and others perceived as troublemakers to work at Firestone, the labor force of which expanded to over 10,000. The final outrage, however, came when troops under the orders of members of the Americo-Liberian elite, themselves former slaves who had settled in Liberia with the motto “The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here,” engaged in systematic night-raiding, kidnapping, and shipping of villagers to Spanish plantations on the island of Fernando Po. Even the then Liberian Vice President Allen Yancy was accomplice to a trade that brought as much as $45.00 a
head for each of 3,000 men exported. This brought down the government (1920–1930) of then President C.D.B. King and led to some reform and a decline in international opprobrium. Short-term coerced labor on private and on nominally government projects continued in the hinterlands, however, at least into the 1980s.

While criticisms of Liberia were justified, both Britain and France had held designs on Liberian territories and sovereignty. The publicity they gave to Liberia’s violations was clearly self-serving. Only objections from the United States, which had its own neo-colonial agenda in Liberia, had repeatedly prevented the African republic’s dismantling by neighboring colonial powers whose treatment of their own subjects, excepting the literal export of slaves to other countries, was little if any better, and certainly no more in conformity with the League’s ideals. See also United Nations and Antislavery.


Gordon C. Thomasson

Les Amis des Noirs

From its first recorded meeting in February 1788, the first French antislavery society, the Société des Amis des Noirs, had very few friends but, indeed, many enemies. Its archenemies were, quite naturally, the planter interest. During the revolutionary period in 1789 and after, colonial planters and merchants, represented in the Comité national or at the Club de l’hôtel Massiac, expressed pointed hatred toward the Société des Amis des Noirs. They blamed it for much of the turbulence that had rocked their plantations and businesses to the ground, and accused it of scheming the ruin of the colonial interest as a whole. In a letter dated September 8, 1791, the Marquis de Rouvray, a planter in Saint Domingue, wrote to his daughter, “No doubt the Friends of the Negroes have been the first cause of our woes,” as a mass slave insurrection broke out in this most lucrative of French colonial possessions. This was typical of the arguments aimed at the Société by its enemies.

Cautious not to be drawn into such controversial debates, the antislavery societies that came into existence in the first half of the nineteenth century, such as the Comité pour l’abolition de la traite and the Société française pour l’abolition de l’esclavage, never fully acknowledged their vital relationship to the first antislavery society. Participating in the same obfuscation, historians have until very recently ignored the existence of the second Société, the Friends of the Negroes and of the Colonies, that was active under the Directory (1795–99) and which became even more internationalist than the first one. The first problem with the Société des Amis des Noirs was thus to disentangle its actual activities from previous misrepresentations. For reasons of space, this article focuses only on the first société.
The Société des Amis des Noirs had a three-fold paternity. On the one hand, it was the natural heir of the Enlightenment in which writers like Montesquieu, the Abbé Prévost, or Bernardin de Saint-Pierre denounced slavery as immoral. From the 1770s onward, the moral condemnation of slavery gave way to a much more radical antislavery which celebrated the institution's violent destruction. Two famous examples are the Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce et des établissements des Européens dans les deux Indes by the Abbé Raynal and L'An 2440 by Louis Sébastien Mercier. Mercier and Raynal constructed the literary figure of the black, indomitable rebel, while predicting the general insurrection of all slaves and the eventual demise of plantation societies in general. While such writers were not true abolitionists seeking an immediate end to slavery, they used radical rhetoric to ameliorate plantation regimens. The members of the Société des Amis des Noirs used a quite different, and far less radical, strategy of promotion, but it is difficult to separate its creation from the earlier work of Raynal and Mercier.

The Société des Amis des Noirs may have been the first antislavery society in France; it was not, as we know, the first antislavery society in the Atlantic World. It was modeled after the English Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which was founded in London in 1787 by Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, James Ramsay, and James Philips. As Brissot and Clavière, the two original founders of the French société, explained in their correspondence, the Société des Amis des Noirs was an offshoot of the English Society. From the very start, the Société existed as part of a complex Atlantic web of antislavery societies—including the Pennsylvania Abolition Society—that shared data and methods.

The members of the Société des Amis des Noirs were roughly of three kinds: liberal-minded aristocrats animated by the ideas of the Enlightenment, such as the Marquis de la Fayette, Condorcet, the Lameth brothers, François-Xavier Lanthenas, the Comte de Mirabeau, and the Abbé Grégoire; gens de lettres and jurists such as Jérôme Pétion, Brissot, and Mercier; and representatives of the business interest such as Clavière or Mollien.

The Société des Amis des Noirs cannot truly be described as an abolitionist society. Much like its English counterpart, the Société’s prime objective was not the immediate abolition of slavery in the French colonies. Its members clearly did not intend to make slaves the agents of their own liberation, as they became in French Saint Domingue. If the Société did petition to grant equal rights to free blacks in Saint Domingue, it did so, in part, to keep the rebellious slaves of the colony under control. The Amis des Noirs was not a philanthropic association either, but a new kind of political society in which a new form of political association was attempted. It was open to men and women alike and to Frenchmen and foreigners. Chapter 3 of its Statutes made the Société explicitly internationalist: “The members of the London and American associations, which share the objective of the Société des Amis des Noirs, will of right be accepted in the general assemblies.” Its aim was to exert pressure on public authorities at the same time it endeavored to instruct the public on the history of slavery and slave labor and on the possible ways of reforming the French colonies.
The first objective of the Société des Amis des Noirs was to abolish the Atlantic slave trade. Its second objective was to bring about a gradual abolition of slavery as a form of labor. Its third objective was to reform the system of French colonization by rationalizing and modernizing the plantation labor system and by creating new colonies in Africa. The use of black labor was still desired, but it could be achieved without the costly transportation of slaves across the Atlantic.

The Société des Amis des Noirs used newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and books to constantly disseminate information about its cause. As true heirs of the Enlightenment, the founding members of the Société believed that the question and character of slavery had to be illuminated fully for the public. The minutes of the first meeting illustrate this strategy. The Société had just received books on slavery from London. The Amis des Noirs firmly believed that “The translation and publication of those works must be one of the first objects of consideration of the committee.” The committee stressed the importance of republishing all out-of-print French books that sponsored the abolition of the slave trade. The members of the Société were also asked to be familiar with the books and pamphlets written by the planter interest so as to better counter their arguments. The Société was, finally, to encourage research on slavery in the colonies and was to publish, on a regular basis, the accounts of its activities. It did so in such newspapers as the Patriote Français, L'analyse des papiers anglais and Le Cercle Social.

The Société des Amis des Noirs was active until the fall of 1791 when it began to become indistinguishable from the activities of such members of the emerging Girondins group as Brissot and Grégoire. Its main success was the granting of equal rights to free people of color in Saint Domingue and other French colonies in March 1792. The Société reemerged for a short period of sixteen months between the end of 1797 and the early months of 1799. Its demise was followed a few years later by its worst defeat: the re-establishment of slavery in the French colonies under the Consulate. See also Brissot de Warville, Jacques-Pierre; French Colonies, Emancipation of; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec

Levy, Moses Elias (1782–1854)

Moses E. Levy was a Jewish-American abolitionist and reformer who achieved celebrity in London during the height of the British antislavery crusade. Both as a Jew and as a U.S. citizen, Levy’s position within the evangelical-led abolitionist movement was unprecedented. His anonymous Plan for the Abolition of Slavery (London, 1828) garnered favorable notice and resulted in the formation of a new antislavery organization that promoted
Levy's unique approach to gradual emancipation. During a time when conversionist activity was rife among the evangelical leadership—earning the enmity of even secular Jews—and when public activism of any sort was avoided in the Anglo-Jewish community, Levy's mere presence during this crucial period made his achievements even more noteworthy.

The son of a merchant and courtier to the sultan of Morocco, Levy fled as a youngster with his family to British Gibraltar after anti-Semitic violence engulfed the entire Moroccan Jewish community. In 1800, Levy left for St. Thomas, Virgin Islands where he established himself as a merchant/shipper. After a successful career in the West Indies, Levy underwent a spiritual epiphany and abandoned his lucrative trade in favor of a life centered on social, educational, and religious reform. He arrived in the wilds of east Florida in 1821 and founded Pilgrimage Plantation, the first Jewish communal/farming settlement in the United States. A few years later, after suffering a series of setbacks, he departed for England where he hoped to elicit support for his fledgling colony. In London, Levy took on the role of social activist during 1827–1828, and his writing and oratory became well known in the metropolis.

Many of Levy's ideas evolved from his practical experience as a planter in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Florida—a background that few British abolitionists could claim. From his perspective, immediate emancipation would be catastrophic since blacks were not only psychologically debilitated by slavery, but were hindered by illiteracy as well. As a solution, Levy advocated universal education for slave children, a humane system that would stress reading, writing, and the fundamentals of science, as well as practical training in agriculture. All students—both male and female—would also be instructed in the Bible and raised as Christians; freedom would be awarded at the age of twenty-one, and each male would be given land for farming. Influenced by the utopian philosophy of Robert Owen and the innovations of Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Levy envisioned an organized group of philanthropic businesses that would enact his tenets. In theory, these companies would own slaves until the time when their newly trained, free-labor force would supplant slavery in the plantation economy.

Levy's *Plan* was praised for addressing pragmatic issues that other abolitionists avoided. Despite the publication's anonymity, Levy's authorship was well-known in reform circles, and his activities were followed closely by the London press. Some evangelicals compared his benevolent character to the renowned William Wilberforce. Levy returned to the United States shortly thereafter. See also American Jews and Antislavery.


**C.S. Monaco**

**Liberated Africans at the Cape of Good Hope**

Those captured as slaves, but released at the Cape of Good Hope, were known as "Prize Slaves" or "Prize Negroes" at the time, because they were
seized by the British navy as "prizes"; today they are more commonly known as "Liberated Africans," the term frequently used for such people in West Africa. Over 4,000 en route to the Americas were landed at the Cape, at the southern tip of the African continent, between the end of the British slave trade in 1808 and the mid 1840s. Though formally liberated from slavery, they were freed into what was virtual slavery, for the fourteen-year apprenticeship system they all had to undergo amounted to a new form of slavery. For some, conditions were harsher than for the slaves. Whereas many of the Sierra Leonean "Liberated Africans" returned to what is now Nigeria and other places of origin when they could, those who were released at the Cape remained in what is now South Africa, the great majority becoming part of those who would be given, and accept, the name "Coloureds."

Liberated Africans arrived at the Cape in two main waves. Once the British ended their own participation in the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, they were anxious, for both economic and humanitarian reasons, to persuade others to follow suit and cease trading in slaves. A British naval squadron, based in Simon’s Town on the Cape Peninsula, south of Cape Town, sought to prevent slave ships traversing the waters of the southern Indian Ocean from reaching the Americas. Numerous slave ships that had set out from ports up the East African coast were seized, along with their human cargoes, and declared "prizes" by the Vice-Admiralty Court that sat in Cape Town. Between 1808 and 1825, approximately 1,500 “Prize Slaves” were taken into service at the Cape. Most arrived before 1815, for in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, the British were not successful in persuading the Portuguese government to sign an antislave-trade treaty that would allow British ships to intercept, search, and seize ships flying the Portuguese flag. It was Portuguese nationals who were most heavily involved in slaving in southern waters in this period. A treaty that was signed in 1817 applied only north of the equator, and British naval officials had no powers to search Portuguese ships south of that. In the two decades after the end of the Napoleonic wars, therefore, there was only one major addition of Liberated Africans to the Cape population: in 1818 a Portuguese ship was wrecked in Table Bay and its large cargo of slaves abandoned.

After the British Parliament passed legislation empowering British naval officers to search any ships flying the Portuguese flag, and capture them if they were carrying slaves or were fitted out as slave ships, the Portuguese agreed to sign the kind of treaty the British had long sought from them. The 1842 Anglo-Portuguese treaty gave Britain the right to search Portuguese ships anywhere. If such ships were found to be engaged in slaving, they were to be brought before a court of mixed (British and Portuguese) commission, one of which had been established in Cape Town in 1843. This second wave brought an even larger number of liberated Africans to the Cape in the early 1840s than had the first. When the governor of the island of St. Helena visited Cape Town in December 1841, he reported that there were 1,700 liberated Africans there, captured at sea by the West African squadron. Cape Town businessmen at once offered money to meet the expense of bringing them to the Cape, and some 1,360 liberated Africans,
most of them children, arrived at the Cape from St. Helena between March and June 1842. As British naval vessels patrolled further up the East African coast, it became impractical for them to return to release the captured slaves at the Cape. Of the 444 slaves on one slave ship captured off Madagascar, over half died before it reached the Cape fifty days later. After Natal became the second British colony in South Africa 1843, some were released there, and others in the Seychelles. The last liberated Africans to be freed at the Cape landed in 1864, but in fact very few were landed after 1846.

This new influx of liberated Africans was very convenient for the property-owning colonists, for it eased the transition to the post slave-trade era and provided a new supply of “apprentices” after the four-year period of apprenticeship for ex-slaves came to an end in 1838. The liberated Africans were much in demand as a labor force that cost nothing and was controlled with relative ease, for there was no possibility of them returning to their places of origin. The majority was placed on farms, but others worked in Cape Town itself, where some were able to acquire education and were assimilated to Cape society. Some followed the example of many of the ex-slaves and adopted the Muslim religion. In Sierra Leone, the liberated Africans came to dominate the pre-existing population, and, to a quite remarkable extent, were able to fashion their own destiny. At the Cape, by contrast, the end of slavery left intact the basic class division of the society, and the liberated Africans, after release, automatically entered the dominated classes in the settler-ruled society. See also Cape of Good Hope, Antislavery and Emancipation at.


Christopher Saunders

Liberia

Liberia was founded in 1822 along the West African coast by the American Colonization Society (ACS) as a site to settle emancipated slaves from the United States, making it the first American colony. It became an independent country in 1847. Between its founding and the outbreak of the United States Civil War, approximately 12,000 Americans migrated to Liberia.

The idea of colonizing freed blacks in Africa was not new when the ACS was organized in December 1816. The concept was discussed by Americans dating back before 1800, and the British founded what would become Sierra Leone for that purpose in 1787. The ACS was supported by many prominent white Americans, such as Henry Clay and Bushrod Washington, and in 1819 Congress allocated $100,000 for the encouragement of
relocating former slaves. The capital city, Monrovia, would even be named for President James Monroe. Chapters of the ACS would open in several states in addition to the creation of other independent state and city colonization societies.

An abortive effort was made to found the colony in 1820. In 1821, with the assistance of a U.S. Navy vessel, land was purchased from the West African natives. Another effort to establish a colony was made in 1822, and this time succeeded in laying the foundation for Liberia. Other state colonization societies such as in Maryland also founded colonies in the same regions and would eventually be incorporated into a larger Liberia.

Liberia was a colony from 1822 to 1847. Among those who resided in the colony were freed slaves from the United States who gained their freedom on condition of leaving, and free blacks who were looking for a better life away from the openly racist white America. The former slaves from the United States would become Americo-Liberians. Former slaves from the Caribbean would become the Congo People. Both Americas and Congo peoples would eventually become separate ethnic groups in modern Liberia.

The population was augmented by recaptured, blacks liberated from illegal slave ships working along the West African coast, as a well as a large indigenous population. With attitudes somewhat similar to whites who migrated to the United States, many of the new settlers saw themselves as coming to civilize the native population. The new society they created was based on the American culture, including the Southern plantation culture they knew in the United States. The expense of maintaining Liberia for the ACS was great, and there were potential threats from colonial powers. In 1846, the
colony voted to become an independent state and a year later it did so. Joseph Jenkins Roberts was elected its first president. While an American creation, independent Liberia was not recognized by the United States until after the start of the Civil War because of persistent Southern opposition.

The supporters of Liberia had varied reasons for endorsing it. For those who did not believe freed slaves could be integrated into American society, it was a way to rid the nation of their presence and to return blacks to their supposedly "natural" home in Africa. Some whites even believed the presence of Liberia would hasten the end of slavery by affording a site where hesitant slaveholders might require their slaves to go as a condition of manumission. Slave owners would also benefit by getting rid of those free blacks whose presence "corrupted" slaves and who might even encourage the murder of slave masters or whites in general.

The society's efforts were opposed vigorously in the 1820s by black anti-colonizationists, and they gained some significant white support in the early 1830s as they won more whites over to oppose the ACS, Liberia, and slavery. Abolitionists, white and black, understood the colony as an effort to strengthen slavery by eliminating the free black presence. Blacks themselves were not enthusiastic about abandoning their native land for an Africa that was no more their homeland than it was that of white Americans.

The country of Liberia was ruled by "Americo-Liberians" from 1847 to 1979. The role of indigenous tribes in the rule of Liberia was sharply curtailed throughout much of the nation's history. In 1862, they were declared subjects with limited political rights, but there was only a very gradual acceptance of their role in society. In a 1979 coup the rule of Americo-Liberians was ended and replaced by a period of turmoil lasting over two decades. In modern Liberia, Americo-Liberians have become just one of many ethnic groups in the country, constituting approximately 2.5 percent of the population, with Congo people comprising another 2.5 percent. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in.


Donald E. Heidenreich, Jr.

Liberty Party

The Liberty Party developed from a split in the antislavery movement over the question of participation in the political process and acceptance of the Constitution as a valid form of government for the United States. Supporters of political involvement wanted a new, third party committed to the elimination of slavery. Those who favored forming such a third party
included Gerrit Smith and Myron Holley of New York, Edwin Stanton of Ohio, and Joshua Leavitt of Massachusetts, editor of the *Emancipator*.

In 1839, a series of meetings beginning at the national convention of the **American Antislavery Society**, led to the formation of the Liberty Party and its nomination of James G. Birney of Michigan for president and Thomas Earle of Ohio as his running mate. The Liberty Party's effort in the 1840 election was minimal, and the party received little more than 7,000 votes nationally.

The Liberty Party platform in 1840 focused on a single issue, slavery, and took no position on other important issues of the day such as the tariff and internal improvements. The party enjoyed some success at the state and local levels during the early 1840s in the Northern states, drawing support largely from members of the Whig Party. In 1844, Birney was again nominated for president and was seen as enough of a threat to be attacked by the Whig Party press with a forged letter calling into question his opposition to slavery. The Liberty Party attracted some 62,300 votes in the election, which was very close between the two main party candidates, James K. Polk and Henry Clay. In New York State, Birney's vote exceeded the margin between Polk and Clay; carrying New York would have made Clay president. The Liberty Party was strengthened by these results and saw itself as now holding the balance between the two principal parties.

This success and political issues of the post-election period, especially the Mexican War, led many in the party to seek alliances with other reform groups and reform or antislavery members of the Whig and Democratic parties. This "broad platform" approach had been discussed prior to 1844, but gained strength afterwards and had prevailed by the 1848 election. Coalitions between the Liberty Party and other reform groups, or antislavery elements of other parties, led to a number of electoral successes for Liberty Party members in a number of Northern states.

In 1848, the Liberty Party nominated John P. Hale of New Hampshire for president. When Martin Van Buren bolted from the Democratic Party over the issue of slavery, Hale and his running mate, Leicester King, withdrew in favor of the new Free Soil Party candidate. Van Buren, however, was not acceptable to the entire "broad platform" faction because of his record on other reform issues and his earlier, much softer, stand on slavery. A rump convention formed the National Liberty Party and nominated Gerrit Smith for president. A coalition of several reform groups also nominated Smith, but with a different running mate.

The Liberty Party did not survive this division. Some of its more politically successful and ambitious members returned to the Democratic or Whig parties. Those with stronger antislavery views joined the Free Soil Party. The Liberty Party was replaced by the Free Soil Party, if anything a more committed antislavery party, but with a much broader base. Both the Liberty Party and the Free Soil Party made little, if any, effort to attract Southern voters for support, as did the later Republican Party. The Liberty Party had succeeded in its principal goal—bringing the debate over slavery into electoral politics. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery.

William H. Mulligan, Jr.

Libreville

Libreville, today the capital of Gabon, began as a coastal settlement on the Gabon Estuary occupied by Mpongwe clans since at least the sixteenth century. Mpongwe men struggled in the early nineteenth century with one another to act as middlemen between European and South American—mainly Portuguese, Spanish, and Brazilian—slave traders and interior networks bringing captives down to the coast. Ironically, the collection of villages that relied on slave exporting became home to a brief and poorly organized establishment to house slaves captured by the French navy. Under pressure from England, the French navy by the 1840s began to patrol the South Atlantic African coast for vessels carrying slaves. Admiral Bouet-Willamez forced several Mpongwe clan chiefs to accept French rule between 1839 and 1845 and built a small fort on the present site of Libreville to shelter repatriated Africans.

After several attempts to find adequate labor for the fledging fort failed, in part due to the fact free Mpongwe people could earn more money trading slaves and natural resources than doing menial labor, French officers considered using liberated captives as a source of workers. In 1846, the French warship Australie nabbed the slaver Elizia off the coast of Cabinda where the Congo River meets the sea (now part of Angola). Most of the slaver’s unfortunate passengers were members of Vili clans from present-day Congo-Brazzaville. Though many of the crew and some slaves fled from the boat, the roughly 270 slaves remaining were shipped to the Senegalese port of Gorée. In the following year, French officers decided to send the former slaves to the French fort on the Gabon Estuary. One of the main reasons for this plan was the dearth of manpower in the region, which especially vexed the French navy because the settlement was the headquarters of slave patrols in the area. This move also annoyed some of the former slaves, a number of whom resisted the relocation, although they faced imprisonment for doing so. About fifty or so of the ex-slaves were finally transported to Libreville by 1849.

Officials and Roman Catholic missionaries designed a model township that assumed former slaves would be docile and loyal workers would accept Christianity. The plans unraveled soon after the first group of former slaves arrived. The 1848 Revolution in France disrupted supplies and funding to the fort and its new village of Libreville. Some former slaves ran off, established their own village several kilometers away, and began to raid Libreville for women to take as wives in 1849. Though a small amount of state aid in rations and tools helped the remaining ex-slaves, most residents of Libreville
began to join the larger Mpongwe town society rather than follow the dictates of French commandants. They also shed their former slave status as soon as possible. Free Mpongwe were outnumbered by slaves from other parts of Gabon, and considered bondsmen and women to be fit only for menial labor and farming. Thus, the “Librevillois” had little incentive to remain in the state-run village. By the late 1850s, the French administration stopped assistance to the settlement and did not bring in any other rescued slaves. Only the name of Libreville left any reminder of the plan to resettle former slaves.

Another irony about Libreville is that domestic slavery continued to exist in the town for many years. The French never made any formal attempt to emancipate slaves owned by Mpongwe masters. Some wily Mpongwe continued to sell slaves to Brazilian and Spanish buyers into the 1850s. At the end of the same decade, the French government initiated an “emigration” program to send slaves to their Caribbean colonies, but halted the program after protests from American missionaries and others. Open execution of slaves by African masters for those accused of using supernatural forces to harm free people continued through the 1870s. When French commandants took a harsher line towards slave executions, a bloodbath began as slaves were killed by mysterious men dressed as leopards between 1877 and 1879. Though the exact causes and directors of these murders never came to light, circumstances suggest masters who wished to keep control over their slaves lay behind the brutal assaults. As late as 1927, some missionaries noted that a dwindling number of old slaves remained in bondage to free Mpongwe families. The end of open slave sales in the late-nineteenth century ensured the slow end of bondage in Libreville. People of slave descent gradually became seen as members of free Mpongwe families.

Far from being the French equivalent of Freetown, Libreville only briefly became a place where former slaves found a new home. French concerns about workers, rather than antislavery rhetoric of liberation, brought bondsmen to the port. Such ambivalence about the colony and the treatment of slaves would make itself felt throughout much of African territories controlled by France. In Gabon as in much of French West Africa, administrators had mixed feelings about banning slavery outright. Libreville failed as a home for ex-slaves, but did eventually succeed in becoming a foothold that later generations of French would exploit to conquer all of Gabon.

What makes Libreville’s name even more incongruous today is that slaves still can be found in the city. West Africans, especially from Benin and Togo, have brought children to work as maids and as vendors selling food and knickknacks on Libreville’s streets. Many of these children are not paid and are not allowed to go to school or return home. Child trafficking is a serious problem in the city. One can only hope the Gabonese government will one day be more successful in stamping out these practices than the French were over a century ago.

On February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky to Thomas and Nancy Lincoln. In 1816, the family moved to Indiana, “partly on account of slavery; but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Ky,” according to Lincoln. Lincoln’s year of formal schooling was in Indiana, but most of his time was spent working on the farm or as a hired hand. In 1830, the Lincoln family moved to Illinois, and shortly thereafter Lincoln struck out on his own. When the Black Hawk War broke out in 1832, Lincoln joined a volunteer company and was elected captain, gaining his first experience as an elected leader.

After the war, Lincoln ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature. He ran again in 1834 and won. While in the legislature, Lincoln began studying law and had gained his license by 1836. Lincoln was reelected three times, and was soon the leader of the Illinois Whigs. In 1837, reacting to the murder of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, the legislature passed a resolution condemning abolitionist societies, declaring the right of property in slaves to be sacred, and asserting that the federal government could not abolish slavery in the capital. Lincoln was one of six legislators who voted against the resolution, and in March he helped to write a protest declaring, “The institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy.” However, Lincoln also asserted, “The Congress of the United States has no power, under the constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.”

In 1846, Lincoln was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. During a break in the session in 1847, Lincoln represented a slaveholder in a lawsuit, arguing that the man should not be deprived of his slaves. In 1849, Lincoln authored a referendum calling for the gradual, compensated abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, but could not get support for the measure. Lincoln did not run for reelection, and for the next ten years practiced law.

As slavery became an increasingly important issue, the new antislavery Republican Party began to siphon members, including Lincoln, away from the Whigs. In 1858, Lincoln campaigned against Stephen Douglas for a senatorial appointment. In
a series of debates, Douglas, who favored not interfering with slavery where it already existed and allowing popular sovereignty to decide on it in the territories, argued that Lincoln sought equality between the races. Lincoln stated his preference that no new slave states be admitted to the Union, and that slavery be abolished in the District of Columbia, but also asserted, "I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races . . . I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people." Lincoln did not receive the appointment, but the debates brought him national attention.

In February 1860, Lincoln spoke at the Cooper Institute in New York, arguing that slavery should not be allowed to spread to new areas, but neither should it be abolished where it already existed. While the position was unacceptable to extremists on both sides, the majority of Northerners agreed with Lincoln's moderate stance, earning him even more national prominence. Lincoln was not the favorite to receive the Republican nomination in 1860, but he was acceptable to most factions of the party, and when the frontrunners ran into opposition, it was Lincoln who was nominated. In November, Lincoln was elected to the presidency even though he received less than half the popular vote and did not appear on the ballot in most Southern states.

By the time Lincoln assumed the presidency, seven states had already left the Union, and soon afterward four more followed them. Lincoln knew he had to keep the border-states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—in the Union, something he could not do if he moved against slavery, so he held off, even rescinding early freedom proclamations issued for runaways by military commanders John Frémont and David Hunter. However, by July 1862 and after the successful implementation of the First and Second Confiscation Acts, Lincoln saw that he could move against slavery as a military measure, thereby forestalling much criticism, and drafted an Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves in areas that were in rebellion. After showing the draft to his cabinet, they encouraged him to keep the document secret until the Union forces had won a major battlefield victory so as to avoid appearing desperate. Lincoln took their advice, kept the proclamation to himself, and waited for a victory. On August 14, 1862, Lincoln met with a group of African Americans and advocated colonization, the voluntary deportation of former slaves, saying that the racism and distrust on both sides would never allow the races to live together. In the months prior to this meeting, Lincoln had actually appointed some individuals to inquire into the possibility of creating a site for African American colonization in the black republic of Haiti. Nowhere, however, in the draft of the Emancipation Proclamation did he mention colonization.

Eight days later, Lincoln wrote, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." In September, after the Union victory at Antietam, Lincoln announced the preliminary
Emancipation Proclamation. Foreign intervention, which had recently seemed a possibility, became a dead letter because no nation wanted to be seen as interfering in a war for freedom. While Lincoln may have wavered on slavery before signing the Emancipation Proclamation, afterward there was no doubting how he felt. In 1864, Lincoln wrote, “I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think and feel.”

In 1864, Lincoln worked hard for his reelection and a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. In November, Lincoln was reelected easily and in January the Thirteenth Amendment was passed. Lincoln’s second inaugural address, delivered just over a month before he was assassinated by Southern sympathizer John Wilkes Booth, showed just how far he had come: “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war shall soon pass away, yet if God wills it continue till all the wealth piled by two hundred years of bondage shall have been wasted, and each drop of blood drawn by the lash shall have been paid for by one drawn by the sword, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” In his 1876 “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln,” Frederick Douglass proclaimed “in his heart of hearts he loathed and hated slavery.” See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Jared Peatman

Literature and Abolition

The institution of slavery in the United States galvanized the literary community as writers sought to present the cruelties meted out against human beings to preserve a social system that defied the founding principles of the revolution and the basic tenets of Christian beliefs. From the introduction of the slave trade at the Jamestown colony in 1619 to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, freed and enslaved African American and white writers, many of whom were active in religious organizations, revolutionary movements, and women’s rights groups, along with individuals compelled by indignation against social injustice, sought to press upon the emerging nation’s conscience the inherent wrong of forcing men, women, and children into bondage and maintaining a caste system that terrorized the powerless to enrich the privileged white landowners, particularly of the Southern states.

The term “abolition” in this context refers to the abolishing of slavery throughout the United States, especially as it concerned the trafficking of Africans from their native lands to be sold as property, the oppression of those descendents of enslaved Africans within a primarily agrarian system of labor, and the denial of these people from achieving self-determination through laws and prohibitions, both by individual states and the federal
government. The survey of literature concerned with abolition includes sermons, speeches, political tracts and essays, autobiographical narratives, poetry, and fiction.

In the seventeenth century, although few voices spoke out against “the peculiar institution,” one remarkable group, the Quaker community, began to organize on behalf of freedom of worship for black slaves. In their yearly meetings from the 1680s on, the Quakers called for the abolition of slavery, which they referred to as the “traffic in menbody.” They pointed out that such a practice undermined the “democratic egalitarianism” of Christianity. The early eighteenth century witnessed an awakening of the American conscience against slavery with Puritan Samuel Sewell’s antislavery pamphlet “The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial” (1700). The pamphlet was published during the heated controversy about the holding of slaves, which the Puritan-enacted Body of Liberties had established in New England in 1641. By 1700, the slave trade was an institution. A burgeoning population of slaves brought the need for a reconsideration of such a practice as it contradicted egalitarian Christian beliefs that all people were children of God and therefore heirs to God’s kingdom, principles that the Quakers had voiced earlier. Puritan leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Cotton Mather lamented the practice of slavery in 1702 in his famous work Magnalia Christi Americana. In 1706, he published an antislavery sermon, “The Negro Christianized,” which spoke of the need to view African Americans as part of the body of Christ, to treat them as brothers and sisters in the faith, and to encourage literacy to make the Bible available to them.

In the period from the mid-eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, voices spoke out against slavery and urged abolition. John Woolman of Massachusetts (1720–1782) published an essay dealing with the issue in “Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes” (1754). Meanwhile, African writers very early on recounted their experiences with slavery from first-hand experience. Among those slaves was Lucy Terry (born in West Africa in 1730), considered the first African American writer, whose poetry was passed down in the oral tradition. Only one of her poems, “Bars Fight,” has survived, published in 1855, over thirty years after her death. Although the poem itself does not deal with abolition, Terry is acknowledged to be one of the first women to fight for equality, unsuccessfully arguing the case for the admittance of one of her sons to Williams College.

In New England, African American men of the cloth represented another voice for equality and abolition. John Marrant, a black preacher, led a congregation of black loyalists in Nova Scotia, impressing on his brethren the idea of a Zion, a promised land, which, according to his view, would be the return of blacks to Africa and the establishment of an all-black community in Sierra Leone. He died before realizing his vision, but paved the way for others, such as David George, who saw the resettlement of African American slaves as a solution to the problem of slavery. Marrant’s autobiography of his life as a preacher, published in 1790, was one of the first to reach a wider audience. In Boston, two other notable black writers, Prince Hall and Boston King, spoke out against slavery in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. Hall’s petition to abolish slavery in Massachusetts in 1777
affected the eventual end to slavery in the Commonwealth in 1783. Connecticut’s Lemuel Haynes, writer and preacher of the New Light Ministry, contributed to abolition in his essay “Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-Keeping,” which was first published in 1783 in the *William and Mary Quarterly*. Although these black Atlantic writers called for abolition, Prince Hall and Boston King considered a return to Africa a more viable way to release their brothers and sisters from bondage and fulfill their dream of a new Zion. Later, whites would take up the idea of colonization, returning blacks to Africa, as an alternative to abolition, most notably Thomas Jefferson himself.

The Founding Fathers addressed the issue in the late-eighteenth century as they grappled with the inherent contradiction of slavery within a new democracy. Benjamin Franklin published an editorial, “On the Slave Trade” (1790), where he urged readers to abolish the institution. Thomas Jefferson, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, “Queries XIV and XVII” (1785), strongly condemned the institution of slavery, but argued that emancipation should be accompanied by the removal of blacks to a separate colony, where they could be “free and independent people.” As leaders of the new republic searched for a compromise, slave narratives began to circulate, bringing the conditions by which people were stolen from their homes, forced to endure the Middle Passage to the United States, humiliated through the slave trade, and denied the most basic of human rights as outlined in the *Declaration of Independence*. Olaudah Equiano, kidnapped from what is now Nigeria, published *The Interesting Narrative* in 1789, an autobiography of his life as a slave and later a freeman. Ignatius Sancho was the author of a publication, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (1782), which included correspondences with British writer Laurence Sterne. Sancho’s letters described the inhumane conditions of blacks forced into slavery and helped raise awareness of their plight.

In the early nineteenth century, three developments gave momentum to both sides of abolition: the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, which handed slave owners legal recourse to reclaim runaway slaves captured in the North; the Missouri Compromise of 1820–21, allowing Missouri to enter the Union as a slave state; and Nat Turner’s Rebellion in 1831. Turner, a black preacher in Virginia, exhorted his parishioners to rise up against their white oppressors. Their fury led to a massacre of both adults and children before the rebellion was forcibly put down. Turner, arrested, tried, and convicted, was sentenced to death, but before his execution in 1831, his confession was recorded by Thomas R. Gray, whose publication of these last words, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in South Hampton, Va.*, was circulated to a reading public curious about the man and the events. The description of his life and times created an uneasy stir among both Northerners and Southerners. In fact, shortly after these events, several states passed laws forbidding slaves to learn to read, citing the fact that Turner had been able to read to study the Bible and preach in the black churches. Additionally, it became increasingly difficult for black preachers to operate freely in the South. In short, the Nat Turner Rebellion created a generalized suspicion and hostility toward blacks. The Missouri
Compromise demonstrated that legislators were unwilling to champion the cause of abolition. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was superseded by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which was more injurious to blacks. This legislation stripped runaway slaves of any legal guarantees that their liberty would be protected in the North. By mid-century, the promise of emancipation had become remote.

Given the political climate of these decades, abolitionists began to speak out forcefully, only to be met with scorn and violence. Many of these social reformers, ministers themselves, wrote essays and political tracts condemning the situation in the South. Meanwhile, the slave narrative gained a wider readership. Frederick Douglass, a runaway slave, orator, and leader of the growing antislavery movement in the Boston area, published his Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave in 1845. The author of the preface was the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. In this account of the cruelties he endured, Douglass brought the conditions of this institution to the conscience of the white readership of the North. Later, he published the essay, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” returning to the inherent contradiction of a nation built on democratic principles and denying at the same time, liberty to millions of black Americans.

Henry Highland Garnet, another black writer of the mid-nineteenth century, addressed the gradual incorporation of African Americans in the society. He gave a speech, later published as An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America, Buffalo, N.Y., 1843, at a Negro National Convention. Another slave narrative, but unique in that it spoke for the black woman, was published in 1861. Although it was several years later than Douglass, Harriet Jacobs’ account of being a slave and a woman impressed upon the nation’s conscience that the issue of disenfranchisement was twofold. In Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Jacobs assumes a fictional protagonist to deal not only with the conditions of the blacks, but specifically of black women: sexual harassment, concubinage, and the selling of children. Her narrator pleads, “Pity me and pardon me, O virtuous reader. You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the conditions of chattel, entirely subject to the will of another.” The confluence of these two movements was to give voice to Sojourner Truth, the sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimké, and Harriet Beecher Stowe at mid-century.

Radical abolitionists brought the controversy to the public forum. Most notable was William Lloyd Garrison, whose antislavery tracts raged against the idea of “gradual abolition,” and called for a militant “immediate” abolition of slavery. The abolitionist movement found a charismatic leader in Garrison, whose weekly newspaper, The Liberator (1831–1865), gave voice to many categories of social reformers in the North. Among those who worked with Garrison was John Greenleaf Whittier, whose Justice and Expediency was an antislavery tract. In the 1830s and 1840s, abolitionists were often met with mob violence. However, such writers as Garrison, Whittier, and Frederick Douglass persevered, passionately arguing the rightness of their cause. Whittier’s poem “Massachusetts to Virginia,” is based on an account of fugitive slave George Lattimer, who pleaded for his freedom.
in Boston against the attempt of his former owner to return him to the South. Eventually, Lattimer was given his free papers. The poem illustrates the hypocrisy of the Fugitive Slave laws.

William Garrison was unswerving in his crusade against slavery. Inspired by another editor, Benjamin Lundy, whose newspaper The Genius of Universal Emancipation (1828) was the only publication exclusively devoted to the cause, Garrison, however, disagreed with Lundy’s position of gradual, not immediate, emancipation and colonization in Africa. In 1831, he and Isaac Knapp began publishing issues of The Liberator, pressing upon Americans the crime perpetrated on millions of black Americans. Garrison maintained that only immediate emancipation would redeem the nation. Included in his vision of universal emancipation were women. Among the early abolitionists, Garrison was preeminent, tirelessly promoting other writers, such as Frederick Douglass, whose narrative saw print through Garrison’s efforts.

Garrison’s influence on women writers was profound. Lydia Maria Child, a young, white novelist of the genteel tradition, turned her efforts toward abolition after meeting with Garrison. Her first abolitionist pamphlet, An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans (1831) was directed to middle-class women. The Grimké Sisters, Angelina and Sarah, were also profoundly moved by Garrison and joined the abolitionist movement in the 1830s. Alarmed by the angry mobs in Boston who attacked women abolitionists, both sisters began lecturing throughout New England. Sarah Grimké, in her Appeal to the Christian Women of the South (1836), argues the urgency of the cause by appealing to their Christian principles. The abolition movement clearly found allies in the women’s movement.

One woman instrumental in turning the tide of public opinion in favor of abolition was Harriet Beecher Stowe, daughter of an illustrious churchman, Lyman Beecher, and wife of a learned theologian. A New Englander, she became aware of the Underground Railroad while living in Cincinnati, Ohio, and felt compelled to address the cause and wrote the novel that dramatized the cruelties of slavery. Uncle Tom’s Cabin, published serially and then as a volume in 1852, captured the hearts and minds of readers across the nation and became perhaps the nation’s first bestseller, selling 300,000 copies in the first year. Although from our contemporary perspective her characters seem stereotyped, the story led readers of her day to understand how the system of slavery tore at the fabric of the family. Even the term “Uncle Tom” later became a label for those African Americans who accommodated themselves to the white racist system, rather than rebel against it. By the end of the decade, the divisions deepened to the point that any compromise to Southern slavery had become remote. Stowe wrote other sketches, stories, and essays, one concerning Sojourner Truth (1797–1883), a black evangelist, abolitionist, and women’s rights activist. Her piece, “Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl” (1863) is a lively exchange, an authentic record of the colloquial speech of her time. Although others recorded her speeches, Olive Gilbert transcribed Sojourner Truth’s powerful Narrative (1850), one of several slave narratives that fueled the abolitionist movement.
Other black women emerged to speak out against such injustices. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, writing at mid-century, is regarded as the first black woman to publish a short story in the United States, “The Two Offers,” which describes the problems created within the black family—drunkenness and child abuse—resulting from the slave system. Her poetry directly concentrates on the issues of slavery and the need for moral reform. “The Slave Mother” dramatizes the mother's anguish when she is forced to give up her child. Her speeches, published in 1857, urge an end to slavery and the equal treatment of women.

One important literary figure, William Wells Brown, an escaped slave from Kentucky, became active in the antislavery movement and spoke as a delegate to the National Negro Convention, held in Buffalo in 1843. He published his own slave narrative in 1847. Brown's novel, *Clotel*, published in London in 1853, later in New York in 1861, is considered one of the earliest fictional renderings of life from a black antislavery perspective. As the novel crossed the Atlantic, it was heavily revised, published in installments in the *Weekly Anglo-African* and finally brought out in 1867 as the novel *Clotelle: or The Colored heroine*. Other novels by black men of the late-antebellum period included Frank Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends* and Martin Delany's *Blake*.

As President Abraham Lincoln took office in 1861, the nation was so deeply divided on the issue of slavery that any compromise or accommodation had become untenable. The secession of South Carolina and the firing on Union troops at Fort Sumter in April of that year plunged the nation into a civil war that was to last for four wrenching years, during which time Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, delivered in 1863, formally ended slavery in the United States. The Proclamation demanded a release of all persons from bondage. As the war continued for one more year, the slaveholding states eventually surrendered their arms, their lands, and their way of life to the more powerful, rapidly industrializing North. In the years to come, African Americans would continue to struggle for equal rights and equal protection under the law, but the abolition of slavery, in principle, had been achieved. Writers, both black and white, had borne witness to the “peculiar institution” that deprived human beings of life and liberty; they had, by speaking out, contributed to the demise of an unjust system that undermined the democratic ideals upon which the nation has been founded. See also Garrisonians.


Sonja Lovelace
Livingstone, David (1813–1873)

Born into a poor Blantyre, Scotland, household in 1813, David Livingstone achieved fame as a Christian missionary, energetic explorer, and formidable opponent of the slave trade. Livingstone spent over half of his life in Central and Southern Africa, from his arrival in 1841 until his death in 1873. Through his speaking tours and popular books, he raised the awareness and increased knowledge of Westerners about Africa and its problems.

From age 10 through 21, the young Livingstone worked full days in cotton mills, while receiving his education through night school and self-discipline. As a young adult, he chose to follow his father in the practices and piety of the Independent Congregational Church. Livingstone felt the call to the mission field in 1834, after hearing about the need for medical missionaries in China. He began his medical and theological training at the University of Glasgow, and became a member of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1838. In 1840, the LMS ordained Livingstone, and he passed the exam to qualify as a doctor. He learned that the Opium War (1839–1842) prevented missionary work in China at that time. Therefore, after hearing a speech by Robert Moffat, his future father-in-law, about evangelistic endeavors in southern Africa, Livingstone changed his life’s course by sailing to Cape Town in 1841.

David Livingstone initially joined Moffat at the LMS mission station at Kuruman, where the new missionary met Mary Moffat, whom he married in 1845. In the hopes of finding new converts to Christianity, David and his family pushed farther north into Mabotsa and Kolobeng, toward the Kalahari Desert. Living and working in one place for a long time, however, proved unsatisfactory for Livingstone. He hoped to discover new ways of converting and evangelizing the Africans. During these early years in Africa, Livingstone acquired skills in speaking the local languages, finding his way through the African terrain, and surviving in places far removed from other Europeans. Between 1849 and 1851, he achieved some measure of fame by traveling to Lake Ngami and exploring the Zambezi River. After living in southern Africa for a decade, Livingstone decided to send his wife and children back to Britain in 1852, as he prepared for the first of three extended periods of exploration into the heart of central Africa.

During his thirty-two years in Africa, Livingstone led three major expeditions. First, in 1853–1856, he crossed the southern part of the continent from Luanda to Kilimanjaro, from the coast of Angola to the coast of Mozambique. Second, in 1858–1864, Livingstone
explored the Zambezi River and the surrounding area; Mary accompanied David on this trip but died in 1862. Third, in 1866–1873, he searched for the source of the Nile River and continued his exploration of the Zambezi. The Royal Geographical Society provided enthusiastic support—and gave special recognition—to Livingstone during his second and third journeys.

In between these three major excursions into Central Africa, Livingstone returned to Britain on two occasions, once in 1856–1857, and again in 1864–1866. During these furloughs, Livingstone published his two famous books: *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857) and *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and Its Tributaries* (1865). These books instantly captured a wide reading audience, and they also played a crucial role in informing the West about the African slave trade. At the same time, Livingstone's work put pressure on Portugal and other European nations that had not aggressively opposed the slave trade.

It is clear that Portuguese explorers had already traveled some of the same routes Livingstone had traversed, but he mapped these trails and recorded information about the flora, fauna, tribes, and landscape as had no other explorer before him. In addition to these geographical discoveries, these expeditions also allowed Livingstone to document the escalation of the African slave trade and the atrocities that accompanied it. His British background and Christian vocation made him keenly aware of the evil of slavery. Because of the reform work of Sir William Wilberforce and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, among others, the British government outlawed the ownership of slaves in 1807 and, in 1833, had abolished the slave trade throughout the Empire.

Livingstone and his travel companions saw the devastation and destruction of the slave trade—in burned villages, ruined crops, rotting corpses, skeletons along the trails, and orphaned and dying children. Sometimes his party saw the villages on fire and even encountered the Arab, Swahili, or Portuguese slavers leading captured Africans yoked or chained together. In some instances, Livingstone and his colleagues exchanged fire with the slavers to free the enslaved men, women, and children. Hoping to show the rest of the Western world the enormous loss of life due to the increased activities of the traders, Livingstone recorded these atrocities in his books and letters.

Livingstone fought the slave trade aggressively, especially as it increased because of new markets in the Indian Ocean. Through the influence of abolitionists like Buxton, Livingstone sought to establish commerce and Christianity—and to “civilize” Africa. He wanted Africans to exchange local goods (e.g., ivory) for Western products (e.g., cloth), but this ideal depended on the goodwill of the tribal leaders and foreign investment. Livingstone's explorations opened up new territory for missionary activities, but he also hoped that his travels would pave the way for legitimate commerce and eliminate the African role in slave trade. Unfortunately, his famous expeditions also provided new trails for the movement of slavers, a paradox that frustrated Livingstone immensely.

After his famous encounter with Henry M. Stanley in 1871, Livingstone died on his last expedition at Chitambo, in modern Zambia, in 1873. David
Livingstone’s African colleagues mummified his body and transported it to the coast; the British people received his body with great reverence and honored him with burial in Westminster Abbey. To be sure, Livingstone left a mixed legacy. Many historians suggest that he failed as a missionary and opened the continent for further colonization. Other critics suggest that he had low regard for the African peoples. In any case, Livingstone made significant contributions to science, and his tireless opposition to slavery also contributed to its ultimate demise.


Gerald L. Mattingly and Leslie A. Mattingly

Locke, John (1632–1704)

John Locke was an Oxford-educated English physician and philosopher whose work addressed broad issues of government, politics, religion, and economy. His book on epistemology, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), brought Locke wide renown. To this day, however, he is best known for his works in political philosophy, of which his Second Treatise of Government (1689) is the most notable. In large part, it is in this work that Locke lays out his opposition to slavery.

Labor, according to Locke, was a fundamental component not just of the economy, but also of society in general for it produced rights as well as things. Slavery attributed only very limited rights, if any, to the enslaved, while defying those basic rights to which all humans were entitled through their labor. Thus slavery was an unjust institution because the society sanctioning it refused to recognize evident human rights and to safeguard the freedom they accorded. Locke’s contention that an individual’s labor entitled the individual to certain rights influenced antislavery thought in fundamental ways.

Locke opposed slavery both on philosophical and political grounds. He did not devote significant space to the matter in general, although he did devote a chapter to the topic in his Second Treatise of Government where he wrote: “The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man but to have only the law of nature for his rule.” The law of nature was “a state of perfect freedom” and a “state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more power than another.”

Politically, Locke opposed slavery for two key reasons. First, he argued that slavery was a violation of liberty because it was not established by the common consent—that is, slaves, although they were under the legislative power of the State, were nevertheless denied a role in determining their
own rights and laws. Second, he maintained that slavery was fundamentally opposed to freedom in that "a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society" was absent from political life.

Locke's political opposition to slavery was informed by what he considered the authoritarianism of the Stuart dynasty in England. He perceived the Stuart rule of his time as tyrannical in general, and its policies, in particular, as intent upon enslaving the English. Thus, the genesis of Locke's opposition to slavery had little to do with any antipathy to the African slave trade. Indeed, Locke was a shareholder in the Royal Africa Company—the sole British company in the latter decades of the seventeenth century chartered to participate in the African slave trade—and had commercial interests in the slave-based colony of South Carolina.

In practice, Locke was far from an abolitionist. He was the author in 1669 of *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, although it was drafted in conjunction with others and ultimately never ratified. Here, he laid out designs of an intentionally organized feudal society, mirroring in some senses the hierarchical political organization of British society at the time. In this context, and despite his philosophical views that slavery infringed upon individual liberty and personal freedom, Locke supported the establishment of slavery in the colony of the Carolinas, arguing that it would increase production and, therefore, the commercial success of the colony. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition.


*Noah Butler*

**Long, Edward (1734–1813)**

Edward Long was born in England, the fourth son of Samuel Long who owned properties in Longville, Jamaica, in Tredudwell, Cornwall, and in London. He was educated in England, and only when his father died in 1757 did he travel to Jamaica, an important British sugar colony. He became a private secretary to the lieutenant governor of the colony and, thereafter, was appointed a judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court in Jamaica. Shortly after his arrival, he married a Jamaican heiress, Mary Ballard, by whom he had six children. However, he spent only twelve years in Jamaica, returning to England on account of ill health in 1769.
His great-grandfather, Samuel Long, had been involved in the English capture of Jamaica from Spain in 1655 and was rewarded with a large land grant at Longville. Edward was inspired by his great-grandfather, who was active in Jamaican politics, and by John Locke’s argument in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) that sovereign power derived from the will of a nation’s subjects. Drawing on them, he argued in his major work, *The History of Jamaica* (1774), that the elected Assembly should be the foremost political power in the colony. His history was widely read in his own time and remains important today on three counts. First, he described the topography and history of the island, and proposed that Jamaica should emulate the commercial economy of Britain to improve trade, accessibility to consumer goods, and the intellectual and moral fiber of the local population, including whites as well as slaves. Second, he indicted the white inhabitants of Jamaica for their moral and intellectual laxity. And third, he advanced a view of African slaves, slavery, and interracial sexuality that has made Edward Long the byname of English racism.

His purpose in writing the book was to draw Britain’s attention to the value of its colonies, which he considered neglected, and to identify the means by which the colony could both be protected from the incursions of maroons and made lucrative for Jamaica and Britain. Motivated in part by the notion that trade and consumer desire could positively influence the social evolution of Jamaica’s slave population, he wrote several pamphlets and letters that explained his perspective on trade and slavery: “Candid Reflections upon the judgments of the Court of King’s Bench on what is commonly called the Negroe-Cause, by a Planter” (1772); “Letters on the Colonies” (1775); and “A Pamphlet on the Sugar Trade” (1782).

Although Long believed that slavery was divinely ordained in that God had appointed some people in all societies to labor, his familiarity with Jamaican society inclined him to believe that planter and white families were degenerating in both their sexual morality and linguistic facility through domestic contact with African slaves. His solution was to uplift the intellectual capacity and moral probity of slaves. He proposed to accomplish this end by providing education, encouraging conversion to Christianity, instilling European habits of consumerism, and assigning special privileges to certain groups in the hope of reducing the gulf between Africans and Europeans and, thus, of fostering a more stable, safe, and prosperous community for all. His criticism of the white class in Jamaica was, indeed, seized upon by abolitionist readers as an indictment of an institution that corrupted both owners and slaves.

Long’s views on race are, however, the keystone of his modern reputation. When he wrote his *History*, his racialist and a historical view of Africans was not then widespread, although elements were adopted by influential figures such as Thomas Jefferson. His negative characterizations of black Africans, to name but a few, included the likelihood that they constituted a separate species from Europeans; that they possessed a distinctive, distasteful odor; that they were naturally slothful and gluttonous; that they indulged in sexual intercourse with apes; and that they had never developed arts and letters. His view represented the beginning of a negative sense of color
consciousness that became entrenched in British discourse and gave new impetus to American racism. Long considered Africans inferior to Europeans physically, intellectually, and morally, and he theorized that the disparities between Africans and Europeans had arisen primarily from the stagnation of African culture, its defiance of progress. However, he believed that Africans could be improved overall by social, sexual, and economic contact with the English. And, while he disapproved of interracial sexuality, he considered the mulatto (a cross between a Negro and a European) an important participant in his new social order. In particular, he believed that the improved physical stature of mulattos would prove a benefit to the military defense of the colony. He justified the institution of plantation slavery by claiming that Britain had introduced Africans to civil society and saved them from slaughter at home while purging Africa of its criminal elements. Long’s editing of Robert Norris’s *Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Abadee, King of Dahomey* (1789), which was published with a tract entitled “The African Slave Trade,” was a supplementary effort to substantiate his proslavery point of view. Bossa Abadee (who ruled from 1732 to 1774) appears as a cruel tyrant responsible for diminishing the Whydah slave trade and depopulating Africa, while “The African Slave Trade” closely follows Long’s *History* in arguing the beneficial effects of slavery on Africans and Britons.


Susan B. Iwanisziw

**Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation**

On November 7, 1775, the Earl of Dunmore, the last royal governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation imposing a state of martial law on the rebellious colony that he had governed since 1771. In an unusual, indeed unprecedented, step he declared free those slaves “appertaining [belonging as a possession or right] to Rebels” who would abscond and fight for the king. It was a daring act by a desperate man, short on troops and trying unsuccessfully to govern the colony from on board a warship. Despite not being a professional soldier, Dunmore was looking to raise an army not only of slaves but also of Indians with which to quell the rebellion. Most Virginians, Tory and Patriot alike, were slaveholders, as was Dunmore himself. Many thought that suborning slaves to desert en masse was opening Pandora’s Box. It might lead to a slave revolt—a prospect too dreadful to contemplate. Such an uprising would be difficult to contain; it would
inevitably spread from the slaves of rebels to the slaves of Tories; together they would make common cause against the common oppressor, slaveholders. Normally, martial law would place slaves—all slaves—under greater restrictions; no slave would ever be declared free in return for military service.

Slaves were not loyal or disloyal subjects; they were not subjects at all. They owed allegiance only to their master, not to the king. The rationale of Lord Dunmore’s proclamation was that the treason of the rebels had discharged their slaves from allegiance. Invoking martial law gave the governor the right to invade and expropriate private property, which the slaves were. He was not freeing slaves so much as confiscating them. Fugitive slaves (the property of rebels) thus became wards of the crown, and, at the pleasure of the crown, could “earn” their liberty by taking up arms in its defense. In the manner of convicts released into military service, the slaves were to be mercenaries paid in the coin of their own freedom. Though royal authority was scarcely enforceable anywhere in Virginia, many slaves, thinking compulsory military service not too high a price to pay for liberty, responded to Lord Dunmore’s proclamation and rushed to the governor’s assistance. Many were slaughtered at the battle of Great Bridge in December 1775; the survivors spent the next few months cruising off the coast of Virginia with the governor and his little fleet. Most died from disease.

The proclamation served little purpose other than to inflame further popular feeling against Lord Dunmore. The patriot convention responded by issuing an edict to the effect that fugitive slaves taken in arms would be summarily executed. An unintended result was that slaves loyal to their patriot owners were armed by them and fought against the British, as was their duty. Subsequent proclamations by British army commanders liberated slaves who fled rebel masters, but they were never allowed to fight. A punitive war measure rather than an antislavery measure, Lord Dunmore’s proclamation was an experiment in brinkmanship too risky to repeat. Declaring slaves of rebels free so that they could help put down a rebellion by their masters was thought to be impolitic, a menace to the very fabric of the socio-legal order to which both parties to the conflict wholeheartedly subscribed. Some eighty-seven years later, during a much greater rebellion and civil war in which slavery was the central issue, Lord Dunmore’s proclamation would find its echo in President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.


**Barry Cabill**

**L’Ouverture, Toussaint (1743–1803)**

Born into slavery in 1743, Toussaint grew up on Bréda Plantation, near Le Cap in the north of Saint Domingue. Though slim and short in stature,
Toussaint was energetic and acquired an extensive knowledge of animals, especially horses, and developed a keen knowledge of horticulture, plants, and roots. Portraits of him are contradictory, but he was not handsome, although he exhibited the charisma of a natural leader.

Little is known about Toussaint's parents. Legend has it that his father was named Gaou-Ginou and was an African chieftain of the Arada tribe from Dahomey, also known as Bénin. Toussaint had some mastery of the Arada language, but he also received some education on Bréda Plantation. He cultivated an air of mystery about his past and heritage, but had been protected from the harsh conditions of slavery in Saint Domingue.

Even before the Haitian Revolution of 1791, Toussaint achieved the status of a free person. By the age of thirty-three, he had married Suzanne Simone Baptiste and had two children by her. He also rented a plot of land and employed thirteen slaves. By 1791, Toussaint owned at least one slave himself, but he awarded his slave freedom following the initial insurrection.

Following the outbreak of the black revolution of 1791, Toussaint joined the rebel insurgents. Even though the Spaniards of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) were allied with the French, the Spaniards hated the French Revolution of 1789 and decided to encourage the rebel insurgents as a means of fomenting trouble for France in the Caribbean. Toussaint and his allied insurgents received arms and ammunition from the Spaniards, but Toussaint joined the French forces when the French abolished slavery in the island in 1793. As an insurgent, he first worked as a doctor, but achieved leadership as a military commander. His skill in battle was legendary, and he was both feared and respected by allies and enemies alike.

Toussaint was not immune to expediency, but he did more than most leaders to promote the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity, as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Indeed, he took extraordinary measures throughout his military and political life to treat all groups equally and with fairness. The trust he engendered helped him solidify his control of the colony. However, when a regiment of mulattos defected to the enemy, causing him to lose a battle against the British at St. Marc, he vowed never to trust the free colored completely again.

In August 1793, Toussaint took the name L'Ouverture in an official document for the first time. The origins of the name are unclear, but one explanation is that he took the name because of his uncanny ability to find and exploit openings on the battlefield. As skilled as he was on the battlefield, Toussaint was also skilled at politics and diplomacy. By exhibiting tireless dedication to the freedom of his people, "Papa Toussaint," as he came to be called, was seen as their protector from enslavement by the European colonial powers.

By 1799, Toussaint had consolidated his control of the colony and set about securing its independence. He achieved the trust of many former planters, whom he invited back to the island; he realized that he needed their knowledge and skills to make the island prosperous again, and many thousands responded to Toussaint's proclamation of peace and safe passage. He also proposed a constitution that ensured equal treatment for all groups
and made himself governor general for life. He negotiated informal trade agreements with Britain and the United States, and he instituted labor policies intended to expand the colony’s production of key tropical staples—sugar, coffee, cotton, and cocoa.

Between 1797 and 1802, Toussaint’s power reached its zenith. He was the quasi-independent ruler of the quasi-independent government of Saint Domingue, and he negotiated with the great powers as if he were the sovereign equal of Great Britain, the United States, and France. But the freedom and independence of Saint Domingue were threatened by events in France. By 1802, the French Revolution had passed thru its radical phase of liberty and equality and had now become much more preoccupied with the restoration of order and business. Toussaint pleaded with the new ruler of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, to recognize him as ruler and to respect the freedom of the black cultivators recently escaped from bondage. He assured Napoleon and the French that he only wanted to achieve commonwealth status within the French empire. But the former planters of Saint Domingue resident in Paris insisted that the productivity of the plantations would only be completely restored if slavery and the old regime were restored. Their opinions deeply influenced Napoleon’s plans for the island.

In 1802, Napoleon sent General Victor Leclerc and 20,000 soldiers against Toussaint and the freed slaves of Saint Domingue. The Leclerc expedition was charged with the mission of retaking the island and reestablishing bondage. Toussaint’s rebel forces fiercely resisted and caused Napoleon to commit 40,000 additional troops. Under the leadership of the former slave Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the black revolution defeated and expelled the white Frenchmen from Saint Domingue, as it had defeated and expelled the Spaniards and English earlier in the 1790s. As for Toussaint, he was seized duplicitously by the French during peace negotiations held under a flag of truce and transported to a prison in the French Alps. He died at Fort de Joux on April 7, 1803, unaware that his army had rallied behind the leadership of Dessalines, to win the colony’s independence and proclaim the new Republic of Haiti on January 1, 1804.

Despite his untimely death, Toussaint L’Ouverture was one of the leading freedom fighters of the modern world. Even though his origins were wretched, he was a brilliant general and wise administrator who expelled the British, Spanish, and French forces sent against him, emancipated the slaves of Saint Domingue and Santo Domingo, and strived to reform Haiti’s politics and society. His extraordinary efforts at reaching across lines of race and class set him apart from contemporaries, and his vision of an independent country of equals was finally ahead of his time. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


Tim Matthewson
Lovejoy, Elijah (1802–1837)

Elijah Parish Lovejoy was an educator, newspaper publisher and editor, religious leader, abolitionist, and political activist. Lovejoy was murdered by an angry mob of men on November 7, 1837 in Alton, Illinois. Many of the local residents opposed his antislavery beliefs printed in the local newspaper, the *Alton Observer*. After the shocking incident, the *American Anti-Slavery Society*, American abolitionists, free blacks, and enslaved Africans commemorated Lovejoy as a hero and martyr of the U.S. antislavery movement.

Lovejoy was born near Albion, Maine to the Reverend Daniel and Elizabeth (Moody) Lovejoy on November 9, 1802. Lovejoy boasted Puritan roots and was raised in an evangelical household. The young Lovejoy first studied at home and later attended local academies in Monmouth and China, Maine. He graduated from the Baptist-supported Waterville College, now Colby College, in September 1826. Upon his graduation, Lovejoy became a schoolmaster at China Academy.

In 1827, Lovejoy moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where he established a private high school, the curriculum for which was grounded in classical education. Three years later, he entered a partnership with T.J. Miller and became the editor of the *St. Louis Times*. In 1833, he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary, and was later licensed as a preacher. He returned to St. Louis to edit the *St. Louis Observer*, which espoused politics informed by Christianity and antislavery. In 1835, he married Celia Ann French.
The Observer, however, came to disturb local residents, primarily because of Lovejoy’s abolitionism. In 1835, Lovejoy was denounced by residents for shipping the Emancipator, a New York newspaper published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, with a box of Bibles to a Jefferson City branch of the American Bible Society for St. Louis. In 1835, a mob destroyed his press and he witnessed the lynching of a man named Francis J. McIntosh. Lovejoy then decided to move to Alton, Illinois with his wife, Celia, and their son, Edward Payson. In 1836, Lovejoy established the Alton Observer and resumed his antislavery publishing. Angry residents in Alton twice destroyed Lovejoy’s press and during the latter attack, he was murdered when he sought to defend his office. See also Bible and Slavery.


Nadine Hunt

Lundy, Benjamin (1789–1839)

Benjamin Lundy, the most significant American antislavery advocate of the 1820s, edited The Genius of Universal Emancipation. Born to Joseph and Elizabeth Shotwell Lundy on January 4, 1789, in Sussex County, New Jersey, Lundy was a birthright Quaker. He witnessed the dehumanizing effects of slavery firsthand while learning the trade of saddlery in Wheeling, Virginia. He relocated to Ohio, where he married Esther Lewis and established his own shop in 1815. He soon began his activist career, helping to cofound the Union Humane Society in 1816 in Mount Pleasant, Ohio. Short-lived though this group proved, its tenets would remain consistent across Lundy’s career: opposition to slavery through both moral and political means, use of all legal means to free slaves, and assisting free blacks.

After a frustrating sojourn in Missouri during the tumultuous statehood debates of 1819–1820, Lundy recognized the importance of an antislavery press. With the 1820 death of Elihu Embree, the Tennessee editor of the Emancipator, Lundy picked up his mantle with The Genius of Universal Emancipation in June 1821. The next year he moved his family and his paper from Ohio to Greeneville in eastern Tennessee, to foster antislavery sentiments in the South.

From the beginning, Lundy based his abolitionist analysis on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, decrying the blatant hypocrisy that slavery entailed politically, ethically, religiously, and economically. Though he embraced the Quaker heritage of John Woolman and Anthony Benezet and counted on Friends’ support, his paper was never partisan, maintaining an ecumenical, even eclectic tone. He supported efforts to prove that free labor
was more profitable than slavery. Lundy was ambivalent toward colonization; he saw through its underlying racism, and ridiculed the impossibility of relocating all American blacks to Africa, but he also appreciated any movement that freed slaves and provoked reflection on the benefits of manumission. One result of this was a trip to Haiti in 1826 to investigate possibilities for American blacks resettling there. Not only was the trip a failure, but also Lundy’s wife died while he was away; relatives raised their five children.

Based in Baltimore since 1824, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* (*GUE*) became the national voice of antislavery. Through Lundy’s paper, forces that shaped abolition and related movements first came to prominence. Lundy cautiously supported Frances Wright’s Nashoba project, and more enthusiastically published Elizabeth Heyrick’s bold *Immediate, not Gradual Abolition*. His serious treatment of women as coworkers and intellectuals continued with his mentoring of the Quaker poet Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, who would become editor of the women’s page of *GUE* in 1829. Lundy also befriended free blacks in Baltimore, including William Watkins, and published their writings occasionally.

In 1828, Lundy traveled north to raise funds, meeting with many Northern philanthropists, such as William Goodell and George Benson. But the most important meeting was with William Lloyd Garrison. Inspired by Lundy, and choosing to focus his energies on antislavery, the young Garrison became an associate editor of *The Genius* in 1829. His more strident tone resulted in legal problems for himself and the paper. Once Garrison was out of prison, he and Lundy amicably ended their business relationship, leaving Garrison free to launch *The Liberator* in 1831. Despite ideological differences and public quarrels over the next decade, the importance of Lundy’s influence in converting Garrison to antislavery and encouraging his editorial skills cannot be underestimated: it cements Lundy’s role in bridging earlier antislavery movements to later abolitionists.

In the spring of 1832, Lundy traveled to Texas, investigating conditions in this part of Mexico for black American settlement. While negotiations with the Mexican government ultimately evaporated, he gained intimate knowledge of Southern white American plans to usurp this land and, he feared, turn it into several new slave-holding states. He wrote two widely circulated pamphlets in 1836, *The War in Texas* and *The Origin and True Causes of the Texas Revolution*. John Quincy Adams used Lundy’s writings and testimonies to delay the annexation of Texas to the United States.

Texas propelled Lundy from a nearly forgotten relic to a central player in the growing antislavery movement of the late 1830s. However, he was suffering ill health and losing his hearing. While preparing for his move to Illinois to live with his children, Lundy’s papers were destroyed in the mob arson of Pennsylvania Hall in 1837. Arriving in Illinois the next year, antislavery forces there saw Lundy and *The Genius* filling the gap left by Elijah Lovejoy’s martyrdom, and so the paper resumed for twelve issues. Lundy died August 22, 1839, in Lowell, Illinois, from fever brought on by overwork on his farm. Lundy was widely eulogized, but his contributions have still been underestimated, now and then. His newspaper fanned a flame of abolition that was nearly extinguished, and brought its fire to a new
generation. His ecumenical approach was not only religious, but sectional, too. He consistently tried to reach the conscience of white Southerners, and to place slavery in international perspective. He was tireless (to his own detriment), almost always impoverished, open-minded to new ideas, and consistent in his principles. Relatively free of class snobbery, he evaluated ideas on their merits rather than on the respectability of their authors. He intuitively grasped the difficulties involved in ending slavery, and thus encouraged a pluralism of ideas to further that goal.


Jennifer Rycenga
Macaulay, Zachary (1768–1838)

Zachary Macaulay was born on May 2, 1768 in the Scottish town of Inverary, one of the twelve children of Reverend John Macaulay and Margaret Campbell. As a child, Zachary's formal schooling was limited, but his father instilled in him a love of reading and tutored him in art, literature, and a number of foreign languages. Despite his love of learning, his father preferred he pursue a career in business, apprenticing fourteen-year-old Zachary to a Glasgow merchant.

After three years, Macaulay left to seek employment in Jamaica, but arrived with few prospects and no money. Using a friend's connections, he was hired as a bookkeeper on a sugar plantation, an experience he found laborious but eye-opening. Working on a sugar plantation, Macaulay saw firsthand the experiences of slaves and their mistreatment at the hands of masters and overseers. At age twenty-one, he returned to England.

Following a brief period of inactivity, Macaulay was introduced to members of the Clapham Sect by his brother-in-law, Thomas Babington, who was a considerable influence on the young man. The Clapham Sect of reformers included evangelicals such as William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Thomas Clarkson and others. Macaulay's exposure to the supposed evils of slavery made him a natural fit in this group, which was becoming increasingly involved in antislavery reform. He was virtually unique among the Clapham reformers as one of few with any firsthand exposure to the institution of slavery.

Shortly thereafter, Zachary Macaulay joined the London Abolition Committee and was appointed secretary of the Sierra Leone Company, whose charge it was to develop the new colony of Sierra Leone. In 1794, the company appointed Macaulay as governor of the struggling possession, and except for a brief vacation, Macaulay served in that capacity until 1799. Although overall he was a tireless and successful administrator, Macaulay was faced with unrest on the part of black Nova Scotian settlers, land allocation problems, and attacks from French naval squadrons involved in the Napoleonic Wars. Macaulay's tenure as governor saw a sizable expansion of the capital, Freetown, before his permanent return to Britain in mid-1799.
In that same year, Macaulay married Selina Mills, and the couple ultimately had nine children. One child was the politician and commentator Thomas Babington Macaulay, while another, Hannah, was the mother to politician and historian Sir George Otto Trevelyan.

After his marriage, Macaulay immersed himself even further in antislavery reform efforts. As the British slave trade was ending, in April 1807 he was instrumental in the founding of the African Institution, the premiere antislavery group in Britain until the 1820s. Macaulay served as the group’s first secretary, was given a special award for service to the group in 1813, and in 1814 was chosen to represent the abolitionists at the Congress of Vienna. In 1823, he helped form the Anti-Slavery Society and edited its newspaper, The Antislavery Reporter. Macaulay’s efforts towards antislavery reform were crucial to the movement, as by the early 1820s many other leaders (such as Wilberforce) were suffering from declining health or old age.

Macaulay’s life in this period was not easy, however. Business problems and lack of attention to financial matters caused considerable hardship, remedied only after several years of intervention by one of his sons. Nonetheless, partly due to Macaulay’s diligence, Britain passed an Emancipation Act in August 1833, which went into effect on August 1, 1834, ending the institution of slavery in the British colonies. In bad health and with lingering financial problems, Zachary Macaulay passed away in 1838. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of.


Wayne Ackerson

Manumission

Manumission involves the liberation of individual bondpersons in a society that continues to maintain slavery. It is distinct from emancipation, which connotes the freeing of all slaves within a society. Wherever slavery existed, manumission occurred. Manumission rates varied across time and space, a heterogeneity borne of disparate demographic, economic, geopolitical, and social conditions. Dissimilar manumission rates in the Americas produced free black and “free colored” populations that differed in size, composition, and outlook. Even so, the actual process of manumission was remarkably uniform. Everywhere, manumission was a protracted enterprise involving multiple parties. Critical negotiations between slaveholders, bondpersons, and others came before and after the bestowal of freedom. In short, manumission was a ubiquitous and complex practice, one whose frequency, character, and consequences changed as historical circumstances changed.

Manumission rates varied among societies. Slave liberations occurred more frequently in Brazil than in the United States, to give an oft-cited example. Yet even in the most manumission-adverse societies, some slaveholders emancipated bondpersons.

Manumission rates also varied within societies. Brazil provides an illustrative example. The differences could be regional: in the early nineteenth
century, manumission rates were higher in Minas Gerais than in Sao Paulo. The distinctions could be temporal: in the sugar-producing regions of northeast Brazil, slave liberations were relatively uncommon in the dynamic mid-seventeenth century, but they increased thereafter as the economy sputtered. The dissimilitude could be demographic: in Brazil (as elsewhere), some slaveholders and bondpersons were more likely to engage in manumission than others.

Intersocietal and intrasocietal differences in manumission rates influenced the size of free black and free colored populations. In Spain's mainland colonies, free people of color outnumbered slaves by the early nineteenth century. In Brazil, the freedperson population approximated the slave population by the early 1800s and surpassed it by mid-century. In most areas colonized by northern Europeans, the free colored population was smaller than the white population and usually dwarfed by the slave population. All totaled, by 1800, there were close to two million free persons of color in the Americas, compared with approximately three million slaves.

Governmental authorities outlined the means by which slaveholders could legally free bondpersons. The most common methods of manumission were gratis, conditional, delayed, self-purchase, postmortem, and state-sponsored. When slaveholders emancipated bondpersons gratis, they did not explicitly demand compensation. In conditional manumissions, slaves obtained liberty, but additional requirements were made of them, such as attending to their ex-owner until his or her death. Delayed manumissions were instances wherein slaveholders withheld immediate liberty, but promised to grant freedom at a future date. In self-purchase arrangements, bondpersons bought their liberty, the price for which could be above, below, or at the market price for slaves. In postmortem manumissions, slaveholders liberated bondpersons upon their demise, usually with a testamentary decree. State-sponsored manumissions took many forms, including bestowing liberty to slaves who revealed insurrection plots and to those who served in the military, with the latter policy sometimes resulting in mass liberations. Although these modes of manumission differed in many respects, they shared at least one characteristic: normally, they granted freedom to select slaves only—large-scale, state-sponsored manumissions notwithstanding. Put another way, slaveholders rarely emancipated bondpersons en masse.

Manumission was not just a legal act. It was also a social process, often a lengthy one, in which important events preceded and followed the official confirmation of liberty. At each stage of the process, bondpersons, slaveholders, and other parties sought to advance their own interests.

For slaves, the trek to freedom was often difficult. Not surprisingly, some bondpersons were better situated to make the journey than others. The law inhibited a number. Restrictions on emancipating superannuated slaves were common, for instance. Even more important were the economic, demographic, and social forces that molded manumission patterns. The result was a distinctive population of freedpersons: females, mixed-race persons, skilled workers, urbanites, and creoles were overrepresented among the manumittees' ranks, largely because their sex, color, occupation, residence,
and level of acculturation gave them greater access to the avenues of freedom. While no single characteristic predetermined whether a slave would achieve liberty, bondpersons with the aforementioned traits generally had the most opportunities for freedom.

Female slaves were more likely to secure liberty than male slaves. Despite the fact that bondmen usually outnumbered bondwomen on slaving vessels and large plantations, sixty to sixty-five percent of manumittees in the Americas were females. This overrepresentation occurred for a number of reasons. In some cases, male slaveholders liberated their bonded sexual partners. In others, slaveholders emancipated bondwomen because they assumed the latter would be dependent on them, and therefore would remain an accessible, exploitable labor force. A gendered division of labor also contributed to the preponderance of freedwomen. Traditionally “female” occupations such as housekeeper, cook, nurse, laundress, and vendor allowed some bondwomen to make money and meet sympathizers, and thereby increased their opportunities to obtain freedom. Sex-specific customs could have the same effect, as was the case in eighteenth-century Surinam, where some planters transferred pregnant slaves to urban Paramaribo in order to better monitor their health, a procedure that introduced such women to persons and practices that bolstered their chances for freedom. Like slavery itself, manumission was a gendered experience.

It was also a familial endeavor. Freedom was usually not given gratis, so slaves who wanted to liberate themselves and their kin had to pool their resources and gradually buy their way out of bondage. The objective was to have one family member buy his or her freedom, and then that manumitee would accumulate funds and purchase other kin. Strategy was essential, and gender and sex influenced bondpersons’ deliberations. Often the choice was between liberating a male, whose comparatively high wages could underwrite additional manumissions, or freeing a female, whose children after emancipation would be born free. To complicate matters, different slaveholders often owned different members of a slave family. In these situations, familial reconstitution necessitated enlarging the strategy for manumission. Expansive undertakings of this sort sometimes irked neighboring slaveholders. Protests were most common in places where manumissions occurred infrequently, such as the nineteenth-century U.S. South. Slaves’ familial bonds thus rendered manumissions intricate affairs, ventures that required determination, sagacity, and deftness on the slaves’ part.

Counterpoised against the slaves’ objectives were their owners’ ambitions. Individuals freed bondpersons for any number of reasons. Some manumitted their bonded concubines. Other emancipators, especially free black ones, liberated their own kin. Still others were moved by humanitarian, religious, or philosophical considerations. To dismiss manumitters’ professions concerning morality, gratitude, and affection as mere rationalizations for pecuniary objectives is to overlook how non-economic forces influenced manumission practices and to ignore slaves’ own efforts to attract the positive attention of their owners, and thereby increase their odds for liberation. Nevertheless, it is clear that many slaveholders initiated manumissions for financial reasons.
Slaveholders freed bondpersons during good times and bad. Manumission rates usually increased when the economy declined. Rising manumission rates in Pernambuco, Brazil during the late-seventeenth century and in the Chesapeake region during the late-eighteenth century, for example, coincided with downturns in sugar and tobacco production, respectively. On occasion, food shortages prompted slaveholders to liberate bondpersons. This was the case in eighteenth-century Curacao, where spikes in manumission rates corresponded with periodic famines. In some instances, however, manumission rates rose during eras of economic growth. In early nineteenth-century Baltimore, manumission abetted commercial and industrial expansion. A similar story unfolded during the early to mid-1700s in the gold-mining region of Sabara, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Viable during both booms and busts, manumission was a protean practice.

From the slaveholders’ perspective, manumission promised an exceptionally productive and flexible labor force. This was especially true in regard to self-purchase arrangements. Slaveholders assumed that bondpersons who were trying to buy their freedom would work harder and be less apt to run away. They also figured that self-purchase agreements would allow them to slowly liberate their older, less profitable slaves and use the manumittees’ ransom money to purchase additional bondpersons. And all the while, slaveholders retained the legal rights to would-be manumittees’ children. In some instances, children born to self-purchasing women were deemed slaves for life; in others, the offspring were entitled to freedom at a later date—when they reached adulthood, for example. Either way, slaveholders could take possession of the youngsters or leave them with their parents, depending upon the costs of child upkeep and their need for child labor. For many slaveholders, manumission meant profit maximization.

Some slaveholders were more likely to embrace manumission than others. Proportionally speaking, small, urban, and free black slaveholders liberated bondpersons more frequently than their large, rural, and white counterparts. In a like manner, females were overrepresented among the manumittees’ ranks. Such women were not exhibiting antislavery sympathies. If anything, slaveholding women, having fewer vocational options and less material wealth than most slaveholding men, were particularly dependent on slave-generated revenue, and they wanted their bondpersons to labor diligently and faithfully. Thus, the profusion of female manumittees was attributable to legal strictures, gender conventions, familial concerns, and slave acumen, not tenderheartedness. Throughout the Americas, lawmakers impaired females’ property rights. Generally speaking, only unmarried and widowed women exercised full control over their property. As a result, female slaveholders’ options regarding slave management were comparatively circumscribed, and this may have made them more reliant on manumission than men. Similarly, gender norms, while varying from society to society, restricted female slaveholders’ management choices, especially in regard to personally inflicting corporal punishment, and manumission may have emerged as a favored method of motivating bondpersons. Familial concerns may have also contributed to the overrepresentation of females among manumittees. Whereas male slaveholders might expect bondpersons
to serve their widows and children, widows may have had more discretion in disposing of their property, a flexibility that could bode well for favored slaves. Finally, bondpersons understood female slaveholders’ legal, social, and familial situation, and manipulated it to their advantage. In short, slave-owning women were as invested in bondage as their male counterparts, but differing circumstances led many to utilize manumission as a way to protect their profits.

Slaves and slaveholders were not the only ones involved in the domain of manumission. Other parties made their presence felt, including lawmakers. The legislators’ influence fluctuated over time. Until the mid-1700s, manumission statutes tended to be unobtrusive. Thereafter, government officials made manumission a more cumbersome process, although Brazil was somewhat of an exception to this trend. In Martinique, Barbados, and Jamaica, the crackdown reflected growing white fears about free black economic competition and servile revolt. The same anxieties were evident in the nineteenth century in the United States and Cuba where the profitability of the cotton and sugar revolutions fuelled slaveholders’ concerns that the supply of bondpersons would diminish due to restrictions on the Atlantic slave trade. By the early nineteenth century, legislators not only required emancipators to post bonds to insure that manumittes would not become public charges, they also prohibited various methods of liberation such as testamentary emancipations and banned the freeing of certain bondpersons, especially the elderly.

Public opinion also affected manumission patterns. When local attitudes countenanced slave flight, bondpersons had greater leverage in negotiating for manumission. In the post-Revolutionary Northern United States, for example, slavery collapsed more quickly than lawmakers had intended, partially because slaves used the burgeoning antislavery sentiment to exact promises of expeditious freedom from their owners. Comparable events transpired in northeastern Brazil 100 years later, when private manumissions outpaced the statutory timetable for gradual abolition. Conversely, when public opinion was not in the slaves’ favor, bondpersons had more difficulty securing freedom. Simply put, outside parties always affected emancipatory ventures.

The ventures did not end once slaves obtained liberty. There was also the question of the freedpersons’ place in the social order. Two important factors in determining manumittes’ status was their relationship with their former owner and the character of the larger society. Some ex-slaves fared better than others, but none enjoyed socioeconomic and political equality.

Manumission conferred freedom, not independence. Many emancipators expected subordination and fealty from their former slaves. Consequently, freedpersons struggled to escape their ex-owners’ control. For some, the terms of manumission obliged them to additional labor. For others, the law demanded that they show deference to their former owners and serve them dutifully. For still others, affective bonds with enslaved kin kept them within their ex-owner’s sphere of power. Destitution likewise impaired manumittes’ quest for autonomy. Self-purchase agreements could leave freedpersons penniless and past their most economically productive years, with
the result being that they remained dependent on their old owners. Even individuals with valuable occupational skills found that white antipathy might stall their drive for independence. Similarly, rural manumittees who could not acquire land were frequently at their ex-owners’ mercy. In sum, the mode of manumission, legal regulations, familial considerations, and economic matters affected freedpersons’ chances for self-determination.

A multiplicity of variables also influenced freedpersons’ status in the larger society. Racial attitudes, demographic trends, economic conditions, and legal codes were among the most important. This tumult of forces never produced a racially egalitarian culture in the Americas, but by the early nineteenth century three distinctive societal patterns had emerged. First, in most of the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking areas, freedpersons’ numerical strength (25 to 50 percent of the population) and economic power (especially in urban locales) provided opportunities for upward mobility, but white racism and civil disabilities limited their prospects, rendering free people of color a large and diverse caste unto themselves. Second, in many parts of the British and French Caribbean, as well as in Dutch Surinam, “free coloreds” served as a racial buffer between an overwhelming slave majority and a white minority that feared servile insurrections. The free people of color exploited their advantage, sometimes becoming large slaveholders and even citizens, yet they still labored under the stigma of their mixed-racial ancestry and former servile status. Last, in the antebellum United States, free blacks constituted only 6 to 8 percent of the Southern population, but they faced a level of enmity that was perhaps unparalleled in the history of slavery, a hostility that inspired laws that required the departure of new manumittees and a colonization movement that championed the removal of African Americans beyond the country’s borders. Thus Southern free blacks probably understood better than anyone that manumission was a protracted, multiparty undertaking that resulted in liberty, not equality.


Eric Burin

Maroons of Jamaica/Tacky Rebellion

The Maroons are fundamental to the history of resistance in the Caribbean, and next to the Guianas, Jamaica had the largest Maroon community
in the British-colonized Caribbean, with Portland, St. Thomas-in-the-East, St. Mary, Trelawny, and St. Elizabeth having been the parishes with the largest centers of Maroon settlement. The meaning of the word *Maroon* has been subject to debate. Some writers insist that it derives from the Spanish word *cimarron*, meaning cattle that had escaped to the wilds, and later applied to Tainos and Kalinagos and later Africans, who escaped European colonization across the Americas (including Brazil where *quilombos* emerged) and established free communities in the forests and mountains. The earliest Maroons in Jamaica were the Tainos who escaped Spanish exploitation. They were joined later by runaway Africans. *Marronage*, derived from *Maroons*, signifies flight to the forest or mountains (or by sea to other territories) and the formation of Maroon communities. The height of marronage was after the British capture of Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655. Between 1655 and 1739 [when the first Maroon war ended], Maroon Towns had been established firmly at Accompong (St. Elizabeth), Trelawny Town (the Leeward Maroons in the Cockpit country), Scott’s Hall (St. Mary), and at Crawford Town, Nanny Town and Moore Town in the Blue Mountain range of eastern Jamaica (the Windward Maroons).

The Maroons secured their freedom through treaties in 1739 and 1795, respectively, after the first and second Anglo-Maroon wars. Several individual Maroon leaders have come to light, including Cudjoe and Nanny (the most famous), who fought for freedom for the Windward (Blue Mountain area) Maroons. The post-treaty history of the Maroons has been contentious. Their treaty obligations required them to assist the British in suppressing revolts and returning runaways (although many Maroons did not collaborate with the treaty agreement) in exchange for land for their villages and their own freedom. This collaborative role that many played has been resented by many Caribbean people.

One example of this collaborative role was during the suppression of the Tacky Rebellion. Tacky, said to have been from the Coromanti ethnic group in Guinea, West Africa, is said to have been the leader of the 1760 slave revolt in Jamaica’s northern parish of St. Mary. At the time, he was headman on Frontier sugar plantation, meaning that he was among the supervisory group. This revolt broke out on Easter Sunday, April 8, 1760, and it involved arson, the killing of about sixteen whites, and the destruction of several sugar estates. Weapons were obtained from Fort Haldane in Port Maria, the capital city of St. Mary, to which Tacky led a small band of other enslaved peoples to capture the weapon-stocked fort. After killing the storekeeper, Tacky and his men took four barrels of gunpowder and forty firearms. The band of rebels went on to set fire to the sugar works at Heywood Plantation. They took over Frontier and Trinity plantations, destroyed Esher Estate and Ballards Valley Estate and engaged the British troops at Bagnolds, drawing the troops into an ambush. Martial law was imposed by the governor of Jamaica who also enlisted the aid of the Windward Maroons [from Crawford Town, Nanny Town], as well as from Scotts Hall, in an effort to quell the rebellion. Oral history indicates that not all of the Maroons fought against Tacky.

By June 1760, the rebellion had been crushed. Tacky himself is said to have been killed by a Maroon, Davy; and many of his followers were said to
have committed suicide in a cave near what is now Tacky’s Falls. Oral tradition indicates that Tacky escaped. As in other rebellions, those freedom fighters captured were brutally punished either by being burnt alive, whipped, imprisoned, executed, or deported. Tacky’s revolt inspired over 1,000 enslaved people in Westmoreland, Hanover, and St. Thomas-in-the-east to revolt. By the end of 1760, over 60 whites and 300 enslaved had been killed as a result of wars of rebellion. See also Palenques (Colombia).


Verene Shepherd

Martineau, Harriet (1802–1875)

Harriet Martineau was an English reformer who opposed slavery in books and speeches as well as in her travels to the United States. She was born in Norwich to a merchant family of Huguenot descent. Her parents encouraged intellectual growth for both male and female children, though the destiny of their daughters remained in their eyes bound to the household.

Harriet proved to be a precocious child. She translated Tacitus and read Thomas Malthus's work on population at the age of fifteen. Within a short time she embraced the political economy of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Under their influence she became a reformer on a number of issues, including her opposition to slavery.

In the early 1830s, Martineau published “Demerara,” a short story condemning slavery, as well as two antislavery articles. At first she stressed that slavery was bad economics and business, but more substantially she argued that it was an unspeakable wrong committed against the blacks. For a while Martineau supported the plan for emigration of slaves back to Africa, but she came to feel that the numbers of those who had chosen this path were so small it was a failure, and also a moral failure because she abhorred the notion that blacks and whites could not live together in the same society.

In 1834, Martineau embarked on a trip to the United States; she was already identified as an abolitionist. When she arrived in New York, the captain hesitated to let her off the ship because of the recent race riots in that city. He was convinced to do so only when her traveling companion assured him that although Martineau was an abolitionist, she was not an activist.

In her later book about this trip, Martineau describes one particular incident in 1835 in Boston that seemed especially important. There she attended a meeting of the ladies auxiliary of the antislavery society, and during its course was asked to comment on the question of abolition. Martineau hesitated at first because, although she had voiced her opinion in England, this would be her first public statement in America. Finally, she did make a public statement in favor of abolition and for that Martineau received death threats and threats that she would be tarred and feathered.
Another consequence of Martineau's trip was that she came in contact with William Lloyd Garrison, and through his influence she strengthened her position against the evil of slavery. Martineau saw for herself what conditions were really like and, like Garrison, came to see that there was no possible justification for it. Conditions could be improved and the black made equal through education.

During her travels in the United States, Martineau also became more aware of another reforming issue, the subjugation of women. She saw this vividly portrayed in the South, but it also was a notable factor in the North. In 1837, for example, the clergy of Massachusetts issued a pastoral letter criticizing the unfeminine activities of women in the antislavery movement. One thing that became clear to her was the close kinship between the liberation of women and the liberation of slavery. One gets another perspective on this close connection from her later book about the Middle East, where she strongly condemned the way in which the Turkish Sultan held his harem in virtual slavery.

Another revealing aspect of Martineau's American trip came when she decided to adopt a slave girl who, it seemed, could no longer be maintained by her owner. Martineau planned for her education either as a domestic servant or worker. The child never came to live with her, but some scholars have found it patronizing that she did not set higher goals for the girl, while others have looked at it in the context of the time.

On her return to England, she continued to support the antislavery movement through such means as raising money and welcomed the United States Civil War as the way to achieve abolition. It is thought that Martineau may have influenced English public opinion in favor of the Union. An ardent reformer who campaigned for the rights of blacks, women, and the underprivileged, she died in 1875. See also American Colonization Society; Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism.


Marc L. Schwarz

Memorialization of Antislavery and Abolition

Throughout the history of slavery, there have been individuals of various races and from various countries who have fought for its abolition. Several of these abolitionists have been honored with memorials, including statues and plaques, conventions, celebrations, and the naming of various buildings and public spaces.

One of the most famous American abolitionists was Sojourner Truth. Born Isabella Van Wagenen in New York in 1797, Truth was sold many times as a slave. Although she escaped from slavery and helped others to do the same, her freedom was not fully secured until after abolition in New York, in 1827. Truth eventually made Battle Creek, Michigan, her home for more than twenty years, and that city has erected a Monument Park in which Truth has a memorial dedicated to her fight for women's rights and
to her efforts to guide escaped slaves through the **Underground Railroad**. There have also been numerous other monuments built in her honor. A portion of highway I-194 and M-66 in Michigan has been designated the Sojourner Truth Memorial Highway. Other noteworthy commemorations of Truth include her induction into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame in Lansing in 1983 and, in 1986, a postage stamp issued by the United States government. In 2002, the bronze Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue was erected in Florence, Massachusetts; it stands atop an eight-foot pedestal surrounded by gardens and flowers.

The renowned abolitionist, **William Lloyd Garrison**, has also been memorialized, although not as extensively as Truth. In Boston, a statue of William Lloyd Garrison is prominently situated in the Commonwealth Mall with the inscription “My countrymen are all mankind.” The statue sits in the middle of one of the busiest streets in Boston.

**Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe** knew Garrison well. Stowe was born in Litchfield, Connecticut and is best remembered for her book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and other literary efforts attacking slavery. She also assisted fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. Today Stowe has a library and museum named after her in Hartford, Connecticut, where her papers and memorabilia are housed along with many unique works and correspondence of other noteworthy abolitionists.

A memorial was erected in honor of the highly regarded orator and abolitionist **Frederick Douglass** in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he lived in the late 1830s. The statue sits outside of the New Bedford City Hall and mentions that Douglass changed his name from Frederick Baily to Frederick Douglass to make it more difficult for Southern slave catchers to find him. Douglass and his dedication to freedom are memorialized in innumerable sites in the United States and beyond.

As antislavery and abolition did not only take place in the United States, the United States is not the only place where one finds them memorialized. The centennial of the abolition of slavery in Cuba was celebrated with the holding of several conferences in 1986. Also, in 1988, conferences were held to commemorate the abolition of slavery in Brazil, an event that involved numerous historical congresses and other ceremonies. The editor of the journal *American Historical Review* decided to dedicate the entire August 1988 issue to mark the anniversary. Also, a statue of **Abraham Lincoln** freeing the slaves stands nearby London’s famed Westminster Abbey.

A memorial to the slaves at Mount Vernon, the former home of President George Washington, was dedicated on September 21, 1983. The memorial sits on the slaves’ burial site, where it is believed over 300 enslaved people were interred. In 2001, in Lawnside, New Jersey, the Peter Mott House officially opened to the public. The house is a memorial for those who ran the Underground Railroad. The house stands as a museum to those who helped the slaves find their way to freedom. The house, constructed over 160 years ago, was inhabited by black businessmen and farmers whom helped escaped slaves to freedom.

On January 1, 1883, in Washington, D.C., a large and important celebration took place. It was the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the
Emancipation Proclamation and a celebration of black abolitionist men. This was the first time an assemblage of influential African American leaders had gathered together. It was at this dinner and all across the country that African Americans first began to commemorate their struggles for freedom. January 1 became Emancipation Day and was celebrated within the African American communities in the North and South. This celebration and commemoration was the first of many in 1883, most of which memorialized black and white abolitionists and their fight for freedom and equality.

The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial to the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Colored Regiments is one of the most eminent commemorations of African Americans’ struggle against slavery. It was dedicated in the Boston Common in May 1897 with a large, solemn parade that included veterans from the two regiments and over 3,500 cadets, seamen, militia, and mounted police. It remains the single most important memorial to the over 180,000 black men who fought against Southern slavery from January 1863 to the Civil War’s end. Many of the Fifty-Fourth’s men died at the Battle of Fort Wagner in Charleston Harbor in July 1863, a battle that the New York Tribune proclaimed, “made Fort Wagner such a name to the colored race as Bunker Hill had been for ninety years to the white Yankees.” This memorial was of enormous significance for it served to remind an American public of a fact that most had forgotten by the century’s end—that the bloody and ultimate Union victory in April 1865 had been very dependent upon the tens of thousands of courageous black troops from the North and South who enthusiastically volunteered to smash the institution which had beleaguered them for so long.

The timing for the Shaw installation was propitious for the nation as a whole, as the South, in particular, was actually then engaged in a very contrary memorialization. Throughout the South, Confederate soldiers were being commemorated with statues and large monuments for their brave defense of their states and the Confederacy. As laws disenfranchising and segregating blacks were being passed throughout the South at century’s end, and Northerners were encouraged to leave the white South alone to resolve its race “problem,” a new and amicable reunion between the white North and South was promoted. Newly erected memorials both North and South celebrated only white veterans and their heroism, and all but denied the vast involvement of African Americans in the great struggle. The acme of this process of forgetting was the great encampment of white veterans in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1913 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the terrible battle. No black veterans were invited to this event, which highlighted the renewed bond of national fellowship between Southern and Northern white men.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, many historians who wrote about the Civil War and the crisis preceding it in the 1850s blamed the abolitionists and irresponsible antislavery forces in the North for causing the war. Through their ceaseless and distorted propaganda against slavery and supposed support for John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, they had needlessly inflamed an anxious South about the security of their control over their legal property—the slaves—and led them to choose secession as
their only feasible recourse. By the mid-twentieth century, however, a vast
revision of the history of slavery, antislavery, and the causes of the Civil War
were undertaken, which highlighted the causative significance of Southern
intransigence in the 1850s and the bold courage rather than corrupt fanati-
cism of the abolitionists. The bravery and dedication of Civil Rights workers
in the South in the 1950s and 1960s helped stimulate a rethinking of the
role and importance of the abolitionists in antebellum America. The civil
rights movement and the reevaluation of the role of antislavery in antebel-
lum America contributed to a new endeavor to commemorate the struggles
of those who had fought against slavery before and during the Civil War.
Along with a host of Web sites affording a positive history of abolitionism,
the most prominent example of this drive to memorialize antislavery is the
recent completion in Cincinnati of the National Underground Railroad Free-
dom Center.

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Johnathan L. Carter

Mennonites

American Mennonites had a consistent record of opposition to slavery,
principally by not permitting any church member to own a slave, but they
did not generally take part in public campaigns for abolition. As early as
1663, Dutch Mennonites in Pieter Plockhoy’s short-lived colony in Delaware
banned slavery and slave traders from their settlement. The 1688 German-
town protest against slavery emerged from a group of Quakers of Mennon-
ite origin, some of whom organized the first Mennonite congregation in
America a decade later.

In the eighteenth century, Mennonites settled in southeastern Pennsylva-
nia and western Virginia, where slave-owning was more a status symbol
than an economic necessity. As with their Quaker neighbors, simple living
was one source of Mennonite antislavery testimony. John Hunt, a contempo-
orary New Jersey Quaker, pointed to the practice of Lancaster County, Penn-
sylvania, Mennonites in rejecting “superfluities” like owning slaves. John
Woolman cited the example of a York County, Pennsylvania, Mennonite
who chose to sleep in a field rather than be waited on by his friend’s slaves.
Unlike Quakers, some of whom owned slaves and had to be convinced to
give them up, the Mennonite ban on slave owning was complete; Pennsyl-
mania tax records reveal no slave owners among Mennonites or the related
Dunkers (Church of the Brethren). As early as 1761, Dunker Elder Christo-
pher Sauer wrote against the slave trade as “an evil and a sin.”

The prohibition against church members owning slaves was universal in
the nineteenth century too. A Mennonite catechism published by Peter
Burkholder at Winchester, Virginia, in 1837 repeated the admonition against slavery and the slave trade because “all are free in Christ.” In one of the earliest extant records of the Virginia Conference, it was “Decided that inasmuch as it is against our creed and discipline to own or traffic in slaves; so it is also forbidden for a brother to hire a slave unless such slave be entitled to receive the pay for such labor by the consent of his owner.”

The Dunkers reiterated their ban on members owning slaves at their annual meeting in 1782, but, in 1787, permitted candidates for baptism who already held slaves to keep them long enough to recover the purchase price before freeing them. They went on record in 1812 that both slavery and the slave trade “should be abolished as soon as possible.”

Although generally wary of political activity, Mennonites in eastern Pennsylvania signed petitions to Congress in the 1830s for the abolition of slavery. They also opposed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The Underground Railroad appealed to Mennonite sensibilities, giving aid to strangers in need. Pennsylvania Mennonites Daniel Kauffman, Deacon Samuel Kendig, Christian Frantz, and Augustus W. Cain were arrested for smuggling slaves to freedom. Lancaster County Mennonites were accused of voting for abolitionists, although this assertion cannot be documented. Areas with a substantial Mennonite vote certainly returned antislavery candidates, such as Thaddeus Stevens. See also Germantown Antislavery Petition.


Richard MacMaster

Methodists and Antislavery

Founded in England in the eighteenth century by John Wesley, the Methodist Episcopal Church grew rapidly and, by the eve of the Civil War, was one of the largest denominations in the United States. Like other Christian churches, the Methodists divided in the wake of increased agitation against the institution of slavery. Although some Methodists joined the abolitionist movement in its earliest days and the Wesleyan embrace of the doctrine of holiness lent itself to a theological opposition to slavery, the church was unable to maintain unity in the face of such a divisive issue.

Created by the revivals led by John Wesley in England, Methodism came to the United States in the era of the Revolutionary War, a period during which antislavery sentiment swept the nation. Accordingly, the first Methodist discipline in America was decidedly antislavery, condemning both slave ownership and the slave trade as sinful. This was in keeping with John Wesley’s own antislavery stance in England, but the American church soon broke with that tradition. As the church grew during the Second Great Awakening, church discipline was one of its defining characteristics. Its top-down church government emphasized a strict discipline that was inflexible.
In the North, especially in New England, ministers and superintendents had no problem with enforcing the regulations against slavery as their congregations grew in the wake of revivalism. Indeed, revivalism fed into social reform, and Northern Methodists were actively involved in antislavery as well as other benevolent activities. In the South, however, revivalism coincided with a social conservatism that restricted the scope of social reform, and rapid membership growth brought the question of slavery to the fore. To maintain unity and encourage church expansion, the Methodist Church began to accommodate slave ownership by not enforcing the rules against it. Sectional unity was maintained by official silence on the issue.

When the abolitionist movement came to prominence in the 1830s, such official silence was no longer possible. New England Methodists readily joined abolitionist organizations and began pushing for enforcement of the discipline on the issue. They did not believe they could have Christian fellowship with the owners of slaves. In the mid-Atlantic and mid-West, some Methodists joined the abolitionist movement, but most kept the silence needed for unity. In 1836, the increasing power of abolitionism required official action. This led to the Methodist General Conference condemning the evils of slavery, but the leaders of the church tried to keep unity by also denouncing the methods of abolitionism. Although this mixed message managed to sustain church unity, it only served to increase the dissatisfaction of Methodist abolitionists. As the years went by, more and more antislavery Methodists began to realize that their church would not take action against the peculiar institution. Increasingly, the only alternative for them seemed to be to join come-outer churches that would split from the main denomination and form smaller organizations dedicated to purity in both theology and politics. In 1841, this led to the creation of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, which opposed slavery and emphasized the holiness doctrine of entire sanctification. This doctrine, taught by Wesley, held that Christian perfection (holiness) was achievable in the face of a corrupt and sinful world. Northern Methodists and other proponents of sanctification believed that individuals could live without sin through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. This led them to denounce the sin of slave owning along with such other practices as the use of tobacco and alcohol. If Christian perfection could be lived in the real world, then it was not necessary to compromise on issues of discipline.

Meanwhile, opponents of slavery who remained members of the Methodist Episcopal Church continued trying to overturn the policy of silence. They cried out against the slaveholding of Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia and called for church action to remove him from the episcopate. This set the stage for the General Conference of 1844 in New York City, where everyone realized the issue would be debated. In a dramatic meeting, the conference delegates struggled with the issue of slavery for two long weeks. The question of slavery raised the question of discipline, which in turn raised the question of church government. Many Methodists flattered themselves by arguing that their church was uniquely American in that it was democratic and individualistic. But the official church government was autocratic and provided for a strong episcopacy. Should the church be centralized or decentralized?
Should slave-owning be considered a sin or not? Could a compromise be reached? After a vigorous debate, the delegates voted and decided, by a vote of 111 to 69, that Bishop Andrew should step down from his position as long as he owned slaves. Outraged Southerners began planning to break with the church, while Northerners insisted that, if the church did not discipline the bishop, they would secede from the ecclesiastical union.

In response, moderate Southern delegates tried to forge a compromise, presenting a plan that called for the creation of two general conferences instead of one. While some Northerners resisted the plan, others supported it in hopes of achieving an amicable resolution to the problem. When the vote was taken, the plan was rejected. Amid calls for a friendly separation, the conference ended. Almost immediately, the Southerners called for a conference of Southern churches and they convened in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1845, where they created the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Northerners were unable to achieve the conciliatory break that some had hoped for. Despite the fact that the Southern church sent a delegate to the Northern conference in hopes of cooperating where possible, the Northern churches further divided on the issue. Abolitionists and other Northern Methodists cried out against Southern secession, arguing that the move was unconstitutional. One major point of contention was the matter of the Methodist publication empire, which both sections had long shared. In 1848, the Northern church refused to accept the Southern delegate and voted to reject any plan for peaceful separation. Tensions mounted as some Northern conferences extended into slave states, and there were arguments over where the boundary between the sectional churches should be drawn. When the division of the publication arm of the church could not be resolved, the Southern church took the matter to court and was awarded a pro rata division in the 1850s.

Thus, the antislavery movement and the question of whether or not slave-owning was a sin divided the Methodist Episcopal Church. Although the division slowed the come-outer movement, the Northern church was not able to recover the lost members who had joined smaller groups like the Wesleyans. The piety of the holiness movement called for stricter discipline and a devotion to entire sanctification that the larger church simply could not provide. A similar split among the Baptists soon followed the division of the Methodists. These religious secession movements foreshadowed political division and remained long after the Civil War. The Methodist Episcopal Church did not reunite until 1939, although dissenting Southern churches again seceded the following year. See also First Great Awakening and Antislavery.


A. James Fuller
Mexican War and Antislavery

The Mexican War (1846–1848), prosecuted by the Democratic administration of James K. Polk, inspired the emergence of a broad-based, politicized antislavery movement that eclipsed the abolitionism of the 1830s and intensified the bitter debate over whether to prohibit or recognize slavery in the federal territories.

Antislavery Northerners complained that the Mexican War was an unprovoked act of aggression whose territorial accessions would mainly benefit Southern (slaveholding) migrants. South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun had boldly asserted the annexation of Texas (the primary cause of war with Mexico) was necessary to provide slavery a western outlet for expansion. This alarmed many Northern free-white-labor advocates who hoped to see slavery restricted to the existing Southern states. The seemingly proslavery nature of the war inspired Henry David Thoreau to write his essay *Civil Disobedience*. Nevertheless, most Northerners of both parties accepted the war.

Still, many people tried to prevent slavery’s expansion into territories gained in the war, though not all for the same reason. On August 8, 1846, David Wilmot, an obscure Democratic representative from Pennsylvania, authored an amendment to a war-time appropriations bill that stipulated “as an express and fundamental condition of the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico … neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory.” Though Congress failed to adopt it, the Wilmot Proviso’s principle of congressional prohibition of slavery’s expansion would serve as the ideological foundation of the new anti-slavery Free Soil Party in 1848.

The proviso was not an abolitionist document. It made a broader appeal to Northerners’ self-interest in defending freedom, especially free labor, rather than to their moral objections to slavery. Wilmot authored his proviso in part out of contempt for black labor and a desire to keep it out of the West. Notwithstanding such instances of racism, many antislavery proponents were quite progressive at the time. Although some Free Soilers, such as Salmon P. Chase, Charles Sumner, and Joshua Giddings, consistently promoted citizenship and voting rights for free black men, they were a distinct minority. Most antislavery supporters had never espoused immediate abolitionism, believing instead that to restrict the expansion of slavery was to set it on the path to peaceful extinction.

In the *Compromise of 1850*, the antislavery movement met with partial success in prohibiting slavery from the territories gained in the Mexican War. That compromise, an omnibus bill consisting of several elements, admitted California as a free state. Importantly, it also allowed for popular sovereignty—a doctrine by which territorial settlers would determine, among other matters, whether or not to recognize slavery—to govern the New Mexico Territory. Inspired directly by the conflicts over the Mexican War, popular sovereignty achieved only limited acceptance among the anti-slavery movement. When it was incorporated into the 1854 bill to organize the Kansas and Nebraska territories, antislavery leaders bitterly resisted since those territories had previously been pledged to freedom by the
provisions of the Missouri Compromise. Yet, by 1856, popular sovereignty in Kansas meant internecine warfare between antislavery and proslavery settlers. The Mexican War further inflamed the dispute over slavery and the territories. Antislavery and proslavery forces would clash over “ownership” of the territories with increasing frequency throughout the 1850s, indeed, until secession and the United States Civil War itself. See also Immediate Emancipation; Texas, Annexation of.


Matthew Isham

**Mill, John Stuart (1806–1873)**

John Stuart Mill is perhaps best known for his formulation of “Utilitarianism,” a moral philosophy predicated on an individual’s right to seek happiness. Mill’s later political philosophical writings on liberty, political economy, and individuality are equally noteworthy. Indeed, toward the end of his life, Mill became increasingly active in political affairs and devoted to causes of social justice.

While slavery and its abolition were not primary concerns of Mill, a majority of his writings dealt with contemporary social and political issues; slavery thus became a recurrent theme. In general, Mill was against slavery yet he never systematically delineated that opposition in any one work. Rather, his arguments against slavery were peppered throughout his writings.

For Mill, slavery was both a political and a philosophical problem. Politically, Mill argued that it was the duty of more powerful nations to entreat other and less powerful nations to enhance liberty. A fundamental way to expand and improve liberty was to abolish slavery. Thus Mill favored a British international policy that would not support slavery in America or elsewhere. Philosophically, Mill opposed slavery because it impeded individuals’ realization of liberty and happiness.

He developed this understanding more fully in one of his most famous works, *On Individuality*, in which he argued that slavery was an
institution predicated on harm and as such constituted a clear social problem: “Acts, of whatever kind, which, without justifiable cause, do harm to others, may be, and in the more important cases absolutely require to be, controlled by the unfavorable sentiments, and, when needful, by the active interference of mankind. The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people.”

Mill found slavery problematic for two reasons. First, it did not allow enslaved individuals to attain and develop his or her full individuality. Second, it allowed some individuals—the slave owners—to harm other individuals, physically and psychologically. The unequal distribution of power enabled the abuse of one class of individuals by another. Slavery epitomized such a misappropriation of power: “[T]he only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.”

For Mill, slavery represented a hindrance to the development of a just society: Its abolition would necessarily be a contribution to “human advancement.”


*Noah Butler*

**Millennialism and Abolitionism**

The Book of Revelation, the last book of the *Bible*, prophesies a 1000-year period of peace to be enjoyed by the faithful. Another name for the Book of Revelation is the Apocalypse, and the millennium has often been termed the New Jerusalem. Questions about the millennium began preoccupying European and American Protestants in the seventeenth century. When would the millennium occur, or had it already begun? Was its beginning sudden or gradual, violent or pacific? Who would enjoy it, and how could the faithful prepare for it? Was it a state in the world or in the hearts of believers? Would it be accompanied by the corporeal resurrection of the faithful deceased as well as by the reappearance of Christ in history, either before (premillennialism) or after (postmillennialism) the golden age? Were there signs of the dawning of the millennium, such as the commonly accepted one of the return of Jews to the Holy Lands? Answers to some of these questions became intertwined with protests against the slave trade and New World slavery.

One influential millennialist was *Jonathan Edwards*, the eighteenth-century Calvinist American theologian, whose prophetic description of the 1000-year period of peace included black and Indian divines. Edwards believed that the forces of evil—those followers of Antichrist—had been losing battles to the forces of good since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, but that Antichrist was still waging war against God. Edwards’s literary executor and theological heir, *Samuel Hopkins*, infused his mentor’s ideas with
abolitionism by arguing in his *Treatise on the Millennium* (1793) that the slave trade and slavery were among the worst sins committed by Antichrist's followers and were part of the final battle between the forces of good and those of evil. Believers should root out slavery, not only because it was sinful but also because in doing so they were participating in the advent of the millennium. Edwards's grandson, Timothy Dwight, a leading theologian and president of Yale College, enhanced the connection between the millennium and abolitionism in two *Discourses* (1812). Dwight elevated the end of the British and the American trade in slaves (1807 and 1808) to the level of major steps in God's plan to bring forward the millennium. In his book-length poem *Greenfield Hill* (1794), Dwight envisioned, in a postmillennial mood, the human ideal of a harmonious society created at last in America. Harmony among all races was a crucial part of Dwight's vision: “All mingling, as the rainbow's beauty blends/Unknown where every hue begins or ends.”

In the early nineteenth century, postmillenialism became the American Protestant consensus. Progress in America—religious, political, economic, material—was to open the gates of the golden age, after which Christ would reappear in triumph. Yet this progress might well be accompanied by great conflict with further chapters in the ongoing struggle between good and evil. For both many Northerners and many Southerners, the battle over slavery was one such chapter. Throughout the several decades before the Civil War, some Americans voiced premonitions of hostility and destruction. A trial by fire or a baptism by blood was, in the abolitionist view, to purge the nation of the sin of slaveholding or, in the proslavery mind, remove the influence of the corrupt North from the plantation South. Apocalyptic notions and images were found widely in American arts, religion, and politics. Indeed, in the most famous antislavery novel, *Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), when the black protagonist is sold away from his family and, ultimately to his death, his master intones, “It's done!... and, fetching a long breath, he repeated, “It's done!” Stowe was alluding to one of the key passages from the Book of Revelation describing the violent judgment of God:

> And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. (Revelation 16:17–19)

The slavetraders and slaveholders were, of course, in Stowe's mind, inviting such divine judgment upon the nation as well as upon themselves.

Scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have sometimes been critical of millenialist abolitionism, which seems not to have concerned itself with black freedom except insofar as it was part of a vast divine design. Black men and black women seem to have been merely figures in the progress of the millennium, not individuals deserving civic freedom in their own
right. Uncle Tom himself, for instance, is an ideal type with the qualities of a saint, not a flesh-and-blood man. An answer to this criticism is that millennialists tended to understand all things and events as part of the divine design, so they were scarcely capable of comprehending civic freedom, whether of black or white, as a good in and of itself. Moreover, their absorption of the battle against slavery into the progress toward the millennium did make abolitionism a matter of the utmost moral urgency. A millennialist element was a crucial part of the nineteenth-century crusade that helped end North American slavery. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism.


*Missouri Compromise (1820)*

In 1803, when President Thomas Jefferson authorized American negotiators to purchase Louisiana from Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France for $15 million, Jefferson believed that he had secured the independence of the yeoman farmer for centuries. Jefferson, however, lived to see his purchase become a fierce battleground between North and South over the issue of slavery. As Americans moved westward, so too did slavery. Matters came to a head in 1819, when Missouri Territory applied for statehood. Missouri had the requisite number of inhabitants to apply for statehood, but it also had roughly 3,000 slaves. Missouri thus threatened to become the first slaveholding state that lay completely west of the Mississippi River.

On February 13, 1819, Representative James Tallmadge, a Jeffersonian Republican from New York, offered an amendment to the Missouri statehood bill. This amendment contained two parts. The first part called for a ban on further importations of slaves into Missouri. The second part outlined a gradual emancipation plan similar to that of New York’s, in which the children of adult slaves would receive their freedom at the age of twenty-five. Adult slaves would remain in bondage. Tallmadge’s amendment created a political firestorm that lasted for two days in the House of Representatives, and two years in the nation.

The House of Representatives, in which the North enjoyed a numerical majority, voted to support the Tallmadge Amendment, but the Senate, which was evenly divided between free and slave states, rejected it. This voting alignment repeated itself throughout most of the Missouri Crisis of 1819–1821. Supporters of slavery in the Senate not only enjoyed the balance of free and slave states, but also the support of senators from states such as Illinois and Indiana, technically free states, but ones with a pronounced Southern influence.

As the House and Senate failed to agree, the bill could not proceed and had to wait until the next session of Congress before any action could
occur. While Congress was between sessions, the Missouri issue caught fire in the Northern states. Large assemblies of citizens around the North met and wrote petitions that they sent to their members of Congress, asking them to support Missouri statehood without slavery. Residents of Missouri, likewise, held meetings to protest the actions of the House of Representatives. These meetings also produced petitions, urging Congress to grant Missouri statehood without restriction as to slavery.

The Sixteenth Congress began its first session in this highly charged atmosphere in November 1819. Missouri took up much of the agenda from November until early March 1820. Speeches poured forth from representatives and senators, as did essays in newspapers. Men argued about the place of slavery in the American republic, the effect of slavery on national character, the degrading influence of slavery on free labor, the three-fifths clause and its impact on national politics, whether Congress had the power to restrict slavery in a territory and a state, and whether Congress had the power to regulate the movement of slaves across state lines. Antislavery Northerners, such as Representatives Timothy Fuller of Massachusetts and Arthur Livermore of New Hampshire, had railed against slavery as an institution in the previous session, going so far as to call it a sin. Some Southerners, such as Senator William Smith of South Carolina, openly defended slavery in the session in late 1819 and launched a new intellectual trend in the South. Representative William Plumer, Jr., of New Hampshire, reported that talk of secession regularly dropped from the lips of Southern members of Congress, should Missouri enter the Union without slavery.

A compromise was already in the works, designed to prevent the possibility of secession. Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky and Senator James Barbour of Virginia were in close contact with President James Monroe. Monroe favored Missouri becoming a slave state, but he also supported the idea of a compromise. Maine had been a province of Massachusetts for several decades, but its residents had grown both in numbers and desire for independence. The Massachusetts legislature granted them the opportunity to apply for statehood in 1819. The Senate linked the statehood bills of Maine and Missouri. If Missouri failed to enter the Union, Maine would suffer the same fate. Despite howls of protest from antislavery Northerners, the Senate approved the bills for Maine without slavery and Missouri without restriction as to slavery. After much debate, the solidarity of the Northerners in the House of Representatives broke, and by a vote of 90 to 87, the House approved the bill for Missouri to form a state government without restriction as to slavery. As part of this package, the House and Senate approved legislation that created a geographic line at 36° 30', the southern boundary of Missouri. There was to be no slavery north of this line, with Missouri being the only exception to this rule.

The compromise was unpopular in much of the North, as well as in Virginia. Antislavery Northerners believed that this failed effort to halt the westward spread of slavery represented a capitulation to the South, a conclusion buttressed by Representative John Randolph of Virginia, who sneered that the men who voted with the South were doughfaces. Many Virginians felt much the same as many antislavery Northerners. These
Virginians believed that the slaveholding South had given up too much territory in this compromise.

The compromise reached earlier in 1820 almost came undone that summer when the Missouri legislature wrote a state constitution that called for a ban on free black and mulatto immigration into the new state. This proposed clause angered many Northerners, as well as some Southerners. The clause raised the issue of black citizenship and whether the proposed ban violated the privileges and immunity clause of the United States Constitution. Under the terms of this clause, all citizens share federal rights in all of the states in the Union. There was much debate over the place of African Americans in the republic, but no consensus. Congress finally agreed to require Missouri's legislature never to pass any law that might infringe on the privilege and immunities of an American citizen. The Missouri legislature agreed, and Missouri entered the Union in August 1821. With this second compromise the American republic had navigated its way through the most threatening political crisis that had yet gripped the nation. The compromise would last until the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 repealed it. See also Compromise of 1850; Mexican War and Antislavery.


James C. Foley

Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, Baron de (1689–1755)

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, was a French intellectual whose writings were influential not only in Enlightenment Europe but in North America as well. Montesquieu is best known for his lengthy book The Spirit of Laws, published in 1748. In this famous work, Montesquieu examined the evolution of law by comparing a wide variety of political, social, and historical contexts from throughout the world.

Montesquieu articulated his views on slavery in Part 3 of The Spirit of Laws. First, he offered a definition: “Slavery in its proper sense is the establishment of a right which makes one man so much the owner of another man that he is the absolute master of his life and his goods.” His opinion of slavery was frank: “it is not good by its nature.”

For Montesquieu, slavery was problematic for two reasons. First, it limited the choices a slave had. In so doing, it prevented a slave from fully developing a sense of “virtue” and acting from it because slaves were forced instead to act in accordance with their masters’ wishes. Second, the masters contracted “all sorts of bad habits from their slaves.”

While he acknowledged the economic and social complexity of slavery, Montesquieu concluded that slavery was essentially a form of despotism and thus primarily a political issue. While considering the origins of slavery, Montesquieu compared the Roman enslavement of other Romans, the Spanish enslavement of Native Americans in the New World, and the French
enslavement of blacks in the French Colonies (e.g., the West Indies). He ultimately determined that slavery was rooted more in political organization (“civil slavery”) than in nature (“natural slavery”), and looking for its origin was a complicated, if not fruitless, endeavor.

Categorizing slavery by the type of labor performed and the space in which it was performed, he distinguished two forms of it: “real” slavery and “personal” slavery. Real slavery was tied to land and was predominantly agricultural; personal slavery was characterized by domestic service. The two were not mutually exclusive and, according to Montesquieu, the worst form of slavery was when real and personal slavery were superimposed.

While he lauded the fact that slavery was illegal in most of eighteenth-century Europe, because Montesquieu noted the complexities surrounding the institution of slavery, he failed to call for a total global abolition of the practice. Instead, he stressed the importance of law: “But whatever the nature of slavery, civil laws must seek to remove, on the one hand, its abuses, and on the other, its dangers.” See also Rousseau, Jean-Jacques.


Noah Butler

Moravians

The Moravian Church was a Protestant religious denomination whose members settled in both Pennsylvania and North Carolina prior to the American Revolution. The Moravians were originally the Unitas Fratrum (Unity of the Brethren), a group of German Protestants descended from followers of John Hus in Eastern Europe. The sect first immigrated to the American colonies in 1735, where they settled in Georgia. Their pacifist views and the high death rate due to the Georgian climate forced the denomination to move northward to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1741. In 1749, the British Parliament declared the sect an organized church in the colonies. The legislation recognized the sect as the “Ancient Protestant Episcopal Church,” and referred to the members of the church as “Moravians.” In 1752, Lord Granville agreed to sell to the Moravians roughly 100,000 acres in the piedmont region of North Carolina. A year later, settlers from Pennsylvania migrated to an area later named “Wachovia,” which is located in modern-day Forsyth County, North Carolina.
While building their communities in the Carolina Piedmont, the Moravians came into contact with the institution of slavery. Their Board of Supervisors (Aufseher Collegium) was officially opposed to slavery, since it conflicted with their religious concepts of free labor and community ownership of property. In addition, members of the church saw African Americans as a potential missionary opportunity. In 1785, a member of the sect went against official church policy and purchased a slave. Other members of the denomination soon began to purchase slaves to assist in tasks that most of the membership deemed unworthy. In addition, the closed religious community began to attract neighbors who were not Moravians, and used slaves for labor and capitol. These individuals founded the community of Winston, which was located next to the Moravian community of Salem. The influx of industry into both Winston and Salem increased the need for labor. By 1847, the Board of Supervisors removed all restrictions against church members purchasing, hiring, or selling slaves. During the American Civil War, a number of Moravians volunteered to serve in the Confederate Army.

In regards to the institution of slavery and African Americans, the Moravians were decidedly different than most of their white Carolina neighbors. The denomination struggled with the notion of slavery, but embraced the notion that slaves were individuals and were capable of worship and belief in a higher deity. This notion of individual worth governed that relationship built around the slaves and their masters. African Americans were allowed to worship with the brethren in their churches. In the 1820s, the church acted upon a desire of a number of African American church members to form their own congregation within the confines of Salem itself. A log church was constructed in 1823. This black congregation was not allowed to meet at times when the local white population was concerned about the possibility of a slave revolt. In 1861, the log structure was replaced by a brick building named St. Philips Moravian Church.

**Further Readings:**

William H. Brown

More, Hannah (1745–1833)

Hannah More was born on February 2, 1745. In her formative years, More was educated by her schoolmaster father, Jacob More, and attended a boarding school in Bristol, England—a leading port in Britain’s Atlantic slave trade. She became an educator, playwright, essayist, and English poet. As an activist and author, More advocated for female education and improving the moral values of lower-class Britons. She also vigorously supported the abolition of the slave trade and slavery.

**John Newton** and **William Wilberforce** nurtured More’s abolitionism. Newton, captain of a slave-trading vessel who turned against the traffic and became an outspoken clergyman and author of *Thoughts upon the African*
Slave Trade (1788), provided her with knowledge about the slave trade. Upon meeting William Wilberforce in the summer of 1787, More became an active supporter of abolition and soon began composing antislavery poetry. In 1788, she published her first work, "Slavery: A Poem" which was republished in 1816 as "The Black Slave Trade." This was followed by other popular poems, including "The Sorrows of Yamba; or, The Negro Woman’s Lamentation" (1795) and "The Feast of Freedom; or The Abolition of Domestic Slavery in Ceylon" (1816).

These poems sought to influence pending antislavery legislation before Parliament. At the request of Wilberforce, More began composing "Slavery: A Poem" in late December 1787 to coincide with parliamentary debates over Sir William Dolben’s Slave Limitation (or Middle Passage) Bill. The poem made vivid the realities of the Middle Passage where Africans were crammed into ship holds and chained closely to each other. These intolerable conditions produced contagious and fatal diseases and required disposal of corpses on almost a daily basis. The Middle Passage Bill proposed to reduce the number of slaves on British slave ships. This legislation had the potential to save the lives of Africans and British seamen.

In “Slavery: A Poem,” More methodically illustrated the spiritual, psychological, and economic cost of Britain’s continuing involvement with the slave trade. Using sentimentality and literary allusions, she imagined the feelings of enslaved Africans and implored Britain to abolish the traffic. In "Slavery: A Poem" and her other antislavery poetry, More spoke ardentl on behalf of enslaved populations and laid the foundation for generations of British women to voice their objections to the slave trade and slavery.


*Marilyn Walker*

**Moreau de Saint-Méry, Médéric-Louis Elie (1750–1819)**

Moreau de Saint-Méry was born in Martinique and trained as a lawyer in Paris before establishing a practice in Saint Domingue in 1774. When the French Revolution began in 1789, he represented Martinique in the
National Assembly and was chosen as president of the electors of Paris. He engaged actively in legislative debates about colonial policy and was a key member of the Club Massiac, a procolonial lobbying group. His tenure as a Revolutionary statesman was cut short by the Terror, however. Faced with an arrest warrant issued by the Jacobin government in Paris, Moreau de Saint-Méry fled to the United States. From October 1794 until August 1798, he lived in Philadelphia, where he opened a bookstore and a printing press.

Before the Revolution, Moreau de Saint-Méry had written a multi-volume work on colonial legislation in the French Caribbean. In exile, he resumed his research and writing about the colonies. He is perhaps best known for creating a system of racial taxonomy. Using “fully white” and “fully black” as the poles of a racial hierarchy, Moreau de Saint-Méry created designations for 110 different combinations of the two races. Suggesting that race was an indelible marker carried in the blood, Moreau de Saint-Méry insisted that African traits would endure in mixed-race children, no matter their education, upbringing, or proportion of European ancestry.

Moreau de Saint-Méry’s “scientific” belief in the permanence of racial marking and his political convictions about colonial autonomy informed his strident opposition to any metropolitan interference in the political status of gens de couleur. He imagined that such interference undermined the whites’ positions as masters, as slaves might then imagine there was a greater power to which they could petition for redress. Moreau de Saint-Méry argued that colonial legislative autonomy was the only way to protect the white population and guarantee the economic benefits of colonial production. Throughout the 1790s, Moreau de Saint-Méry insisted that the colonies should have their own special laws, instead of being subjected to the French constitution. This position would give plantation owners unfettered control over their slaves and prevent the gens de couleur from obtaining full political rights.

Moreau de Saint-Méry returned to France during the Consulate. He became an advisor to Napoleon Bonaparte, taking a position in the Colonial Ministry, where he worked alongside others who had defended colonial autonomy and slavery. Bonaparte’s own proslavery, procolonial views were reflected back to him by men like Moreau de Saint-Méry. Having this nucleus of support cleared the way for Bonaparte to send the Leclerc expedition to Saint Domingue in 1802 and to reimpose slavery in the French colonies in 1804. Moreau de Saint-Méry thus stands as an exemplar of French thought about slavery and race at the beginning of the nineteenth century. While supporting the amelioration of slave conditions, his convictions about the benefits of colonial production made Moreau de Saint-Méry a champion of plantation slavery. His attitudes about race, which resonated with the growing trend toward scientific racism, justified this view. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of; Haitian Revolution; St. Domingue, French Defeat in.


Jennifer J. Pierce
Mormons. See Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Antislavery

Moses

Moses, the biblical figure bearing a rather common Egyptian name, flourished sometime between the sixteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E. Perhaps due to national embarrassment, he is unmentioned in contemporary ancient Egyptian records, although Canaanite slaves are known to have been held in Egypt at that time (following the defeat of the final Hyksos Dynasty and the great exodus of most Canaanites from Egypt ca. 1540 B.C.E.). Nevertheless, biblical texts give significant details about Moses in terms of slavery, and he becomes a symbol of freedom and abolition for the ages.

The story of Moses logically begins with Joseph who had been sold into slavery in Egypt, rose to a position of great political power and trust under the then pharaoh (probably a Hyksos pharaoh), and saved Egypt as well as his birth family from a great famine (Genesis 37:50). The Israelite population later grew and apparently was seen as a threat to Egypt. To control them they had been enslaved by a later pharaoh, “which knew not Joseph.” Later, to further prevent the Israelites’ population growth, a genocidal program of killing sons born to the Israelites was instituted. Moses is depicted as a unique survivor of this genocide, whom an Egyptian princess was tricked into raising (Exodus 1:2). As an adult, Moses killed an Egyptian who was smiting one of the Hebrew slaves. He then fled to the land of Midian, settled, and married. God later revealed himself to Moses and called him to return to Egypt and free his people from slavery in accord with the Lord’s covenants with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel.

Egypt refused to free the Israelites, but a series of miracles culminating in the death of the firstborn Egyptian males helped Moses lead the Israelites to freedom. He subsequently delivered God’s laws to Israel, beginning with commanding observance of the Passover Seder, often known as the “Festival of Freedom,” which celebrates their being freed from slavery. Later he gave Israel the Ten Commandments and other laws, including a command to observe the Jubilee year in which people whose impoverished circumstances had forced them to indenture or pawn themselves into slavery for a fixed period of time were to be set free. The image of freedom from slavery becomes, through Jubilee symbolism, part of the biblical image of messianic redemption—such as the formal year of release declared by Jesus in a Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:18–19, compare Isaiah 61:1–3).

Moses remains, from antiquity to the present, a symbol or archetype of the liberator from slavery and champion of freedom. In his lifetime, George Washington was often associated with Moses, leading his people to freedom, as was Abraham Lincoln. With more justification, Harriet Tubman was frequently referred to as the Moses of her people. The figure of Moses is found in the struggle against slavery and oppression to the present day, from Negro spirituals such as Go Down Moses: “Go down Moses/ Way down in Egypt Land/Tell ole Pharaoh/To let my people go,” to the freedom songs of Bob Marley such as Exodus: “Send us another Brother Moses gonna cross
the Red Sea.’ Finally, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1964 Nobel Peace laureate speech perfectly reflects the image of Moses as it has continued in history: “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever .... The Bible tells the thrilling story of how Moses stood in Pharaoh’s court centuries ago and cried, ‘Let my people go,' just as his prophetic April 3, 1968 speech in Memphis just before his assassination painfully echoes Moses's death: “I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land” (compare Deuteronomy 34:1–5). See also Book of Exodus, Story of Joseph.

Gordon C. Thomasson

MOTT, LUCRETIA COFFIN (1793–1880)

Lucretia Coffin Mott was a Quaker minister and advocate of abolition, women’s rights, and peace. She was born on January 3, 1793, on the island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, the daughter of Thomas and Anna Folger Coffin. Like many on Nantucket, her father engaged in the East India trade; Mott later attributed the independence of Nantucket women to the frequent absence of men from the island. At home, school, and in meeting, Mott absorbed Quaker theology and antislavery sentiment. In 1804, her family moved to Boston and Mott soon left to attend Nine Partners, a Quaker Boarding School in Dutchess County, New York. She chafed against the authority of her instructors, but eventually became a teacher at the school and learned first-hand of sexual discrimination through her unequal salary. She also met fellow teacher James Mott, a Quaker from Westchester County, New York, whom she married in 1811.

After their marriage, the couple moved to Philadelphia, where Mott soon discovered her skill as a public speaker. James embarked on several unsuccessful careers before finally settling on a cotton commission business in 1822. Mott gave birth to the first of her six children in 1812, and her youngest daughter was born in 1828. She also taught in a Quaker school in 1817. But her son Thomas died in 1817, plunging Mott into a spiritual crisis from which she emerged renewed as a minister and follower of Elias Hicks, the radical Quaker preacher from Long Island, who railed against the Philadelphia Elders and their complicity with slavery. In 1827, the Motts and other Hicksites left the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends to form a parallel organization more sympathetic to Hicks’s teachings. Lucretia Mott became one of the most famous and controversial Hicksite preachers, as she found the new denomination disappointingly conservative. In her sermons, she castigated the Society of Friends for not taking a strong enough stand against slavery, and for allowing superficial indications of spirituality to outweigh the individual’s inner experience of God’s teachings. She adopted as her motto “truth for authority, not authority for truth.”

In the 1820s, the Motts first began to advocate the use of free produce, or goods made without slave labor, and James gave up his cotton commission
business for wool in 1830. Both James and Lucretia Mott attended the founding meeting of the 
American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia in 1833. James signed the Society’s declaration, 
but Mott, as a woman, did not, although she was the only woman to speak at the meeting. Shortly 
thereafter, Mott and other white and black women formed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery 
Society, which thrived for the next thirty-six years with Mott as its frequent president. She par-
ticipated in the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, speaking at its first meeting in New 
York in 1837. When the Convention met in Philadelphia the following year, an angry antiabolition 
mob burned Pennsylvania Hall, the meeting site, to the ground, and then headed for the Motts’ 
house before being diverted at the last moment by an abolitionist ally.

In 1840, Mott was one of several female American delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Con-
vention in London, who were refused seats by British abolitionists upon their arrival. This 
rebuff, following so soon after the American Anti-Slavery Society split over the proper role of 
women in the movement, galvanized Mott and another American woman, Elizabeth Cady 
Stanton. Mott began speaking more frequently on women’s rights, motivated also by further factionalism in the Society of Friends over slavery and women’s authority. Mott’s visit to her sister, Martha Coffin Wright, in Auburn, New York, prompted the organization of the first women’s rights 
convention at nearby Seneca Falls in 1848.

Mott spent the next three decades traveling the country, attending meet-
ings on a variety of reforms. Mott viewed the antislavery, women’s rights, 
temperance, and peace movements as contributing to the spread of true dem-
cracy and Christianity. She spoke against the false authority men derived 
from organized religion, tradition, politics, and law, urging people to follow 
their personal understanding of God’s will, not society’s prescriptions. In 
1853, Mott gave an antislavery speech in Maysville, Kentucky. While local 
slaveholders feared she would incite rebellion, her lecture was so well-
received that the audience demanded she speak again on women’s rights. 
Mott tolerated no compromises with slavery, but she did seize every oppor-
tunity to talk individually with slaveholders. But when the Civil War 
loomed, Mott would have preferred that President Lincoln allow the South 
to leave the Union.

Committed to the peaceful and non-violent doctrine of non-resistance, 
Mott deplored the Civil War, but she celebrated emancipation with other 
abolitionists. She never attributed this success to the military, however, but 
to the moral warfare waged by William Lloyd Garrison and other
abolitionists. Like many abolitionists, Mott turned her attention to aiding former slaves, joining the Friends Association for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen. After the war, Mott devoted herself to women’s rights, peace, and free religion, an antisectarian movement committed to a liberal understanding of Scripture. Her beloved husband James died in 1868, but Mott continued her struggle for human progress, attending an anniversary meeting of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1878. However, her increasingly failing health limited her ability to attend reform meetings, and she died at home on November 11, 1880. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Seneca Falls Convention; Women’s Antislavery Societies.


Carol Faulkner

Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in

Slavery was widely practiced in Muscat and Oman where slaves were used as domestics, laborers in the date plantations, and pearl divers along the coast of Oman. Slaves continued to arrive in Oman in the late 1940s from the Makran coast and from Baluchistan in Pakistan, despite the fact that the institution had been abolished in neighboring Bahrain in 1937. For Oman it was clear that abolition had to be accomplished from within, otherwise any attempts to do so from without would have met with problems of compliance. Accordingly, Britain, the dominant power in the region, used its influence to persuade the states in the region to end domestic slavery. This in itself, however, was not a sufficient deterrent; the demand for slave labor, for instance, on date plantations in Oman in the mid-twentieth century was quite crucial in affecting the prevalence of the institution. At least two more decades would pass before slavery was finally abolished there after a palace coup deposed Sultan Said Ibn Taimur, an owner of hundreds of slaves.

As with some of the other states in the region, the British did not directly pressure the ruler of Oman to suppress slavery. They argued that they could not force him to end an institution that was recognized by Muslim law. Moreover, they believed he opposed abolition because he was unwilling to pay compensation to former owners. In the 1950s, the British manumitted slaves—excluding those in the Sultan’s possession—at the rate of about eighteen a year on the grounds of ill-treatment, and understood the Sultan’s tolerance of these actions as evidence of his good faith.

There were, of course, inconsistencies in the British position here as elsewhere. Their claims that manumitted slaves still in the service of their former masters were free to leave were proven to be untrue when they learned that domestic slaves in Batinah were, in fact, prevented by force from seeking full freedom. Furthermore, while the rulers of the northern six states (which included Dubai) and later Abu Dhabi agreed to sign a
treaty in May 1963 declaring that slavery, like the slave trade, had long been banned in their territories, no such pressure was brought to bear on Oman to do the same, despite the fact that conservative Saudi Arabia had just abolished slavery. It was thus no surprise that Britain faced continuous attacks at the United Nations over the next several years for being a supporter of the autocratic Sultan. The British position was dictated by their economic, political, and strategic interests to maintain the flow of oil from the region and to retain their air base in Masirah. They continued supporting the despotic Sultan whose son, Qabus, was still too young to replace him.

Both domestic and foreign opposition to the Sultan grew more vociferous by the mid-1960s, especially once oil was discovered. At the same time, Britain came increasingly under attack from the leading Arab states for its involvement in Oman. The anticolonial atmosphere both at home and in the Arab world forced the Labor government to announce its intention to leave the Gulf and Oman by 1971. Before this could happen, however, a palace coup took place in July 1970 in which Qabus, with the British endorsement, deposed his father and assumed the crown for himself. One of the first reforms of his new administration was to outlaw legal slavery in that year. Oman now ceased to be the only country in the region in which slavery was legal. See also Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery; Islam and Antislavery; Qur’an and Antislavery.

Further Readings:


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Myers, Stephen (1800–1870) and Myers, Harriet (1807–1865)

Stephen Myers came to be the most important leader of the Underground Railroad movement in Albany, New York, in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. Together with his wife, Harriet, they were the focal point of assistance in helping freedom seekers, or fugitives from slavery, who had arrived in Albany on their way to Canada or settling in New York State. While there had been other significant figures of the Underground Railroad in Albany, they met untimely fates, or moved to other theaters of action. It is well documented that Stephen and Harriet Myers assisted thousands of individuals to settle in or move through Albany to points west, north, and east on the Underground Railroad. Initially, in the 1830s, Myers used his own resources. By the 1840s, Myers organized The Northern Star Association, utilizing its resources in support of freedom seekers and in support of the publication of The Northern Star and Freeman’s Advocate newspaper. By the 1850s, Myers was the principal agent of the Underground Railroad in Albany, and was receiving financial assistance from a broad range of backers. Under his leadership the Albany branch of the Underground Railroad
was regarded by some as the best-run part of the Underground Railroad in New York State.

Stephen was born a slave in 1800 in Rensselaer County in Hoosick Four Corners. While not much is known of his early years, it is known that at the age of twelve he was in the service of Albany’s General Warren of Revolutionary War connections, and was freed at the age of eighteen. Over the next decade and a half he worked as a grocer and steamboat steward, starting his journalistic enterprises in the late 1830s and early 1840s. His first newspaper venture was short lived. It was called The Elevator. It concentrated on news and information targeting the free African people in Albany. Stephen and Harriet were married in 1827. Harriet worked with him on his newspaper ventures. He was a leading spokesperson for antislavery and the rights of free blacks in Albany in the late 1840s and 1850s. His newspaper, The Northern Star and Freeman’s Advocate, was a vehicle for reform around education, temperance, black rights, and the need to abolish slavery. Toward the end of the 1840s, the newspaper may have taken on the name Northern Star and Colored Farmer when Myers was involved in organizing an economic project call the Florence Farming and Lumber Association. Later in his life he had other publishing ventures including the Pioneer, and Telegraph and Temperance Journal. Stephen Myers was an active speaker and shared the podium with other black orators of his day, such as Frederick Douglass and William H. Johnson. He spoke in Albany and Troy, as well as in Massachusetts and the New York City area.

Myers was not only involved in abolitionist activity, but he showed leadership in addressing a wide range of civil rights issues. Through his newspapers he was deeply involved in education and advocacy. He also provided leadership as the superintendent of one of the area’s first schools for black children, The Free Colored School in Albany based at Israel African Methodist Church in 1843. He was active in organizing Suffrage Clubs to encourage Black voting rights, petitioning the state legislature for reforms, and the early organization of free black labor. He was also involved in economic development through the Florence Farming and Lumber Association where he worked with philanthropist Gerrit Smith to provide farms and farming skills to black farmers.

Harriet Myers was born in 1807 as Harriet Johnson. While the source of her education is not known, she collaborated with her husband in the production of the various newspaper projects and was known for providing a “skilled” editorial hand in proofreading. She was also involved in various women’s organizations popular among black women that raised funds through bazaars and sewing circles to support the work of the Underground Railroad.

Harriet Myers died in August 16, 1865. In the obituary, which appeared in the Philadelphia Christian Recorder of September 2, 1865, she was described as one of “nobleness” of heart, “unselfish hospitality,” and “Her house was ever a refuge for the oppressed and friendless.” Stephen Myers was buried February 16, 1870, but no record has been thus far found identifying the specific date of his death.

Paul Stewart
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Nabuco, Joaquim (1849–1910) and Abolition in Brazil

Brazil’s gradual process of abolition during the nineteenth century gave rise to the development of competing ideologies of labor and citizenship among elites troubled by the transition from slavery to free labor. Great Britain’s abolitionist agenda and trade interests in Brazil resulted in a series of treaties between the two nations during the first half of the century, culminating in the end of Brazil’s involvement with the transatlantic slave trade in 1851. The subsequent decline in the availability of slave labor in the Brazilian Empire and the escalating presence of antislavery sentiment in international politics pushed both elite abolitionists and non-abolitionists to consider what was to be made of “free” labor in a slave society. In contrast to the popular abolitionism that flourished in the United States, abolition remained an issue of debate among Brazilian political elites only for most of the nineteenth century. The political career of Joaquim Nabuco (1849–1910) traces the shifting political climate surrounding abolitionism in Brazil and the more popular overtones it acquired by the 1880s. Nabuco’s abolitionism was primarily expressed in fiery parliamentary speeches, in several written works, and in popular campaigns, which eventually emerged in the streets. He remains Brazil’s most renowned abolitionist leader.

In 1870, while still a law student in São Paulo, Nabuco wrote his first abolitionist essay, *A Escravidão*, which was only posthumously published. In this work, he described slavery as legal, yet unjust and degrading to Brazilian society because it furthered the feudal-agrarian structure, it gave unlimited power to landowners and slaveholders, and it stripped man—including Africans—of his “natural” rights. Nabuco located the essential immorality of slavery in its denial of the natural right of man to property in himself and to free labor. This viewpoint led him to support agrarian reform, which would give poor workers and ex-slaves access to land and production. He discussed a transition from slavery to freedom that would integrate the national worker, which included African-born and Brazilian-born ex-slaves, into a peasantry based on small landholdings. Although
Nabuco later favored European immigration as a means of securing the development of the free-labor economy in Brazil, he initially believed that the ex-slave population would supply adequate labor, and the experience of working within a free labor system would gradually “season” and educate ex-slaves, traumatized by the experience of slavery, into responsible and productive workers. Nabuco viewed the right to property not only as an inalienable right, but also as a “rational” destiny fulfilled by the transformative power of free labor. With the passage of the Free Womb Law in 1871 which freed children born to slave mothers, Nabuco became more committed to the abolitionist cause, as ending slavery in Brazil seemed more possible.

After law school, Nabuco spent almost a year in New York (1876–1877), coinciding with the election that resulted in the Compromise of 1877 and the election of Rutherford B. Hayes as president. Scholar Carlos Daghlian has argued that Nabuco learned much about public speaking from observing the debating and oratory of the presidential candidates. After this experience, he went back to Brazil and was elected deputy from the province of Pernambuco. The speeches he gave while serving in the Chamber of Deputies between 1879 and 1880 earned him a reputation as a great orator and leader of the abolitionist cause. Numerous politicians recalled the power of Nabuco’s early parliamentary speeches and how his talent for improvisation, his magnetic, clear voice, and his physical attractiveness conquered crowds, all of which would strengthen his popular abolitionist campaigning in the 1880s.

The years 1879 and 1880 proved crucial for the abolitionist movement in Brazil. Having failed at the first attempt to legalize immediate emancipation through parliamentary action, abolitionists turned to other means of building support. They published newspapers, such as *A Gazeta da Tarde* and *O Abolicionista*, and formed such abolitionist societies as the *Sociedade Brasileira Contra a Escravidão* and the *Associação Central Emancipadora*. These abolitionists, mainly based in Rio de Janeiro, formulated ideas about economic development and the restructuring of free labor modeled after the postemancipation labor policies of the United States. Abolitionist pamphlets appealed to literate and educated urban dwellers likely to identify with the antioligarchic language adopted by the movement after 1880. *O Abolicionista* indicted slavery as the cause of Brazil’s industrial and urban underdevelopment. Abolitionists credited the success of the United States South’s reconstruction to the industrialization of the cotton industry, which had shifted toward the development of local textile industries and away from the export economy.

The concern with the legacy of slavery and its impact on people of African descent was a widely discussed topic throughout the nineteenth century. Anxious about rehabilitating Brazil’s economy and liberating it from the legacy of slavery, abolitionists emphasized the benefits liberal capitalism would have upon free labor and the modernizing of agriculture. The French Revolution, they argued, had eradicated feudalism by not only democratizing the countryside through wage labor, but by industrializing its cities and giving workers a greater choice of occupations. France was a model for urban abolitionists aspiring to weaken the proslavery rural oligarchy and give leverage to a small urban bourgeoisie inclined toward industrial development.
Abolitionists also argued that abolition was essential for the advance of universal citizenship. Throughout the nineteenth century, political elites debated the voting rights of free blacks and freedpersons, granting libertos (free/freed blacks) the right to vote if they possessed a certain minimum income or property. Those in Parliament who argued for limiting libertos' right to vote contended that the experience of slavery had forever incapacitated people of African descent from exercising their natural rights responsibly. Moreover, they believed the realities of race further crippled the African slaves. Being black was in and of itself a badge of degradation and precluded their citizenship. Yet Nabuco and other abolitionists responded that, while slavery had in some way damaged libertos, education would rehabilitate the ex-slave population and render them a responsible citizenry capable of fully exercising their natural rights.

Nabuco addressed these problems of citizenship in Parliament in 1879–1880, problems further complicated by an influx of Chinese immigrant labor into Brazil to overcome what planters asserted was a shortage of labor. Nabuco argued that a shortage of labor was not Brazil's problem, and instead advocated agrarian reform and the education of ex-slaves. Nabuco stated that Chinese labor would only sustain slavery by promoting poor labor and removing the need to free and elevate the enslaved. Resorting to his own racial preconceptions, Nabuco claimed the Chinese would degrade, rather than strengthen, Brazil and its people. Rather, he supported the importation of European migrant workers to "revitalize" the Brazilian race and help the ex-slaves overcome their "African" past by a process of "whitening" through intermarriage.

Despite heated debates in 1879–1880, the oligarchy in Parliament continued to favor slavery, as well as relationships of dependency between ex-slaves and ex-masters, as a means of protecting planter interests. Nabuco was defeated as a candidate for Parliament in 1881. Nabuco then retreated to London where he established contact with the Anti-Slavery Society in efforts to revitalize the abolition movement in Brazil. There he wrote O Abolicionismo in 1883, the single most important printed work of the abolitionist movement in Brazil. In this work, Nabuco examined the history of Brazil's antislavery struggle throughout the nineteenth century. Nabuco defined abolitionism as a social and political reform movement that went beyond the issue of abolition by acknowledging slave emancipation alone would not solve Brazil's problems. Nabuco identified slavery as the real ruler of Brazil: "the master over all available capital . . . it has the commerce of the city at its mercy, all the property of the country behind it, and, finally, a formidable clientele in every profession: lawyers, doctors, engineers, priests, teachers, and public employees." Thus, Nabuco's abolitionism was a struggle to increase access to and diversify capital, a movement to initiate land reform and to open Brazil for bourgeois development and federalism. The latter objective was the particular focus of Nabuco's 1884 election campaign in Recife, during which he defined the abolitionist cause as a movement of social, economic, and political reform that went beyond slave emancipation. His campaign's renewed abolitionist agenda returned him to the seat in the Chamber of Deputies he had lost in 1881, when the popular appeal of the abolitionist struggle seemed to fade.
During this election, abolitionism shifted from a topic of parliamentary debate to one engaging both popular abolitionists and urban working classes. This shift was in large part due to the electoral reform of 1881, which enfranchised a portion of the urban working class who were sympathetic to abolition. During the 1884 Recife election campaign, Nabuco appealed to these new voters in a populist manner and posited abolition as crucial to the development of urban labor and industry. His speeches concentrated on the “emancipation” of free urban workers rather than on the emancipation of slaves. Although Nabuco's advocacy of immigrant European labor seemed contrary to this optimistic belief in the national urban working class, it nonetheless illustrated the influence of the new urban electorate on abolitionist political campaigning. Nabuco and other abolitionists recognized the great significance the emerging urban-industrial economy would play in the new, post-emancipation Brazil.

Although the Golden Law of 1888 abolished slavery in one act, its isolated singularity does not justly illustrate the shifting moral attitudes toward slavery that developed throughout the nineteenth century—not only among abolitionists, but also among planters who interpreted slavery as a “necessary evil” for Brazil's economic progress. After abolition, Nabuco continued to be active in politics and defended the Brazilian monarchy, which was toppled in 1889 by a coup d’état that established Brazil's first republican regime. By the early 1900s, Nabuco had embraced republicanism and worked for the Brazilian embassy in London. In 1905, Nabuco became the ambassador for Brazil in Washington D.C., where he defended a pan-American approach to international politics, influenced by the Monroe doctrine, and where he lived out the last years of his life. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in. 


*Patricia Acerbi*

**Napoleon.** See Bonaparte, Napoleon

**“Negro Exodus” (1879–1881)**

The “Negro Exodus,” first black migration after slavery in the United States, was a three-year period in which as many as 40,000 African Americans migrated to Kansas from the Mississippi Valley (Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Northern Texas). The Exodus was motivated by failing legislation designed to increase blacks' socio-economic opportunities. The African Americans who participated in the Exodus took an important step toward Black Reconstruction and civil rights for blacks all over the United States.
Black migration had been considered a remedy to racial conflict and slavery since before the United States Civil War. During slavery, Abraham Lincoln advocated, and the American Colonization Society (ACS) funded, the emigration of blacks from America to Liberia in West Africa. Despite the 11,000 blacks transported, many were hesitant to relocate to foreign lands. At the close of the Reconstruction Era, Henry Adams and Benjamin "Pap" Singleton began to entreat blacks to leave the South for Kansas, which proved a more palatable suggestion. Jim Crow practices impeded legal remedies for racism, and over time, racial violence and voter intimidation in the South became intolerable for many African Americans. In response, Adams and Singleton began planning the Exodus in their respective home states, Louisiana and Texas.

In 1877, Singleton, an escaped slave and often referred to as the "Father of the Exodus," began organizing his migration efforts in Texas, while Adams, who bought himself out of slavery, began speaking publicly about black subjugation and voting restrictions in Louisiana. Although he initially attempted to use the services of the ACS, Adams came to recognize the unwillingness of many blacks to remove to Africa. He also noticed the success of Singleton's Kansas migration, and in 1879, Adams changed his strategy and began leading his followers to Kansas as well. Although Singleton and Adams never met, they were the key coordinators of the Negro Exodus. They organized thousands of African Americans to abandon the South and relocate to Kansas between 1879 and 1881.

The Exodus's success drew attention from Congress. Early in 1880, Adams and Singleton were subpoenaed to testify separately about the motivations for the phenomenon before the United States Senate Committee in Washington, D.C. The mass migration of the "Exodusters," as the migrants are often referred, was initially successful. Many of the migrants became landowners and entrepreneurs. Initially, black men were able to exercise their voting rights and several were elected to public offices. Additionally, African Americans remaining in the Mississippi Valley capitalized on the migration, which made jobs more readily available and the negotiation of improved tenant farming contracts easier.

The impoverished condition of these migrants eventually forced them into wage labor and domestic jobs, however, while others remained unemployed or homeless. By 1884, some of the migrants returned to their home states. Others who remained in Kansas became destitute. Shortly after the conclusion of the Exodus concern arose among poor whites about the influx of African Americans into Kansas. As a result, the socio-economic circumstances experienced by African Americans in the Mississippi Valley became recognizable in Kansas.


Ellesia A. Blaque
New Divinity

The New Divinity was a movement extending the Calvinist theology of Jonathan Edwards after the great divine’s sudden death in 1758. Its leaders were Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, both associates of Edwards, and its influence was great, particularly in New England. It was a controversial movement, articulating strong views of predestination and divine providence, as well as a demanding standard of personal ethics contained in its doctrine of disinterested benevolence. It was also an evangelical movement, leading some New Divinity men, along with lay people, to preach to African Americans. Christian ideals of missions to Africans and the Christianization of the continent were bolstered by the New Divinity.

A number of men and women in the New Divinity camp became active in both abolitionism and charitable efforts to improve the lives of African Americans. The ethical standard of benevolence seemed to mandate an immediate end to the slave trade and slavery, the cruelties and viciousness of which seemed self-evident. Whether or not disinterested benevolence should unite blacks and whites affectionately and equally in a free society was less obvious. Some adherents of the New Divinity endorsed an interracial society, while others favored the expatriation of free blacks, also known as colonization. Indeed, some individuals wavered between these two approaches to a postslavery America.

Because of their ardent patriotism in the War of Independence, the New Divinity men have sometimes been understood as jingoists who retreated from abolitionism as the new nation accepted slavery in the South and the slave trade for two decades after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. This understanding is inaccurate. The New Divinity remained committed to divine standards of ethical behavior and civic freedom, and they never accepted a slaveholders’ status quo in America. If the New Divinity approach to race seems flawed from a twenty-first-century viewpoint, it is because some of them were pessimistic about the prospects of an interracial society and thus favored colonization.


John Saillant

New England Antislavery Society (NEASS)

Founded in 1832 in Boston, the New England Antislavery Society (NEASS) was the first American abolitionist organization to embrace the doctrine of immediatism. The NEASS thereafter became the model for all “second wave” abolitionist organizations, including the American Anti-Slavery Society, founded in Philadelphia in 1833. The NEASS also proved innovative
by hiring traveling agents and publishing a short-lived organizational magazine, *The Abolitionist*. The group also offered a public platform to some of the most important antislavery activists of the nineteenth century, including Frederick Douglass. The NEASS was perhaps best identified with its founding figure, William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of the radical abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*. But the group also drew inspiration and support from Boston’s black community, which offered intellectual and monetary capital to the burgeoning immediate abolition movement, both in New England and nationally. Garrison himself was influenced by black Bostonian David Walker who authored *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829), a rousing rejection of prevailing abolitionist tactics of gradualism and colonization. In addition, African Americans provided nearly a quarter of the seventy-two signatures to the group’s constitution at the first annual meeting of the NEASS. In this sense, the NEASS was the first biracial reform organization in America—a significant achievement when considered against the history of segregation in early abolitionist societies such as the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

The NEASS’s activism rested on attacking Southern slavery and routing racial prejudice in Northern states. Just as the group hoped to convince and coerce Southern masters to liberate enslaved people, so too did it aim to challenge racial injustice above the Mason-Dixon Line. As the group’s constitution boldly put it, “the objects of the society shall be to endeavor, by all means sanctioned by law, humanity and religion, to effect the abolition of slavery, to improve the character and condition of the free people of color... and obtain for them equal civil and political rights and privileges with the whites.” Group activists challenged Massachusetts’s laws prohibiting racial intermarriage and aided in early school desegregation lawsuits. They also signed petitions against both slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Despite espousing ideals of racial equality, white activists within the NEASS could also practice a form of “romantic racialism,” which depicted African Americans—both free and enslaved—as desperately in need of white leadership.

Outside of attacking Southern slaveholders (and antiabolitionist Northerners), the NEASS struggled against members of the American Colonization Society, who argued that abolitionism was folly and removal by transportation of freed blacks was the only safe solution to America’s racial ills. NEASS members constantly debated the efficacy of colonizationist policies in town meetings throughout New England, and waged a similar war against colonizationist thinking in printed publications.

In February 1835, the NEASS was officially renamed the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MASS), and it functioned for several years as an auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society. Although female activists in New England created a bevy of their own abolitionist organizations, the MASS supported women’s activism, admitting female reformers and hiring female agents. While schisms within the broader antislavery movement—particularly over women’s roles and political abolitionism—certainly impacted the MASS, the group functioned through the Civil War, holding a memorable thirtieth anniversary meeting in 1862. See also Garrisonians; Immediate Emancipation.

Richard Newman

New Mexico Slave Trade. *See* Indian-Mestizo Captives, Liberation of

New York Committee of Vigilance

One of the most radical African American abolitionist societies of the 1830s, the New York Committee of Vigilance was organized on November 21, 1836, although its activities began informally the year before. The New York Committee of Vigilance especially sought to halt the practice of kidnapping of self-emancipated slaves and free blacks from the streets of the city. Slave catchers, using the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act as a pretense, would bring their captives before a city magistrate, who would then rule the person a fugitive slave. Quickly, the black person would be taken in chains to a waiting ship and spirited off to slavery in the Southern states. The New York Manumission Society’s radical wing had contested such practices since the 1790s and local blacks had commonly demonstrated and even rioted against slave catchers, calling them man stealers.

Organizing the Committee was an important step in uniting middle class blacks, sympathetic whites, and the black working class against kidnapping. At the organizing meeting, David Ruggles was appointed secretary. A radical abolitionist, Ruggles already had experience accosting slave catchers and indicting sea captains taking part in the illegal slave trade. Other significant members included Thomas Van Rensselaer, a former slave and now a prominent black restaurateur and community leader, William Johnston, an English-born abolitionist, George R. Barkers, a New York City broker, and James W. Higgins, a local grocer. Ruggles found a number of enslaved people held illegally by their masters who were often on Northern tours. This integrated group, led by Ruggles, embarked on a number of sensational slave rescue cases, using a legal device known as a *writ de homine replegiando* that freed individuals imprisoned or held by a private party by giving security that the accused would appear in court. It is now replaced in American law by the writ of *habeas corpus*; Ruggles and the committee cooperated with the New York Manumission Society in the Dixon Case, which forced the judiciary to grant jury trials to fugitives. In 1838, Ruggles created the nation’s first black magazine, the *Mirror of Liberty*, to chronicle the hundreds of instances in which the committee helped fugitive slaves. Ruggles’s zeal eventually caused trouble when he printed a letter in the *Colored American* accusing a local black boardinghouse keeper of hiding fugitives for slave catchers. The boardinghouse keeper successfully sued Ruggles, the newspaper, and the committee for libel. An ensuing investigation uncovered financial irregularities and Ruggles was forced to resign his post. In 1840, lobbied by the manumission society, the New York State Legislature passed a bill requiring jury trials for blacks, although it was weakened several years
later in the *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* case. The Committee continued on into the 1840s but on a lower profile. It inspired the New York State Committee, innumerable local organizations, and was a key, early safe harbor on the Underground Railroad.


Graham Russell Gao Hodges

**New York Manumission Society (NYMS)**

Founded in 1785 in New York City, the New York Manumission Society (NYMS) was one of the most important abolitionist groups of the early national period. Counting elite statesman such as John Jay and Alexander Hamilton as members, the group helped shepherd the gradual emancipation act through the state legislature in 1799. Less well-known group members—particularly adherents of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers—pestered ship captains engaged in the international slave trade through the port of New York, aided free black kidnapping victims, and even helped fugitive slaves. Together with the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and the American Convention of Abolition Societies, the NYMS put a tactical face on the early antislavery movement.

Originally called the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May be Liberated, the NYMS was formed during the country’s first broad public debate over slavery’s status in post-Revolutionary culture. Beginning with Pennsylvania in 1780, every Northern state passed a gradual abolition law during the next twenty-five years. Although New York’s law, which took effect July 4, 1799, was the second to last Northern abolition act (New Jersey’s statute passed in 1804), debate over abolitionism in the state dated back to 1777. The New York Manumission Society took shape in January 1785 to bolster the passage of such a law. Although the group attracted support from some celebrated New York politicians and merchants, Quakers and Anglicans dominated its day-to-day membership. The Society’s constitution declared that slavery violated the religious and political underpinnings of American culture—equality and justice for all. By the time NYMS members helped push through the abolition act in 1799, New York contained roughly 21,000 enslaved people. The law stipulated that all slaves born after passage of the act would be freed gradually, women at twenty-five and men at twenty-eight. The law was revised in 1817 so that all slaves would be liberated on July 4, 1827.

As Patrick Rael has written, the New York Manumission Society also “worked to tighten loopholes in other state laws: it sought to strengthen prohibitions on the import and export of slaves to the state, to prevent inhuman treatment of slaves, and to remove provisions of the slave code permitting courts to deport slaves deemed guilty of crimes.” Perhaps the Society’s most unheralded act was the creation of an African Free School in November 1787. By the 1820s, abolitionists watched over roughly 800 students in seven different schools. Eventually, protest in the first half of
the 1830s by the black community compelled abolitionists to turn over running the schools to African American leaders. The city of New York incorporated the two principal African Free Schools into the public school system in 1834.

Like other gradual abolitionist groups of the early national era, the New York Manumission Society did not admit black members—it was a segregated group. Moreover, its members were accused of treating New York City’s free black community paternalistically and even as inferiors. By the 1830s, when second wave abolitionists appeared nationally declaring black activists “coadjutors” of a new movement to destroy slavery immediately, the New York Manumission Society was in decline. The group officially folded in 1849. Yet its several decades of abolitionist activism formed an integral part of the early antislavery movement, particularly the sectional erosion of slavery in Northern states via gradual abolition laws. See also New York Committee of Vigilance.


Richard Newman

Newton, John (1725–1807)

John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, worked as a slave trader, an ironic twist of history that has given rise to a mythology about the writing of one of Christianity’s greatest hymns. Stories about John Newton and his hymn abound, filled with tales of him penning the words on the night of his conversion or asserting that he immediately gave up his work as a slave trader because of the freedom his own salvation had given him, and he wanted to grant that same release to others. While the myths are mostly inaccurate, the historical account of John Newton’s life might be even more dramatic than those stories.

Born in London, England, in 1725, he was the son of a merchant sea captain. Newton’s mother, a pious woman, raised her son in the faith, exerting considerable influence over the boy while her husband plied his trade at sea. She dedicated her son to the ministry and taught him to read by the age of three. Her plan for his education was largely biblical, with much time dedicated to the scriptures and catechism. When his mother died when John was seven years old, his father enrolled him at a boarding school in Essex. There, he continued his education by learning Latin, but his father took him from the school to go to sea on his eleventh birthday.

Over the next seven years, Newton sailed with his father and learned to be a sailor. His father encouraged John to live morally, but did not push him toward spiritual things. Throughout his teenage years, he occasionally read Christian books and studied the Bible, but also lived the life of a sailor, which he later termed “profane” and ”sinful.” Yet, his early education led him to further spiritual interest and he often attempted to reform his behavior. This was especially true during times of crisis. But his reformation was
mostly superficial. His habit of living a good life on the surface while also indulging in pleasure and sin continued into adulthood.

At sixteen, he went to Kent to conduct some business for his father and met Mary Catlett, the daughter of a friend of his mother’s. He quickly fell in love with the fourteen-year-old girl and extended his visit despite his father’s instructions. About a year later, Newton was impressed into service on board an English man-of-war. His father was unable to secure his freedom and he was forced to serve in the navy. He threw off his faith and became openly hostile, even attempting to desert, which resulted in a brutal whipping and his demotion. Finally, his unruliness prompted his being traded to a passing merchant ship. Not long after that, he found himself bound to service as the servant of a slave trader.

For the next year or so, Newton worked on an island plantation on the coast of Africa. His slavetrader master was married to an African woman who disliked the young man because her husband treated him like a son. She mistreated him in every way she could, especially when her husband was away on business. He found himself in bondage, picking limes, and suffering under humiliating conditions. He was nearly a slave. Traded to another master who treated him better, Newton learned much about the slave trade and saw its profitability, and his skills led to his promotion to manager of his master’s factories. Rescued in 1747, he returned to the sea.

During a voyage, he read The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis, which renewed his interest in spiritual things. Over the next few years, he experienced a gradual spiritual growth that led to his conversion. Newton finally married Mary Catlett in 1750 and soon became the captain of his own ship. He had worked in the slave trade for a number of years before his conversion, and he continued to do so after. He could not ignore the horrors of the Middle Passage, and he deplored the conditions under which the slaves were transported across the Atlantic. He felt that it was his Christian duty to improve those conditions, but he did not yet believe that slavery itself was a sin. This was indicative of his strict Calvinist theology, which emphasized man’s fallen nature and doing one’s duty in whatever context God placed the individual. In his autobiography, Newton wrote that, as a slave trader, “I never had the least scruple to its lawfulness. I was upon the whole satisfied with it as the appointment providence had marked out for me.” However, he was “sometimes shocked with an employment that was perpetually connected with chains, bolts, and shackles. In this view I had often prayed that the Lord, in His own time would place me in a more humane calling.”

When he was about to embark on yet another voyage in 1754, Newton suffered a seizure that left him temporarily paralyzed. His doctor refused to allow him to sail again and he resigned his position. At about the same time, his wife also became seriously ill and her health steadily declined thereafter. John now focused on nursing his wife and studying for the ministry. In 1764, he was appointed to the curacy at Olney, where he became close friends with William Cowper. Together, they wrote hundreds of hymns and published “The Olney Hymns,” a collection that became standard for decades. There in Olney, he wrote Amazing Grace and put it to a
tune that may have originated with slaves. In 1779, he moved to London as pastor of St. Mary Woolnoth Church, where he continued his ministry until his death in 1807.

Later in life, Newton began to oppose slavery. When Parliament debated the slave trade, Newton testified about the atrocities of it and publicly supported the legislation that abolished the slave trade throughout the British Empire in 1808. The former slave trader lent his name to the antislavery cause and became widely known for his ardent opposition to the institution. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition.


A. James Fuller

Nonviolence. See Violence and Nonviolence in American Abolitionism

North Africa and Abolition

Abolition of the slave trade in North Africa occurred piecemeal, elements of the slave trade effectively suppressed as early as 1816 and some continuing well into the twentieth century. While export slavery diminished considerably under pressure from European and Ottoman powers, domestic slavery, which could be conducted privately, persisted throughout North Africa. The slave populations involved were diverse; historically, North Africa was the center of the oriental trade in slaves. Slaves trafficked through North Africa were “white” Christian Europeans from the Mediterranean region and “black” pagan Africans, but only very rarely “white” Circassians and Georgians, who generally traveled the Black Sea route. Located from west to east on the southern Mediterranean coast, the countries we now know as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt were motivated in banning the slave trade or in forestalling abolition by various cultural and economic considerations. Among the motivations for action or inaction were threats of foreign or imperial intervention, diplomatic and trade advantages, local and religious custom, the importance of slaves as domestic and agricultural workers, and the revenue generated from slave-trading markets and ports.

Historically, Europeans from the Mediterranean region and Africans from the Gold Coast, the Sahara, and the Sudan comprised the major human commodities for North-African Muslim slave traders. International trade for European countries depended on access to the Mediterranean Sea, and, centuries before fifteenth-century Europeans initiated the Atlantic slave trade in Africans, the Muslim states of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli trafficked in European, as well as African slaves, both for domestic use and for sale in the east. According to Muslim law, or Shari’a, which sanctioned servitude, those who did not conform to Islam, those without peace treaties, and those forcibly defeated in accordance with the rules of jihad (or holy war) were all subject to enslavement.
**Mediterranean Christian Slavery and Abolition**

Mediterranean slaves came from nearly every part of Europe, acquired as prisoners in open warfare, by corsair (pirate) raiding in coastal regions, on merchant shipping, and by shipwreck. From the Middle Ages, both France and Spain had encouraged friars of their Trinitarian and Mercedarian Orders, respectively, to negotiate the ransom or redemption of Christian Europeans. Some historians claim that as many as a million Europeans were subjected to North African or Turkish slavery, but the numbers have always been far lower than those for the oriental traffic in black Africans. With the expansion of international trade in the sixteenth century, most European countries involved in Mediterranean trade and, later, the United States of America, endeavored to limit the enslavement of seafaring nationals in North Africa by means of treaties with the individual states or with the Ottoman Empire, which, for many years, exerted direct or nominal control over Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Egypt. Not all treaties specifically denied North African states the right to enslave Europeans, but even when they did, European and American nationals were sometimes captured and sold. Narratives about European servitude became popular among the reading public; some publications describing Englishmen in North African bondage include *A True Description and Breefe Discourse, of a Most Lamentable Voiage, Made Latelie to Tripolie in Barbarie ... Set Forth by Thomas Saunders* (1587), Francis Knight’s *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie under the Turkes of Argeire ...* (1640), Simon Ockley’s edition of *An Account of South-West Barbary Containing What Is Most Remarkable in the Territories of the King of Fez and Morocco. Written by a Person Who had been a Slave* (1713). Famous captives include the Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) and the French priest and reformer Vincent de Paul (1581?–1660), who was later sanctified, as well innumerable naval and military officers. Except for women inducted into seraglions (harems) or sailors and artisans detained for their valuable technical skills, the period of bondage was often brief—an average of about five years. Although many perished in North African galleys and public works projects, some slaves were ransomed, redeemed, or exchanged for Muslim prisoners; some escaped, making their own way home; and some converted to Islam, thus securing their own freedom. From 1580 to 1680, the total number of Europeans held captive at any one time in North Africa probably amounted to about 35,000, with the numbers declining thereafter.

After the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade by several European nations and the United States of America, Britain, in particular, turned its attention to the abolition of the Mediterranean-Christian slave trade. In 1814, British Admiral William Sidney Smith stepped up to champion the end of Christian slavery by demanding military action against the corsair states of North Africa. Smith founded an international charity to finance the effort, naming it the Society of Knights Liberators of the White Slaves in Africa. His mission was forestalled, however, by the pivotal bombardment of Algiers by Britain’s Lord Exmouth in 1816, which freed the remaining 3,000 or so Christians held in Algiers and across North Africa. After Exmouth’s military...
intervention, the North African states generally capitulated to their European and American trading partners by signing treaties that included non-enslavement clauses. Moreover, the British and American navies spearheaded military efforts to enforce compliance. The northern Circassian trade to eastern markets continued unabated, with a large influx of agricultural slaves in the 1860s. The Ottoman Porte was reluctant to interfere, but by the 1890s only a few women of slave-status were acquired for harem service, and the institution of Circassian slavery in Islamic culture gradually died out.

**Abolition of the African Trade**

The abolition of the African slave trade in North Africa was more difficult to accomplish than the abolition of the white slave trade. From the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, some 10,000 Africans were sold into enslavement annually, destined for labor in various parts of North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Arabia. Attempts to end this commerce came from Europe and from the Ottoman Porte, but most official declarations to end the slave trade or slavery itself had no provisions for enforcement. Humanitarian efforts, whether prompted by antislavery zeal or diplomatic and trade considerations, came from the east and west. Efforts from the east included several nineteenth-century Ottoman edicts; the most important of these are the Ferman of 1847, which attempted to prohibit the African export trade to Asia and censured the involvement of government officials, and the Ferman of 1857, which gave legal and moral authority to the Ottoman abolition of the trade. Despite its domestic adherence to antislavery, the Turkish government was able to exert very little pressure to ensure that its satellites conformed. However, the 1880 Convention for the Suppression of the Slave Trade between Britain and Egypt gave Britain the right to search Ottoman ships and to seize contraband slaves, a power that allowed Britain to act as the international enforcer throughout the Mediterranean region. In the west, Britain persuaded the United States and all the major European maritime powers, except France, to sign treaties outlawing the slave trade, and it promoted the right of each state to search the others' shipping. However, even when backed up by naval power, such treaties often proved a hindrance to slave traffickers rather than a true impediment.

Humanitarian concern for slaves continued to have an effect in official circles, but once North Africa was partitioned by the colonial powers, reform was frequently nominal rather than actual. Between 1890 and 1919, the European powers established several agencies to oversee the end of slavery. The Brussels Conference of 1889 declared slavery criminal. The resulting **Brussels Act** of 1890 reaffirmed that the welfare of Africans susceptible to enslavement was an international responsibility and required the signatories to prevent slave raiding and trafficking, to repatriate or resettle freed or escaped slaves, and to curtail arms dealing in slaving areas. While this Act actually facilitated colonialism and the further exploitation of Africa under the guise of antislavery legislation, it also created two international bureaus—one in Zanzibar and the other in Brussels—to maintain records of
slave trafficking and antislavery legislation by the signatories. These offices, however, had no provisions for enforcing antislavery policies except by resort to public opinion.

Between 1892 and 1914, all the colonial powers attempted to reduce large scale slave raiding and trading, including the export of slaves from Africa, but none was successful in imposing an immediate end to the institution of slavery. By 1919, the League of Nations agreed to suppress slavery in all its forms, but little was accomplished until the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, piloted by John Harris (1874-1940), lobbied the League to promote effective antislavery measures. Even Britain, which complacently regarded itself as the world’s emancipator, ducked the issue of slavery in its own colonies. Spurred by Harris’s agitation, the League appointed the Temporary Slavery Commission of 1925 to inquire into slavery worldwide, and the Slavery Convention of 1926 became the first international body with a specific mandate to end slavery. This treaty remains in force today. Other committees were convened and discussion about slavery and other forms of forced labor continued, but chattel slavery was legally abolished only on a country-by-country basis, the last capitulation coming in 1970—although slavery is not, even now, completely eradicated. Anti-Slavery International, a contemporary agency dedicated to eradicating slavery, monitors continuing incidents, including small-scale European domestic, agricultural, and sex slavery; Asian child and sex slavery; and Sudanese slavery, which recently erupted as a result of military conflicts and famine. Perhaps tens of thousands of Sudanese children and adults have been snatched as war booty from their homes in the south and transported north, to work for Islamic owners.

Many international policies have lacked effective enforcement procedures, relying on the integrity of the signatories, who, often enough, had other interests to pursue. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most of North Africa came directly into French control during this period of legislation about and oversight of slavery, and French colonials were more interested in preserving local rights and peaceful coexistence than in pursuing the humanitarian agenda of abolition.

Abolition of the African Trade in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco

France acquired these territories in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although, for hundreds of years previously, Portugal and Spain had controlled vital ports and maintained a military presence across North Africa.

Algeria (the nation that emerged from the city-state of Algiers) fell to French control in 1830. The actual number of African slaves in nineteenth-century Algeria is not known, but they were a significant factor in the economy. In the lands along the Mediterranean coast, slaves were mainly employed in agriculture, and in the Sahara region to the south, slaves worked in date production, the construction and maintenance of irrigation systems, and herding. From 1844, the local French bureaucracies—les Bureaux arabes—were set up to administer local populations, and these
authorities became responsible for implementing emancipation when the 1848 French imperial law that abolished slavery took effect. French administrators in Algeria viewed the prospective emancipation of slaves with skepticism, for abolition would not only affect the revenues arising from the trans-Saharan caravans (which were subsidized by slave trading) but also the support of the Arabs who would resent the loss of personal wealth tied up in slaves. In 1857, 1858, and 1887, governmental circulars insisted—without result—on the implementation of abolition, even though, in 1880, France decreed that the relationship between a slave and his owner would no longer be recognized by law. Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian slaves learned to flee from their owners to regions controlled by the French authority in Algeria in search of emancipation, but only in 1906 did the president of the French Republic issue a decree on the illegal character of the slave trade in Algeria. As a consequence, slavery declined but did not cease altogether.

Like Algeria, Tunisia (the nation emerging from the city-state of Tunis) had also been a satellite of the Ottoman Empire since the end of the sixteenth century. However, the Husseinic dynasty founded in 1705 was able to assert a good deal of autonomy for more than 100 years. Sandwiched between Algeria, which fell to France in 1830, and Tripolitania (now Libya), which was reclaimed by the Ottomans in 1836, the Tunisian ruler, Ahmad Bey (1837–1855), favored European protection over Ottoman submersion, and he initiated a number of reforms to modernize Tunisia. Tunisia was not a major slave trading country, and, persuaded by Britain and protected by its naval force, the Bey abolished slavery in Tunisia in 1846. However, his successor, Muhammad Bey (1855–1859) reversed the law, claiming that slavery was an integral part of Muslim tradition. Crisis during the reign of Muhammad al-Sadiq (1859–1882), who carried on the process of modernization, drew Tunisia into a series of economic and social reversals, which led to Tunisia's realliance with the Ottomans in 1871. The Bey soon severed this tie, but, several years later, Britain traded its de facto protection of a highly vulnerable but independent Tunisia for French acquiescence in the British administration of Cyprus. Tunisia was reduced to a French protectorate in 1883. As such, it was subject to French imperial law, with its lax enforcement policies regarding abolition.

An empire in its own right from the time of Ahmad al-Mansour (d. 1603), Morocco was a Muslim state accustomed to slaving revenues from both the “white” and “black” trades. From al-Mansour's time, the empire included the Songhay (a once powerful empire in the Sahel region immediately south of Morocco), which provided a rich source of both gold and slaves who were routinely trafficked through Morocco and across North Africa to the east. Moroccans also used slaves domestically in households, in agriculture, in the military, and in public works. The Ottoman edicts had no effect in Morocco, and the slave trade, traditionally conducted either privately or in open markets in most of the major cities, was not abolished until the end of the nineteenth century when the sultan succumbed to European pressures. However, the Moroccan historian Ahmad al-Nasiri assisted in creating abolitionist sentiment by a strong indictment of slavery in his History of the
Maghrib (1881), in which he argued that Islamic law was broken by the enslavement of Africans who were, for the most part, already Muslim.

Britain protected Morocco from European colonization by supporting its nineteenth-century sultans, some of whom attempted to impose reform along modern European lines, but Britain finally ceded Morocco to the French in 1912 in return for a free hand in Egypt. In the French Protectorate of Morocco, the series of laws for the abolition of slavery enacted by the French government had little effect until 1925, when a law was passed that explicitly prohibited slavery. Even then, there was no sudden end to slavery, and freed slaves and their former masters continued to relate to each other in substantially the same manner.

Abolition of the African Trade in Libya

Libya, previously known as Tripolitania, developed in the region of the port of Tripoli, and spread as far as the western border of Egypt. It was under Ottoman domination from 1551 until 1722. With sparse agricultural development and a comparatively low population, Tripolitania had little domestic demand for slaves. Thus, most of the Africans transported along the northern route from the Sudan and Morocco or along the trans-Saharan slave routes were exported to the east; indeed Tripoli was a major slave outlet from the late-sixteenth century onward. After 1722, the country was ruled by a hereditary sultanate, which continued to facilitate the slave trade until 1835, when the Ottomans invaded and resumed control. Current estimates place the total traffic at about 784,000 African slaves between the years 1550 to 1857, when the Ottomans abolished the slave trade. Ottoman prohibition in Tripolitania proved itself somewhat effective; a major influence on abolition was the dreadful deaths in 1849 of 1,600 slaves and the slave merchants who accompanied them when they crossed the desert from Bornu to Fezzan, an event that spurred the British government to urge the Ottoman Porte to take steps to prevent the recurrence of such suffering. As a result, the Porte required the Governor of Tripoli to monitor slave trading more carefully, although he was not commissioned to prohibit slave imports altogether. Yet, after the 1857 edict, Tripolitanian governors did attempt to end raids and to repatriate enslaved Africans. Until that point, perhaps two thirds of the caravan trade across the Sahara involved slaves. Owing to Ottoman abolitionist measures, British pressure, and the spread of French imperial power in Africa, which removed important slave catchment areas from predation, by 1869 the numbers of slaves in transit had dropped substantially. This suppression of trafficking along the traditional Tripoli route led, however, to increased traffic along the more arduous Algerian and Egyptian routes. Slaves were sold for domestic use in twentieth-century Libya, even after the Italians expelled the Ottomans in 1911.

Abolition of the African Trade in Egypt

Egypt was sequentially subject to foreign powers with different slave policies. Mamluk Egypt fell to Ottoman domination in 1517, although the
Mamluk Sultanate managed to regain control by the late-eighteenth century. Curiously, throughout this period the Ottomans strove to restrict the transportation of slaves for sale in Egypt. This restriction was not premised upon humanitarian principle but upon military pragmatism, a ploy to debilitate the Mamluks who relied on male slaves for their army. When the Ottomans restored direct rule in Egypt in 1786, they simultaneously prohibited any slave imports into Egypt, a prohibition that lasted through the French occupation (1789–1801) and into the Anglo-Ottoman reoccupation that followed, and indeed, until the 1850s, when the Ottoman Empire abolished slavery. Of course, slaves were imported despite the ban, some entering Egypt overland when the Tripoli route was jeopardized by active policing of the slave trade, and some entering from the Sudan, especially after the Egyptian occupation in 1820. Slave-trading that originated in the Sudan was difficult to suppress, but the slave markets in Khartoum were closed by 1864, and a river police patrol was established to track down traders' boats and seize their slave cargoes. Meanwhile, Britain strove to abolish slavery within Egypt, but met with sustained religious resistance. Following the Convention for the Suppression of the Slave Trade between Britain and Egypt in 1877, abolition remained elusive. When Sir Evelyn Baring was appointed Agent and Consul General in Egypt in 1883, he did nothing to promote the cause of abolition, having concluded that slavery in Egypt did not exist by any act of the government but rather as a Muslim religious law, and, hence, could not be abrogated by legislative action. However, the British established Manumission Bureaus in Egypt, which emancipated any slave who applied, and by 1907, the institution was largely eradicated. Nevertheless, in 1907, Egypt established a Slavery Repression Department to ensure oversight of continuing slave trafficking in the north. See also Africa, Anti-slavery in; Africa, Emancipation in, Africa Squadron; Arabia and Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Slavery; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Barbary Wars and White American Enslavement in North Africa; British Slavery, Abolition of; East African Slave Trade; Islam and Antislavery; Livingstone, David; Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in; Ottoman Empire; Decline of Slavery in; Slave Narratives.

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Susan B. Iwanisziw

Northwest Ordinance (1787)

The Northwest Ordinance is perhaps the most significant piece of
national legislation passed by the U.S. Congress during the period when the
Articles of Confederation formed the basis for national government. Enacted
on July 13, 1787, it was among the last measures passed by the Confedera-
tion Congress.

Designed to facilitate the orderly settlement of the territory west of the
Appalachian Mountains and north of the Ohio River, the Ordinance had sev-
eral elements. Most generally, it established the principle that new territo-
ries, when sufficiently settled, would become states, fully equal to the
original thirteen, and not remain permanently or even for very long in a
subordinate position. Land in the territories would be sold directly to occu-
piers in small parcels, not in large parcels to speculators and others with
political connections. Federal land would be surveyed prior to sale using a
grid system and specific lots were set aside to support public education.
These principles continued to govern the territorial expansion of the United
States for the next century as the nation reached its current borders. Finally,
slavery was prohibited from the entire territory, although provision was
made for the return of fugitive slaves from the territory when claimed by
their owners or their owners’ agents. The exclusion of slavery from the ter-
itory was not controversial at the time, unlike later efforts to legislate on
the status of slavery in the territories, and reflects both the spirit of equality
that emerged from the Revolution and the general sense in the 1780s that
slavery was an economically marginal institution and would soon disappear.

While the ordinance appeared to free those slaves already in the territory,
territorial governor Arthur St. Clair did not move to free slaves already in
the territory and acted to prevent slaves being freed by court order, ruling
that pre-1787 slaves must remain in bondage.

When Indiana was established as a separate territory, it permitted the
importation of African Americans as indentured servants who were bought
and sold openly. When Illinois became a separate territory, it adopted the
same practice. There were 746 indentured blacks in Illinois as late as 1830.
Both territories continued this practice, as well as lax enforcement of anti-
slavery provisions in their constitutions, after attaining statehood. Both
indenture and slavery in the Northwest Territory and the states formed
from it were largely limited to areas near the Ohio River.

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Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia became home to Canada's first significant community of freed blacks in the aftermath of the American War of Independence. These communities were settled by refugee slaves who had fled behind British lines in response to proclamations freeing the slaves of rebels. Article VII of the Treaty of Paris ending the war provided that American slave-property not be sequestrated, or separated from other property returned to the victorious Patriots. Sir Guy Carleton, British commander-in-chief in America, refused to comply with this provision on the grounds that it constituted bad faith with his predecessors who had promised freedom to fleeing slaves under the terms of the Philipsburg (NY) Proclamation of June 30, 1779. Carleton thus assumed the logistical, if not the moral responsibility for evacuating the freed blacks, as well as Loyalists both white and black, from New York City. Between April and November 1783, some 3,000 freed blacks were transported to greater Nova Scotia (including today's New Brunswick), where they hoped to be treated as immigrant settlers on equal terms with other refugees. Systemic racism, however, prevented such a favorable reception.

A freed black was simply a fugitive slave in disguise, and not even blacks who had served with the army were privileged with equal rights. Culturally there was no difference between Nova Scotia and most of the Thirteen Colonies; fugitive slaves, war or no war, were not the same as legally manumitted slaves or freeborn blacks. Moreover, Nova Scotia was no better prepared for an influx of 3,000 irregular freedmen than it was for ten times that number of Loyalists. There were already hundreds of slaves in Atlantic Canada, and as many as 2,500 more were imported by the Loyalists. An unreconstructed slave society such as Nova Scotia was in 1783 readily determined that a freedman who was actually a refugee and fugitive from slavery in revolted neighboring colonies was inassimilable. The coming of the Loyalists and their slaves reinforced slavery, while the coming of the freed blacks, but recently slaves themselves, at once undermined and complicated it.

The ports of debarkation for the freed blacks were Saint John, Port Roseway, Halifax, Annapolis Royal, Fort Cumberland (Amherst), and Port Mouton. The largest group—some 1,500—went to Port Roseway, where, at the head of the northwest arm of Shelburne Harbour, they established Birchtown, at the time the largest freed black settlement in North America. In so doing, they immortalized the name of the one-time military commandant of New York City, Brigadier Samuel Birch, who had issued many of their safe-conducts which certified their freedom. The second largest group was set down with the Loyalists at the mouth of the Saint John River (City of Saint John), whence they proceeded northwards and settled on the Kingston Peninsula. In Halifax they established the historic black quarter in the north suburbs of the old town, which survives to this day. On the eastern side of
Halifax Harbour, beyond the village of Dartmouth, they took over the new Loyalist township of Preston, which has forever since been identified with them, and where a subsequent wave of black refugee immigrants was settled after the War of 1812. On the fringe of the Loyalist settlement of Digby, on the western shore of the Annapolis Basin, they established Brindley Town. Among other communities they founded were Birchtown, “Niggertown Hill” [Sunnyville] and Tracadie Road in Guysborough County, and Birchtown in Annapolis County.

The freed blacks were treated little better than the slaves that they had formerly been, and did not flourish despite their best efforts. Disqualified from fully exercising their property and civil rights in a society which viewed blacks as property almost by definition, many of the freed blacks were receptive in 1791 to a proposal from the Sierra Leone Company, a London-based antislavery philanthropy, to relocate to West Africa. Officialdom in Nova Scotia encouraged the venture because they were glad to see the freed blacks go; they feared that ex-slaves could not coexist with slaves without undermining the very institution of slavery. As a result, many of the freed black communities were depopulated and some disappeared altogether. Of all the settlements founded by the freed blacks, only Birchtown (Shelburne County), the largest of them, remains intact. Yet the majority of the freed blacks were not seduced by the blandishments of the Sierra Leone Company and decided to stay in Nova Scotia, where their descendants live to this day. They stoutly resisted efforts by Loyalists to reenslave them and many lived to witness the disappearance of slavery. At a time when most blacks were unfree, those freedmen who could not prove that they were not slaves were apt to be pressed into slavery by Loyalists who had lost slave property in America for which they could not obtain compensation. The presumption was in favor of the master, not the purported slave, and before the 1790s no court would uphold the constitutional liberty of freed blacks if it were challenged.

While it is by no means easy to distinguish descendants of the freed blacks from those of the slaves, who established their own communities after the end of slavery, it is clear that the children and grandchildren of the freed blacks were not entirely displaced by the post-War of 1812 “Black Refugee” immigrants. The very presence of the freed blacks encouraged the slaves, beside whom they lived and with whom they probably intermingled, to assert and test their right to freedom. If the slaves of rebels could be emancipated by royal fiat, why not also the slaves of Loyalists? Thanks to the initiative of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, the freed black experience of 1783–1792 has become the prime focus of black historical interest in Nova Scotia. The tendency to assimilate the freed blacks to the Loyalists expresses retrospectively the hope of the freed blacks themselves—that, like the Loyalists, they would find in Nova Scotia a promised land where they would be free indeed, endued not only with the fundamental right of freedom but also with the legal rights deriving from it. Instead they found themselves half-free in a slave society overflowing with acquisitive slaveholders from the very colonies where they themselves had formerly been enslaved. The continual struggle to maintain their newfound, qualified
liberty under the most difficult conditions imaginable bedeviled their efforts to form sustainable communities and build a free society in the midst of a slave one.


Barry Cabill
O'Connell, Daniel (1775–1847)

Daniel O'Connell was a Catholic landowner who became the preeminent Irish statesman of his time. His abolitionist activities came late in his life, after he had already established his reputation as a champion of Irish and Catholic rights, but O'Connell was staunchly opposed to both British and American slavery. Abolitionists on both sides of the ocean welcomed his support. Nonetheless, because O'Connell's political priority was always with Ireland, and because his career was in its twilight by the 1840s, he remained on the margins of organized abolitionism, never allowing himself to be identified fully with a particular group of antislavery reformers.

O'Connell rose to prominence in the 1810s and 1820s, when he helped mobilize an impressive popular movement in Ireland against the Protestant ascendancy in politics, which was only strengthened by the Union of 1800 formally joining Ireland to the United Kingdom. By denouncing the disenfranchisement and marginalization of Catholics, O'Connell became a hero among the populace. After mobilizing impressive displays of popular dissent, he was elected to the House of Commons in 1828, despite the prohibition of Catholics from seats in Parliament. O'Connell's defiant election pressured the British government to grant Catholics legislative representation in 1829, and to allow O'Connell—nicknamed the "Liberator"—to take his seat. This was his most important political achievement, the act that became known as Catholic emancipation.

Once in Parliament, slave emancipation also occupied O'Connell's attention. In the parliamentary debates that produced the Emancipation Bill of 1833, he sided with abolitionists against the West Indian lobby. After 1834, he criticized apprenticeship and supported its overthrow in 1838. Yet O'Connell's antislavery sentiments did not subside after emancipation. He encouraged British abolitionists as they turned their attention to universal emancipation, and particularly to the United States.

O'Connell's renown as an antislavery spokesman and his philippics on American hypocrisy impressed abolitionists, especially William Lloyd Garrison, who met him while visiting England in 1833. O'Connell supported
Garrison’s efforts to expose the shortcomings of the American Colonization Society before British abolitionists. Garrisonians were also impressed in 1840 when O’Connell criticized the exclusion of women from the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention. After the Convention, O’Connell added his name, along with that of the popular temperance reformer Father Theobald Mathew, to the so-called “Irish Address.” In the Address, which carried an additional 60,000 Irish signatures, O’Connell urged Irish-Americans to side with the abolitionists and spurn prejudice against African Americans. It was brought to the United States at the end of 1841 by black abolitionist Charles L. Remond.

In January 1842, Garrisonians triumphantly produced the Irish Address at a public meeting in Boston, hoping that O’Connell’s influence would win over Irish immigrants to the antislavery cause. But for a variety of reasons, including the racism of many Irish Americans and their own struggle against nativism, Irish immigrants did not respond to the Address enthusiastically. Many persisted in their antiabolitionism despite their respect for O’Connell. The Address thus crystallized what would be a recurring problem for the Irish “Liberator.” On the one hand, he wanted to garner Irish-American support for political reforms at home, but on the other hand, he refused to recant his opposition to American slavery.

This dilemma surfaced again in 1843, when O’Connell spearheaded a yearlong campaign for the repeal of the Union of 1800. O’Connell had long favored a distinct Irish Parliament and a form of home rule; he saw his nationalism as continuous with his fight for religious toleration and the political equality of Catholics. Thus, in 1843, with his political alliances in Parliament eroding, O’Connell renewed his calls for Repeal. Repeal associations sprung up among Irish Americans, who sent financial aid across the Atlantic. O’Connell welcomed the money despite the often virulent antiabolitionism of the senders. Garrisonians criticized what they saw as O’Connell’s equivocation, just as they would later criticize the Free Church of Scotland for accepting contributions from the South. But O’Connell did not withdraw his condemnation of slavery. In a long 1843 letter rebuking the Cincinnati Repeal association, which had defended American slavery, he made clear that his commitment to Repeal did not lessen his commitment to abolition. At any rate, O’Connell was arrested by the British government at the end of 1843 for his Repeal activities, and his influence among Irish radicals declined thereafter, though his popularity remained considerable.

Despite his antislavery commitments, O’Connell was politically wary of being associated with the Garrisonians. In 1843, he publicly criticized what he saw as Garrison’s infidel religious beliefs, which he said were opposed
to Catholic faith. An infuriated Garrison felt betrayed by these remarks, but he was similarly wary of O’Connell. Since radical abolitionists often denounced both politicians and Catholicism, O’Connell’s status as a Catholic politician was problematic. Even so, Garrisonians gladly praised his strictures on slavery, frequently publishing his speeches. They also applauded his opposition to the use of violence for political ends, even for Ireland’s independence. When Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth later vacillated on slavery, Garrisonians chided him by pointing to the constancy of O’Connell, whom many of them eulogized in 1875 on the centennial of his birth. Despite his death in 1847, O’Connell’s memory thus lived on among antebellum American abolitionists. See also Hibernian (Irish) Anti-Slavery Society; Roman Catholic Church and Antislavery and Abolitionism.


W. Caleb McDaniel

Oman. See Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in

Oroonoko and Early Antislavery Literary Works

Authors who expressed a profound sensitivity to the histories of individual slaves or disgust for slave abuse were often motivated by simple compassion, rather than by antislavery sentiment. Sympathetic fictional treatments, biographies, plays, and poems, whose numbers grew incrementally throughout the long eighteenth century (1660–1832), nevertheless helped build the ideological foundation from which abolitionist writers were able to create a public antislavery constituency. Writers from Britain, North America, the Caribbean region, and Europe all contributed to the development of this constituency, which, ultimately, influenced antislavery legislation in Great Britain, the United States, South America, and elsewhere.

Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave (1688), a novella by Aphra Behn, has been promoted by several twentieth-century scholars as an early antislavery text. The nameless narrator purports to have lived in Surinam and befriended the Coramantien Prince, Oroonoko, who led a failed slave rebellion during the English colonial administration (1649–1667). To punish his revolt, the deputy governor of the colony has the prince cruelly whipped, but, once restored to health, Oroonoko kills his wife, Imoinda, to preserve her and their unborn child from the indignities of slavery. While the narrator is absent, the colonists brutally execute the prince by dismemberment and burning. The depiction of Oroonoko’s noble character and tragic history is highly flattering, but the narrator’s romanticization of his life is accompanied by a rather matter-of-fact acceptance of the harsh conditions suffered by the ordinary slaves. Indeed, Oroonoko is clearly identified as a trader in African slaves in his own country, his capture the trick of an English sea captain to whom he had previously sold prisoners of war. In light of Behn’s royalist convictions and the fact that the
transatlantic slave trade was sanctioned by Charles II who issued African trade monopolies to the Company of Royal Adventurers (1663) and to the Royal African Company (1672), her attitude toward slavery is unlikely to be wholly disapproving. However, the dramatic adaptation of the colonial part of the story, first by Thomas Southerne in 1695 and then by a series of eighteenth-century adapters, drew Behn's sympathetic account of the royal slave inexorably into the province of the abolitionists.

Southerne's play held the stage for over 100 years, one of the mainstays of British theater. If Behn's text must remain an ambiguous record of her attitude toward slavery, Southerne's play cannot, with any justice, be similarly categorized. In debating a slave's right to rebel, Southerne's Oroonoko argues that he is a legitimate purchase with no cause to defraud his owner. Displeased with the dramatic Oroonoko's character, mid-eighteenth-century adapters transformed the play in order to emphasize the horrors of slave life and to press readers and playgoers into recognizing the cruelties of the institution. Only in John Ferriar's *Prince of Angola* (1788), an adaptation sponsored by the Manchester Society for Abolition, did the play become unambiguously abolitionist. The antislavery agenda is made explicit in Ferriar's preface, but it surfaces implicitly in his redrawing of Oroonoko as an eighteenth-century man of sentiment and, especially, in his excision of Oroonoko’s involvement with slave-trading activity.

Plays were not a major vehicle for arousing antislavery advocacy, but several dramas depicted sympathetic slaves in French, English and North American theaters. These included Pierre Antoine de La Place's French translation of *Oroonoko* (1742); Isaac Bickerstaff's *Padlock* (1768), featuring the slave Mungo, which was performed in England and in various North American locations as early as 1771; and Olympe de Gouges's *Zamore et Mirza* (transformed into *L'Esclavage des Nègres* or *Negro Slavery*) published in France in 1788. Most important in terms of the antislavery cause is George Colman the Younger's *Inkle and Yarico* (1787). In this extremely popular comic opera, Colman transformed the well-known Caribbean story about a pregnant Indian woman named Yarico, who was sold into slavery by her callous English lover, into a celebration of two interracial marriages.

Behn's novella, that sparked much of this dramatic reflection on slaves and slavery, did not, overall, have much impact on fiction writing. Indeed, her *Oroonoko* was marketed as a “true history” rather than a fiction. Early novels certainly mentioned slaves and freed slaves; for example, Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) includes a brief episode about the marriage of a capable Jamaican slave to a young Englishwoman. But Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (serialized in 1851–1852) provided the archetype for the antislavery novel. On the other hand, the personal histories of African slaves became popular reading. These include Ottobah Cugoano’s *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787); Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), which was translated into Dutch, German, and Russian; and the anonymous American autobiographical poem, *The American in Algiers, or the Patriot of Seventy-Six in Captivity* (1797).
The greatest literary contribution to the antislavery movement arose in the form of poetry. Many verses expressing sympathy for African slaves were composed by writers who were not professionally dedicated to the poetic arts. Some appeared within antislavery treatises, such as Thomas Tyron’s *Friendly Advice to the Gentleman-Planters of the East and West Indies* (1684). Daniel Defoe, better known for his novels and tracts, expresses his contempt for the exploitation of Africans and Native Americans in his poem *Reformation of Manners: A Satyr* (1702). Other critiques of contemporary slavery include Bernard Mandeville’s *The Planter’s Charity* (1704), several poems about Inkle and Yarico, and Richard Savage’s *Of Public Spirit in Regard to Public Works* (1737).

When the abolitionist movement gathered momentum, many poems became vehicles for propaganda. Published in the hundreds during the last decades of the eighteenth century, poems were composed by men and women, both black and white, from various social classes and religious affiliations. *The Dying Negro, A Poem* (1775) by Thomas Day is prefaced by an anguished description of the slave trade, while the poem addresses the suicide of an escaped slave who is forced back into slavery on the eve of his marriage to an English woman. At William Wilberforce’s request, William Cowper wrote two moving poems concerning the slave trade: *The Negro’s Complaint* (1778) and *Pity for Poor Africans* (1788). Also commissioned by the British Anti-Slavery Society in support of Wilberforce’s bill, Hannah More’s *Slavery, A Poem* (1787) was widely distributed in Britain and in the United States. Ann Yearsley, or Lactilla, the “milkmaid poet,” wrote *A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade* (1788). For obvious reasons, African poets living in North America, such as Phillis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon, were less forthright in condemning the slave trade. However, abolitionists used their poetic genius to challenge common white assumptions of African intellectual inferiority.

Romantic poets also contributed to the public cause with topical poems. William Blake wrote *The Little Black Boy* (1789); Robert Southey composed a sonnet sequence on the slave trade (1794); and Samuel Taylor Coleridge penned, in Greek, *The Wretched Lot of the Slaves in the Islands of West India*. William Wordsworth wrote a sonnet dedicated to the end of slavery, entitled *To Toussaint L’Ouverture* (1803).

As well as poets and writers, public activists of all stripes were inspired to commemorate in verse the triumphs and struggles of William Wilberforce’s parliamentary campaign and the eventual abolition of the slave trade in Britain. Activists included Anna Letitia Barbauld, John Walsh, James Graham, and Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins. Distanced by revolution and circumstance from British parliamentary activity, Americans countenanced their own abolition of the slave trade without the same outpouring of poetic propaganda. However, William C. Foster, a working man, called for an end to slavery worldwide in *An Address, Presented to the Readers of the Waterford Gazette*, January 1, 1803. See also Literature and Abolition.

Ottoman Empire, Decline of Slavery in

Approved by custom and sanctioned by law, slavery was an institution of vital importance in Ottoman society. Ottoman law regulated all aspects of the slaves’ status. It laid down the obligations of masters and slaves, and determined the relationship between them. In theory, slaves could only be obtained from non-Muslim countries with which a state of war existed. Muslim prisoners of war or rebels could not be enslaved.Legally, slaves could not be used for “inappropriate” uses, for example as thieves, beggars, or prostitutes (although they could be for concubines). The law reflected ideals of a male-dominated society.

Culturally, slavery was an important channel for recruitment and socialization and a means of linking individuals into patronage networks. While the law did not make any distinction among types of slaves, in practice clear social stratification emerged. Part of the complexity of studying slavery in the Ottoman Empire arises from the continuum of degrees of slavery rather than a clear distinction between slave and free. At the top, we have the officeholders (e.g., Grand Vazirs), state functionaries and harem ladies of slave origin. Their decisions affected the lives of both slave and free, and in most cases had both slave and free reporting directly to them. There was little to distinguish these slaves from the free. At the other end of the spectrum we have the agricultural slaves, the most restricted of Ottoman slaves.

During the early period of the Ottoman Empire (c. 1446–1556), prisoners of war (especially children) were converted to Islam and taught how to practice their new faith. These kul slaves were also taught the Turkish language and customs. Depending on their abilities and aptitudes, they were trained for a career in government (religious, military, or administrative) with elite status. The women who came to the harem as slaves were taught and trained to be Ottoman ladies. Like the kul slaves, they went through rigorous training to learn all the domestic and social roles attached to their position. As they grew up, they were paired with kul slaves—an appropriate match for Ottoman society. With the stabilization of frontiers, kul slaves were recruited through devshirme (a child-levy imposed on the empire’s non-Muslim subjects). During the seventeenth century, the child-levy was abandoned and a different strategy for recruitment and socialization emerged.

Wealthy families “adopted” children of slaves, educated them and endowed them for life. This custom of besleme was encouraged by Ottoman culture and served a dual purpose of freeing the slave and expanding the patronage network of the family. The complexities and richness of such
situations often developed into lifetime relationships that entailed protection, patronage, loyalty, and mutual affection.

The kul and barem slavery survived until the demise of the empire in the second decade of the twentieth century. Emanating from the palace and permeating into the elite, only the abolition of the sultanate and the physical removal of the royal family from Turkey finally ended the practice.

Demand for skilled labor in Ottoman cities was partly met by industrial slaves. Slaves were immune from seasonal migration and were more productive than free labor, as they could buy their freedom by working for a specified number of years or by producing a specified quantity of goods.

Domestic slaves, because of where they served, were intimately connected with the decision makers of the family. Hence, they could negotiate their position and influence family decisions. A suckling relationship, for example, could evolve into a “mothering” relationship with freeborn children of the house. By extension, slave children would be considered “part of the family.” Ottoman law had legal mechanisms to grant manumission. One was for the master to voluntarily grant freedom (encouraged by Ottoman ideals). Another was for the slave to buy his/her freedom (mukatebe). Offspring of free-slave unions were considered free, and the bonded mother was free upon the master’s death. Once free, it was illegal to be enslaved again. If mistreated, slaves could and did, seek redress through the courts; however, in most cases, the courts abstained from regular interference in the treatment and punishment of slaves by owners.

Ottoman law forbade the enslavement of freeborn Muslims, and Zimmis (protected minorities). The absence of slave breeding practices and cultural attitudes resulted in a steady decline of the slave population. Ottoman slavery hence depended on a vast and complex slave-trading network that provided the lion’s share of slaves. In the eighteenth century, an increasing number of the Ottoman elite were educated in European institutions and in such European values as equality, individual rights, and political freedom, which influenced Ottoman culture. The Ottomans adopted a negative stance towards slavery and gradually disengaged from it on moral grounds.

During the 1850s and 1860s, Circassian refugees from Caucasus entered the empire in large numbers. Although the Circassians were Muslims, their culture, including their treatment of slaves, was closer to that practiced in the Balkans. The Porte (Ottoman government) was reluctant to interfere with established custom, and sought to limit agricultural slavery through existing means. Laws prohibiting the sale of free individuals into slavery were strengthened and enforced. Slaves who wanted their freedom used the mukatebe—sometimes with assistance from the state treasury. Realizing that slaves typically could not afford the manumission fee, the government offered land as part or full compensation. Finally, laws mandating military service of refugees sped up manumission.

In the 1840s, the abolition movement in Britain started looking at slavery in the Ottoman Empire. The British abolitionists treated all types of bondage within the Ottoman Empire as one homogeneous entity. Hence, an agenda to emancipate only the most restrictive slaves was never considered. This lack of differentiation may have contributed to prolonging the most
oppressive forms of slavery. The Ottomans viewed the attack on their slavery system as an affront to their sensibilities and culture. Hence, foreign efforts at abolishing slavery in the empire were met with considerable resistance; even though some of the high-ranking ministers were themselves “of slave origin,” i.e., either slaves with elite status or offspring of slaves.

The British government then focused its efforts on curtailing the trafficking of slaves on humanitarian grounds. The goal was to get the Porte to issue edicts forbidding the trade in slaves. British diplomatic and commercial representatives monitored the implications of these edicts, and reported to London. Eventually, the Ottoman government participated in negotiations leading to the Brussels Act against slave trading in 1890.

The Ottomans felt morally and spiritually superior to the Europeans. This feeling coexisted with the recognition of their technological and economic inferiority, and bred resistance to yielding to British pressures. Thus, even when the Porte issued a number of edicts, their enforcement often lagged behind and required reiteration and reenactment. Ideologically, the statesmen responded defensively to British pressure for abolition. While they accepted the need to prevent human suffering, their laws restricted the slave-trade without addressing slavery itself. The reform-minded activists were too absorbed in their struggle for political rights and only marginally addressed slavery. During the 1870s, the playwrights, novelists and poets made the most impressive effort to grapple with the issue of slavery. All three groups seem to project the least restricted forms of slavery to Europe (i.e., the kul and harem slaves), where there is virtually no practical difference between slave and free. While at home, they addressed the most restrictive forms of bondage.

The Ottomans did not adopt a policy of abolishing slavery per se. Instead, they enacted laws that effectively choked off the slave trade, hindered the travel and transfer of slaves, and encouraged manumission, sometimes using the state treasury to compensate slaveowners. These measures severely curtailed slavery in the empire. This attitude was in keeping with the Ottoman political culture, which was patient, mindful of the long term, gradual, indirect, very pragmatic, and in most cases quite effective. See also Qur’an and Antislavery.


Mohammed Hassanali
Paine, Thomas (1737–1809)

A printer, pamphleteer, author, and statesman, Thomas Paine is best known as the author of two critical Revolutionary-era treatises, “Common Sense” (1776) and “The Rights of Man” (1791–1792). Thomas Paine was also an important antislavery figure in the late-eighteenth century Western world. In 1775, Paine published “African Slavery in America,” a vigorous attack on both the slave trade and the institution of slavery itself. Referring to slaves as “an unnatural commodity” and the slave trade as “wicked,” Paine chastised Anglo-Americans for sanctioning chattel bondage. Paine found religious justifications of slavery particularly troubling. Far from chattel possessions devoid of rights, enslaved people, Paine observed, had “a natural, perfect right” to freedom. The essay, published in *The Pennsylvania Journal and the Weekly Advertiser*, marked Paine as one of the rising antislavery voices of the 1770s, along with fellow Pennsylvanians Benjamin Rush and Anthony Benezet.

Paine solidified his antislavery credentials by joining the *Pennsylvania Abolition Society*, the first antislavery organization in the Western world. In 1780, Paine also helped draft Pennsylvania’s gradual abolition law, which declared that all enslaved people born after that year would be liberated at the age of twenty-eight. As the first so-called “post-nati” abolition law passed in the United States—post-nati referring to the fact that the individual’s liberation occurred at some established date after their birth—it became the basis for similar statutes in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island over the next twenty years. Paine’s particular genius as an antislavery writer and statesman was to link antislavery principles to the democratic institutions of Congress.

governance appearing in America. Abolition could not be achieved, Paine concluded, by relying on masters’ private manumission of slaves; rather, emancipation must be compelled by positive government enactment. For Paine, abolition was nothing less than common sense.


**Palenques (Colombia)**

**Palenques** were communities of runaway slaves formed since the late-sixteenth century all along Colombian territory. These became important centers for resistance to colonial slave society, especially in those areas surrounding key economic regions like Cartagena and Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast where domestic and agricultural slaves were widespread, and Cauca and Antioquia close to the Pacific coast where mining was more common. The most important *palenques* were San Basilio, west of the Magdalena River in the Caribbean, and El Castigo, close by the Patia River in the southern Andean province of Popayán. The symbolic power of *palenques* was recognized by the colonial state, which barred their formation and existence. Yet finding this an impossible goal, by the eighteenth century the state promoted arrangements with some *palenques* in order to achieve some control over them while granting them the right to be free communities.

Slave resistance in colonial Colombia took many forms. Legal strategies afforded one form whereby the enslaved appropriated Hispanic judicial spaces and language for the defense of their rights. These strategies had been customary since the seventeenth century and became more frequent in the eighteenth century when more tolerant Bourbon legislation created more judicial opportunities for the enslaved. Rebellion, on the other hand, was not always a safe path as colonial authorities and slave owners punished rebels severely with mutilation or death. A more feasible alternative for slaves was to run away and form free communities, or *palenques*, beyond the reach of the Spanish state or slave owners.

Flight represented an elemental form of resistance to slavery and led to the emergence of autonomous communities, which deeply threatened the institution of slavery. *Palenques* were transgressive because they symbolized the possibility to achieve freedom for enslaved populations. In their communities they generally created agricultural economies and sometimes organized themselves politically on the basis of African tribal structures. But the members of these communities also continuously attacked plantations to obtain goods and helped to destabilize colonial society.

The earliest fugitive communities formed in the late-sixteenth century around the city of Cartagena, the most important port of trade for African slaves on the Caribbean coast. After numerous Spanish expeditions attempted to overpower the runaways, their communities did not disappear.
The most important *palenque*, San Basilio, was formed by groups of Kongo, Angola, Arará, Mina, and Karabali runaway slaves from *haciendas* around Cartagena, who successfully defended their freedom against these assaults.

In the seventeenth century, the colonial government abandoned the project to pacify the *maroons* and instead determined to recognize them as autonomous black communities. The name “community of San Basilio” was given to them by governor Juan de Torrezar Diaz y Pimienta in 1774 in recognition of their free status, granting them the right to have land, name a political leader, and exclude all white men, except the priest, from the town. These were among the first free towns in America. The crown’s decision to legalize their existence, however, included the mandate that they henceforth observe Spanish law as well as prevent other runaways from joining their communities. These negotiations were the most notable to occur between the state and a maroon community in colonial Colombia.

The southwestern maroon community of “El Castigo” affords another important illustration of the relation between the state and a Colombian *palenque*. Located in the province of Popayán, in the Patía River Valley, it comprised two villages, each one with a church, and included runaway slaves from the *haciendas* near Popayán and Valle del Cauca, and from the mines in Barba-coas, Panamá, and Chocó. Initial negotiations with the state secured a priest to live among them, but without the community accepting any political compromise with the state or formal integration into colonial society. Such adamant conditions asserted by this *palenque* spurred rising tensions with the state, and Spanish authorities viewed these maroons as intractable throughout the eighteenth century. However, during the wars of independence in the early 1810s, the Patía maroons defended their own freedom by allying with the Spanish army against the revolutionaries. They became some of the war’s most feared guerrillas, and their military organization safeguarded their territory and guaranteed their permanence as a free community. The *palenque* allied with the royalists because they were very suspicious of the patriots’ position on race and their communities and they feared that independence might bring a revocation of their hard-won rights acquired during the colonial era.

*Palenques* resisted slavery and forged autonomous communities which built innovative political structures, merged their residents’ African ancestral beliefs with those of Catholicism, and created an alternative economy which allowed them landed property and independent production and exchange. *Palenques* were the first examples of collective Afro-Colombian culture and were the predecessors of Colombia’s contemporary black communities. See also African American Communities.


*Marcela Echeverri*
Parker, John Percial (1827–1900)

A former slave from Virginia, John Percial Parker is believed to have aided 900 or more slaves during his fifteen-year career as an Underground Railroad conductor. At age eight, he was sold by his master, probably also his father. Purchased by a Mobile, Alabama, doctor, he drove the doctor to see his patients, and became friends with the doctor’s two sons, who secretly taught him to read and write.

After being separated from his master’s sons when they went north to complete their educations, Parker’s master apprenticed him to a plasterer. An argument with his employer landed him in a slave hospital, from which he fled after a fight with the hospital’s sadistic caretaker. He spent several months on the run, and was only accidentally reclaimed by his master.

Following this abortive escape, his master arranged employment for him in a foundry. Parker quickly became a skilled iron molder, but his tendency to quarrel with his employer and coworkers led to trouble. His master decided to sell him south as a field hand. Desperate to avoid this fate, Parker persuaded one of his master’s patients to purchase him with the understanding that he would pay her back his purchase price plus interest, in exchange for his freedom.

By working hard, Parker was able to repay the widow in eighteen months. In 1845, he was given his freedom papers, traveled north to Cincinnati, and found employment as an iron molder. Though he states in his autobiography, *His Promised Land*, that his master never mistreated him, he nevertheless harbored a deep resentment for having been enslaved. Therefore, he was not averse to the idea of assisting in the escape of two Kentucky slave girls. This first experience of guiding fugitive slaves from Kentucky to the home of a Ripley, Ohio, abolitionist, was the start of his career as an Underground Railroad conductor.

Parker married in 1848, after which he moved from Cincinnati to Ripley, where he had already been working with the town’s many abolitionists. For the next fifteen years, he was actively involved in conducting escaping slaves across the Ohio River. Among his many antislavery colleagues were Ripley Presbyterian minister John Rankin, as well as Levi Coffin. Although he had a $1,000 price on his head, he made almost-nightly trips into Kentucky to bring groups of fleeing slaves to Ripley. He recounted many of his harrowing (and sometimes amusing as well) adventures in *His Promised Land*.

Although the traditional lore of the Underground Railroad has painted a picture of a movement organized and headed by Caucasian abolitionists, without whom runaway slaves would never have been able to make their bids for freedom, the truth is quite different. They were much more apt to trust fellow African Americans over white men, and their first contact after they had entered a Northern state was most often with a free black like Parker. Many cities had sizeable free black communities; their residents frequently concealed runaways, forwarding them further north to both black and white abolitionists when it was safe to do so.

These Northern blacks, despite being free, did not find life easy. They encountered bitter prejudice from whites, which limited jobs they might
hold and where they might live. The Ohio Black Laws, originally enacted in 1804, for example, required that all free blacks entering the state not only possess free papers, but also register themselves with the clerk of courts in the county they resided in. Later Black Law legislation required that free blacks coming into the state post a $500 bond to ensure that they would not become a public charge. Other Northern states enacted similar laws. In addition to such obstacles, they also ran the risk of being kidnapped and sold into slavery by white slave hunters.

John Parker was a respected member of the Ripley, Ohio, community. He established himself not only as a successful businessman, running his own foundry, but also as an inventor. One of the first African Americans to hold patents for his inventions, he manufactured and marketed his soil pulverizers and tobacco presses throughout the Midwestern United States.


*Susannah C. West*

**Paul, Nathaniel (1793–1839)**

Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, Nathaniel Paul was an outspoken African American clergyman and abolitionist during the 1820s and 1830s. He founded the First African Baptist Church in Albany, New York, in 1820, where he served as pastor for ten years. The son of a veteran of the American Revolution, Paul adhered uncompromisingly to the republic’s founding principles of liberty and equality for all. He was one of the earliest agitators for complete and immediate emancipation, staunchly opposing the American Colonization Society’s scheme for gradual emancipation. Throughout his career, he pursued various avenues to end slavery and racial discrimination.

Paul was instrumental in founding the nation’s first African American newspaper. In 1827, spurred by racially disparaging comments from white journalists, Paul joined with other free black abolitionists including Presbyterian minister Samuel E. Cornish and Episcopal pastor Peter Williams, Jr., to establish *Freedom’s Journal* (1827–1829), in New York City. As an authorized agent for the paper in Albany, New York, Paul promoted its efforts to present a black voice in the nation’s debate over slavery.

Paul is probably best known for his address at Albany’s First African Baptist Church on July 5, 1827, celebrating New York’s official termination of slavery, which took effect on July 4, 1827. In lauding the New York
legislation as a triumph “over tyranny and oppression,” Paul employed religious, sometimes prophetic, language to denounce slavery as “contrary to the laws” of God. He declared that “not only throughout the United States of America, but throughout every part of the habitable world, where slavery exists, it will be abolished.”

Despite his opposition to African colonization, Paul and his brother, Benjamin, moved in 1830 to Wilberforce Colony, Canada, a free black community led by former slave and Rochester businessman, Austin Steward. After a year of acting as the colony’s agent and minister, Paul departed to travel throughout the British Isles, raising funds to establish a manual labor college at Wilberforce. Although his expenses exceeded the $8,000 he raised, his many lectures before thousands of people attracted attention and support from leading British and American abolitionists such as George Thompson, Thomas Clarkson, and William Lloyd Garrison. Upon his return to the United States in 1836, he continued his public antislavery work with the Albany Anti-Slavery Society and as a supporter of Cornish’s new newspaper, Colored American.

A strong proponent of education, Paul believed that black religious, social, and moral improvement would advance the antislavery cause and weaken racial prejudice. Consequently, he devoted considerable attention to African American self-improvement efforts, becoming the first president of Albany’s Union Society for the Improvement of the Colored People in Morals, Education and Mechanic Arts. In addition, Paul continued in the ministry, leading Albany’s Union Street Baptist Church until his death.


Dianne Wheaton Cappiello

Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS)

Founded in 1775, “The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage,” also known as the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS), was the world’s leading antislavery organization during the early republic. Indeed, only the rise of Garrisonian reformers in the 1830s dethroned the PAS as the abolitionist vanguard in the United States. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society remains in existence today, supporting African American educational endeavors and the memory of the abolitionist struggle, among other things.

After its initial organization, the PAS lapsed during the Revolutionary War, but was revived in 1784. Reorganized in 1787, the PAS formed a constitution, created a committee system assigning specific abolitionist tasks to members (from educational activities in the free black community to raising funds among philanthropists), and organized a legal aid system for endangered blacks that became a model for other abolitionists. The group was officially incorporated by the state in 1789. According to its constitution,
the PAS would “use such means as are in their power to extend the bless-
ings of freedom to every part of the human race.” The PAS’s committee of
 correspondence communicated with abolitionists and reformers in England,
 France, the Caribbean, and almost every state in the American union.
 Indeed, under the PAS’s leadership, Philadelphia became a worldwide cap-
il of the first-wave abolitionism.

The PAS’s first incarnation comprised a small group of men who wanted
to expand Quakers’ attacks on slavery. The Society of Religious Friends,
 commonly known as Quakers, had a long history of antislavery activism,
 particularly in Pennsylvania, where figures from Ralph Sandiford to Anthony
 Benezet had published consciousness-raising essays against bondage. The
 PAS grew from these roots, attracting support from other religious denomina-
tions as well as statesmen and governing elites. During the late-eighteenth
 and early-nineteenth centuries, nearly 2,000 members would officially join
 the PAS, and many more reformers would express sympathy with its motives.
 While men of standing joined the group—including America’s leading states-
 man, Benjamin Franklin, who served as president of the group from 1787
 to 1790; its leading doctor, Benjamin Rush; and its leading jurist, William
 Rawle—so too did tailors, middling merchants, and candle makers.

The PAS advocated gradual abolitionism, both in Pennsylvania and other
 states. PAS members, including Thomas Paine, helped pass the Quaker
 State’s gradual abolition statute in March 1780. The first of its kind in the
 western world, the law outlined slavery’s gradual demise in Pennsylvania: all
 slaves born after the law’s passage would be free at twenty-eight. This stat-
 ute, combined with PAS lawyers’ advocacy of black rights in state and federal
courts, compelled even fugitive slaves to run away to “free” Pennsylvania.

Tactically, the PAS favored action in legal and political venues rather than
 mass organizing of American citizens. The PAS was the first abolitionist
 group to issue antislavery petitions to federal institutions. In 1787, the
 group asked PAS member Benjamin Franklin to present an antislavery
 memorial to the Constitutional Convention then meeting in Philadelphia
 (Franklin pocketed the petition for fear of its divisive consequences). In
 February 1790, the PAS petitioned the first federal congress for an end to
 overseas slave trade and consideration of gradual abolitionism. “We have
 observed with great satisfaction,” the petition told Congress, “that many
 important and salutary powers are vested in you for ‘promoting the welfare’
 and ‘securing the blessings of liberty’ to the people of the United States.”
 Such power should be aimed at slavery. The memorial infuriated Deep
 South slaveholders and was not acted upon by Congress. Subsequent PAS
 memorials were less radical in tone. Nevertheless, both on its own and as
 the leader of the American Convention of Abolition Societies, a bienn-
 ial meeting of local and state abolitionist groups from 1794 to 1836, the
 PAS presented many other petitions to state and federal governments on
 subjects ranging from ending the domestic slave trade to abolishing slavery
 in the federally controlled District of Columbia.

The PAS had a complex relationship with Pennsylvania’s free black com-
 munity. On the one hand, the group rendered important aid to African
 Americans by finding apprenticeships for former slaves, opening schools for
free blacks, and even offering business loans to black leaders such as Richard
Allen and Absalom Jones. On the other hand, the PAS remained a seg-
regated organization until the 1830s. The group would not ask black
leaders to become fellow activists, as did Garrisonians, because they
believed that abolitionism should be left to legal and political elites. African
Americans could be helped by white abolitionists but they could not be
considered coadjutors of the movement.

As slavery expanded both geographically and numerically during the nine-
teenth century, the PAS faced its toughest challenges. Indeed, slavery’s
growth in the South and Southwest offset the passage of gradual abolition
laws in every Northern state. In addition, the creation and expansion of
the American Colonization Society (or ACS, formed December 1816)
allowed Northern and Southern citizens to unite behind a quasi-antislavery
movement, one that pictured free blacks—and not bondage—as America’s
major problem. While the majority of blacks opposed the ACS, the PAS did
not publicly rebuke colonizationism until the late 1820s. Although some
PAS members believed that colonization would fail, others, such as well-
known reformer Roberts Vaux, considered the ACS a worthy reform group.

By the 1820s and 1830s, as blacks in Philadelphia, New York, Boston,
and other locales engaged in more radical forms of abolitionism (from mass
pamphleteering to confrontational fugitive slave defenses), and a new gen-
eration of white reformers began embracing the doctrine of immediate aboli-
tionism, the PAS was further marginalized. Labeled "modern” abolitionists,
these new reformers included white evangelicals, black elites, and for the
first time in mainstream antislavery organizations, women. Modern aboli-
tionists formed the American Anti-Slavery Society (ironically in the PAS’s
home of Philadelphia), supported Garrison’s Liberator, and spawned a
whole new wave of local and state abolitionist societies. By the mid-1830s,
the era of PAS dominance was over. “Has abolition gone defunct in Pennsyl-
vania,” some old-time activists wondered?

Still, the PAS remained active over the next several decades, with some
members joining the modern abolitionist crusade (the first immediatist anti-
slavery society appeared in Philadelphia in 1834, attracting some key PAS
supporters). Other PAS members worked with fugitive slaves, became fur-
ther involved in black education efforts and remained dedicated to a more
moderate brand abolitionism. The group has never folded.

Though it receives little credit in contemporary histories of antislavery,
the PAS was an important part of American abolitionism. During the post-
Revolutionary era in particular, when many statesmen supported antislavery
ideals but feared abolitionist action, the PAS attacked slavery in a highly effi-
cient and formally organized manner. The group helped launch gradual abo-
licationism in Northern states and establish (with black runaways and
kidnapping survivors) the concept of “free” Northern culture well before
the Free Soil and Republican Parties would do so. And the group was
among the first to put slavery on the federal radar via petitions against the
overseas slave trade. Even Garrison would salute the PAS as among the most
“thorough-going” antislavery reformers prior to the 1830s. In sum, the
group formed a critical part of first-wave abolitionism. See also Democratic
Perfectionism

Perfectionism, also known as “Christian Perfection,” was a religious doctrine developed in the United States in the 1830s and 1840s, which found expression in evangelical Protestant theology, social reform activism, and experimental utopian communities. Phoebe Worall Palmer, a Methodist lay preacher, proclaimed the possibility of perfect Christian love at a series of weekly, interdenominational prayer meetings in New York City in the late 1830s. Perfectionist doctrines were formulated systematically in the mid-1830s at Oberlin College by the Reverend Charles Grandison Finney and by Oberlin’s first president, the Reverend Asa Mahan. As developed by Finney and Mahan, the doctrine of Christian perfection traced its theological origins back to the writings of John Welsey, the founder of Methodism, who first advanced the argument that devout Christians could experience a state of grace known as “perfection” or “holiness.” Breaking with Martin Luther and John Calvin’s views on human sinfulness, Wesley argued that God not only justified an individual by forgiving sin, but sanctified that individual, i.e., enabled that individual to be thereafter “perfectly holy,” or free from sin. Drawing upon Wesley’s writings, Finney laid out the basic tenets of Christian perfectionism in a series of lectures delivered in 1836 in New York City, later published as Lectures to Professing Christians (1837): the doctrines of “entire sanctification” and of “perfect holiness.”

The scriptural foundation for the doctrine of perfection is the Gospel of Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which in heaven is perfect.” For Finney, who throughout his career remained a Calvinist (meaning he remained committed to the theological doctrines associated with New England Puritanism), this scriptural passage supported a legalistic interpretation of perfection. “Sanctification is holiness,” Finney lectured, “and holiness is nothing but obedience to the law.” Christian perfection, accordingly, involved “perfect obedience to the law of God.” The key innovation in Finney’s perfectionist theology, which set him at odds with Old School Presbyterians and other ultra-orthodox Calvinists, was his assertion that through entire sanctification God provided the means by which devout Christians could meet this standard of perfect obedience.

The perfectionist doctrine that Christians could know and fully obey God’s commandments led to a widespread belief that these commandments constituted a divine or transcendental higher law that Christians were duty-bound to obey even if it put them at odds with society’s civil and criminal codes. Belief in the existence of a higher moral law led many perfectionists to participate in abolitionism and other nineteenth-century social
reform movements. Taking the position that sin was entirely voluntary, many perfectionists believed both individuals and American society could be rid of all vice, corruption, and sinful behavior through moral suasion and concerted social activism. The first triumph of perfectionist social reform came with the Temperance Movement, a moral crusade against Americans' drinking habits that resulted in a dramatic decrease in the per capita consumption of alcohol. Perfectionists also identified prostitution, gambling, the penal system, and Sabbath-breaking as other pressing social problems urgently in need of reform.

Perfectionist social activism found its clearest expression in the rise in the 1830s of the abolitionist or radical antislavery movement, and in the abolitionist doctrine of "immediatism," which demanded the immediate, unconditional end of slavery. Drawing upon strands of perfectionist thought found in Quaker theology and in the peace or pacifist movement, William Lloyd Garrison and his abolitionist followers, known as Garrisonians, proclaimed slavery an absolute evil and a national sin, sought to persuade slaveholders of the irredeemable sinfulness of their actions, and condemned Northern politicians for their willingness to compromise on the issue of slavery and for supporting half-hearted antislavery reforms like gradual emancipation and the American Colonization Society. By the late 1830s, however, leading antislavery perfectionists like Gerrit Smith became frustrated with the Garrisonians' inability to effect decisive social change through moral suasion. Turning to politics, antislavery perfectionists founded the Liberty Party and nominated James G. Birney as the Party's presidential candidate in the elections of 1840 and 1844.

Other perfectionists, believing the social ills and moral corruption occasioned by the Market Revolution placed the nation beyond hope of reform, turned away from American society and founded experimental utopian communities. The best-known and longest-lived perfectionist commune, the Oneida Community, was established in 1847 by John Humphrey Noyes. Ordained a Congregationalist minister after attending Yale Divinity School, Noyes' license to preach was revoked in 1834 after he proclaimed that he "received the holy spirit," and therefore was free from sin. Over the next decade Noyes refined his radical perfectionist vision in periodicals like the widely read Perfectionist, and in correspondence with other perfectionists like Charles Grandison Finney and Gerrit Smith. After receiving a large inheritance from his father, Noyes established a perfectionist community in 1843 in his hometown of Putney, New York. The Putney and Oneida communities are best known for Noyes's controversial doctrine of "complex marriage," which rejected the sanctity of monogamous marriage, and mandated sexual relations between adult male and female members of the community. Scandalous at the time, Noyes's unorthodox views on sexual relations were in fact consistent with his socialist interpretation of perfectionist doctrine, which he termed "biblical communism," and which critics described as "Antinomian Perfectionism." Asserting a "higher law of perfection," Noyes declared that neither he nor other community members were bound by or obligated to respect society's civil codes or traditional Protestant interpretations of Scripture.
Noyes’s relation to the abolitionist movement was complex and ambiguous. Evidence suggests that Noyes influenced Garrison’s views on immediatism and non-resistance. Noyes also praised the formation of the Liberty Party, denounced Southern malfeasance during the Kansas-Nebraska Crisis and condemned the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case. Yet Noyes later criticized Garrison and John Brown for inciting the reactionary violence that assailed the abolitionist movement. Like other perfectionists and utopian reformers influenced in whole or in part by the doctrine of comeouterism, Noyes’s ultimate concern was the spiritual regeneration of the individual rather than the institutional reform of society. See also Anti-slavery Evangelical Protestantism; Bible and Slavery; Congregationalism and Antislavery; Immediate Emancipation; Methodists and Antislavery; Millenialism and Abolitionism.


Neil Brody Miller

Phillips, Wendell (1811–1884)

One of the most effective and influential abolitionist orators of the nineteenth century, Wendell Phillips was born on November 9, 1811 as the eighth child of John Phillips, a wealthy lawyer, politician, and philanthropist, and Sarah Walley. His family occupied the highest caste in Boston, tracing their North American roots back to early seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts.

First educated at the Boston Latin School, Phillips later attended Harvard and graduated in 1831. Although he harbored an interest in studying history, he was recognized as a skilled debater and carried that talent with him to Harvard Law School. A Boston attorney and member of the Suffolk County bar, Phillips quickly grew bored with the legal profession.

In Ann Terry Greene, Phillips found both a wife and a vocation. Ann was the daughter and heir to one of Boston’s wealthiest families, and a political radical. She was an avowed abolitionist, a supporter of antislavery newspaper editor William Lloyd Garrison, and a member of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. Phillips followed her both down the aisle and into the ranks of Boston’s abolitionists, dedicating himself to the cause at a March 1837 meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. He was married on October 12, 1837, and only weeks later found the voice that would define his career.

Phillips’ revealed his oratorical powers at a critical moment in the anti-slavery movement. In Alton, Illinois, on November 7, 1837, a proslavery
mob murdered abolitionist newspaper editor Elijah P. Lovejoy and destroyed his printing press. Barricaded in the warehouse where he had hidden a new press—three others had been thrown into the nearby Mississippi River—Lovejoy was killed when he tried to prevent the mob from setting fire to the building. Word of the event electrified anti- and proslavery activists, and a month later, on December 7, Phillips attended a heated meeting at Faneuil Hall in Boston to discuss the case. What he heard enraged him. James T. Austin, the Massachusetts attorney general, denounced Lovejoy and compared the murderous mob to the Revolutionary War patriots who threw off British rule in 1776. For Phillips, this was too much; at the urging of friends, he rose with a spontaneous address celebrating Lovejoy’s intrepid resistance. The gathered crowd was stunned by Phillips’s clarity and eloquence, and thus, at the age of twenty-six, Phillips thrust himself to the forefront of the antislavery movement.

Following that debut, Phillips became a confidant of Garrison. The two saw abolitionism as a larger cause that embraced women’s rights, rejected religious denominations, and was set apart from politics itself. Like Garrison, Phillips believed that the partisan electoral system was tainted by slavery; to be successful, abolitionism would have to be radical and revolutionary. He was even more hostile to proslavery forces than Garrison, dissenting from the latter’s pacifism. For Phillips, a war against slavery would be a just war.

In 1840, Phillips and his wife were traveling in Europe where they attended the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London as representatives of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Hoping to win support from British abolitionists for their movement, they were disappointed by their inability to convince the international gathering to allow women to vote at the event. The couple’s failure in Britain demonstrated that a trans-Atlantic abolitionist movement would be less radical and more conventional than what Garrison and his cohort sought. Mainstream abolitionism continued to work through elections and politics to achieve its ends; Garrison, Phillips, and their associates continued to pursue a broader and more ideological reform agenda.

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, Phillips continued to be at Garrison’s side, professing before audiences the sentiments Garrison conveyed in print. Among his other writings, he penned two pamphlets on the defects of American politics: The Constitution—A Proslavery Document (1842), and Can an Abolitionist Vote or Hold Office under the United States Constitution? (1843). Both pamphlets laid out the Garrison-Phillips argument that abolitionists who continued to be involved in American politics were coconspirators in a corrupt system. The United States Constitution, as he saw it, was inherently proslavery.

Despite his power as a public speaker, Phillips also engaged in social reforms and civil disobedience in the cause of racial equality and abolition. He was a member of the executive committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Boston Vigilance Committee; in the latter capacity, he helped protect fugitive slaves from capture in Boston after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. He also worked to overturn segregation in the city’s public schools. Phillips wanted such activities to heighten, rather
than assuage, the growing tensions between free and slave states. Agitation, he believed, could eventually split the Union; years before any slave states contemplated secession, Phillips advocated that Northern states peel away from the United States, leaving only the slaveholding states behind.

Phillips made this case throughout the 1850s, touring as a lecturer who delighted audiences with discourses on all kinds of topics, from natural science to the arts and architecture. But most came to hear him discuss slavery, blending his quick wit and accessible style with his uncompromising platform. He traveled throughout the northeastern and mid-western United States, never using a script, lending rhetorical support to the increasingly confrontational tactics of antislavery activists like the Free Soilers in Kansas, John Brown's followers at Harpers Ferry, and those who spirited away fugitives.

When war came, however, Phillips reversed his course. While supportive of the idea of Northern states seceding to escape slavery, he was now unwilling to permit Southern states to leave the Union to protect their peculiar institution. Demanding war and the return of the slave states, Phillips became one of the most radical of Republicans during the Lincoln Administration. He wanted the war to be about slavery, a radical revolutionary conflict that would result in emancipation and aggressive land redistribution in the South.

Parting ways with Garrison after the war, Phillips did not view emancipation as the endpoint of the abolitionist struggle. Reconstruction represented a new beginning, and in 1865 Phillips succeeded Garrison as president of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He served in that position until 1870, when the Fifteenth Amendment was passed.

In that year, Phillips ran for governor of Massachusetts as the candidate of both the Labor Reform and Prohibitionist Parties, garnering 20,000 votes. Phillips continued his activism on behalf of freed African Americans and began to speak out on issues of labor relations. In 1871, he supported former Civil War General Benjamin Butler's candidacy for governor of Massachusetts. In public, he called for eight-hour workdays and cooperative workplaces. Phillips made his last public speech on December 26, 1883 and died on February 2, 1884. See also Bleeding Kansas; Radical Republicans; Underground Railroad.


Brian Murphy

**Pitt, William, the Younger (1759–1806)**

William Pitt was born in 1759, the second son of his famous father of the same name. The elder William Pitt was the legendary prime minister who, in the year of his son's birth, had secured victories for England in America, India, and the West Indies, thus creating a much enlarged British Empire and subduing its French rival. Known as the “Great Commoner,” he tended to favor conciliation with the colonies, but failed to avert conflict with
America when he became prime minister again in 1766. Given the title Earl of Chatham, he suffered from mental instability, collapsed in the House of Lords in 1778, and died shortly thereafter. Neither the younger Pitt nor his contemporaries ever forgot the example of the elder Pitt. Educated at home, he went to Cambridge at the age of fourteen, and then attended law school at the Inns of Court in London.

Following his father’s lead, Pitt entered Parliament and, in a stunning move, King George III appointed him prime minister at the age of twenty-four; he remained in this post, with one short intermission, until his death in 1806. He is frequently credited with having revived England after the debacle of the American Revolution and the bitter factional politics that followed it.

Pitt quickly gained esteem as an expert government manager and economist. At the same time he was also regarded as a reformer because of his stand on a number of issues. For example, he improved the operation of the East India Company, tried unsuccessfully to bring about reform of parliamentary constituencies, and failed in his attempt to establish Catholic Emancipation. Pitt’s concern for reform was considerable; in particular, he was dedicated to ending the slave trade and abolishing slavery. In 1787, Pitt appointed his close friend, the prominent opponent of slavery, William Wilberforce, as head of the antislavery movement in Parliament.

Pitt also spoke openly in support of antislavery in the House of Commons. For instance, in 1788, Pitt presented a motion for an end to the slave trade. The motion was passed, but its opponents managed to place such obstacles in its path that it never took effect. Wilberforce proposed antislavery bills annually, and in 1792 Pitt gave a powerful speech on abolition. Many contemporaries (and later historians) considered this to have been among the greatest orations the prime minister ever gave. Pitt made it clear in his address that he would issue a sustained attack on slavery, arguing against the assumption that Africans were ill-suited to civilization and could not rise above the status of a slave, which, as he pointed out, was the same thing Romans had said about ancient Britons. Yet, just as the British had shown the capacity to move beyond their early culture, so the African slaves, given the right circumstances, could emerge into a similarly higher civilization.

Pitt continued to support antislavery measures until his death in 1806, a year before the abolition of the slave trade. Some abolitionists believed that he was only half-hearted in this support for their cause because he never made it a government bill. Yet his defenders argue that such a radical action could have caused the demise of his cabinet. It is clear, however, that his actions did much to keep the antislavery cause alive. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery, Abolition of.

Plato (c. 427–c. 347 B.C.E.)

Plato, the Athenian philosopher and founder of the school called the Academy, made a major contribution to Western thought. Although he never endorses the abolition of slavery, his philosophy is based to a considerable extent on the value of individual thought, upon the questioning of conventional assumptions, and upon the rejection of tyranny; thus his philosophy provides an ethical paradigm which by its very nature challenges the premises underlying the institution of slavery. Plato was the teacher of Aristotle, and the precise points of agreement and disagreement between the two philosophers have been argued about for over twenty-three centuries.

Plato was descended from the old aristocracy of his native city. He is reported to have been persuaded by Socrates to abandon the composition of dramatic poetry in favor of philosophy. After the execution of his beloved teacher Socrates in 399, Plato remained a student of philosophy, and his teaching is delineated, sometimes subtly, in the dialogues he wrote, many of them featuring Socrates as principal interlocutor, representing in more or less dramatic form the rhetorical and dialectical discussion of philosophical issues.

Though slavery was a normal part of life in classical Athens, where, as elsewhere in Greece, there prevailed a pragmatic acceptance of the rights conveyed by possession of superior power, Plato’s dialogues are based upon a concept that undermined arbitrary authority. The remarkable power of Socratic argument is often found to be irresistible, and, though Socrates possessed neither wealth nor political power, he is conspicuously superior to many of those who confront him. Socrates’ oft-repeated assertion that he merely sought the truth (as he demolished one conventional belief after another) posed a challenge to all arbitrary social conventions.

In the Platonic dialogue *Meno*, Socrates engages in a demonstration of a geometric proof simply by questioning a slave. He asks the right questions, and the slave provides the correct answers, and though Socrates goes on to argue from the slave’s apt responses that knowledge must be a matter of recollection, clearly he has demonstrated as well that the potential of one human being is very much like that of another, a result which makes slavery one of the kinds of convention that Socrates’ truth-seeking method tends to threaten. This disregard for convention infuriated many Athenians, particularly those who enjoyed a status enhanced by these socially and politically protected institutions, and eventually led to Socrates’ indictment and execution.

Two other major Platonic dialogues also reckoned with slavery. The *Republic*, which described a conversation in which Socrates and two of Plato’s brothers attempt to define justice by describing a hypothetical just city, seems to maintain that considerable restrictions of individual liberty—possibly intended to suggest those of Spartan life—are necessary for a city’s survival. At the same time, however, the dialogue argues that the perfection of the city can only occur if philosophers are in charge, which suggests the political desirability of a wise harmony between *nomos* (“convention” or “law”) and *physis* (“nature”). Within the just city proposed by Socrates
and his friends, one law will forbid the enslavement of Greeks by other Greeks (Book V), and, though the immediate rationale for this prohibition is that the Greeks should remain united against the threat posed by the non-Greeks (barbaroi), the argument suggests that a critical examination of the convention of slavery is fitting and proper.

The Laws, written late in Plato's life, set forth another perhaps more practical model régime. As background for the construction of this model, the speaker, the Athenian, described Persia, the great military power that had forced the independent Greek city-states to band together to resist its military power, as a nation in which slavery had been taken to an extreme. Athens, according to the Athenian, had taken freedom to an equally undesirable extreme (Book III). Though this dialogue included some theoretical legislation which stipulated cruel penalties for disobedient slaves, it also suggested a certain underlying sophistication of terminology, for the Athenian nostalgically refers to the past as a better time when his fellow citizens were "willing slaves of the laws," a phrase which almost invites reconsideration of the concept of slavery, since "laws" (nomoi) are also conventions. But such subtlety, which characterized many points in Platonic discourse, remains matter for interpretation, and slavery in Plato never met a direct challenge.

Plato himself, according to one story, may have been enslaved for a while. He had gone to Syracuse to give political guidance to the tyrant Dionysius I. The tyrant, however, soon found Plato's independence of mind so objectionable that he arrested the philosopher and had him sold into slavery. Friends soon had him liberated.

The importance of Plato's thought on slavery is evident in the works of several great philosophers from antiquity. Socrates, much of whose influence in subsequent philosophy derives from Plato's account of him, was also a paradigm for such groups as the Cynics and the Stoics. Both of these groups valued personal freedom highly although measured it in somewhat different ways. The Stoic Epictetus, in the Roman era, was a freed slave who asserted that the freedom of his own intellect was within his own power. A key Stoic maxim which stated that the good are always free while the evil are always slaves demonstrated an important figurative development of the concepts of freedom and slavery. Plato also influenced Aristotle whose Politics, where he argued that some people are slaves by nature, discussed many issues raised in Platonic works. See also Classical Greek Antislavery.


Robert W. Haynes

Pointe Coupée Rebellion (1795)

The settlement of Pointe Coupée, located 150 miles north of New Orleans, was founded by French settlers in 1717. It remained a small, isolated
frontier post for most of the French period. From the start, racial intermix-
ture was prevalent in Pointe Coupée, and for a long time its slave population
did not experience any marked developments. The slaves in Pointe Coupée numbered a mere 70 in 1731 and about 400 in the 1740s. In the Spanish period, however, its slave population increased, especially in the 1780s when the reexport trade in African slaves from Jamaica and Dominica reached its apogee. More than 4,000 slaves, many from the Bight of Biafra and most of them men, arrived in Louisiana from those two islands in the 1780s. The slave population reached the number of 1,500 in 1788 and about 1,600 in 1797. Both the 1788 and the 1797 censuses indicate a ratio of approximately one white settler for every three slaves. With an influx of Africans from both the Atlantic and Caribbean slave trades, the average number of slaves on plantations increased, which resulted in very imbal-
ced sex ratios, which in turn augmented the possibilities for resistance. The Pointe Coupée plantation was also unusually large for Louisiana.

While Pointe Coupée was not a slave society on the scale of Saint Dom-
ingue, many a planter there could only understand the attempted rebellion
in 1795 in Pointe Coupée as the narrowly averted replica of the 1791 slave
rebellion on the island. "If our information is correct, the Saint Domingue
insurrection did not have a more violent beginning," argued one planter to
the New Orleans Cabildo, the municipal body of representatives. If the
secret dealings of the conspiracy had not been disclosed, it was believed that
the rebel slaves would have reenacted the ceremony of the Bois Caı ¨man,
behind the plantation of Jacques Vignes at False River, and would have set
fire to the Poydras Plantation, raided its ammunition store, killed all white
men, unsupportive creoles and other slaves, before seizing the white
women and fleeing. The planned rebellion of 1791 contrasted in scope and
intensity with the slave plot that had been discovered at the Pointe Coupée.
Slave involvement in the 1791 slave plot was much more limited and it also
suffered from ethnic tensions between African and creole slaves. The plot
leaders, among whom was Cesar, a Jamaican slave, were liberated a few
years later, and the scale of the repression was very limited indeed.

On the contrary, the 1795 plot in Louisiana came to the attention of the
Spanish authorities in the early days of April, after months of preparation
that had taken slave leaders from one plantation to another trying to enlist
fellow slaves and free people of color. Less than two months later, fifty-
seven slaves were found guilty of having prepared a rebellion. Twenty-three
were executed, their heads placed on pikes across Lower Louisiana to
impress slaves into submission. Two free people of color were also con-
victed of involvement, as were three white men. Joseph Bouyavel, a Wal-
loon teacher, was one of them. The fact that he had in his possession a
copy of the Declaration of the Rights of Man was enough to raise the spec-
ter of Saint Domingue in most planters’ eyes. Between the discovery of the
plot and the execution of the convicted slaves, the planters’ dread led them
to exercise fierce and arbitrary power: slave patrols were sent to search for
weapons in and around the plantations of Pointe Coupée and in other rural
districts, and regular troops were called in for help, as hysteria spread
across lower Louisiana.
The rebellion was centered on the heavily African plantation of Julien Poydras. Antoine Sarrasin, a mulatto driver, or *commandeur*, who belonged to the plantation, was one of the leaders of the conspiracy. The other leaders included Grand Joseph, Antoine, Philipe, and Baptiste who belonged to Colin Lacour and the widow Lacour. But the conspiracy spread to several other plantations and included slaves from different African ethnic groups as well as creole slaves, lower-class non-slaveholding whites, and free people of color. As Governor Carondelet remarked, “all appearances indicate that all the slaves from Pointe Coupée to the capital … had knowledge of what was going on there.” Like four years earlier, a Jamaican creole slave was among the leaders. Because of their noted history of resistance, Jamaican slaves were regarded by Louisiana planters as prone to rebellion, just as much as slaves from Le Cap in Saint Domingue.

In the past fifteen years, the many myths of Pointe Coupée that had deprived slaves of their agency in the conspiracy have been finally debunked. The Pointe Coupée slave rebellion is now broadly understood in two ways. It is, on the one hand, described as a multi-racial, cross-ethnic and universalist, abolitionist movement modeled after the Saint Domingue slave rebellion and directly inspired by the ideology of the rights of man. The conspiracy was discovered only four years after the outbreak of the Saint Domingue slave revolution, only three years after free people of color were given full civil and political rights in Saint Domingue, and just one year after slavery was abolished by the French Convention. Louisiana may have been a marginal colony within the Spanish Empire, but the winds of the revolutions blew in its direction and slaves heard and read about such upheavals. One of the rumors that motivated the conspirators was that slaveholders had concealed news of their freedom. According to this model of interpretation, the conspiracy, if it had gone through, would have rapidly spread from Pointe Coupée to Natchitoches, Opelousas, the German coast, and New Orleans, making it a cross-regional and not just a parochial affair. It is thought that slaves received the support of lower-class white Jacobins, many of them sailors and soldiers. Traditionally, the conspiracy has been interpreted as a simple story of brutal slave control leading to slave rebellion in which few slaves actually participated and the scope of which should not be exaggerated, certainly not to the point of understanding it as a widespread movement of abolition that crossed boundaries of race, class, and ethnicity. If one looks at the conspiracy from this angle, slave unrest was mostly centered on Pointe Coupée and hardly concerned the outlying areas. The plot is thus seen either through the lengthy and at times contradictory correspondence of the Spanish authorities and planters or through the eyes of the slaves they interrogated.

Some uncertainty still lingers as to what the plot really amounted to, but it was, in the end, a clear example of overt slave resistance and more importantly, a potent attempt to impose, by force, the abolition of slavery in a disproportionately slave-dominated, isolated frontier region of Spanish Louisiana. See also Saint Domingue, French Defeat in; German Coast (Louisiana) Insurrection of 1811.

*Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec*

**Port Royal (South Carolina)**

One of the oldest place names on the eastern coast of North America, Port Royal is an important site in the history of New World slavery. In 1562, Jean Ribaut, while seeking a haven for French Huguenots in the New World, sailed into a broad harbor on the coast of South Carolina and named it Port Royal. Since then, the name has applied to the region, to the harbor, to an island, a river, and a town.

As a region, Port Royal includes the Sea Islands of South Carolina. The Sea Islands were one of the great incubators of the Gullah culture that combines elements of several African cultures with those of Europe. Thousands of African slaves from Senegambia, Angola, and other parts of Africa came to the Sea Islands to grow indigo, cultivate rice, and produce the famed Sea Island cotton. Living isolated lives away from commercial centers, the Sea Island slaves developed their own language, arts and culture.

The harbor and river of Port Royal were the training grounds for African American pilots and sailors. African Americans not only produced the staples that made white Beaufortonians rich, but they also took the crops to markets in Charleston and Savannah. In the first decades of European settlement in the region, these waterways were escape routes for hundreds of slaves who fled to St. Augustine. So many slaves fled South Carolina that the Spanish officials allowed them to settle and govern their own town—Garcia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosa north of St. Augustine. The settlement was the site of a major defeat for Carolina troops during General James Oglethorpe’s siege of Saint Augustine in 1740.

The Sea Islands were also home to the “Port Royal Experiment”—an effort to transform the lives of the former slaves through education and religion. After the surrender of Forts Beauregard and Walker, federal troops occupied the Sea Islands in 1862. One of their immediate challenges was to care for the slaves who lived in the area, as well as the thousands of others who fled to the Union lines for freedom. A public-private response involved abolitionist teachers and preachers from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and other Northern states who came South and opened schools for the freedmen. Later, the Freedmen’s Bureau provided housing and food, negotiated labor contracts, and tried to reconnect broken families. A few fortunate freedmen acquired land and many became successful farmers, craftsmen, and small businessmen.
One of the first schools founded during the Port Royal Experiment was the Penn School on St. Helena Island. This school trained and educated African Americans in the Port Royal area for decades. Today, it continues its mission as the Penn Community Center.

The Sea Islands, with their large African American majorities, were politically significant during Reconstruction. Robert Smalls of Beaufort served as a U.S. Congressman and was a member of both the South Carolina Constitutional Conventions of 1868 and 1895. He remained a political power in the region until his death. The Carolina low country was the last bastion of black power in the state.

The island of Port Royal was the site of Old Fort Plantation. From there on New Year's Day 1863, the Reverend William Brisbane read the Emancipation Proclamation to thousands of freedmen with great ceremony. Also, the Reverend Mansfield French presented regimental colors to the First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers, a troop of freedmen who had enlisted in the Union army. The First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers, later known as the 33rd U.S. Colored, was the first African American regiment commissioned during the Civil War. Federal forces raised both the First and Second South Carolina Regiments in the Port Royal area. Therefore, the Port Royal region and name have deep, multifaceted significance for the history of slavery and African Americans. See also African American Communities.


**Alexia Helsley**

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Portuguese Colonies, Abolition in

Portugal had reached an abolition agreement with Britain as early as 1815, although that agreement allowed Portugal to continue its slave trade in the Southern Hemisphere. This began a tragic series of decrees that declared the abolition of slavery in Portuguese colonies, but never actually abolished the institution.

Due to its dependence on the Angolan slave trade, Portugal’s decision to abolish the slave trade entirely came quite late, being delivered only in 1836. For several decades the prohibition went unenforced. Citing fears of political unrest and the lack of reliable access to inland areas, Portugal was particularly slow to support abolition even following a variety of official abolition decrees.

Initially the continuation of the slave trade in Portuguese colonies was tied to ongoing trade with Brazil, which was a Portuguese colony until 1822. In Brazil the demand for slaves remained high into the late-nineteenth century, and throughout that time Portugal relied on the economic network with Angola and Brazil. Although Brazil abolished the slave trade in 1850, slavery remained legal until the “Golden Law” of 1888 abolished slavery itself, making Brazil the last country in the Western Hemisphere to do so officially.
Portuguese and Brazilian slave ships traveled unhindered from African coastal settlements until as late as 1845. Lacking local naval bases, as it had secured in West Africa, the Royal Navy was ineffective in searching ships traveling from Portuguese southern African ports until the late 1800s. Overall British naval efforts represented a stunning failure, as they managed to rescue only around 3,000 slaves per year. At the same time, an estimated two million slaves were transported from the western coasts of Africa in the decades just before and just after 1850.

Angola built its overseas commerce almost entirely on slave trading, and given Portugal’s reliance on Angolan revenues, there was little movement from the colonial rulers to enforce abolition. Slave shipments from the ports of Luanda and Benguela on the Angolan coast continued until the late 1860s, with Portuguese, Brazilian, and Cuban slave traders replacing British and French merchants. Despite passage of an 1842 treaty with Britain that declared the trade to be piracy, the slave trade from Angola was continued with shipments going to Brazil until around 1853 and to Cuba into the 1860s. Exports only began to decline, not by any prohibition from Portugal, but with the closure of Brazilian slave markets. Even with this, however, the trade continued with slave shipments from Angola to the island colonies of Sao Tome and Principe. These shipments continued for decades, hiding behind the guise of “contract labor” to elude external pressure against the trade.

Other Portuguese colonies, however, did not experience the cessation of the external slave trade that occurred in Angola. The slave trade from
Mozambique, for example, while being reduced in numbers, continued as that colony’s slave exports were simply redirected towards the networks of the Indian Ocean. Thus slaves from Mozambique were forced into the unacknowledged slavery of contract labor systems in French sugar planting colonies or the slave markets of eastern Africa. This shift in Mozambique’s slave trade from an Atlantic to an eastern orientation would continue until the last decades of the 1800s. The use of slaves from Mozambique as contract labor on French plantations lasted until Napoleon III abolished the practice by a decree in 1864.

A Portuguese decree of 1869 and a later decree of 1875 sought the complete abolition of slavery, not simply the external trade. The problem of enforcement remained, however, and with the exception of decreased activities in some Angolan coastal towns, slave trade continued. Merchants and slave dealers who opposed the abolition of slavery as an institution actively resisted the decrees from Portugal and other supporters of the decision to end the external slave trade.

Even though slavery was finally abolished officially in 1878, many Africans continued to suffer as slaves under the ongoing programs of contract, and increasingly forced, labor. Many freed slaves had few options but to remain with their former owners under conditions that were largely unchanged. Others who attempted to maintain small farms were pushed into forced labor, especially through the use of taxes, in order to satisfy the demand for cheap labor. Many of the labor contractors or local authorities were former slave traders. The extensive use of vagrancy laws meant that any Africans not regularly employed could be drafted into contract labor or forced to work without remuneration. Under these programs unacknowledged slavery and the slave trade continued into the twentieth century. See also Africa, Antislavery in; Africa, Emancipation in; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Nabuco, Joaquim and Abolition in Brazil.


Jeff Shantz

Postal Campaign (1835)

In May 1835, at the second annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), AASS Publications Committee Chair Lewis Tappan announced an aggressive campaign to deliver each week issues of the society’s four publications to social and political leaders throughout the United States. Tappan called upon abolitionists throughout the country, including especially women and children, to donate generously toward the cost of publishing and mailing AASS materials through the federal mails to “inquiring, candid, reading men” who had not yet embraced the message of immediate emancipation. Although the Society targeted religious leaders,
educators, businessmen, and politicians throughout the nation, the campaign was designed especially to reach leaders in the Southern states who might throw their influence behind abolition.

Tappan and editor Elizur Wright, Jr., who orchestrated much of the great postal campaign, counted upon a certain degree of violent opposition to help put their cause at the forefront of national attention. As Wright stated in the first issue of the serial *Human Rights*, published in July 1835, “If you wish to draw off the people from a mad or wicked custom . . . you must make an excitement, do something that everybody will notice.” During the following year, the AASS mailed more than one million pieces of antislavery literature to post offices throughout the nation, triggering a public outcry against abolitionism that far exceeded their expectations. The postal campaign was premised upon the mistaken assumption that antislavery sentiment ran wide and deep within the Christian public, including Southern churches, and that a determined appeal to Christian conscience would persuade many leaders to ally themselves with the cause of the slave. Instead AASS leaders found themselves vilified in both Northern and Southern states as advocates of disunion and racial war. Although free blacks were not on the AASS mailing list, it was widely rumored that they were the chief target of abolitionist organizing efforts, leading to a spate of new state laws to police free negroes and demands for more vigorous enforcement of existing race laws.

The postal campaign triggered a dramatic rise in antiabolitionist violence during the summer of 1835. Almost every major city in the nation saw antiabolitionist rallies and torchlight parades. News of mobs and antiabolitionist speeches filled the newspapers each day. In both North and South, pastors took to their pulpits to denounce abolitionists as irresponsible incendiaries who deserved to be censured by the public and prosecuted by the government for crimes against humanity. In many towns, committees formed to inspect the mails and destroy offensive abolitionist literature, an action that Postmaster General Amos Kendall virtually endorsed. On July 29, 1835, a mob broke into the Charleston, South Carolina, post office and carried off recently arrived mailbags filled with AASS literature. Identifying themselves with the patriots of the Boston Tea Party in 1773, the following night the thieves held a rally on the Charleston parade grounds attended by over 2,000 citizens, who watched approvingly as the abolitionist mail was burned beneath a large mock gallows where antislavery leaders hung in effigy. A grand jury in Virginia indicted and demanded the extradition of all officers of the AASS, while many Southern vigilance committees offered large bounties to anyone who would deliver prominent AASS officers to them dead or alive.

The postal campaign was a defining moment in the history of antislavery. The campaign helped to drive a wedge between more conservative churchmen and those who wished to see the evangelical churches align themselves with the cause of emancipation. The concerted opposition to the campaign across the nation and the virtually universal condemnation expressed by Southern citizens underscored the futility of antislavery tactics based upon moral suasion and helped to provide impetus to political
approaches to the problem. Just as importantly, the violence sparked by the postal campaign succeeded in making the abolitionist cause a topic of daily conversation. According to Elizur Wright, Jr. the violence directed at the AASS did more to advance the cause of antislavery than the arguments of 1,000 agents could have accomplished. Between May 1835 and May 1836, more than 15,000 people subscribed to AASS publications and the number of AASS auxiliaries grew from 200 to 527 chapters. Abolitionism could never again be dismissed as a fringe movement.


James R. Robrber

Prince, Mary (c. 1788–c. 1833)

Mary Prince was a West Indian slave, born about 1788 in Bermuda, a British colony. Prince's mother was a household slave and her father was an enslaved workman. She had seven brothers and three sisters, who like herself, would all be sold into slavery. Her autobiography, The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself, was published in London and Edinburgh in 1831. History detailed the life of Prince under the consecutive ownership of Charles Myners, the Williams family, Captain I—, Mr. D—, and the Woodses. Legally considered property of these various slaveholders, Prince would experience physical and psychological abuse. Her narrative exposed the brutalities of colonial slavery and was critical in the struggle to rally the British populace for the abolition of slavery in the British colonies.

In 1826, Prince traveled with her last owners, the Woodses, from Antigua to England where they journeyed to retrieve their daughters from school and enroll their son in school. At her own request, Prince accompanied the Woodses on the trip. During the sea voyage, Prince had been unable to fulfill the demanding laundry duties Mrs. Woods assigned her. After continual mistreatment, abuse, and being threatened with expulsion from the Woodses' home after they had reached England, she fled, realizing that, in England, her status as their slave had no validity. Aided by Mash (a shoe black), Moravian missionaries, and the Anti-Slavery Society, Prince found sporadic work and sought to attain her freedom in Antigua. In 1829, she was employed as a domestic servant by Thomas Pringle, the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. Under the employment of Pringle, Prince suggested that her history be recorded.

Prince, unable to read or write, required assistance to compose her autobiography. A guest in the Pringle home, Susanna Strickland, transcribed History truthfully and without embellishment. Pringle would edit History.
Invested in preserving the veracity of Prince's narrative, he wrote a “Preface” verifying Prince's pamphlet, provided supplementary documents recounting his first meeting with Prince, and provided a copy of a letter from Mrs. Pringle to the Birmingham Ladies Society for Relief of Negro Slaves about the inspection of Prince's body.

In *History*, Prince revealed the inhumane nature of slavery. She testified to the trauma of being separated from family, sold on the auction block, and abused violently by slave owners. For example, after Prince accidentally broke a jar, she was flogged with 100 lashes. She also described the daily regimen of life in West Indian bondage, especially for women. The enslaved nursed children, washed clothing, worked on farms, and extracted salt from mines and the numerous salt ponds of Turk Island. Prince's autobiography was very popular and influential; by the end of 1831, three editions of *History* had been published. Little is known of Mary Prince's life after 1832.


*Marilyn Walker*

**Prison Reform and Antislavery**

Antebellum American advocates of immediate emancipation—the immediate, uncompensated emancipation of slaves without expatriation—were generally unconnected with contemporaneous institutional experiments in the incarceration and rehabilitation of criminals. Yet, their absence from the penitentiary movement did not mean that abolitionists were unconcerned with crime in society or with the treatment of society's law-breakers. On the contrary, as fortress-like prison structures began to garner support among reformers and state legislators in the 1820s and after, a vocal abolitionist minority unleashed a rhetorical assault against these prisons and the society that supported them.

No immediatist abolitionist mindful of the nation's criminal justice system surpassed the level of activism of the physician, educator, social reformer, and signer of the *Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Rush*. In 1787, Rush helped found the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons. In the decades following the American Revolution, he vigorously opposed—in lectures, pamphlets, petitions, and personal correspondence—punishments public and capital, and was among the earliest proponents of private confinement, religious instruction, and physical labor for prison inmates. Such positions placed Rush in the vanguard of penal reform. Indeed, his wide-ranging philanthropic pursuits included antislavery, Bible distribution, temperance, and humane treatment for the mentally ill,
and anticipated the more focused efforts of evangelically inspired Protestant reformers of the 1820s and beyond. Rush judged the death penalty as a moral blight on society and utterly inconsistent with Christian precepts and with republicanism. “An execution in a republic,” he asserted, “is like a human sacrifice in religion.”

Yet little in Rush presaged the radical positions opponents of carceral and capital punishment would assume in the 1830s. When peace activists assembled in Boston on May 18, 1838, to establish an organization different from the more conservative American Peace Society, the participants understood capital punishment as only one malevolent symptom among many that plagued society and prevented humanity’s progress. Their assembly launched the New England Non-Resistant Society, led by the fiery and controversial abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Henry Clarke Wright. They envisioned a world free of violence and of coercive institutions and relationships. To achieve the universal peace and human perfection that would usher in God’s millennial Kingdom on earth, non-resistants sought the eradication of slavery, all warfare, military armaments, and imprisonment, and capital punishment. Regarding the latter, the society’s Declaration of Sentiments announced to readers that Christ’s compassionate teachings effectively abrogated the Old Testament’s eye-for-an-eye injunction. “[F]orgiveness instead of punishment of enemies,” it explained, “has been enjoined upon all his [Christ’s] disciples, in all cases whatsoever. To extort money from enemies, or set them upon a pillory, or cast them into prison, or hang them upon a gallows, is obviously not to forgive, but to take retribution.” In this way, non-resistants employed the same logic as Benjamin Rush. Whereas the latter invoked Jesus Christ to defend the rehabilitative potential of penitentiaries, the former did so to repudiate institutions in general. For non-resistants, the solution to social ills lay in nonsectarian faithfulness to Christ; thus, they declared their allegiance first of all to the government of God rather than any merely human institutions or denominations.

The Non-Resistant Society did not monopolize efforts to abolish the death penalty in antebellum America. Additional organizations such as the Massachusetts Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment and a New York analogue were established in 1844 and were followed by a national society in 1845. The Harvard-educated lawyer and Garrisonian abolitionist Wendell Phillips, and the Quaker poet and non-Garrisonian immediatist John Greenleaf Whittier, were among the founders of the Massachusetts organization; the Unitarian minister, Garrison ally, and nonresistant Samuel Joseph May helped found the New York group. Other important abolitionists including Theodore Parker, Charles Burleigh, and Lydia Maria Child would also contribute to these movements. These societies, however, were not exclusively composed of antislavery agitators, but of humanitarians of several stripes—ministers, politicians, journalists, and physicians alike. Yet those abolitionists active in penal reform espoused the least popular and most radical aspects of that movement. Rather than embrace the expansion of penitentiaries and praise the reformation prison life supposedly afforded, these abolitionists protested against the execution of criminals. Still, so long
as African Americans remained in bondage, opposition to the gallows was but a peripheral cause for immediatists.

It does not follow, however, that everyone involved in the antebellum antislavery campaign absolutely opposed criminal incarceration and the rehabilitation mission of penitentiaries. For example, although the Andover Theological Seminary graduate and Congregationalist minister, Louis Dwight, advocated the cause of the slave, improvement of prison conditions preoccupied his reformist activities. From 1825 until 1854, Dwight, as the founder and secretary of the Boston Prison Discipline Society, diligently spread the gospel of penal reform as he understood it: a system of solitary confinement and congregated productive labor for the incarcerated; Bible and common school provisioning for inmates; and the organization of prison populations according to age, mental health, and criminal record. Despite obvious divergences in objectives from nonresistance exponents, the proceedings and events of Dwight’s Prison Discipline Society often appeared in Garrison’s abolitionist weekly, The Liberator. The association also extended life memberships to the noted philanthropists and immediatists, Arthur Tappan and Gerrit Smith. And although the renowned educator of the handicapped, Samuel Gridley Howe—a future financial backer of John Brown’s failed attempt to incite slave rebellions—disagreed with Dwight on certain penal fundamentals, as well as the latter’s seeming dominance over organizational leadership, Howe nonetheless numbered himself among the society’s affiliates. Yet, whoever aligned with the Boston Prison Discipline Society likely shared the regenerative philosophy of its leading member. For Dwight, “They [the convicted] are capable of love; but generally, when committed to Prison, they are filled with malice. . . . The very aggravation of their guilt is the loud call for your pity and prayers, and efforts. And their case is not hopeless.” Upon such sentiments lay a strong impetus for the penitentiary movement, if not early nineteenth-century evangelical social reform more broadly. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Bible and Slavery.


Raymond James Krohn

Pugachev’s Revolt

The largest peasant insurrection in Europe before the French Revolution took place in southeast Russia, and was led by Yemelian Pugachev, a Cossack born around 1742 in the village of Zimoveiskaia, also the birthplace of Stepan Razin, who led a similar revolt in the preceding century. Born in modest circumstances, Pugachev apparently did not attend school, and
remained illiterate his whole life. After service in the army during the Seven Years War, Pugachev survived a bout of severe illness caused by a plague epidemic in 1770. Refused his request for military discharge, he then became a fugitive but was captured and placed in chains under guard. Establishing a pattern, he soon escaped, was recaptured and escaped again, four times within fifteen months. Finally he found refuge in the rural environs of Yaitsk, an outpost of Cossacks between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea.

Here there had already been rebellions against Czarist authority, which had a double policy of attempting to secure Cossack loyalty by accommodations to traditional tribal forms of governance and cultural customs, and severe repression of dissidents. The entire region of southeast Russia was characterized on the one hand by the advance of the centralized Czarist government and indigenous resistance from peoples such as the Kalmyks. The Cossacks themselves took pride in their semi-barbarous skills as cavalrymen; when the Russians obtained their allegiance, it was never fully secured, as their independence remained a dominant factor. The centralized government favored the formation of a political elite among the Cossacks, giving rise to a division between “obedient” and “disobedient” factions. These tensions resulted in a short, but fierce, armed conflict in January, 1772, during which scores were killed and government records were destroyed.

Having found receptive listeners in the Yaitsk district, Pugachev conspired with a handful of others to suddenly announce to the world on September 1773 that he was actually Czar Peter III, and thus was seeking the restoration of the Fatherland under his name. Conditions of public information and knowledge were so primitive in rural Russia at that time that no one in the immediate region seemed to be able to discern the difference between Pugachev and the real Peter III, who had died in 1762. The manifesto then issued promised “land, grasses, money, lead, powder, and bread.” The small band of rebels quickly grew when “Czar Peter” appeared at villages and towns, where he was greeted by the traditional bread and salt by peasants and even priests of the Orthodox Church. Typically, alcohol was then distributed freely. Soon whole units of Cossacks deserted to the rebellion; towns were besieged, burned and sacked, with army and government officials hanged or shot.

Local and regional government authorities were undermanned and often incompetent. While Pugachev promised much to those thronging to his side, he also threatened and delivered severe punishment to all who either opposed him or denied him necessities. With his military experience, Pugachev was able to make use of the assortment of artillery that he seized, for use in sieges. However, brutal though most of his sieges were, few were completely successful. The revolt took on the nature of a large, fluid band of marauders plundering the country, moving rapidly from place to place. This meant that the core of rebel leaders, which they labeled a “State War College,” evaded capture, but also that the rebellion lacked stability. Insurgent forces could number in the thousands, suddenly mustering to the call of the rebels.
The prevailing status of the lower classes in Russia was some form of serfdom, involving age-old traditional obligatory labor and service to feudal authority, either nobility or the church, and equally traditional ties to the land. When the rebels arrived in a new locale, they typically announced liberation from private serfdom, in favor of service to the government itself under “Peter III,” the end of obligatory head-taxes, and cheap or even free salt (essential to the preservation of food). Peasants were also asked if local masters or stewards merited punishment, and if so, they were executed and hanged on the gates of wealthy estates.

In the Urals, forms of industrial serfdom prevailed, as the district was quickly being developed into a major metal-mining and refining zone. Sometimes hundreds of such “factory serfs” joined Pugachev’s forces, while others would simply disappear into the mountains. Their expertise was often useful in producing weapons for the rebellion, including artillery, but these were improvised and not always safe to use (they often exploded when discharged).

After several months of confused fighting, the central government began to respond, with skilled commanders placed in charge, with sufficient forces to begin defeating the rebels. The siege of Orenburg, for instance, which had lasted six months, was lifted in March, 1774. Ever resourceful, Pugachev escaped encirclement, to seek refuge in the Ural Mountains, where again a series of small battles ensued. Finally, he broke out to the west and dramatically attacked the city of Kazan on July 12, 1774, burning it to the ground. However, he was quickly forced to turn south, toward Tsaritsyn, which was too powerful for him to attack. In a last phase, thousands of serfs along the Volga rose in revolt, but Pugachev continued to retreat toward the Caspian Sea.

Realizing that in spite of their intrepid struggle defeat was imminent, Pugachev’s own men turned him over to the government in mid-September, and the revolt ended. At least 3,000 noblemen, clergy, military officers, and officials were killed by the rebels, often by gruesome means, such as bludgeoning or torture. Destruction of records by rebels eliminated files that could confirm debts or property rights. During the repression that followed the defeat, thousands of serfs were executed in summary fashion. Pugachev and several of his associates were executed in Moscow on January 10, 1774.

In the short time of one year, the rebels had convulsed the entirety of southeast Russia, though they never had sufficient forces to threaten the central government itself. Pugachev’s promise of “freedom” attracted the momentary allegiance of hundreds of thousands, and formed the basis of a great legend in Russian history. After his execution, Catherine the Great renamed the city of Yaitsk and the Yait River “Uralsk” and the “Ural River.” Even public discussion of the rebellion was suppressed, though the memory of it resurfaced in the now classic account by Pushkin, published in 1833.

Quakers and Antislavery

The Christian denomination of the Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, has a long history of involvement with antislavery causes. While the Quakers have been hailed as leaders in the antislavery struggle, they sometimes suffered internal dissension over the issue. The Friends, started in England in the 1640s as a radically egalitarian reaction to the left of the Puritans, always maintained a strong tenet of human spiritual equality. As the denomination developed, Quakers possessed the intellectual and communal forms for critiquing slavery, as well as its attendant ills of racism, formalism, and inherited institutional power. This did not ensure, however, that Quaker antislavery testimony would be consistently applied, nor skillfully articulated at all points in their history. While the common impression that the Quakers were in the forefront of antislavery activism should be tempered, they were nevertheless in the antislavery vanguard among predominantly white groups.

As Quakers settled in the growing colonies of North America and the Caribbean, the founder of the Society, George Fox (1624–1691), began to express qualms about slavery. His concerns, though, were not directed against the institution of slavery, but focused on the proper obedience and religious instruction of slaves, and upon the conduct of masters. On a 1671 visit to Barbados, Fox took more care to dispel rumors that the Quakers were inciting slave revolts than he did to condemn the institution of slavery. Fox’s travel companion, William Edmundson (1627–1712), however was shocked by the slavery he saw in North America in the 1670s. In his widely circulated journal, he speculated that Christianity and slavery were incompatible.

More forthright in their criticisms were a brave group of Dutch Quaker immigrants to Pennsylvania. In 1688, they addressed a strongly-worded denunciation of slavery to their monthly Meeting, pointing out the incompatibility of slave-holding with the Golden Rule: “There is a saying that we shall do to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent or colour they are . . . . Is there any that would
be done or handled at this manner? viz. To be sold or made a slave for all
the time of his life?" This remonstrance disappeared from history until
republished by abolitionists in 1844. A similar denunciation of slavery from
the schismatic followers of George Keith in 1693 was likewise fleeting in
its impact.

Through the early eighteenth century, increasingly prosperous Quakers
involved themselves in all aspects of slavery and the slave trade, economic
success undercutting any strict application of their ideals of equality. These
ideals did not, however, disappear. A few lone voices were raised against
slavery in the 1720s and 1730s, most notably Ralph Sandiford (1693–1733)
and Benjamin Lay (1682–1759), each of whom published antislavery argu-
ments. However, the outstanding individual leaders of the movement to
purge slave-holding from American Friends were Anthony Benezet
(1713–1784) and John Woolman (1720–1772). Benezet’s pamphlets on
slavery had wide currency in both America and Europe, among Quakers
and outside of the Society; his writings are credited with awakening the
conscience of English abolitionist Thomas Clarkson. Furthermore, Bene-
zet, who opened a school for free blacks in Philadelphia in the 1760s,
became one of the first antislavery advocates to denounce as well the ideol-
ogy of racial inferiority which undergirded slavery: “I have found amongst
the negroes as great a variety of talents as amongst a like number of whites;
and I am bold to assert, that the notion ... that the blacks are inferior in
their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice.”

John Woolman’s method included the written word, but succeeded more
through a quiet but persistent personal witness. He would visit slave-hold-
ing Quakers, speaking against the practice, then insist on giving wages to
slaves who had assisted him during his stay. He attended meetings in many
districts, raising the inconsistencies of slavery and Christianity, without con-
demning slaveholders as individuals. By the late 1740s, slaveholding was
decreasing among Quakers, and in 1754 the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting
declared slave-holding a sin, a resolution with which the Yearly Meeting
concurred in 1758. Other Quaker meetings followed them; by 1780 slave-
holding among Quakers was virtually unknown, as it had been determined
an offense requiring disowning by other Friends. John Woolman’s gentle,
unrelenting style achieved ongoing resonance through his Journal, which
became standard devotional reading for generations of Friends.

As Jean Soderlund demonstrates, Woolman’s personal quest could not
have succeeded without a change in the economic status of Quaker leader-
ship. In the 1730s, many of those who deliberated and published the pro-
ceedings of Yearly Meetings were, themselves, slaveowners. By the late
1750s, leadership had passed to more reform-minded, middle-class Friends,
who had no personal stake in upholding slavery.

Even as Quaker political power dissipated during the American Revolu-
tion, Friends seized on the congruency between republican language and
antislavery. In April 1775, Anthony Benezet called the initial meeting of the
Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully held in Bondage. Thomas
Paine was among the attendees of this first interreligious abolition group,
but the majority were Quakers. Moses Brown (1738–1836), a wealthy
merchant destined to play a key financial role in the industrialization of New England, manumitted his slaves and joined the Friends on the eve of the Revolution. Brown used his social prominence to fund numerous anti-slavery organizations over the next half-century. In the decades following the Revolution, a large-scale internal migration of Quakers occurred because of slavery; large numbers of Quakers in Southern states relocated to Ohio and Indiana, removing themselves from slave culture and governments that eyed their ideological differences with suspicion. Others moved to Canada, where they would later assist escaped blacks.

Arguably the most important international action of American Quakers during the Revolutionary era came when the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting urged their London counterparts to action. This resulted in English Friends submitting the first formal petition to Parliament opposing the slave trade in 1783, which would deeply influence the men who would become the leaders of the English movement to abolish the Atlantic slave trade including William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Thomas Buxton, none of whom were Quakers. Quaker meetings would also form a crucial grassroots backbone for the antislavery cause.

With the slave trade officially banned in 1808, white American and English antislavery entered a more quiescent, gradualist phase. The most notable Quakers in this period were the American editor Benjamin Lundy (1789–1839) and the English woman writer Elizabeth Heyrick (1769–1831). Lundy edited an antislavery newspaper, The Genius of Universal Emancipation, which kept the flame of abolition alive in the 1820s by entertaining all approaches to mitigating and ending slavery. One such approach came in the stirring tones of immediatism, first enunciated by Elizabeth Heyrick. Her call for an immediate end to the sin of slaveholding jarred her more conservative Quaker brethren in England when her pamphlet, Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, was published in 1824. However, her logic impressed women’s antislavery groups in England, and, when republished in Lundy’s paper in 1826, initiated a radicalization of white abolitionists in the United States.

Immediatism was the rampart of the English Quaker abolitionist Joseph Sturge (1793–1859), who led the struggle to end slavery in all English territory in 1835. Realizing that Parliament’s recent passage of gradual, compensated emancipation in the British colonies could be compromised by racism, apprenticeship requirements, and the persistence of proslavery sentiments, Sturge undertook visits to the Caribbean and the United States to eradicate slavery in the British West Indies once and for all. He also helped organize the 1840 World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London which extended antislavery internationally.

With the advent of more radical abolitionist organizations in the United States after 1830, Quakers were divided amongst themselves on questions of tactics. There had been schismatic movements among the Friends in the early nineteenth century which resulted in an official distancing of those called Orthodox Quakers from abolitionist causes, despite a high level of individual Quaker participation in the movement. Quakers who played key roles in the abolitionist struggle included poets John Greenleaf Whittier
(1807–1892) and Elizabeth Margaret Chandler (1807–1836), and especially Philadelphians Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793–1880) and her spouse James Mott (1788–1868).

Lucretia Mott’s antislavery activism highlights the contradictions present among Quakers. Because women had always participated equally in the Society, functioning as traveling ministers as well as speaking at meetings, Quaker women nurtured many organized women’s antislavery groups. But as Quakers became more religiously conventional, they adopted some of the prejudices of their time, and objected to women’s public political presence. Mott was also criticized for bringing black women to Quaker meetings; despite Benezet’s early witness, Quakers had long discouraged African Americans from joining. Even though Mott was a member of the more socially radical Hicksite group, her actions left her threatened with disownment. The famous 1840 London conference refused to seat her as a full delegate; this led to her meeting Elizabeth Cady Stanton and planning what would eventually become the Seneca Falls Convention.

Many other abolitionists had been born Quakers, or sojourned with them, but had to leave the Society to continue their antislavery activism. Isaac Hopper (1771–1852), Arnold Buffum (1782–1859), Angelina Grimké (1805–1879), Sarah Grimké (1792–1873), Abby Kelley Foster (1811–1887), Prudence Crandall (1803–1890), Laura Haviland (1808–1898), Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), and even Elias Hicks (1748–1830) himself, all found themselves at odds with Quaker meetings. Ironically, many of them are now claimed as Quaker heroes.

Similar tensions marked Quaker involvement in the Underground Railroad. Many Quakers assisted runaway slaves, but those who made it a priority were often chastised. Along the border states of Indiana and Ohio, heated disputes led to ruptures. Levi Coffin (1798–1877) and his wife Catherine White Coffin (d. 1909) were among those who were dismissed for meeting with non-Quaker abolitionists and for their willingness to break the law against harboring runaways. They and other radicals started the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends in 1843, which rejoined the main branch once most Quakers evolved to a similarly militant stance by 1857. Another noted Quaker “conductor” on the Underground Railroad was Lucretia Mott’s associate, the Hicksite Thomas Garrett (1789–1871). Positioned strategically in Delaware, he assisted over 2,000 runaways, and provided financial and logistical support to Harriet Tubman (ca. 1820–1913).

The American Civil War posed the ultimate test for the pacifist Quakers, dramatically pitting their ideal of equality against their non-violence. Some, such as Garrett and Mott, had already reconciled themselves to the likely need for violence to overthrow the slave power. A few Iowa Quakers allied with John Brown (1800–1859) as he planned for his raid at the Harpers Ferry arsenal. Once the war began, Confederate states imprisoned Friends on suspicion of being against both slavery and the war. In the North, individual Quakers agonized over support for the war, and young men faced the even more grueling decision about whether to fight. Records show that as many as a quarter of eligible Quaker men did enlist; very few disownments were made despite this blatant disregard of a foundational tenet of the denomination.
Quakers remained active as missionaries during the late-nineteenth century expansion of British imperialism in Africa. In Zanzibar and Kenya, slaves were held under a variety of indigenous Muslim and Swahili social systems. Quakers vociferously maintained the need for immediate abolition. Henry S. Newman, the Honorary Secretary of the Friends Foreign Mission Association, established the “industrial mission” of Banani on the island of Pemba in 1897. Former slaves were welcomed, providing Newman with the means to agitate for abolition throughout the region. However, the Quakers of the time did not question the presumptions of imperialism, the paternalism of racism, or the exploitations of British capitalism; Friends had become part of the establishment, even if still occasionally a gadfly. While slavery was abolished in most colonial territory of East Africa by 1909, labor relations between the former slaves and the plantation owners was virtually unchanged. Quakers continued their antislavery agitation following World War I, joining in petitions to the League of Nations to monitor imperialist labor practices verging on slavery.

Contemporary Quakers are rightfully proud of their legacy of involvement in antislavery, but have not rested on their laurels. The American Friends Service Committee continues the struggle by working against debt-bondage, sexual slavery, and slavery in civil wars.

From the time they renounced slave-holding among themselves, Quakers became an integral part of antislavery struggles internationally. Because of their strong intra-group communication, they provided activists with organizational models and access to existing networks. The prominent public role of women in Quaker polity paved the way for the emergence of feminism from within the awakened political consciousness of female abolitionists. Yet Quakers have also suffered from their own internal problems including an incomplete dismantling of racial prejudice and debilitation from internal disputes, which have limited their cohesion at key moments in the struggle. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Germantown Antislavery Petition.

Jennifer Rycenga

Quok Walker Decision (1783)

In 1783, in Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Jennison, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts under Chief Justice William Cushing pronounced Quok Walker—and all other slaves in Massachusetts—free. Through that single action, the court transformed Massachusetts from the first colony to legalize slavery into the first state to deny any of its citizens the right to hold human property.

This historic decision did not emerge, however, until Massachusetts courts oversaw two years of legal battles. In 1781, Quok Walker sued Nathaniel Jennison of Barre for assault and battery. While Quok considered himself a free man, Jennison thought Walker was his runaway slave. When Jennison found him working for John and Seth Caldwell, and Walker refused to accompany Jennison back to his home, Jennison and two other men beat him. After this brutal beating, Jennison imprisoned Walker in a barn.

Within a month, Quok Walker sued Jennison on a plea of trespass. The Worcester County Inferior Court of Common Pleas ordered Jennison to appear for the case Walker v. Jennison (1781). People illegally enslaved usually used a charge of trespass to sue for freedom. Trespass, the unlawful injury of another’s person or property, determined status because a master could legally injure a slave, but not a free person. Therefore, if the jury found the defendant had injured the plaintiff, they had decided that he or she was free. From Jennison’s perspective, injury was not possible, for he could not injure his own property. As his property, Jennison had a right to beat or restrain Walker as he willed. Walker and his lawyers responded that Walker was a free man and had therefore suffered injury. Before Jennison owned him, Walker had made an agreement with James Caldwell, Walker’s original owner, to free him at the age of twenty-five. Jennison acquired Walker through marriage with one of Caldwell’s daughters. After the daughter died and Walker came of age, Jennison refused to uphold Caldwell’s agreement. The jury found Walker’s argument most convincing and decided that Jennison had injured Walker, and, thus, Walker was free.

The initial case blossomed into three other cases between Walker, Jennison, and the Caldwell family. In each of these cases, the attorney, Levi
Lincoln, offered an impassioned plea for the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts; yet none of these cases declared anyone free, but Walker himself. The scope of the case would change, however, when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts arrested Jennison for imprisoning and beating Walker in the final and most important case, Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Jennison (1783).

The remarkable aspect of this case was Chief Justice Cushing’s charge to the jury. Cushing pushed aside the traditional adherence to points of law and looked to the State Constitution of 1780 to instruct the jury. He thought that the concept of natural rights bound the framers to “declare that all men are born free and equal” and stated furthermore that “every subject is entitled to liberty.” In his legal instruction he deemed slavery “as effectively abolished as it can be.” He, therefore, ordered the jury not “to consider whether the promises of freedom to Quaco ... amounted to manumission or not.” After issuing his oral charge, Cushing wrote out his instructions in his legal notebook. Almost in amazement of what had happened, he ended the entry with a statement in his notebook that explained the significance clearly: “The preceding Case was the one in which by the foregoing Charge, Slavery in Massachusetts was forever abolished.”

Despite this seemingly unequivocal assertion, slavery did not instantaneously end in Massachusetts. The immediate legacy of these cases was very murky. Most importantly, the abolition of slavery by judicial decree did not result in a mass emancipation but made it impossible for masters to maintain their ownership when brought to court. For this reason, some scholars have questioned whether the case indeed ended slavery. As legal scholar A. Leon Higginbotham expressed it, however, the court had indeed “signaled that it would no longer protect the legality of slavery.” But the burden lay upon the enslaved men and women who had to assert their freedom to their master. The first substantial evidence that slaves actually became free was the 1790 Census when Massachusetts reported no enslaved inhabitants.


*Emily V. Blanck*

**Qur’an and Antislavery**

Like the revelations of the *Torah* and the *Gospel* before it, the revelation of the *Qur’an* was a profoundly transformative event in human history. Within 150 years of the death of the Prophet Muhammad, in 652 C.E., much of the inhabited world—stretching from Spain to India—had become
Muslim, responding to the vigorously asserted new faith and an entirely new legal system in ways that have had, and continue to have, a tremendous impact on world events. What impact did the revelation of the Qur’an have on the age-old institution of human slavery? A cursory review of the text and of the early Islamic history following its revelation might lead one to the conclusion that the Qur’an, much like the other Abrahamic scriptures that preceded it, left the institution of slavery just as it found it. Many scholars have contended that, while the Quranic text contains a number of ameliorative provisions lessening the harshness of the treatment of slaves and encouraging manumission, the Holy Book of the Muslims does not suggest abolition and it cannot be read as an antislavery document.

Closer analysis of the Quranic text and a critical approach to the history surrounding the revelation of the text shows that this conclusion is not completely accurate. It is important to note that the early revelations of the Qur’an exhorted the Prophet Muhammad and his small band of followers to embrace a dynamic new worldview. This worldview emphasized, in newly phrased and uncompromising terms, the oneness of God and the unity of the human race. It ardently rejected the domination of any group in human society by any other individuals or group of oppressors. The Quranic message, first revealed in an Arabian society riven by tribal rivalries, warfare, and socio-economic strife, was initially directed to members of the Prophet Muhammad’s own tribe, the dominant and aristocratic Quraisy of Mecca. Ultimately the message became a universal call, directing all human beings to seek justice and upright moral and ethical conduct in all their affairs. It demanded the abolition of worldly distinctions between human beings based on ethnicity, language, class, caste, wealth, lineage, or geographic origin.

The Qur’an’s egalitarian message is likely why slaves, the poor, and the disenfranchised in Mecca were among the first converts to the new religion. Slaves who converted to Islam endured particularly harsh retribution from their masters. For example, Muslim schoolchildren are familiar with the story of Bilal ibn Rabah, an Ethiopian slave who was tortured by his Meccan owner for days in the hot midday sun because he refused to renounce his conversion to the newfound faith. One of the Prophet’s companions, Abu Bakr, a wealthy man and a new Muslim himself, interceded, purchasing Bilal and instantaneously freeing him. Bilal enthusiastically took up the cause of the new religion and ultimately originated the adhan (“the call to prayer”), first used by him at the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina and now heard all over the world five times a day. Bilal thus was Islam’s first muaddhin (“caller to prayer”). We owe our enjoyment of the melodious tones of the Muslim call to prayer to this emancipated slave, Bilal ibn Rabah.

In those early days of Islam, there were many more events like the instance of the emancipation of Bilal. Those events did not just concern slavery and persecution. They also involved other practices of the Meccan aristocracy that were viewed as corrupt, immoral, or oppressive. The texts of the early Meccan Quranic revelations, while powerfully condemnatory of Meccan immorality, tribalism, and polytheism, make only oblique references to the actual events that prompted the revelations. Instead, most accounts
of the actual facts will be found in the historical literature and in the Traditions of the Prophet. A review of those facts leaves no doubt, however, that the early Muslim experience led to the liberation of many new Meccan Muslims from lives of slavery and degradation.

This reality is confirmed by the fact that all the important Quranic rules on slavery are emancipatory. There are no provisions in the Qur'an that actively promote or counsel the continuation of the institution of slavery. The message of the Qur'an rather exhorts mankind to work toward the achievement of a slavery-free society. This message was, unfortunately, deemphasized after the death of the Prophet Muhammad and ultimately lost in the rapid expansion of the Islamic Empire. Although the Qur'an's assertions of absolute human equality, the inviolability of human dignity, and the importance of earthly justice were key rhetorical factors in fueling the rapid expansion of Islam, those messages did not result in any impulse or movement seeking the widespread abolition of the slave trade or of the system of chattel slavery. Yet, consistent with the core Quranic message, manumission of slaves in the Muslim world was a common and frequent occurrence. In some places, notably Egypt, former slaves rose to occupy the highest positions in political and religious hierarchies. Thus, in spite of the existence of a 1,300-year horrific and anti-Quranic history of plunder and trading in slaves, an examination of the Qur'an's textual provisions on slavery and its more general discussions of the ideas of social justice and human equality shows the clear presence of a theological and jurisprudential basis for an antislavery position. As we have noted, not all of the Quranic usages are equally significant in determining the Qur'an's attitude toward slavery, and in some cases they are ambiguous or neutral, displaying a matter-of-fact acceptance of the existence of chattel slavery in Arab society at the time of the revelation. Yet, in many other instances the antislavery message is unmistakable. The most effective way to analyze the Quranic treatment of the issue is to group its provisions on slavery by Arabic linguistic usage. Using a linguistic lens in our analysis helps separate the Qur'an's neutral provisions from its antislavery provisions and will make the Holy Book's intention clearer to the reader.

The Qur'an generally uses three linguistic forms in its references to slaves and slavery. The first linguistic form involves the use of the Arabic masculine noun 'abd, which literally means "slave," but is also frequently used in the Qur'an to describe a servant or worshiper of God. Although the form is often used in a neutral way, a number of the usages of this form carry emancipatory messages. The second Quranic linguistic form describes chattel slaves with the use of the Arabic idiomatic expression, ma malakat aymanukum ("those whom your right hands possess"). This phrase describes war captives and others who may fall into a state of enslavement as a result of hostilities, negotiations between belligerents, or as tribute or war booty. The phrase, or some variant of it, is used thirteen times in the Qur'an (4:3, 4:24, 4:25, 4:36, 16:71, 23:6, 24:31, 24:58, 30:28, 33:50, 33:52, 33:55, 70:30). Although many of the verses using this phrase do nothing more than lay down rules of etiquette or decorum involving treatment of prisoners, a number of them also clearly contemplate a lightening
of the burden of the captive or outright emancipation. The third linguistic form uses variants of the metaphorical expression *raqabah* ("the neck") to describe slaves, an obvious reference to the ancient practice of yoking captives by the neck. The Quranic usage of this form is much more graphic, and the verses employing this usage give us the most direct expression of the Qur'an's overarching purposes in regard to slavery. In all of the verses using this form, God instructs the believers to free "the neck" or substantially lighten the burden placed upon it. Several of the instances of this usage are found in chapters and sections that convey a powerful message of equality and human freedom. The most important Quranic linguistic usages for descriptions of slavery are the first and the third forms, and we will discuss both usages here, focusing most of our attention on the metaphorical *raqaba* ("the neck") usage.

In a number of the instances in the Qur'an where *'abd* usage is employed, the Qur'an instituted an important change in how slaves were to be treated under the law. For example, verses 2:178 and 2:179 established the principle of equality in terms of punishment for homicide, abolishing distinctions based on social status or tribal affiliation. After the revelation of verses 2:178 and 179, slaves in Muslim society no longer feared being sacrificed as satisfaction to the victims of homicides committed by free persons, and, more importantly, they were protected by the law of homicide in the same way that free persons were protected. This was a revolutionary change in the Arab tribal customary law, and, as the criminal law often does, it sent a powerful rhetorical message of equality to all of the new Muslims. In the area of personal relations, the Qur'an also made profound changes in the law governing slaves. Prior to the emergence of Islam, slaves were often either not allowed to marry or they faced difficulties in establishing and maintaining marriage ties. Sometimes prisoners of war, captured and enslaved during hostilities, were allowed to bring a spouse with them into captivity, but this did not guarantee that the marriage tie would be respected. The Qur'an, to a large extent, changed these and other rules governing slave marriages. At verses 2:221 and 24:32, the Qur'an exhorts Muslims to permit their slaves to marry and, using the *'abd* linguistic form, extols a preference for marital partnerships between believing slaves and believing free persons over those between slaves and unbelievers, even though they might be free. While the social taboo associated with marriage to a slave may have persisted, the text clarifies that such relationships should no longer be legally taboo and that marriage among believing slaves and between believing slaves and believing free persons were henceforth to be viewed as acts of piety. It is important to remember that, while a slave's conversion to Islam did not automatically result in emancipation, a free person's marriage to his or her slave would result in the slave's emancipation, based on the jurists' Quranic interpretation that it was legally impossible to own one's spouse. Although these provisions might cause a male owner of a concubine to eschew marriage to her, preferring ownership and unrestrained access, the Caliph Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam, acting within thirty years after the revelation, nullified the untoward results of this practice by ordering that a female slave mother of children by her free male
owner (known as *umm walid* or “mother of the child” in Arabic) could not be sold and that she must, by operation of law, be emancipated upon the death of her owner. The Islamic law, drawn from interpretations of the *Qur’an* and Traditions of the Prophet, also stipulated that the children of such unions were free at birth. These rules encouraged meaningful and long-term humanitarian relationships between slaves and masters, ultimately ending in emancipation, and many prominent figures in Islamic history, including heads of state, military leaders, poets and scholars, were products of such unions.

Each Quranic use of the metaphorical Arabic word *raqaba* ("the neck") is also unmistakably emancipatory. Each time this word is used, the *Qur’an* orders or strongly urges that “the neck” be freed. Perhaps the most frequently referenced passage using the “neck” description of slaves is the verse that immediately precedes the verses announcing the ordinance that the law of equality must be applied in homicide, referred to above. The verse, 2:177, counsels the believers to eschew blind adherence to religious ritual, and, in imparting that counsel, it gives an express definition of righteous behavior. The verse requires that every righteous believer “spend of your substance . . . for the ransom of slaves.”

The exhortation to righteous behavior is not the only way that the *Qur’an* encouraged the freeing of slaves. Again using the harsh linguistic phrase “the neck,” the *Qur’an* announced that slaves were to be freed in partial expiation for the crime of unintentional homicide (4:92), for failure to comply with an oath or for taking false or futile oaths (5:89), and as penalty for inappropriate or unjust behavior by a husband toward his wife (58:3–6).

Two other instances of the use of the “neck” linguistic form in the *Qur’an* involve explicit pronouncements of legal injunctions and are of major importance for the Islamic law of slavery. A third instance, while only hortatory, is of nearly equal importance because of its delineation of the Islamic ethic in regard to slavery. Each will be considered in turn.

The first instance, at verse 9:60, is widely cited in legal treatises because it sets out the eight classes of persons in society who are entitled to receive public charity or *Zakat*, one of the five “pillars” of the Islamic faith. Those classes of persons are: (1) the poor; (2) the needy; (3) *Zakat* workers; (4) new Muslims; (5) slaves; (6) debtors; (7) those struggling “in the cause of God”; and (8) travelers. Although this verse does not expressly suggest that the heads of Islamic states should affirmatively work to eliminate or abolish slavery, it commands the authorities to consider the plight of slaves as one of their highest categories in the social welfare context.

The next instance of the *Qur’an*’s use of the “neck” metaphor is at verse 47:4, which sets out provisions for the treatment of prisoners of war. The verse provides that the Muslim military commander is permitted to capture and enslave non-believing enemy prisoners of war but, when hostilities are concluded, efforts must be made to free the prisoners or to ransom or repatriate them back to their communities. Despite a fair amount of scholarly opinion suggesting that the verse is only advisory, rather than mandatory, and the fact that, during the medieval era, heads of Islamic governments
often ignored the verse’s provision, the plain meaning and imperative tense of the Quranic language seem to mandate that heads of government must free captives at the cessation of hostilities.

The third and last instance of the use of the “neck” metaphor is perhaps the most compelling evidence of a Quranic philosophy in favor of individual freedom and an insistence on emancipation and abolition in the case of slaves. This philosophy, summed up in the wonderfully terse chapter entitled al Balad (“The City”), was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad early in his prophetic mission. The revelation, addressed to the Prophet, concerns his relationship with Mecca, the city of his birth, and the struggle he was about to undertake, which would eventually require him to flee the city in order to save his life and continue his mission. The chapter first points out that he, the Prophet, is a “freeman” or “dweller” of the city, but, like other men, he will face toil and struggle in life, of which many other men cannot fathom the meaning. The chapter then announces that there are two roads in life, one steep, and difficult, and the other flat, and easy. The steep road is the preferred road, but how is one to know the steep road? The Qur’an answers this question, stating that the steep road, among other things, involves freeing slaves, protecting orphans, and uplifting the indigent in society.

The Qur’an’s exhortation to the Prophet in al Balad describes the struggle required of the Prophet if he is to succeed in creating the virtuous society contemplated by the Holy Book. Every Muslim who emulates the Prophet in his or her individual effort to create this virtuous society must behave similarly. The good Muslim therefore frees slaves and works for abolition and the virtuous society contemplated by the Qur’an will ultimately be one that is free of slavery. See also Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery; Bible and Slavery; Islam and Antislavery.


Bernard K. Freamon
Radical Republicans

The Radical Republicans earned their label by advocating policies of radical social change during the Civil War era. Radicals interpreted the United States Constitution’s guarantee of republican government in the several states as a mandate for vastly expanded national power during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Inspired by this view, Radical Republicans invoked federal power not only to destroy slavery, which they viewed as antithetical to republican freedoms, but also the political and economic systems that had supported it. Especially through Reconstruction, radicals envisioned remodeling the entire South into a region of small producers and free laborers, characterized by political equality for all men, regardless of race. Though not wholly successful in implementing their goals, they did inaugurate dramatic social and political change in the South, and throughout the United States.

Pointing to slavery as the fundamental cause of the Civil War, radicals prodded President Abraham Lincoln early in the conflict to wage war for emancipation. Lincoln’s shrewd reluctance to propose emancipation prematurely—so as to preserve the loyalty of slaveholding Unionists in the border states—greatly frustrated radicals. For the most part though, they supported Lincoln’s policies and greeted his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862 with great enthusiasm. Through their leadership of the Joint Committee of the Conduct of the War, radicals also sought to aid the president in prosecuting the war, assistance that likely complicated his management of the war as much as it helped.

Radicals also differed with Lincoln on the subject of Reconstruction. The president sought the quick restoration to the Union of seceded states in which 10 percent of the adult, male population pledged their allegiance to the Constitution. Radicals, though, thought the destruction of the South’s old political regimes was more important than hasty restoration to the Union. In July 1864, Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio and Congressman Henry Winter Davis of Maryland sponsored a Reconstruction bill that required oaths of allegiance from over half of a state’s adult males
and disenfranchised Confederate leaders. Lincoln pocket-vetoed the bill, but radicals did not abandon demands for harsher Reconstruction measures.

Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, a leader in the House of Representatives, advocated redistributing plantation property to freedmen in small freeholds, and other radicals proposed legislation to guarantee black male suffrage. However, few Americans supported land redistribution, and several Southern states passed Black Codes in 1865 and 1866 that severely circumscribed black freedoms and voting rights. President Andrew Johnson (who succeeded to the presidency on Lincoln’s assassination) vetoed the Freedmen’s Bureau and Civil Rights bills in 1867, which had been designed to protect the freedoms and rights of freedmen. In response, Charles Sumner led other radicals in holding up congressional passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1867 until it incorporated protection of citizenship rights and suffrage regardless of color. Radicals also combined with moderates to assume control of Reconstruction in 1867 and orchestrate the impeachment of Johnson the following year.

Inspired in large part by George Julian, Stevens, and other radicals, Congress’s Reconstruction Acts of 1867 divided the South into five military districts, directed the military to register voters for new state constitutional conventions, and enfranchised adult, black males to vote in those elections. These measures enfranchised over 700,000 African American voters, outnumbering the region’s white voters, and led to the first biracial state governments in the nation’s history. Those governments funded public education and other social programs designed to enhance economic and social opportunities for small producers, both white and black.

However, this radical change proved short-lived. Waning Northern support for the ongoing, costly Reconstruction process caused many moderates to abandon Radical Reconstruction by 1868. The combination of Southerners’ dissatisfaction with new state taxes and a wave of racist violence aimed at Republican voters soon toppled Republican governments in the South. Democrats’ return to power in most Southern states by 1872 effectively ended Radical Reconstruction. Though Radical Republicans’ policies proved short-lived in the South, they had paved the way for greater political and social equality for Northern blacks and greatly expanded the powers of federal and state governments to effect social change. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Whig Party and Antislavery.


*Matthew Isham*
Rama V, King of Siam. See Chulalongkorn, King of Siam

Rankin, John (1793—1886)

John Rankin was a Presbyterian minister and a prominent leader of the Underground Railroad in southern Ohio from the 1820s until the abolition of slavery in the United States. Along with a handful of others, he is considered to be one of the first antislavery activists to call for an immediate abolition of slavery. William Lloyd Garrison considered Rankin his antislavery mentor and cited Rankin's writings as inspiring him to enter the antislavery movement.

Of Scottish descent, Rankin was born near the village of Dandridge in Jefferson County, Tennessee, on February 4, 1793. Rankin attended Washington College in southeastern Tennessee where, in 1816, he married Jean Lowry, the granddaughter of Samuel Doak, the college's founder and president.

Rankin's antislavery activism began the year before, when he helped organize the Manumission Society of Tennessee in 1815. Soon after being licensed by the Abingdon Presbytery in 1817, Rankin began preaching against slavery. Opposition to his activism led Rankin to make plans for his family's removal to the town of Ripley in Brown County, Ohio. Their exodus in 1817 took the Rankin family through Kentucky, where their only horse died and their travel funds ran out, leading Rankin to accept a position as the minister of the Concord Presbyterian Church near the town of Carlisle in Nicholas County. In Kentucky, Rankin was active in the Kentucky Abolition Society until 1822, when he moved his family to Ripley, Ohio, their original destination.

In Ohio, Rankin joined the Chillicothe Presbytery, which installed him over the church at Ripley. In 1824, Rankin began publishing letters, addressed to his brother, a slaveholder in Virginia, which called for immediate abolition. Originally published in a serialized format in Ripley's local newspaper, the Castigator, Rankin's Letters on Slavery were republished in book form in 1826. By 1850, as many as twenty editions had been published, including one by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

At Ripley, Rankin emerged as a prominent leader of the Underground Railroad. His house on the bluff overlooking Ripley, with a lantern lighted every night, became a beacon guiding runaway slaves to freedom. Thousands of slaves made their way along the Ripley Line, frequently receiving help from Rankin and his family. Rankin's notoriety grew on the southern side of the Ohio River, where a $2,500 bounty was eventually placed on his head. In 1835, Rankin joined with Theodore Weld, James G. Birney, Horace Bushnell, and others to form the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. The following year, Rankin traveled in Ohio as an organizing agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

After the national governing body of the New School Presbyterians refused to exclude slaveholders from membership, Rankin joined the “come-outer” movement. In 1847 he led the effort to form the Free Presbyterian Church, a new denomination that barred slaveholders or advocates of slavery from becoming members.
Rankin’s contribution to the antislavery cause went beyond his organizing and publications. Rankin is the source of the real-life story that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe’s fictional character, Eliza Harris, in Uncle Tom’s Cabin. In 1838, Rankin and his family helped a runaway slave who crossed the partially frozen Ohio River, carrying her two-year-old baby in her arms. Rankin lived to see the abolition of slavery, dying in 1886, having personally helped hundreds of slaves escape their bondage and having helped shift popular sentiment in favor of immediate abolition. See also Immediate Emancipation.


Andrew Lee Feight

Raynal, Abbé Guillaume-Thomas (1713–1796)

Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal wrote Philosophical and Political History of the European Settlements and Commerce in the Two Indies. It was central to the eighteenth-century French debate about slavery and the slave trade. This collaborative project went through three editions (1770, 1774, 1781) and many printings, and while it bears Raynal’s name and editorial influence, many of the arguments were supplied by philosophers such as Jean de Pechméja and Denis Diderot. Essentially a celebration of European expansion in Asia and the Americas, the History was similar to the more popular Encyclopedia in being a laboratory of ideas advanced during the Enlightenment. As a work of advocacy, it helped to frame the terms of the growing abolitionist movement in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Beginning with the satirical critique of slavery in Montesquieu’s Spirit of the Laws in 1748, an abolitionist movement emerged in France to denounce both slavery and the slave trade that made it possible. Despite the popularity of the Enlightenment’s humanitarian and reformist ideals, France by the mid-eighteenth century still controlled more than half a million black slaves. The mercantilistic French economy profited from the sugar and other plantation staples produced in its West Indian colonies. From French port cities, over 4,000 slaving ships visited Africa between 1650 and 1850 to procure workers for the colonies of Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. In the decades before the Revolution, there were some calls for gradual abolition of slavery, but they were never enacted. There were more substantial examples to follow, such as the fledgling English abolitionist movement begun by William Wilberforce and the antislavery initiatives of the Quakers in Pennsylvania. Moreover, the Physiocrats, a cluster of progressive French economic reformers, urged the advantages of free over slave labor and undercut primary arguments for colonial slavery. By the 1770s, slavery and the slave trade were being attacked on humanitarian and economic grounds for the first time.
After the *Spirit of the Laws*, Raynal's *History* was the most discussed critique of slavery and abolition. Raynal's *History* included an extensive description of the system of enslavement from Africa to the Antilles. Raynal attacked widely supported proslavery arguments. He asserted that religions had no right to support slavery for the purpose of conversion; people of African descent were not born slaves or for slavery; prisoners of war—supposedly enslaved legitimately—actually were created by European-sponsored conflicts to produce captives; the protests and the resistance of the enslaved made clear that they were not content to labor in the Americas. At its core, the system of Atlantic slavery was a vast violation of human freedom and Raynal called upon the world’s monarchs to oppose slavery. But his was not an egalitarian perspective. Like most of his contemporaries, Raynal saw his project as part of a “civilizing mission” to regenerate an Africa which was yet in its historical infancy. This effort would parallel the reforms that he recommended in the American colonies. In the third edition of the *History*, he even recommended mixed marriages between French subjects and natives in other lands as a way of further civilizing the latter.

Raynal advanced one of the Atlantic World’s first systematic plans for **gradual emancipation**. Raynal extolled the advantages of cultivation by Africans in Africa and the dissemination of European arts and industry to Africa; he did not favor the immediate liberation of present slaves but, oddly, he recommended the continued importation of those who were slaves in Africa so that they would become free in America. Female slaves could be emancipated once they bore enough children to augment the colonial population. Those blacks already enslaved in the colonies would not be emancipated, as they were unprepared for freedom. Younger slaves would have to work until the age of twenty, and then for five additional years with salary for the same master. Then they could become independent cultivators or agricultural laborers. Raynal (or Pechměja) warned that the alternative to refusing to end black slavery would be a slave uprising that would lead to reprisals and destruction. Raynal prophesized the appearance of a “Black Spartacus” who would restore human rights and perhaps, vengefully, replace the black code with a white code.

Yet Raynal’s increasingly radical antislavery did not continue long past his third edition. By 1785, Victor-Pierre Malouet, an associate and colonial official, deeply influenced Raynal with his *Essay on the Administration of Saint-Domingue*. Raynal now revised his policies and argued that tropical agricultural products could be cultivated only by blacks. Until they could produce among themselves a Montesquieu, blacks were closer to humanity as New World slaves with their labor productively directed than as victims of their own barbaric and hostile societies in Africa.

As a collective enterprise that underwent three major editions, struggling through an era when humanitarian ideals were being balanced with economic realities, the *History* was frequently inconsistent. But even with its contradictions, Raynal's *History* was a seminal work in the emergence of a vigorous antislavery in the eighteenth century. To its contemporaries it was a synthesis of Enlightenment antislavery ideas with its dedication to strong and articulate advocacy. Abbé Raynal was an oracle to his peers in the
Reconstruction Acts in the United States (1867–1868)

Between March 1867 and March 1868, the U.S. Congress passed four Reconstruction Acts to facilitate the reentry of the former Confederate states into the Union. The First Reconstruction Act divided the South into five military districts under the command of army generals. The act also subjugated the citizens of those districts to the authority of military courts. The first district was comprised of Virginia, the second of the Carolinas, the third of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, the fourth of Arkansas and Mississippi, and the fifth of Texas and Louisiana. Tennessee was not part of any district as it had already ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and was considered reconstructed. In addition to establishing military districts, the First Reconstruction Act barred former high-ranking Confederates from holding public office, demanded that states enact new constitutions guaranteeing universal male suffrage regardless of race, and required states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. President Andrew Johnson vetoed the bill, but was overridden by Congress. The presidential veto and ensuing congressional override was a pattern that would be upheld for all of the Reconstruction Acts. In response to the passage of the First Reconstruction Act, President Johnson removed Secretary of War Edwin Stanton from office in an attempt to curb the power of the Radical Republicans. However, Stanton was sustained in office by the Tenure of Office Act, and Johnson was impeached and nearly removed for his actions.

Faced with a choice of granting suffrage to former slaves or living under continued military occupation, many Southerners decided they would rather deal with the army than enfranchised African Americans. Recognizing this, Congress waited less than a month before passing the Second Reconstruction Act and giving the military district commanders directions on holding state constitutional conventions. The act proscribed the loyalty oath that was required of former Confederates, established the system for choosing delegates to write the new state constitutions, and laid out the methods and procedures for elections. The federal government was going to make sure the Southern states wrote new constitutions and ratified the
Fourteenth Amendment whether they wanted to or not. President Johnson, unhappy with compelling citizens to write a new constitution against their will, interpreted the bill as narrowly as possible.

In July 1867, Congress passed the Third Reconstruction Act, allowing district commanders to remove state officials from office. The act also declared that former U.S. government officials who then served in the Confederate government were not entitled to register to vote, and established who could serve on the voter registration boards and how they would work. In March 1868, the Fourth Reconstruction Act allowed the new state constitutions to be approved by a simple majority vote. By the summer of 1870, all of the former Confederate states had been readmitted to the Union, bringing an end to the necessity of the Reconstruction Acts. See also Lincoln, Abraham.


*Jared Peatman*

**Redpath, James (1833–1891)**

An immigrant to the United States from Scotland, James Redpath launched a career in journalism by working as a reporter for Horace Greeley’s New York *Tribune*. He journeyed in the South in the mid-1850s, interviewing slaves clandestinely. After the third trip, Redpath published these interviews together with his impressions of the South in a book entitled *The Roving Editor: or, Talks with the Slaves*. In this book, Redpath allowed the slaves to express their discontent and willingness to revolt.

In 1855, Redpath moved to Kansas where he reported on the dispute over slavery in that territory. During these years, Redpath became a close associate of militant abolitionist John Brown. In 1858, Brown encouraged Redpath to move to Boston to help rally support for his plan for a Southern slave insurrection. After the failure of Brown’s attack on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859, Redpath wrote a highly sympathetic biography of the executed abolitionist, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown*.

In 1860, Redpath toured Haiti as a reporter and returned to the United States as the official Haitian lobbyist for diplomatic recognition, which he secured within two years. He simultaneously served as director of Haiti’s campaign to attract free black emigrants from the United States and Canada. Redpath hoped that a selective immigration of skilled blacks to Haiti would elevate conditions on that island nation and thereby dispel racial prejudice in the United States. Redpath eventually also abandoned emigration, when he recognized that North American blacks preferred to remain at home once the Civil War seemed to promise a new day of freedom for their race. In 1863 and 1864, Redpath redirected his efforts to pioneering the publishing of cheap paperbound books principally intended for distribution to a reading audience of bored Union soldiers.

Later in the Civil War, Redpath served as a frontline war correspondent with the Union army in Georgia and South Carolina. In February 1865, federal military authorities appointed Redpath the first superintendent
of public schools in the Charleston region. He soon had more than 100 instructors at work teaching 3,500 students of both races. In May 1865 in Charleston, Redpath organized the first-ever Memorial Day service to honor buried Union Army dead there. His reputation as a radical abolitionist and his tentative steps toward integrating South Carolina’s schools caused worried military officials to replace Redpath and remove an irritation to Southern-born President Andrew Johnson.

In 1868, Redpath organized the first professional lecturing bureau in the United States and had as his clients, such notables as Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, Susan B. Anthony, and Frederick Douglass. Redpath ended his professional career as the editor of the North American Review and ironically, given his abolitionist credentials, as the ghost writer for the former Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Despite suffering a stroke in 1887, Redpath continued to lead an active life until he was killed by a trolley car accident in New York City in 1891.


John R. McKivigan

Re-emergence of Slavery During Era of World War II

While serfdom and chattel slavery were abolished in nations like Russia and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, the nature of modern conflict eighty years later meant that for total war, total mobilization of the work force became necessary. Several nations engaged in practices of forced labor that were tantamount to slavery, whether permanent as in the case of Nazi treatment of Jews and Slavs, or temporary as in the relocation and internment of Japanese citizens of the United States and Canada.

Classic serfdom entailed a complex web of ties of families and even entire clans or tribes to feudal masters. Chattel slavery meant the actual ownership of persons by individuals, with property titles, deeds, and invoices. In the United States, the vast majority of slaves were Africans. The Nazi idea similarly involved racial themes, but with more concentration on “the Jewish question,” as well as such other groups branded as inferior as Gypsies, Slavs, etc. There was some dispute whether such untermenschen should be killed outright, or dedicated to slave labor.

With the advent of the Nazis to power in 1933, concentration camps were quickly established throughout Germany. Almost all of these had ancillary labor camps, factories, and the like in the vicinity, where inmates worked without pay. There was no individual “title,” but rather, entire races were simply the property of the German State, processed by the Schutzstaffel (commonly termed the S.S.), and rented out to factories, farmers, etc. There was some recognition that inmates such as engineers, technicians, and skilled workers should be particularly designated and deployed in industry and agriculture.

Once the war began, and especially once the Eastern Front was opened in June 1941, a policy of extermination of the Jews was set in motion. Whole communities were massacred. One’s racial identity was sufficient to
be a “crime” worthy of death. But there developed a split within the Nazi hierarchy, as one faction was set on extermination pure and simple, while another faction had a realization on some level that such a policy would set the subject populations against the Nazis based on the need to survive and also that this ran counter to the need for forced labor to keep German industry going. Throughout the war, this tension was never really resolved. Significantly, once the extermination camps got into full operation, the process of selecting was well developed. Upon arrival, those judged unable to work—the very young, the old, the sick—were sent at once to the gas chambers, while another cohort was destined for the nearby factories. There was a kind of industrial efficiency, wherein clothing, hair, gold from teeth, etc. was processed and recycled. Hence the people were not only slaves, but they became industrial products themselves. Similarly, prisoners were utilized as clinical material for medical research and cruel experiments on a wide scale.

Of the 35,000 slave laborers who worked in the I.G. Farben plants in the Auschwitz complex, 25,000 died there. The rations for workers in such factories were so small that malnutrition was epidemic. The life expectancy of the typical slave laborer was three-and-a-half months. In classic chattel slavery, the slave was valuable, but in the Nazi context, he or she was worthless, as population reduction was a main goal, and there were always more slaves to be had. In addition to Jews, vast numbers of prisoners and civilians from the East were brought into this system. Frequently these laborers were so weak from malnutrition and illness that they were useless for factory work.

From the Western Front, hundreds of thousands were transferred to Germany to work in factories; some 1.3 million from France alone. In some cases these were prisoners of war, while others were simply rounded up, and yet others “volunteered” because the alternative was starvation. By the end of 1944, one fifth of the work force in Germany was foreign, totaling 5 million.

Those who deny the Holocaust have argued that the crematoria in camps like Auschwitz were used merely to deal efficiently with the corpses of those who died of natural causes in nearby factories. This position tacitly acknowledges the existence of forced labor on a massive scale during the Nazi era.

Forced labor under the government of the Soviet Union took on a slightly different character. In 1931, Stalin stated that the Soviets were fifty to one hundred years behind the industrialized countries; they had ten years to make it up or they would be crushed. Hence, the Great Famine in the Ukraine was caused by a need to accumulate capital by selling grain on the world market, thus enabling the Soviets to purchase entire factories from Ford. In a similarly ruthless fashion, the Purge trials and Terror produced a compliant bureaucracy that would strive to meet production goals because failure to do so meant imprisonment or death. The “Gulag Archipelago” of labor camps stretching across Russia and far into Siberia was a vast system of industrial development on a “crash basis.” Though there was usually a pretext of “crimes” having been committed by inmates—sabotage,
conspiracy, and the like—the actual purpose of this system was industrial production at all costs. Whole social classes such as the wealthy peasant Kulaks were arrested, and either shot or transported to labor camps. The basis for the Soviet forced labor system was not race for the most part, but social class. "Class traitors" or other dissidents went to their deaths, or to the camps. A memorable literary portrait of this process is Yevgeny Yevtushenko's long poem *Bratsk Station*, in which dedicated Bolsheviks found themselves building electrical power plants in Siberia. As in Germany, the State was the "owner" of the person, rather than individuals. Even whole families could be deported, and thus the familial character of the old system of serfdom was replicated. The numbers involved in this system are disputed, but it was certainly in the tens of millions.

In the Far East, the Japanese Empire, allied with Nazi Germany, developed a vast system of slave labor to fuel factory and mine production in China (especially Manchuria), Korea, and in Japan itself. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese and Korean workers were brought into industry, with mortality rates as high as fifty percent in the mines. This system is powerfully depicted in the classic film trilogy "The Human Condition," directed by Masaki Kobayashi (1959–1960), where a young and somewhat liberal Japanese engineer is sent to a remote Manchurian factory where he is soon horrified by its brutal conditions. The sponsoring corporation is depicted as a cynical bureaucracy, indifferent to the suffering from which it profits so handsomely.

As in Germany, the Japanese engaged in medical experiments on prisoners of war, during which hundreds died in gruesome ways. These included experiments in germ warfare. Thus human beings were transformed into mere clinical material, in which they had no rights.

In addition to factory and mine labor, the Japanese developed a system of "comfort women," in which tens of thousands of women were forced into brothels for the Japanese military. In Korea alone, some 200,000 women were so conscripted; many did not survive the experience. Women of all races from the entire reach of the Japanese empire were included in this system.

Even in the western democracies, such as the United States and Canada, forced labor was also introduced, albeit with significant differences from the fascist model. In both countries, citizens of Japanese ancestry were quickly interned after Pearl Harbor was attacked. In the United States, they numbered 112,000, and in Canada, 21,000. They were transported to hastily constructed camps, often in remote desert regions. Some internees began work on nearby farms, producing food for themselves and in place of those who went off to join the war. As their "crime" consisted only of their racial origin, and there was no evidence of antigovernment sabotage or conspiracy, such internments bore a distinct resemblance to the camps in Germany. One difference was that it seemed to be more in the nature of a wartime emergency measure, rather than a result of a racial stigma that could never be overcome. Indeed, hundreds of Japanese-Americans interned in the camps actually served in the United States Army, though in Europe rather than in the Pacific. It is also significant that unlike in Germany there.
was nothing in place resembling extermination procedures, nor was there a high mortality rate for internees, compared to that for forced laborers under the Japanese. Still, the existence of internment and forced labor in the democracies suggests that the dynamic of such systems was not unique to the fascist powers.

While there had been isolated revolts by Jewish militants, both in the camps and in incidents like the Warsaw Rising of 1943, these had not been sufficient to shake the system, let alone destroy it. As with the end of chattel slavery in the United States at the end of the Civil War, the end of slave labor under the fascists was brought about only through the allied victory and the total defeat of the fascist armies.

After the war, a handful of military officers and corporate leaders in both Germany and Japan were tried for war crimes, including the use of forced labor. Some were convicted and sent to prison. However, the “comfort women” of Korea who survived sixty years after the end of the war, were still endeavoring to obtain reparations from the Japanese government.

Further readings:

Fred Whitehead

Repartimiento

In the Spanish New World Empire, repartimiento represented the allocation of Native Americans for compulsory labor, though it also could include goods and services. In Hispaniola, Christopher Columbus promised his men salaries, but he rarely paid them. Disgusted with meager earnings, settlers revolted against the Columbus family authority during the admiral’s absence. Upon his third voyage in 1498, Columbus learned that colonists opposed his brother Barolome’s command in Hispaniola. To preserve stability, Columbus sanctioned the distribution of Indians that his adversaries disbursed to specific settlers. These allotments, termed repartimientos, designated a particular chieftain and his people to an encomendero to work in mines or agriculture. Early Spanish colonists coveted the repartimiento because it guaranteed labor supply and bestowed prestige to the encomendero.

In colonial Spanish America, the repartimiento evolved into the encomienda system. Repartimiento laborers were coerced into arduous work in agriculture, textile factories, and mining. Horrific working conditions and starvation under the repartimiento, coupled with contagious diseases, contributed to Caribbean native population decline. Edicts such as The Law of
Burgos (1512) failed to reverse this catastrophe. The Dominicans, under **Bartolomé Las Casas** (1474–1566), protested the mistreatment of Native Americans under the *repartimiento* system. Las Casas angrily denounced the Spanish abuse of Indians through his writings, which influenced the Spanish Crown to promulgate the New Laws of 1542. The New Laws banned Indian slavery and undermined the *encomienda* system. However, the *encomenderos* forcefully resisted implementation of these decrees. The Crown then allowed for an extension of the *encomienda* system, which thereafter gradually declined in central Mexico and Peru. However, the *encomienda* and *repartimiento* continued in Paraguay, the Yucatán, and Central America.

After the promulgation of the New Laws, Indian communities substituted cash tribute for previous non-monetary payments, though this transition remained inconsistent. For tributaries to meet annual payments they had to produce commercial goods and work for wages. By 1600, Native American communities were reorganized to fulfill their economic obligations to the colonial state and the **Roman Catholic Church**. However, financial requirements alone failed to compel enough Indians to abandon traditional production for *repartimiento* labor. To resolve this labor shortage, a system of rotational labor drafts, called the *repartimiento* in Mexico and the mita in Peru, was instituted.

Formal *repartimiento* and mita drafts were established in New Spain in the 1550s and in the central Andes in the 1570s. Under this system, the Indian communities supplied labor quotas for two to four months of the year. These minimal wages paid for tribute and other required payments. In New Spain the *repartimiento* dominated in agriculture and silver mining. In Peru, the mita furnished labor for silver mines, coastal plantations and road maintenance. In Quito, the *repartimiento* provided workers in the textile factories. In Peru, Ecuador, and Central America, the *repartimiento/mita* system mobilized Indian labor until the independence era.

Indigenous population decline and Spanish population growth rendered the *repartimiento* system inadequate for resolving labor scarcity. In central Mexico, large landowners and mine owners procured a stable workforce by contracting directly with Indians by offering wages slightly higher than those for *repartimiento* labor. Eventually wage labor replaced forced labor as Indians, being displaced due to land confiscation or sale, became wage earners. By 1630 wage labor replaced the *repartimiento* in New Spain, though Spanish and Creole landowners and mine owners deliberately kept salaries low.

Peruvian Indians fought against the *repartimiento* with uprisings from the 1740s through the 1770s. The most intense uprisings occurred under the leadership of José Gabriel Condorcanqui, also known as **Tupac Amaru II**. As a local chief from the Cuzco region, his insurgency wanted to abolish the mita, the *repartimiento* of goods, and the corregidores (provincial colonial administrators). In November 1780, the uprising grew as rebels executed a nefarious corregidor (magistrate). A colonial militia sent from Lima defeated the insurgency, and in May 1781, Tupac Amaru II was executed but the rebellions still continued. Before peace was restored in 1783,
10,000 people died during the insurrection that ultimately destroyed the repartimiento system. See also Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in.


Republicanism and Antislavery

In their struggle to convince Americans of the necessity of immediate, uncompensated emancipation of slaves without expatriation, and to persuade them of the sinfulness of human enslavement, antebellum abolitionists directly and indirectly invoked the legacy, language, and values of republicanism (as well as those of liberalism and evangelical Christianity). Indeed, to justify their cause, to embolden adherents and inspire converts, and to realize the nation’s libertarian pretensions, immediatists often enlisted the past—particularly the memory of the American Revolution—to achieve a more perfect future (and union for that matter). The republican ideological heritage that partly informed abolitionist perceptions of slavery and helped shape abolitionist arguments against slaveholding was distinctive and sophisticated, extending across great amounts of space and time—from classical antiquity, Renaissance Italy, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, and Revolutionary America—and embracing such theorists and writers as Niccolo Machiavelli, James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, Thomas Gordon, John Trenchard, and Thomas Jefferson, to name only several.

Although abolitionists espoused that lineage, they never systematically adhered to a unitary framework of republican thought; nor, for the most part, did their intellectual ancestors. That is, American republicanism, hardly a static concept, has been shaped and reshaped, applied and reapplied, depending on the individual and the context. Indeed, the manner in which abolitionists utilized republican ideas often differed markedly from the usages of their contemporaries—Whig and Democratic politicians, urban laborers, slaveholders, and so on. Yet, despite republicanism’s protean nature, certain central tenets nonetheless define that term and distinguish that worldview.

At the epicenter of republicanism was liberty, specifically how best to secure and preserve it. Liberty could mean different things to different people; for Americans, however, liberty referred to traditional rights, such as the ones guaranteed by the state and federal constitutions. To ensure liberty’s enjoyment and existence, citizens must restrain their private desires and interests for the sake of the common good and be ever vigilant against plots that might endanger the body politic and jeopardize established freedoms. Should such conspiracies remain undetected, unchecked, or ultimately succeed, tyranny and oppression would assuredly follow (late-eighteenth-century colonial American rebels deployed similar rhetoric in defense of independence from England). Because of such ever-present threats, civic-minded republicans were the perpetual sentinels against
arbitrary arrangements and encroachments of power. Such responsibilities, at least in the antebellum United States, ceased to be the exclusive domain of property holders—those individuals originally deemed appropriately independent, sufficiently capable of disinterested decision making, and necessarily invested in a republic’s proper maintenance. Yet, the democratization of America in the early-nineteenth century, particularly the expansion of the suffrage to include all white adult males regardless of land ownership, incorporated greater numbers among the ranks of the productive, responsible, and virtuous citizenry. At about the same time, abolitionists completely undercut newly created racial and gender strictures for republican guardianship that matured during the Jacksonian era—for white male activists embraced not only black men as among those worthy of vigilant citizenship, but also black and white women as crucial participants. (It does not follow, however, that white-male antislavery agitators were without racial prejudices and gender biases.)

According to one historical argument that has asserted the strongest link between republicanism and abolitionism, immediatists believed that slavery “embodied the frightening force of arbitrary power [and] acted as an expansive and conspiratorial menace that smashed all barriers to authority, infected the moral character of a people, created widespread misery, and destroyed the fragile principles of human liberty” (McInerney, 8–9). To be sure, republican-sensitive abolitionists judged human enslavement utterly reprehensible, if only because masters were virtually all powerful and slaves nearly powerless. Such an extreme was a blatant contradiction of basic republican hallmarks, balance and order on the one hand, and self-control and self-determination on the other. And if power corrupted, republican-inspired abolitionists specifically feared the direful consequences that might arise from the absolute power that slave masters wielded.

Yet, when numerous antislavery delegates, primarily from across the North, gathered in Philadelphia in 1833 to establish what became the American Anti-Slavery Society, the national movement that they inaugurated did not originate in counter subversion. That is, at the outset of their campaign, antebellum abolitionists espied anything but a scheming planter oligarchy that, because of its determination to safeguard the “peculiar institution,” threatened to subvert the liberty of everyone else. The suppression of traditional civil rights (the abolitionist postal and petition campaigns of the middle 1830s, for example), the decades-long debates over the status of slavery west of the Mississippi River, and the perceived attempt to seemingly nationalize the institution of slavery (the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and the proslavery decision in the 1857 Supreme Court case, Dred Scott v. Sanford), all unequivocally stirred in abolitionists’ republican misgivings. By the time the slave states of the Deep South greeted the election of Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1860 with secession from the Union, abolitionists had proven themselves the inveterate foes of what was called the Slave Power and the most outspoken agitators against the conspiracy thought to be waged by a cabal of aggressive and rapacious slaveholders to extend and protect slavery wherever slaveholders might travel or reside.
Indeed, soon after the founding of immediate abolitionism’s national organization, antislavery activists confronted violence and endured hostility—in the press, in the streets, and in legislative halls, and against their property, against their persons, and against their basic rights—for nearly three decades before the eruption of sectional military conflagration. Because of the accumulated negative reactions that immediate emancipation intentionally and unintentionally provoked (largely stemming from abolitionist-instigated controversies surrounding the repeated incursions of the slavery issue into the national public and political discourse), abolitionists-cum-republicans were convinced that some malevolent, designing force impeded the emancipation of slaves, wrought havoc on the sanctity of liberty, and prevented the nation’s return to founding principles as enshrined in the opening paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, thereby assisting in the republic’s desolation and approaching demise. The Civil War, however, allowed for the potential of an appropriately restored republican course, one that extended personal freedoms to and protected the individual liberties of all the country’s inhabitants. Such a hope enabled normally nonviolent and antiwar abolitionists to tentatively support the Union cause. Such a hope, moreover, ensured that abolitionists would remain ever vigilant on behalf of the enslaved, as they continually agitated for stronger anti-slavery measures from the Republican-controlled Congress and Executive. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Slave Power Argument; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Raymond James Krohn

Roma and Emancipation

The Emancipation of the Roma has specific features that result from the way in which the Roma have been perceived and disenfranchised since their arrival in Europe. The Roma arrived in Europe in several waves following the great Mongol invasion of 1241. They settled down gradually in Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and finally Western Europe. If at the beginning they were regarded with curiosity and fascination, gradually the traditional animosity between the sedentary and the nomads contributed to the construction of the Roma as the dangerous Other who would steal children, cast destructive charms, and try to subject the natives to unorthodox practices.

Such friction led to juridical decisions to expel the Roma beyond national borders. In 1530, King Henry VIII of England banned the Gypsies from his country. In 1524, King Gustav Vasa of Sweden ordered all Gypsies to leave the country, and in 1637 a new anti-Gypsy law was passed in Sweden. The great round up of all Gypsies in Spain in 1749 was probably the most aggressive anti-Gypsy legislation in Europe before the Holocaust (Porojmas, the destruction of the Roma).
The Western European feudal states with a powerful central authority succeeded in putting these aggressive policies into practice, banishing the Roma and inflicting very severe punishments on any one sheltering or helping them. The few Roma who continued to live in Western Europe never posed the same problems as in Eastern Europe. Firstly, their numbers were and are much smaller, with the exception of Spain, which has a larger number of Roma. Also, the much earlier modernity of Western Europe influenced the emancipation of the Roma. They were designated citizens of these modern states and were granted better economic opportunities in their developing industrialized economies. This did not prevent, however, the discrimination and the marginalization of the Roma, whose efforts to preserve their culture were often seen as standing against modernization and integration.

In Eastern Europe, which, during the Middle Ages, was under increasing Ottoman threat, the Roma were not banished, but many of them came to be enslaved. Probably they had been assimilated with the Tartars or the Turks, because they often came after the enemy troops and their racial visibility singled them out as aliens from the South. There were quite large numbers of Roma slaves on the territories of present-day Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Russia. Roma women were often housemaids, whereas men worked on the fields. They were appreciated as musicians (lautari) and/or practitioners of such traditional crafts as blacksmiths or metal engravers. However, unlike the black slaves working on the plantations in the American South, the labor of the Roma slave was not the fundamental economic basis of all East European societies. These societies relied mostly on the exploited labor of the serfs and the peasantry, not on slave labor.

The emancipation of the Roma came slowly and mostly as a consequence of the influence of the Enlightenment ideology. In this respect, the Roma slaves and the American slaves were often regarded similarly. In Hungary and Transylvania, the Roma slaves were emancipated by Maria Theresa and Joseph II. The abolition of slavery was justified as the abolishment of an institution shameful for the age of Enlightenment. The manumission was accompanied by drastic measures against nomadic Roma. The idea was to turn the Roma into New Hungarians, citizens with stable whereabouts, that they be controlled and contained. The Roma had to become individuals who paid taxes to the state and had a clearly defined profession as their source of income. All these were considered to be valuable steps in diminishing the crime rate among the Roma. Roma children were obliged to attend schools where classes were in Hungarian and where musical education was offered as well.

Russians also had concerns about the nomadic Roma. In 1759, Czarina Elisabeth II passed a law forbidding the Roma to settle in St. Petersburg. This prohibition was repealed only in 1917. In 1783, the Roma were invited to “settle” and this obligation was reenacted in 1800, 1809, and 1839. The new authorities that came into power after the fall of the Czar in 1917 also encouraged the Roma to settle down and become farmers. In 1925, a Union of Gypsies was formed which developed many cultural programs promoting the foundation of Romany schools and encouraging Romany culture.
1928, the Romany Theatre was founded. All this rich cultural activity came to an abrupt halt in 1938 when Stalin decided that the Roma were not a nation and an end was put to all the cultural activity in Romany. Only the Romany Theatre survived. It was only Mikhail Gorbachev’s glasnost policy after 1985 that made Romany culture visible again and also allowed free manifestations of Romany organizations.

Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Serbia were parts of the Ottoman Empire for half a millennium. The Roma were levied higher than the Serbians, but otherwise they were treated like any other minority in the Empire. The Ottoman authorities also tried to discourage nomadism because it prevented the accurate taxation of the Roma. During this historical period, many Roma converted to Islam. The nineteenth century was the century of successful nationalisms in the Balkans. The emancipation of the Roma became part of the creation and consolidation of these new states. The new national authorities were also interested in forbidding nomadism and turning the Roma into settled citizens easier to contain, supervise, and tax. Many Roma became urban residents and were attracted by the urbanizing and industrialization policies developed mostly after World War II. The Holocaust seriously affected the Roma communities in these countries. Numerous Roma were placed in labor or extermination camps.

Cultural emancipation stagnated during this period, but, on the whole, in the twentieth century significant efforts were made to create a written Romany language and found Romany theatres. In the 1930s in Bulgaria, fragments from the Bible were published in Romany dialects, in Serbia Trifun Dimić published the New Testament in Romany, and in 1980, Shaip Jusuf published the first Romany grammar in the Romany language. The Pralipe Theatre was founded in Skopje (it operated until 1990s) and the Theatre Roma functioned in Sofia between 1947 and 1951. For a short period after World War II, Communist authorities allowed magazines and newspapers in Romany language, but it was only after 1990, in post-Communist societies, that the cultural emancipation of the Roma truly became visible. Journals and magazines, many of them funded internationally, were published, and television and radio programs were broadcast (at Tetovo and Skopje in Macedonia, in Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest in Romania). On the other hand, the post-Communist freedom of expression also gave vent to racist and xenophobic voices, which sometimes overwhelmed the voices of tolerance, ethnic cooperation, and mutual understanding.

In the Romanian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia), the Enlightenment influence continued all through the 1850s and coincided with the challenging influence of the American abolitionist discourse. For instance, only one year after its publication in the United States, Uncle Tom’s Cabin was translated into Romanian. Mihail Kogalniceanu, an important Romanian writer and historian, and one of the champions of Roma emancipation, wrote the preface to this translation, which was supposed to influence the general public in favor of the emancipation of the Roma. Already in 1844, in an article published in the periodical Propasirea, Kogalniceanu talked about the necessity to emancipate the Roma. He made a comparison with the American colonies where the blacks were oppressed and the legislative bodies teemed
with supporters of slavery. The situation was much better in the Romanian Principalities, in his opinion. The emancipation of the Roma became part of the nationalist discourse. The emancipation of the Romanian nation could not be complete and convincing while slavery, a barbaric and shameful custom, was still accepted. In 1855, on the eve of the emancipation of the Roma, Alecu Russo, a prominent writer and journalist, tackled the problem in an article published in the periodical *Steaua Dunarii*. In his opinion, slavery had to be abolished for humanitarian reasons, but also for economic reasons. It was not profitable. The appearance of the modern agricultural machines made the existence of so much labor force unnecessary. Turning the former Roma slaves into free workers who sold their labor force and bought wares for their necessities was much more profitable.

A much less remembered factor in the emancipation of the Roma in this part of Europe was the influence of the Freemasonry. The Freemasons considered that the human being can only be the slave of God; any other form of enslavement was to be rejected. Many of the personalities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Masons, including Joseph II and Mihail Kogalniceanu.

In the Romanian Principalities, the process of Roma emancipation began with Alexandru Mavrocordat’s Act (1746 in Wallachia and 1749 in Moldavia). Alexandru Mavrocordat forbade the separation of spouses when Roma slaves were sold, and he also decreed that the offspring of a free individual and a slave was free. Before Mavrocordat’s Act, matrimony to a slave meant slavery for both spouses. In Moldavia, particularly, there was fierce opposition to this law. In 1766, priests were forbidden to give their blessing to such unions. In 1785, there was a backlash and religious practice reverted to the previous “custom of the country.” However, in 1780, in Wallachia the *Pravilniceasa Condica* (the Law Record) imposed the immediate separation of a Roma who married a free woman, but the offspring of such a union were free. The slaves owned by the state were manumitted in Wallachia in 1843 and in Moldavia in 1844. In the last year in Moldavia, the slaves owned by monasteries also became free. The same manumission process occurred in Wallachia in 1847. The manumission of the Roma slaves, who were the property of individuals, occurred in 1855 in Moldova and in 1856 in Wallachia. Former owners were to receive compensation for their losses but most of them refused, so much had the idea of Roma manumission as a sign of modernity in the Romanian Principalities become influential. However, juridical emancipation did not solve the problem of the Roma. The social and economic needs of this new group of free individuals were not addressed at all. No programs of vocational training or social integration and education were conceived, and even less were implemented. Singular voices, such as that of Gheorghe Sion, would call for some form of vocational education for the manumitted Roma, but nothing practical would be done. As Romania was mostly an agricultural society, there was no significant industrial boom to absorb these newly free individuals. A solution would have been their transformation into farmers by allotting them land from the estates where they had previously been slaves. Nothing like that was even considered in the public discourse of the time. The Rural Act
from 1864 did not refer to the former slaves who would be left out of the mainstream society.

The consequences of this situation can be seen even today. The Roma developed a marginal way of life somewhere in-between survival and crime, which increased the prejudice against them. Emancipation still has a long way to go. The situation is clearly grasped by the Roma themselves. The prevalent attitude was (and it is not yet extinct) that there was an intrinsic negative nature of the Roma that pushed him to crime and harmful idleness. Voices, which called for humaneness, tolerance, and an honest evaluation regarding the circumstances that pushed the Roma to marginalization, were neglected and even laughed at.

Significantly, it was the Roma themselves who tried most successfully, in the period between the two World Wars, to manage their own emancipation. Several political organizations of the Roma appeared. The most prominent leaders, such as G.A. Lazareanu-Lazurica or Calinic I. Popp-Serboianu, insisted on the necessity of assisting the Roma to find practical solutions to their social and economic needs.

A peculiar aspect of modern Roma emancipation was the reappearance of the so-called Roma kings, dukes, voivodes, etc. This new form of leadership resumed a medieval tradition when the Roma had their own leaders who represented the Roma in their relations with the mainstream authorities. At the end of World War II, the Kalderash from Poland, for instance, elected their own kings and formed the Kwieck dynasty (Michal II, Janusz Kwieck, and Rudolf Kwieck), which was recognized by the Polish authorities of the time.

These efforts to have a dialogue with mainstream society and develop typical Roma leadership were brutally interrupted by the dictatorships that ruled in Eastern European countries from the 1930s until 1990. During World War II, many Roma were deported to death camps in order to cleanse society of their reputed evil influence and actions. After World War II, Communist regimes did not recognize the Roma as a minority, with the significant exception of Yugoslavia. The situation of the Roma was analyzed several times by the Communist parties in plenaries dedicated to ethnic problems. For instance, in 1983 there was a report by the Propaganda Section of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party about the Roma. The idea was that the Roma had to be bleached and assimilated to the majority. Compulsory secondary education and the obligation to be integrated into the labor force were the prevalent strategies.

After the fall of the Communist regime, the dismantling of the huge industrial complexes and of the collective farms affected the Roma more than other people. As they usually held the lowest positions in a factory, those that required fewer qualifications, they were the first to lose their jobs in the case of privatization or restructuring. The disappearance of the collective farms was another severe blow because land was given back to the former owners and usually the Roma did not own land. On the other hand, the free trade and free initiative opportunities were beneficial for other Roma who were able to integrate more quickly into the new economic structures of the East European countries.
But Roma emancipation is still an ongoing process because centuries of neglect and marginalization cannot be overcome by the success of few. Affirmative action policies in higher education, as well as increasing educational and social opportunities, publications in Roma language, and encouraging the appearance of a Roma elite are all aspects of the contemporary Roma emancipation process. See also Russian Serfs, Emancipation of.


Michaela Mudure

Roman Catholic Church and Antislavery and Abolitionism

Slavery was a normal social institution, justified both scripturally and legally, in the world in which early Christianity spread. Mosaic law (Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15) mandated moderate treatment of slaves, and Romans owned slaves and legislated regarding slavery. Jesus and the Apostles never sought to overturn the social institution of slavery, but they emphasized the equality before God of all believers, whether free or enslaved. On the one hand, this emphasis implied that slaves should work loyally and, if necessary, suffer patiently while keeping in mind the rewards of faith and the prospect of heaven. On the other hand, it implied that a social institution in which individuals were locked into inequality must be immoral. In most of Roman Catholic history, this tension has been resolved by the acceptance by canonists and theologians of the legitimacy of the institution of slavery along with a desire to ameliorate the condition of slaves themselves. An amelioration of slave life would, according to traditional Catholic thought, encourage dignity and faith.

Saint Paul exemplifies early Church teaching on slavery. Christian faith created one people, regardless of enslavement or of liberty, before God (Galatians 3: 27–28), yet slaves were still to obey their masters (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3: 22–24). In Philemon, Saint Paul urged a master to accept a runaway slave, Onesimus, returning as the courier of the letter itself, “not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, … both in the flesh, and in the Lord” (Philemon 16). The ambiguity of this letter allowed both proslavery and antislavery advocates to claim it as their own. Moreover, an idea found in the Gospels as well as in Saint Paul’s letters that sin itself was a form of slavery would centuries later imply to believers that slavery was a kind of sin.

From the time of the early Church to the eighteenth century, Catholic teaching promoted amelioration while still tolerating slavery. While slavery disappeared in most parts of Europe and was replaced by serfdom, it
continued to thrive in the Mediterranean and in some border regions. Some churchmen and monasteries held slaves, while others were instrumental in manumissions. Theologians like Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas justified enslavement as part of the fallen world that had followed original sin. Natural law was, in Aquinas’s views, silent on slavery itself, but not on the basic rights of slaves to sustenance, family life, worship, and the like, or on the masters’ obligations of benevolence and guardianship to the enslaved. The exploration and settlement of the Atlantic World by Catholics beginning in the fifteenth century initiated a gradual decline of the ameliorationist-tolerationist stance. A 1435 papal bull commanded Catholics to free those of the native people of the Canary Islands, who had recently been enslaved by European settlers. A 1537 papal bull extended the command to Europeans in the West Indies, followed by mandates for the Philippines (1591), Brazil (1639), South America (1781), and all areas where native Americans or Africans were enslaved (1839). An influential figure in this process was Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566). Las Casas’s father had accompanied Christopher Columbus on one of his expeditions to the New World, and Bartolomé moved to Hispaniola in 1502. Soon ordained, las Casas, a slaveowner himself, came to object to the treatment of the indigenous people in the encomienda system, which allowed Spanish settlers to command the labor of local people. Widely used to exploit native peoples grossly, encomienda was replaced by an apparently less harsh system of draft labor, repartimiento, which ended the enslavement of natives while expanding that of Africans. Despite the efforts of Catholic missionaries to uphold the provisions of repartimiento, abuses by colonial officials continued. For example, following las Casas, a cohort of Jesuit missionaries sought both to convert the Guaranis of Paraguay and protect them from enslavement by Europeans. From 1609 to the 1750s, the Jesuits held other Europeans at bay, but finally the Paraguayan towns were attacked and the Jesuits expelled. Other Brazilian and Spanish clerics such as Tomas de Mercado, Bartolome de Albornoz, Alonso de Sandoval, and Pedro Claver were also among the first in the New World to speak against the Atlantic slave trade, doubting that such a cruel and murderous commerce could be sustained by Christian ethics. Yet they focused their ministrations on assisting and converting recently arrived Africans rather than on upending the commerce itself.

Las Casas reveals the mental and moral journey typically made by abolitionists in the era that more efficaciously opposed the slave trade and slavery (1775–1875). Thus, las Casas is important not only as a defender of the natives in the Spanish colonies and as a chronicler of early settlement, but also as an exemplary figure. The stages of this journey were an acceptance of slavery as a just social institution, skepticism about its justness and a personal crisis over its continuance, a provisional rejection of slavery, and, finally, a critique of the institution itself. Las Casas was a slaveowner. Experience in the Spanish colonies convinced him that the native peoples would inevitably be overworked, mistreated, and degraded by their Spanish masters. He passionately advocated Church protection of the natives, but he urged that their place as laborers be taken by sub-Saharan African slaves. He
was not, however, the first to propose African slaves for labor in the Spanish colonies. His 1518 proposal came more than a decade after the first importation of African slaves. Las Casas has often been castigated as a proponent of the enslavement of Africans, but he did finally admit that it, too, was immoral. It is more accurate—both in the case of las Casas and of most abolitionists—to identify the process by which people came to understand that the slave trade and slavery were wrong than to expect a consistent opposition to slavery.

Las Casas was not alone. Many prelates and Church authorities supported his call for more humane treatment of the Indians. Yet the idea that the institution of slavery itself was immoral—an idea that negated centuries of Church teachings—was as slow dawning to Catholics as to Protestants. For both branches of the Christian faith, the decisive period for abolitionism ran from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. European settlers in Catholic colonies almost always resisted the efforts of the Church to ameliorate slavery. Brazilian colonists, for instance, expelled the Jesuits and disobeyed royal orders when the use of Indian labor was threatened by ameliorationist or emancipationist policies. The 1685 Code Noir, effective in the French colonies, mandated religious privileges and days of rest for slaves, but the slaveholding planters refused to enact these protections. Such circumstances helped to convince Catholic intellectuals that ameliorationism would never work, that the only solution to the problems of the slave trade and slavery was their abolition. By the nineteenth century, leading Catholics like the Irish “Liberator” Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847) and the French educational reformer Comte de Montalembert (1810–1870) were arguing for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. In 1888, the largest number of slaves freed by a national emancipation in a Catholic country occurred in Brazil, after several decades of internal abolitionist agitation, international pressure, and immigration of laborers whose wages were often lower than the upkeep required to maintain slaves. Yet even that liberation sparked widespread protest from slaveholders, most of whom were Catholic. Cardinal Charles Lavigerie (1825–1892), would spearhead the Catholic antislavery movement in sub-Saharan Africa in the late-eighteenth century as European colonialists divided the vast continent among themselves. Appalled not only by the indigenous slavery but also by the savage exploitation of the Africans by the colonizers, especially in the Belgian Congo, Lavigerie struggled with mixed results to secure a humane modification of these policies by Belgium’s King Leopold.

Is there, finally, one Catholic teaching on slavery? For lay people, the slave trade and slavery probably seem right or wrong insofar as they cohere with society and culture at large. Thus, Catholics were once active in the slave trade and in enslaving Indians and Africans and papal bulls threatened excommunication. American Catholics of the Northern states fought in the U.S. Civil War, and today Catholics worldwide feel a visceral revulsion at the thought of slavery. For Catholic intellectuals and theologians, it seems certain that Church tradition is still influential. Slavery can be seen as in institution of the fallen world, not inherently evil but so prone to the abuse
of slaves that it should be outlawed. To return to Aquinas, if natural law is silent on slavery, but if rights and duties that are required by natural law are incommensurable with the enslavement of some people, then the slave trade and slavery must be immoral. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Bible and Slavery; Book of Exodus; Buddhism and Antislavery; Islam and Antislavery; Story of Joseph.


John Saillant

Rome and Antislavery. See Classical Rome and Antislavery

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a leading intellectual of the French Enlightenment. He wrote on a variety of topics and in genres as diverse as opera and autobiography. Rousseau, however, is best known for his treatises on political philosophy, the two most famous of which are The Social Contract (1762) and The Discourse on the Origin of the Foundation of Inequality among Men (1775).

Rousseau, together with Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and others, is recognized as a theorist of the social contract. For Rousseau, the “social contract” was a product of a fundamental change in social organization. Rousseau postulated that humans existed originally in a “state of nature”—a state, put as simply as possible, devoid of exploitation and political organization. The creation and nature of private property, according to Rousseau, indicated a fundamental departure from the reciprocity of the state of nature. In this context, the genesis of individual rights as the foundation of society stems from a tacit agreement (a “social contract”) between the governed and their government.

Slavery according to Rousseau's system was an entirely social institution, based on private property and opposed to the social contract. There was no “natural” basis of slavery because, for Rousseau, there was no private property in nature. Rousseau, however, was far more concerned with the historical evolution of property than slavery. Nevertheless, he was influential in reshaping ideas about both individual and human rights, especially the doctrine that humans existing in the state of nature were fundamentally “good.” The idea of a social contract presupposed a concern for the general good of the citizens to whom it attached. Slavery was contrary to this end and as such was an immoral institution. The problem of slavery, however, was not primary in Rousseau's philosophy; while he opposed slavery, its abolition was not one of his central preoccupations or a topic he visited frequently in his writings. See also Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, Baron de.

Further Readings: Rousseau, Jean Jacques. The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings. Gourevitch, trans. and ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
Ruggles, David (1810–1849)

David Ruggles was a prominent African American abolitionist, publisher, and bookseller. He was born in Norwich, Connecticut, on March 15, 1810, the first of eight children of David and Nancy Ruggles, a free black couple. David Sr., was a blacksmith; his wife Nancy was a locally famous cook and caterer. Ruggles spent his early years in the family home in an old tenement located on a tiny triangular plot just off the main road in Bean Hill, a prosperous rural neighborhood of Norwich. Though his parents were members of the Methodist Church, David was educated at a charity school operated by the First Congregational Church. In his teens, he worked as a mariner on coastal vessels. At seventeen, he left home, moved to New York City and opened a grocery store on Courtland Street. Initially he sold alcohol, but soon announced his conversion to temperance in an advertisement in the Freedom’s Journal, the newspaper of black New Yorkers.

Ruggles became active in the local antislavery and anticolonization movement. By the early 1830s, he employed self-emancipated slaves in his grocery. In 1833, he abandoned the store to concentrate on antislavery work as an agent for the Emancipator. He traveled around New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, making speeches, honing his ideas and making valuable contacts. He attended the National Conventions of Colored Peoples in Philadelphia and New York City and was a founding member of the Phoenix Society of New York, the Garrison Literary and Benevolent Association, and the New York Temperance Society, groups that combined reform, education, and antislavery. He opened the nation’s first African American bookstore and lending library at his home at 67 Lispenard Street in New York City and operated it until a mob destroyed it in late 1835. In 1834, Ruggles published his first pamphlet, the anticolonization satire, Extinguisher Extinguished . . . Or David M. Reese, M.D. Used Up. In this pamphlet and an 1838 piece entitled An Antidote for the Furious Combination, he attacked Dr. David M. Reese, a prominent doctor and proponent of colonization policies. In 1835, Ruggles published the Abrogation of the Seventh Commandment, on his own press, another black first. This pamphlet appealed to the nascent feminist movement to shun Southern wives and daughters of slave masters. Ruggles began to write dozens of letters to the editors of abolitionist and other newspapers, extolling the value of education and antislavery journalism.

Ruggles began working with local abolitionists, Barney Corse and Isaac Hopper, to counteract the illicit slave trade, kidnappings of free blacks and capture of self-emancipated slaves in New York City. Working with them or by himself, Ruggles took part in highly publicized arrests of sea captains smuggling slaves in New Bedford, Massachusetts and New York City. He also routinely boarded vessels in New York harbor or entered private homes in search of blacks held unlawfully by masters and mistresses. In 1835,
Ruggles formalized such activities by organizing the **New York Vigilance Committee**. Over the next few years, the committee enabled hundreds of blacks including **Frederick Douglass** to avoid arrest and help them to freedom and work in New England or Canada.

Ruggles worked equally with whites and blacks. Between 1838 and 1841 he chronicled his activities in the *Mirror of Liberty*, the nation’s first black magazine. He also published an annual report of the vigilance society. In 1839, his fervor proved his undoing. A successful suit for libel brought against Ruggles and Samuel Eli Cornish, the editor of the *Colored American* threatened to bankrupt the newspaper. Ruggles had made hasty claims that a local black boarding house keeper was hiding slaves. Ruggles and Cornish parted ways over the suit; accompanying audits of the vigilance society revealed unexplained deficits attributed to Ruggles’s careless bookkeeping. Alienated, broken in health (he suffered from declining sight, stomach ailments, and other diseases), Ruggles fought his old colleague Cornish bitterly for two years before quitting New York.

After a fundraising tour of New England where many black organizations feted him for his courage, Ruggles showed his old grit in 1841 by refusing to move to the segregated cars on a railroad between New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts. Tossed off the train, Ruggles suffered more injuries. This injustice sparked numerous protests, including attempts by **William Lloyd Garrison** and the newly famous Douglass to integrate the trains. Ruggles meanwhile had settled at the Northampton (Massachusetts) Association of Education and Industry, a communitarian society formed by abolitionists. There he mended his body, though he eventually lost his sight. He continued his work on the **Underground Railroad**. Ruggles studied hydrotherapy and opened first a clinic and later a hospital where he treated and cured patients ranging from **Sojourner Truth** to the wife of a Southern slaveholder. By the late 1840s, Ruggles was a respected practitioner and was on the cusp of expanding his business when he died on December 16, 1849, of a severe bowel inflammation. **See also** Methodists and Anti-Slavery.


*Graham Russell Gao Hodges*

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**Rush, Benjamin (1746–1813)**

A famed physician, statesman, and reformer, Benjamin Rush was also one of the leading abolitionists of the early national period. A native of Pennsylvania, Rush was an active member of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery (best known as the **Pennsylvania Abolition Society**), the world’s leading abolitionist organization before the 1830s and based in Rush’s longtime home of Philadelphia. Rush served as secretary of the group (1787–1789) and worked on various abolitionist committees during his life. He corresponded with leading abolitionists in America and England and served as a delegate to the **American Convention of Abolition Societies** several times during the 1790s. Like other members of the
Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Rush advocated **gradual emancipation** and supported Pennsylvania’s 1780 law guaranteeing enslaved blacks born after that date freedom at the age of twenty-eight.

Years before this, Rush had authored one of the first broad attacks on slavery and the slave trade in the American colonies, a 1773 essay entitled “An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements in America, Upon Slave-Keeping.” Rush was also a patron of free blacks in post-revolutionary Philadelphia, helping to raise money for the first autonomous free black churches. Although some of his racial pronouncements sound odd to modern ears—Rush once argued that African Americans suffered from a form of leprosy, which accounted for their darker pigmentation—he was also part of an antislavery vanguard in late-eighteenth-century transatlantic culture which not only envisioned slavery as a moral wrong, but abolitionism as a practical good. Ironically, but not unlike some members of first-generation abolition societies in both New York and Virginia, Rush owned at least one enslaved person during his life.


*Richard Newman*

**Russian Serfs, Emancipation of (1861)**

The statutes emancipating the serfs in the Russian Empire were signed into law by Tsar Alexander II on February 19, 1861. Twenty-two million serf men, women, and children—around 40 percent of the total peasant population of the empire—were freed from servile dependence on their noble landowners. The statutes also set in motion a land reform that, in time, would enable the freed serfs to buy land allotments from their former owners through the intermediary of the government. Similar reforms for the rest of the peasantry, those who lived on lands belonging to the state and imperial family, were also implemented. The intention of the bureaucrats who designed the reforms was to create, over a couple of generations, a landed as well as a free peasantry. It has become a cliché in the historical literature to state that the alleged shortcomings of the reform were among the long-term causes of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Over half a century separated 1861 and 1917, however, during which a great deal happened that had more direct and immediate bearing on the collapse of the tsarist regime. Such a judgment disregards, moreover, the scale and ambition of the abolition of serfdom and related reforms that constitute among the largest pieces of social reform carried out by a government anywhere in the world prior to the twentieth century. The emancipation of the Russian serfs was a far more extensive measure than the near simultaneous emancipation of the slaves in the American South, where there was no land settlement. The Russian reform is more directly comparable in content to the gradual abolitions of serfdom that had been carried out elsewhere in central and eastern Europe, in particular the German states and Austrian Empire, over a few
decades prior to 1848. In Europe, only Romania retained serfdom, for a few years, after Russia.

There were a number of motives for reform in Russia. There were long-standing economic, humanitarian, and political reasons to abolish serfdom that had been discussed both inside and outside the government for decades. The reasons for abolition and the immediate requirements of the state came together in the mid-1850s, when the defeat in the Crimean War highlighted the need for major reforms of the existing order. It seems that Alexander II accepted the argument for abolition that was put to him by reform-minded bureaucrats in 1856. It took a further five years, however, to plan the reform and overcome the opposition of conservatives in the government and nobility as a whole. The reform unfolded in a number of stages that did not reach their conclusion until 1907.

Tsar Alexander II (1855–1881) came to the throne in the middle of the Crimean War. He inherited a legacy of considerable discussion of reform of serfdom in secret in the inner circles of his father’s government, but the only significant reforms that had been enacted concerned peasants who lived on state and imperial family lands and on noble land in the southwestern provinces, where the landowners were rebellious Poles. If he was going to go a stage further, Alexander faced the prospect of compelling the Russian nobility to give up their serfs. The general arguments for reform were well known in government circles and among the intelligentsia. The principles of free-market economics dictated that free labor was more productive than bonded labor, and that emancipation would create the conditions for economic development in a country that was increasingly lagging behind the industrializing states of northwestern Europe. The humanitarian arguments—that it was degrading for both serfs and serfowners to be part of a system where some human beings were owned by others—had roots in both Christianity and the secular ideas of the Enlightenment. Serfdom also posed a threat to internal security. The government was very well aware of, and concerned about, serfs’ discontent with their status. While violent revolts were few and far between, the most recent was the Pugachev’s Revolt of 1773–1774; the secret police reported what seemed to be a rising tide of small-scale protests, and advocated reform to diffuse a potentially explosive situation. The original reason for serfdom, moreover, had become an anachronism by the nineteenth century. The tsars had created serfdom by decrees issued between the late-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries as a way of compensating nobles for compulsory service in the armed forces and administration. The tsars paid their servitors with landed estates
and peasants bound to those estates rather than money. Compulsory state service for nobles had been abolished in 1762, however, and the government increasingly depended on professional military officers and bureaucrats, most of whom still came from the nobility, but who were paid with monetary salaries. There was, therefore, no reason to retain the system except inertia and a fear that emancipation could spark a revolt by either the nobles, who resented the loss of their serfs, or the serfs themselves, who might seek a more far-reaching reform than any tsar would concede.

All the motives for reform were familiar to Alexander II’s predecessors from Catherine the Great (1762–1796). What seems to have spurred him to act was Russia’s defeat by Turkey allied with Britain and France in the Crimean War of 1853–1856. The defeat on home territory indicated the need for major reform. A key point, however, was that serfdom was an impediment to reforming the system of military recruitment. Since the reign of Peter the Great (1682–1725), a small proportion of the male peasant population, usually under 1 percent, had been drafted into the army every year for long terms of service (two years in the first half of the nineteenth century). Recruits were freed from serfdom on joining the armed forces and very rarely returned home, even if they survived their service. Thus, in times of peace and war, the state maintained a vast and expensive army of former peasants. Other European states, however, were moving towards a system of drafting far larger numbers of men for much shorter terms of service, after which they were released into the reserves to be called up in times of war. This was a much cheaper option, and the money saved could be invested in reequipping and retraining Russia’s outmoded and defeated army. Drafting large numbers of young men for a few years and then sending them home was incompatible with serfdom for two reasons. First, if draftees were still freed from serfdom, then the institution would be abolished by default over a number of years. Second, it would mean sending back men with military training to the villages. Given the government’s concern for serf discontent, this was not a viable option. The argument for abolishing serfdom as a necessary precursor to military reform was put to Alexander II by deputy minister of war Dmitrii Miliutin in March 1856. Shortly afterward, Alexander impressed on the nobles of Moscow province the need for reform, and asked them to put forward proposals for how it might be carried out.

At the same, Alexander II entrusted planning the reform in secret to a trusted and conservative advisor, Yakov Rostovtsev. The government’s initial plans were for a relatively modest measure that did not envisage a large-scale land reform. When the nobles, not altogether surprisingly, did not respond to the tsar’s call for proposals, Alexander engineered a response from the Lithuanian provinces of the empire in November 1857. His reply was published and, thus, his decision to act was out in the open. Over the following couple of years, provincial nobles formed committees and drew up moderate proposals for reform, most of which left them in control of the land. Meanwhile, in St Petersburg, reform-minded bureaucrats, for example Dmitrii Miliutin’s brother, Nicholas, were working with Rostovtsev to plan a more radical measure that would enable the freed serfs to acquire
land. As a result of hard work on their part and friends in high place, in particular the tsar's brother Constantine and his aunt Elena, the reform-minded bureaucrats were able to triumph over more conservative elements in the government and the nobility.

It was their reform that was signed into law on February 19, 1861 and implemented. The serfs became personally free in 1861, but nothing else changed immediately. The first two years from 1861 to 1863 were a transitional period. In 1863, an indefinite period of “temporary obligation” began. The freed serfs continued to work for or pay dues to their landowners, but their obligations were strictly regulated by law. After 1863, on the initiative of their landowners, the freed serfs could enter the third stage—the redemption operation—during which they bought their land allotments by making payments to the government, which advanced compensation to the landowners. The terms of the redemption operation were deliberately favorable to the landowners to encourage them to initiate this final stage of the reform. Redemption became compulsory in 1881 for the minority of freed serfs who were still temporarily obligated to their landowners. Redemption took forty-nine years and was brought to a slightly premature conclusion with effect from January 1, 1907.

Most nobles resented the loss of their serfs, but gained financial compensation for the land they transferred to them. They were also compensated by the creation of provincial and district councils (zemstva) in 1864, in which they were disproportionately represented and thus gained renewed influence in rural areas. The nobles’ days as the elite of the empire were numbered, however. Neither were the freed serfs particularly happy with the reform. There were widespread protests in the spring of 1861, when the measures were announced and, rather badly, explained to the rural population. Grudgingly, the freed serfs went along with the reform and sought to get the best deal they could. In time, their representatives learned to work with their former owners in the zemstva, and managed their own affairs at the village level in new institutions of local administration and justice set up after 1861. Russia’s peasants, moreover, gradually adapted to and took part in the wider social and economic changes, such as the start of industrialization and urbanization and the expansion of schooling that unfolded in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In 1905–1907, however, Russian peasants took part in a massive rural revolution in which they seized land from non-peasants and tried to drive nobles from the countryside. In 1917–1918 they staged a successful repeat. The rural revolutions of 1905–1907 and 1917–1918 have often been seen as evidence for the failure of the reform. Recent research, however, has drawn into question the extent to which the freed serfs lost land they had worked for themselves prior to the reform and paid too much for it. The “land hunger” that spurred the peasant revolutions was to a large extent the result of massive population growth over the preceding decades—the population of the empire increased two-and-a-half fold between 1858 and 1917—rather than the land settlement enacted in 1861. The peasants clearly did resent the fact that they had not been given all the land free of charge in 1861, but this was not a realistic option politically for any tsarist government.

David Moon
Saint Augustine (354–430)

Augustine was one of the most influential Christian theologians of Late Antiquity. Born in 354 in North Africa, he taught rhetoric in Carthage, Rome (382), and Milan (385). Under Ambrose, bishop of Milan, he was converted in 385. In 388 he went back to Africa, and in 395 became bishop of Hippo Regius, where he remained until his death in 430. As in the case of other Church Fathers such as St. Ambrose (337–397 C.E.) and Isidore of Seville (602–636 C.E.), Augustine's ideas of slavery combined Greco-Roman and Christian views, a tradition that could be traced back to the New Testament, in whose texts the legitimacy of slavery was not questioned and the slave was depicted as someone whose body was liable to physical punishment and sexual abuse. The endorsement of slavery was deepened by the common characterization of the relationship between man and God as one between a master and slave. Slavery was thus understood as integral to the social and religious order.

The problem of slavery in Augustine's works is bound up with the issue of social order. The prime cause of slavery is sin. Before the Fall there was no slavery either to man or to sin. In the City of God, Augustine argued that it was "sin, so that man was put under man in a state of bondage; and this can be only a judgment of God, in whom there is no unrighteousness, and who knows how to assign divers punishments according to the deserts of the sinners." Slavery was thus penal, and a remedy for sin. Since Adam had misused the freedom he had been given by God in the natural state, all men became sinners, deserving punishment from God. Slavery was one of those punishments and therefore must be accepted. Moreover, Augustine stated that both masters and slaves were all slaves of sin and further blurred the boundary between free and slave: "And surely it is a happier lot to be slave to a man than to a lust; for the most cruel overlord that desolates men's hearts, to mention no other, is this very lust for overlordship." In the treatise In Johannis Evangelium, Augustine remarked: "O what a wretched thing is slavery! It is very common for men when suffering under bad masters to put themselves up for sale. Their aim is not to do without a master,
but to change masters. But what is the slave of sin to do? To whom is he to turn? Whither is he to turn? Whither is he to seek to sell himself. ... A bad conscience cannot escape itself, there is nowhere for it to go." In this latter case, Augustine adopted the Stoic view of slavery. The Stoics, in spite of focusing on legal slavery, turned their attention to moral slavery, in accordance to the paradox that "every good man is free and every bad man a slave." The philosophers Seneca (4 B.C.E.—65 C.E.) and Epictetus (55—135 C.E.) argued that what really mattered was to avoid becoming a slave of passions and emotions. Being a slave was an accident due to Fate or Providence. True freedom was achieved only by living according to Nature and despising the lust for material things.

On the other hand, the Augustinian view that slavery was a punishment for sin resembles the Ciceronian justification for slavery, although Greco-Roman ideas of moral fault are not identical with Christian notions of sin. According to Cicero (106—43 B.C.E.)—an author well known to Augustine—slavery was a consequence of warfare. Rome had conquered the world waging just and defensive wars. The people conquered were thus guilty and deserved either death or slavery. If the life of the defeated enemy was preserved, he was made a slave of a Roman citizen. And if he redeemed himself, he could be manumitted and become a free man and a citizen. That Augustine had in mind the theory of just war when formulating his own conception of slavery is attested in a passage from his City of God:

The origin of the Latin word for “slave” is believed to be derived from the fact that those who by the law of war might have been put to death, when preserved by their victors, became slaves, so named from their preservation. But even this could not have occurred were it not for the wages of sin; for even when a just war is waged, the enemy fights to defend his sin, and every victory, even when won by wicked men, humbles the vanquished through a divine judgement, correcting or punishing their sins.

For Augustine, redemption occurred not in the earthly city: freedom was achieved only eschatologically. No one in this life can be free.

Augustine was one of the Church Fathers who most emphasized the connection between slavery and sin, a connection that would become a key theme for the modern antislavery movement in the eighteenth century, as the Quakers in particular exemplified. However, in the age in which Augustine lived slavery never achieved the status of a problem, as it did in the modern world. In the fourth century C.E., slavery was still a pervasive institution in the urban and rural areas of the Roman Empire. And for Pagans and Christians alike it was inconceivable for a society to exist without slaves. See also Classical Rome and Antislavery.


**Saint Domingue, French Defeat in (1803)**

In January 1802, the French Captain-General, Victor Charles Leclerc, arrived at Samaná Bay in the West Indian island of Hispaniola in the Greater Antilles. The following month the general occupied the charred city of Cap François, a provincial capital of the French colony of Saint Domingue, or present-day Haiti, which had been burned by its fleeing black inhabitants. France’s First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, had decided to reduce the colony’s black leader, Toussaint L’Ouverture, to reestablish the old regime, and to recover the rich colony inhabited by 500,000 blacks from their leaders, whom he derided as the “gilded Africans.” Over the next twenty-one months, Bonaparte added more than 30,000 troops to Leclerc’s army of 20,000 soldiers and sailors, but in November 1802 the survivors of the French expedition, 7,000 in number, were compelled to withdraw. Following the French withdrawal, the blacks declared themselves the independent Republic of Haiti on January 1, 1804, the first republic after the United States to win its independence.

Preparing for the Leclerc expedition, Napoleon Bonaparte had made peace with England on October 1, 1801. Bonaparte had received reports from several observers, including even Léger F. Sonthonax, claiming that Toussaint was the only obstacle to the restoration of French power in the Caribbean. The French expedition sailed from Brest on December 14, 1801 and was one of the largest ever sent out from France. But before Leclerc departed from France, Bonaparte secured the cooperation of the recently inaugurated President Thomas Jefferson in Washington, D.C., believing that the support of the American government and American merchants would be essential to the victory of the French over the blacks.

with Secretary of State James Madison to inquire how the newly inaugurated Jefferson administration would respond to a French effort to recover its wayward colony of Saint Domingue. The regime of Toussaint had moved in the direction of independence and indeed was independent in all but name. Toussaint had proclaimed himself governor general for life and promulgated a constitution for Saint Domingue that put all power in his hands. He also conquered the Spanish part of the island Santo Domingo (which is now named the Dominican Republic) and asserted the indivisibility of the eastern and western portions under his control. Expanding the area of free soil in the Americas, Toussaint abolished slavery in Spanish Hispaniola. Pichon’s interview with Secretary Madison did not yield a firm commitment to U.S. support for the Leclerc expedition, so Pichon secured an appointment with President Jefferson. On July 19, Jefferson proposed to Pichon a concert between England and France against Toussaint and his followers, saying that then nothing would be easier than to starve Toussaint into subjection.

On January 29, 1802, the Leclerc expedition anchored off Samaná Bay in eastern Hispaniola. Leclerc’s troops occupied the burned out remains of Cap Français not long after. The black troops of Saint Domingue had torched the city and taken defensive positions in the mountainous interior. But Bonaparte resorted to treachery, which was one of his most effective weapons. He had initially sent more than 20,000 troops against the black rebels, but he had hoped to divide the black generals against one another as a means to avoiding a bloody fight with the black soldiers and cultivators. He had promised the black generals places of command in the French army and guaranteed them their freedom. Two of Toussaint’s most trusted allies, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, deserted Toussaint for the French. On May 1, 1802, Toussaint surrendered to Leclerc under a flag of truce. Dreading Toussaint’s power over the black troops, Leclerc had Toussaint kidnapped and shipped off to Europe, where the martyr for freedom died in a dank prison in the Jura Mountains. The convenient fiction adopted by the French leaders and black generals was that the conflict with France had only been occasioned by a misunderstanding. Learning of French treachery against Toussaint, the black soldiers and cultivators remained passive, hoping to avoid a war to the death with the French, by not reacting to the seizure of Toussaint and his forced departure from the island.

The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804, appeared to have been stopped dead in its tracks. But in mid-1802, a fateful French decision provoked a general uprising against the Leclerc expedition. Napoleon was under the influence of the former slaveholders of Saint Domingue and they insisted that the profitability of the plantations could only be restored if slavery were restored throughout the French islands. In mid-1802, the news arrived in Saint Domingue from the French colony of Martinique of French efforts to implement Bonaparte’s decision to restore slavery, forced labor, and the old regime as it had existed before 1791. The news from Guadeloupe provoked a near universal movement for independence among the black and free colored of Saint Domingue; the movement began first among the
mid-level officers in the black army and then spread to the remainder of the black troops and cultivators. It later drew in the black generals and black and colored elites of Saint Domingue. It also solidified an alliance between the blacks and free colored troops, who were led by Alexander Pétion and others. Bonaparte’s objective had been the restoration of pre-1791 settlement of Saint Domingue. But neither the blacks nor free colored elites, nor the mass of black workers and cultivators, were willing to accept Bonaparte’s reactionary vision.

By 1802, black soldiers had been fighting against foreign domination for more than a decade, and had finely honed skills. Now the blacks and coloreds moved in unison against the invasion. However, the black-mulatto soldiers needed arms and ammunition from outside the island to pursue their struggle for freedom, and in this regard they secured assistance from an unlikely ally, the Jefferson administration.

The United States was unwilling to see the expansion of French power in the Caribbean. Jefferson and Madison now preferred a weak black-colored regime under the control of indigenous elites to a powerful government controlled by Bonaparte. Shortly after the arrival of French troops in Saint Domingue in 1802, Pichon asked President Jefferson to embargo American trade with the insurgent blacks and free colored of Saint Domingue, but Jefferson had changed his mind about helping the French. Even though Jefferson’s policy would result in the independence of Saint Domingue under black domination, Jefferson turned a cold shoulder to Pichon’s entreaties, asking the French charge why Bonaparte had decided to send such a large expedition to Saint Domingue. By early 1802, rumors of French treachery circulated in the Atlantic World, saying that the French had sent such a large expedition so that the French could seize control of Louisiana and restore the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Others speculated that the large French army would be used to conquer the rich English colony of Jamaica, while still others insisted that the French intended the conquest of the Mississippi valley and that the French had secured the retrocession of Louisiana from Spain to France. The upshot was that American merchants refused to trade with the French, but they traded freely with the black and colored elites and their leaders. So it was the French who found themselves starving in Saint Domingue while the black revolution received everything it needed to prosecute the war against France.

President Jefferson went further, threatening use of American troops against the French. He told the French directly that if they attempted to seize New Orleans, the United States would negotiate an alliance with England and declare war on France. Jefferson’s moves contributed to the black victory over the Leclerc expedition in 1803, but it was the English who assumed the role of protector of black Saint Domingue. British agents met with Jean-Jacques Dessalines at Gonaives in early 1803, offering assistance against France. The British also blockaded the French held ports of Saint Domingue. General Leclerc himself died of yellow fever in 1803, but General Rochambeau continued the fight. Rochambeau sent several dispatches to Pichon in the United States, calling on Pichon to feed the French army. On November 19, Rochambeau and General Dessalines signed an
agreement involving the French evacuation of Saint Domingue, and a few days later Rochambeau sailed from Cap François to surrender to the British. On January 1, 1804, Dessalines declared the independence of the former colony, restoring to the island the Indian name of Haiti and asserting the indivisibility of eastern and western Hispaniola.

Bonaparte's army had suffered devastating losses in Saint Domingue; only 7,000 troops evacuated the island in 1803. Their defeat had momentous consequences for the Atlantic World. For Afro-America, Haiti assumed the role of beacon of hope and symbol of freedom and served as a magnet for free blacks and colored elites in the Americas who had the means to escape to "free soil." For the United States, it provided the Jefferson administration with the opportunity to take Louisiana, which Jefferson purchased from the French on April 30, 1803, thus sending the most important part of the French empire in the Americas.

For the English, it led to a fundamental shift on slavery. The English antislavery movement had grown dramatically during the war with France; antislavery leaders, such as the "saints" William Wilberforce and James Stephen, mobilized middle-class and even working-class support against the slave trade, and the saints secured the termination of the international slave trade to the Americas. Over the next century, England conducted an international crusade against the slave trade, a policy that grew out of the collapse of French power in Saint Domingue. English abolitionists seized on the termination of French competition in the slave trade to call for its abolition and the English Parliament agreed. From the perspective of the "saints" it was a moral obligation to end the slave trade and slavery. But the members of Parliament decided to end the slave trade as a war measure against the enemies of England. Parliament realized that the French had mobilized thousands of Africans as troops against England, and terminating the slave trade undercut France's ability to continue to do so.

Following the creation of independent Haiti, Jefferson shifted his policy toward Saint Domingue once again. He had first volunteered to help the French against Toussaint, but he grew alarmed at the enormous size of the French expedition. Deciding to assist the rebels against France, once Generals Dessalines and Henri Christophe had driven Rochambeau from the island, he reversed himself again. Alarmed by black revolution in the United States following the Gabriel rebellion of 1800 in Virginia, President Jefferson responded to Southern calls for protection against black rebels. In 1805, Jefferson embargoed American trade with Haiti, a policy that France also sought. This policy remained in effect until 1862 when it was reversed by the Lincoln administration. President Jefferson helped seal the fate of French slavery in the Americas, but his imperial expansion of American power in Louisiana reinvigorated slavery in the Old Southwest and the Louisiana territories and led Jefferson to reverse his earlier opposition to the expansion of slavery in the west. See also French Colonies, Emancipation of.

Sandoval, Alonso de, S.J. (1576–1652)

Alonso de Sandoval was a Catholic priest, a member of the Society of Jesus, commonly referred to as the Jesuits, who worked among the African slaves in Spanish America, seeking to convert them to Christianity. Although he never denounced slavery directly, his writings vividly described the sufferings of the black populations enslaved in the Spanish colonies of the New World.

Sandoval was born in Seville, Spain, in 1576. During his childhood, his parents emigrated with his other six brothers and sisters to Lima, Peru, at that time a large viceroyalty in the Spanish Empire. He matriculated to the San Martin Seminar in Lima in 1591 and in 1593, he entered the Society of Jesus as a novice. From 1605 until his death in 1652, he lived and worked in Cartagena de Indias, now in Colombia, in the College that the Jesuits had opened there in 1605.

Cartagena de Indias was an important harbor in the Spanish commercial system when Sandoval lived there, and it served as one of the main harbors for ships arriving from Africa with people captured for sale as slaves. An important task for the Catholics priests there was to meet the ships and provide “spiritual” care for the Africans. Alonso de Sandoval dedicated his life in Cartagena to this ministration.

Sandoval was dedicated to Christianizing these slaves. He gathered together a number of Africans who served as interpreters, and for years he baptized and cared for the Africans who had just completed the grueling Middle Passage. Concerned to know more about the life of these Africans so he might minister to the arrivals more effectively, he began to collect a great amount of information about Africa. From 1617 to 1619, he returned to Lima to study Africa in the Jesuit Library. He even wrote letters to other Jesuits working in Africa seeking details not only of their spiritual work, but also about the life and customs of the African population.

By 1627, he published in Seville De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute, a lengthy compilation of all that he had learned about the continent. This book was actually influenced by the work, De Procuramdam Indorum Salute (1588), of another famous Jesuit, José de Acosta, who had a similar concern about the “spiritual life” of the indigenous population in the Hispanic colonies. Sandoval’s book offered an historical and geographical description of the known world, a vivid account of the suffering of the African slaves, and a practical guide for Jesuit missionaries. In many ways, the work denounced African slavery in the Americas. However, because African
slavery was perceived as a “natural” institution in the colonial period—even the Jesuits had slaves and sugar estates, many theologians justified the enslavement of “infidels,” and the Inquisition was still active—Sandoval did not publicly call for a frontal assault on slavery.

Yet, this seminal work of Alonso de Sandoval was well-known among priests who ministered to the black population. Moreover, it was one of the first “ethno-historical” treatments of the black population in the Americas. Pedro Claver, one of Sandoval’s closest disciples, would receive the formal recognition never accorded Sandoval when he was proclaimed a saint in 1888. See also Las Casas, Bartolomé de; Roman Catholic Church and Anti-slavery and Abolitionism; Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in.


Luis Gomez

Saudi Arabia and Abolition

From ancient times through the 1960s, slavery was a fact of life in Arabia. African captives were imported into the Arabian Peninsula to be sold as slaves until the late-nineteenth century. While some may have served as soldiers, sailors, and commercial workers, the vast majority were destined to become domestic slaves who provided various services in rich households in urban centers. The practice of confining women to certain quarters of the house—common among the upper class—created a need to acquire domestic servants to perform their domestic chores. This work is now undertaken by maids from south and southeast Asia.

Why did slavery persist for so long in Saudi Arabia despite Quranic teachings encouraging manumission as an act of penance and as a sign of piety? First, slavery was recognized as a right that was permitted by law. Second, readily available slaves from across the Red Sea were relied upon for labor, especially in the households of mercantile families. Well into the twentieth century, slavery was understood as both an economic necessity and a critical component of the country’s system of social stratification. Moreover, the royal family itself owned many slaves, and King Ibn Saud saw nothing wrong with slavery especially since existing slaves were believed generally to be well treated.

After World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was increasingly involved in the affairs of the Middle East and attempted to circumscribe the widespread practice of slavery. In 1927, Britain and Saudi Arabia signed the Treaty of Jeddah, which granted Britain rights of manumission within the country in return for recognizing the independence of the Saudi king’s realm. Thus, in the late 1920s and 1930s, Britain freed and repatriated hundreds of runaway slaves. This right of manumission, however, was revoked in 1936, the year that King Abdul Aziz al-Saud (r. 1902–1953) established new slave regulations. King al-Saud had issued a decree—an outcome of yet another treaty with Britain—ending the importation of new slaves into the country, regulating the conditions of slaves, and
providing for manumission under some conditions. Nevertheless, British records show clearly that these regulations were not being enforced and the number of slaves who continued to run away attested to their masters’ poor treatment of them. In fact, the policy of consular manumission was pursued even as the British attempted not to meddle in the internal affairs of the kingdom. The Saudis appeared unwilling even to ameliorate slavery, let alone abolish it.

Although Ibn Saudi’s imposition of peace and order helped restore some stability to the Kingdom and pilgrimages to Mecca resumed, slave imports, while declining, continued and the king profited from customs duties assessed on them. Slaves were now being sold, not openly, but in informal or disguised markets. In 1928, West Africans, called Takruni, were still being imported illegally to Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage season—but not at the levels they had in decades past because closer control of the pilgrimage by European colonial powers ensured that unscrupulous dealers did not bring in people to Saudi Arabia under false pretexts. Declining demand for slaves further unsettled the institution of slavery. The increasing use of cars to replace slave camel drivers undermined the economic interests of Hijazi dealers who gained most from this trade. Demand for slave soldiers was drying up. Thus, by the end of the 1950s, slave markets had been significantly curtailed as had been slavery itself.

In November 1962, Prince Faisal, appointed prime minister by his brother, King Saud, issued a Ten-Point Program to abolish slavery. This was a bold and revolutionary move on the part of conservative Saudi Arabia which was increasingly vulnerable to the criticism of progressive Arab leaders such as Egypt’s outspoken Jamal Abdel Nasser. Prince Faisal officially abolished slavery on the grounds that it was difficult to guarantee the Islamic stipulation that kindness ever be shown to one’s slaves. Yet, it is doubtful that slavery came to an end at once. Several more years were required to make it an obsolete practice. The emergence of the lucrative oil industry, gradual modernization of the Saudi economy, and outside pressure from the West eventually made slavery no longer respectable or acceptable. In 1964, the sixth World Muslim Congress, which has Consultative Status with the United Nations and Observer status with the Organization of Islamic Countries, pledged support for all antislavery movements. See also Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery; Islam and Antislavery; Ottoman Empire, Decline of Slavery in.


Abdin Chande

Schoelcher, Victor (1804–1893)

Victor Schoelcher was the most important French abolitionist of the nineteenth century. The son of a wealthy French merchant and industrialist, Schoelcher early became an active participant in Parisian intellectual,
artistic, and literary life. He inherited enough money to devote himself to travel and to writing. In 1829, he made the first of several trips to the Americas, visiting Mexico, Cuba, and the Southern United States where he discovered the issue to which he was to devote the rest of his life, slavery. He wrote about the issue in Parisian journals and in 1833, published *De l'esclavage des noirs et de la législation coloniale*. In the course of a long life, he wrote about twenty books, almost half of them on slavery and on race prejudice. He also published regularly in Parisian journals. In 1840 and 1841, he toured the West Indies, and in 1847, he visited Senegal. By 1848, he was well-known in progressive circles in Paris.

When the revolution of 1848 took place, he entered the provisional government as undersecretary of state for the colonies and wrote the law abolishing slavery in all French colonies. It went into effect on April 27, 1848, and provided for total and immediate emancipation everywhere in the French empire. Slaveowners were to be reimbursed for their losses. That summer, he was elected to the National Assembly from both Martinique and Guadeloupe, where he was regarded as the liberator. When Louis Napoleon seized power in 1852, Schoelcher went into exile. He remained in exile until the fall of Napoleon after France's defeat in 1871 in the Franco-Prussian War. When elections were held in 1871, he was elected once again from the island of Martinique. In 1875, he was elected to the Senate.

As a deputy and a senator, Schoelcher defended the interests of his West Indian constituents and in particular, the interests of the former slaves. He was also involved in slavery issues elsewhere. Under Napoleon, and again during the early years of the Third Republic, France was extending its control over various African territories. Starting in the first African colonies, France's colonial proconsuls found ways of avoiding the abolition law of 1848 so as not to disturb trading partners. Schoelcher had correspondents in Senegal and elsewhere and used his position in the assembly and then the Senate to alert French public opinion about compromises of French political principals. Particularly important was a speech he gave in 1880, attacking the conduct of the colonial administration in Senegal. It forced the colonial regime to change many of its policies, in particular, the expulsion of runaway slaves from French towns in a way that made it easy for masters to seize their slaves.

In 1882, he founded *Le Moniteur des Colonies*, which became a progressive voice on colonial issues. He also worked for abolition of the death penalty, for prison reform, and for the rights of women and children. In 1889, he published a biography of *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, the leader of the successful *Haitian Revolution* in the 1790s.


*Martin A. Klein*

**Scotland, Antislavery in**

Scottish philosophers including Francis Hutcheson, *Adam Smith*, James Beattie, and John Millar developed some of the eighteenth century's most influential arguments against slavery. Yet for a country of its size, Scotland
was also disproportionately involved in the slave trade. This contradiction between Scottish theory and practice may have stemmed in part from Scotland’s economic and political disempowerment relative to England following the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707. Britain’s colonies in America and in the West Indies offered Scots economic and political opportunities that they were denied at home. Accordingly, Scotland’s economy relied heavily upon the tobacco and sugar trades, which in turn relied on slave labor. Scottish influence on the British Emancipation Act (1834) thus followed the circuitous route of Scottish emigration to the colonies: American antislavery pamphleteers appropriated the theoretical arguments of Enlightenment philosophers to protest the practice of slavery in the American colonies, and their pamphlets in turn influenced Evangelical abolitionists in early-nineteenth-century England.

Scottish intellectuals developed moral and economic arguments against slavery, both of which were governed by the principle of utility, and both of which will seem familiar from their reiteration in antebellum America. Together, these arguments demonstrated that slavery was not simply unnecessary to the happiness of any given society, but also detrimental to its prosperity. Moralists asserted that slavery corrupted our natural propensities to sympathy and benevolence while economists argued that all individuals work more efficiently when motivated by the prospect of personal profit. Thus, when Adam Smith declared in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that “the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of all,” he referred to both the economic and moral price of slavery. Edinburgh lawyer George Wallace added a more radical claim based on natural law to these economic and moral arguments; he asserted in his *System of the Principles of the Law of Scotland* (1760) that each person’s inherent right to liberty is legally inalienable.

The theoretical arguments against slavery developed by Scotland’s intellectual elite reached a broad audience through university classes and debating clubs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen; through regional branches of London-based groups including the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions; and through widely-read periodicals like the *Aberdeen Journal* and the *Edinburgh Review*. Directed towards a middle-class reading public, these periodicals featured polemical articles like “The Horrors of Negro Slavery existing in our West India Islands” (*Edinburgh Review*, 1805) and excerpts from longer antislavery works like Thomas Clarkson’s *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (*Edinburgh Review*, 1808). Two court cases in the latter half of the eighteenth century illustrate the practical impact of popular antislavery sentiment in Scotland. In Fife in 1777, a group of miners raised money for the legal defense of David Spens, a slave who resisted his master’s attempts to return him to the West Indian plantation from whence he came. The miners who supported his case were probably motivated less by abstract philosophical arguments against slavery than by the sympathies arising from their own status as indentured servants—until 1799, Scotland’s municipal law dictated that miners could be hereditarily bound to their occupation, and many wore collars engraved with their master’s name. Spens won his case
and his freedom, and worked in Scotland as a farm laborer for the rest of his life. A similar case arose in 1778, when John Wedderburn brought a slave named Joseph Knight to Scotland as his personal servant. When Knight requested permission to leave his master's service, the Scottish Court of Sessions ruled that the municipal law of the British colonies had no authority in Scotland. Invoking George Wallace's arguments concerning natural law, the court claimed that the "unjust dominion" supported by Jamaican law "is repugnant to the first principles of morality and justice" which dictate that no person can alienate his or her right to liberty.

Following the case of Joseph Knight, the Court of Sessions ruled that any slave who set foot in Scotland automatically became free. However, Scots remained heavily involved in the slave trade—as private traders, managers of trading companies, factories, and plantation owners—in Africa, the West Indies, and the United States. Their involvement suggests that antislavery movements in Scotland must be situated in the broader context of Scotland's prominent role in British colonialism. See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Scottish Churches and Antislavery.


Juliet Shields

Scottish Churches and Antislavery

Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had considerable involvement in the slave trade and Caribbean slavery, but the nation also made a significant contribution to the campaign for emancipation. In an age and culture that took religion very seriously, Scottish churchmen provided theological and practical tools to mount an effective attack on slavery.

The influence of the Church was evident when Scottish courts considered slaves on Scottish soil. In 1756, Jamie Montgomery was given a "Certificate of Christian Conduct" in Ayrshire by his minister John Witherspoon, but his bid for freedom ended in his death while awaiting trial. David Spens took his minister's surname at his baptism in 1760, but was only freed when his master died the next year. Although baptism was regarded by English courts as having no standing in law, biblical arguments were fiercely debated in three cases before the Scottish Court of Session in Edinburgh. A majority of judges found that slavery was incompatible with the Christian nation of Scotland and freed the Jamaican slave, Joseph Knight, in 1778.

In 1788 and 1792, the national Church of Scotland provided by far the majority of Scottish petitions to the House of Commons against the slave trade, mainly through the widely representative Presbyteries and Synods. William Dickson toured the country for three months in 1792 on behalf of
the London Abolition Committee, and it was mainly due to his contacts with church ministers from Inverness to Galloway that 185 petitions came from Scotland out of a British total of 519. In addition, community and civic petitions often followed public meetings held in churches and chaired by ministers. Although the General Assembly never petitioned, its condemnation of the slave trade was heard with approval by the celebrated ex-slave Olaudah Equiano and featured in the Church’s annual address to the king.

Presbyterian secessionist churches and other independents became more prominent in the campaign against slavery after 1823. John Ritchie, a United Secessionist minister in Edinburgh, distributed leaflets and persuaded over 150 congregations to petition in 1830/1831. The cluster of twelve Roxburgh villages that sent resolutions to parliament in 1833 reflected the enthusiasm of a Congregational evangelist, James Douglas of Cavers. Eight Methodist congregations in Shetland and Baptists in Stirling, Perth, and Dunfermline also petitioned.

The public impatience with the failure of effective improvements in West Indian slavery was voiced in October 1830 by a leading Church of Scotland minister, Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh. Thomson argued that there could be no mitigation of evil, or gradual abolition of sin, and he compared slavery to the poisonous Upas tree that must be immediately uprooted. This uncompromising stance not only spurred change in the Scottish and British movement, but also inspired abolitionists in the United States. Thomson died in 1831, but not before the Christian Observer, which he edited, carried vigorous theological debate on “immediatism,” the “gradualist” position being expounded by Henry Duncan, minister of Ruthven near Dumfries.

From 1834 until the end of the Apprenticeship Scheme in 1838, the main locus of Scottish antislavery moved from Edinburgh to Glasgow. Ralph Wardlaw, a leading Congregationalist, chaired the Glasgow Emancipation Society, whose attention later moved to abolition in the United States and throughout the world. Before long, Scottish abolitionists were drawn into American abolitionist disputes, but the fieriest controversy was over money sent from the Southern States to support congregations of the Free Church that had split from the Church of Scotland in 1843. In 1845 the runaway American slave Frederick Douglass toured Scotland and denounced this acceptance of “blood money.” The “Send Back the Money” campaign divided the nation and weakened the emancipation societies, who lost Free Church supporters whilst never achieving the return of the money.

The final chapter of Scottish church support for antislavery was written in the late-nineteenth century by missionaries in different parts of Africa. David Livingstone’s lifelong passion for “ Commerce and Christianity” as a weapon to kill the central African slave trade was first inspired by attending Wardlaw’s antislavery sermons in Glasgow. In 1841, Livingstone was encouraged to hear fellow Scottish missionary John Phillip describe his struggle to free the Khoi people of South Africa from slavery. Thirty years later, John Kirk, a doctor from Dundee, persuaded the Sultan of Zanzibar to outlaw the slave trade on the island. It was another milestone in over a century of campaigning, starting from the baptism of Jamie
Montgomery by a man who was later to sign another freedom document, the *Declaration of Independence*, in America in 1776. *See also Scotland, Antislavery in.*


*Iain Whyte*

**Secession Crisis and Abolitionists**

Between Abraham Lincoln's election on November 6, 1860, and the attack on Fort Sumter in mid-April 1861, seven Southern states left the Union, and four more would join them in the spring and early summer, making up the Confederate States of America. For many Southerners, particularly slaveholders, this moment was the culmination of a long, tortuous process of anxious negotiation. By balancing a desire for independence with an attention to the fragile regional unity that created the Confederacy, Southerners built a society on the understanding that slavery was right and just, and that the white man was intended by Scripture and nature to rule over the black.

Several moments in earlier decades of the nineteenth century suggested that secession might be an option that would allow Southerners to protect slavery. During one of the first options—South Carolina’s 1832 Nullification Controversy with the federal government—the citizens of the state proved
unwilling to declare independence. By the 1850s, what had earlier seemed a dim possibility became a growing reality. The efforts of Northern abolitionists by then were important to the development of a common perception among many Southerners that secession was the only option for protecting slavery, their key labor source. Important turning points were the eruption in Kansas of a bloody conflict between slaveholders and free soilers in the mid-1850s and John Brown’s raid into Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859. Events in Kansas showed Southerners the lengths to which abolitionists were willing to go to thwart the slaveholder’s right to human property. Brown’s raid in 1859 exposed the efforts of a few radical abolitionists to topple slaveholder power by storming a military battery and potentially spurring slaves into rebellion.

Though these incidents proved especially powerful in setting Southern opinion in favor of secession, it was Lincoln’s election that proved the central catalyst. Secessionist “fire eaters” painted a picture of manipulation and abolitionist control of the central government that they elaborated into an 1860 campaign filled with images of racial mixing, intermarriage, and the overturn of white supremacy. “Black Republican” became a watchword for a national political party firmly in the control of a radical group bent on the destruction of the South. Despite the Republicans’ best efforts to show that a Lincoln administration would check the growth of slavery in western territories, and not the institution’s eradication, most Southern slaveholders fervently believed that any attempt to abrogate their right to own slaves would propel the South into a subservient position to the industrializing North. However, as each Southern state deliberated on its future, deep and important divisions emerged which threatened a new Southern nation from the beginning. Secession in Mississippi and Alabama passed, respectively, on January 9 and 11, 1861, but not before exposing divisions between slaveholding southern counties and non-slaveholding northern counties in each state. Georgia seceded from the Union on January 19, 1861, but not before a protracted deliberation that revealed the fragility of slaveholder control over politics in the state; non-slaveholding counties which had long supported the Democratic Party shifted their support in the secession election against slaveholders who wished to join the Confederacy, creating anxiety among secession leaders that they were losing an assumed base of support. There were also constant concerns in the Deep South over the loyalties of the Upper South. Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky were all initially cool to secession, but the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861, and Lincoln’s call for 75,000 troops the following day to put down the Southern “insurrection,” brought all the reluctant states, save for Kentucky, into the Confederacy by the following June. See also Bible and Slavery; Bleeding Kansas; Radical Republicans.


*Erik Mathisen*

**Secondat, Charles de, Baron de Montesquieu.** *See* Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, Baron de

**Second Confiscation Act.** *See Confiscation Acts*

**The Secret Six**

“The Secret Six” were the six Northern abolitionists who helped to finance John Brown’s antislavery violence in Kansas and his raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia in October 1859. They comprised Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel Gridley Howe, Theodore Parker, Franklin Sanborn, **Gerrit Smith**, and George Luther Stearns. Their identities became public after the failed raid at Harpers Ferry, when federal troops discovered papers abandoned by several of Brown’s cohorts in a farmhouse near Harpers Ferry. Two of the men, Howe and Stearns, appeared before a U.S. Senate committee, chaired by Senator James Mason of Virginia, that investigated the raid at Harpers Ferry. The committee failed to prove decisively that Howe and Stearns had advance knowledge of Brown’s plans.

“The Secret Six” were fortunate the Mason Committee was unable to link them in any conclusive way to Brown’s raid, because their support was incontrovertible. They had raised money for Brown from contacts within their social and ideological circles, given him money themselves, hosted him in their homes, introduced him to local notables such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, and shipped rifles to him in Kansas. Two of the six, Higginson and Smith, were fanatical in their support of

John Brown and other prisoners coming out of the engine room during his attempt to free the slaves of Virginia (Harpers Ferry Raid). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Brown's violent attacks on slaveholders and their followers. Higginson would go on to lead a regiment of African American soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War.

These men who became the “Secret Six” were pillars of their communities. They were the descendants of some of the most prominent families in the northeastern United States. Higginson, who had begun studies at Harvard at age thirteen, was a well-respected author, editor, and minister, who also supported disunion abolitionism in the 1850s. He believed that the Constitution was a proslavery document, and believed that slavery had corrupted American politics. The best thing that could happen would be a separation of North and South. Howe was a medical doctor whose wife, Julia Ward Howe, would gain fame for writing the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” during the Civil War. This song was based on “John Brown’s Body,” a song written to commemorate Brown’s execution by Virginia authorities and which helped him achieve martyr status in many parts of the North. Howe’s relatives had participated in major events in the American Revolution, such as the Boston Tea Party and the building of fortifications for the Battle of Bunker Hill. Howe had also supported republican revolutions in Greece, France, and Prussia in the late 1820s and early 1830s.

Sanborn instructed the sons of prominent families from both North and South at his school. Some of his students, in fact, prevented federal marshals from seizing Sanborn in a late night raid. They sought to bring him to Washington to testify before the Mason Committee. Not surprisingly, parents of Southern boys withdrew their sons from his school as sectional tensions escalated after Brown’s raid and the revelation of Sanborn’s involvement. Parker was a well-respected Unitarian minister whose failing health forced him to leave the United States before Brown’s raid. Parker died in Florence, Italy, on May 10, 1860, roughly six months after the raid on the federal arsenal. Smith was a wealthy landowner who lived near Syracuse, New York. He had supported Frederick Douglass’s newspaper, The North Star, and had set aside 120,000 acres of land in upstate New York, near Lake Placid, for black freedmen. Smith also was one of the founders of the Liberty Party in 1840, a party that promoted abolition and ran candidates on its antislavery ticket.

Members of the “Secret Six” became radicalized by two important events of the 1850s, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Gerrit Smith led an armed rescue of a fugitive slave, Jerry McHenry, from a Syracuse jail in the autumn of 1852. Thomas Wentworth Higginson led a raid that attempted, but failed, to free a fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, from prison in Boston in 1854. Higginson and Parker condemned the Fugitive Slave Law in sermons, while George Luther Stearns, who was a wealthy businessman, joined the antislavery effort because the same law was anathema to him.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 led to the overturning of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had banned slavery north of 36° 30’, with the exception of Missouri. The 1854 act allowed settlers to decide if slavery would exist in the two new territories. Wealthy men from Boston
established the New England Emigrant Aid Company to help settlers move west and populate Kansas with enough free-state settlers to gain control of the territory and form a government opposed to slavery. When “border ruffians” from Missouri began raiding free-state settlements, Parker began buying guns and bullets for the migrants from New England.

Their hatred of slavery, the “Slave Power,” and the perceived injustice of the Fugitive Slave Law, led the “Secret Six” to support John Brown. He was a man willing to wage war on slavery, as he proved in Kansas, most notoriously in the Pottawatomie Creek massacre in 1856, and he believed that he could launch a massive slave rebellion in the valley of northwestern Virginia. The idea of provoking civil war between North and South appealed to members of the “Secret Six,” especially Smith and Higginson. Not all of the six believed this idea was prudent, a sentiment shared by Frederick Douglass. None of the six abolitionists faced prosecution for their actions, though they suffered ignominy from their conservative friends and associates for a time. Some of the six, such as Sanborn, continued to defend Brown from critics for as long as he lived. The episode of the “Secret Six” revealed the depth of passion aroused by slavery and the events of the 1850s. See also Bleeding Kansas; Jerry Rescue (1851).


**James C. Foley**

### Segregation and Disenfranchisement in the American South

The segregated or “Jim Crow” South developed amid the social and political turmoil of the late-nineteenth century, when economic depression, a growing disparity of wealth, increased tenancy (sharecropping), and rural indebtedness created an environment of political radicalism and growing racial animosity. By the 1880s, repressive measures written into law and supported by violent white reprisal carefully circumscribed the actions of black Southerners, blocking their ability to vote, and keeping political control in the hands of a coterie of elite white Southerners. In 1896, the United States Supreme Court enshrined the prevailing ethos of racial segregation with the decision on *Plessy v. Ferguson*. With the backing of progressive reformers and the sanction of scientific racism, the Court’s decision deemed African Americans “separate but equal”—a slogan that legitimated violence, intimidation, lynching, segregated public space, unequal access to state services, and an unwritten code of racial conduct that prevailed for over half a century.

Both segregation and disenfranchisement drew inspiration from a desire to control blacks and limit their access to political representation in Southern politics. Disenfranchisement was the pivotal feature of white supremacy; by neutralizing African Americans as a force in politics, white legislators put wider segregation measures in place. Beginning in 1890 with
what became known as “The Mississippi Plan,” the state passed laws requiring literacy and “understanding tests,” poll taxes and grandfather clauses—all designed to bar blacks from the polls. By 1908, six Southern states had followed Mississippi in passing similar laws. Trumpeted by many white Southern progressives as an effort to cleanse the electorate of the greed and graft which, they charged, characterized Southern politics as far back as Reconstruction, disenfranchisement excluded the vast majority of blacks and many poorer white Southerners from the ballot box.

While disenfranchisement excluded them from the nation’s body politic, segregation limited blacks in public space. Segregation was a largely urban phenomenon, designed to ensure that African Americans intruded as little as possible into white New South towns and cities. Public transportation was one of the early efforts to erect a code of separation. Between 1887 and 1907, every state in the former Confederacy designed laws to segregate passengers on railways. Black access to state services like health care and education were also severely limited, and when blacks did have access to them, those services were severely under funded. Whites segregated virtually every area of Southern public life in which the races interacted, both by law and by custom that varied from city to city. White Southerners also supported segregation with violence. Between 1880 and 1930, whites lynched approximately 3,220 African Americans (and 723 whites), many in public demonstrations meant to unify whites and terrify blacks into accepting the status quo.
African Americans responded to this widespread social and political repression throughout the nation. The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909 was but one of many black organizational efforts to combat a system of repression. Many black Southerners also sought relief from Jim Crow by leaving the region; over one million African Americans left the South between 1910 and 1930. While white Southerners supported their control over blacks with ceaseless effort, African Americans throughout the South and the nation campaigned for several more decades to overturn the codes of southern segregation and disenfranchisement.


**Erik Mathisen**

**“The Selling of Joseph” (Sewall, 1700)**

In 1700, Samuel Sewall (1652–1730), an affluent judge and merchant in Newbury, Massachusetts, published one of the earliest American antislavery tracts, “The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial.” Sewall's pamphlet helped spur a debate in New England over the appropriateness of slavery in their society that would continue through the eighteenth century. Sewall's nephew, Jonathan Sewall, would in fact lead the fight for slave emancipation in Massachusetts courts in the late 1760s and 1770s.

An ongoing feud with John Saffin, a local merchant and slave trader, motivated Sewall to write the pamphlet. In 1694, Saffin had promised his slave, Adam, freedom, but then failed to manumit him when the designated time arrived. Adam then sought his freedom through the courts and engaged Sewall to provide legal assistance. In the process of assisting Adam in his legal battle, Sewall wrote “The Selling of Joseph” specifically to attack Saffin and defend Adam, but more broadly as a probing inquiry into the leading justifications of Atlantic World slavery. “The Selling of Joseph” highlighted two key arguments against slavery and the slave trade. Establishing the common ancestry of all human beings through Adam, Sewall then used biblical exegesis to prove the immorality of the selling of humans. He delineated a more practical argument that urged his peers to use white indentured servants rather than black slaves who, he argued, because of their racial inferiority, could never become fully accepted members of New England society and would pollute white bloodlines if, as they well might, intermarried with whites. He concluded the pamphlet by countering some other common arguments used to support slavery including the contention that Africans were the cursed descendants of Cham, that the Christianization of the pagan Africans justified their enslavement, and that the Africans imported into the colonies had been justifiably sold as captives from just wars. Saffin
responded to “The Selling of Joseph” with his own pamphlet, “A Brief and Candid Answer to ‘The Selling of Joseph,” in which he defended slavery and the slave trade. Adam was eventually freed in 1703.


Emily V. Blanck

Seminole Wars

The Seminole Wars comprised the three wars fought between the United States and the Seminole Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century. They resulted from Indian slavery and the desire for Indian removal. An increasing number of escaped black slaves took refuge among Seminoles in Florida, a practice the United States government refused to tolerate. During the fighting, hundreds of slaves and former slaves fought for their own freedom. The wars ended without a formal surrender by the Seminoles. Nevertheless, the wars effectively removed most of the Seminoles to Indian Territory in Oklahoma and terminated the ability of African Americans to find freedom in Florida.

The first Seminole War occurred in the aftermath of the War of 1812, when the Spanish government in Florida turned a deaf ear to American complaints about the Negro Fort, a hideaway for runaway slaves in the Florida panhandle. The United States Army, under the command of Major General Edmund P. Gaines, attacked and destroyed the fort on July 27, 1816. Most of the 300 African American inhabitants were killed, and Gaines returned any survivors to slavery.

Despite Gaines’s success, African Americans continued to find freedom by crossing the permeable Florida-Georgia border. In Florida, a colony that Spain struggled to control, blacks allied and sometime intermarried with Seminole Indians who had their own tensions with white Georgians. Many of these African Americans lived in villages that existed autonomously from their Indian allies, while others lived as members of Seminole villages.

After a series of skirmishes with the Seminoles, the United States authorized General Andrew Jackson to capture or kill the Seminole warriors. Jackson pursued the Indians and their African American allies into Florida, burning villages and agricultural fields as they went. Ignoring orders that forbade him from attacking the Spanish, Jackson also captured the Florida towns of St. Marks on April 7, 1818 and Pensacola on May 24, 1818. Soon after, the United States arranged to take possession of Florida.

Nevertheless, African Americans continued to seek refuge in Florida after the United States occupied the territory. As cotton agriculture spread in northern Florida, slaveowners sought to end the Seminole harboring of runaway slaves. In the 1823 Treaty of Moultrie Creek, the Seminoles agreed to return these fugitives and move onto reserved lands to the south in return for protection and cash payments. Although the Seminoles relocated, the protection and payments promised by the United States government did not follow. None of that inhibited runaway blacks from relentlessly pursuing
refuge among the Seminoles in the Florida interior. With the treaty widely considered a failure, the U.S. government demanded the complete removal of Indians from Florida. In 1832, seven Seminole chiefs agreed to this demand in the Treaty of Payne’s Landing. Most Seminoles were outraged, and they responded by assassinating Charley Emathla, the chief largely blamed for agreeing to the land cession. In adherence with the treaty, nearly 4,000 Seminoles moved to Indian Territory. The rest of the Seminoles, led by Osceola and supported by hundreds of African Americans, went to war with the United States.

From 1835 to 1842, the U.S. government repeatedly tried to subdue the Indians in Florida. The Second Seminole War, as it was later called, provided the opportunity for hundreds of African Americans in Florida and Georgia to fight for their freedom. In many of the battles, American soldiers were struck by the presence and bravery of “black Seminoles.” At the Battle of Lake Okeechobee on Christmas Day 1837, the actions of John Horse led the United States to change its policy regarding blacks in Florida. Rather than insisting on their reenslavement, in 1838 the United States offered them freedom if they agreed to move to Indian Territory. Over the next few years, more than 500 African Americans took this option, thus curtailing the ability of the Seminoles to launch large-scale resistance.

When the fighting finally ended in 1842, the U.S. government removed another 4,400 Seminoles to Indian Territory. A few hundred Seminoles moved even further from American settlements and remained in Florida. In the following years, only a few African Americans found refuge in the swamps of Florida and among the Seminoles.

While the Seminoles served as an ally to runaway blacks, they also enslaved them at times. Indeed, at the conclusion of the Civil War, the U.S. government insisted that the Seminoles provide for black slaves on their land. Section Two of the March 21, 1866, treaty with the Seminoles stated: “And inasmuch as there are among the Seminoles many persons of African descent and blood, who have no interest or property in the soil, and no recognized civil rights it is stipulated that hereafter these persons and their descendants, and such other of the same race as shall be permitted by said nation to settle there, shall have and enjoy all the rights of native citizens.”


Andrew K. Frank

Seneca Falls Convention (1848)

On July 19–20, 1848, about 300 people met in the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, in the first woman’s rights convention held in the
United States. One hundred of them (sixty-eight women and thirty-two men) signed a Declaration of Sentiments, patterned after the **Declaration of Independence**, asserting that “all men and women are created equal” and listing grievances of women against the patriarchal establishment of the United States, which included inequalities in political rights and suffrage, legal rights, economic opportunities, education, religion, sexual morality and personal self-respect. Although the Declaration itself made no mention of slavery, all the identifiable signers were from one of two abolitionist groups. More than one third of the signers came from political abolitionist households in Seneca Falls that supported the new Free Soil Party. At least one quarter of the signers were Garrisonian Quaker abolitionists from nearby areas who were in the process of forming a new, egalitarian group called the Congregational Friends (later the Progressive Friends or Friends of Human Progress). **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, the convention’s main organizer, had friends in both groups and acted as a catalyst for the convention. Without an antislavery movement, there would have been no Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention.

The convention touched off the organized woman’s rights movement. From 1850 until the Civil War, national woman’s rights conventions met every year except one. Women’s rights activists continued to draw extensively on the antislavery movement for inspiration and support, and many black women and men including **Frederick Douglass**, William C. Nell, **Sojourner Truth**, and Jermain Loguen became key woman’s rights supporters. In 1866, supporters of equal rights formed the American Equal Rights Association. This division occurred in 1869 when the Fifteenth Amendment gave the vote to African American men, but not to women of any color. Supporters of the Amendment including Lucy Stone formed the American Woman Suffrage Association. Opponents, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, formed the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1890, these groups merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association. **See also** Garrisonians; Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Quakers and Antislavery; Women’s Antislavery Societies.


*Judith Wellman*

**Sewall, Samuel.** *See “The Selling of Joseph”*

**Seward, William Henry (1801–1872)**

William Henry Seward was one of the most important American politicians of the nineteenth century. His political career began in the early 1820s with **John Quincy Adams** and continued through Andrew Johnson
and Reconstruction. Seward rose from state senator in New York to become governor, U.S. senator, and finally secretary of state under Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. His political affiliation was almost as complex. He began as a National Republican, became an Anti-Mason, then a Whig, and finally, a Republican.

Seward was both a man of his time and a man ahead of his time. His racial and ethnic attitudes confirm this characterization. Seward rejected the nativism, the hatred and fear of foreigners, embraced by many of his contemporaries. He supported Irish independence and educational opportunities for Catholic immigrants. His views of African Americans were more nuanced. Seward believed African Americans to be inferior to whites, yet he vehemently opposed slavery. He believed African Americans deserved freedom and the opportunity to improve themselves through education, and supported suffrage for all qualified residents of New York State. Seward and his wife even raised their children in a household where racial prejudice was not tolerated. Seward also opposed slavery because it hindered economic growth, an argument made popular first by the Free Soil Party and then the Republicans. Most importantly, Seward opposed slavery because it besmirched American claims to be the asylum for liberty. A nation devoted to freedom could not also have slavery. In 1839, as governor of New York he opposed returning a fugitive slave to Virginia, asserting that it was impossible for a human being to be considered the property of another. As a U.S. senator he supported resolutions that called for compensated emancipation.

Seward’s dislike for slavery often put him at odds with the South and conservative Northerners. His election to the United States Senate in 1849 gave him more prominence in the growing controversy over the westward expansion of slavery. From 1849 to 1861, Seward was often in the middle of this political crisis. His first speech in the Senate opposed Henry Clay’s compromise plan for the admission of California without recognizing it as a free state. Seward’s speech of March 11, 1850, has come to be known as the “higher law” speech. Seward rejected compromise over slavery, because he viewed it as a transitory institution while freedom was a perpetual institution, even in the South. He asserted that the public lands of the West were the “common heritage of mankind, bestowed upon them by the Creator of the universe. We are his stewards, and must so discharge our trust as to secure, in the highest attainable degree, their happiness.” Seward rejected arguments that politicians only had recourse to the Constitution for guidance on this issue. “But there is a higher law than the Constitution,
which regulates our authority over the domain, and devotes it to the same noble purposes." This law was God's law.

Seward opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and wrote an "Address to the People of the United States," which detailed the growth of the Slave Power. He supported the Free State settlers in Kansas and denounced the policies of the administrations of Presidents Pierce and Buchanan. Seward denounced Buchanan and Chief Justice Roger Taney for their roles in the Dred Scott decision, accusing them of destroying American liberty in the interests of preserving slavery. In 1858, while campaigning for the Republican gubernatorial candidate in New York, Seward gave his famous "irrepressible conflict" speech. Seward asserted that the United States had two political systems, and what divided them was the conflict between slavery and free labor. As the country grew in size, the two systems came into contact and conflict, and the result was an "irrepressible conflict," meaning that one of the two antagonists, slavery or free labor, must give way. Slavery could only win through the support of the Democratic Party and violation of the Constitution; therefore, Seward urged American voters to reject Democratic candidates for political office. Seward's belief in the superiority of free labor was grounded in his idea of a permanent American union bound together by the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as well as by geographic features, immigration, education, national pride, transportation, and trade.

Seward's speeches often hurt him politically. He was a conservative, but the rhetoric in his major speeches was often radical. As a result, other politicians and political leaders often did not trust him. Was he a statesman or an office seeker? His strong views cost him some political friends and support, a fact that became evident in 1856 and 1860, when the Republican Party rejected him to nominate, instead, John Frémont and Abraham Lincoln, respectively. These rejections wounded Seward, who felt particularly bitter in 1860 because he believed that his time had come as a presidential candidate and other Republicans had told him so as well.

Despite his disappointment, Seward agreed to serve as Lincoln's Secretary of State. Seward wielded considerable influence in the cabinet and with Lincoln early in his presidency. Lincoln supported Seward when other cabinet members called for his ouster. Seward and Lincoln worked well together during the secession crisis and the Civil War. Seward's diplomatic skill during the war helped the United States avoid conflict with Great Britain and France. Seward helped to smooth over relations with Great Britain during the "Trent affair," when a U.S. Navy vessel removed two Confederate diplomats from a British vessel and successfully pressured Great Britain not to build warships for the Confederacy. Seward's advice to Lincoln on the Emancipation Proclamation was critical. He encouraged Lincoln not to issue the preliminary document until the Union enjoyed a victory, lest foreign powers perceive its issuance as an act of desperation. Lincoln heeded this advice and waited until after the victory at Antietam in September, 1862, to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Seward survived an assassination attempt on the night Lincoln was assassinated, April 14, 1865. He recovered from those wounds, and earlier
wounds from a carriage accident, and served Andrew Johnson as secretary of state. In terms of domestic policy, Seward's ideas about Reconstruction were much the same as Johnson's, a quick reunion with little support for freedmen's rights. Seward believed that restoring the Union was more important than assuring rights for the freedmen, whom he viewed as inferior and whose improvement would take many years. For his support of Johnson's policies, Seward received the scorn of many Radical Republicans.

As for foreign policy, Seward remained an ardent expansionist, encouraging the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, and attempting to purchase islands in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans for naval bases. Seward left office on March 4, 1869, and began his retirement from public life. He died on October 10, 1872. See also Compromise of 1850; Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Whig Party and Antislavery; United States Constitution and Antislavery.

Further Readings:

James C. Foley

Sherman, William T. See Field Order No. 15

Sierra Leone

Known as the “Province of Freedom,” Sierra Leone was the first established settlement for repatriated freed slaves. Between 1787 and 1850, four waves of settlers arrived—free blacks from London, black Loyalists from Nova Scotia, exiled Jamaican Maroons, and Africans released from captured slave ships. Descendants of these settlers are known in Sierra Leone as Creoles.

After the end of the American Revolution, hundreds of African Americans went to London, after having been wooed to support the unsuccessful British cause by promises of freedom and land. Unfortunately, these promises were not kept, and without access to land or work, the majority of the newly freed blacks lived in poverty. Their situation elicited sympathy from philanthropists, who began to consider resettlement as a solution to both help poor blacks and relieve the burden on city government.

The selection of Sierra Leone was inspired by British entomologist-turned-abolitionist Henry Smeathman who had spent three years studying insects on the Banana Islands, off the coast of Sierra Leone. His idea was taken up with great enthusiasm by abolitionist Granville Sharp, who became the chief architect of the resettlement scheme. There was not unanimous support for the plan; black leaders such as Ottobah Cugoano and Olaudah Equiano withdrew their support, accusing the organizers of not having the best interests of blacks in mind.
The first group of 356 settlers arrived in Sierra Leone in 1787 and established their settlement, Granville Town, on land purchased from the local Temne ruler, King Tom. As a result of harsh rains, malaria, tensions with the local population, and lack of food to plant and eat, the majority of these first settlers succumbed to illness.

The second migration came from black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, individuals who had been promised land in Canada in exchange for serving with the British. Approximately 3,500 had settled in Nova Scotia, only to be cheated out of land and employment opportunities. Black Loyalists petitioned the British government for resettlement, and approximately 1,000 chose to make the move to Sierra Leone. Upon arrival in 1792, they built a settlement entitled Freetown, the name of the present-day capital.

The third wave of settlers came from Jamaica. These were the Maroons, named after the Spanish word for wild, cimaron. Maroons had been released by Spanish slave owners in the 1650s, and had maintained their independence through agreements with the British to help capture any newly escaped plantation slaves. A Maroon rebellion against the British led to the dissolution of all past agreements and their exile to Nova Scotia. Similar to the Loyalists, the Maroons petitioned the British government for resettlement, and approximately 550 Maroons arrived in 1800.

The largest wave of settlers, known as “Recaptives” and “Liberated Africans,” came from captured slave ships. In 1808, when the British government took responsibility for the settlement and it became the colony of Sierra Leone, the British Navy began suppressing the Atlantic slave trade and releasing the liberated slaves in Freetown. Approximately 40,000 liberated slaves settled in Sierra Leone between 1808 and 1850. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Liberia.


Chitra Aiyar

Slave Narratives

Slave narratives were autobiographies written by ex-slaves. There were two major periods in which slave narratives were published, 1760–1807 and 1831–1865. During the initial period, slave narratives described the authors' lives as slaves. In the later period, authors provided more brutal descriptions of slavery, overtly agitating for the abolition of slavery.

In the early period, slave narratives were part of the larger genre of colonial autobiography and narrated the adventures of Africans who became enslaved. Authors portrayed slavery as the absence of physical freedom, with the dehumanizing elements of slavery rarely emphasized. Rather, the
focus was on the protagonist who usually assimilated into western culture and converted to Christianity, with freedom offered as a reward. Some of the most noteworthy examples of this genre are Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa* (1798); Boston King, *Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher* (1798); Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery...* (1787); and Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789).

While a handful of slave narratives appeared in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the growth of the American abolitionist movement in the 1830s renewed interest in publishing slave narratives. White abolitionists understood that slave narratives could serve as a powerful propaganda tool for their cause. Often ex-slaves were aided by sympathetic abolitionist editors in writing their autobiographies. Many narratives also included testimonials about the author, generally written by white abolitionists or ministers, to authenticate the author's good character and the truth of his story. With slavery becoming increasingly controversial during the antebellum period, many Northern whites became interested in the lives of slaves. Reflecting the power of these first-hand accounts of slavery, several slave narratives went through multiple editions.

Antebellum slave narratives provided much more graphic descriptions of slavery than their eighteenth-century counterparts. The physical hardship and brutality of slavery were narrated in detail. The emotional, intellectual, and spiritual deprivations were also provided, revealing the human side of the slave experience. Many of the most popular slave narratives, such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, emphasized the authors' pursuit of individual freedom and their perseverance through slavery, gross exploitation, and the dangerous flight to freedom. Slave narratives often adopted the sensational and sentimental literary styles of the nineteenth-century United States. To speak effectively to a highly religious audience, the religious contradictions of slavery were also exposed.

While slave narratives have been extremely useful to historians because of their first-hand accounts of slavery, they are not fully representative of the antebellum slave experience. Less than 15 percent of the antebellum slave narratives were written by women, and most of the slave narratives describe slavery in the upper South, leaving few accounts of slavery in the lower South. In their ability to escape from slavery and subsequently write perceptively about it, the authors of slave narratives were also exceptional and, not infrequently, privileged slaves with the occupational and geographical mobility to enhance success at flight.


*Daniel P. Kotzin*
Slave Power Argument

The three-fifths clause in the United States Constitution called for three-fifths of the Southern slave population to count in the total population of the slave states, both for tax purposes and for representation in the United States House of Representatives, and therefore in the electoral college as well. Thus, the slave states increased their representation in Congress; in fact, they continuously had one-third more seats than if only their free populations had counted for representative purposes. In 1793, the slave states (not including those Northern states such as New Jersey and New York that enacted plans of gradual emancipation after 1793) had forty-seven seats as opposed to the thirty-three that their free population warranted. In 1812, they had seventy-six instead of fifty-nine, and in 1833, they had ninety-eight instead of seventy-three. This inflated representation for proslavery Southerners formed the basis of the Slave Power.

Due to their inflated congressional representation and incredible unity, the slave states needed only to sway a few Northern voters in order to enact their policies in the House of Representatives, while the balance of free and slave states meant only one Northern vote was necessary for the Slave Power to succeed in the Senate. This magnified representation also helped in presidential elections, as it was only necessary for a Southern candidate to carry a small portion of the Northern electoral votes to win the election. With the exception of the two single-term Adams presidencies, from 1797–1801 and 1825–1829, the president hailed from a slave state for the entire first half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, between the election of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, at least nineteen of the thirty-four appointees to the Supreme Court were slaveholders. Due to this power, a string of proslavery laws and court decisions were put into effect. For example, the Slave Power defeated the Tallmadge Amendment to the Missouri statehood bill in 1819, which proposed banning the further introduction of slavery into Missouri and gradual emancipation to manumit slaves born there. The Slave Power also crushed the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed banning slavery in all territory taken from Mexico. The same forces were behind the admission of Texas into the Union as a slave state, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act that repealed the Missouri Compromise. The Taney Court’s 1857 Dred Scott decision—which ruled against the power of Congress to regulate slavery in the territories—was decided by a staunchly pro-South Court. These laws and decisions greatly alarmed antislavery Northerners. Concerned about this slave oligarchy extending slavery at the expense of the rights and liberty of Northern whites, antislavery fervor increased, culminating with the rise of the Republican Party in the North. The Whig Party disintegrated, and the Northern Democrats sustained irreparable damage. Increasing numbers of immigrants had substantially swung the representative balance of power back to the North, so with the elections of 1858 and 1860, the Republicans seized control of Congress and the White House, crushing the Slave Power. See also Adams, John Quincy; Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Texas, Annexation of; Whig Party and Antislavery.
Slavery and Abolition in the Twentieth Century

By the beginning of the twentieth century, chattel slavery was no longer legal in most of the world outside of the Arabian Peninsula and Ethiopia. A chattel slave was a possession, who could be bought, sold, or transferred, at the will of his or her owner. Such slaves owned nothing, and had no control over their lives or families. Their subjection was complete, lifelong, and hereditary. This type of slavery had existed since ancient times and was widespread and legal in much of the world until the later nineteenth century. Although by definition chattel slaves were simply commodities, their worldly status and lifestyle varied considerably. Many were agricultural laborers or domestic servants, often harshly treated. However, some were respected retainers, trusted soldiers, and even, particularly in the Muslim world, high officials of state. The most fortunate of the women were beloved concubines, or even the powerful mothers of rulers. Some of the males were eunuchs, particularly valued by rulers as soldiers and officials because they could not father rival dynasties. They also served in harems and tended mosques.

Chattel slavery came under growing attack in the western world during the eighteenth century and was gradually eliminated in many European possessions, in the United States of America, Latin America, and various other areas in the nineteenth century. The last western country to outlaw it was Brazil in 1888. The abolitionist movement had a number of roots. The most vocal protagonists were evangelical Christians who thought slavery was a sin. Moreover, the various missionary societies who worked among slave-owning peoples thought it impeded the spread of Christianity. Philosophers and activists regarded it as incompatible with human rights. Economists believed it was less profitable than wage labor. The working classes, particularly in twentieth century Britain and the United States, increasingly saw it as a threat to free wage labor.

In the early twentieth century, chattel slavery was still legal in Arabia, then mainly under Ottoman rule, and in the small enclaves claimed, but not ruled, by the British—notably the Aden Protectorate and the sheikhdoms on the Persian Gulf. It was widely practiced in much of Africa, particularly in the remoter areas barely occupied by the European colonial powers, such as Niger and Mauritania, parts of Assam and Burma. It was also legal in some independent states such as Thailand (Siam) and Nepal. It was practiced in parts of the Philippines and Baluchistan. Remnants of it were to be found in Korea. In Ethiopia, it was legal and widespread, slave raiding was endemic in some areas, and slave trading was a fact of life.

As long as there was a demand for slaves, slave raids, the slave trade, and the export of slaves, particularly from Africa, continued. They were gradually
reduced as the colonial powers gained control of the coastal areas during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and later occupied most of the interior. However, a small-scale slave traffic across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean continued as an illegal smuggling trade from the East African coast, parts of India, Baluchistan, Southeast Asia, and even China. Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca from all over the world, traveling overland or by sea, were also often enslaved on their way to, or in, Arabia itself.

On the African continent, in the early twentieth century, slave raids were slowly eliminated, and slave trading was gradually reduced to a small smuggling trade as new areas were brought under European control. They continued in remote areas such as Mauritania and the Sahara fringe, on a diminishing scale throughout the colonial era. Small-scale trading, particularly in children, was also endemic in much of Africa.

During the period of conquest, it was as much in the interests of the colonial rulers to keep slaves in place and working as it was in the interests of their owners. Each colonial power dealt with the question in its own way. Their aim was to end or modify slavery slowly so as not to disrupt the existing economies by provoking resistance on the part of the owners or wholesale flight by the slaves. The British, whose empire was the most extensive, outlawed slavery in very small areas designated as colonies. The greater parts of their territories were designated "protectorates," in which slavery was not initially under attack. They introduced a system worked out in India in the nineteenth century, simply announcing that slavery no longer had any legal status. Slaves could stay with or leave their owners as they wished. The theory was that slavery would gradually die out with minimal disruption as, on the one hand, the supply of new slaves was cut off and on the other, job opportunities or access to land became available to former slaves, and economic development allowed masters to hire free labor or turn to other forms of investment.

Other powers developed their own policies for ostensibly ending slavery, but often tacitly allowing it to continue or finding means of using slaves for their own projects. The Portuguese declared slavery illegal, but in practice it simply continued under another name and in another form. The Belgians virtually ignored it. The French, however, outlawed it in West Africa after failing to stop the wholesale exodus of slaves from one area in 1905–1906. In time, as European control increased, the end of raids and wars curtailed the supply of slaves. Moreover, large numbers of followers ceased to be the main requisite for power and prestige, and where poll or hut taxes were imposed on owners, slaves became an expense and not a source of wealth. However, in Africa many slaves, having little alternative, simply stayed with their erstwhile owners. Where possible they renegotiated their terms of service. Some became share croppers. Others performed various services for their owners, or paid them part of any wages they earned. In many areas, such services eventually became largely symbolic, but social discrimination continued right through the century, particularly when it came to questions of marriage, inheritance, rights to land, and religious ceremonies.

In the 1920s, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula and in Ethiopia, slavery was both legal and widely practiced. Arabia was the main importer of
slaves. Their fate varied. They might be servants of poor Bedouins, pearl divers, dockers, camel drivers, domestic servants, concubines, or eunuchs. Many were illegally imported from eastern Africa, Baluchistan, India, South East Asia, and even China. Ethiopia was a ready source of supply as raiding continued on the frontiers, and slaves were seized by unpaid soldiers and officials, or sent as tribute to the rulers. Pilgrims on their way to or from Mecca were enslaved in spite of the fact that Islamic law forbade the enslavement of Muslims.

In areas where the colonial rulers had ended the legal status of slavery, they had a desperate need for labor to develop their new territories. Hence they used various means of coercion to force indigenous peoples into the labor force. These devices became known as “new forms of slavery.” Some of the worst cases were in Africa. Thus, in King Leopold’s Congo Independent State, French Equatorial Africa, and Portuguese Africa, concessionaire companies were given exclusive rights to certain products such as rubber or other forest products in a particular area. Some also had administrative powers. The result was that unscrupulous employees determined to meet targets simply forced the inhabitants to collect these products, taking no account of the Africans’ own agricultural cycle and often committing atrocities. Africans were killed, mutilated, beaten, or fined and their wives and children were held as hostages until arbitrary quotas were met. The colonial powers also conscripted Africans as forced labor, often performed far from home with great loss of life, due to ill-treatment and undernourishment, but also to exposure to new disease environments and unfamiliar foods. Thousands died during the First World War in the British East African Carrier Corps. Between 1921 and 1934, 14,000 to 20,000 conscripts died building the French Congo railway. The Portuguese ran a virtual slave trade in so-called “contract” workers to their islands of São Tomé and Principe, and on the mainland, Africans were forced to work for Portuguese companies or other European enterprises for six months of the year for a pittance. In settler colonies, large areas were alienated for European settlers and Africans were only allowed to live in increasingly inadequate and underdeveloped reserves, forcing the men and some women to work for low wages in the colonial economy. Wages could be kept at a minimum because families produced their own food in the reserves. Africans were also driven onto European estates as squatters, forced to work for the landowners in return for the right to grow some crops but without security of tenure. Another device was to make people grow export crops such as cotton on their own land, in often unsuitable soils. In other parts of the world, notably Latin America and the Southern United States, former slaves became sharecroppers and peons—and formed a poverty stricken underclass. Some indigenous peoples, as in Putamayo, were virtually enslaved by rubber producing companies. In the Indian sub-continent, whole families fell into debt bondage. This was virtual slavery as the debts could never be repaid and were sometime hereditary.

All of these abuses were attacked in the metropoles, by various groups of abolitionists vying for funds for their causes. Prominent amongst them were missionary societies, who believed that these practices impeded the spread
of Christianity and who called on church groups to denounce slavery. A minority were activists, such as E.D. Morel, who founded the Congo Reform Association and believed that human rights included recognizing indigenous peoples’ rights to their land and their right to live by their own creeds and customs. The most prominent organization was the British Anti-Slavery Society, which in 1909 amalgamated with the Aborigines Protection Society, to form the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society. The purpose of the society was to use peaceful means to protect colonial peoples from both chattel slavery and various forms of “new slavery.” In spite of its tiny budget and small membership, this society, called Anti-Slavery International from 1990, was, and remained, the acknowledged world leader of the anti-slavery movement. The main abolitionist struggles of the early twentieth century were fought out in the metropoles by these groups, who tried to muster public support against governments anxious to make their colonial possessions pay and businessmen determined to make profits.

At the end of World War I, the victorious allies decided that the slave trade and slave raids had virtually ended. They abrogated the Brussels Act, which they wished to end for other reasons. However, article 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations bound members to secure “fair and humane” conditions for labor in all countries with which they had commercial dealings. Former German and Ottoman territories were shared out among the victorious colonial powers as mandates to be ruled in the interest of their populations until they were “ready” for self-government. In the mandates, slavery was to be ended as soon as social conditions allowed it. In 1919, a treaty signed at St. Germain replaced the Brussels Act and bound signatories to suppress slavery in all its forms. These were vague commitments without time limits. There the matter would probably have rested had not news arrived of widespread slave-raiding and slave-trading in Ethiopia. This was quickly followed by evidence of an active slave traffic across the Red Sea, particularly to the new kingdom of Hijaz, founded when the Ottoman Empire was broken up at the end of the war.

Finding the British government unwilling to take action, the secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, John Harris, waged an active press campaign and persuaded the delegate from New Zealand to raise the question at the League of Nations. Dramatic proof that the slave trade was active was furnished by the capture in 1922 of a slaver carrying victims from Ethiopia to Arabia. The result of this humanitarian campaign was that, in spite of the opposition of the colonial powers, the League appointed a Temporary Slavery Commission in 1924 to inquire into slavery in all its forms. This had been the aim of the antislavery society from its formation in 1839. It enabled the commission, which was composed of seven independent members, including former colonial governors and officials and a representative of the International Labor Organization, to discuss questions not previously considered forms of slavery. The colonial powers did what they could to hamstring the commission, restricting its sources and limiting its range of inquiries, particularly in the case of forced labor which was, as has been seen, widely practiced in all their territories in various forms.
However, in its report this commission extended the definition of slavery to include pawning (the pledging of a person as collateral for debt), forced marriage, child marriage, the transfer or adoption of children to exploit them, debt bondage and peonage, serfdom, forced crop growing, and, most controversial of all, forced labor. The British member, Lord Lugard, forced the hand of his government by sending it a draft convention against slavery. The British felt bound to negotiate a treaty based on this report, but they watered it down to protect their own interests before presenting it to the League of Nations. The result, after much haggling by the colonial powers each trying to defend their own practices, was the **Slavery Convention of 1926**, which was still in force at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

This convention defined slavery as "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership were exercised." It thus went far beyond the chattel slavery hitherto under attack, but it was vague and the various forms of ownership identified by the commission were not listed in the convention. Moreover, signatories were merely bound to secure the "progressive" disappearance of the various forms of servitude under attack, and no time limit was set. Forced labor was always to be paid and performed near home and was only to be used "exceptionally" and for "public purposes." These purposes were not defined, nor were the terms of service. Finally, signatories were only bound to end it "progressively and as soon as possible."

The convention was weakened by the fact that no monitoring system or means of enforcement was established. The League, it was held, could not interfere in the internal affairs of states. Clauses against the maritime slave trade proposed by the British were rejected. Instead the powers with territories in areas where the slave trade was still active agreed to sign a further agreement against it, but this was never done. Moreover, signatories of the convention could exclude any of their territories to which they did not want to apply it. The British, for instance, excluded the Indian princely states as well as unadministered tracts in India and Burma. The French excluded Tunisia and Morocco. There was also no means of forcing countries like Saudi Arabia, where slavery was rife, to sign the convention.

Although the convention had these serious weaknesses, it was the first international legal document to establish a moral position condemning slavery, the slave trade, and a range of practices previously not considered forms of slavery. It thus marked the beginning of the international attack on them. One of the most significant results was that the forced labor question was taken up by the International Labor Organization (ILO), which negotiated the Forced Labor Convention of 1930.

Although chattel slavery had now been condemned in an international instrument, it only died out slowly. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society continued to press for its abolition worldwide and was joined by various other non-governmental organizations, as well as dedicated individuals. It was they who called public attention to the continuing plight of certain chattel slaves, shaming governments into action. Thus the first serious steps against slavery in the Sudan, for instance, were taken by the
British only in the late 1920s. Attitudes changed slowly, however, and ending the legal status of slavery was only the first step. Slaves anxious to leave their owners had to assess their chances, in the case of men, of finding other means of livelihood. For women it was even more difficult unless they could find a male protector. Some women, particularly in rural areas, were still under their masters’ control in Sudan thirty years later. In Ethiopia horrendous reports were still being received of slaving on the frontiers right up to the Italian occupation in the mid 1930s. In Sierra Leone, although slaves were told they were free and officials were forbidden to recognize slavery in the late 1920s, in practice little changed. Many former slaves, now called “cousins,” continued to work for their former owners without pay in return for access to land, lodging, and food as late as 1956. In French ruled Mauritania, women and children in particular were retained as slaves in spite of the outlawing of slavery. Similarly, slavery continued in Niger through the twentieth century.

In the 1930s, as the result of continuing humanitarian pressure, a second slavery committee was formed by the League of Nations, the main result of which was the establishment of a permanent committee, the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery, which met from 1935–1938. Due to its British member, this committee continued the attack begun by the first committee on the various practices that it had designated as slavery. These included particularly the Chinese practice of “adopting” children, mainly little girls who were called Mui Tsai (“little sister” in Cantonese). Ostensibly adopted, usually because their parents could not afford to keep them, many ended up as unpaid ill-treated domestic drudges. Unknown numbers were brought to the island of Hong Kong and other British possessions in southeast Asia, as well as to French and Dutch territories. The committee also discussed other forms of child labor, as well as debt bondage, peonage, serfdom, pawning, and slavery in the Muslim world. In 1935, in the midst of the committee’s proceedings, the Italians conquered Ethiopia using the suppression of slavery as one excuse for their unprovoked attack.

The Advisory Committee collected a great deal of information, and by the outbreak of the Second World War, some progress had been made by the colonial powers, particularly Britain and France, who demanded reports from colonial governors and in some cases, reviewed and reenacted some of their antislavery laws. The Italians claimed to have outlawed slavery in Ethiopia. The committee, however, died of attrition as the result of events leading to the Second World War.

The 1920s and, more particularly, the 1930s had been notable for the emergence of new forms of servitude. From the early 1920s, the Russians were using political and other prisoners as forced labor in so-called gulags. Victims were worked, often to death, in horrendous circumstances, producing gold, timber, and other export goods, and building dams and roads. Capitalist firms in the western world feared they would be undercut and western trade unions believed that free labor was threatened. The basic facts were known by the 1930s. But these gulags were not discussed by the League committees. They fell into the realm of forced labor. In any case, the Soviet Union was not a member of the League of Nations, and thus
beyond the reach of its committees. Moreover, the full development of the
gulags occurred only during and after World War II.

In the 1930s, Nazi Germany instituted concentration camps in which
Jews and gypsies, together with political prisoners, and other persons con-
sidered undesirable were worked to death. Inmates incapable of work were
killed on arrival. During the war itself, the Germans expanded these camps
and also forced thousands of workers from all over occupied Europe to
work as virtual slaves, producing arms and other goods for the German war
effort. The concentration camps were not discussed by the League slavery
committees, although much was known about them by 1938. Germany had
by then withdrawn from the League. The recruitment of foreign slave
laborers only took place during the war after the committee had ceased to
meet.

After the end of the war in 1945, many of the prewar concerns discussed
by the Advisory Committee on Slavery no longer existed. Slavery had been
outlawed in Ethiopia in 1943, as the result of the British expulsion of the
Italians and the restoration of the emperor. In 1946, the French ended the
use of forced labor. In the 1950s, the communist conquest of China cut off
the supply of new mui tsai, which Britain had already done much to sup-
press in its own colonies. Chattel slavery, however, remained legal in Saudi
Arabia, Oman, and the British satellites on the Persian Gulf. It also contin-
ued illegally in Mauritania and Niger and other areas on the Sahara fringe.
Forced labor in various forms still continued in, for instance, Portuguese
African possessions, where labor laws required people to work in the colo-
nial economy for half the year, for a pittance. Moreover, debt bondage
remained widespread particularly on the Indian subcontinent.

As early as 1946, the Anti-Slavery Society, now led by Charles Greenidge,
began agitating for the appointment of a UN permanent committee against
slavery on the lines of the last League committee. The Charter of the
United Nations issued in 1945 stated that one of its aims was to promote
respect for the observance of human rights and to ensure fundamental free-
doms for all without respect to race, sex, language, or religion. Slavery was
not specifically mentioned, but its eradication was clearly implied. However,
like the League, the United Nations was hamstrung by the same inability to
enforce its treaties or interfere in the internal affairs of member states. It
was also deeply divided on what constituted human rights. It was domi-
nated, on the one hand by the United States and its democratic allies, and
on the other by the Soviet Union which now led the much expanded com-
munist world. Their concepts of freedom were different. The United States
and its allies stressed political rights, freedom of expression, of information,
of religion, freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to a fair trial, and other
components of the rule of law. The communist world stressed economic and
social rights, equal opportunity, and the right to education. It condemned
racial discrimination. This was a weak point for the United States because of
its treatment of non-whites, and for the colonial empires, which discrimi-
nated against their indigenous subjects. The slavery question became a pawn
in the struggle for the hearts and minds of the so-called non-aligned states,
former colonies such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Ghana, and many others
which, as they became independent, took their places at the United Nations.

The Anti-Slavery Society persuaded the Belgian delegate to raise the issue of slavery at the United Nations. There was a fatal division between the Socialist “eastern bloc” and the Democratic “western” bloc as to what constituted slavery. The Russians thought of it as the chattel slavery of old and the various other practices condemned by the League committees. The British, anxious to divert attention from the chattel slavery in their South Arabian protectorate and their satellites on the Persian Gulf, claimed that it included forced labor, peonage, and mui tsai which still continued in China. In 1949, the United States proposed an inquiry into forced labor everywhere.

A UN committee was finally established to deal with slavery only. Forced labor was once more the province of the ILO. This ad hoc committee was appointed in 1949 to “survey the field of slavery and other institutions or customs resembling slavery.” Its four members met in 1950 and included Charles Greenidge, the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. It had more leeway than the League committees had had to solicit and collect information. However, it broke up early and in disorder, largely because it was attacked by Peru, Colombia, and Chile for discussing peonage.

However, it had important results. The United Nations took over the 1926 Slavery Convention and Greenidge presented the British government with a new convention to include the practices defined as slavery in the report of the Temporary Slavery Commission but not formally incorporated in the 1926 treaty. These were debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage, and the adoption of children for their exploitation. He also suggested treating the maritime slave trade as piracy. The British felt bound to present a watered-down version of this to the United Nations, and the result after much wrangling was the negotiation of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery of 1956. This convention had an unexpected result. It ended all of Britain’s treaty rights to search shipping on the high seas. These were now resented by rising powers such as Iran and Pakistan, and had barely been used by the scaled down British navy after World War II. A step forward was the condemnation in the convention of peonage, debt bondage, forced marriage, and adoption for exploitation. This was followed by the negotiation by the ILO of the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention of 1957. This outlawed forced labor for economic advantage, political repression and labor discipline—a clear attack on the gulags. These were being dismantled in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, but were being introduced in China and other communist powers to suppress dissent and to produce goods for export.

The long struggle for the supplementary convention focused attention on Arabia, which became the center of the antislavery struggle for the next few years. There was still no means of forcing states to sign or carry out the two antislavery treaties. However, the British began to pressure the sheikhs in Qatar and the Trucial Coast to end slavery. As oil revenues mounted, Qatar did so in 1952, paying compensation to slave owners. Britain also formed a special force ostensibly to suppress the trade on land in
the Trucial States and Oman, and to drive out the Saudis from the Buraimi Oasis, where they were accused of slave dealing. The next few years were a period of turmoil in the Middle East, as Gamal abd el-Nassr nationalized the Suez Canal and launched a campaign of revolutionary socialism aimed at ousting colonialism from the Arab world together with all the “feudal rulers.” The development of the oil industry enabled fugitive slaves to find jobs and opened up new avenues of investment for their owners. Much publicity was given in the western press to the enslavement of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia coming from as far away as West Africa. In 1962, pressure on the Saudi rulers mounted as Egypt sent a force to support a military coup in Yemen, where the new government declared an end to slavery. Soon after, Saudi Arabia declared slavery abolished and offered compensation to owners. This led to the announcement by the Trucial sheikhs, under British pressure, that slavery had long been illegal in their territories. In the Aden Protectorate, the British, faced with rebellion, left in 1967 without having officially ended slavery, but their left-wing successors soon outlawed it. Finally in 1970, a British supported coup in Oman led to its abolition by the new sultan. Chattel slavery was now illegal everywhere. This, however, does not mean that it had ended everywhere. Evidence of its persistence in Mauritania surfaced in the 1980s and new laws against it were issued by Niger in 2005. Moreover, many ties between former slaves and their former owners or their descendants were still active at the end of the century, even among members of both groups who had immigrated to France.

If slavery was now illegal everywhere, the demand for cheap and subservient labor was growing rapidly with globalization, and the last years of the twentieth century saw an enormous increase in the “new” forms of slavery now called “slavery-like practices.” The abolitionists, led by the Anti-Slavery Society, focused full attention on them and encouraged the formation of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to attack them. After a long struggle led by the society and a series of UN-commissioned reports, the United Nations finally formed a working group on slavery, later called the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. It consisted of five members of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities. Its first meeting was in 1975, and with one exception it met annually until the end of the century. It consisted of one member from each of the five areas into which the United Nations divided the world—the western democracies, the eastern (originally communist) bloc, Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

This committee had no powers of investigation and no way of enforcing its resolutions. In its early years it was divided by the Cold War and by the issue of apartheid in South Africa. Only after these issues were settled was it able to conduct its meetings with less desire to score political points against adversaries and more willingness to listen to the cases brought to its notice by NGOs, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), UN organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and others, including Interpol. The work of this virtually powerless committee, together with that of the much more effective International Labor Organization (ILO), publicized the many and varied forms of servitude which existed at the end of the
twenty-first century. Many of them were as old, or older than, slavery. Some, such as forced prostitution, had been considered by various committees of the League. By the end of the twentieth century, however, they were all brought to the Working Group, which changed its name to bring it into line with its work. It thus became the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. A separate group was formed to deal with the exploitation of indigenous peoples.

By 1975 chattel slavery and the slave trade were only practiced in a few remote areas. Many more people were affected by contemporary forms of slavery. As the colonial empires disintegrated, some states became richer as they developed their resources, while others sank into greater poverty. As globalization intensified, so labor began to be organized in different ways and flowed under different guises in ever increasing numbers from poor areas to richer or “developing” areas, often, but not always, in foreign countries. These changes had begun earlier, but were intensified in the last quarter of the century by attempts at globalization, by the growth of the arms and drugs trades and the ever-rising organized crime, assisted by the Internet and the ease of laundering money.

One of the most widespread abuses considered a contemporary form of slavery was debt bondage. This possibly predates slavery itself. It was widespread among the rural population of the Indian sub-continent, but also took root in factories and other industries, and by the end of the century was a worldwide problem. People borrowed money for a variety of reasons—for the use of land, to buy tools, to pay for medical treatment, to pay their fares to get to a promised but non-existent job—only to find themselves bound by debts they could never repay. In some cases, notably South Asia and Latin America, the debt was hereditary. In others it was continually being extended. Thus, Chinese triads smuggled illegal aliens into Britain, and then demanded more money from the workers under threat of harming not just the workers, but also their families in China. By the year 2000, victims might find themselves working anywhere in the world in restaurants, gold mines, garment factories, farms, brick factories, and so on. Some were imported as servants by diplomats and kept locked up, isolated in homes, unable to speak the local language, and with their passports taken from them. Many were the easy victims of brutal treatment.

Forced prostitution was another form of contemporary slavery, flourishing at the end of the twentieth century. Unknown numbers of girls and some boys were tricked or lured into being trafficked to various countries, or forced to work on the streets or in brothels in their own countries. By the late 1990s, an estimated forty to fifty thousand women and children were believed to be trafficked annually to the United States alone, many of them victims of poverty from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The traffic was worldwide, and the propagators of this form of slavery did not hesitate to use force. Victims who resisted faced mutilation or death. All faced the threat of contracting HIV-AIDS or other infections in which case they might be simply thrown out on the streets.

Children in particular were victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Child labor was the subject of special UN reports in the 1980s and 1990s.
Children are cheap and defenseless, hence easily exploited. The problem was world wide but worse in poorer countries. In Thailand in the 1980s, poverty stricken parents in the north sold their children to work in sweatshops in Bangkok in appalling conditions. In India parents in debt-bondage sent their children to toil long hours in carpet factories where they were often tied to looms, sometimes to the point of being crippled. Others were deliberately mutilated in order to send them out to beg in the streets. In Pakistan whole families worked in brick factories. In El Salvador children were forced by poverty-stricken parents to wade in swamps for fourteen hours a day searching for mollusks, smoking cigars to keep off the mosquitoes, and taking amphetamines to keep awake. In West Africa boys in search of jobs ended up as prisoners working as slave labor on cocoa plantations.

Most dangerous was the use of children in armed combat. Boys between twelve and seventeen were forcibly recruited as soldiers, usually in rebel armies. Others joined as a survival strategy. In some cases, such as Sierra Leone, they were forced to mutilate civilians. Renamo in Mozambique made them kill their parents and then recruited them to fight. The Lords Army in Sudan kidnapped school children, forcing the boys to serve as soldiers and the girls as sex slaves.

Most pitiable were the children of both sexes, but mainly girls, forced into sexual slavery. In India thousands were trafficked around the country to meet the growing demand for young virgins. Many were Indian or Nepalese, but some came from China, Russia, or Latin America. Sex tourism involving children was a growing industry in the last decades of the twentieth century. Tour agencies advertised sex tours as package deals involving a range of deviant practices. Men fearful of contracting AIDS were demanding younger and younger children. In 1989, Interpol reported to the Working Group that there was a growing demand for child pornography, encouraged by the development of the Internet.

In 1988, the Working Group was told by a Thai NGO that some 10,000 babies a year were kidnapped or bought for adoption in Malaysia. Similarly, children were kidnapped or bought in South America and Romania for adoption in Europe or North America. In China baby girls could be bought from orphanages for some $20,000 or more.

In the early 1990s, the Anti-Slavery Society, now called Anti-Slavery International, turned its attention to "servile marriage"—marriage in which women did not have the same rights to property, or to their children, or to divorce as men, and in which men might have more then one wife. In many countries children were betrothed without the right of refusal. In some countries widows were inherited by their husband's kinsmen. Although in the latter case the intention was to provide the widow with a male protector, it could also condemn her to an unhappy marriage. Some children were also dedicated to a deity, often to expiate the sin of some relative. They became, in effect, the wives or servants of the priest—a hereditary situation from which they could not escape.

Forced labor was another form of contemporary slavery reported to the Working Group. Sometimes it was, as in the past, practiced by governments
like the government of Myanmar, which forced dissident peoples to work in harsh and often dangerous conditions. China sentenced dissidents to gulags, where many were used to produce goods for export or as cheap labor for agriculture or domestic construction. Some forms of forced labor were to be found in the private sector. In 1999, for instance, some 40,000 young Asian women were found on the American island of Saipan, imprisoned in compounds, threatened with violence, and forced to work twelve hours a day, seven days a week, producing goods for well-known U.S. firms. Migrant laborers are particularly vulnerable to forced labor and some have been found working as virtual prisoners on farms and garment factories in the United States, and in sweat shops in Europe.

It remains here to discuss what steps had been taken by the end of the century to stop these abuses which were well-known as they were reported to the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, and to the ILO, and were exposed by the media. In theory much had been gained. Reports had been commissioned and conventions negotiated on a whole range of questions, including slavery, forced labor, and debt bondage. There followed conventions for the suppression of the traffic in persons and the exploitation of prostitution, and the convention on consent to marriage, the minimum age for marriage and the registration of marriages. There was also a declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women. To protect children, a convention was passed on the rights of the child, followed by an ILO convention against the worst forms of child labor. There was also a
declaration to protect women and children in emergencies and armed conflict. Added to these were treaties against trafficking and a convention to protect migrant workers and their families. Thus, by the end of the century a whole range of conventions and agreements were in existence to protect the most vulnerable from abuse.

The remnants of chattel slavery were under attack in Mauritania and Niger. Public opinion was being mobilized, not just in the developed world, but also in the areas from which most victims came or where they lived. The Working Group which had gathered so much information was still not able to do more than advise on action, but the problems were now becoming known all over the world and attempts were being made to alert potential victims to the dangers they might face. Moreover, NGOs proliferated and did their best to make abuses known, and often took action themselves to combat them, sometimes at risk of members’ own lives.

However, the basic problem which generated so many vulnerable workers remained untouched—the huge gap between rich and poor countries which drew thousands of potential victims into the hands of international criminal networks. Moreover, the numerous treaties, conventions, and declarations could only be enforced by governments, and many of them were too poor or too corrupt to take the steps needed to end particular abuses. Added to these difficulties was the proliferation of small wars, which dislocated economies and flung thousands of economic refugees on the market. Similarly, the disintegration of the Soviet Union sent unknown numbers of poverty-stricken people into one form or another of contemporary slavery. At the heart of the problem was the weakness of the United Nations and the lack of a concerted and determined attempt to carry out its many conventions. See also Arabia and Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Slavery; Ethiopia, Haile Selassie and Abolition in; Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in.


Suzanne Miers

Slavery Convention of 1926

The Slavery Convention of 1926 was the first international treaty against both slavery as well as the slave trade. It defined slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom all or any of the powers attaching to the rights of ownership are exercised.” It bound signatories “to prevent and suppress the slave trade” and to “bring about progressively and as soon as possible the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms.” Moreover, signatories undertook to take “all necessary measures to prevent compulsory or forced labor from developing into conditions analogous to slavery.”

This treaty was recommended to the League of Nations by the Temporary Slavery Commission of 1924–25. This commission had recommended a
treaty for the immediate abolition of the legal status of slavery “in all its forms.” It had defined the forms to include chattel slavery and serfdom, debt bondage and peonage, forced marriage of women, girls and widows, and the exploitation of children. It thus began the process of changing the meaning of slavery at the international level. It had suggested that slave traders at sea should be treated as pirates, that signatories should grant each other rights to pursue slavers over land frontiers and in territorial waters, and that severe penalties should be imposed for slave raiding and trading. Most controversial of all, it urged that forced labor, which was widely used by the colonial powers, should be abolished except for essential public works.

Neither the British nor the other colonial governments had any desire for such a treaty, but the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society advocated it, and the British government had recently assured Parliament that it was still committed to leading the antislavery campaign, which commanded wide public support. Therefore, the British drew up an emasculated version of the commission’s proposals and presented them to the Sixth Commission of the League Assembly in September 1925. It caused consternation among the colonial powers, each of which set out to protect its own practices and interests.

The French refused to allow slave trading at sea to be treated as piracy or to allow the British or any other nation the right to search ships flying their flag. This impasse was solved by a clause stating that powers in whose areas the slave trade was active would take all possible measures to end slaving under their flags and would negotiate agreements giving each other special rights to search their ships. Moreover, the French hinted that searches could be made ostensibly for arms, and if slaves were found on board, the vessel could be arrested and taken to the nearest port of the nation whose flag it was flying. All Britain’s existing maritime treaties remained in force.

The convention was weakened because signatories were only bound to end slavery progressively, and the powers in whose territories and on whose waters the traffic flourished never negotiated the special agreements necessary to help each other track down slavers.

Forced labor was used by all the colonial powers in varying degrees for projects, such as providing labor for concessionaire companies, for building public works, for the growing of export crops, to provide labor for private companies and individuals, for porterage, and for the army. It might last from a few days to a lifetime, and at its worst included men, women, and children. After long discussions, the treaty stipulated that forced labor could only be used for “public purposes” in exceptional circumstances, and that it must be paid, and employed near home. However, neither the exceptional circumstances, the public purposes, nor the terms of service were defined.

The convention was signed on September 26, 1926, by thirty-six members of the League and acceded to by the United States, which was not a member. Other powers also gradually signed or ratified it. Exceptions included the Soviet Union, which also did not belong to the League, and more important at the time, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in both of which slavery was still legal. The convention had serious weaknesses. It fixed no date
for the end of slavery, and its definition of slavery based on degrees of ownership did not stand the test of time. The maritime powers in the slaving zones never signed the agreements stipulated. There was no monitoring system and no way to enforce the provisions of the convention, many of which were ignored for years. Moreover, signatories were allowed to exempt some of their territories from it provisions.

Nevertheless, as the first international treaty against slavery it was an important landmark in the abolition movement. The signatories had at least agreed to end slavery as a legal status—albeit in their own time. By calling attention to the fact that forced labor could be a form of slavery, the treaty played a part in opening the way to the negotiation of the International Labor Organization's Convention against forced labor. Finally, the definition of slavery as forms of ownership, together with the recommendations of the Temporary Slavery Commission, began the international attack on other forms of exploitation, such as peonage, debt bondage, servile marriage, and the exploitation of children—all subjects of later treaties.

The 1926 Convention is still in force. It was taken over by the United Nations in 1953 and extended, but not replaced, by the United Nations Slavery Convention of 1956. It now stands at the center of a network of later treaties for which it laid the groundwork. See also League of Nations and Antislavery and Abolition; Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery; United Nations and Antislavery.


Suzanne Miers

Smith, Adam (1723–1790)

Adam Smith was a Scottish political economist concerned with global economics. The Wealth of Nations (1776) is Smith's great book and remains an important contribution to the foundations of the study of political economy. Smith favored capitalism and political liberalism, believing that the role of government was to legislate and that government ought not to interfere in the machinery of capitalism. Smith opposed strict government regulation of human behavior and the economy, especially trade. He sought to expand the sphere in which rational individuals pursuing their own best interests might act as freely as possible in the economy. Such a dynamic, he argued, would lead to that society's increased productivity and wealth.

Slavery was not a principal concern for Smith. In the Wealth of Nations, he devoted relatively little space to the topic. Rather, he was more concerned with the economic impact of wage labor. For Smith, slavery was not as economically sensible as wage labor. Wages for labor were driven by the market and wage laborers were interchangeable—one could be substituted for another and at the same wage. Slavery, however, was more substantially an investment. No wage attached to the labor of the slave, and the return on the investment in the slave was wholly dependent on the slave's
longevity and regularity of labor. For Smith, wage labor made more sense than slavery: “The wear and tear of a slave, it has been said, is at the expense of his master; but that of a free servant is at his own expense” (Smith 1989: 85). The actual costs of “replacing or repairing” (Smith 1989: 85) a slave are not present when one pays a laborer a fixed wage.

As with Rousseau and other social contract theorists of the Enlightenment, Smith imagined a sort of pre-economic social organization that had been drastically altered with the arrival of private property and formal political organization.

In the original state of things, which precedes both the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock, the whole produce of the labour belongs to the labourer. He has neither landlord nor master to share with... But this original state of things, in which the labourer enjoyed the whole produce of his own labour, could not last beyond the first introduction of the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock. (Smith 1989: 68, 69).

Thus, for Smith, slavery was one form, but not the only form, of the alienation of laborers from the product of their labor. See also Literature and Abolition.


Noah Butler

Smith, Gerrit (1797–1874)

Among the most renowned abolitionists and nineteenth-century philanthropists, Gerrit Smith devoted his life and most of his great wealth to the cause of equal rights for all men and women. Over a twenty-year period, from 1838 until the Civil War, the immediate abolition of every sin was his most passionate desire, and he went to great lengths to effect it. Smith, along with his close friend, John Brown, was virtually unique among white reformers in his efforts to overcome enormous class and racial barriers and to establish close affinities with other blacks. But following John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, Smith suffered a crisis of faith that resulted in his support for more conservative reform measures during the Civil War and Reconstruction; he supported Lincoln and the Republican Party, emphasized the suppression of the Rebellion over emancipation, and after the war advocated clemency to former rebels.

Smith was born in Utica, New York on March 6, 1797, into one of the wealthiest families in the country. In 1806, his parents, Peter and
Elizabeth Livingston Smith, moved the family to Peterboro, a village they founded in Madison County, part of the “Burned-Over District” of western New York, where Gerrit lived for the rest of his life. As a young patriarch, Smith had visions of becoming a man of letters, an eminent lawyer, a respected minister, or a statesman. But immediately after graduating as valedictorian from Hamilton College in 1818, a series of incidents occurred which precipitated his turn to reform work including the death of his mother, the death of his new bride, and the retirement of his father, who requested that Gerrit manage his vast property concerns. In little more than a year after reaching “manhood,” he found himself back in the family mansion house overlooking the village green of Peterboro, bound to his ledger books and land office, with his dreams shattered and the two most important people in his life dead.

In 1823, he married Ann Carroll Fitzhugh Smith, a cousin of George Fitzhugh and a fervent evangelical. She was instrumental in fueling her husband’s religious zeal and spawning his vision of a broad sacralization of the world. He soon became an avid temperance reformer, and in 1827 he joined the American Colonization Society, whose efforts to colonize blacks in Africa represented for him the most effective way to bring about gradual emancipation and an end to the degradation of free blacks. His complete break with colonization and whole-hearted embrace of immediate abolition occurred in 1837, and it corresponded to a fundamental shift in the source of his values; he became a self-described “outsider” and “fanatic,” rejected existing social conventions and authority, and turned inward by affirming his spiritual instincts and passions of the “heart.” His belief in the preservation of the social order and distinct hierarchies—values on which the principles of colonization were based—had crumbled. This profound shift was due in part to the Panic of 1837, which brought him to the brink of bankruptcy; to the deaths of two children, one in 1835 and the other in 1836; and to his newfound reliance on “sacred self-sovereignty.”

One of the most important applications of Smith’s religious vision was his reinterpretation of the Golden Rule as empathy. He continually sought to participate in the feelings and sufferings of his black brethren and to see himself as a black man. “To recognize in every man my brother—ay, another self” was his wish, and he often described his efforts “to make myself a colored man.” His empathic awareness and black identification had tangible results: He was instrumental in turning Madison County into the most fervent abolition county in the country; his own village of Peterboro, which the black leader Henry Highland Garnet likened to “Heaven,” became an antebellum model of interracial harmony; and in 1846, he gave to each of some 3,000 poor blacks from New York roughly 50 acres of land in the Adirondacks (where John Brown eventually settled) as a way for them to attain the franchise, become self-sufficient, and remain isolated from the virulent racism in the cities. Black leaders throughout the North, from Garnet and Frederick Douglass to James McCune Smith and Samuel Ringgold Ward, became respected friends and allies; and the black abolitionist paper, The Ram’s Horn, went so far as to say, “Gerrit Smith is a colored man!”

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636 SMITH, GERRIT (1797–1874)
Smith’s radical reform efforts from 1840 to the Civil War closely paralleled those of black leaders in New York, who overwhelmingly embraced political abolitionism and lost patience with peaceful means of abolishing slavery, especially following the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Smith helped found the Liberty Party in 1840, which interpreted the Constitution as an antislavery document, and in 1852 he was elected to the House of Representatives on an abolition ticket that advocated immediate abolition, universal suffrage for men and women, and land grants to the landless. He never completed his term in Congress, however. Immediately following the passage of the Kansas Nebraska Act in 1854, Smith resigned out of disgust with Congress and the white laws perpetuating slavery, and became a revolutionary. The tension between his boundless reform visions and the present, sinful reality had reached a breaking point; he began to see himself as a prophet and accepted blood atonement as a necessary means for vanquishing the forces of evil. He donated over $16,000 in “emigrant aid” that sent fighting men and munitions to “save” Kansas from slavery; and he became a lead conspirator in John Brown’s efforts to liberate slaves that culminated with the attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in October 1859.

The Harpers Ferry raid profoundly affected Smith’s world views and reform visions. He was the only conspirator who, in the aftermath of the raid, considered it wrong and experienced profound guilt over his participation in it. He believed himself culpable for all the lives lost in the incursion, and suffered a complete, but brief, emotional collapse. Following his recovery in early 1860, he distanced himself from blacks, and viewed his black identification and close friendship with blacks, as well as his acceptance of prophecy belief and blood atonement, as the dark sources of violence. In May 1860, he acknowledged that “much of the year 1859,” his most active period of pursuing violent remedies for ending slavery, was “a black dream,” and he described the link between his black identification and his descent to violence in a short story called “The Ruinous Visit to Monkeyville.” He never again identified so closely with blacks, became considerably more moderate in his reform efforts, and for the rest of his life denied his complicity in the Harpers Ferry raid. Before the Civil War officially began, Smith became a casualty in his own civil war, and he lost faith in the power of empathy and sacred self-sovereignty.

Shortly after the election of 1860, Smith began to support Abraham Lincoln and the Republican administration. Although he was himself nominated for president on a Radical Abolition ticket, he did not take his candidacy seriously, and felt that Lincoln was “in his heart an abolitionist.” As the Southern states seceded, he advocated the compromise measures of a lower tariff and compensated emancipation to lure the South back into the Union without bloodshed. But following the firing on Fort Sumter, he fervently embraced the war efforts of the administration to “put down the Rebellion,” and believed that its suppression would be the means for ending slavery. The war had dissolved all party distinctions, he argued, and he viewed all Northerners as either Unionists or disloyal Rebels who must be crushed: “We are assembled... not as Republicans, nor Democrats, nor Abolitionists—but as Americans,” he said in the first of many speeches to raise
money and troops for the war effort; “we are all on the side of the Government,” which “must be upheld at whatever expense to friend or foe.” The Rebellion was “simply slavery in arms.”

Smith’s primary role in the war was to lend his support to the Lincoln administration by urging unified support to the Union cause. He published numerous speeches to this effect, and campaigned for Lincoln in 1864. He spent over $10,000 of his own money and raised thousands more for troops, equipment, and the relief of afflicted families, and he urged a stiff income tax on the wealthy to help fund the war. For the first time since becoming a radical abolitionist in 1838, he was no longer considered an “outsider” and “fanatic,” but a respected, though eccentric, elder statesman.

Smith’s attitude toward the use of black troops highlights the enormous shift that occurred in his attitude toward blacks following the Harpers Ferry raid. He urged black participation as early as August 1861, but primarily as a tactical measure: “The party that gets the blacks to fight for it gets the victory.” Although he believed that arming blacks would facilitate the cause of equal rights, in 1863 he also compared blacks (and Indians) to devils and suggested that putting “down a base, brutal, abominable, causeless, accursed Rebellion” required the use of dark-skinned, base, and brutal savages: “Common-sense teaches us that we should get the negro to help us if we can; and the Indian also if we can; and the devil himself if we can. I would that we could succeed in getting our harness upon his back and in making him work for us. It would by the way, be doing a great favor to the old rascal to make him serve a good cause once in his life.” While he never abandoned his quest for equal rights, he now considered blacks to be potentially dangerous and by nature less civilized than whites. His first utterance that betrayed a belief in the prevailing pseudo-scientific arguments for innate black inferiority occurred in late 1861, when he admitted, “were the laws of nature allowed free play, the dark-skinned races would find their homes within and the light-skinned races without the tropics.” Simultaneously he renewed his faith in colonization—after having denounced it for twenty years as inherently racist—as the most effective way to solve the race problem, so long as the decision to colonize rested with blacks themselves.

As Smith moved into the mainstream role of elder statesman and “insider,” his racial views became increasingly conservative, and his position during Reconstruction was one of moderation. Initially he refused to support the Thirteenth Amendment because of his long-held belief that the Constitution was already an antislavery document and because he felt it would detract from the war effort, but he eventually endorsed it. Similarly, he initially advocated literacy as a condition of voting for both blacks and whites before accepting universal black suffrage. Throughout Reconstruction he sought amnesty for rebels, and in 1867, he alienated himself from most Northern radicals by signing Jefferson Davis’s bail bond—along with mainstream leaders Horace Greeley and Cornelius Vanderbilt.

Smith’s declension from his perfectionist vision and close identification with blacks in the 1840s and 1850s did not go unnoticed by black leaders. His correspondence with them, which surpassed that of all other white
reformers combined before the war, waned considerably following Harpers Ferry. Some former friends and allies harshly rebuked him; the black physician and intellectual, James McCune Smith, began criticizing Gerrit as early as August 1861: “I charge you... with being unequal to the exigency of the hour. After lives spent in signal devotion to the cause of the slave you fairly abandon that cause in the hour of its trial and triumph.” But black leaders never forgot the great lengths Smith went to for the cause of equal rights in the twenty years before the war. In 1873, a year before Gerrit’s death, Henry Highland Garnet summed up the feelings of many black reformers by saying: “Among the hosts of great defenders of man's fights who in years past fought so gallantly for equal rights for all men,” Smith was “the most affectionately remembered and loved.” See also Bleeding Kansas; Radical Republicans.


John Stauffer

Smith, James McCune (1813–1865)

James McCune Smith, black abolitionist and physician, was born in New York City, the son of slaves. All that is known of his parents is that his mother was, in his words, “a self-emancipated bond-woman.” His own liberty came on July 4, 1827, when the Emancipation Act of the state of New York officially freed its remaining slaves. Smith was fourteen at the time, a student at the African Free School no. 2, and he greeted the day as a “real full-souled, full-voiced shouting for joy” that brought him from “the gloom of midnight” into “the joyful light of day.” He graduated with honors from the African Free School, but was denied admission from Columbia College and Geneva, New York medical schools on account of his race. With assistance from the black minister Peter Williams, Jr., he entered the University of Glasgow, Scotland in 1832, at the age of nineteen, and earned the degrees of B.A. (1835), M.A. (1836), and M.D. (1837). He returned to America in 1837 as the first professionally trained black physician in the country.

Smith resettled in New York City, married Malvina Barnett, who bore him five children, and established himself as a successful physician. He set up practice in Manhattan as a surgeon and general practitioner for both blacks and whites, became the staff physician for the New York Colored Orphan Asylum, and opened a pharmacy on West Broadway, one of the first in the country owned by a black.

It was his activities as a radical abolitionist and reformer, however, that secured his reputation as one of the leading black intellectuals of the antebellum era. As soon as he returned to America, he became an active member of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which sought immediate abolition by morally persuading slaveholders to renounce the sin of slavery and emancipate their slaves. By the late 1840s, he had abandoned the policies of non-resistance and non-voting set forth by William Lloyd Garrison and his followers in the Society, for political abolitionism, which interpreted
the Constitution as an antislavery document and advocated political, and ultimately violent, intervention to end slavery. In 1846, Smith championed the campaign for unrestricted black suffrage in New York state; that same year he became an associate and good friend of Gerrit Smith, a wealthy white abolitionist and philanthropist, and served as one of three black administrators for his friend's donation of roughly fifty acres to each of some three thousand New York blacks on a vast tract of land in the Adirondacks. He became affiliated with the Liberty Party in the late 1840s, which was devoted to immediate and unconditional emancipation, unrestricted suffrage for all men and women, and land reform. In 1855, he helped found the New York City Abolition Society, which was organized, as he put it, “to Abolish Slavery by means of the Constitution; or otherwise,” by which he meant violent intervention in the event that peaceful efforts failed (though there is no indication that he resorted to violence). When the Radical Abolition Party, the successor to the Liberty Party, nominated him for New York Secretary of State in 1857, he became the first black in the country to run for a political office.

In his writings Smith was a central force in helping to shape and give direction to the black abolition movement. He contributed frequently to the Weekly Anglo-African and the Anglo African Magazine, and wrote a semi-regular column for Frederick Douglass’ Paper under the pseudonym “Communipaw,” an Indian name that referred to a charmed and honored black settlement in Jersey City, New Jersey. He also wrote the introduction to Douglass’s 1855 autobiography, My Bondage My Freedom, and he often expressed his wish that Douglass relocate his paper from Rochester to New York City. Douglass considered Smith the “foremost” black leader to have influenced his reform vision.

Smith’s writings focused primarily on black education and self-help, citizenship, and the fight against racism; and these themes represented for him the most effective means through which to end slavery and effect full legal and civil rights. He was a life-long opponent of attempts among whites to colonize blacks in Liberia and elsewhere, and a harsh critic of black nationalists who, beginning in the 1850s, encouraged emigration to Haiti and West Africa rather than continuing to fight for citizenship and equal rights. Although he defended integration, he also encouraged blacks to establish their own presses, initiatives, and organizations. “It is emphatically our battle,” he wrote in 1855. “Others may aid and assist if they will, but the moving power rests with us.” His embrace of black self-reliance in the late 1840s paralleled his departure from Garrisonian doctrines and the American Anti-Slavery Society, which largely ignored black oppression in the North—even among abolitionists—by focusing on the evils of slavery in the South. Black education in particular, he concluded, led directly to self-reliance and moral uplift, and these values in turn provided the most powerful critique against racism. He called the schoolhouse the “great caste abolisher,” and vowed to “fling whatever I have into the cause of colored children, that they may be better and more thoroughly taught than their parents are.”

The racist belief in innate black inferiority was for Smith the single greatest and most insidious obstacle to equality. In 1846, he became despondent
over the racial “hate deeper than I had imagined” among the vast majority of whites; fourteen years later he continued to lament that “our white countrymen do not know us”; “they are strangers to our characters, ignorant of our capacity, oblivious to our history.” He hoped his own distinguished career and writings would serve as both a role model for uneducated blacks and as a powerful rebuttal against racist attacks. And as a black physician he was uniquely suited to combat the pseudo-scientific theories of innate black inferiority. In two important and brilliantly argued essays—“Civilization” (1844) and “On the Fourteenth Query of Thomas Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia” (1859)—he incorporated his extensive knowledge of biology and anatomy to directly refute scientific arguments of innate black inferiority.

The driving force behind Smith’s reform vision and sustained hope for equality was his supreme “confidence in God, that firm reliance in the saving power of the Redeemer’s Love.” Much like other radical abolitionists such as Douglass and Gerrit Smith, he viewed the abolition movement and the Civil War in millennialist terms; slavery and black oppression were the most egregious of a plethora of sins ranging from tobacco and alcohol to apathy and laziness that needed to be abolished in order to pave the way for a sacred society governed by “Bible Politics,” as he envisioned God’s eventual reign on earth. He strove to follow his Savior’s example by embracing the doctrine of “equal love to all mankind” and at the same time remaining humble before Him; he likened himself to “a coral insect... loving to work beneath the tide in a superstructure, that some day when the labourer is long dead and forgotten, may rear itself above the waves and afford rest and habitation for the creatures of his Good, Good Father of All.” Following his death in 1865 from heart failure, his writings and memories remained a powerful source of inspiration, “rest and habitation” to future generations of reformers.


*John Stauffer*

**Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG)**

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) was an Anglican missionary organization established in 1701 by Thomas Bray, commissary for the Bishop of London. It was designed to spread the “word” of the Church of England and to promote Christianity in the North American colonies. The Society provided clergymen for Anglican parishes in the colonies and the Caribbean. By the time of the American Revolution, they had sent over 600 ministers to the colonies and solicited support for local and parish libraries. In 1760, the Quaker Anthony Benezet wrote asking Quakers to aid the
SPG so that, “books might be provided, as they were scarce in those Parts [the South] except sent by ye society.”

One man who deeply inspired their work was Morgan Godwyn, who had been an early supporter of the conversion and baptism of blacks without freeing them. Serving as a minister in Virginia in the late 1660s, he also traveled to Barbados to begin laying ground for the Society’s later work there. He wrote in a pamphlet in 1680, quoting from Acts 17:26, “That God had made (of one Blood) all nations of Men, for to dwell on the face of the earth.”

In 1711, Bishop William Fleetwood gave a sermon at the annual SPG meeting in London, calling for the baptism of slaves but maintaining that “we are a people who live and maintain ourselves by Trade; and that if Trade be lost, or overmuch discouraged, we are a ruined nation.” Later in 1727, the Bishop of London told American slaveowners that if they converted their slaves, the enslaved Africans would be under “stronger Obligations to perform those Duties with the greatest Diligence and Fidelity, not only from the Fear of Men, but a Sense of Duty to God.” The conversion of slaves need not also require their manumission argued the SPG. The SPG actually owned several large plantations in Barbados, and hundreds of slaves.

The SPG sent its first missionary, Samuel Thomas, to South Carolina in 1703. By 1706, he had begun to convert some Africans and Native Americans, all of whom he believed were just like so many whites—“sheep without a shepherd.” The Society also opened schools for blacks, most notably in South Carolina and New Jersey, a program later taken up more substantially by Anthony Benezet. The SPG, while advocating the baptism of blacks and priding itself in teaching slaves, young and old, to read and write and to learn the scriptures, simultaneously supported newly established laws guaranteeing that baptism did nothing to alter the state of their slavery.

On April 26, 1767, Anthony Benezet sent the SPG a letter with a copy of his *A Caution and a Warning to Great Britain* in which he requested that the SPG “seriously consider” opposing the Atlantic slave trade. In early 1768, the SPG replied to Benezet by praising his work among the enslaved and admonishing him not to jeopardize it by alienating masters from the SPG with his opposition to the slave trade and, more fundamentally, to slavery itself. His correspondent urged him “not to go further in publishing your Notions, but rather to retract them.”

As the American Revolution approached in the colonies, The SPG’s labors continued, but its authority and mandate were weakening. All the American colonies would come to prohibit the slave trade by 1775 and the Anglican SPG was increasingly suspect. After the American Revolution, the SPG ended its activities in the United States. See also Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray; Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Bible and Slavery.


Maurice Jackson
**Somerset Decision (1772)**

The Somerset case, decided in 1772 by Lord Mansfield (William Murray), helped launch the movements to abolish slavery in England and the United States, and became a significant part of the common law of slavery in the English-speaking world.

James Somerset was born in Africa, sold into the slave trade, and then taken to Virginia where Charles Stewart purchased him. Stewart took Somerset to England in 1769. In October 1771, Somerset escaped, and when Stewart recaptured him, he immediately imprisoned Somerset on a boat headed to Jamaica where he planned to sell him. Three abolitionists, Thomas Watkins, Elizabeth Cade, and John Marlow, came to Somerset’s aid and submitted affidavits to the court for a writ of habeas corpus. Mansfield agreed to hear the plea and summoned Thomas Knowles, the owner of the ship, to bring himself and Somerset to court on December 9, 1771.

Knowles testified that Somerset belonged to Charles Stewart, that he had never been “manumitted, enfranchised, set free or discharged,” and that Somerset had “departed and absented himself” from service without permission from Stewart. Mansfield believed the case had merit and arranged court dates in February and in April 1772 to hear arguments from both sides.

The two lead lawyers, Francis Hargrave and John Dunning, gave sophisticated arguments before the court. The primary question confronting the court was whether an owner could remove a slave from England. Although Hargrave had never argued before the bar, he presented a subtle and compelling case that slavery was contrary to English common law. Seeming to anticipate almost every counterargument, Hargrave admitted that villenage, or conditions pertaining to feudal serfs, and colonial slavery were legal, but forced the court to recognize the way that English common law had steadily progressed in favorem libertatis or in favor of liberty. He argued that if England accepted American racial slavery, it would be forcing the law to regress rather than progress. Furthermore, English law required consent in all service relationships, and Hargrave contended that “no man can by compact enslave himself.” His arguments were published in the United States and England and were widely used by abolitionists.

John Dunning, a well-respected lawyer who had argued just a year before that no one could be detained as a slave in England, defended Knowles and Stewart’s right to imprison and sell Somerset. He tried to argue from fact and law to unsettle the emotional strength of Somerset’s case. He contended that the emancipation of Somerset would undermine the respect that the court should hold for the law of Virginia where Somerset was purchased, and where slavery was legal. More effectively, he argued that the emancipation of Somerset could precipitate the emancipation of all enslaved blacks in England, a scenario that would divorce men from their property and place a great burden on England’s poorhouses.

Mansfield did not feel compelled to write the decision in this case, but Somerset’s unwillingness to settle out of court forced him to do so. Mansfield’s greatest contribution finally to English law was not the Somerset decision, but his promotion of commercial law, which helped England’s
emerging capitalism to flourish. His brief decision reflected the tenuous relationship between capitalism and slavery. He recognized that his decision could disrupt the property rights of thousands of slave owners, but concluded, “fiat Justitia, ruat coelummet” (let justice be done whatever the consequences). Slavery, he argued, was different in each locality and “so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law.” The case, as Mansfield made clear, did not end slavery in any of the British colonies, nor, as he showed in subsequent cases, did it end slavery in England; however, it did prevent owners from forcibly detaining slaves and deporting them for sale. This careful decision, historian David Brion Davis notes, preserved the service of the slaves to their masters, but at the same time established an important precedent that labor is voluntary, an important legal foundation for a capitalist society.

Whatever Mansfield’s intention, the case had a much wider influence. It was the first step toward the emancipation of blacks in England. In America, some slaves and abolitionists incorrectly used the case to support the end of slavery. Other opponents of slavery more correctly used the case as support to end slavery in only parts of the United States, requiring positive law to maintain slavery and contending that slavery could be upheld in one locality but not another. This understanding of slave law, as requiring positive law, became the common law in the United States and is reflected in the Constitution’s support of slavery without mentioning slavery by name. Slavery became a local (state) issue, not a national one and required positive law to be upheld in each locality. Somerset was almost immediately cited in court cases and petitions in Massachusetts. Likewise, throughout the antebellum era, judges and legal commentaries on slavery used the case as the foundation of opposition to slavery in America.


Emily V. Blanck

Sonthonax, Léger Félicité (1763–1813)

Léger Félicité Sonthonax was a dynamic Jacobin and zealous antislavery advocate, who arrived in Saint Domingue in September 1793. He had been sent to Saint Domingue as the head of a Civil Commission whose goal was to restore peace between the contending factions in the island and to prepare the French colony to repel an English assault. A prosperous son of a French merchant and Revolutionary, he rose in the ranks during the French Revolution and in 1792, was sent to Saint Domingue as part of the Second Civil Commission, a group of three men sent to defend the interests of France there.

Sonthonax conceived of his mission as having two primary objectives: enforce the law of April 4, 1792, which granted full citizenship to the
Sonthonax recognized that French authority had disintegrated on Saint Domingue. He allied himself to the free men of color who he believed would be fiercely loyal to France. But by aiding the free coloreds, he antagonized the white planters still further. He exiled many royalist whites, which attached the men of color to him all the more. He did not defeat the black insurgency, but he was able to confine it largely to the northern plain.

By early 1793, Sonthonax had achieved his primary objectives. But in February 1793, France declared war on Britain. The war highlighted two major problems for France and Saint Domingue—French preoccupation with European affairs and French naval weakness in the Caribbean. Owing to the French declaration of war on England, Sonthonax set about building defenses against impending English and Spanish assaults. His most famous act, however, was related to his republican ideals and zealous commitment to antislavery. On August 29, 1793, Sonthonax issued a proclamation extending freedom to the slave insurgents, one of the most radical steps in the French and Haitian Revolutions.

War and emancipation had always been linked in history. By forming an alliance with the African slaves against England and Spain, Sonthonax’s motivations were clear enough: they included a genuine belief that the principles of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—required an end to slavery and racism in any form; a desire to expand the French Revolution and bring Saint Domingue under its banner; and solidification of an alliance with the freedmen against Britons and Spaniards.

But even facing the British and Spanish invasions of the island, unity in Saint Domingue remained elusive. White colonists continued their fight against Sonthonax; they wanted the restoration of the French monarchy and slavery. Even some free men of color joined the white planters, for they desired their own citizenship, but they were reluctant to extend freedom to the African slaves, and indeed some wanted the restoration of slavery. Neither did the African slaves trust Sonthonax completely, for it was not until February 4, 1794 that the French National Convention ratified Sonthonax’s general proclamation of freedom to the slaves, thus formally ending the 300-year history of slavery in Saint Domingue.

Meanwhile, the French National Convention recalled Sonthonax to France to defend his proclamation of freedom. He did return to Saint Domingue during spring 1796 at the head of the Third Civil Commission, but Sonthonax’s moment in history had passed. Both the free men of color and freed slaves had turned against Sonthonax. As during his previous mission to Saint Domingue, his goals were to save Saint Domingue for France and extend full citizenship to the freed slaves, but he lost out in the struggle for power in Saint Domingue.
By 1796, the African leader **Toussaint L'Ouverture** had seized the leadership of the northern free blacks, who were now called “cultivators.” Regardless of his emancipation act of August 29, 1793, African slaves feared that Sonthonax had been sent to Saint Domingue to restore slavery, which was a persistent dread among the slaves. Toussaint L'Ouverture exploited that African dread and forced Sonthonax to flee to France. By August 24, 1797, when Sonthonax boarded a ship for France, Toussaint and the black cultivators had developed their own agenda and their own consciousness, and they would accept no settlement to the black revolution that failed to include complete emancipation.

Even during the intervening 200 years, Léger Félicité Sonthonax has remained a controversial figure of the Haitian Revolution. His critics have denounced him as vain, power hungry, and duplicitous. Still, a leading Haitian historian, Thomas Madiou, wrote that the people of Haiti spoke well of Sonthonax as a defender of their freedom. Another historian, Robert Stein, presented Sonthonax as a dedicated French Republican, a patriot who wanted to preserve French sovereignty over Saint Domingue, and a principled advocate of the Rights of Man. See also Dessalines, Jean-Jacques; French Colonies, Emancipation of; Haitian Revolution; Saint Domingue, French Defeat in.


**Tim Matthewson**

**Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in**

Beginning with Christopher Columbus’s voyages in the 1490s, Spain began a conquest of a vast colonial empire in the Americas. It soon also expanded the African slave trade into an Atlantic slave trade that helped to provide slave labor for Spain’s growing American colonies. Its slave trade remained a closely controlled monopoly enterprise until 1789, when Spain removed some of the monopoly restrictions and broadened the slave trade to Spanish colonies by permitting foreigners to participate legally. Opponents of African slavery and the slave trade did not begin to surface within Spain or its colonial empire until the nineteenth century, and even then there was no concerted abolitionist movement in Spain until the latter half of the nineteenth century. **Bartolomé de las Casas** and a handful of other Catholic clerics had spoken and written forcefully on behalf of enslaved Indians in the sixteenth century, but the enslaved Africans had no similar champion in Spain or its colonies.
The summoning of a Cortes or Parliament in Cadiz from 1810 with members from Spain's overseas colonies enabled colonial questions to be debated publicly. Two of the most important were the slave trade and slavery. The rise of a powerful abolitionist movement since the 1790s had led to the prohibition of the slave trade in the British Empire and in the United States. British diplomats at Cadiz were instructed to do whatever they could to persuade the Spanish government and deputies to follow Britain's example and pass legislation against the slave trade. A small number of Spanish and colonial liberals wanted to join Britain in this campaign. Miguel Guridi y Alcócer, a deputy from New Spain (later Mexico), introduced a motion into the Cortes on March 26, 1811 to abolish the slave trade. The actual Cortes debate in April, 1811, took place on resolutions introduced by the Spanish liberal, Agustín Arguelles, also against the slave trade, but at the end of this debate Alcócer steered it toward the abolition of slavery. The Cortes did not pass any of the resolutions, but instead turned them over to a commission to examine them. Here Cuban planters were able to exercise their considerable economic and political influence to defeat any further action by the metropolis against the source of their plantation labor.

Another isolated sign of Spanish liberal opposition to slavery had come much earlier in 1802, when Isidoro de Antillón y Marzo read a dissertation against slavery to the Real Academia Matritense de Derecho. In 1813, he tried again to bring up the subject of slavery in Spain's empire, but without success. When the Cortes was reconvened in 1820 for another three-year period, the Cuban cleric and philosopher, Padre Félix Varela y Morales, a Cuban delegate to the Cortes, presented his own plan of slave abolition to the Cortes. The Cortes took no action on this plan, but it represented the one occasion during the brief periods of Spanish liberalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century when a prominent clergyman took a stand against slavery in the Spanish Empire.

Following the independence of Spain's mainland Latin American colonies, Spain and the colonial elites in Cuba and Puerto Rico refashioned a second colonial empire based on plantation slavery in these islands. Opportunities for public debate on such a politically sensitive topic as slavery were rare in the colonies until the latter part of the nineteenth century because of the censorship Spain imposed, but in the metropolis itself the public sphere expanded at the same time as metropolitan and colonial politics became more closely intertwined. Slave labor provided the basis of the wealth of Spain's colonies upon which Spain depended. Yet the institution was coming under increasing attack principally from the abolitionist movement in Britain, but also from the United States and fledgling abolitionists in Spain itself.

The Abolitionist Society of Spain was not formally founded until 1865 when the abolition of slavery in the United States forced a radical rethinking of Spanish colonial policy. In the middle of the nineteenth century, however, public institutions began to proliferate in Madrid, giving rise to a growing number of debates on public policy. As Christopher Schmidt-Nowara has pointed out, the debate over free trade presaged the debate on abolition: free traders would support abolitionism while defenders of
protection upheld colonial slavery because of the wealth that labor produced. The debates over slavery became inextricably entangled with the complexities of Spanish colonial policy towards Cuba and Puerto Rico.

A Puerto Rican intellectual, Julio de Vizcarrondo, was one of the key founders of the Spanish Abolitionist Society, although the Spanish politician, Rafael María de Labra, soon emerged as Spain’s leading abolitionist. Puerto Rican abolitionists tended to favor immediate abolition while the Cuban reformers favored a gradualist approach. The gradualists feared both the impact of immediate abolition and its denial of the property rights of the slaveholders. Thus they favored compensation to the owners of slaves in return for their accepting abolition.

Following the passage of the law of free birth in 1870, the Moret Law, Spanish abolitionism fused with Spanish politics and mobilized a steadily expanding middle-class opposition. In 1873, an estimated 10,000 people marched in Madrid in favor of Puerto Rican emancipation. This public protest, along with others in major Spanish cities, marked a high point of Spanish abolitionism. When Spain became a republic in 1873, one of the first acts of the republican government was to abolish slavery in Puerto Rico, freeing the island’s 29,000 slaves with indemnities for the slave owners and a contract for the slaves to work for a further three years for their former masters. Cuba, however, was not included.

The ten-year civil war that broke out in Cuba in 1868 took the question of Cuban abolition out of the hands of the metropolitan abolitionists in Spain. Slavery in Cuba began to erode first in the east as slaves took advantage of the wartime conditions to find freedom and planters promised freedom to those slaves who would fight alongside them. Then, following the end of the Ten Years War, the metropolitan government promised a gradual emancipation in 1880, but was forced to accelerate it and enact a complete abolition law in 1886. The conditions in Cuba, including the dynamic efforts of the slaves themselves to seize their own freedom, determined the pace of Spanish abolition in Spain’s most important overseas colony. In contrast, the Spanish abolitionists played a relatively minor role in the final emancipation of slavery in Spain’s overseas empire. The emergence of Spanish abolitionists and Spanish abolitionism as a political force in the metropolis in the second half of the nineteenth century, however, is one of the elements behind the final success of the long and protracted emancipation struggle in Puerto Rico and Cuba. See also Cuba, Emancipation in; Latin America, Antislavery and Abolition in; Roman Catholic Church and Antislavery and Abolitionism.


David Murray

Spartacus Revolt (73–71 B.C.E.)

The revolt led by the slave Spartacus was the last in a series of three great slave rebellions that shook the Roman world during the second half of the
first century B.C.E. The first two uprisings occurred in Sicily, in 135 to 132 B.C.E. and from 104 to 100 B.C.E. In the first Sicilian war, the rebel slaves, who were led by a Syrian slave called Eunus and were comprised principally of herdsmen, took the city of Enna. Another group led by the slave Cleon later joined them. The slaves gained control of several cities in Sicily, but were ultimately defeated by the Romans. The second Sicilian slave war was a consequence of a law that ordained that no free citizen of an allied state could be enslaved in a Roman province. The governor of Sicily then freed 800 slaves but encountered the opposition of the slaveowners. When the governor decided to abrogate the law, a slave revolt ensued. The slaves chose Salvius as their leader and he established a kind of monarchy at the city of Triokala. A second group of slaves, led by the Cilician Athenion, also joined Salvius, and together they resisted the Roman forces until the final defeat.

These three slave revolts can be interpreted as a result of the political and economic transformations that had affected the Mediterranean area since the second century B.C.E. The Roman victory over Carthage and its hegemony in the Italian peninsula led to a concentration of wealth, particularly lands and captives, in the hands of the Roman aristocracy. In the territories of southern Italy and Sicily, as well as in North Africa, an agrarian economy developed that employed large numbers of slaves, although a free peasant economy never completely disappeared. War and piracy provided

Death of Spartacus, a slave who led a gladiators’ revolt in ancient Rome, 71 B.C.E. Courtesy of the North Wind Picture Archives.
slaves particularly from the eastern Mediterranean and introduced into Italy men and women of common ethnic and cultural origins. In southern Italy and Sicily the slaves were employed in rural properties that combined market-oriented agriculture with the raising of cattle and sheep. Spartacus' revolt differed from the Sicilian wars in two aspects: it occurred in southern Italy and not Sicily, and it was composed of gladiators, a role commonly assigned to slaves in the Roman world.

Spartacus, a Thracian by birth, was a gladiator in Capua. In 73 B.C.E., about seventy gladiators escaped from their training school and, led by Spartacus, started a revolt that ended only in 71 B.C.E. The revolt soon gathered broad popular support—it is estimated that 90,000 enslaved and free poor men joined—and spread to the Italian peninsula south of Rome. Rome's first response was to send out a pretor, Gaius Claudius Glaber, with 3,000 men. This army was defeated by Spartacus on Mount Vesuvius. A second force was then sent out, under the command of another pretor, Publius Varinius. Spartacus also defeated this army and even took the Roman lictors—symbols of magisterial authority—and Varinius's horse. In 72 B.C.E., two consuls, Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus, were sent out with two legions against Spartacus' troops. Both consular armies were defeated and the slaves took their supplies of food and weapons, which were divided among the followers. By late 72 B.C.E., the Senate assigned Marcus Licinius Crassus, a Roman noble, the command of almost 40,000 men to suppress Spartacus' revolt. After six months, the slave army was defeated in Lucania and Spartacus was killed. Crassus pursued the remnant that survived and killed 6,000 of them. They were crucified along the Via Apia, from Capua to Rome. Another 5,000 survivors were crushed by Pompey's army that was returning from Spain.

Spartacus' Revolt never faded from Roman memory. The historian, Tacitus, mentioned the Revolt in the second century C.E. in his *Annals*, as did the Christian writer, Orosius, in the fifth century C.E. in *History against the Pagans*. Spartacus was upheld as a paradigm of social unrest precisely because he threatened so fundamentally the slave-holding ideology of Roman society. Nevertheless, Latin and Greek sources on the revolt extolled its justice and discipline. They criticized the unjust behavior of owners that led the slaves to revolt; they contrasted the discipline of Spartacus' army with the lack of proper command in the Roman forces. It was just after Cassius restored the army discipline that victory was finally achieved; but they also emphasized the lack of honor in a Roman fighting such a war for slaves who were deemed incapable of waging war. According to Plutarch, Crassus "did not even attempt to ask for a great triumph for himself. Indeed, it seemed ignoble for him to celebrate even the lesser triumph... that the Romans call an ovatio for a war fought against slaves."

Yet neither Spartacus' revolt nor earlier slave rebellions in Sicily offered any critique of slavery as a social institution. The rebels led by Spartacus desired to leave Italy and return to their homelands. It was only in Europe in the eighteenth century as slave revolts erupted in European overseas colonies that Spartacus acquired the image of a revolutionary who had fought for universal freedom. Although Toussaint L'Ouverture, the leader of the
1791 slave revolt in the French colony of Saint Domingue, was called "the black Spartacus" by an admirer. Spartacus himself was no Toussaint avant la lettre. His aim as a rebel slave-leader was not to abolish slavery, but to struggle to escape the life of a slave. See also Cicero; Classical Rome and Antislavery.


Fábio Duarte Joly

**Spooner, Lysander (1808–1887)**

Lysander Spooner was an American legal theorist who became a prominent member of the radical abolitionist community in the 1840s when he wrote *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery.* His argument that the United States Constitution did not sanction slavery was made two decades before the ratification of the *Thirteenth Amendment.* Spooner’s theory challenged the view, held by William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, that the Constitution was a “covenant with death, and an agreement with hell” that permitted and protected slavery. In later life, Spooner wrote about anarchism, but his abolitionist writings were his most influential; both the Liberty Party and Frederick Douglass embraced his theory.

Whether the subject matter was deism, economics, jury trials, or slavery, Spooner always made legalistic arguments based on individuals’ natural rights. In his most famous abolitionist work, *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery,* published in two parts in 1845 and 1847, Spooner said that written laws violating these natural rights were not legitimate and that people were not legally obliged to obey them. The only permissible exception was when a law specifically stated, in unequivocal language, that the government was permitted to infringe on these rights. The Constitution was not such a law; it did not mention “slavery” or “slaves.”

This interpretation is based on an understanding of the original meaning of the language used by the Framers of the Constitution, and directly challenged the arguments made by Wendell Phillips. Phillips used historical documents (such as James Madison’s notes from the Constitutional Convention in 1787) to show that the original intent of the Framers had been to build into the Constitution a series of compromises that protected slavery. Spooner rejected the legal relevance of these documents, because he believed that a law could only be legally binding as it was specifically written down.

Spooner was not the first to argue that slavery was unconstitutional, or to reach this conclusion using natural rights arguments. The intellectual ancestry of his theory is seen in the 1830s works of, for example, Alvan Stewart and William Goodell. His was, however, the most comprehensive
and legalistic of these analyses of the relationship between slavery and the United States Constitution. Although he never again reached an audience matching that of the 1840s, Spooner continued to write antislavery works. In 1850, in *A Defence for Fugitive Slaves*, he challenged the legality of the fugitive slave acts of 1793 and 1850. Consistent with his lifelong distrust of government officials, he encouraged people to facilitate the escape of fugitive slaves. If this resulted in their arrest, Spooner believed that the best course of action was to challenge the constitutionality of the fugitive slave laws. He combined the natural rights theory of *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery* with the elements of judicial process that formed the core of his later work on jury trial. While his argument was radical, the civil disobedience that he advocated was a strategy widely adopted by opponents of the 1793 and 1850 laws.

Spooner enjoyed less support for the views expressed in *A Plan for The Abolition of Slavery (and) To the Non-Slaveholders of the South*, an 1858 pamphlet responding to the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision (1857). His radicalism continued to increase, as he saw no hope for a political end to slavery. He now advocated, if necessary, violent rather than merely legal challenges to laws. Illustrating his argument by using examples from the American and French Revolutions, Spooner called upon whites and blacks alike to engage in a revolutionary uprising in the South to liberate slaves. This ignited a wellspring of criticism, and most abolitionists were unwilling to condone this plan at a time of increasingly volatile sectional divisions. Spooner initially sought to ensure widespread distribution of his pamphlet, but John Brown persuaded him to suppress the publication because Brown feared it would jeopardize his planned raid at Harpers Ferry in 1859. Their ideas were similar, but consistent with his other writings Spooner focused on the theory of a revolution, whereas Brown intended to put ideas into practice.

Overall, during his lifetime the influence of Spooner’s work was limited; he never achieved the fame he expected his writings to bring. He lacked the social benefits of a college or law school education, having learned the law as an apprentice to several prominent Massachusetts lawyers (including Governor, and later Senator, John Davis). His status as a serious legal scholar was undermined by some of the radical positions that he adopted, and, as a result, history has generally regarded him as an abolitionist whose writings, while voluminous, were of limited legal or theoretical importance. See also Fugitive Slave Law; Garrisonians; United States Constitution and Antislavery.


Helen J. Knowles
Sri Lanka, Antislavery in

Portuguese (1505–1658) and Dutch (1658–1796) colonial Sri Lanka—until 1972, named Ceylon—imported chattel slaves as domestic servants. After the British replaced the Dutch in 1796, they considered two other forms of involuntary labor in Sri Lanka to be “slavery.” These were the “slave castes” of the Tamil north and slaves held in the Kandyan Kingdom in the interior of the island, which was annexed in 1815. Their gradual abolition became an important part of British triumphantist accounts of the benefits they brought to the colony. Other forms of coerced labor continued, however, and the plantation economy they created condemned millions of laborers to poverty and servility.

The British had guaranteed the property rights, including slaves, of Dutch subjects, and they also purchased slaves in India as soldiers (“Kaffir Corps”) and road laborers (“Pioneer Corps”). Once the Colonial Office assumed control from the English East India Company in 1802, the Government of Ceylon began to take steps to abolish slavery. Most chattel slaves were owned by Dutch descendants and by a few Sri Lankan elites who emulated them. The British ended the slave trade with India and began to compile slave registers to facilitate a gradual abolition. The first governor, Lord Frederick North (1798–1805), unsuccessfully attempted to abolish slavery by proclamation, but his successor, General Thomas Maitland (1805–10) defended the rights of slaveowners. Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, convinced slaveowners to liberate the children of their slaves voluntarily in 1816, and this was implemented by legislation in 1818. After 1821, the government emancipated the children of slaves in the southwest of the island by purchasing them at birth. Government slaves were liberated and served under indenture.

The “slave castes” of Jaffna proved to be an intractable problem. Three castes—kñviyar, nallavar, and pallar—historically were bonded as laborers to members of the dominant veeˇeˇa caste. Because they produced agricultural commodities valuable to the export trade, the Dutch considered them in law to be chattel slaves. In 1806, the veeˇeˇa were required to register their dependent laborers on penalty of forfeiture. This was never enforced. Ownership of slaves in Jaffna was made illegal after August 12, 1819, but no action was taken to relieve the disabilities of the bonded laborers.

Under Kandyan law, people of all castes could be enslaved temporarily in several ways: sold by poor parents, entering into debt peonage, as compensation for a crime, or (for women) as a result of sexual offenses. Keeping slaves as domestic servants and personal attendants was an important symbol of high status for royalty and chieftains. The government of Ceylon emancipated the slaves of the royal household when they deposed the last king, but they were reluctant to interfere with the privileges of their allies among the chieftains. They considered it a benign form of servitude, preferable to alternative punishments, and did not act against it.

Sri Lanka was exempted from the British Emancipation Act of 1833, but it stimulated interest in the remnants of slavery in the colony. The Act’s extravagant compensation to British West Indian slaveholders encouraged
Jaffna slave owners, especially in the coastal areas, to register their dependents in vain hope of receiving similarly generous compensation. Under scrutiny from the antislavery movement in England, the Colonial Office insisted in 1837 that all slaves be registered. Kandyans in the interior of Sri Lanka resisted the expensive and unwieldy provisions of this Act, and when the government failed to enforce it, the Colonial Office demanded the total abolition of slavery in 1841. The colonial government temporized, passing yet another slave registration act, which outraged the Colonial Office since all slaves could have been liberated for non-registration under earlier acts. When no slaves were registered, the governor proclaimed that slavery had ended, although a few hundred Kandyans continued to serve their chieftains. Ordinance No. 20 of 1844 finally made slavery illegal.

Although the formal abolition of slavery is usually listed as one of the great accomplishments of British colonial rule, the government of Ceylon only reluctantly yielded to British demands for abolition. Missionaries showed little interest in the antislavery movement, since their proselytizing was aimed at the higher castes. The government did little to improve the conditions of the people who were liberated: the "slave castes" of Jaffna remained depressed, and the Kandyan chieftains continued to behave as if they were a feudal aristocracy.

The government did not intervene in the forced labor of the lower grades of the Sinhalese sal-gama caste who had been required since pre-colonial days to peel cinnamon bark for export. Only the collapse of the cinnamon industry ended this practice. The British colonial government relied on universal corvée labor (r-jak-riya), primarily for opening roads, until 1833, when it was replaced by a road tax.

The emergence of a plantation economy in the 1830s resulted in a new form of servitude. The coffee plantations of Sri Lanka were modeled directly on the slave plantations of the Caribbean, substituting poor immigrant labor from south India for slaves. These "Plantation Tamils" were isolated in "cooly lines" on the plantations, ethnically distinct from the local population, and tied by indebtedness to the plantation. Labor laws made it difficult to leave the plantations. Ironically, these laborers were called "free laborers" because they were unindentured.

The Colonial Office rejected labor legislation based on archaic English "Master and Servant" laws in 1837 and 1840 on the grounds that they set out severe penalties for laborers, on the word of the employers, but offenses of employers against their workers were not made punishable. The government of Ceylon added provisions to make employers who failed to honor contracts liable to a fine of £10, and this took effect as Ordinance No. 5 of 1841. Under this act, all laborers were under contracts that remained in effect until the laborer gave one month's notice. The planters put every possible obstacle in the way of a laborer who attempted to give notice against their wishes. Laborers were not allowed to exercise their right to break a contract for non-payment of the previous month's wages on the grounds that they had entered into a fresh contract by accepting food and lodging on the plantation, something that was unavoidable.
The living and working conditions of Plantation Tamils were improved only from pressure from the Colonial Office, most famously after 1861 when Florence Nightingale questioned the government about the high mortality rates of plantation laborers. Some laborers also managed to leave the plantations illegally. Gradually, the living and working conditions of the Plantation Tamils improved, but they remain the poorest people on the island. See also Indian Sub-Continent, Antislavery in.


Patrick Peebles

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady (1815–1902)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was best known as a leader of the woman’s rights movement in the United States, but she found inspiration and allies through her early identification as an abolitionist. She converted to abolitionism at her cousin Gerrit Smith’s home in the mid-1830s, where “the anti-slavery platform,” she remembered, “was the best school the American people ever had on which to learn republican principles and ethics.” She married Henry B. Stanton, political abolitionist leader, on May 1, 1840. On their honeymoon, the Stantons visited the Weld-Grimké family and attended the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London, where Elizabeth met James G. Birney, William Lloyd Garrison, and Lucretia Mott, who became her lifelong mentor. When the London meeting refused to seat U.S. women, Stanton and Mott resolved to call a convention solely to discuss the rights of women. Eight years later, in 1848, they organized such a convention at Seneca Falls, New York. There, 100 women and men signed a Declaration of Sentiments (drafted in part by Stanton), asserting that “all men and women are created equal.”

Although a lifelong sympathizer of Garrisonian abolitionists, Stanton also had learned from political abolitionists the importance of the vote. Supported by Frederick Douglass, she introduced the demand for woman’s suffrage at the Seneca
**Falls Convention.** Throughout the 1850s, Stanton worked with Susan B. Anthony, drawing on a network of abolitionist allies to promote women's right to vote, keep their children in case of divorce, and control their own wages. During the Civil War, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the Women's Loyal National League, which generated petitions with 400,000 signatures in support of abolitionism. In 1866, Stanton helped to “bury the woman in the citizen,” turning the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention into the American Equal Rights Association to work for voting rights for African American men and women of all races. She and Anthony spoke throughout Kansas in 1867, on behalf of a state constitution that would grant equal suffrage for all. When Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment, giving voting rights to African American men but not to women, Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association to work for woman suffrage. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Grimké, Angelina; Grimké, Charlotte Forten; Weld, Dwight Theodore; Women and Antislavery; Women's Antislavery Societies.


*Judith Wellman*

**Stewart, Maria Miller (1803—1879)**

Black abolitionist writer and speaker, Maria Stewart, is most often cited as the first recorded American-born woman to give a public political speech in the United States, when she addressed a “promiscuous audience” of male and female, black and white, in Boston’s Franklin Hall, on September 21, 1832.

Maria Miller was born a free black woman in 1803 in Hartford, Connecticut. After being orphaned at a young age, she was raised in a clergyman’s family as a servant. She was a domestic worker from the age of fifteen until her marriage. It is not known exactly when she moved to Boston, where she became part of the small but active black community there in the 1820s. In 1826, she married a black veteran of the War of 1812, James Stewart. James Stewart worked as a ship’s outfitter, which, together with shared attendance at the African Baptist Church, brought the couple into regular contact with the used clothing merchant and black antislavery activist, David Walker. His famous *Appeal* (1829) proved a major intellectual influence on Maria Stewart.

Following the publication of Walker’s *Appeal,* a rapid sequence of tragedies struck Maria Stewart. First, her husband James died in December 1829; then David Walker died of consumption in August 1830. Dishonest
white lawyers compounded Stewart's sorrows by cheating her of her late husband's pension, which meant she had to return to domestic labor.

Stewart was among those who supported *The Liberator*, a pioneering abolitionist newspaper published by William Lloyd Garrison, when it commenced in 1831. She brought her first essay for publication to Garrison's office in September of that year. The significance of this essay, "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on which We Must Build," resides in both its occasion and its content. Published soon after Nat Turner's revolt in Southampton, Virginia in August 1831, but while Turner was still hiding, Stewart boldly extended Walker's critique of American slavery and racism to new circumstances, and as a woman. Stewart pointedly argued that "if blacks are spiritually equal to whites, then social equality must follow." Noting the sexual abuse that accompanied slavery, she taunts the slaveholders that they have already created a multiracial nation, in which "our souls are fired with the same love of liberty and independence with which your souls are fired." Recognizing the singularity of Stewart's voice and perspective, Garrison became an outspoken supporter of hers, and published the essay as a free-standing pamphlet.

In 1832 and 1833, Stewart gave a series of four public talks, the texts of which were all published in *The Liberator*. Three years before the white Grimké sisters roused controversy by speaking in public, Stewart experienced both the self-empowerment and the vitriol visited upon women who dared to defy their traditionally enforced silence. The criticisms eventually discouraged her enough that she abandoned her speaking career, leaving Boston to resettle in the Brooklyn, New York area in late 1833.

Her speeches and writings developed four important themes. The first was black self-reliance; she consistently called on the free black community to build its own schools, stores, and other institutions. Secondly, she stressed the nexus of religion and respectability; Stewart closely linked piety with sobriety, education, and black progress. She often employed evangelical language, and, following Walker, denounced American racial hypocrisy as the most perilous of sins.

Politically, Stewart focused more on Northern racism than on Southern slavery. She denounced rampant discrimination in employment, the consignment of blacks to manual labor, and vociferously opposed the plan of the American Colonization Society to return free blacks to Africa. Finally, her feminism grew over her brief public career; in her farewell speech given in Boston in September 1833, she vigorously defended her public speaking by dismantling apparent biblical mandates proscribing women's public voice, especially those pronounced by Paul in his New Testament Letters.

After moving to Brooklyn, Stewart remained involved in abolitionist activity. She attended the 1837 Women's Antislavery Convention, and participated in a black women's literary society. She sent letters to Frederick Douglass's paper, *The North Star*. In the 1840s, Stewart became a schoolteacher in Brooklyn. In 1852, she moved to Baltimore, where she started her own school. During the Civil War, she relocated to Washington D.C., where she continued her teaching. In 1872, she served as matron of the Freedman's Hospital in Washington. In her last years, she recovered her
husband's stolen pension; she used the funds to reissue her writings in 1879. Stewart died in Washington, D.C., in December of that same year.

Maria Stewart has unjustly remained a footnote in women’s and abolitionist history. Stewart was a self-educated and sophisticated thinker whose writings pioneered the exploration of intersections of gender, class, labor, privilege, and race that are still debated today. Inspired by the insights and passion of David Walker, she, too, united evangelical language with an incisive analysis of the situation of free blacks to array the religious hypocrisies and gross racial injustice of antebellum America. Though her public career was brief, her commitment to attaining freedom and self-development for her people never wavered. While the recognition of her importance to feminist thought has grown over the past few decades, Maria Stewart’s significance has yet to be fully plumbed. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Grimké, Angelina Emily; Women’s Antislavery Societies.

Further Readings:

Jennifer Rycenga

Stipendiary Magistrates

In 1833, the Emancipation Act was passed in England, ending 300 years of slavery in the British-colonized Caribbean. Among the clauses of the Act, designed to be implemented on August 1, 1834, was the provision for the introduction of stipendiary magistrates.

These men, sent out from England, were appointed to visit the plantations and settle disputes between employers and apprentices, and generally to make sure that the labor system ran properly. They worked on two-year contracts and could be dismissed if they were inefficient. But there were not enough stipendiary magistrates in each territory to make the system work well. There were only 150 in all for the British-controlled Caribbean territories, with sixty of these stationed in Jamaica. In the Bahamas, three were appointed in 1834 for New Providence, Eleuthera and Turks Islands.
By 1838, three more were appointed and the system was described as working fairly well in the Bahamas. In fact, there were fewer complaints in the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands over how the system worked.

In some territories, the local Justices of the Peace (JPs) assisted stipendiary magistrates. Some of these JPs were of mixed race (coloreds), like Richard Hill of Jamaica. This complicated arrangements because some white employers did not wish to relate to colored people in this way. Some white JPs themselves also used apprentice labor and did not want colored people employed as JPs.

Many magistrates came from the planter class or were proplanter in their thinking and so could not function as objective and neutral negotiators in disputes. Some found the task of visiting the numerous estates difficult, especially in a large island like Jamaica. Many died from health-related illnesses during the first year of their service. They considered the initial salary of £300 grossly inadequate. This was later increased to £450. It was widely understood that this low salary made them likely to accept bribes from employers. In addition, as the magistrates did not have any control over plantation discipline, the owners could quite freely administer punishments. If the apprentices refused to work and had to be brought before the courts, then the magistrates had no control over the legal process. The result was that apprentices were systematically victimized by the legal system. See also Apprenticeship.


Verene Shepherd

Story of Joseph (Genesis 30:22–24, 37–50)

The earliest Anglo-American abolitionism, both black and white, was informed by Christianity. Abolitionists scanned the Bible for arguments against the slave trade and slavery, and they relied on the superiority of the New over the Old Testament to dismiss the common claim that Jewish slaveholding authorized the modern institution among Christians. Furthermore, abolitionists drew on biblical narratives to support their arguments. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt through Moses (Exodus 1–15) has often been considered the foundational biblical narrative of African American writing, both creative and religious, but early black writers were far more interested in Joseph than in Moses. The story of Joseph provided a narrative foundation on which books like Olaudah Equiano’s Interesting Narrative (1789) were built. Joseph provided a model of a righteous slave who became the savior of his family—a useful paradigm for black men who were acting as abolitionists. Several points of convergence between the ancient and the modern lines of events seemed obvious. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and seized by slave traders traveling into Egypt: this corresponded to the West African slave trade. He was made a slave, pushed toward dangerous sexual activity, and sent to prison: these corresponded to
the hardships, vulnerabilities, and humiliations of American slavery. His ability to interpret dreams secured his release from prison: this corresponded to an African religious background shared by many slaves, as well as probably to African American folk practices. And he ultimately came to understand that God’s hand had been at work in all his trials, leading him to be the savior of his family as he provided them food and arranged for their pasture lands in a time of drought: this corresponded to the Calvinist predestinarianism that was common among Equiano’s peers, as well as to their sense that they were serving blacks by opposing the slave trade and slavery. In general, thus, when the biblicism of the abolitionists is considered, we should be aware of the ways the scriptures were deployed. The Bible provided material for antislavery arguments (such as the mandate to love others), personae who triumphed because of righteousness or faith (such as Moses, Job, Daniel, and Jesus), and narratives useful to the self-understanding of abolitionists (such as the story of Joseph). See also Bible and Slavery; Book of Exodus.


*John Saillant*

**Stowe, Harriet Beecher (1811–1896)**

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s contribution to the antislavery movement centers upon her novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which rapidly attracted worldwide attention, above all along a transatlantic axis running between the United States and the United Kingdom and Europe. *Uncle Tom* concentrates upon the stories of two families of slaves “owned” by a Southern planter family, the Shelbys, and on the fates of Uncle Tom on the one hand and George and Liza Harris on the other. The novel first appeared in serial form in the abolitionist newspaper, *The National Era*, during 1851–1852, and immediately afterward as a book published by John P. Jewett, entitled *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, The Man That Was a Thing*.

Stowe, from late adolescence onwards, had developed growing antislavery sympathies, first in New England and, after 1832, in Ohio. But she had almost no direct experience with slavery in the American South save for one brief visit to Kentucky in 1834. Thus she largely relied upon anecdotes related by others, for example, the stories told to her by escaped slaves, including
her own servant, Eliza Buck, when she was living in Cincinnati from 1832 to 1850. Stowe also drew upon antislavery publications, such as the pamphlet written by Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (1839). The pamphlet drew on a mélange of sources, including escaped slaves’ stories, but chiefly on newspaper reports, particularly accounts in numerous Southern newspapers. Stowe also spoke to an escaped slave, Josiah Henson, and read his 1849 autobiography. In the subtitle of later editions of his book, Henson claimed to be “Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s ‘Uncle Tom.’” However, Stowe never accepted this claim, and, though there are similarities with Henson, Tom is substantially a fictional character—the creation of a white female writer seeking to stir up active resistance to the continuation of slavery in the United States, and especially to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

Stowe succeeded in her aim. Abraham Lincoln, on meeting her in 1862, is said to have exclaimed, “So you’re the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war?” The persistence of this apocryphal story provides an indication of the scale of Uncle Tom’s success. The first printing of the book (5,000 copies) sold out in a few days, and it was to be constantly reprinted in the United States and the United Kingdom and across Europe (in translation). Over 300,000 issues were sold in the first year in the United States, a figure still dwarfed by British sales, which soared over 1.5 million. Voyaging abroad to receive an antislavery petition composed by the duchess of Sutherland, the earl of Shaftesbury, and the earl of Carlisle, and signed by half a million women inspired by *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe discovered how much of an international antislavery celebrity she had become. She subsequently traveled widely in Europe, particularly in Britain and Ireland, rallying support for American antislavery efforts.

Yet, *Uncle Tom’s* reliance on anecdote, its force as an antislavery polemic, and its targeting of a white audience have given the book a controversial history. White Southerners were incensed, claiming the book distorted the workings of the institution of slavery. Faced with such criticism, Stowe rushed out *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin Presenting the Original Facts and Documents Upon Which the Story Is Founded* in 1853. African Americans, for very different reasons, were also uneasy, particularly about the book’s portraits of black slaves. For example, the portrayal of Topsy, the young slave girl, as a naïve, mischievous, capering, dishonest self-hater, came in for heavy criticism—Stowe’s unthinking reliance on blackface minstrelsy’s excesses were all too clear. But Uncle Tom himself attracted the heaviest criticism. As early as 1852, William C. Nell criticized Tom for his passive reliance on the efficacy of Christian forgiveness. By 1865, Frederick Douglass, despite his *Paper*’s initial enthusiasm, in a speech to the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, expressed concern about Tom’s readiness “to take off his Coat whenever required, fold his hands, and be whipped by anybody who wanted to whip him.” By 1926, William Stanley Braithwaite observed in *The Negro in American Literature* that “the moral gain and historical effect of Uncle Tom have been artistic loss and setback.” In 1956, J.C. Furnas, in his *Goodbye to Uncle Tom*, described
the “theological terror” that the book invoked as comparable to the “terror” upon which the Southern States’ “lynch mob[s]” had relied. Consequently, Furnas claimed, “American Negroes have made ... [“Uncle Tom”] a hissing and a byword.” Or, as James Baldwin put it in his Partisan Review essay of 1949, “Tom ... has been robbed of his humanity and divested of his sex.”

In contrast, outside the South, the white reception of the book was generally characterized by respect, if not admiration. Initial reviews from anti-slavery sympathizers on both sides of the Atlantic were eulogistic, although some advocates of “immediate” or “ultra” abolition found Stowe’s message too conservative. Those unconvinced about abolition’s desirability were even more wary, if compelled, to recognize the book’s power. For example, on September 3, 1852, a London Times reviewer wrote that “with the instincts of her sex, the clever authoress takes the shortest road to her purpose, and strikes at the convictions of her readers by assailing their hearts.”

As this passage implies, Stowe’s novel is carefully contrived, strategically aiming to appeal as widely as possible to its audiences, be they antislavery converts, the unconverted or—perhaps above all—agnostics. Part of the problem would seem to be Stowe’s relative naivety concerning abolitionist politics. Before the publication of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Stowe was only a sympathizer, not an active abolitionist; she only learned to negotiate with confidence the politics of abolition—the competing claims of Garrisonian advocates of immediate abolition on the one hand and gradualists on the other—after being thrust into the international limelight.

Yet Stowe’s naivety can be overstated. Acknowledging this provides a way of analyzing why Uncle Tom’s narrative splits into two stories. As the fugitive slaves George and Eliza Harris escape North, Tom, however, progresses southwards, deeper into servitude and suffering. As George and Eliza travel North, their story increasingly engages with the public politics of abolitionism and the solutions posited by those abolitionists, political abolitionists, who saw the remedy for slavery as primarily residing in political change. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act marked a significant defeat for these political abolitionists, by dramatically extending slavery’s impact. Stowe traces the Act’s consequences for Eliza and George during their northward journey: Bounty hunters strive to recapture the Harrises during their journey; Senator Bird and his wife debate the Act’s rectitude; George makes his “Declaration of Independence” in an armed stand-off; and the British colony of Canada is ironically identified as the runaways’ blessed land of freedom. The repeated sense is that in the public domain of politics, insuperable institutional impediments block the achievement of perfect Christian charity. Indeed doubt is shed upon the idea that any public human institution can deliver the necessary reform.

In counterpoint with this political, Northward plotline, Tom’s involuntary progress South effectively takes up the arguments of those abolitionists who saw a resolution to the issue of slavery residing not in the political arena, since even the United States Constitution itself countenanced slavery but in the persuasive efficacy of the moral arguments against both slavery—as when the saintly Little Eva disputes with the slave-owning St. Clare—and racism—as when St. Clare shows Ophelia how she dreads
“touching” Topsy. This sort of moral persuasion is climactically advanced by Tom’s Christ-like death and final words: “Ye poor miserable critter [Legree]! ... I forgive ye, with all my soul!” (II: 275). The focus of the political plot-strand centering on Eliza and George is primarily external/public, demanding political action and resistance, while the moral suasionist strand of Tom’s story is primarily internal/domestic. Tom practices perfectionism in his faith, residing in his belief that, even unto death, God’s justice will prevail.

Focusing upon this narrative division and the implicit support it provides to moral suasionists provides a way of understanding how some feminist critics came to take *Uncle Tom* as highly significant in its advocacy of moral nurturing, archetypally depicted in the Quaker matriarch, Hannah’s harmoniously-organized Christian kitchen. More significantly, the novel’s double plotline also, at least apparently, provides a way of rebutting those critics dismayed by Tom’s passivity: George, unlike Tom, actively fights his persecutors. Though George is a light-skinned quadroon, so raising the issue of how skin color ranks high in many abolitionists’ calculations of “worth” (as in Richard Hildreth’s *The White Slave* (1836) and its use of a “white” hero to stir up antislavery anger), vigorous resistance is also offered in Stowe’s novel by the dark-skinned Jim Selden. This surely contradicts Baldwin’s 1949 suggestion that Tom is Stowe’s “only black man.” Yet it is clear why Baldwin errs; Selden appears only briefly, and elsewhere St. Clare ponders how, since “there is a pretty fair infusion of Anglo-Saxon blood among our slaves now ... with all our haughty feelings burning in their veins,” they “will not always be bought and sold” (II: 76). African Americans’ unease with this novel’s color politics cannot be dismissed.

Yet it is important to distinguish between the novel itself and variations that have constantly flourished in popular culture. The illustrations to the novel have often emphasized a sentimentalized Uncle Tom, or brought out the blackface traces in Stowe’s characterizations. Much more damagingly, Southern racist popularizations, as in the staging of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin as It Is* in Baltimore in 1852, or in *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or Southern Life as It Is* by Mary Henderson Eastman in 1852, portrayed Southern slavery as a pastoral idyll overseen by paternalistic planters and “Uncle Tom” suffering racism in the North and gladly returning South to his cabin. Such deformations explain well just why “Uncle Tom” became so much of a “hissing and a byword,” in J.C. Furnas’s 1956 verdict. As a tentative counter-balance to this emphasis, reference needs to be made to Stowe’s other antislavery novel from 1856, *Dred; a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, which offers a messianic portrait of a runaway maroon. Concealed in the swamps, Dred resists white attempts at recapture, while denouncing slavery—if in an overly melodramatic and apocalyptic fashion. However, Stowe has always primarily entered public consciousness as Uncle Tom’s creator, and, in her depiction of George and Eliza resolving to travel to Africa in line with American Colonization Society propaganda, as a colonizationist. One sign of the resulting problem of this legacy is how, in the late 1960s, Tom once again needed reinventing—this time, in the wake of the rise of black power—as a
resistant hero quite unlike the original. Stowe’s Uncle Tom remains deeply discomforting. See also Literature and Abolition.


Richard J. Ellis

Sturge, Joseph (1793–1859)

Joseph Sturge was an English corn factor, abolitionist, and political reformer. A member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, Sturge’s life-long political activism was characterized by an uncompromising moral certitude informed by his evangelical religious faith. Sturge devoted much of his life to the struggle to emancipate all slaves and end the system of apprenticeship that followed slavery in parts of the West Indies. He also contributed his considerable energies to expanding the franchise and to promoting pacifism, free trade, education reform, church disestablishment, and temperance. His life-long unwillingness to compromise moral principle for political expediency can be seen in his commitment to the temperance movement. Despite the importance of the trade in alcohol for most corn factors, Sturge steadfastly refused to sell malting barley to distilleries or rent his warehouses to spirit merchants. Such uncompromising stances characterized his activism in the antislavery movement as well.

Joseph Sturge was born August 2, 1793 in Elberton. At the age of twenty-one, Sturge became a partner in a corn factor business in Bewdley. In 1823, he relocated to Birmingham, a move that marked both the beginning of his ascent in the world of business and his entry into popular political agitation. In 1834, he married Eliza Cropper, who died in childbirth less than a year later, and in 1846 remarried to Hannah Dickinson, with whom he had five children.

Shortly after moving to Birmingham, Sturge began organizing and attending public meetings advocating the gradual emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire, and by 1826 he was secretary of the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society. By 1830, Sturge was calling for immediate abolition, and pursuing more aggressive grassroots strategies for achieving this end. His conversion to immediate abolition is representative of a wider conflict within the abolitionist movement between many in the rank-and-file, who were losing patience with London-based leaders advocating gradual and conditional, rather than immediate and entire, abolition.

In 1831, Sturge contributed to the formation of the Agency Committee, which paid lecturers to travel the country and speak at public meetings about the merits of immediate abolition within the British Empire. These lecturers also worked to coordinate the petitioning and other activities of local antislavery societies, particularly the large number of women’s antislavery societies, which had been in existence for some time. This created a swell of grass-roots pressure that often ran ahead of the movement’s London leadership. After the passage of the 1832 Reform Act, Agency Societies worked to extract pledges from parliamentary candidates in favor of
immediate emancipation, which Sturge published to encourage supporters to vote only for pledged candidates. In 1833, voters returned a Parliament with over 100 pledged members and in the same year Sturge participated in an antislavery delegate conference in London to keep the pressure on the government to act.

Lord Stanley’s 1833 Act abolishing slavery in the British Empire, with its provisions for a period of unpaid apprenticeship for former slaves and compensation for slave owners, was a bitter disappointment for Sturge. He believed that the apprenticeship system was de facto slavery, and felt that it was the slaves themselves, rather than the owners, who deserved to be compensated. Sturge personally communicated these feelings to Lord Stanley himself, and the strength of his anger over the provisions of this act put him at odds with many parliamentarians, as well as much of the leadership of the London Anti-Slavery Society.

As Sturge began to hear reports of ill-treatment of apprentices in the Caribbean, he and others attempted to reenergize the rank-and-file of the abolitionist movement. In November of 1836, Sturge traveled to the West Indies with Thomas Harvey, Reverend John Scoble, and William Lloyd in order to collect information about the apprenticeship system first-hand. They interviewed apprentices, magistrates, and plantation owners, and uncovered abundant evidence of cruelty and injustice. Sturge and Harvey laid out their findings in *The West Indies in 1837*. Sturge also purchased a Jamaican apprentice named James Williams, freed him, brought him to Britain, and published an account of the violent and inhumane treatment he suffered as an apprentice in *The Narrative of James Williams*.

Upon his return in May of 1837, Sturge traveled across England delivering public speeches about his experiences in the West Indies and the brutality of post-abolition apprenticeship. The Colonial Office was forced to investigate his allegations, and Sturge was called to testify before the reconvened Parliamentary Select Committee on Apprenticeship. In November 1837, he called a meeting of delegates in London to coordinate the activities of local antislavery societies for exerting pressure on Parliament to end apprenticeship. At this meeting, the Central Negro Emancipation Committee was founded, and soon Parliament was besieged with petitions from all corners of Britain. By act of Parliament, all apprentices were emancipated on August 1, 1838.

Next, Sturge focused on the conditions and rights of recently freed slaves, as well as the abolition of slavery worldwide. In April 1839, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was formed, and Sturge was made an honorary member. In June of 1840, a World’s Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London. Although many countries were represented, most of the delegates came from Britain. The conference bitterly divided over the issue of whether female attendees would have the full rights of participants or would be treated merely as “visitors,” with Sturge taking the latter side of the debate. The conference achieved little. In 1841, Sturge traveled to the United States, where he met with many American abolitionists and politicians, and also engaged in some dangerous confrontations with slave owners and traders. He participated in a variety of antislavery protests,
including the illegal distribution of antislavery literature in slave states. He wrote about his experiences in *A Visit to the United States in 1841*. Sturge was involved with the international antislavery movement for the remainder of his life.

During the period in which Sturge was active in abolitionism, he was aware of the growing use of rhetoric comparing the denial of political rights to British male workers at home to slavery. Although Sturge disapproved of physical force used by some supporters of Chartism, and personally disliked Feargus O’Connor, he was sympathetic to the cause of universal suffrage. As a Birmingham alderman, he forcefully argued against the importation of a small contingent of the Metropolitan Police Force to suppress Chartist meetings in 1839. Sturge, who had many friends among “new move” and “church chartists,” gradually became more vocal in support of universal male suffrage. In November 1841, Sturge suggested the Anti-Corn Law League work toward expanding the franchise. Despite the cold reception he received, Sturge continued to work for a middle class alliance between supporters of the Anti-Corn Law League and Chartists in order to gain universal suffrage. This Alliance was realized in April 1842 at a Birmingham conference that led to the formation of the National Complete Suffrage Union (NCSU). Complete Suffrage Union branches were formed in many parts of the country. The proposed alliance ultimately foundered due to the unwillingness of Chartists to abandon the full Charter, or even the Charter in name, which some members of the NCSU felt had been tainted with sedition and violence. The alliance was further undermined by leaders of the National Charter Association, who felt that the NCSU distracted Chartists from the primary goals of the movement, and expressed doubts about whether the repeal of the Corn Laws would result in benefits for the working class. Additionally, the strikes and disorder of August of 1842, as well as the failure of the second Chartist petition, frightened away many potential middle class supporters. In 1842, Sturge stood for Parliament in Nottingham, but lost to John Walter, the owner of *The Times*.

Joseph Sturge died on May 14, 1859 in Birmingham. Three years after his death, a crowd of nearly 12,000 people came out to witness the unveiling of a statue of Sturge created by sculptor John Thomas. The statue recognized the very important contributions that Joseph Sturge made in the abolition movement and to the ending of apprenticeship. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; Immediate Emancipation.


Christopher Frank
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956)

The Supplementary Slavery Convention of 1956 complemented but did not replace the Slavery Convention of 1926. The Second World War had seen Nazi concentration camps in which inmates were either killed or worked to death, and the forced recruitment of thousands of Europeans from German-occupied countries to work as slave labor for the Germans. The gulags or forced labor camps in the Soviet Union, to which dissenters, kulaks, criminals, prisoners of war, and many innocent people were sentenced, were now known to be huge enterprises, producing goods for export on an unprecedented scale. The slave trade had been reduced to a small smuggling traffic and chattel slavery was still legal in the Arabian Peninsula, including the British-protected emirates on the Persian Gulf and in the Aden Protectorate. Servile and forced marriage and the exploitation of children continued.

The colonial powers, as the result of the war, had been supplanted as great powers by the United States and the Soviet Union. The United Nations, which had replaced the defunct League of Nations, was torn by permanent rivalry between the communist states and their supporters and the western powers and their allies. In 1948, the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Soviets, who considered slavery to be merely the chattel slavery practiced in Arabia and in some British territories, were responsible for article four of the declaration which said that no one should be held in slavery or servitude and that the slave trade should be prohibited "in all its forms." The United States and its allies considered that "slavery in all its forms" included the gulags and other Soviet labor practices. The declaration, however, was a mere statement of principle requiring the drafting of conventions to give it force.

Against this background of growing tension between the Soviets and their allies, and the democratic powers and their supporters, the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, led by Charles Greenidge, came to New York to rally support at the United Nations for a new and more effective treaty against chattel slavery and the range of practices similar to it, that had been described in the Report of the Temporary Slavery Commission in 1925.

Greenidge persuaded the Belgian delegate to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to propose that the United Nations establish a committee to inquire into slavery in all its forms. This became inextricably mixed up with British and United States' efforts to include the slave labor camps of the Soviet Union, and with the Soviet attacks on the labor practices of the capitalist states and colonial powers. After much wrangling, an ad hoc committee on slavery finally met in 1950 and 1951. It was supposed to consist of five members—one from each of the areas into which the United States had divided the world—the Soviet or Eastern Bloc, the Western bloc, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. But suitable members could not be found for all areas. The committee eventually broke up in disorder, its members at loggerheads, and its time cut short by ECOSOC because Chile, Peru, and Colombia objected to the inclusion of peonage in
its discussions. The United States also decided that forced labor should be the subject of a separate committee.

However, the slavery committee’s recommendation that the United Nations should take over the 1926 Slavery Convention was accepted in 1953. Then Greenidge took the decisive step of submitting a draft supplementary convention to ECOSOC. Eventually after more discussions and reports, ECOSOC appointed a small drafting committee to draw up the convention. It met in Geneva in January 1956. It consisted of the colonial powers and their supporters, five in all, and of an anticolonial block of India, Ecuador, Egypt, Yugoslavia, and Soviet Russia. Agreement was thus hard to get and interest ran high. When the draft was finally discussed in ECOSOC, the delegates of more than fifty states attended. The communist bloc and Latin American states came in force, and the discussions took place in the highly charged atmosphere that followed the Suez Canal crisis. Decisions were made for political, rather than humanitarian, reasons.

Nevertheless, the Supplementary Convention was signed in 1956. Unlike the 1926 convention, it clearly stated that slavery included debt-bondage, serfdom, forced marriage, early marriage, transfers of and the inheritance of women, and the adoption of children for their exploitation. It also defined these practices and stated that they should be eliminated, together with the slave trade. Enslavement and enticement into slavery were to be criminal offences, as were branding and mutilation. Signatories were to cooperate and to supply the Secretary General with copies of their laws and the measures they were taking to end all these forms of slavery. However, there were no means for enforcement, and many of the practices were embedded in the cultures of the former colonial states, which had gained or were just gaining their independence.

The treaty marked the beginning of the end of Britain’s leadership of the antislavery movement. It had to give up its long held rights to search shipping even in the slave trade zone in response to protests from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan, and Iran, and in order to gain other concessions over applying the treaty to those parts of the British Empire in various stages of dependence over which it no longer had full control.

The convention continued the ever-widening definition of slavery, or “slavery like practices” begun in 1926 and which continued for the rest of the twentieth century. It also convinced the Anti-Slavery Society of the need for a permanent United Nations Slavery Committee. See also Brussels Act; League of Nations and Antislavery and Abolition.


Suzanne Miers

Swisshelm, Jane Grey (1815–1884)

Jane Swisshelm enjoyed considerable attention as an American antislavery newspaper editor and writer, especially in the late 1840s and early 1850s.
She also endorsed other social reform movements, including women’s rights and temperance.

Born into a Scottish-Irish family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Swisshelm’s life was in many ways shaped by her Covenanter faith, a branch of the Presbyterian Church that often preached opposition to slavery. Taught by her religion to dislike slavery in theory, Swisshelm’s brief residence with her husband, James Swisshelm, in Louisville in the late 1830s convinced her to dislike it in practice. Her experiences there, including her conversations with enslaved women and men and their owners, formed much of the material she would later use in her editorials and public addresses.

By the 1840s, the couple had returned to the Pittsburgh area, and Jane Swisshelm began to write for the local Liberty Party paper, the Spirit of Liberty. When that paper went bankrupt, in December 1847, Swisshelm started her own paper for the Liberty Party, the Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter. She soon gained notoriety because of her willingness to engage male editors in heated debates over slavery and women’s rights. Swisshelm opposed slavery on the grounds that slaves, especially women, were poorly and immorally treated, and she sited anecdotes from her stay in Louisville to illustrate her points. Although her newspapers consistently endorsed the Free Soil and Republican parties that called only for halting the spread of slavery into the Territories, Swisshelm held that the Constitution would allow immediate abolition everywhere. Further, immediate abolition was necessitated by the extent of slavery’s moral crimes.

Her editorials were reprinted in a wide variety of newspapers because of her flare for language and personal invective, and Swisshelm quickly became a leading American journalist. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, hired her to cover Washington politics in 1850, where she was the first female reporter to sit in a congressional press box. However, she soon lost her position when she unleashed her penchant for personal attack on Senator Daniel Webster, who had just infuriated the antislavery community by supporting the Fugitive Slave Law. Reporting that Webster had a large family by a black mistress, Swisshelm spread a current rumor but was unable to back up her story. While fired by Greeley, Swisshelm’s continued work for abolition won the praise of Frederick Douglass. By 1853, her paper had a circulation estimated at approximately 6,000. She also serialized her own fiction (under both her own name and the pseudonym Jeannie Deans) in the Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter, including her prodigal reform novel The Locust’s Song. In addition, she wrote an advice book, Letters to Country Girls, in 1853.

By the mid-1850s, however, Swisshelm struggled to keep her paper afloat in the face of a lack of party financial support and the need to spend time with her daughter, Zo. She sold the Saturday Visiter in 1854. In addition, her always tempestuous marriage was collapsing. In 1857, she deserted her husband and moved to St. Cloud, Minnesota, to live with her sister. There she founded another newspaper, the St. Cloud Saturday Visiter, which was soon embroiled in verbal combat with the powerful local Democratic Party leader, Sylvanus Lowry. In March 1858, Lowry and others destroyed Swisshelm’s printing press. Swisshelm thrived on conflict, however, and she
soon had a new paper, the St. Cloud Democrat, up and running. Once again in the forefront of the news, Swisshelm embarked for the first time on a speaking tour, traveling throughout Minnesota giving rousing and often satiric speeches in favor of abolition and women's rights.

The St. Cloud Democrat endorsed Abraham Lincoln for the presidency in 1860, and Swisshelm moved to Washington, D.C., during the Civil War to claim a job at the War Department. While there, she became a close friend of Mary Todd Lincoln. Selling her St. Cloud newspaper in 1863, she threw herself into her clerkship, occasionally nursed Union soldiers, and eventually started another newspaper, the Reconstructionist, in December 1865. That paper soon folded, and she returned to Swissvale, outside Pittsburgh, to live on land won in a lawsuit against her husband's estate. There she worked as a columnist and a public lecturer. She also wrote her caustic and entertaining autobiography, Half a Century (1880).

Swisshelm is remembered for her satiric, often contemptuous exchanges with her opponents and for her courage in facing down both her conservative antiabolitionist opponents and also the many fellow reformers with whom she disagreed. Because of her dislike of conventions as a reform tactic, she fell out of favor with the leadership of the women's rights movement despite her early support for female suffrage, married women's property laws, and equal educational and vocational access for women. Likewise, she often disagreed with people in her own antislavery parties because they moved too slowly for her tastes. Seemingly a loner by temperament, she wrote best when on the attack, and these attributes caused gulfs to develop not only between her and her enemies but also between her and people she probably ought to have befriended. As a result, she faded into relative historical obscurity. Nevertheless, she was a pioneer in women's journalism both as an editor and reporter and was one of the better-known abolitionist writers in the United States, especially in the early 1850s. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Radical Republicans; Women's Antislavery Societies.


Michael D. Pierson
Tacky Rebellion. See Maroons of Jamaica/Tacky Rebellion

Tappan, Arthur (1786–1865)

Arthur Tappan, with his younger brother, Lewis Tappan, became one of the most famous abolitionists in the United States. The brothers helped establish the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 and led the fight against slavery throughout the antebellum period. Together, the brothers made millions in business and used their wealth to fund abolitionist and other social reform organizations. Less well-remembered than his brother because of Lewis’s role in the famous Amistad case, Tappan’s influential leadership helped create and shape the direction of abolitionism.

Born in 1786 in Massachusetts, Tappan’s early life was directed by his mother, Sarah. More forceful than her husband, Benjamin, Sarah instructed her children in a strict, yet loving, way that emphasized a Calvinistic interpretation of the Christian religion. While Lewis often required his mother’s reproof and punishment, Tappan was a submissive boy who rarely needed discipline. As Lewis put it in his biography of his brother, Tappan “had the good fortune to escape much chastisement at home, or in school.” His submission was rooted, no doubt, in his introspective personality, but may also have stemmed from his mother’s constant reminders of the uncertainty of life. She often told him how he had nearly died on several occasions. When combined with his reserved nature, his mother’s interpretation that he was alive only by the miracle of God made Tappan an obedient boy. Her influence was so strong that Tappan apparently did not experience an emotional conversion to Christianity. It was as if he had always been saved, and there was no room for doubting this. While his brother briefly became a Unitarian, Lewis’s return to orthodoxy was treated with the kind of celebration that often accompanied conversion in evangelical Christian circles. But Tappan inherited his mother’s sense of religious mystery and alternating feelings of guilt and gratefulness for being alive.

Tappan entered into business as a teenager, working as a merchant apprentice in Boston. Later he went to Montreal to sell blankets for trade with the
Indians. The War of 1812 interrupted his business, and he lost money in the venture. Upon his return, he borrowed money from Lewis to start an importing business in New York City. He was successful, especially as a silk merchant, and his firm flourished. Located on Pearl Street, his store was a center of fashion, with the latest styles of hats and umbrellas and ladies’ apparel. As his business and wealth expanded, Arthur became involved in social and religious reform. Like many other Calvinists in the early nineteenth century, he became an evangelical and joined with other Christians to improve society and save souls. He was one of the founders of the American Tract Society in 1825, gave liberally to the American Sunday School Union, and worked hard to promote education, help prostitutes get off the streets, stop the evils of alcohol, and pass Sabbatarian legislation. His reserved personality and aversion to the urban environment took its toll, however, and he invited his brother to join him in business in 1828. Not long after Lewis arrived, Tappan moved his family to the quieter atmosphere of New Haven, Connecticut.

Even as he struggled with his own guilt, Tappan became convinced of the nation’s sin. Urged on by the great revivalist, Charles Grandison Finney, Tappan and his brother had become part of a circle of wealthy Christian philanthropists who funded various benevolence organizations, founded colleges, and promoted reform. This included Tappan’s generous contributions to Oberlin College in Ohio, a school that became a hotbed of Christian perfectionism and abolitionist activity. Convinced of the abolitionist position in the mid-to-late 1820s, Tappan founded an antislavery newspaper, but was hesitant to embrace what he perceived to be the radicalism of outspoken abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison. This changed by the early 1830s when he helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society, which came to lead to national movement for abolitionism.

His activism made Tappan very unpopular, and he became the target of mobs and was lampooned in songs and newspapers across the country. When the brothers experienced financial setbacks in the late 1830s after a fire destroyed their warehouses, followed by the Panic of 1837, the Tappans did not despair. They struggled on, honoring their debts and rebuilding their business empire. Tappan responded to all adversity with stoicism and a dogged determination to do his duty. Along with Lewis, he founded the Mercantile Agency, the country’s first credit-rating service, to help stabilize the economy in the wake of the Panic of 1837.

Elected president of the American Anti-Slavery Society when it was founded, Tappan soon became known as a conservative influence in the organization. Although a devoted abolitionist, he also wanted to remain
respectable and was suspicious of the methods of radicals like Garrison. His quiet personality made him an unlikely choice for top leadership and, although other abolitionists appreciated his financial donations, they doubted his abilities to bring about real change. In the movement, as in his own business, Tappan followed a strict, cautious line of financial responsibility. While this worked well in keeping the society solvent, it was unpopular with those who wanted to move more quickly and use dramatic methods. His cautious nature also led him to move briefly toward gradual emancipation, rather than the more radical immediatism called for by Garrison. This brought widespread criticism, and Garrison used it to ask Tappan to step aside. Instead, Tappan recanted his heresy, returned to supporting immediate emancipation, and donated a large sum of money to buy the forgiveness of the radicals.

Tappan made many mistakes and often seemed reluctant to support the radical abolitionists completely. From the perspective of later generations, he was not a saint and not a great hero. In part this was due to his personality and the fact that he left very few papers and made very few public speeches. His brother, Lewis, was by far the more popular candidate for abolitionist sainthood, as he remained active in the movement up to the Civil War, pushed for the most radical methods, and supported the Amistad slaves in their famous case. Eventually, Lewis himself tried to restore Tappan to his proper place in the history of abolition by publishing a biography of his brother, but even that was not enough. Some scholars believe that Lewis was too modest and attributed some of his own work to his older brother. Despite his flaws and his somewhat ambivalent record, Tappan was an important leader of the abolitionist movement and his contributions were more than just financial in nature. In the context of the 1830s, he was at the forefront of the fight against slavery and deserves to be remembered for his efforts. See also Garrisonians; Unitarianism and Antislavery.


*A. James Fuller*

**Tappan, Lewis (1788–1873)**

Lewis Tappan, Christian reformer, businessman, and philanthropist, epitomized evangelical abolitionism in nineteenth-century America. A signal leader in numerous benevolent associations, Tappan believed in antislavery as a righteous cause. No American abolitionist had a longer or more dedicated career.

Raised in Massachusetts by devout Congregational parents, Benjamin and Sarah Tappan, Lewis retained a lifelong dedication to piety and social conscience. After a short-lived youthful embrace of Unitarianism in Massachusetts, Tappan joined the New York silk merchandising firm of wealthy older brother Arthur Tappan in 1827, where he not only managed operations but also entered Arthur's world of orthodox evangelicalism. Together with
other pious New York businessmen, they founded the *Evangelist* in 1827 and hired Joshua Leavitt to edit the new journal. The Tappans supported the Free Church movement to make seating and membership in a church not contingent upon payment of a fee. Combining this policy with their new dedication to popular enthusiastic preaching associated with the Second Great Awakening, they helped organize the Chatham Street Chapel as a part-time home for fiery revivalist Charles G. Finney.

The Tappan brothers’ conversions to abolitionism came gradually, but by 1833 Arthur had helped launch the *Emancipator*, hiring Elizur Wright, Jr., as secretary. Conversations with Theodore Dwight Weld turned Lewis to immediate emancipation, and in 1833 the Tappans, staying just ahead of an antiabolitionist mob, inaugurated the New York Anti-Slavery Society at the Chatham Street Chapel. That December the first national antislavery convention witnessed Lewis bridging the interests of the New York organization and the more liberal Boston-based Garrisonians. Both Tappan brothers held high positions in the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) that issued from that meeting, and helped author its declaration that slavery was both a crime and a sin. To promote Christian abolitionism’s westward expansion, they supported Lyman Beecher and Lane Seminary in Cincinnati; later, Arthur put his substantial fortune behind founding the more radically antislavery Oberlin College in northeastern Ohio.

Lewis Tappan’s talents as an editor, fundraiser, and administrator were tremendously useful in the war against slavery. Belief that moral suasion could produce manumissions led him to mount a massive postal campaign in 1835 directed at Southern slaveholders. The South’s furious reaction against this campaign earned the antislavery movement national attention and chastened Lewis’s confidence that moral suasion alone would convert the South to abolition.

William Lloyd Garrison’s growing radicalism only increased the Tappan brothers’ discomfort with non-evangelical abolitionists, and contributed to a schism in the national organization in 1841 and the Garrisonians gaining control of the AASS. Lewis immediately led a handful of men centered in New York City to form the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) that, like its British model, stressed international cooperation among antislavery reformers. Their numbers were small: internecine bickering and the challenges of conducting business in a climate of notoriety had recently led Arthur to retrench from visible antislavery activity, while other former cohorts stayed with Garrison in the AASS, retired, or sought political solutions through participation in the newly formed Liberty Party.

In 1839, Lewis Tappan formed a committee to free jailed Africans who had recently mutinied and murdered some crew members on the Cuban slaving schooner *Amistad*. The case, which attracted national attention, provided a ready outlet for Tappan’s talents as administrator, publicist, religious teacher, and legal advisor. A few years later, the crisis over Texas annexation inspired Tappan to travel to England, where he failed to convince British leaders to acquire Texas for the empire and concurrently block the spread of American slavery.
In England, Tappan witnessed the potential value of third-party political action. Upon his return, he began to support the Liberty Party, and founded their popular journal, the *National Era*, under the editorship of the dynamic Gamaliel Bailey. Politically, antislavery’s propensity for pragmatism and compromise disquieted Tappan, however, and when its various factions combined with assorted disaffected partisans to form the Free Soil Party in 1848, Tappan, shocked and wounded, refused to join.

Political interest soon gave way to pursuits more suited to a pious evangelical whose primary objection to slavery had always been its spiritually destructive effects. Tappan refocused his efforts on Christian abolitionism. In 1842, his Amistad committee had merged with the black-founded Union Mission, an alliance that within a few years expanded into a reconstituted American Missionary Association (AMA), an officially nonsectarian organization that nonetheless drew heavily from Congregationalist support. Largely in pursuit of Tappan’s dream of an interracial Christian fellowship, the AMA by 1860 had spent over one million dollars on antislavery missions worldwide.

Tappan’s visibility as an antislavery reformer waned, yet sectional violence in the 1850s led him to resurrect the AFASS as the American Abolition Society and renew his condemnation of bondage as criminal and unconstitutional. During this period, he also challenged evangelicals who continued to tolerate slavery, an effort that climaxed in a dramatic clash at the American Tract Society’s convention in 1856. Although best remembered for his evangelical abolitionism, Tappan was also the founder in 1827 of the *Journal of Commerce* and in 1841 of the Mercantile Agency (later Dun and Bradstreet), the country’s first credit reporting agency.


_Cathy Rodabaugh_

**Texas, Annexation of (1845)**

The annexation of Texas was the central issue in the expansion of slavery into new territories, and the various factions of the antislavery movement united in opposition to it.

In the 1820s, the Mexican government encouraged Americans to migrate to the very sparsely settled lands of Mexico’s most northern province, Texas. Many came from the Southern states, and brought their slaves with them. But having abolished slavery in 1829, Mexico reversed its settlement policy in 1830 and prohibited both further American immigration and the importation of slaves. In 1835, Texas revolted against Mexican rule, winning its independence in 1836 and establishing the Republic of Texas. Immediately after and for the next nine years, Texas nevertheless actively sought annexation to the United States.

In 1835, the abolitionist **Benjamin Lundy** wrote two pamphlets denouncing the Texas revolution as an effort to restore slavery where it had
been abolished and create the opportunity for the United States to annex it. Most opponents of annexation followed his lead. John Quincy Adams delivered lengthy speeches in 1836 and 1838 opposing the annexation of Texas, casting the measure as risking war for the benefit of slavery. Texas was a key component in what antislavery forces saw as a Slave Power conspiracy. On March 3, 1843, Adams and several other antislavery congressmen issued an address depicting the annexation of Texas as a measure to insure the permanent rule of the slave states over the free states.

The antislavery furor prevented Jackson and Van Buren from annexing Texas. In 1843, John Tyler actively revived the project. He sent Duff Green as his personal representative in Great Britain to speak to Texas officials there and to ascertain British intentions in Texas. Green concluded that British abolitionists wanted to use the promise of guaranteed loans to force Texas to abolish slavery, which would serve as a prelude to attacking the institution in the United States, in part by encircling the Southern states with colonies and nations where slavery had been outlawed. Tyler and his allies tried to portray the annexation of a slave state as a benefit to the North. In January 1844, Senator Robert J. Walker put forth the theory that a slave Texas would tend to draw slavery further south, and prevent the migration of escaped slaves to the north. Walker cited statistics from the 1840 census, which purported to show a high incidence of insanity among free blacks. The effort failed, and the Senate rejected an annexation treaty in June 1844. In the closing days of his administration, Tyler achieved the annexation of Texas through a joint resolution of Congress. Opponents of annexation considered the joint resolution as the triumph of the Slave Power over the United States Constitution. It certainly helped prompt the United States' war with Mexico. See also Slave Power Argument.


Robert W. Smith

**Thirteenth Amendment (1865)**

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States. Adopted by two-thirds of Congress in January 1865, and declared ratified by three-fourths of the states in December of that year, the measure declared in its first clause that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” In its second clause, the amendment added that “Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

The amendment represented a monumental, if largely unanticipated, consequence of the Civil War. In the first year of the war, political leaders of the Union promised not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, a promise that Abraham Lincoln and others of the Republican Party had
made in the 1860 election campaign. Lincoln even supported a constitutional amendment, sometimes called the “first Thirteenth Amendment,” adopted by Congress in March 1861, which prohibited federal interference with slavery where it existed. The proposed amendment was signed by President Lincoln, on the day of his inauguration (March 4, 1861)—the only amendment ever signed by a president—and later that day was sent to all states for ratification. Three states actually ratified it and more might have had it not been for events unfolding in the South.

As the war continued beyond the first year, more Northern whites accepted, if not encouraged, the use of emancipation as a war measure against the Confederacy. Union commanders, who during the first year of the war had been instructed by the Lincoln administration to return escaped slaves to their owners, began to follow the lead of General Benjamin Butler, who from the beginning of the war had refused to return African Americans and instead declared them “contraband” of war. Congress endorsed the contraband policy by passing Confiscation Acts in 1861 and 1862, which declared that all rebel property, including slaves, would be seized by the Union. The initiative taken by runaway slaves, by military commanders, and by Congress ultimately led President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared “forever free” all slaves in rebellious areas. However, the Proclamation exempted those slaves in Union-controlled regions of the South and Border States. Lincoln signed the final Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.
After Lincoln signed the Proclamation, abolitionists used petition drives to press for a broader act of emancipation. In April 1864, the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution for an antislavery amendment, but the House of Representatives failed to carry it in June. Lincoln ensured that the amendment was on the national platform of the Republican Party that summer. Lincoln and the Republicans scored victories in the fall elections, and the president claimed the vote as a popular endorsement of the amendment. He urged the House of Representatives to take up the measure again. Using informal cajoling as well as offers of patronage, Lincoln applied pressure to lame-duck Democratic congressmen to win their votes. Rumors floated through Washington that Lincoln's agents were bribing congressmen on behalf of the amendment, but no evidence of bribery has ever been uncovered. Enough Democrats changed their vote or absented themselves so that on January 31, 1865, the House of Representatives carried the amendment. States across the North immediately began to ratify the amendment, though some such as New Jersey initially voted against ratification. After Lincoln's assassination and the end of the war, President Andrew Johnson made ratification a condition of Southern states' readmission to the Union. On December 18, 1865, Secretary of State William Henry Seward issued a proclamation that the amendment had been ratified by three fourths of the states.

Almost immediately, Congress began to debate the meaning of the amendment. While Democrats and conservative Republicans argued that it merely abolished chattel slavery and secured no rights to the freed people, moderate and Radical Republicans claimed that the measure guaranteed equal rights for African Americans. The argument for equality won the day: Republican congressmen used the amendment's enforcement clause to create the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the first clause of which guaranteed “full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings” to African Americans. They also invoked the amendment to renew the Freedmen's Bureau, which had been created in 1865. Congress carried both the act renewing the Freedmen's Bureau and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 over the veto of President Andrew Johnson, who had begun to court the support of conservatives. Ultimately, the Thirteenth Amendment was eclipsed by the Fourteenth Amendment, which was adopted in 1868 and added specificity to freedom by setting the terms of citizenship and explicitly prohibiting states from denying “due process” and equality before the law.

The long-term effects of the Thirteenth Amendment were limited. The measure became an important weapon against various forms of involuntary servitude, but its phrasing allowed peonage, or debt slavery, to persist into the twentieth century. The most common victims of this form of servitude were African Americans, the very people meant to benefit from the Thirteenth Amendment.

Although the Thirteenth Amendment is overshadowed by the Fourteenth, the measure retains great significance. Civil rights lawyers still use the amendment, sometimes with success. In the Supreme Court case of Jones v. Mayer of 1968, for example, the Court accepted the Thirteenth Amendment as the basis for overturning discriminatory housing practices. The amendment remains a perpetual monument to the cause of freedom in the
United States. Slavery, a word not used in the original Constitution, had long been protected by it. With the Thirteenth Amendment, slavery was officially abolished. See also Democratic Party and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; United States Constitution and Antislavery.


Michael Vorenberg

**Thompson, George (1804–1878)**

George Thompson was a British abolitionist and wide-ranging reformer whose chief importance was his leadership of Garrisonians in the United Kingdom. Thompson began his professional career as a reformer in 1831, when he became a salaried lecturer for the Agency Committee and participated extensively in the popular campaign that culminated in the emancipation bill of 1833. In that same year, when William Lloyd Garrison traveled to England, he began a lifelong friendship with Thompson, whose eclectic radicalism and commitment to reform by moral suasion affirmed Garrison's views. The following year, at Garrison's invitation, Thompson visited the United States for a lecturing tour that became the defining moment of his abolitionist career.

Before leaving for the United States, Thompson helped to organize antislavery societies in Glasgow and Edinburgh; his influence among Scottish abolitionists remained strong throughout his life. Embryonic though they were, these societies funded Thompson's 1834 Atlantic crossing. Thompson arrived in New England in October and remained for a year, lecturing from Massachusetts to Maine on the virtues of immediate emancipation and the viability of Anglo-American cooperation in the antislavery struggle. But where Thompson saw cooperation, his enemies sensed conspiracy. Thompson's visit fueled antiabolitionist paranoia that English support was behind radical Garrisonianism; he was routinely tarred with accusations of "foreign interference." In 1835, as antiabolitionism moved rapidly from verbal abuse to violence, Thompson's lectures were sometimes disrupted or threatened by rioters. The great Boston mob that nearly lynched Garrison on October 21 formed in part because of rumors that Thompson would be speaking before a meeting of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. A month later, Thompson returned to Britain and broadcast news of his violent reception, thus contributing to a growing belief in England that American abolitionists were martyrs.

Thompson continued as an advocate of Garrisonian abolitionism in Britain even after the 1840 schism in the American Anti-Slavery Society, during which most British abolitionists sympathized with Lewis Tappan and James Birney. In the 1840s, he allied himself with a variety of British reforms, including the Anti-Corn Law League and moral-force Chartism. Thompson turned most of his attention, however, to land reform in British
India, serving as an agent of the Aborigines’ Protection Society and a lecturer for the British India Society. He agreed with some other British abolitionists that the cultivation of Indian cotton by free labor, combined with free trade policies, would deprive slave-grown American cotton of its European markets, thus hastening the end of slavery. In 1843 and 1844, Thompson made his first visit to India to investigate land tenure policies, but was distracted by his defense of the Rajah of Satara, who claimed to have been unjustly deposed by British officials. In subsequent years, Thompson took up the Rajah’s cause in England.

In the general election of 1847, Thompson was elected to Parliament by the London district that Stephen Lushington, a distinguished jurist and abolitionist, had represented. But when he toured America again in 1850 and 1851, this time as a member of the British government, cries about the impropriety of his “foreign interference” were raised both by enemies abroad and constituents at home. In 1852, Thompson lost his seat in the House of Commons. After his defeat in 1852, Thompson became involved in scattered enterprises, but his activity and influence waned. Financial difficulties hounded the last quarter-century of his life. He remained close friends with American Garrisonians, who on occasion tried to raise funds to support him. From 1863 to 1867, Thompson even lived in Roxbury, Massachusetts, near Garrison, and witnessed the final throes of the Civil War. He joined Garrison in supporting Abraham Lincoln’s reelection in 1864, and in 1865, he introduced Garrison at the flag-raising ceremony at Fort Sumter that symbolized the end of the conflict. Returning to England in 1867, he died in Leeds in 1878.

Although a consistent ally of the Garrisonians, Thompson was hardly controlled by them. At the World’s Antislavery Convention (1840), he disappointed Garrisonians by not denouncing the exclusion of women. He often frustrated his allies by his interest in other reform causes and his lack of financial acumen. His brief stint as a Member of Parliament also concerned Garrisonians, who opposed politics on principle. But despite these occasional disagreements, Thompson was one of the few nationally renowned British abolitionists whom Garrisonians could always count on as an ally. He served as an important liaison between British and American antislavery radicals, introducing many in the United Kingdom to the Garrisonians’ ideas, and his transatlantic trips impacted the course of the American movement at key junctures in its history. See also British Slavery, Abolition; Scotland, Antislavery.


W. Caleb McDaniel

Tocqueville, Alexis de (1805–1859)

French historian, political theorist, and statesman, Tocqueville was born Alexis Charles Henri Maurice Clerel de Tocqueville in Paris. Throughout his
public life, he opposed slavery on Christian principles, the philosophy of the rights of man, and the pragmatic concerns of the French colonies.

The child of an aristocratic family, Tocqueville studied law and became an assistant magistrate in 1825. In 1831, Tocqueville and his friend, Gustave de Beaumont, traveled around the United States for nine months with a commission to study the American penal system. Tocqueville also had a larger interest in understanding how democracy worked in the United States. His observations were published in a two-volume tour-de-force entitled *Democracy in America* (1835). While Beaumont would publish a book specifically about slavery, Tocqueville also expressed concern about the institution in *Democracy in America*, calling it "evil." Yet he recognized the problems for a fuller black inclusion in American society because the vicious racism toward free blacks in the North largely barred them from civic life.

In 1835, after his return to France, he became a charter member of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery. After being elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1839, he served as reporter on a commission to investigate the abolitionist proposal of Destutt de Tracy. Tocqueville's report, critical of the policy of gradual emancipation as impractical, advocated for the immediate emancipation of slaves in the French colonies as in the best economic interest of both slaves and planters. Although the Chamber of Deputies never discussed the report, Tocqueville sent it to friends in the United States who published and circulated it widely. Concerned about the inaction of the French government, in 1843 he published anonymously a series of articles for the opposition newspaper, *La Siècle*, arguing for the necessity of emancipation. The honor of France, he insisted, was at stake. Moreover, with slavery ended in Britain's Caribbean colonies, French slaves on Caribbean islands would surely flee to the British. The French colonies were thus in jeopardy of losing their labor force unless the slaves were emancipated.

Tocqueville's final public discussion of slavery occurred in 1845 during a series of debates in the Chamber of Deputies where he argued for establishing laws to improve the conditions of slavery in the French colonies. He maintained that they would establish France's, rather than the colonies', authority over slavery and thus lay the foundation for the French government to abolish slavery in the near future. See also Literature and Abolition.


*Daniel P. Kotzin*

**Truth, Sojourner (c. 1797–1883)**

Sojourner Truth was born Isabella Van Wagenen in about 1797 as a slave in Hurley, New York. During her life as a slave, she allegedly bore thirteen
children, of which three were sold into slavery. She served five masters until slavery was abolished in the state of New York on July 4, 1827. After experiencing a religious epiphany, the ex-slave Isabella changed her name to Sojourner Truth and became a singing preacher traveling throughout New York and Connecticut.

In 1847, Sojourner Truth became associated with the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, which was founded in 1841 as a community dedicated to abolitionism, pacifism, equality, and the betterment of human life. It was there at Northampton that she became immersed in the abolitionist movement and began working with many of the movement's leaders including William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass.

Although illiterate, Sojourner Truth's memoirs were published in 1850 with the assistance of Oliver Gilbert (a fellow abolitionist) as The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave. Her book, along with her speaking skills, propelled her to the front of both the abolitionist and women's rights movements and she spoke broadly in the lyceum circuit. Her most famous speech—"Ar'n't I a Woman?"—was made at a women's convention in Ohio in 1851.

In 1857, Sojourner Truth moved to Battle Creek, Michigan and after the Emancipation Proclamation she relocated to Washington, D.C., where she worked to gain support for a land distribution program for former slaves. This effort failed when Congress refused to enact the bill. Afterward, she returned to her home in Battle Creek. All in all, she dedicated over forty years of her life to denouncing slavery, promoting women's equality, and later, after slavery ended, to promoting equality for blacks and providing assistance to ex-slaves in need. Surrounded by family and friends, this influential icon died in 1883. See also Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism.


Iris Hunter

Tubman, Harriet (c. 1825–1913)

Born into slavery as Araminta Ross, Harriet Tubman was a self-emancipated woman, conductor of the Underground Railroad, abolitionist, feminist, soldier, and philanthropist. As a multi-faceted person, her family, friends, and acquaintances also knew her as Moses, Aunt Harriet, Minty, and
General Tubman. Tubman fought to eradicate slavery in the United States by rescuing enslaved Africans and their families from a life of anguish.

Tubman was born near Bucktown in Dorchester County, Maryland, to Harriet (Rittia) Green and Benjamin Ross. As an enslaved child, Tubman was hired out to several families, working as a muskrat trapper, nursemaid, and domestic. In her adolescent years, she was assigned to manual labor. In 1844, Tubman married a free black, John Tubman. In 1849, she escaped the bonds of slavery, leaving her former slave life and moving to Philadelphia, where she initiated contacts and networks with local abolitionists. Tubman's marriage ended shortly after her escape.

In 1850, she returned to Maryland as a conductor of the Underground Railroad and made her first rescue. Initially, Tubman focused her efforts on relocating her siblings and their families to St. Catherine's, Upper Canada (present day Ontario, Canada) via Underground Railroad networks in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. However, her fight against slavery expanded to include non-family members from the Dorchester county area. She confidently rescued and directed approximately 120 enslaved Africans and their families to free states in the North and to Upper Canada.

Harriet was not formally educated and relied on her impeccable memory, her astute Christian beliefs, her prophetic abilities, and use of pictographs to complete successful Underground Railroad journeys. Her successful career as an Underground Railroad conductor was extraordinary, since she was one of the most famous and most wanted runaways in the United States. Several slaveholders and planters in the Maryland area offered large bounties for Tubman's arrest or her head.

As General Tubman, she participated in fundraising efforts for John Brown's unsuccessful war against the United States government to end slavery. She recruited African American soldiers for Brown's war and for the Union army during the Civil War. She served in the South Carolina branch of the Union army, working as a laundress, cook, nurse, and spy. During Reconstruction, she directed her attention to women's suffrage movements and dedicated her life to the betterment of African Americans. In 1869, Tubman wedded Civil War veteran, Charles Nelson Davis. Davis and Tubman spent the rest of their lives committed to improving the lives of African Americans in Auburn, New York.

In 1897, Tubman was recognized by Britain's Queen Victoria and awarded the Silver medal for her fight against slavery. In 1990, President
George H.W. Bush declared March 10 as Harriet Tubman Day, acknowledging her passion and dedication to ending slavery in the United States.


Nadine Hunt

Tucker, St. George (1752–1827)

St. George Tucker was a Virginia lawyer, judge, law professor, and legal scholar. He was born in Bermuda and raised in that slaveholding society. His father, Henry Tucker, was a successful merchant, whose holdings included land and slaves. St. George was comfortable with slaves and slavery. It was part of his life on an island where half the population was enslaved. In 1771, at age nineteen, he migrated to the Virginia colony to attend the College of William and Mary, studying law with George Wythe, the first true professor of law in America, and the same man who had taught Thomas Jefferson a decade earlier. Here he was once again immersed in a culture of slavery. His mentor, Wythe, was a slaveholder but also a critic of the institution. Wythe ultimately took a strong stand against slavery, emancipating his own slaves and bravely attempting to strike down slavery by judicial fiat in the case of *Hudgins v. Wrights* (1803), where as a trial court judge, Wythe declared slavery to be in violation of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

After studying at William and Mary, Tucker was admitted to the Virginia bar in 1774 and then returned to Bermuda. When the American Revolution began, Tucker returned to Virginia as a merchant, bringing gunpowder and salt for the patriot cause from his native Bermuda to his adopted homeland. He subsequently joined the militia, rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel and being wounded at Yorktown. As the war wound down, Tucker began to practice law in his now adopted country, served on the Board of Visitors of his alma mater, and rose rapidly in the legal/political world of post-war Virginia, arguing cases before the state's highest courts, publishing political tracts, and serving as a delegate to the failed Annapolis Convention. Tucker served as a judge in 1788 and in 1790 succeeded Wythe to the chair in law at William and Mary.

Like many elite Virginians of the immediate post-Revolutionary era, Tucker understood that slavery was a danger to society and incompatible with Republican institutions. He told his students at William and Mary that it was "hard to determine" just "how far" was "the condition of these unfortunate people . . . reconcilable to the principles of our government." In the aftermath of the Revolution he wondered "whether there is a due consistency between our avowed principles and our practice."
Unlike other Virginians who were troubled by the inconsistencies of proclaiming liberty and owning slaves, Tucker set his mind to figuring out how to deal with the issue. He did not focus on his personal status as a slave-owner. Nor did he agonize about slavery, becoming paralyzed by the enormity of the problem as his friend Jefferson did. Rather, he focused on the public policy question. He asked the activist’s question: how do we end this institution? More to the point, he framed it with the mind of the practical lawyer: how do we end this institution safely and with as little social dislocation as possible? Tucker, the law professor, also asked the scholar’s question: how have other societies, other states in the new Union, eliminated the problem?

This led him to write *A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal For the Gradual Abolition of It, in the State of Virginia*, which he published in 1796. This was the only serious proposal to end slavery written by a Southerner in this period. The dissertation contains a short history of slavery in Virginia, and a reasonably good summary of all legislation on slavery in Virginia. The heart of the *Dissertation* was a plan to end slavery gradually, through a complicated and convoluted system of partial emancipation over many years. Under Tucker's plan, the daughters of all slave women born in Virginia, but not the sons, would be born free. Those daughters would have been kept as servants of their mother's master until they turned twenty-eight, at which time they would be completely free. Their children, however, would be bound out as apprentices until age twenty-one. Meanwhile, the sons of all slave women would be born as slaves for life. This meant that for at least twenty-eight years after the plan went into effect all blacks in the state, except those already free, would remain in some form of bondage. At that point, twenty-eight-year-old women would start to become free. Their children, male and female, would be born free, but would be indentured until age twenty-one. Tucker estimated that this system would keep some blacks in bondage for more than a century.

In addition to regulating black labor, Tucker would have prohibited free blacks from owning land, inheriting property, or participating in civic life at all. Tucker believed his system would allow planters to control black labor, while gradually ending slavery. He thought that in a century-long process blacks and whites could learn to live together in this new environment, or else blacks would gradually leave the state.

Tucker addressed his dissertation to the state legislature, which completely ignored it. He distributed it as a pamphlet and reprinted it in 1803 as an appendix to his five-volume edition of *Blackstone’s Commentaries*. By the time he published the *Commentaries*, there was no support at all for his proposal. Even Tucker himself seemed to realize it was a proposal that would go nowhere.

Tucker was no abolitionist. He realized that a speedy emancipation would be unacceptable to Virginia's white majority and that it would have led to great social disruption. He offered a gradual solution to the problem of slavery, but his plan was so convoluted and complex that it is unlikely very many Virginians even understood it, much less endorsed it. Nevertheless, it was the only attempt by an elite Southerner to deal with the problem of
slavery in the new state. Tucker's effort might have led to further debate and perhaps a more refined and practical answer to the problem if other Virginians, especially his friend Thomas Jefferson, had entered the debate. But, Jefferson chose to keep his comments on slavery private, and never took a public stand against the institution.

A few years after publishing his edition of the *Commentaries*, Tucker wrote the opinion of Virginia's highest court in the case of *Hudgins v. Wrights* (1806). The case involved the Wright family, which claimed to be free on the grounds that their maternal ancestor was not a black slave, but an American Indian. In the lower court, Chancellor George Wythe had ruled the Wrights were free since they were not black, but also because the Virginia Declaration of Rights declared that "all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." Tucker upheld the freedom of the Wrights on racial grounds, and indeed, set out a standard based on race for determining who was a slave and who was not, but he flatly rejected Wythe's assertion that the Virginia Declaration of Rights affected the status of slaves in the state. Tucker wrote: "I do not concur with the Chancellor in his reasoning on the operation of the first clause of the Bill of Rights, which was notoriously framed with a cautious eye to this subject, and was meant to embrace the case of free citizens or aliens only; and not by a side wind to overturn the rights of property." Thus, despite the opportunity, Tucker declined to strike a blow against all bondage in Virginia. His antislavery notions were limited to a slow and agonizingly gradual end to slavery. It seems anything else was too dangerous to contemplate for this slaveholding Virginian who, more than any of his neighbors and friends, understood the dangers slavery posed for his society. Though unable to devise a practical solution to slavery, Tucker remains the only Virginian to offer any plan to end slavery in that state.


Paul Finkelman

**Tupac Amaru II (1738–1781)**

A famous indigenous leader in colonial Peru, Tupac Amaru II was born Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui in a small town called Surimana, about sixty miles from Cuzco, the former capital of the pre-Columbian Inca Empire. He was descended from Felipe Tupac Amaru, the last Inca to resist the siege of Spanish conquerors at Vilcabamba. Tupac Amaru II was a *curaca*—or indigenous leader—of the towns of Tungasusa, Surimana and Pampamarca. As with all indigenous leaders in Colonial Peru, he was exempted from paying the tribute, spoke Spanish and Quechua (an important indigenous language in the Central Andes) and attended the school that the Jesuit Congregation
had in colonial Cuzco for the sons of the curacas. His descent from an Inca royal family also entitled him to use his royal last name, Tupac Amaru. Although he became a prosperous merchant, he had many concerns about the life and social conditions of the common indigenous population. He asked for the colonial rulers to liberate the indigenous population from forced labor in the mines, but they refused.

Deeply disillusioned and supported by his relatives and other indigenous people, Tupac Amaru II organized the most important rebellion in late colonial Peru. The rebellion began in Tinta on November 4, 1780, when the rebels executed the regional governor of Tinta, Antonio de Arriaga. Failing to secure an end to abuses by the regional governors (corregidores) and improvements in the life of the indigenous population, the rebellion spread quickly from Tinta to the entire Andean region around Lake Titicaca. The rebels laid siege to Cuzco but never actually entered the city. Seeking further support, Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru declared that all the black slaves who joined with him would be free. As it unfolded, the rebellion increasingly became more radical, more anti-Hispanic, and more antislavery. Finally, the rebels were defeated and Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru was tortured and then killed in Cuzco’s main square in 1781. Almost all of his family, including his wife, Micaela Bastidas, suffered the same fate. Only one of the members of the Tupac Amaru family survived, his little son, Fernando.

After his death, the rebellion continued, but only for a brief period of time. Although all traditions identified as “Inca” were now outlawed, the curacas who had helped to destroy the rebellion remained in their posts. Hated by the colonial rulers, Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru became an icon during the period when Peru gained its independence. He has been reclaimed as a patriotic champion by twentieth century political groups ranging from the right wing to the more radical leftist organizations such as Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru. Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru remains heralded nationally because of his defense of native Peruvians, his opposition to the colonial rulers, and his bold call for the emancipation of the enslaved population. See also Spanish Empire, Antislavery and Abolition in.


Luis Gomez

Turner, Nat (1800–1831)

Nat Turner is best known for the 1831 slave revolt he led in plantation-dotted Southampton County, Virginia. A decade before his eponymous revolt, Turner had a vision that he would lead a slave rebellion. Despite having escaped from slavery in 1821, Turner’s vision compelled him to return voluntarily to his former plantation, where he would bide his time until the moment for rebellion was nigh. In the late 1820s, Turner began preaching to slave congregations. His sermons focused on themes like freedom,
liberation, and redemption. His powerful exhortations attracted many followers, some of whom would refer to Turner as “The Prophet.” As a preacher, Turner had the liberty to travel to different plantations, which was ideal for reconnaissance and rallying support from local slaves.

Turner interpreted a solar eclipse in February 1831 as a sign to begin his rebellion. He planned to launch it on July 4; the date was chosen intentionally for its symbolic importance. However, Turner fell ill, so the revolt was postponed until August 22. (This was the anniversary of the 1791 slave uprising in Saint Domingue, which probably inspired Turner and his coconspirators.) The revolt began at the home of Joseph Travis (Turner’s owner), where the rebels killed everyone in the household. Turner planned to move from plantation to plantation, killing all the whites. He made it clear that this strategy was only a means of intimidating whites and inspiring other slaves to join his cause. Once the rebellion had achieved critical mass, Turner expected the indiscriminate violence to abate.

Turner turned his insurgents towards an arsenal in Jerusalem, Virginia. However, as more supporters joined the rebellion, Turner had to contend with collapsing organization in his ranks. After three days, the rebels were dispersed by militiamen, who killed more than 100 slaves while suppressing the revolt. Turner survived as a fugitive until he was captured on October 30, 1831. He was tried, sentenced to death, and hanged on November 11, 1831. While awaiting execution, Turner recounted his hopes and plans to his attorney, Thomas Gray. Gray later published Nat Turner’s Confessions.

Nat Turner's revolt was the most violent slave uprising in American history. The brief rebellion and its brutal repression left almost 200 people dead on the plantations of Southampton County, Virginia. Later, more than 100 slaves were executed for their involvement in the uprising. Eugene Genovese, the noted historian of American slavery, has suggested that Turner's revolt was a turning point in the movement towards the United States Civil War because it stiffened the resolve of both abolitionists and proslavery advocates. It seemed to vindicate the position of those abolitionists who believed that slaves would fight for their freedom if they were organized and armed from without. (This attitude would have significant implications for someone like John Brown.) As with previous slave revolts, Turner's rebellion encouraged many Southerners to demand harsher restrictions on slaves. After 1831, American abolitionists became more radical in
their demands and plantation owners became more bellicose in their support for slavery. The myth of the happy slave died with Nat Turner. See also Gabriel's Conspiracy; Haitian Revolution; Literature and Abolition; St. Domingue, French Defeat in; Vesey's Conspiracy.


Jennifer J. Pierce
In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe took the nation by storm with her anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. A cultural phenomenon rather than a mere book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* sold some 300,000 copies within a year of its release and went on to become, after the Bible, the second-best selling book in the world during the nineteenth century. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* almost immediately gave rise to a number of dramatic productions and spawned a cottage industry in figurines, collectors’ plates, and other decorative items that represented popular scenes and characters from Stowe’s story. As late as the 1930s, some eighty years after the novel’s publication, “Tom shows” toured the United States, making Uncle Tom, Eliza, Topsy, Little Eva, and Simon Legree some of the most recognized literary figures in the nation.

Originally serialized in the *National Era*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* emerged out of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anger over the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Like many white Northerners at the time, Stowe was not an abolitionist. But as a former resident of Cincinnati, gateway to the free North for many slaves, she felt outraged at the cruelty the system inflicted, and was particularly appalled at its destruction of slave families. Prompted by her sister-in-law to “write something” on the subject, Stowe designed a novel that would tug at the heartstrings of men, women, and children who had previously felt little personal connection with, or individual responsibility for, Southern slavery. She also hoped to effect the conversion of slaveholders with her sentimental portrayal of the suffering that

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)

Uncle Tom and Eva from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
slaves endured regardless of the kindness or cruelty of any individual master. As Stowe suggested in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, even when a slave was owned by an indulgent or compassionate slaveholder, the laws that supported slavery made the existence of all slaves precarious, and likely to be rendered unbearable at a moment's notice.

While Stowe's fictional portrayal of Southern slavery attracted an unprecedented following among white Americans, it also drew considerable criticism. Many Northerners and Southerners alike viewed *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as an affront to slaveholders and a threat to the Union, prompting the publication of both angry reviews and over two dozen "anti-Tom" novels intended to discredit Stowe's representation of slavery. Some abolitionists, on the other hand, pointed out that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reinforced negative stereotypes of African Americans. Stowe allowed the light-skinned slaves George and Eliza Harris to escape to Canada, even depicting the highly capable George shooting and wounding a white slave catcher along the way. Yet the much blacker, more simple-minded Uncle Tom died a martyr on a Louisiana plantation, rejecting violence to the very end as a legitimate means of gaining freedom. Scholars have long debated whether Tom's choices represent resistance to slavery and loyalty to the slave community or submissiveness to, and even a complicity in, white power. Finally, Stowe's conclusion, in which the entire Harris family relocated to Africa rather than becoming integrated into American society, troubled abolitionists who regarded colonization as a racist policy that worked against black equality. See also Literature and Abolition.


*Sarah N. Roth*

**Underground Railroad**

The essence of the Underground Railroad, to use the National Park Service's Network to Freedom's definition, was "the effort of enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom by escaping bondage." The origin of the term "Underground Railroad" is not known, but it appears to have come into use by the 1830s. As Frederick Douglass noted, "secrecy and concealment were necessary conditions to the successful operation of this
railroad, and hence its prefix 'underground.' Several different stories explain the origin of the term. One of the best-known relates to Tice Davids, a freedom seeker who swam the Ohio River from Kentucky to Ripley, Ohio, and disappeared so quickly that his master thought he must have "gone off on an underground road."

Freedom seekers (generally known as fugitives) traveled alone or in groups, with or without help. Usually they were young men, but many women and children also escaped, often as families. Fear of imminent sale was a common motivation. They walked, used horses, boats, ships, wagons, or railroads. Most often, they escaped from the upper South (Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, or Tennessee), but sometimes people escaped from port cities along the Mississippi River, the Gulf, or the Atlantic. Sometimes they escaped for only a few days to nearby woods or to maroon communities. Often, however, they left permanently. Many headed for Canada. A few went to Mexico or the Caribbean, but many also settled in Northern free states. By the late 1830s, Vigilance Committees—the first of them started by David Ruggles and other black abolitionists in New York City in 1835—were quickly organized by black and white Underground Railroad supporters throughout the North, and they openly assisted freedom seekers.

Both African Americans and white Americans kept safe houses. In Wilmington, Delaware, Quaker Thomas Garrett, friend of Harriet Tubman, noted that he had helped 2,038 fugitives by 1856. In many Northern cities, African Americans kept the major safe houses, sustained by a wide biracial network. Robert Purvis and William Still, both African Americans, worked with whites J. Miller McKim and Lucretia Mott in Philadelphia. Oliver
Johnson and Sydney Howard Gay assisted African Americans David Ruggles and Theodore Wright in New York City. Stephen Myers, Reverend Jermain Loguen (known as “the king” or “the prince” of the Underground Railroad, probably for his central location, his importance, and his size), and John Jones, all African Americans, kept the main safe houses in Albany, Syracuse, and Elmira, New York. In Newport, Indiana, and later Cincinnati, Ohio, Quaker Levi Coffin kept a major safe house. In Detroit, William Lambert and George DeBaptiste, African Americans, worked with Seymour Finney, a white hotel operator.

While it is impossible to know how many people escaped on the Underground Railroad, 1,500 per year is a generally accepted estimate. Certainly, enough people escaped to make passage of a Fugitive Slave Law a top priority for white Southerners as part of the Compromise of 1850. The Fugitive Slave Act required federal marshals to assist slave-catchers to capture accused fugitives. Freedom seekers had no right to testify on their own behalf. Underground Railroad helpers could be jailed for six months and fined $1,000 for each person they helped. Commissioners received $10 for ruling on behalf of slave-catchers and $5 for ruling on behalf of the freedom seeker. Fearing recapture, many freedom seekers who had settled in the Northern United States fled to Canada. Others, including Shadrach Minkins in Boston and William “Jerry” Henry in Syracuse, successfully escaped federal agents. The federal government did capture Anthony Burns in Boston, however, and returned him to slavery under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Act.

William Still’s extensive notes formed the basis for his 1872 book, The Underground Railroad. Memoirs of people such as Quaker Levi Coffin, Harriet Tubman, and John Parker, themselves freedom seekers, offer important primary source evidence. Historians in the late twentieth century generally ignored the history of the Underground Railroad, citing the unreliability of oral traditions and the lack of written primary evidence. A closer look at both oral traditions and written evidence, however, has led to a rejuvenation of interest in this field. See also Jerry Rescue; Rankin, John.

Unitarianism and Antislavery

It is difficult to summarize the relationship of Unitarians to the antislavery movement. Most Unitarians, it appears, were opposed in principle to slavery. Many Unitarians tacitly, if not actively, supported the moderate antislavery movement and its agenda of gradual emancipation, slaveholder compensation, and African colonization. With the emergence of William Lloyd Garrison and the abolitionist movement in the 1830s, however, leading members of the Unitarian clergy publicly chastised the Garrisonians for their advocacy of immediate emancipation and for their confrontational, socially disruptive tactics. Still other Unitarians emerged in the 1850s as spokespersons for the radical vanguard of the abolitionist movement. While it is difficult, therefore, to generalize about Unitarianism and antislavery, it is possible to identify the socio-economic and cultural factors behind their initial conservatism, and to chart the relationship between their evolving radicalism and the major political events of the day.

Reverend William Ellery Channing, (1780–1842), the leading Unitarian minister of his generation, lamented privately to a friend, that “no sect in this country has taken less interest in the slavery question” than the Unitarians. As a small sect of liberal Congregationalist ministers located initially in and around Boston, the Unitarians were closely associated with the city’s wealthy mercantile families and elite cultural institutions. Many Boston merchants had long-established relationships with Southern slaveholders, first as owners of the merchant ships that trafficked in African slaves, and later as owners of and investors in New England’s growing textile industry, which depended on a regular supply of Southern cotton. Economic self-interest, compounded by a social conservatism and cultural elitism shared by Boston’s merchants and Unitarian clergy, sanctioned expression of only the most moderate antislavery sentiments. Reverend Henry Ware, Jr., a professor at Harvard Divinity School, was pressured in 1834 by Harvard administrators, Boston newspapers, and members of his own congregation, to renounce his affiliation with the Cambridge Anti-Slavery Society, a moderate antislavery association. Another member of Harvard’s faculty, Carl Follen, a distinguished German scholar, was dismissed for publicly voicing antislavery views. By the early 1850s, one-third of Harvard’s undergraduates were the sons of Southern planters, and with the outbreak of Civil War in 1861, Harvard could claim the dubious honor of counting seventeen Confederate generals among its alumni.

William Ellery Channing typifies the relationship of many Unitarian ministers to the antislavery movement. Channing was born and raised in Newport, Rhode Island, a town still referred to in the late-eighteenth century as “the slave market of America.” After graduating from Harvard in 1798, Channing spent two years in Virginia tutoring the children of a prominent Richmond slaveholder. Channing married into a wealthy Newport mercantile
family whose fortune had been earned in part by selling rum to slave-traders, who occasionally settled their debts in slaves. In 1830, troubled by poor health, Channing vacationed on a slave plantation on the Caribbean island of St. Croix, where he once again witnessed first-hand the harsh realities of the plantation system.

Despite these experiences, or perhaps more accurately, due largely to these experiences, Channing refrained from commenting publicly on or participating in the antislavery movement until the last years of his life. Criticized by Maria Weston Chapman, a radical member of his congregation, and by the Reverend Samuel J. May, a young Unitarian minister converted to abolitionism, Channing admitted in 1834 that he had been "silent too long" on the subject of slavery. Slavery, Channing's first public statement in support of antislavery, was published in 1835. From that year onward until his death, Channing took an increasingly public stance against slavery. In 1837, Channing organized a memorial service for the murdered Illinois abolitionist, Elijah P. Lovejoy, over the protests of Andrews Norton, another leading Unitarian minister, and despite increasingly hostile condemnations by members of his Federal Street congregation and other prominent Bostonians. A cursory reading of Slavery and Channing's other published antislavery works reveals, however, that despite his heightened political activism, Channing's views never evolved beyond a moderate antislavery position. Even as he proclaimed his devotion to the antislavery cause, in nearly every work Channing reserved his harshest criticism for the abolitionists, whom he criticized repeatedly as irresponsible, if well intentioned, extremists.

Channing's evolving views on slavery are significant only in comparison to the intransigent and often intemperate condemnations of the antislavery movement voiced throughout the 1830s and 1840s by Andrews Norton, Ezra Stiles Gannett, and other leading Unitarians. Despite the social conservatism of Channing's generation, by the 1850s younger Unitarian ministers like Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Theodore Parker had repudiated their elders' views on antislavery and achieved prominence as leading spokespersons in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement. The radicalism of these younger Unitarians achieved its fullest expression in the abolitionist activism of Reverend Theodore Parker.

Parker's radicalism had several sources. Parker was particularly proud of the fact that his grandfather led the local militia in the Battle of Lexington, and references to the American Revolution recur throughout his antislavery writings. Like many New Englanders, Parker was also outraged by passage of the Fugitive Slave Law and by the outcome of the case of Anthony Burns. The failed efforts to prevent Burns's reenslavement, compounded by news of the outrages committed in Kansas by proslavery forces, compelled Parker and many other Unitarians to accept violence as a legitimate tactic in the war against slavery. Parker took to carrying loaded pistols, and supported the movement to arm Kansas free-state settlers, including the militant abolitionist John Brown. Parker's support for Brown continued even after Brown's massacre of unarmed, proslavery settlers at Pottawatomie Creek. In 1859, Parker, along with Higginson, became a member of the Secret Six, a group of prominent, proviolence abolitionists who provided
Brown with funds for his intended, and ultimately unsuccessful, slave insurrection at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. By the time Brown’s ill-fated raid came undone in October 1859, Parker lay dying in Rome, Italy, where he had hoped to recuperate from tuberculosis. Nevertheless, upon learning of Brown’s indictment and pending execution, Parker used “what poor remnant of power is left to me,” to celebrate Brown as a martyr and a saint, and to assert that the slave “has a natural right to kill every one who seeks to prevent his enjoyment of liberty.” See also Bleeding Kansas.


Neil Brody Miller

United Nations and Antislavery

The United Nations (UN) was formed immediately after the end of the Second World War. Like its predecessor, the League of Nations, its purpose was to ensure peace by preventing wars and promoting human welfare. Its charter issued in 1945 stated that one of its aims was to promote “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex or language or religion.” Although slavery was not specifically mentioned, its eradication was clearly implied. However, like the League, it ruled out interference in the domestic affairs of member states. Hence, it could negotiate covenants but had no means of enforcing them even in the case of members that had signed and ratified them.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, its subsidiary bodies were formed in an atmosphere of rising tension created by the Cold War—the intense hostility between the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union and the western democracies led by the United States. These were the only remaining great powers, as one by one, the European colonial empires disintegrated and the newly independent states took their places at the United Nations. To the Western Bloc, human rights included freedom of expression, of assembly, of information, of religion, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and other components of the rule of law, while the Soviet Bloc stressed freedom from want and discrimination, the right to education, equal opportunity, and other economic and social rights.

The abolition of slavery became a pawn in the battle between the western democracies and the Soviet Union and its allies to win over world public opinion. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), a subsidiary of the
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Russians maintained that slavery meant only the chattel slavery which was still legal only in the Aden Protectorate and the small sheikdoms on the Persian Gulf under British protection, and in the independent states of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Hence, they proposed that article four of the Universal Declaration should declare that “no one shall be held in slavery or servitude: and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.” To the Western Bloc, however, “slavery in all its forms” included the forced labor practiced in the gulags of the Soviet Union and the other practices included in the report of the League of Nations Temporary Slavery Commission and referred to in the Slavery Convention of 1926. The Universal Declaration, however, was simply a declaration of principles. Covenants were needed to implement it and these were many years in coming.

The Secretary of the British Antislavery Society began to pressure the United Nations to appoint a permanent slavery committee as early as 1946. The result, after much disagreement and discussion, was the appointment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Slavery 1950–51. Two years later, the UN took over the Slavery Convention of 1926, including its unsatisfactory definition of slavery. This in turn led to the negotiation of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery in 1956. This treaty confirmed that these practices included debt-bondage, serfdom, forced labor, the adoption of children under 18 in order to exploit them, as well as forced marriage, the forced transfer of married women, and the inheritance of widows. To prevent child marriage, signatories undertook to set a minimum age for marriages, to register them, and to ensure that consent should be freely expressed by both parties before competent authorities. These provisions were incorporated into the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages of 1962. This was followed by a recommendation of the UN General Assembly in 1965, which suggested that fifteen should be the minimum age for marriage.

Similarly, the UN General Assembly issued the Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959, proclaiming that children must be assured a “happy childhood” free from discrimination, and insecurity. They had a right to free and compulsory education, and must be allowed time for recreation. They should not be employed below a minimum age, or engaged in any occupation dangerous to their health and development.

Thus by the 1960s, the United Nations had negotiated important human rights covenants and declarations but it had no means of enforcing them. During the next few years, the antislavery campaign must be seen against the background of increasing tension as each side in the Cold War sought support from the newly independent unaligned former European colonies. The revulsion of these new countries against colonialism increased as South Africa’s policy of apartheid became ever more brutal, as Rhodesia declared independence from Britain and tightened its racial policies, and as Africans turned to guerrilla warfare against South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese colonies. Fuel was added to the fire by the United States’
embroilment in war between South Vietnam and the communist North Vietnam, and by Israel's humiliating victory in the 1967 war against its Arab neighbors.

The slavery question at the United Nations was put on the agenda of ECOSOC in 1960 by a group of closely allied non-governmental organizations (NGOs) led by the Anti-Slavery Society and including women's organizations. They demanded the establishment of a UN commission of inquiry or a committee of experts on slavery. The slavery question assumed political importance when President Nasser of Egypt emerged as a leading abolitionist denouncing chattel slavery in Arabia. Saudi Arabia and Yemen outlawed it in 1962. Thus, the only areas in which chattel slavery was legal were the Aden Protectorate and the Trucial States, both under forms of British protection, and Oman, whose sultan was a close ally of Britain. However, many of the practices designated forms of slavery in the 1956 and subsequent treaties were still practiced in the newly independent former colonies.

By the end of 1962, only 44 of the 104 members of the UN had acceded to the 1956 treaty. A compromise was reached at the UN with the appointment of a special rapporteur on slavery, rather than the committee wanted by the NGOs. The rapporteur, Dr. Mohammed Awad, an Egyptian scholar, began work in 1964, sending out questionnaires asking governments to report on the situation in their countries. Most of the replies were less than honest. In his report, discussed in the social committee of ECOSOC in 1966, Awad advocated the appointment of a UN slavery committee with its own secretariat. He wanted it to have the power to promote and supervise the activities of specialized agencies and NGOs, as well as to cooperate with, and advise, governments on action they might take. He even hinted that the committee might send experts to investigate conditions and offer advice to countries needing help.

The proposal was strongly opposed. The USSR claimed it was unnecessary. The United States objected to the expense. Many of the newly independent states had no desire for investigations into questions such as marriage customs, cult slavery, child labor, debt bondage, and so forth. The Latin American nations had no wish to tackle peonage or the plight of their indigenous minorities. The British, to placate Parliament, the Anti-Slavery Society and the public, were reluctantly prepared to support such a committee, but suggested that it should be purely advisory. However, the coup de grace came when Tanzania and other former colonies succeeded in passing a resolution which included the "slavery-like practices of apartheid and colonialism" as forms of servitude and called on the Commission on Human Rights to consider ways to end them, effectively and immediately. This was opposed by Britain, and the proposal for the committee died.

In the years that followed, the slavery issue was kept alive by NGOs led by the Anti-Slavery Society. In 1967, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), to whom ECOSOC had referred the question, passed it on to its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities (SPDPM). This was a committee of so-called independent experts appointed by the CHR but approved by their governments. How
independent they were depended on their governments. Originally most were lawyers, sociologists, and other academics, but from 1969, as their numbers were enlarged to give more representation to Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans, more diplomats and civil servants were appointed and the appointments became more politicized. The members represented the five areas into which the UN divided the world. They had a large mandate—to protect minorities and prevent discrimination and other infringements of human rights. Henceforth this was the body that dealt with slavery questions.

Although the appointment of a special committee to deal with slavery was for the time being a dead issue, the UN issued a number of declarations and negotiated conventions dealing with various forms of servitude. In 1968, for instance, ECOSOC declared trafficking in persons for prostitution to be a form of slavery, and called on the specialized agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to rehabilitate the women and girls who were freed. The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Others had replaced earlier treaties in 1949, but for legal and other reasons, its provisions could not be effectively implemented.

In 1969, a further Awad report was commissioned. Awad was particularly urged to seek information from the specialized agencies as well as NGOs and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Arab League, and the Organization of American Unity (OAS). He was also asked to investigate specific manifestations of apartheid, such as sweated labor and the denial of trade union rights to Africans.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Slavery Society formed an All Party Group in the British Parliament to pressure the government into taking stronger action at the UN. The group, however, was particularly interested in the welfare of indigenous peoples such as “Amerindians” in South America and the “Bushmen” in Southern Africa.

The definition of slavery was constantly expanding. Various agencies and increasing numbers of NGOs were being drawn into the abolition struggle, but there was no organization to oversee their efforts, and action depended entirely on government cooperation. Moreover, when Awad presented his final report in 1970, it was disappointing. The UN special agencies who relied on the cooperation of governments for their work, had not wanted to be drawn into the antislavery campaign, and many governments had still ignored or failed to ratify the conventions. In many cases they had outlawed slavery and denied that it existed; hence they were reluctant now to admit that their laws were not being carried out.

Britain’s dilemma over chattel slavery was reduced when the rulers of the Trucial states were induced to sign a decree stating that it had long been forbidden in their territories. In the Aden Protectorate, where British control was non-existent in some areas, slavery was still practiced to an unknown extent. This problem was solved when Britain withdrew from
Aden in disarray late in 1967, and the extreme socialist government that took over outlawed slavery. In Oman, closely allied to Britain, slavery ended when a British-supported coup replaced the existing ruler with his son in 1970. By this time, South Africa had left the British Commonwealth on the issue of apartheid, and the only colonies remaining under British rule continued to do so by their own choice. Henceforth, Britain had no difficulty submitting to the demands of the Anti-Slavery Society and its supporters, who urged the government to pressure the UN to establish some mechanism to foster and supervise action against slavery.

At the UN, pressure from more than twenty NGOs and revelations that a number of Africans were being smuggled into Europe and ill-treated, led to the appointment of the Working Group on Slavery in 1974. It consisted of five members of the sub-commission, one from each of the areas into which the United Nations had divided the world. The Soviets, however, stipulated that it was only to meet for three days every other year. It could not carry out investigations and it had no authority to see that the advice it was expected to provide was carried out. Its membership, constantly changing, was unlikely to produce any experts on slavery. It was thus a small toothless committee established to end contemporary forms of slavery that in the last years of the twentieth and early ones of the twenty-first centuries were constantly taking new forms.

Some of the Group’s early defects were remedied in the next few years due to intense NGO pressure. It became a permanent body, meeting annually first for five days and then for eight. Most importantly, its meetings were held in public with simultaneous translation into English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Moreover, NGOs and specialized agencies were invited to attend and give evidence. By 1992, its meetings were held long enough before the meeting of the sub-commission for the latter to have time to read its reports and act upon them. However, it lacked secretarial support and could not conduct its own investigations on the ground or enforce its recommendations. It was thus dependent on the information which was brought to it by the UN Secretariat and NGOs, as well as the UN special agencies, many of which did not attend its meetings regularly.

Its early meetings were highly politicized as members defended their own regions. The Cold War introduced a competitive atmosphere in which the Soviet and Asian Blocs in particular flatly denied the various charges brought against them. The communists, for instance, claimed there was no prostitution in their countries. When Ethiopia was accused of hijacking people off the streets of Addis Ababa to work in the sesame fields as forced labor, a Russian representative claimed that the accusation was untrue and that the evidence was produced by the Western Bloc to embarrass the Ethiopian communist government. When debt bondage in India was denounced, the chairman complained that his area of the world was being “picked on.” Members wandered in and out of the meetings and appeared to have little interest in the proceedings. Moreover, there was rarely any press coverage, which was what hard pressed, under funded NGOs craved.

With the end of the Cold War and of apartheid in South Africa, following the dissolution of the European colonial empires, the atmosphere at the
Working Group became less politicized. Another big change was that public awareness of the various forms of modern servitude heightened as these abuses attracted more attention in the press. By the last decade of the twentieth century, the number of NGOs had proliferated and more and more of them came to the meetings of the Group. It was one institution at which they were sure of being heard. Although its powers were extremely limited, the Group was responsible for the appointment of several special rapporteurs, particularly on the exploitation of children. It also initiated the establishment of the UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, financed by government donations. This fund brought local NGOs and sometimes victims of contemporary slavery to Geneva to provide first hand accounts of abuse.

By the end of the twentieth century, chattel slavery had almost disappeared. It still existed illegally in Mauritania and in some of the neighboring countries in the Sahel. The Sub-Commission sent out a committee to investigate the situation in Mauritania in 1984. Progress was slow; in the 1990s, many slaves, especially men, had been freed, but owners were still trying to keep women and children. Slave-raiding and slave-holding also revived in Sudan as the result of the war between the North and the South. A special rapporteur was sent out by the UN, and agencies such as UNICEF, tried to trace abducted women and children in order to rehabilitate them. The UN was involved in trying to broker peace in the Sudan.

In most of its sessions, however, the Working Group found itself hearing about more and more practices that had not in the past been defined as slavery, or had been called “slavery-like practices.” After much discussion, it decided in 1987 to change its name to the Working Group on Contemporary forms of Slavery. The sub-commission defined slavery as the “exploitation of man by man,” and maintained that, as this was constantly changing its forms, the definition of slavery could not be a static concept.

Under this rubric, the Group collected more and more information on practices that differed from chattel slavery in certain important features. The emphasis changed from ownership to control, and often to temporary control, as for instance, slave children grew up and forced prostitutes grew old or ill. Moreover, slaves were no longer acquired by raids. Some were still kidnapped, but many came willingly in search of jobs and on arrival found the job they had been promised did not exist and were then forced into various forms of servitude through debt bondage or brutalization or threats. Thus, people were recruited in the slums of Brazil to work in Amazonia, only to find on arrival that they were in debt to the people who had transported them. The debts could not be repaid, and hence they were forced to work in gold mines or other jobs. Women and girls found themselves forced into prostitution. Similar scams were practiced in areas as different as Eastern Europe and West Africa. Parents sold their children on the promise of a good job or an education, only to find that they were worked like slaves on plantations and quarries, or as domestic servants, or prostitutes in their own countries or abroad. Debt-bondage was an old form of servitude, particularly in South Asia, where it was often hereditary. It took the form of peonage in the Americas. It now increasingly spread to new
areas and played an intrinsic part in the rising flow of labor from the poor areas of the world to the rich ones.

The exploitation of child labor was the subject of special UN reports in the 1980s and 1990s. Children were especially vulnerable to exploitation, and the problem was world-wide but particularly widespread in poor countries. Children worked in mines, factories, cottage industries, stone quarries, brick kilns, agriculture, and domestic service. Small boys from South Asia were recruited to ride as camel jockeys in the United Arab Emirates (formerly the Trucial States). Some children worked with their parents, others worked away from home. Criminal gangs used "street" children for prostitution, drug trafficking, and theft, and even mutilated them to turn them into beggars. Many were victims of sex tourism, forced prostitution, and child pornography. Child soldiers were widely recruited, mostly in rebel armies, and in some cases were forced to commit atrocities, killing or mutilating even children, as in Sierra Leone.

Much information on these iniquities was brought to the Working Group, before and after the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. In the 1990s, the Group drew up a plan of action to be sent to governments. The Commission on Human Rights appointed special rapporteurs to deal with the child slavery. Finally, the ILO established the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) and in 1999, negotiated the Convention against the Worst Forms of Child Labor (no. 182).

Some of the many cases brought before the Working Group bore little or no relation to slavery as generally conceived. These cases included female genital excision (also called cutting or circumcision), the honor killings of Muslim girls by their relatives in the belief that they had disgraced them, the murder of persons to use their organs in transplants, as well as incest, and other iniquities. As a result by the late 1990s, the Working Group was in danger of losing its focus.

Some forms of servitude, however, were transferred to other UN working groups. Legal foreign migrant laborers were often denied the benefits due to citizen workers. Moreover, they lived away from their families, and faced violence and racism. Illegal alien migrants were particularly vulnerable to abuses such as extortion by the criminal groups who smuggled them into the richer nations. Thus, Chinese triads extorted money from them as well as their families under threat of violence. Some illegal aliens were forced into sweatshops which were virtual prisons. At best these economic refugees faced resentment from local workers, fearful of losing their jobs. To protect them, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families was signed in 1990. Seven years later, the Commission on Human Rights established a working group to consider the protection of migrants.

Similarly, the Working Group on the Protection of Indigenous Populations (WGIP) was established in order to protect their rights to lands, and ensure they did not become victims of serfdom, debt bondage, forced labor, and discrimination. This UN Group attracted wide support. It drafted a Universal Declaration on the rights of indigenous minorities and helped establish the Permanent Indigenous Forum under ECOSOC. It also established a Trust
Fund to bring spokesmen to meetings at which governments exchanged information on indigenous peoples.

In sum, the United Nations through its various committees, working groups, and specialized agencies was actively involved in the suppression of the various forms of slavery which evolved in the twentieth century, as well as in ending the remaining vestiges of chattel slavery. It remains to be seen how successful it has been. The Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery plans to review its work and its impact in 2005 and to meet together with the more powerful ILO to consider plans for the future. The distinction between forced labor and slavery has not been clear-cut since forced labor was included in the definition of slavery by the League of Nations Temporary Slavery Commission. However, although the Working Group has heard evidence on the question, it was the ILO which negotiated the various forced labor conventions.

Many of the problems the United Nations has attacked are almost intractable as they are the result of dire poverty in some regions of the world in contrast to the great wealth of others. The result has been a steady flow of migrants, both free and in servitude, from the poor areas to the rich areas. Globalization is still in its infancy. The problem of protecting the vulnerable from exploitation by employers and criminal gangs became more difficult with the increasing ease of communications, with money laundering, and widespread official corruption, as well as the growth of organized crime. On paper much has been achieved. Conventions have been signed. Wide publicity has been given to various forms of contemporary slavery. However, some serious problems remain. Governments do not have to sign or ratify the conventions. If they do sign them, and if they pass the laws needed to implement them, they are often too poor or too corrupt to enforce them. Moreover, if treaties are to be carried out, an up-to-date definition of slavery is needed. At present it is still defined as in 1926 as a question of ownership. Thus, in spite of considerable UN efforts, many forms of contemporary slavery have continued into the early twenty-first century. See also League of Nations and Slavery; Muscat and Oman, Abolition of Slavery in; Slavery in; Slavery and Abolition in the Twentieth Century.


*Suzanne Miers*

**United States, Antislavery in**

Organized antislavery in the United States has a long history that can be roughly divided into four somewhat overlapping phases. The movement began during the American Revolution and for the most part ended with
the adoption of the **Thirteenth Amendment**, which abolished slavery in the United States. However, some opponents of slavery and a few organizations continued to be active in the United States well after slavery was abolished in the nation. One of the earliest antislavery organizations, the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, never disbanded and continues to work for better race relations.

**Early Abolition Societies**

During the American Revolution, opponents of slavery in most of the Northern states, and a few states of the upper South, organized what were known at the time as abolition societies. The most important was the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race, more commonly known as the **Pennsylvania Abolition Society**, or the PAS. The PAS was first organized in 1775, but became moribund during the British occupation of Philadelphia. A revived society remerged in 1784. However, members and future members of the Society helped work for the passage of the Pennsylvania Gradual Abolition Act of 1780, the first American legislative act to begin the process of dismantling slavery. Similar organizations in other states successfully worked for gradual abolition acts in Rhode Island (1784), Connecticut (1784), New York (1799), and New Jersey (1804). Societies in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky were unsuccessful in moving those states toward abolition, and by 1810, the Southern societies were moribund or simply no longer functioning. Many of the leaders of these societies were leaders of the new nation itself. **Benjamin Franklin** and Dr. **Benjamin Rush**, a signer of the Declaration of Independence along with Franklin, served as presidents of the Pennsylvania Society. The president of the New York Society was **John Jay**, the diplomat and future chief justice of the United States. Another key member was Alexander Hamilton, who coauthored the *Federalist Papers* with Jay and then served as secretary of the treasury. James Wood, who served as governor of Virginia from 1796 to 1799, was also the vice president of the Virginia Abolition Society. Other members of these societies included **Thomas Paine**; James Otis; James Pemberton, a Quaker merchant; Philadelphia mayor, Hilary Baker; Rufus King, a signer of the U.S. Constitution; Judge James Duane; and Daniel D. Tompkins, a future governor of New York.

The Northern abolition societies had four general goals. The first was to abolish slavery in their own states. In this they were remarkably successful. In addition to those Northern states which ended slavery through gradual abolition acts, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont (the fourteenth state) abolished slavery through constitutional provisions. By 1804, all of the Northern states had either ended slavery outright or were in the process of gradually destroying it. The slave population in the North dropped precipitously, while the free black populations grew rapidly. For example, in Pennsylvania the slave population dropped from 6,855 in 1780 to 211 in 1820. In New York there were 21,324 slaves in 1790 and just over 10,000
in 1820. In 1827, the state freed all remaining slaves. New England had 3,870 slaves in 1790 and 145 by 1820.

Second, the societies agitated for an end to the African Slave Trade. In the first session of Congress, the Pennsylvania Society petitioned Congress to end the commerce. The Constitution prohibited an absolute ban on the trade at that time. Nevertheless, the Society petitioned Congress to end the trade, which led to an astounding attack on abolitionists by Southern members of Congress. Benjamin Franklin responded, in his last published essay before he died, with a brilliant satirical attack on the slave trade. In this essay, Franklin took on the voice of a North African Moslem, praising the virtue of enslaving Christians. Even though Congress could not yet ban the trade, the individual states could. Thus, the Northern states and a number of Southern states, prohibited their citizens from participating in the trade. The abolition societies worked to make sure these laws were enforced.

Third, the societies fought to protect free blacks. The PAS, for example, agitated for legislation to protect free blacks from kidnapping and reenslavement. This led, in 1788, to an elaborate amendment strengthening the 1780 gradual abolition act. The PAS, as well as other societies, also used litigation to protect free blacks, help emancipate slaves, and make life miserable for slaveowners. At one point, President George Washington complained to political leaders in Pennsylvania that the PAS was harassing too many Southern masters. The PAS and its New York counterpart also initiated litigation to secure the liberty of blacks who had a legal claim to freedom. The threat of a lawsuit was probably the reason Thomas Jefferson reluctantly signed a paper agreeing to free his slave James Hemings, after he brought him to Philadelphia. Ironically, intervention by the PAS on behalf of a kidnapped free black ultimately led to the adoption of the 1793 fugitive slave law. However, despite that outcome, the abolition societies throughout the North used the legal talent of their members to secure the freedom of a number of blacks. In many ways, these societies were the first public interest organization to use litigation to achieve social reform. They can be seen as the precursors of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or the American Civil Liberties Union.

Fourth, the societies worked to enhance the social conditions of blacks. They built schools for blacks, helped raise money for black education, black churches, orphanages, and other social institutions. In an age before public education and a social safety net, the abolition societies provided significant material aid to black communities.

The abolition societies continued to function into the early part of the nineteenth century. With immediate abolition in northern New England and the last gradual abolition act passed in New Jersey in 1804, the mission of the societies evolved to protecting free blacks from kidnapping and helping black communities provide education for their children. Except for the African slave trade, the societies were mostly focused on local issues. Their purpose was to end slavery in their own backyard and end the African slave trade. By 1808, they had accomplished both. By the 1820s, they had ceased having national conventions as they had done in the 1790s and generally disbanded or, like the PAS, faded into obscurity, continuing to help runaway
slaves and black schools, but otherwise not participating in the emerging new attack on slavery in the 1830s.

**American Colonization Society**

In 1816, a diverse collection of humanitarians, opponents of slavery, slaveowners fearful of free blacks, and various politicians, organized the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color, better known as the **American Colonization Society** (ACS). The early leaders of the ACS included Henry Clay, the speaker of the House of Representatives; Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer of Virginia; Maryland lawyer and author of the *Star Spangled Banner*, Francis Scott Key; and James Monroe, who would become the fifth president of the United States. The first president of the Society was Supreme Court Justice Bushrod Washington, the nephew of President George Washington. The ACS transported free blacks and recently manumitted slaves to Africa, where they established colonies and settlements and eventually the country of **Liberia**. The goals of the Society were mixed. Many of the slaveholding Southern members saw the Society as a vehicle for removing free blacks from the United States. They believed free blacks were subversive to slavery. Other members, such as the Massachusetts politician Daniel Webster, believed the ACS would encourage masters to free their slaves by providing a safe place to send them. Thus, the ACS combined proslavery racism with antislavery humanitarianism. Over the years, some masters took advantage of the ACS to emancipate their slaves. This was particularly applied in states like Virginia and North Carolina, which had made manumission without also removal from the state extremely difficult. Some free blacks supported the ACS because they felt Africa offered them more opportunity than the United States. Most free blacks, however, saw the ACS as a threat to their liberty. In Philadelphia, the Reverend Richard Allen led a huge protest against the ACS. The black revolutionary David Walker vigorously attacked colonization in his pamphlet, *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829). The free black opponents of the ACS understood that its slave-owning leaders and proslavery supporters, such as the Virginians John Tyler and Abel Upshur, were hardly friends of emancipation or free blacks. These Southerners wanted the ACS to remove free blacks, not slaves, from American shores. In the 1830s, the new antislavery movement attacked the ACS as a friend of slavery, not of blacks. In fact, it was a friend of slavery, but at the same time, the ACS facilitated the private manumission of a few thousand or so slaves.

**The Emergence of Immediatism**

Opponents of slavery objected to colonization because the colonizationists were not, ultimately, interested in ending slavery. At best, the ACS facilitated liberty for a few slaves through private manumission. But, the cost of this private manumission for the African Americans was high; to gain freedom they had to leave the land they knew, the United States, and relocate
to another land where they had never been, Africa. They had to leave friends and relatives behind and venture to an unknown place. Most of all, however, colonization retarded any direct assault on slavery.

Blacks like David Walker and Richard Allen were the first to condemn colonization, but in the early 1830s, white opponents of slavery also attacked the ACS. The most important of these—indeed, the most important opponent of slavery for the next three decades—was William Lloyd Garrison, a native of Newburyport, Massachusetts and a printer by trade. In 1831, Garrison began publishing The Liberator, which became the nation's leading antislavery paper. Garrison, along with other early white abolitionists including Arthur and Lewis Tappan, had been deeply influenced by the intensity of black opposition to colonization, their increasing attacks on slavery, and their dedication to faith and self-improvement. This influence was critical in moving the previously procolonization Garrison and the brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan out of the fold and toward a demand for total and immediate abolition. Quoting the nation's founding document in the inaugural issue of The Liberator, Garrison asserted his support for “the 'self-evident truth' maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, 'that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" Garrison proclaimed, “I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population.” Setting the tone for the next three decades, Garrison declared the following in his newspaper:

I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

A year later, in 1832, Garrison helped found the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which advocated immediate abolition. In December 1833, sixty-two opponents of slavery met in Philadelphia to form the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS). The delegates included three blacks and four women, in an age when men and women rarely gathered in public meetings and blacks and whites rarely worked together. Most of the delegates were religiously motivated and saw their movement as part of a moral crusade to rid America of sin. Many came out of the temperance movement. The abolitionists demanded the “immediate, unconditional, uncompensated emancipation” of the nation’s slaves. They rejected the gradualism of the earlier abolition societies and the absurd position of the ACS that free blacks had to be removed from the nation. Such a position was unfair to blacks and at the same time made ending slavery impossible, because the prerequisite for emancipation—moving the former slaves to Africa—was
impossible. There were simply not enough ships or resources to move American slaves to Africa or anywhere else, assuming they wanted to go.

The new “immediate” abolitionists believed that they could accomplish their goals through moral suasion—that is, by persuading slaveowners that they should free their slaves because it was their Christian duty to do so. Their tactics included flooding the mails with pamphlets and letters and trying to convince leading Southerners, especially churchmen and lay leaders, to take a stand against slavery. Later, the abolitionists would flood Congress with petitions against slavery. The AASS developed local and state organizations throughout the North. While women continued to work within the men’s organizations, they also formed their own groups, such as the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. Members of this group found an attorney to petition for a writ of habeas corpus to test whether a visitor could bring a slave into Massachusetts. In Commonwealth v. Aves (1836), they succeeded in getting the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to hold that slaves brought into the state immediately became free.

Abolitionists were trapped by their own language—immediate emancipation—because no one believed this was either possible or desirable. Almost all whites, even those opposed to slavery, believed that most of the two million or so slaves in the nation were not ready for immediate freedom. Furthermore, even opponents of slavery understood that the overwhelming majority of whites in the North as well as the South were not prepared to accept so many free blacks living among them. This led to the complicated explanation that the new abolitionists favored “immediate abolition, gradually achieved.” They believed the ending of slavery must start immediately, and the Americans, especially slaveholders, had to commit to emancipation to save the very soul of the nation. This led to the tactics of moral suasion.

These early abolitionists met with little success. In the North they were mobbed and in the South they were ignored or banned. Between 1833 and 1835, citizens in Canterbury, Connecticut repeatedly attacked a boarding school for black girls run by a Quaker abolitionist, Prudence Crandall. In 1835, a mob in Boston threatened to lynch William Lloyd Garrison, dragging him through the streets with a rope around his neck. In 1837, an abolitionist printer, the Reverend Elijah P. Lovejoy was killed as he tried to defend his business and printing press from a proslavery mob attempting to throw his press into the Mississippi River. Mobs in Utica, New York City, Philadelphia, and elsewhere broke up antislavery meetings and even burned buildings. Some abolitionist speakers were beaten up and chased out of towns in the North. Congress passed a “gag” rule to prevent the reading of abolitionist petitions, and relatively few Northerners joined antislavery organizations.

Abolitionists also struggled with each other over a variety of issues. Garrison and his allies were not content with focusing on antislavery. Garrison campaigned for women’s rights, world peace, pacifism, and temperance. He attacked the organized churches and became increasingly disaffected with politics. By the end of the 1830s, he was moving to the position that abolitionists should reject political activity altogether. Declaring the Constitution to be a “covenant with death and an agreement in hell,” he adopted as a
slogan for his newspaper, “No Union with Slaveholders.” This radical disunionism made him even less popular among most white Northerners. Most of the subscribers to his newspaper were blacks. However, despite his personal unpopularity, and the small number of whites or blacks who joined the AASS, Garrison’s message began to take hold. Northerners who had never thought about slavery could no longer avoid the issue. In addition, Garrisonians used the courts in Massachusetts and elsewhere to challenge slavery where they could. Members of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society brought the issue of visiting slaves before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in Commonwealth v. Aves (1836). The conservative chief justice, Lemuel Shaw, sided with the abolitionists, holding that a slave became free the moment he or she entered the state, unless as a fugitive slave. Within a decade, most other Northern states had followed this rule. The AASS also provided legal help to fugitive slaves. The AASS continued to operate until the end of the Civil War. Small in numbers, the society had powerful speakers, including Wendell Phillips who was perhaps the greatest orator of the age. Frederick Douglass began his career as a Garrisonian, and as an agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Women speakers like Abby Kelley Foster were also important in spreading the gospel of strong antislavery ideas. The AASS served as a powerful force for changing opinion, even if it lacked members and convinced few to accept all of its goals. Northerners introduced to abolitionist ideas by AASS pamphlets, books, and its many speakers might not have become immediate abolitionists, but many became strongly antislavery, and those sentiments eventually affected politics, law, and social relations.

Political Antislavery

Garrison’s increasing radicalism led to a split within the movement. In 1840, moderate abolitionists, led by James G. Birney and Lewis and Arthur Tappan, formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The AFASS rejected women’s rights, pacifism, and other causes and focused only on slavery. The election of Abby Kelley to the AASS board precipitated the creation of the new organization, but this was not the only cause of the schism. Garrison and other leaders of the AASS had mounted an unrelenting campaign against the organized churches—“synagogues of Satan” and “cages of unclean birds” as one Garrisonian called them. But other abolitionists, evangelicals such as Arthur and Lewis Tappan, James G. Birney, and William Jay (the son of former Chief Justice John Jay) were more orthodox in their religious beliefs and support for existing churches. They were also not ready to mix antislavery with support for women’s rights and other issues. Thus, in 1840 a number of key AASS members, led by the Tappans and Birney, formed the AFASS. The organization would continue to operate until the mid-1850s, when it faded from the scene. The split between the two antislavery societies left both of them weaker. But, by competing with each other, they probably increased the total number of antislavery books, pamphlets, and newspapers in circulation, and gave more people access to antislavery ideas.
Initially, the new organization ignored politics, but shortly after the schism, the Tappans and Birney help form the **Liberty Party**, with Birney as its first presidential candidate in 1840. The Liberty Party was the first political party in the nation's history to openly oppose slavery. By this time, the antislavery movement was beginning to have an effect on electoral politics. Antislavery sentiment was particularly strong in northern New England, northern and central New York, much of Massachusetts, northern Ohio, and the new state of Michigan. Some Whig members of Congress, such as **John Quincy Adams** of Massachusetts, Seth Gates of New York, Joshua Giddings of Ohio, and William Slade of Vermont, were openly sympathetic to antislavery. So too were some important state politicians, like Governor **William H. Seward** of New York. But antislavery Whigs were a minority in their party. While a few Democrats also opposed slavery, for the most part the office holders and rank and file of the Democracy were deeply hostile to antislavery. The national **Democratic Party** was dominated by Southerners, and most Northern Democrats followed their lead on issues of slavery and race. The Liberty Party offered antislavery voters an opportunity to express their opposition to slavery and their disgust that neither of the two major parties was willing to take a stand against slavery. In 1840, the new party won only 7,000 votes nationally, and had no effect on the election.

In 1844, Birney again ran for president on the Liberty ticket. This time he won slightly over 62,000 votes. The party won no electoral votes, but may have taken enough votes from the Whig candidate, Henry Clay, to give the election to the Democrat, James K. Polk. In the popular vote, Polk beat Clay by just over 38,000 votes. In New York, Clay lost to Polk by fewer than 5,000 votes, while the Liberty Party won about three times that many votes. Clay believed the Liberty Party cost him New York, and the election. He was certain that he would have won most of the votes going to Birney had there been no Liberty Party, and thus but for the third party would have been elected president. But, this analysis, supported by some historians, assumes that the antislavery voters who supported Birney would have been willing, in the absence of an antislavery party, to vote for the slave-holding Clay. This is at least debatable. It is just as likely they would have stayed home and refused to vote for either slave-holding candidate.

In 1848, another antislavery party emerged, the Free Soil Party. In the wake of the war with Mexico, the Free Soilers insisted on preventing the spread of slavery into the west. Unlike the Liberty Party, the Free Soilers were not dedicated to ending slavery where it existed. The new party nominated Martin Van Buren, the former Democratic president, who had great popularity among Northern Democrats, particularly in his home state of New York. Despite the Party’s refusal to attack the existence of slavery, the Free Soilers’ commitment to stopping the spread of slavery made their organization an important and powerful alternative to the Whigs and Democrats for those voters who opposed slavery. Before 1848, mainstream antislavery politicians had generally been Whigs. But in 1848, the Democrats faced the problem of a rank and file revolt against allowing slavery to exist in the newly acquired territories. This was perhaps a testament to the success of
the abolitionists. While neither of the two major antislavery societies had gained very many members, together they had helped usher in a sea change in Northern opinion. Thus, many Northern Democrats now had to offer some antislavery sentiments to their constituents. The Free Soil Party appealed to these Democrats, as well as to the Liberty Party voters.

The Free Soil Party’s candidate, former Democratic president, Martin Van Buren, gained over 290,000 votes. Van Buren clearly took votes away from the Democratic candidate, Lewis Cass, setting the stage for the Whig candidate to win the election. Meanwhile, other Free Soilers were elected to state legislatures and Congress. In Ohio, a small group of Free Soilers held the balance of power between the Democrats and Whigs. They leveraged this position to gain repeal of most of Ohio’s black laws and to send an abolitionist, Democrat Salmon P. Chase, to the U.S. Senate. Joining him that term was the Whig abolitionist, William Henry Seward of New York. Scores of others in the House and Senate were now adamantly opposed to slavery in one form or another. Few came close to the Garrisonian position of immediate abolition. Almost all believed the federal government had no power to end slavery in the states. However, the antislavery men in the House and Senate were determined to prevent the spread of slavery into new territories and states, and were willing to fight to chip away at slavery where they could—such as in the District of Columbia, the federal territories—and by more effectively enforcing the ban on the African Slave trade. They unsuccessfully opposed the stringent Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, but its repeal would be part of the political agenda of antislavery activists for the rest of the decade.

By the 1850s, antislavery was part of mainstream politics in the North. The AASS and the AFASS continued to agitate, send out speakers, publish attacks on slavery, aid fugitive slaves, and fight segregation and racism. William C. Nell, a black Garrisonian, spearheaded a drive to integrate Boston’s schools. His work led to the first school desegregation case, Roberts v. Boston (1850), which was argued by Charles Sumner, the soon-to-be abolitionist U.S. Senator, and Robert Morris, one of the first black attorneys in the nation. The plaintiffs lost before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, but Nell did not stop there. Despite the Garrisonian rejection of voting, Nell persistently petitioned the state legislature, ultimately succeeding with a law in 1855 that banned segregation in the state’s public schools.

Informal and small antislavery groups helped fugitive slaves evade capture and aided them in seeking shelter in the United States or in Canada. They included some groups that were exclusively black and some that were integrated. In the 1830s, the black leader, David Ruggles, organized the New York Committee of Vigilance in New York City. The Committee helped hide fugitive slaves and helped expose professional slave catchers. After the adoption of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, blacks, sometimes working with whites, organized more vigilance committees to help protect themselves from slave catchers. In 1851, at Christiana, Pennsylvania, scores of blacks and whites showed up when horns were blown because a master was trying to recover his fugitive slave. The abolitionists tried to talk the master out of seeking his slave, and when this failed, gunfire broke out.
The master was killed, the slaves escaped, and the government indicted numerous bystanders for treason. Abolitionist lawyers, including the Whig congressman Thaddeus Stevens, defended those indicted, all of whom were acquitted.

The major antislavery organizations persistently denounced the fugitive slave laws and helped raise money for fugitives in Canada. Attorneys who were members of the AASS and AFASS often represented fugitive slaves or those charged with helping them escape. In New York City, for example, William Jay and his son John Jay, Jr., were extremely active in supporting fugitive slaves, as were a number of Liberty Party men. American abolitionists corresponded with members of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada and other Canadians who were dedicated to helping fugitive slaves. Americans like Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips lectured in Canada. John Brown, who operated outside of any organizational structures that were not his own, held a meeting in Ontario to plan his raid on Harpers Ferry.

Most of the antislavery societies were integrated—at least if there were blacks in the area. Many local societies were in the rural North, where few, if any, blacks lived. African Americans organized numerous societies and conventions, focusing on their social, political, and legal rights. Slavery, and especially the protection of fugitive slaves and stopping the kidnapping of free blacks, was always on their agenda. But, these organizations were far broader than the traditional antislavery societies. Overlapping interests led to cooperation between black and white groups on a variety of issues. Indeed, one of the great legacies of antislavery was the development of interracial cooperation. Equally important was the development of separate black groups that provided leadership training and organizational skills that helped develop Northern black communities and set the stage for black leadership in the post-Civil War South.

Mainstream Politics and the End of Slavery

In 1854, the Democratic majority in Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, opening almost all of the western territories to slavery. This led to the formation of the Republican Party. By 1856, most political abolitionists had become Republicans. The AFASS virtually disappeared, as did what was left of the Liberty Party. The Republicans were not a single-issue party. The party took positions on tariffs, land policy, Mormon polygamy, banking and currency, and foreign policy. But, the party’s biggest issue was slavery. The Republican Party captured Northern state legislatures, elected governors, congressmen, and senators. In 1860, it would capture the presidency. The first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, personally hated slavery. He correctly understood the Constitution to protect slavery where it already existed, but he was determined to prevent its spread to new places.

Lincoln’s election was an ironic culmination of decades of abolitionist agitation. The Garrisonians sneered at Lincoln. Referring to one case where Lincoln represented a slaveowner (and lost), Wendell Phillips called him “the slave hound of Illinois.” Lincoln similarly despised the disunionism of Garrison and Phillips and the violence of their new hero, John Brown. In fact, however,
Lincoln and his party owed much of their success to the organized antislavery movement of the previous three decades. Abolitionists like Phillips, Garrison, Douglass (who voted for Lincoln), Theodore Dwight Weld, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Abby Kelley Foster, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Gerrit Smith had convinced the vast majority of Northern whites that slavery was simply wrong, that it was sinful and unnatural, and that it violated the basic principles of American society. Lincoln and his party provided an effective political vehicle for implementing these sentiments.

During the Civil War, the Republican Party and the U.S. Army became the most effective instrument of antislavery philosophy and politics. Abolitionists like Chase and Seward entered Lincoln's cabinet. Other abolitionists were military officers, including Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson. In the 1840s, he was a member of the Essex County Antislavery Society. He later ran for Congress as a Free Soiler. At the same time he worked with Garrison and supported women's rights. In 1854, Higginson had helped storm a Boston jail in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the fugitive slave Anthony Burns. He was allied with Garrison intellectually, on some issues, but rejected non-resistance and pacifism. In 1854, Higginson also helped organize the Massachusetts Kansas Aid Committee, which worked with the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society. Higginson's "aid" to settlers in Kansas often took the form of rifles known as "Beecher's Bibles." In 1857, he organized a "disunion" convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1858 and 1859, he was one of the "secret six" who backed John Brown in his abortive raid on Harpers Ferry. In 1862, he accepted a commission as a Colonel in the First South Carolina Volunteers, a regiment made up of former slaves who enlisted on the South Carolina Sea Islands. He spent the next two years fighting slavery as a soldier and a commander of black troops. In 1864, he left the army because of illness.

Meanwhile, other abolitionists moved to the South to set up schools for former slaves and in other ways to help them adjust to freedom. In 1862, for example, James Miller McKim organized the Philadelphia Port Royal Relief Committee, which later became known as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association. Before the war, McKim had been the general agent for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. McKim illustrates the flexibility of abolitionists. He was Garrisonian in his view that the Constitution was pro-slavery, but he worked closely with legislators in Pennsylvania and also supported John Brown. And, when the war began he worked with former slaves. He was also a member of the Union League of Philadelphia and helped recruit black regiments in the state. He remained involved in helping former slaves until 1869. He also fought for a ban on segregation in public transportation in Pennsylvania.

Unlike McKim, Garrison thought his work was done in 1865 when he dissolved the American Anti-Slavery Society, believing that the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment had rendered his organization no longer necessary. In retrospect, we know that conclusion was a mistake. After slavery, blacks needed support, education, and activist allies. Some white abolitionists like McKim stayed longer. Wendell Phillips continued to be concerned about the plight of blacks, but also focused on labor reform after the war.
Black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass continued their work until the end of their lives.

In the end, the antislavery movement set the moral tone for the nation. The leaders of the movement developed organizing skills and propaganda techniques. Despite intramural disputes and disagreements over tactics and theories, in retrospect the antislavery movement was surprisingly coherent. The schisms and internal disputes mask the diversity of opinions and the ability of abolitionists to accept a variety of tactics and goals. Garrison, Phillips, or McKim may not have voted, but they worked well with politicians in their own states and many of their followers did vote. The non-voting abolitionists helped create a huge constituency of fellow travelers who did vote, and who would ultimately only vote for opponents of slavery. At the social level, not all abolitionists were integrationists, or even racial egalitarians. But, the organizations almost universally opposed discrimination and emphatically supported black rights. Abolitionists fought for integrated education, antidiscrimination laws, and black suffrage. Abolitionist women in Massachusetts successfully petitioned the legislature to repeal the state's ban on interracial marriage, because they believed the state should have no laws that sanctioned racial discrimination. Even non-political Garrisonians agitated for blacks to have the same right to vote as whites. Interracial cooperation within the movement was never perfect. But, nowhere else in the United States was there as much cooperation and interracial opportunity. Much of the post-war black leadership came out of the antislavery movement. Similarly, women in the movement gained valuable experience, which they applied to their fight for legal equality after the war. The top leaders of the women's movement—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony—had all been active abolitionists before the war. A final legacy of organized antislavery was its persistence and staying power. For more than three decades abolitionists labored against the monstrous injustice of slavery. They provide a model of how to keep an eye on the prize through decades of struggle and discouragement. See also Immediate Emancipation; Mexican War and Antislavery; Postal Campaign; Whig Party and Antislavery.


**Paul Finkelman**

**United States Constitution and Antislavery**

The United States Constitution protected slavery in a variety of ways. Article I, Sec. 2. Par. 3, contained the three-fifths clause, which counted three fifths of all slaves for purposes of representation in Congress. That provision vastly increased the power of the South in Congress. The three-fifths clause also gave the South extra power in electing the president because the
allocation of presidential electors was based on the number of representatives in Congress. **Thomas Jefferson**, who owned nearly 200 slaves, would not have been elected president in 1800 without the extra electors produced by the three-fifths clause. Article I, Sec. 8, Par. 15, known as the domestic insurrections clause, empowered Congress to call “forth the Militia” to “suppress Insurrections,” including slave rebellions. Southerners were delighted by this provision, as well as one in Article IV, Sec. 4, known as the domestic violence provision guaranteeing that the U.S. government would protect states from “domestic violence,” including slave rebellions. Article I, Sec. 9, Par. 1, popularly known as the “slave trade clause,” prohibited Congress from banning the African slave trade before 1808. Under this clause, more Southerners imported about 100,000 Africans into the United States in the early nineteenth century. The amendment provisions of Article V further protected the slave trade by specifically prohibiting any modification of that provision before 1808. Article I, Section 9 and Section 10 prohibited taxes on exports, which Southerners demanded as a way of prohibiting an indirect tax on slavery and slave produced products. Article IV, Sec. 2, Par. 3, the fugitive slave clause, prohibited the states from emancipating fugitive slaves and required that runaways be returned to their owners “on demand.”

Besides specific clauses of the Constitution, the structure of the entire document ensured against emancipation by the new federal government. Because the Constitution created a government of limited powers, Congress lacked the power to interfere in the domestic institutions of the states. Thus, during the ratification debates, only the most fearful Southern antifederalists opposed the Constitution on the grounds that it threatened slavery. But most Southerners agreed with the federalists, who argued that the Constitution created a limited government that could not harm slavery. For example, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina, crowed to his state’s house of representatives, “We have a security that the general government can never emancipate them, for no such authority is granted and it is admitted, on all hands, that the general government has no powers but what are expressly granted by the Constitution, and that all rights not expressed were reserved by the several states.” Similarly, at the Virginia ratification convention, Edmund Randolph asserted, “Were it right here to mention what passed in [the Philadelphia] convention... I might tell you *that the Southern States, even South Carolina herself, conceived this property to be secure*” and that “there was not a member of the Virginia delegation who had *the smallest suspicion of the abolition of slavery*.”

The amendment process, set out in Article V, further secured slavery. Under Article V, an amendment required the ratification of three-fourths of the states. As long as the slave states voted against an amendment, it could not pass. In 1860, for example, there were thirty-three states, of which fifteen were slave states, thereby eliminating the possibility of twenty-five states (three-fourths of all the states) voting against Southern interests. Voting as a block, these states can still prevent any amendment to the Constitution, even in the modern fifty-state nation.

Because of these many proslavery provisions and compromises with slavery, and the impossibility of ending slavery through a constitutional process,
William Lloyd Garrison, the great nineteenth-century abolitionist, called the Constitution a “covenant with death” and “an agreement with Hell.” Garrison and his followers refused to participate in American electoral politics, arguing that if they did so, they would be supporting “the pro-slavery, war sanctioning Constitution of the United States.” Instead, under the slogan “No Union with Slaveholders,” the Garrisonians repeatedly argued for dissolution of the Union.

Part of Garrisonian opposition to the Union stemmed from their desire to avoid the corruption that came from participating in a government created by what they considered a proslavery Constitution. But their position was also at least theoretically pragmatic. The Garrisonians were convinced that the legal protection of slavery in the Constitution made political activity not only futile, but actually counterproductive. They believed that traditional political activity created popular support for the constitutional order, which in turn strengthened the stranglehold slavery had on America. In his pamphlet, Can Abolitionists Vote or Take Office Under the United States Constitution (1845), Wendell Phillips pointed out that in the years since the adoption of the Constitution, Americans had witnessed “the slaves trebling in numbers—slaveholders monopolizing the offices and dictating the policy of the Government—prostituting the strength and influence of the Nation to the support of slavery here and elsewhere—trampling on the rights of the free States, and making the courts of the country their tools.” Phillips argued that this experience proved “that it is impossible for free and slave States to unite on any terms, without all becoming partners in the guilt and responsible for the sin of slavery.”

The Garrisonians ultimately argued that since the political system and the Constitution were stacked in favor of slavery, it was a pointless waste of their time and money to try to fight slavery through electoral politics. The Garrisonian critique of the Constitution logically led to the conclusion that the free states should secede from the union. Garrisonians thus rallied to the slogan “No Union with Slaveholders.”

Other nineteenth-century antislavery leaders disagreed with the Garrisonians. Salmon P. Chase, the most successful antislavery politician of the period, fought throughout the antebellum period to convince his colleagues in Congress, the judiciary, and Northern voters that the Constitution was really antislavery. Chase argued that abolitionists should use the political process to prevent the expansion of slavery and the addition of new slave states. He believed repeal of the fugitive slave laws and other laws protecting slavery were ways in which the Constitution could be used to fight bondage. Frederick Douglass, who began his career as a Garrisonian, eventually came to accept the idea that the Constitution could be used to fight slavery. He went so far as to argue that the “three-fifths clause” leaned toward freedom. This analysis ignored the fact that the clause gave extra representation in Congress to the South for its slaves, but of course did not give the slaves any particular power. If the clause leaned toward freedom, it was only because it did not give the South full representation for its slaves.

Despite their creative perseverance, the efforts of Chase, Douglass, William H. Seward, and other political abolitionists failed. The United States
Supreme Court almost always protected slavery in the cases it heard. Likewise, almost all American presidents and their cabinet officers protected slavery in foreign and domestic politics. Perhaps most frustrating to the political abolitionists was the fact that some of their most brilliant allies in the crusade against slavery, the Garrisonians, agreed with their enemies on the meaning of the Constitution. Thus, one Ohio Liberty Party man, who believed in using politics to fight slavery, expressed his frustration with the Garrisonians after reading Wendell Phillips’s pamphlet on the Constitution: “Garrison, Phillips, and Quincy; Calhoun, Rhett, and McDuffie; all harmoniously laboring to prevent such a construction of the Constitution as would abolish slavery.”

Once the Civil War began, however, the Lincoln Administration was able to use the Constitution to attack slavery. Lincoln found the necessary authority to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in his powers as commander-in-chief. Furthermore, with eleven of the fifteen slave states no longer participating in the government, Congress was free to limit slavery as much as possible. Thus, Congress repealed the Fugitive Slave Laws, banned slavery in the territories, and then ended slavery in the District of Columbia. In 1865, Congress sent the Thirteenth Amendment—ending slavery—to the states. The slave states could come back to the Union only if they ratified this amendment. Thus, in four years of the Civil War, the proslavery Constitution was remade as an antislavery document. Over the next five years, antislavery Republicans would pass two more amendments that further changed the Constitution to give blacks equal political and constitutional rights. See also Declaration of Independence; Radical Republicans; Thirteenth Amendment.


Paul Finkelman

United States South, Antislavery in

Long before the dramatic rise of the organized abolitionist movement in the early nineteenth century, slaves themselves commenced resistance and rebellion in the United States South, which had become the heartland of the nation’s slave system. In numerous ways slaves signaled their discontent with servitude, by running away, by malingering, sabotage, and arson. Because during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries parts of the South were still sparsely settled, especially sections of swamps, woods, and mountains, entire small groups hid out as maroons, evading capture for months or even years at a time. While there were no large-scale revolts like those led by Spartacus against Rome, there were sporadic uprisings, such as that of a small but determined group of slaves who killed several whites at Stono, South Carolina in 1739, apparently aiming to escape to the colony of free blacks under the Spanish at St. Augustine in Florida.

In addition to actions such as these, the culture and daily life of slaves provided ways to resist as well. Folklore is replete with tales of slaves who
outwitted their masters, who like the “trickster” Br’er Rabbit, found their way to safety in the “briar patch.” Songs such as “Jimmie Crack Corn,” composed by Daniel Emmett with the likely help of African-Americans, made fun of the pomposity of the masters, and took covert satisfaction when they were “accidentally” killed by the Blue Tail Fly.

During the American Revolution, tens of thousands of slaves fled to the British side, having been promised freedom if they did so. All these aspects of early American slave life suggest the constant pressure of slaves themselves against the system.

Small religious groups such as the Quakers had long expressed their opposition to slavery, as did figures like the Deist Thomas Paine. The Presbyterian leader David Rice made an impassioned plea against slavery at the Constitutional Convention in Kentucky in 1792, but that state was admitted with its “peculiar institution” intact.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the South provided many examples of small groups, mostly of religious leaders, who opposed slavery. In Jonesborough, Tennessee, the Quaker Elihu Embree published seven issues of The Emancipator in 1820. After his death that same year, Benjamin Lundy started The Genius of Universal Emancipation in Greeneville, but moved it to Baltimore in 1824. While it is sometimes claimed that these initiatives represented the beginnings of the abolitionist movement, they usually took a gradualist position, and even supported the “return to Africa” colonization societies. However, William Lloyd Garrison was clearly inspired by Lundy’s example, and thus there are some valid connections between these isolated and beleaguered Southern antislavery writers and the militant groups that emerged in the 1830s.

The Nat Turner Revolt of 1831 led to a complex but open debate about slavery in the Virginia legislature, where opponents tended to come from the western mountain sections, while proponents were from the tidewater and piedmont sections where tobacco produced by slaves was carried out on a large scale. The antislavery forces were defeated, but at least there had been a frank discussion on the issue.

By the middle of the 1830s, Northern abolitionists launched a campaign to saturate the South with their literature, but this only led to violent opposition, including the dramatic burning of U.S. mail by a mob in Charleston in 1835. While the Deist “Founding Fathers” had tended to hope that slavery might eventually and gradually disappear, the 1830s saw a new rigidity on the part of the masters. Gradualism, after all, might be postponed indefinitely, while the immediatism of Garrison and his followers presented them with a more urgent challenge to the entire system. Even though at this time Garrison remained a pacifist or “non resistant,” any kind of opposition was met by determined force. As the number of slaves had grown to three million, now almost entirely confined to the South (with emancipation now in effect throughout the North), and their labor was essential to the profitability of the industrialized system of agriculture, the stakes were high indeed.

The tier of Deep South states from South Carolina to Texas was the heart of large scale rice and cotton production, with tobacco predominating in Virginia and North Carolina. The Border States from Maryland to Missouri
included mountain areas where poor whites already disliked the predominance of the lowland, tidewater, and river districts, and sometimes assisted escaping slaves. These states provided distinct enclaves of safety and support, both for slaves and abolitionist sympathizers, from the mountains of what would be separated from Virginia to form the new state of West Virginia in 1863, to urban centers like Louisville and St. Louis, where one could hide out at least temporarily.

In spite of this heightened bitterness, Southern figures like Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky continued to argue against slavery, though his case emphasized the harmful effects of slavery not so much for its own sake, but because it threatened the well-being of free white labor. In 1845, a mob seized the press of Clay’s newspaper *The True American* and shipped it north to Cincinnati. Though Clay courageously continued his struggle, he had little success; while there was a debate about slavery in the Constitution Convention of 1849 in Kentucky, all efforts to abolish it went down to defeat. While Clay remained in the state, many other Southern abolitionists found it necessary to move North in order to avoid assassination. However, their experiences told in books and speeches inflamed Northern opinion. Scores of slave narratives provided vivid details of oppression, brutality and suffering.

The operations of the Underground Railroad, as well as less organized individual escapes, meant that by the 1850s, 50,000 slaves per year were attempting to flee. Most of these were captured, but the sheer effort required to try to maintain the system in place was enormous.

By the mid 1850s, a significant component of the antislavery movement included the new immigrants from Germany and other European countries, largely consisting of radical veterans of the Revolutions of 1848. As far west as San Antonio, Adolph Douai published an antislavery German language newspaper until he, too, was forced to leave Texas in 1856. By 1860, things had become so violent in Texas that a peddler who was found with copies of Hinton Helper’s *The Impending Crisis* in his wagon was suspended from a tree branch, the wagon soaked with oil, and the man burned to death by his own wares.

The sum of this history suggests that the gradualist and colonization tendencies of the emancipation struggle were doomed to be ineffective. Similarly, pacifist and other strategies that emphasized moral persuasion did not succeed. The dynamic convergence of blacks and whites in the Underground Railroad and the broader movement threatened the basis of the slavery system, but in the end it was force in the form of the Union Army that led to the end of slavery in the South.


Fred Whitehead
V

Vesey, Denmark. See Vesey’s Conspiracy

Vesey’s Conspiracy (1822)

Perhaps the largest slave conspiracy in North American history, the Charleston, South Carolina, plot was organized by Denmark Vesey, a free black carpenter. Although brought into the city in 1783 as a slave of Captain Joseph Vesey, Telemaque, as he was then known, purchased his freedom in December 1799 with lottery winnings. For the next twenty-two years, Vesey earned his living as a craftsman and, according to white authorities, was “distinguished for [his] great strength and activity,” and the black community “always looked up to [him] with awe and respect.” His last (and probably third) wife, Susan Vesey, was born a slave but became free prior to his death. But his first wife, Beck, remained a slave, as did Vesey’s sons, Polydore, Robert, and Sandy, who was the only one of his children to be implicated in his 1822 conspiracy.

Around 1818, Vesey joined the city’s new African Methodist Episcopal congregation. The African Church, as both whites and blacks called it, quickly became the center of Charleston’s enslaved community. Sandy Vesey also joined, as did four of Vesey’s closest friends: Peter Poyas, a literate and highly skilled ship carpenter; Monday Gell, an African-born Ibo, who labored as a harness maker; Rolla Bennett, the manservant of Governor Thomas Bennett; and “Gullah” Jack Pritchard, an East African priest purchased in Zinguebar in 1806. The temporary closure of the church by city authorities in June 1818, and the arrest of 140 congregants, one of them presumably Vesey himself, only reinforced the determination of black Carolinians to maintain a place of independent worship and established the initial motivation for his conspiracy. The “African Church was the people,” Monday Gell insisted. He and Pritchard had considered insurrection in 1818, he swore, “and now they had begun again to try it.”

At the age of fifty-one, Vesey resolved to orchestrate a rebellion followed by a mass exodus from Charleston to Haiti. President Jean-Pierre Boyer had recently encouraged black Americans to bring their skills and capital to
his beleaguered republic. Vesey did not intend to tarry in Charleston long enough for white military power to present an effective counterassault. “As soon as they could get the money from the Banks, and the goods from the stores,” Rolla Bennett insisted, “they should hoist sail for Saint Doming[ue]” and live as free men. For all of his acculturation into Euro-American society, Vesey, as a native of St. Thomas, remained a man of the black Atlantic.

Vesey planned the escape for nearly four years. His chief lieutenants included Poyas, Gell, Pritchard, and Rolla Bennett. Although there are no reliable figures for the number of recruits, Charleston alone was home to 12,652 slaves. Pritchard, probably with some exaggeration, boasted that he had 6,600 recruits on the plantations across the Cooper and Ashley Rivers. The plan called for Vesey’s followers to rise at midnight on Sunday, July 14—Bastille Day—slay their masters, and sail for Haiti and freedom. As one Southern editor later conceded, “The plot seems to have been well devised, and its operation was extensive.”

Those recruited into the plot during the winter of 1822 were directed to arm themselves from their masters’ closets. Vesey was also aware that the Charleston Neck militia company stored their 300 muskets and bayonets in the back room of Benjamin Hammet’s King Street store, and that Hammet’s slave, Bacchus, had a key. But as few slaves had any experience with guns, Vesey encouraged his followers to arm themselves with swords or long daggers, which in any case would make for quieter work as the city bells tolled midnight. Vesey also employed several enslaved blacksmiths to forge “pike heads and bayonets with sockets, to be fixed at the end of long poles.”

Considerably easier than stockpiling weapons was the recruitment of willing young men. With Vesey and Pritchard employed about the city as carpenters, it is hardly surprising that so many other craftsmen became involved in the plot. Most of all, Vesey and his lieutenants recruited out of the African Church. As a class leader, Vesey was not only respected by the church membership, but he knew each of them well; he knew whom to trust and whom to avoid. As former Charleston slave Archibald Grimké later wrote, Vesey’s nightly classes provided him “with a singularly safe medium for conducting his underground agitation.”

The plot unraveled in June 1822 when two slaves, including Rolla’s friend, George Wilson, a fellow class leader in the African Church, revealed the plan to their owners. Mayor James Hamilton called up the city militia and convened a special court to try the captured insurgents. Vesey was captured at the home of Beck, his first wife, on June 21 and hanged on the morning of Tuesday, July 2, together with Rolla, Poyas, and three other rebels. According to Hamilton, the six men collectively “met their fate with the heroic fortitude of Martyrs.” In all, thirty-five slaves were executed. Forty-two others, including Sandy Vesey, were sold outside the United States; some, if not all, became slaves in Spanish Cuba. Robert Vesey lived to rebuild the African Church in the fall of 1865.

In the aftermath of the conspiracy, Charleston authorities demolished the African Church and banished Morris Brown to Philadelphia. The state Assembly subsequently passed laws prohibiting the reentry of free blacks into the state, and city officials enforced ordinances against teaching African
Americans to read. The City Council also voted to create a permanent force of 150 guardsmen to patrol the streets around the clock at an annual cost of $24,000. To deal with the problem of black mariners bringing information about events around the Atlantic into the state’s ports, in December 1822 the legislature passed the Negro Seamen Act, which placed a quarantine on any vessel from another "state or foreign port, having on board any free negroes or persons of color." Although U.S. Circuit Court Judge William Johnson struck the law down as unconstitutional, a defiant Assembly renewed the act in late 1823. It would be no coincidence that many of those who nullified the federal law in 1832—including then-Governor James Hamilton, who resigned his office in 1833 to command troops in defense of his state’s right to resist national tariffs—were veterans of the tribunals that tried Vesey and his men a decade before. See also Gabriel’s Conspiracy; Turner, Nat.


Douglas R. Egerton

Violence and Non-violence in American Abolitionism

A common assumption shared by historians as well as people generally is that the great majority of American abolitionists were doctrinaire pacifists. Accordingly, John Brown and other antislavery activists who either advocated or engaged in violent tactics were exceptional. Yet, while abolitionists acknowledged the desirability of relying on peaceful tactics, they were not inflexible in regard to violent means. They recognized that white Americans had won freedom from Great Britain through violent means, and they refused to rule out a similar option for African Americans. In January 1842, for example, white abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith noted that although "there are . . . some persons in our ranks who are opposed to the taking of human life in any circumstances. . . . the great majority of abolitionists justify their forefathers’ bloody resistance to oppression." They could, therefore, oppose slave revolt only on the basis of "expediency." In other words, most abolitionists were ambivalent concerning means. They endorsed violent or non-violent tactics depending on their perception of conditions. Immediate abolitionism arose in the North at a time when black antislavery violence in the South made it expedient for antislavery societies to endorse nonviolence. But, as time passed, abolitionists found violence to be increasingly expedient.

Black Antislavery Violence

During the 1820s and early 1830s, violent black liberators in the South and violent black rhetoric in the North influenced the rise of immediate
emancipation. In 1822, a free black carpenter named Denmark Vesey led a slave-revolt conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina (see Vesey's Conspiracy). The conspiracy collapsed when informants revealed it to their masters. Until recently historians believed the conspiracy, for which Vesey and with thirty-five others were executed, had little impact beyond South Carolina. But historian Peter P. Hinks indicates that unrest within Charleston's black community, if not Vesey himself, directly influenced black abolitionist David Walker. Walker, who had been born free in North Carolina and visited Charleston during the early 1820s, published his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in Boston in 1829. The *Appeal* urged black men to assert their masculinity through violent resistance to their masters. It recalled the successful slave revolution in Haiti led by Toussaint L'Ouverture and predicted that God would raise up a black warrior to deliver African Americans from oppression.

By relying on black and white seamen, Walker, who died in 1830, was able to circulate his *Appeal* in the South. This, along with William Lloyd Garrison's initiation of his newspaper, *The Liberator*, in January 1831, led many white Southerners to assume that Northern abolitionists encouraged Nat Turner's August 1831 slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia. There is no proof that such a linkage existed. But when Turner and his band of more than sixty black men killed approximately fifty-seven white men, women, and children, they convinced white Southerners that a real threat of violent abolitionism existed.

White militia overwhelmed Turner's uprising. He and seventeen of his associates were hanged, and white vigilantes killed at least 100 other African Americans in Virginia and North Carolina. In the North, black and white abolitionists joined in a general revulsion against the bloodshed that Turner had unleashed. Although abolitionists compared Turner to George Washington, L'Ouverture, and other liberators, they emphasized that they did not endorse his violent methods. Instead, they warned that without immediate peaceful abolition, additional slaves would follow his violent example. In other words, they urged a peaceful solution to slavery backed with a violent threat.

**Nonviolence**

Memories of Turner's revolt and white Southern accusations of abolitionist complicity in it were fresh as immediatists organized in the Northeast during the early 1830s. Invariably they pledged themselves to non-violent means. The New York Anti-Slavery Society at its initial meeting in October 1833 declared, “We have no force but the force of truth.” Those assembled promised never to “countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to force.” Two months later, the American Anti-Slavery Society's Declaration of Sentiments called on slaves “to reject the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance from bondage.”

Sincere Christian morality, including Quaker and evangelical strains, influenced these pledges. Non-violence remained a powerful component of immediatism until the Civil War, especially among Garrison and his
associates. But circumstances as much as Christianity shaped early immediatist rejection of force. A tiny band of abolitionists, already suspect because of its radical views on slavery and race, and accused of involvement in Turner's revolt, dared not put itself beyond the law and outrage public opinion by appearing to justify race war.

Once established as policy, non-violence among abolitionists developed during the 1830s under the influence of a feminized masculinity common among northeastern reformers. Many abolitionist men favored what they regarded as feminine persuasion over male aggressiveness. Conscious of slavery's brutality, a few of them renounced involvement in any system that rested on force. In 1838, Garrison and his friend Henry C. Wright formed the Nonresistance Society, which renounced involvement in any form of violence. Members refused to defend themselves. They also became anarchists because all human government is based ultimately on force. The great majority of abolitionists, including some leading Garrisonians, however, opposed non-resistance. They associated it with heretical religion and saw in its rejection of human government a threat to the northern social order. Yet Lewis Tappan and other church-oriented abolitionists fervently embraced peaceful means. Tappan and a few other evangelicals approached non-resistance in their refusal to defend themselves or their property against antiabolitionists or to sue in court those who harmed them.

Led by the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), abolitionists during the 1830s initiated a variety of peaceful strategies (usually referred to as “moral suasion”) that continued throughout the following decades. They rapidly formed local antislavery societies across the Northeast and Old Northwest, so that by 1838 the AASS claimed to have 1,350 affiliates and a total of 250,000 members. In 1835, the AASS executive committee, under the leadership of Lewis Tappan, organized an ambitious postal campaign designed to send huge amounts of antislavery literature to white Southerners. At about the same time, the AASS initiated a gigantic petitioning campaign calling on Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. Abolitionists designed the latter campaign to raise the slavery issue in Congress and to bring non-abolitionist Northerners into the antislavery movement. Abolitionist women led in circulating the petitions.

As historian Carlton Mabee establishes, abolitionists also engaged in a variety of non-violent direct actions. They integrated churches, left churches that did not denounce slavery, and formed new abolitionist churches. They engaged in “ride-ins” in attempting to integrate Northern railroads and worked to integrate Northern schools. Some of them supported boycotts of slave produce sold in Northern markets. They worked peacefully to repeal Northern state laws that discriminated against African Americans. From the mid-1840s through the 1850s, antislavery missionaries, supported by the abolitionist American Missionary Association and other groups, risked their lives to distribute antislavery literature and provide Bibles to slaves in the Upper South. During the 1840s, many advocates of the abolitionist Liberty Party contended that political engagement was a peaceful form of antislavery action, although non-resistants pointed out that politics, like government, rested on force.
In most instances, these peaceful efforts produced disappointing results. Many white Southerners, fearing that abolitionist literature would reach slaves, responded with anger to the postal campaign. A mob in Charleston, South Carolina, burned antislavery publications that reached that city. President Andrew Jackson and several Southern state legislatures called on Northern states to suppress the abolitionist movement. Southern members of the House of Representatives, with considerable Northern help, passed the Gag Rule in 1836, banning the reading of antislavery petitions. Abolitionist speakers, editors, organizers, and missionaries faced mob violence during the 1830s and to a lesser extent during the 1840s and 1850s. It seemed that peaceful moral suasion was not enough to make progress against slavery.

**Defensive Violence**

From the 1830s into the 1840s, as angry antiblack, antiabolition mobs attacked abolitionists and black communities in the North and Border South, numerous abolitionists forcefully defended themselves and their property. During an antiblack, antiabolitionist riot in New York City in 1834, AASS president Arthur Tappan distributed guns to employees at his business. In 1836 in Cincinnati, abolitionist organizer James G. Birney and his sons used guns to defend their home against rioters. In Alton, Illinois, abolitionist newspaper editor Elijah P. Lovejoy died defending his printing press against a proslavery mob. In the Border South, where abolitionists were more isolated than in the North, organized defensive violence became increasingly common. Kentucky abolitionist Cassius M. Clay used a knife in 1849 to kill a proslavery antagonist. During the early 1850s, Clay raised armed bands to defend his non-violent associate John G. Fee. Moral power, Clay contended, had to be supplemented with “cold steel and the flashing blade”—“the pistol and the Bowie knife.”

**Slave Rebels and a Revolutionary Heritage**

Despite their commitment to non-violence and embrace of feminine values, white Northern abolitionists admired slave rebels. Americans, they realized, regarded violent struggles for freedom to be heroic. Although black abolitionists shared their white colleagues’ ambivalence toward violent means, a few during the 1830s openly praised Turner. In part this was because a masculine image of a violent Southern black liberator challenged pervasive stereotyping of black men as meek and submissive. By the late 1830s, as well, abolitionists had come to regard slavery as a war of extermination against African Americans. Many of them concluded that Christian morality allowed for black violence in self-defense. The American revolutionary heritage reinforced this point of view. As early as 1837, Garrison observed that the Declaration of Independence “authorized” slaves to “cut their masters’ throats.” Although outright calls for slave revolt were rare during the 1830s, black and white abolitionists praised such violent black liberators as L’Ouverture, Vesey, and Turner. In December 1841, Liberty Party
abolitionists on Long Island, New York, declared that Madison Washington, who a month earlier had led a successful slave revolt aboard the brig Creole, “acted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Independence.” Those attending the meeting hoped that Washington’s example would “be imitated by all in similar circumstances.”

The Underground Railroad Versus the Fugitive Slave Laws

Garrison argued in 1844 that helping slaves to escape was a non-violent activity, carried out “in the spirit of good will to the oppressed, and without injury to the oppressor.” But assisted slave escapes often turned violent. Armed masters used force against escapees, and the escapees sometimes carried weapons to protect themselves. Black and white slave rescuers, ranging from Charles T. Torrey during the early 1840s to Harriet Tubman during the 1850s, carried guns and threatened to use them against masters, slave catchers, and law enforcement officials. Black Underground Railroad operative John P. Parker, who helped slaves escape from Kentucky to Ohio during the 1850s, recalled that there was “real warfare” between antislavery and proslavery forces in the Ohio River Valley. Like Tubman, Parker always carried weapons when he ventured into the South. Also like her, he sometimes threatened to shoot fugitives who endangered the rest of his charges.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 pushed northward and widened violent conflict between practical abolitionism and angry masters. Increased numbers of black and white abolitionists aided escapees. Masters enlisted federal marshals to help them recapture their human property. African Americans had violently resisted the earlier Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 since its inception. After 1850, the violence became more biracial and more common as non-abolitionist Northerners joined abolitionists in defying the new law. Influenced by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s dramatization of the plight of fugitive slaves in her novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, large numbers of Northerners favored forceful resistance to the law. Although such resistance centered in New England, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, white Southerners believed that militant abolitionists, who used violence against the property rights of masters, pervaded the North.

Although there were numerous instances in which abolitionists violently resisted the Fugitive Slave Law, five cases gained notoriety. In February 1851, a black mob, supported by black and white abolitionists, forcefully rescued fugitive slave Shadrack Minkins from a Boston courtroom. The following September, African Americans, led by underground railroad agent William Parker, killed a master who attempted to recover a fugitive slave at Parker’s house in Christiana, Pennsylvania. That November, a biracial mob led by black abolitionist Jermain Wesley Loguen and white abolitionists Gerrit Smith and Samuel Joseph May, stormed the Syracuse, New York police station to rescue William Henry—known as “Jerry.” In 1854, black and white abolitionists in Boston unsuccessfully attempted to rescue Anthony Burns from the city courthouse. One of Burns’s guards died in the melee. Later, local authorities had to call in state and federal troops to protect
those who escorted Burns to a southbound ship in Boston Harbor. Another biracial abolitionist mob composed of faculty and students from Oberlin College forcefully rescued fugitive John Brice from a Wellington, Ohio, tavern where he had been held.

In each of these cases, abolitionist rescuers enjoyed the support of local public opinion. In each case there were indictments and some rescuers went to jail pending trial. But there were few convictions and none at all in the especially violent Christiana and Burns cases. Just as popular opposition had contributed to abolitionist non-violence during the 1830s, awareness of support encouraged abolitionist violence during the 1850s. Prior to the Jerry rescue, Smith predicted that the local fugitive slave law commissioner would very likely release the fugitive. “But,” Smith advised, “the moral effect of such an acquittal will be as nothing [compared] to a bold and forcible rescue. A forcible rescue will demonstrate the strength of public opinion against the possible legality of slavery and this Fugitive Slave Law in particular.”

Bleeding Kansas

Abolitionist participation in violent resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law increased white Southern fear of the movement. Democratic and Whig Party leaders responded by pledging to “crush out” agitation of the slavery issue. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, introduced into Congress in January 1854 and passed the following May, destroyed what chance there was of carrying out such a pledge. The act further divided the two sections of the country and accelerated violent tendencies among abolitionists.

Stephen A. Douglas, a Democratic senator from Illinois, had proposed to organize territorial governments in Kansas and Nebraska chiefly as a means of routing a transcontinental railroad through Kansas. To secure Southern support for his bill, he added a clause repealing the Missouri Compromise prohibition of slavery in the two territories and providing that the settlers of each territory vote to decide whether or not to admit slavery. This encouraged Southern leaders to try to make Kansas a slave territory and eventually a slave state. It also outraged most Northerners, who believed Douglas had sold out the interests of free labor, and set the stage for a violent struggle in Kansas Territory between free state and slave state settlers. Free state settlers, who constituted the overwhelming majority in Kansas, battled against “border ruffians” from Missouri, federal officials, and federal troops sent to Kansas by proslavery U.S. President Franklin Pierce. Proslavery aggression in Kansas convinced most abolitionists that force should be used not only on behalf of fugitive slaves but to defend freedom in the territory.

Although few abolitionists went to Kansas, those who did either set out with violent intentions or gave up their commitment to peaceful means after they arrived. Charles B. Stearns, for example, was a non-resistant before he arrived in Kansas in 1855. Shortly thereafter he declared, “These proslavery Missourians are demons from the bottomless pit and may be shot with impunity.” A year later, John Henry Kagi, a correspondent of several
abolitionist newspapers, killed a proslavery man during a brawl. The most famous abolitionist who fought in Kansas was John Brown. At least since the late 1840s, Brown had advocated violent action on behalf of slaves and against slaveholders. In May 1856, in reprisal for a proslavery attack on the free state town of Lawrence, Brown and several of his sons brutally executed five proslavery settlers at Pottawatomie Creek. Although few, if any, abolitionists knew the details of his actions at Pottawatomie, many of them lionized him and contributed funds to pay for his ambitious plan to assault slavery in the South.

Events in Kansas Territory helped break down what non-violent principles remained among the great mass of abolitionists. Gerrit Smith, Garrison's friend Wendell Phillips, and other immediatists contributed money to arm antislavery migrants to Kansas. Smith contended that "the shedding of blood [in Kansas] was unavoidable." Leading abolitionist women, such as Lydia Maria Child and Angelina Grimké Weld, professed continued preference for peaceful means while recognizing the legitimacy of antislavery violence in Kansas. Weld lamented, "We are compelled to choose between two evils, and all that we can do is take the least, and baptize liberty in blood, if it must be so." By the late 1850s, Garrison and Lewis Tappan, who persisted in their formal commitment to peaceful means, represented a distinct minority among immediate abolitionists.

Northern Abolitionists and Slave Revolt

Although abolitionists had long admired slave rebels, before 1850 they rarely called for revolt. Even black abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet in his famous Address to the Slaves of August 1843 qualified his demand for resistance with a warning that revolt was inexpedient. But by the late 1850s, amid resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law, guerrilla war in Kansas, and rumors of widespread slave unrest following the Republican Party's first presidential election campaign in 1856, immediatists began forthrightly to call for a slave uprising. That formally non-resistant white Garrisonians often joined black abolitionists in such appeals indicates that the long-term ambivalence among abolitionists concerning peaceful and violent means had decisively shifted in favor of the latter. Sill claiming to be a non-resistant, Wright declared in 1857, "We owe it as our duty to ourselves and to humanity, to excite every slave to rebellion against his master."

Traditional notions of masculinity rebounded among abolitionists during the contentious 1850s. Under the racialist assumption that white men were more aggressive than black men, white abolitionists, such as Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Theodore Parker, contended that they had to instruct black men in martial valor. To a degree, black abolitionists shared this view. Frederick Douglass declared, "My people can never be elevated until they elevate themselves, by fighting for their freedom, and by the sword obtaining it."

Few prominent abolitionists, however, were willing, prior to the U.S. Civil War, to transform violent rhetoric into action. That was left to Underground Railroad operatives on what historian Keith P. Griffler calls "the
front line of freedom” and the few abolitionists who went to Kansas. John Brown belonged to both groups. Emerging from a Garrisonian meeting in 1859, he scoffed, “Talk! talk! talk!—that will never set the slave free.” Support from Gerrit Smith, Higginson, and Theodore Parker for Brown’s plan to invade the South to launch a black guerrilla war against slavery reflected violent sentiment among abolitionists during the 1850s. But Brown had begun to formulate a plan to lead a slave rebellion during the 1840s. Thirty years of abolitionist admiration for slave rebels and twenty years of abolitionist contacts with slaves in the border South established the context for his plan. Longstanding aggressive tendencies within the antislavery movement contributed as much as the heightened sectionalism of the 1850s to the raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in October 1859.

Brown’s raid failed to spark a slave uprising as members of his tiny interracial band were killed, captured, or forced to flee northward. But Brown, who was among those captured, used the month between his trial and his execution to employ a surprising eloquence against what remained of abolitionist pacifism. “I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood,” he declared on the day he died. Although a few Garrisonians, such as Parker Pillsbury, Marius Robinson, and Moncure Conway, continued to disavow violence, most now agreed that black men must follow Brown’s example if African Americans were to gain freedom. Garrison declared, “Give me, as a non-resistant, Bunker Hill, and Lexington, and Concord, rather than the cowardice and servility of the southern plantation.” On the day of Brown’s execution, Garrison proclaimed, “Success to every slave insurrection in the South!” Frederick Douglass suggested that “posterity will owe everlasting thanks to John Brown [because] he has attacked slavery with the weapons precisely adapted to bring it to the death.”

Many correctly predicted that Brown’s raid would spark civil war between the North and South. When the war began in April 1861, abolitionists became fervent supporters of Union cause, urging from the start that black men be allowed to enlist in Union armies and that emancipation be a war aim. Older abolitionists, including Douglass, helped raise black troops. Younger abolitionists, including sons of Douglass and Garrison, enlisted in what became a successful war against legalized slavery. Several white abolitionists, including Higginson, became officers in segregated black regiments that distinguished themselves in battle. Years later, after the Civil War and Reconstruction had failed to secure equal rights for African Americans, elderly white abolitionists regretted that armed conflict had superseded their peaceful crusade. Violence, they implied, could not end racism. Yet their movement had been rooted in violence, had never been entirely non-violent, and had achieved important objectives through violent means. See also Bleeding Kansas; Democratic Party and Antislavery; Jerry Rescue Radical Republicans; Whig Party and Antislavery.


Stanley Harrold

Von Scholten, Peter (1784–1854)

Peter von Scholten was governor general of the Danish West Indies from 1827–1848. In this position he acted as a reformer who improved the social conditions of free blacks and enslaved laborers. Under pressure from revolting slaves, he abolished slavery in the islands by gubernatorial fiat on July 3, 1848.

Von Scholten began his career of colonial service in the Danish West Indies in 1804. King Frederik VI appointed him to the position of weighmaster in 1814. Frederik VI was historically significant for his liberal reforms, including the abolition of Danish serfdom. Von Scholten shared the king's reformist ideology. From 1814 to 1827, von Scholten held various positions of increasing power, until he was appointed governor general of the Danish West Indies in 1827. As governor general, von Scholten sought to reform the conditions of slavery and to transform the relationships of blacks to whites. To this end, he initiated a social revolution with two goals: changing the social position of free blacks and changing the slave owners' relationships to the enslaved. He orchestrated these changes by increasing the political authority associated with his position and exercising extensive control in regard to the administration of slaves and free blacks.

Von Scholten expanded his role as governor general to realize his plans of ameliorating the social conditions of free blacks and slaves. He placed a considerable number of important political issues and institutions under his exclusive jurisdiction. Consequently, he gained some opponents among slaveowners, Danish officials, and local officials who opposed his omnipotent political power and did not share his racial politics.

Von Scholten’s initial reforms were aimed at producing equality for free blacks. There was a large free black population in the Danish West Indies in the early nineteenth century. Despite their “free” designation, they lived under strict regulations that constituted a semi-free status. For example, free blacks were subject to sumptuary laws, could only hold specified jobs, and they were required to carry freedom certificates and to live in houses of specified dimensions in a proscribed area. Von Scholten approached King Frederik VI with proposals to obtain rights for free blacks in 1829 and 1834. The ultimate result of these negotiations was the royal decree of
April 18, 1834 proclaiming complete equality between whites and free blacks, defined as those free by the date of issuance, with a trial period of three years for anyone freed after that date. A new census recording free blacks was also directed by the decree. Von Scholten objected to the lack of distinction of classes for free blacks, the short term of the trial period which he proposed at ten years, and the new census that marked race. He ultimately abolished that designation.

Beyond legislative reforms, von Scholten attempted to change the racialized social climate by placing free blacks in public positions and inviting them to racially integrated dinner parties and official functions. In 1828, Von Scholten began living with his consort, Anna Heegaard, a free mulatto woman, who was sufficiently wealthy to have owned her own property and slaves prior to her relationship with von Scholten. She presided over official meals and entertained at public dinner parties held at their residence. Heegaard undeniably influenced the movement for legal and social equality for free black men and women in the Danish West Indies.

Von Scholten initiated a sequence of reforms in slave conditions in 1828 that eventually came to be regarded as an emancipation plan. He sought approval from the Danish government for some reforms and initiated others independently. As a consequence of von Scholten’s reforms in the 1830s, the length of the work day was regulated, slave owners’ powers over corporal punishment were curtailed, public auctions of slaves were banned, slaves gained some property rights, slaves gained the right to change owners if the former owner was compensated, pregnant women were barred from the most demanding field work, and housing improvements were mandated. The governor general gained the right to place a mistreated slave with a new owner. As result of additional reforms in the 1840s, the word slave was officially replaced with unfree, Saturday became an official day off for all slaves, compensation was required for slaves who worked on Saturday, and elementary schools were established for slave children.

Von Scholten favored gradual emancipation, after a transitional period, rather than immediate emancipation. He attempted to control elements that threatened his vision of emancipation. For example, he barred settlement of Methodists, Quakers, and Baptists because of their disharmonizing effect upon slave societies elsewhere. Von Scholten’s 1846 emancipation proposal called for a transitional period of twenty years, which he felt was primarily necessary to prepare slaves for freedom and secondarily to enable planters to benefit from the labor of slaves for the duration period instead of receiving compensation from the Danish government for their freedom. The Royal Rescript of June 28, 1847 regarding emancipation shortened the transitional period to twelve years and, despite von Scholten’s advisement against it, ordered that children born to the unfree after the date of the rescript were free from birth. The free birth law was a precipitating cause of the slave revolt that began on July 2, 1848, in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

Enslaved laborers initiated an island-wide work strike on July 2, 1848 and thousands gathered in town on July 3 to demand their freedom. Von Scholten declared emancipation on July 3. He resigned on July 6 and
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returned to Denmark where he was put on trial for dereliction of duty. Found guilty in 1851, he was acquitted by the Supreme Court upon appeal and granted an honorable discharge in 1852. Former slaves petitioned Denmark for his return to the Danish West Indies after the revolt. He never returned to the islands where his efforts resulted in social transformation and ultimately in emancipation. Von Scholten died in 1854. See also Danish West Indies, Abolition and Emancipation in.


Lori Lee
Walker, David (1796/97–1830)

David Walker was born in Wilmington, North Carolina, in the Lower Cape Fear District, in about 1796. His mother was a free black and he thus acquired her status. Slave labor and society was very evident in this region where rice was cultivated and naval stores were produced in the extensive pine barrens. Slaves here proved both very religious and restless. The early Methodist church in Wilmington was overwhelmingly black and probably was the foundation of Walker’s lifelong dedication to the denomination. The pervasive swamps of the Lower Cape Fear were commonly refuges for runaways and small maroon encampments, and several incidences of slave rebellion issued from them between 1775 and the early nineteenth century. This black world of religiosity and restlessness likely helped shape David Walker.

Sometime in the 1810s, Walker journeyed to Charleston, South Carolina, which had a much larger free black population than Wilmington, as well as greater employment opportunity. By 1818, Charleston also had one of the earliest congregations of the recently launched African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, established by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1817. Vehe-mently opposed by local white authorities, it was comprised of both free blacks and slaves and quickly became the center of black Charleston. It also was an important nexus for the plotting of a major slave conspiracy led by Denmark Vesey, a free black carpenter who was a member of the church, and a number of other free blacks and slaves in the town. The intensely religious and Methodist Walker likely attended this church and may have been exposed to the conspiring in one form or another. He certainly knew of the plot when it was uncovered in June 1822 and violently crushed by the local magistrates. More than thirty free blacks and slaves were executed and a number of leaders of the church including its minister, Morris Brown, fled the town soon after the plot’s exposure. Walker probably left at about the same time and may have roamed along the eastern seaboard of the country. It is very likely that he went to Philadelphia where the seat of the AME church was located and to where most of those blacks fleeing Charleston
went. The name David Walker appears in Philadelphia municipal records for 1824. There is even some indication that he may have gone briefly to Haiti when a number of American blacks were emigrating there to accept President Jean-Pierre Boyer's offers of free land and other assistance to settlers.

By 1825, David Walker had settled in Boston, Massachusetts. He soon opened a used-clothing store, married, became an African Mason, bought a house, and joined Reverend Samuel Snowden's black Methodist church. He was the local agent for the first black newspaper, Freedom's Journal, and he was a principal in the formation in 1828 of one of the nation's first explicitly black political organizations, the Massachusetts General Colored Association. In December 1828, he addressed the Association and passionately decried slavery, the colonization movement, and racial injustice.

Walker is best known for his publication in September 1829 of his Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World. This booklet was one of the most vivid and incisive denunciations of American slavery, racism, and hypocrisy produced in the country in the nineteenth century. In it, Walker clearly empathized with the suffering, both physical and psychological, endured by the slaves in the South, a people whose world he knew well from his earlier years. But he also chided them for any tendency to succumb to demoralization induced by their brutal treatment and to surrender themselves to slavery and slavishness. He admonished them to refuse to submit to enslavement any further; to do so was to make themselves complicit in the sin of slavery. To whites, he counseled an immediate acknowledgement of their horrible sinning in imposing slavery and degradation upon blacks. They must seek God's forgiveness for their sins and publicly repent. Finally, they must reach out to blacks in Christian fellowship and seek a non-violent path to reconciliation with blacks and the forging of a new free and interracial society in the United States. Walker believed such a reunion was possible, but was also fully aware of the daunting obstacles confronting it. If whites proved unrepentant and continued to enslave blacks, then they had no choice but to reject their enslavement and violently oppose the whites who had in effect rendered themselves Devils. For blacks to do otherwise was the grossest of affronts to God. In the pamphlet, Walker struggled to harness the optimistic activism inherent to evangelical Christianity and revolutionary republicanism to inspire African Americans to a new sense of personal worth and to their capacity to challenge the increasingly systematized ideology and institutions of white supremacy.

By early 1830, Walker had launched a remarkably resourceful circulation of his Appeal in Georgia, South, and North Carolina, Virginia, and New Orleans. White authorities throughout the South were enraged and sought to check its influx into their states by monitoring local slaves and free blacks carefully, impeding the movement of Northern white and free black sailors in their ports, and guarding the mails and newspapers from importing any seditious materials. Still, the pamphlet found its way into black hands in the South, especially in North Carolina where an impressive network of runaway slaves, free blacks, and perhaps some white Quakers moved it along the state's eastern counties. Walker implored literate slaves
and free blacks to read his work to their less educated brethren and apparently some did. The pamphlet failed, however, to spark the wide-scale resistance for which Walker hoped. But his passionate words fired black activism in the North throughout the antebellum era and beyond. Maria Stewart, Frederick Douglass, and Henry Highland Garnet all looked to Walker as seminal in the movement over which they became so prominent. Even as late as 1940, W.E.B. Du Bois lauded the Appeal for its “tremendous indictment of slavery” and for being the first “program of organized opposition to the action and attitude of the dominant white group,” as well as for its “ceaseless agitation and insistent demand for equality.” See also Methodists and Antislavery; Vesey’s Conspiracy.


Peter Hinks

Washington, D.C., Compensated Emancipation in

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill to end slavery in Washington, D.C. The bill, entitled “An Act for the Release of Certain Persons Held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia,” marked the first time that the federal government authorized the emancipation of any slave and the only time that it compensated former owners as part of an emancipation plan.

While compensation was not included in later acts, emancipation in the nation’s capital was an early sign of the end of slavery in the United States. The District of Columbia Emancipation Act was received with joy in Washington’s African American community and is now remembered in the District’s Emancipation Day celebration.

Throughout the antebellum era, ending the slave trade and slavery in Washington, D.C., was a popular cause for abolitionists. They focused on Washington because of the symbolic importance of slavery in the capital of a free republic and because of the ability of the federal government to end it there. Under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, Congress has exclusive power to pass laws for the nation’s capital.

On December 16, 1861, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts introduced the District of Columbia Emancipation Act in the Senate. The bill provided for immediate emancipation of all slaves in the District of Columbia as well as compensation for their masters and funds for the foreign colonization of slaves who chose to emigrate outside the United States. Wilson’s three-point plan linking emancipation with payment to owners and colonization was similar to earlier proposals to end slavery. Supporters reasoned that connecting emancipation with payments to owners and funds to encourage former slaves to emigrate would make the abolition of slavery more palatable to the slaveholding states that had not seceded to join the Confederacy, such as Kentucky and Missouri.

The compensation provision of the District bill, however, divided antislavery members of Congress. Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas criticized
compensation for owners on the grounds that it wrongly recognized slaves as property. He argued that if Congress authorized any compensation, it should be paid to former slaves. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts answered Senator Pomeroy, stating that payment to masters was acknowledgment of Congress's responsibility for slavery in Washington and would dull opposition to the bill. Despite this resistance to compensation, it remained in the District of Columbia Emancipation Act.

As passed by Congress and signed by the president, the act appropriated as much as one million dollars to be paid to owners in the District of Columbia, provided that the total amount paid did not exceed an average of $300 per slave. Under the statute, owners could be compensated only if they were loyal to the Union. The act directed the president to appoint three commissioners to receive and investigate petitions and to assess the value of slaves freed by the statute. The act also appropriated $100,000 for voluntary colonization.

After signing the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, President Lincoln appointed commissioners to the three-member board in April 1862. The commissioners met throughout the following three months, receiving claims, determining ownership and loyalty to the Union, and setting compensation for former slaves. Compensation payments were ostensibly based on estimates of the former slaves' intrinsic value to their owners. To determine the intrinsic utility of each, the commissioners began by estimating salable price before the start of the war, relying on the assessments of Bernard Campbell, a slave dealer from Baltimore. As estimated price usually exceeded the average compensation allowed by law, the commissioners granted payments of $300 in most cases.

The loyalty provision prevented only secessionists from recovering compensation. The commissioners interpreted the restriction to apply only upon proof that the "claimants have borne arms against the Government of the United States in the present rebellion or in any way given aid or comfort to the enemy." They justified their interpretation of the statute by noting that its language was similar to the Constitution's treason provision in Article III, Section 3. Since the Constitution defined treason to apply only in specific circumstances with adequate proof, the commissioners accepted claims even of Confederate sympathizers.

The commissioners received 966 petitions, claiming 3,100 former slaves. Of those petitions, the commissioners granted 909 in their entirety and 21 in part, accounting for 2,989 former slaves. The remaining petitions were rejected because former owners had voted for secession or moved south to join the Confederate military or had failed to appear before the board.

On July 12, 1862, a supplemental bill to the District of Columbia Emancipation Act was signed into law. The Supplemental Act allowed slaves and former slaves whose former masters had not filed compensation petitions to assert their own claims to freedom under the April 16 or July 12 statutes. The Act also specified that any slave who had lived or been employed in the District of Columbia with the consent of his or her owner after April 16, 1862, was legally free.

As with the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, the Supplemental Act charged the emancipation commissioners with receiving and investigating
petitions. The statute provided that African Americans could not be excluded from testifying. The commissioners received 161 petitions under the Supplemental Act and granted 139.


Edward Daniels

*The Wealth of Nations*. See Smith, Adam

Wedderburn, Robert (1762–c. 1831)

An important figure in the radical London underworld and an antislavery activist, Robert Wedderburn was born in Jamaica in 1762. His father was James Wedderburn, a Kingston doctor and plantation owner, his mother a house slave named Rosanna. James Wedderburn sold Rosanna when she was five months pregnant, on the condition that the child should be free from birth. Separated from his mother, the young Robert Wedderburn was raised by his maternal grandmother. He joined the navy at the age of sixteen in 1778, and arrived in London shortly thereafter.

Few details are known about Wedderburn’s early years within the underworld community of sailors, former slaves, and radicals in London. He converted to Methodism in 1786, and became a journeyman tailor. He also began to involve himself in radical politics, and eventually converted to Unitarianism. Wedderburn early showed a keen interest in activism. He wrote a theological tract, "Truth Self-Supported," following his conversion to Methodism, and he became a regular participant in radical debating clubs during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Around 1813 he joined the circle of the radical organizer Thomas Spence, embracing the combination of millenarian religion, slave rebellion and emancipation, radical politics, and free thought that characterized Spence’s movement. Following Spence’s death in 1814, Wedderburn continued to popularize his radical ideas, landing himself in prison on more than one occasion. In 1818, he published *The Axe Laid to the Roots*, which called for immediate emancipation and universal suffrage.

Wedderburn’s personal history gave him a particular interest in antislavery activities. He spoke out regularly against slavery at his Hopkins Street Unitarian Chapel, and published numerous antislavery tracts. In “A Critical, Historical and Admonitory letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury,” he criticized the role of the established church in the perpetuation of the slave
system. Wedderburn also authored tracts inciting slaves to rise up and overthrow their masters, smuggling them into the colonies by way of black sailors. His participation in discussions on radicalism and slavery at meetings of the British Forum at Lunts coffee house in London, drew the attention, if not necessarily the full support, of mainstream abolitionists. William Wilberforce, who frequently visited jails to evangelize prisoners and encourage their repentance, is known to have visited Wedderburn in prison. Upon his release in 1824, Wedderburn published an antislavery autobiography, entitled "The Horrors of Slavery."

Despite repeated harassment from authorities, Wedderburn continued his political activities. In 1831, at the age of sixty-eight, he was again arrested and returned to prison. The final record of Wedderburn's life is a letter he wrote from the prison to the radical reformer Francis Place. The exact time and circumstances of his death are unknown. See also Methodists and Antislavery; Unitarianism and Antislavery.


Michael A. Rutz

Weld, Angelina Emily Grimké. See Grimké, Angelina Emily

Weld, Theodore Dwight (1803–1895)

Theodore Dwight Weld was an influential abolitionist in the United States during the 1830s and early 1840s. For much of his young life it appeared that Weld, son of a Congregationalist minister, was destined for a career in the ministry. He briefly attended Andover Seminary, but withdrew after experiencing vision impairment, which may have been a psychosomatic manifestation of his dissatisfaction with orthodox Calvinism. In 1826, Weld’s religious fervor was renewed after he was converted to evangelicalism by the famed minister Charles Grandison Finney. Weld devoted himself to Finney, becoming one of his most trusted aides. His work as a revivalist soon led him into the temperance and manual labor reform movements. As an agent for the Manual Labor Society, he helped establish Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, which he entered as a student in 1833 to prepare for the ministry.

Lane instead launched Weld into abolitionism. In 1834, Weld led a revolt amongst the students of Lane against the school’s administration over the issue of slavery. In February of that year, Weld helped organize an eighteen-day debate at the seminary where he and his fellow students discussed the duties of Christians regarding slavery, specifically debating the comparative merits of the scheme proposed by colonizationists to end slavery gradually and the demands of radical abolitionists for its immediate abolition. The students emerged from the debate certain of the utter sinfulness of both slavery and racial prejudice, convinced that colonizationism did not offer adequate means to repent those sins, and eager to put their newfound immediatist convictions into practice. They founded an antislavery society at the seminary and, led by Weld, they began to reach out to the local African American community, setting up both secular and religious education programs in
Cincinnati’s “Little Africa” district. The activism of the Lane students drew harsh criticism from many in Cincinnati’s white community, who called upon the trustees of Lane Seminary to restrain them. In October, the trustees bowed to this pressure, passing resolutions that banned student organizations not directly related to ministerial education and allowing the trustees to expel offending students. Led by Weld, the majority of the students promptly withdrew from the seminary rather than compromise their antislavery beliefs.

This dispute at Lane propelled many of its former students into abolitionist activism, none more so than Weld. Weld spent two years as a full-time agent of the American Antislavery Society (AASS) touring Ohio, New York, and other western areas agitating the antislavery cause and helping to establish local abolitionist societies. Despite persistent, sometimes violent, harassment from antislavery mobs, Weld was remarkably successful, helping to establish numerous local societies and converting many who came to hear him speak to abolitionism. In the mid 1830s, Weld’s voice was compromised following years of non-stop speaking, and thereafter he assumed a less public role in abolitionism as correspondent, editor, and pamphleteer at the headquarters of the AASS in New York. In 1836, he recruited and trained dozens of abolitionist agents for the AASS including Angelina and Sarah Grimké. Daughters of an elite South Carolina slaveholding planter, the Grimké sisters had been converted to Quakerism and then to abolitionism. Coached by Weld, the sisters spent much of the following two years touring New England promoting abolitionism. In the midst of this tour, Weld began courting Angelina, and they were married in May 1838.

Collaborating with his wife, Angelina, and sister-in-law, Sarah, Weld produced American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses (1839). In this widely circulated pamphlet, Weld and the Grimkés amassed firsthand accounts of the horrors of slavery compiled from Southern newspapers and personal testimonies solicited from Southerners. The pamphlet documented in grisly detail the violence and cruelty endemic to the institution of slavery. American Slavery as It Is ranks as one of the most influential works of American antislavery literature. Over 100,000 copies were sold in the first year, and Harriet Beecher Stowe later reported that it was an important source for Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

From 1841 to 1843, Weld labored as a researcher and lobbyist for antislavery Congressmen in Washington. In particular, he helped in the fight against the Gag Rule, which suppressed debate regarding antislavery petitions. This fight was ultimately successful and the Gag Rule was rescinded in 1844. Following his stint in Washington, Weld withdrew from an active role in abolitionism. See also Immediate Emancipation.


Robert K. Nelson
West Indies Emancipation Day

On August 1, 1834, the emancipation bill of 1833 was promulgated in the British West Indies and placed the former slaves under the transitional system of apprenticeship, which was to last for six years before the enactment of full emancipation. Under apprenticeship, the former slaves were required to labor forty-five hours each week for their master; beyond that time, they could earn wages for themselves. Yet apprenticeship was abolished two years early on August 1, 1838.

Both events of August 1 were welcomed by black and white American abolitionists as auspicious signs that success was inevitable in their own country as well, and throughout the remainder of the antebellum period, many commemorated the "First of August" as an antislavery holiday.

At a time when the Fourth of July was developing into an annual occasion for patriotic effusions about freedom, the First of August was a subversive surrogate for the hypocritical rituals of Independence Day. By celebrating Great Britain's virtue, abolitionists spotlighted America's vice. Simultaneously, they highlighted the path to repentance: by publicizing the perceived peacefulness and profitability of West Indian emancipation, they used the First of August to argue that immediate abolition would be safe and expedient for the American South. In addition to its usefulness as a rhetorical platform, however, the First of August contributed to the movement culture of Northern abolitionists, both black and white, providing them with annual opportunities to congregate, celebrate, and rejuvenate their commitment to reform.

Observances of the First of August clustered around the geographical centers of immediatism, specifically Boston and New England, New York City and upstate New York, Philadelphia, and Ohio. Ceremonies were often held in meeting houses or rustic "groves," and audiences numbered from hundreds to thousands at the largest events. Especially in Massachusetts and New York, assemblies were frequently biracial and composed of both men and women, particularly in the mid- to late-1830s. In the next two decades, however, First of August celebrations were marked by the divisions that plagued the antislavery movement, both among white abolitionist factions and between black and white reform communities. Garrisonians in the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the American Anti-Slavery Society consistently observed the day with official "picnics" up to the Civil War, but African American leaders within Boston, New York, and Philadelphia...
increasingly organized separate celebrations, both to demonstrate the solidarity of black communities and to legitimize their own claims to community leadership.

First of August celebrations drew on many of the cultural traditions that shaped the Fourth of July, but they also manifested the same class tensions that were exhibited on Independence Day. Much like middle-class celebrations of the Fourth, which contrasted with the rowdy celebrations of the urban working class, ceremonies for the First usually emphasized orations and songs. Attending orations allowed abolitionists to display their respectability and temperance, even while espousing radical views; but if the First demonstrated abolitionist decorum, it was also a day for rest and recreation. The resulting tension between recreation, respectability, and radical reform helped produce a diversity of opinions about how the First of August should be observed, just as many contemporaries argued about the proper way to celebrate the Fourth of July.

Recent scholarship has focused on the First of August as a window onto community formation and political mobilization among Northern African Americans. Long before British emancipation in the 1830s, black Northerners had developed holiday alternatives to the Fourth of July, a day on which they were often targeted by racist discourse and dangerous rioters. Many celebrated July 5 (New York state emancipation), instead of the Fourth, or preferred other holidays, like the anniversary of Crispus Attucks’s death in March or of the slave trade’s abolition later in July. Preexisting traditions were grafted onto West Indian emancipation celebrations by black Northerners, including traditions developed during slavery, when holidays like Pinkster and Negro Election Day served as opportunities for symbolic critique and communal self-expression. Drawing on memories of these events, African American communities often observed the First of August with parades, dances, and militia drills.

These practices were often chastised by white abolitionist leaders, and they were also controversial among black abolitionists. On the one hand, African American leaders wanted to attract people to their First of August celebrations to show numerical strength, and parades and dances were certainly attractive. They also wanted to lay claim to public space as political agents, which parades in particular allowed them to do. But on the other hand, many abolitionist leaders, white and black, stressed the need for “moral uplift” and respectability in black communities, and parades and dances were seen by many as unrespectable. Planners for First of August celebrations attempted to balance the values of group unity, effective political action, and adherence to social conventions. Among black abolitionists, the former two values frequently outweighed the latter. Important as decorum was to African American elites, it was often more important to draw on long-standing festive traditions in African American communities and to draw large crowds to First of August events. See also Apprenticeship; Stipendiary Magistrates.


*W. Caleb McDaniel*

**Whig Party and Antislavery**

The Whig Party was an American political party officially formed in 1834 in opposition to Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party. Political descendents of the National Republican Party, the Whigs advocated for “The American System,” a nationalistic economic system that featured tariff protection, federally supported internal improvements, and the continuation of the national bank. Drawing much support from New England Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and evangelical Protestants, the Whig Party endorsed a variety of reform movements, believing government should play a role in the moral behavior of Americans and eliminate sin in the United States. Many Northern Whigs supported abolitionism.

Early on in their party’s history, Whigs in Congress split sectionally over slavery issues. In 1836, almost all Northern Whigs in the House of Representatives voted along antislavery lines, while nearly all Southern Whigs voted proslavery. Northern Whigs, however, were unique from their Southern colleagues: Southern Whigs and Southern Democrats generally shared the same position on slavery, whereas the antislavery position of Northern Whigs enabled them to present themselves as unique from Northern Democrats on the issue of slavery. Mutual animosity towards the Democratic Party and a nationalist vision kept the Whig party united in spite of divisions over slavery.

By 1840, Northern Whigs grew in strength as they attracted an increasing number of abolitionists, like William Seward. Even with the formation of the abolitionist Liberty Party in 1840, Whigs retained the loyal support of abolitionists. As the Liberty Party gained strength between 1840 and 1844, Northern Whigs increasingly attacked slavery to limit defections. With the onset of the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, Northern “Conscience” Whigs opposed the expansion of slavery into the West, splintering the party further along sectional lines. That a wing of a large national party associated itself so strongly with antislavery, however, helped legitimize the abolitionist movement.

The nomination and election in 1848 of Zachary Taylor, a war hero from the Mexican War, helped keep the Whigs united. Taylor’s election, however, marked a turning point for the Whig party. The party splintered even further along sectional lines, prefiguring the Civil War. Taylor’s effort to avoid the issue of slavery angered some “Conscience” Whigs who joined with members of the Liberty Party to form the Free Soil Party. The defeat of the Whigs in the election of 1852, accompanied by its calls for moderation and union during the struggle over the Compromise of 1850, heralded further defections to the Free Soil Party. Southern Whigs fled to the Democratic Party, which appeared to them much more receptive to slave-holding rights. The
defections culminated with the formation of the Republican Party in 1854 when numerous Northern Whigs joined the new party. The Whig Party was in such a beleaguered state by 1856 that at its convention it endorsed former President Millard Fillmore, previously a Whig who was now running as the presidential candidate for the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party. In 1860, the small number of remaining Whigs reorganized to form the Constitutional Union Party, but they fared poorly in that portentous election. See also Anti-slavery Evangelical Protestantism; Bible and Slavery; Congregationalism and Antislavery; Radical Republicans; Texas, Annexation of.


Daniel P. Kotzin

Whitefield, George (1714–1770)

George Whitefield was an influential itinerant English preacher who traveled throughout the American colonies where he initially condemned the institution of slavery. The son of a tavern keeper, Whitefield never lost the common touch that would make his preaching uniquely appealing. After graduating from Oxford University in 1736, he embarked on a series of far-flung evangelical tours that confirmed him as a lynchpin of early Methodism in Britain and the spearhead of the Great Awakening in the colonies.

Whitefield’s canny self-marketing facilitated his unprecedented success as a preacher—he deployed commercial and entrepreneurial devices very effectively to deliver the message of salvation in Christ. By judiciously distributing printed sermons, journals and other advance publicity, Whitefield ensured himself a reception so enthusiastic that he frequently preached outdoors to crowds of thousands. Most of his sermons were structured to make his hearers painfully conscious of their moral failings, to emphasize the grace of God, and to communicate the joy of deliverance through faith. By the mid-1740s, thanks to his perfectly crafted theatrical performances and the appeal of his spiritually egalitarian message, Whitefield was one of the best-known figures in the British Empire—known, if not always respected, by people throughout the colonies.

Whitefield believed depravity and decadence were rife in the populations of the Lower South. In 1740, he focused his attention on South Carolina, which he sought to convert to evangelical Calvinism. Whitefield and his reforming allies felt that the godliness of Southern society was jeopardized by a variety of dangers including an unregenerate clergy, an immoral population fixed on extravagance, and the presence of a cruel slavery.

To the twenty-three-year-old Englishman who would spend his life emphasizing that all souls should be receptive to salvation, the huge number of
heathen blacks working in appalling physical and spiritual conditions on low-country rice plantations shocked him: “my blood has frequently almost run cold within me to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper raiment to put on.” In June of 1740, Whitefield published an open letter to the planters of the Southern colonies concerning “the treatment of their Negroes.” He campaigned for more humane treatment of slaves, warning that unchristian behavior would summon God’s disfavor, possibly through slave uprisings, which he suggested might be just punishments. But this caveat little moved Carolina planters who perennially feared black insurrection, having only recently suffered the Stono Rebellion of 1739, which killed near twenty whites. While a minority of these planters was persuaded that converting and educating their slaves was a worthy and safe undertaking, most feared that Christianity would offer blacks a dangerous elevated status and the opportunity to justify and coordinate conspiracies. Those planters who did follow Whitefield offered their slaves limited privileges after they converted including church membership, baptism, formalized marriages, and Christian burial. A small minority of reforming planters, warily observed by their counterparts, sought to limit excessive corporal punishments, and some would later permit blacks to minister to their bondspeople.

George Whitefield’s advocacy of an improvement in black treatment and education, however, never extended as far as challenging slavery itself. Indeed, within ten years of his arrival, Whitefield was ardently championing the extension of the institution from South Carolina into the fledgling colony of Georgia, where slavery was initially prohibited. For him, a condition of human bondage was justified in Holy Scripture, and therefore lawful, though he deplored the excesses of the slave trade and the brutal abuses that accompanied plantation slavery. When slavery was finally legalized in Georgia, where Whitefield had established an orphanage, he rejoiced that he would have the opportunity to convert to Christ those enslaved on his own estate—the ends justified the means. For a man renowned for his booming voice, Whitefield’s silence on slavery after initially condemning the barbarous treatment of slaves represented more of a shift in strategy than a reversal: his will to reform slavery diminished as other projects such as extending evangelism to Southern slaveholders and supporting his orphanage swelled. Yet George Whitefield later became the Countess of Huntingdon’s chaplain, and his achievements were commemorated in the first poem written by the freed slave, Phillis Wheatly, after his death in 1770, in which Whitefield not
only spoke to "Americans" but also to "Africans," reminding them that God is an "Impartial Saviour." See also Antislavery Evangelical Protestantism; First Great Awakening and Antislavery.


Ben Marsh

Wilberforce, William (1759–1833)

William Wilberforce was a Member of Parliament (MP), an author and Britain's best-known abolitionist. He belonged to one of Kingston-upon-Hull's most affluent merchant families. Wilberforce was gifted intellectually, although his health and eyesight were poor throughout his life. He entered St. John’s College, Cambridge in October 1766 and proved an able and popular student. In 1780, Wilberforce became the Member of Parliament for his hometown at twenty-one—the minimum age at which one could run—and was later elected in 1784 as MP for the large, prestigious county seat of Yorkshire. From his earliest days, Wilberforce was regarded as an eloquent speaker.

He had a dramatic religious experience in 1785 when he converted to evangelical Christianity. It transformed his life and his politics. In 1787, he founded the Proclamation Society for the reformation of individual and societal morals. At about the same time, Wilberforce met Thomas Clarkson whose research on the Atlantic slave trade shocked him. His friend, Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, also an abolitionist, encouraged Wilberforce to spearhead the issue in the House of Commons. Wilberforce and Clarkson prepared evidence for the Privy Council in 1788. Ill health forced Wilberforce to withdraw temporarily from his political duties, and Pitt presented their findings to Parliament. This resulted in an act that restricted the number of slaves a vessel might carry based on the ship's tonnage. Although popular sentiment continued to mount against the slave trade, George III's mental illness and the resulting Regency Bill Crisis trumped other issues during the winter of 1788–89. The king's recovery in the spring allowed abolition to return to the agenda.

In 1789, Wilberforce, with Pitt’s cooperation, brought a bill forward once again to abolish Great Britain’s involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. His speech was praised as being one of the most powerful ever heard in the House. In January 1790, abolition was proving a very time-consuming issue and the matter was given to a Select Committee. By the fall, Wilberforce had 1,400 pages of evidence to present to the House. Many abolitionists argued their case on humanitarian and Christian grounds, but Wilberforce also attempted to destroy the notion that Africans were inferior. He became an ardent supporter of the often troubled Sierra Leone project to
repatriate freed blacks to West Africa. He hoped its success would demonstrate that free Africans could establish a well-ordered society.

Wilberforce addressed the Commons on April 18, 1791, but the bill was defeated yet again. He and his fellow abolitionists pressed on, urging more petitions, meetings, pamphlets, sermons, and public education. Their campaign had always been hampered by powerful economic interests that wanted to defeat, or at least delay, abolition. By the early 1790s, the abolitionists lost ground as public and political opinion recoiled from the excesses of the French Revolution and the St. Domingue slave uprising. The issue was revisited in 1792 in the House; Wilberforce received support for gradual abolition but the House of Lords postponed the issue. Once again the “West Indian interest” of powerful planters employed successful delaying tactics.

Despite the downturn in public and political support for abolition, Wilberforce reintroduced the Abolition Bill almost every year in the 1790s. Much to Wilberforce’s dismay, even Pitt’s enthusiasm cooled during this period. It was not until 1804 that the tide began to turn. Napoleon’s hostility to emancipation became known and the cause was helped by the inclusion of new Irish MPs who favored abolition. However, Wilberforce reintroduced the bill in 1804 and 1805 without success. Finally, Parliament voted overwhelmingly in its favor and the Abolition Act received Royal Assent on March 25, 1807. It became illegal to trade in slaves, although stamping out slavery in British colonies would prove far more difficult to effect.

Troubled by multiple health complaints, Wilberforce resigned his seat of Yorkshire in 1812 for the pocket borough of Bramber, Sussex, which he hoped would be a less demanding constituency. He began work on the Slave Registration Bill, which would help monitor slave traffic and ensure compliance with the Abolition Act. Once again, he encountered significant resistance. Despite his failing health, he continued to speak and publish tracts attacking slavery, which led to the founding of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1823 and the campaign to emancipate the slaves in all British colonies. The Society believed in educating and mobilizing popular pressure to overcome remaining opposition. By 1830, it had published half a million tracts.

In 1821, Wilberforce selected his replacement: leadership of the parliamentary campaign passed to Thomas Fowell Buxton. In 1825, Wilberforce resigned from the House of Commons. Despite his lengthy career in politics, he never once enjoyed office. Wilberforce’s retirement was spent at Mill Hill, north of London, with his family, although he did suffer significant financial setbacks during this time. His last public appearance was in
1830 at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. Wilberforce lived to see the
Emancipation bill gain support and was on his deathbed when it received
its final Commons reading on July 26, 1833. He died three days later and is
buried in Westminster Abbey.

Wilberforce was involved in many humanitarian causes before Parlia-
ment, such as Catholic Emancipation, as well as several causes outside
of the House. Although Wilberforce is the best known of the abolitionists, he
did not act alone. There were many inside and outside of Parliament who
fought for this cause. He found great support from his friends and fellow
Christians centered in the village of Clapham, south of London. They were
nicknamed the “Saints” by their detractors and later tagged the “Clapham
Sect.” Nevertheless, Wilberforce was the prime mover of the group and
was instrumental in the fight to liberate slaves in Britain and international-
ly. See also Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition; British Slavery,
Abolition of; French Colonies, Emancipation of; St. Domingue, French
Defeat in.

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Cheryl Fury

Williams, Eric Eustace (1911–1981)

Eric Williams is one of a handful of professional historians who made last-
ing contributions to historical scholarship as well as to national and interna-
tional politics. For most people, Williams will be remembered as the first
prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who governed that Caribbean
nation for twenty-five years, from its political independence in 1956 to his
death in 1981. But historians and related scholars will remember him as a
brilliant historian, whose work has had a continuing and unmatched impact
on historical scholarship. This entry focuses on his contribution to historical
scholarship—specifically, his contribution to the study of slavery and abol-
ition—and not on his contributions in politics and related fields, information
on which can be found in the voluminous writings on the man and his
time.

Williams’s contributions to the study of slavery and abolition began with
a 1938 Oxford University doctoral dissertation entitled, “The Economic
Aspects of the Abolition of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery.” Subse-
quently, Williams moved to the United States where he took a position as
assistant professor of social and political science at Howard University in
Washington, D.C. For a brief period, he set aside the doctoral work to
undertake research leading to the publication of his first book, The Negro
in the Caribbean (1942). He returned thereafter to the subject of his disser-
tation, which he expanded to include the contribution of the Atlantic
slave trade and Caribbean slavery to the development of capitalism in Eng-
land. The expanded work was published in 1944 under the title Capitalism
and Slavery. In all, Williams wrote seven scholarly books and several journal articles. But his contribution to the study of slavery centers on *Capitalism and Slavery*. The historical scholarship provoked by this seminal work is the focus of this entry.

There are two specific ways the contribution of a scholarly work to the advancement of a disciplinary theme can be measured. One is the lasting relevance of the questions raised and the amount of further research on the theme provoked by the arguments developed. It does not matter whether the new research praises or criticizes the work. The sheer volume of scholarly production responding to the arguments advanced and exploring further the issues articulated is an important measure of scholarly contribution. The other is the extent to which the validity of the conclusions reached stands the test of time after being subjected to sustained scrutiny, with accumulated new evidence and the application of advances in conceptual sophistication. Again, it does not matter whether some or all of the arguments are found to be wrong or inadequate. If the accumulation of new evidence and the application of advances in an analytical framework uphold the conclusions reached in the work under sustained critique, that is a significant measure of scholarly contribution, particularly if the conclusions are radically different from preceding dominant ones. These two measures provide the context for the discussion in this article.

In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams explored three main hypotheses that historians have debated for more than six decades: First, that economics, not racism, gave rise to the transatlantic slave trade and the enslavement of Africans in the Americas; ultimately, anti-African racism evolved from African enslavement. Second, that the slave trade and slavery in the British Caribbean contributed greatly to the development of industrial capitalism in England. And, third, that the socio-economic and political conditions created by expanding industrialism in England, not humanitarianism, were the principal factors in the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of the enslaved Africans. Each of these three propositions has remained important in the literature on slavery. But, for Williams, and for his protagonists also, the main focus was on the economics and politics of the abolition of the British slave trade and the emancipation of the enslaved Africans in the British Caribbean by the British Government. On this subject, Williams framed his argument in the context of two contending propositions:

- that abolition and emancipation were the product of humanitarian pressures arising from the spread in England of moral condemnation of the slave trade and slavery;
- that abolition and emancipation were primarily the product of power shifts among interest groups with bargaining power in England, brought about by structural changes in the English economy and general changes in the evolving global economy.

The historiography of slavery and abolition had been dominated in Britain for decades by the first argument. It was promoted vigorously by the school of imperial history established at Oxford University by Reginald Coupland. The argument was presented in a manner suggestive of national pride in the
triumph of morality over material greed in England. As Williams wrote in his *British Historians and the West Indies* (1964: 233), “The British historians wrote almost as if Britain had introduced Negro slavery solely for the satisfaction of abolishing it.” Williams advanced the second argument as a counter. He praised the abolitionists, especially Thomas Clarkson, for their selfless crusade against the evils and injustice of slavery and for their service to Africa. But he contended that the importance of the abolitionists, whom he accepted as “saints,” has been erroneously argued and grossly exaggerated. The moral sentiments they expressed, he argued, were not sufficiently widespread and deeply felt by the majority of people in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England to form the main basis of state policy in an emerging democracy. It was changes in the relative strengths and weaknesses of interest groups with bargaining power, brought about by changes in some groups’ perception of their self-interests and the emergence of new groups with bargaining power (e.g., industrial capitalists) following the growth of industrial capitalism that altered the power equation against proslavery interests (e.g., the West India interests and their allies, especially the agrarian aristocracy) and in favor of abolition. Without these fundamental structural changes, Williams contended, the abolitionists would not have been able to secure enough support in Parliament to pass legislation outlawing the slave trade and slavery no matter how much and how well they fought.

Although the three issues articulated by Williams may have been raised by other historians before him, no historian before Williams brought these issues together and developed lines of argument with anything close to the same degree of originality, detail, and clarity. No modern historian before Williams provoked a noteworthy debate on any of these issues. Williams framed the issues and developed his arguments in a manner that made them relevant to the concerns of people in the Commonwealth and beyond during the post-war decades of the 1950s and 1960s. The economic conditions of the British Caribbean in particular, and the entire West Indies in general, had been deteriorating since the nineteenth century. In the post-war decades, the most important exports from the Caribbean had become its people, instead of products, as lack of employment opportunities provoked large-scale migration. People in the Caribbean wanted to know how they got to that situation. Eric Williams’s argument served well this yearning for historical explanation. His argument concerning the relative decline over time of the bargaining power of the West India interests in British politics is both original and logically consistent with the broader argument that, while slavery enriched the planters privately and contributed socially to industrial development in England, the economics of slavery created a one-way movement of resources—from the plantations (the Caribbean) to the mercantile centers (England, in this case)—thus preventing in the Caribbean the creation of conditions for self-sustained growth in the long run. The contemporary relevance of the issues, and the clarity and logical consistency of the argument explain the great appeal of the work to the educated public and scholars in the Caribbean.

In fact, the contemporary relevance of the issues and the appeal of the arguments were not limited to the Caribbean. They extended to all
countries in the Americas where enslaved Africans were an important part of the historical process between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly the United States and Brazil. What is more, even though the circumstances were different, the mercantile argument concerning the contradiction between one-way resource flow and long-run self-sustained development resonated with anticolonial crusaders across the globe, especially in Asia and Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. Like the people of the Caribbean, the educated public in colonized countries in Africa and Asia yearned for an historical explanation of their contemporary relative economic backwardness. Scholars concerned with these countries found that the Williams analytical framework, with appropriate modifications, could be applied logically to the study of the consequences of colonialism for long-run socio-economic development in those countries. In fact, it may be fair to argue that dependency theory evolved out of a continuous refinement of the Williams framework; or, at least, that the two approaches share some common conceptual elements.

While *Capitalism and Slavery* received a warm embrace in the Caribbean and the rest of the Third World—and in the socialist bloc too—it came under relentless attack in the Western world, especially in Britain and North America. Not only did Williams’s attack on the Coupland school bring into question the humanitarian basis of abolition and emancipation, but the argument that slavery contributed immensely to the development of capitalism also appears, to some Western historians, to bring into disrepute the moral foundation of Western civilization. The history of this feeling is difficult to trace and explain. Early eighteenth-century writers in England did not see anything immoral in linking economic development in England to the employment of enslaved Africans in the Americas. The ideological battle between capitalism and socialism for moral superiority during the Cold War, and the charge of colonial exploitation by the anticolonial crusaders in Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s, may be partly the explanation. Whatever the origin, the attacks on Williams’s work stimulated considerable interest in the subject and gave rise to more questions and research. Few modern historians have stimulated as much research as Williams.

Given the extensive and sustained scrutiny, have Williams’s arguments and conclusions stood the test of time? As already suggested, much of the scrutiny came from the Western world, and most of it focused on showing that all Williams’s arguments and conclusions are wrong. For decades, no serious efforts were made to determine whether or not the validity of all or some of the conclusions could be demonstrated through the employment of modes of analysis different from those employed by Williams. In other words, most critics and their critiques did not differentiate between arguments and conclusions; they showed little awareness that conclusions may be historically valid even if the arguments leading to them can be shown to be wrong or inadequate. The general tendency was to demonstrate that Williams’s arguments are wrong and proceed to say that his conclusions are, therefore, also wrong. However, even this negative approach has not been effective in undermining Williams’s arguments in all cases. This is particularly so in respect of the origins of the transatlantic slave trade and the
conditions which facilitated the adoption and implementation of abolition policy by the British government.

On the issue of abolition and emancipation, where the debate has been most heated and the amount of research and publication probably most extensive, Williams's arguments have been subjected to detailed evaluation, and some have not fared well. In several instances, Williams' use of evidence has been faulted. Statistical evidence has been amassed and deployed to disprove Williams's argument concerning economic decline in the British Caribbean following the American Revolution. It is argued that the British slave trade and the British Caribbean slave plantations continued to be profitable in the late-eighteenth century. Hence, it is concluded, the British government committed economic suicide—“econocide”—when it signed legislation abolishing the slave trade. Without doubt, this creative research has brought much needed balance to the analysis and raised more questions for further research.

While the narrowly framed debate on the decline issue appears to remain open, as prodecline publications are still appearing in the opening years of the twenty-first century, it must be said that the critique appears to have overlooked the central point in Williams's analysis—relative decline both in reality and in perception. The critique contains no detailed macroeconomic analysis of the changing weight of the British Caribbean economies relative to the English economy that will enable us to assess what was happening to the relative bargaining power of the West India interest in British politics. Even if the argument is correct that the British slave trade and the British Caribbean slave plantations remained profitable in the late-eighteenth century, the evidence is clear enough that the growth of the British Caribbean economies from the 1780s to the early nineteenth century lagged considerably behind the rapidly industrializing economy of England during the period. The sectoral changes in the industrializing economy of England meant that commerce and industry grew disproportionately relative to agriculture, raising the resource weight of the industrial interest groups at the expense of the old agrarian aristocracy. Thus, at the same time that the slave plantation economies of the British Caribbean lagged and became a diminishing proportion of the British imperial economy over time, the agricultural sector lost ground over time in the English economy. In reality, therefore, the weight of the West India interest in English society diminished over time, along with that of their agrarian allies, during the period. Worse still for the West India interest, the interaction of the ongoing structural changes in England with those in the evolving global economy precipitated changes in several interest groups' perception of what was in their self-interest, changes in perception that were detrimental to the political fortunes of the West India interest.

The foregoing observations are in accord with the evidence gathered in the painstaking efforts made by the British government to ascertain beforehand the likely consequences of abolishing the slave trade for the English economy in the long run. While the slave traders and the allied plantation interests assembled evidence to show the long-run adverse consequences of abolition for the English economy, what may be taken as the "official
The perception concerning the declining importance of the British West Indies, right or wrong in reality, appears not to have been uncommon among the informed public in England in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And there is evidence that the British government began to seriously consider changes in commercial policy following the political independence of the United States. Thus, a plan to reorient British trade, drawn up in 1783 by a Henry Trafford and submitted to Lord Grantham, notes that the loss of the North American colonies had compelled “His Majesty’s Ministers and the Parliament to take into their most serious consideration what alterations and improvements” needed to be made “in our commercial system.” Trafford’s plan, submitted to the ministers to assist them in their task, made a strong case for transforming Africa from its subordination to the Americas into the center of British commerce. A somewhat similar view was expressed in 1812 by the managing committee of the English Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, a regulating company of individual British traders.

That these perceptions and structural changes in England significantly influenced British government policy is made even clearer by evidence from the most recent discussion of the issues. The evidence is the more significant, because it comes from Seymour Drescher, one of the most meticulous and energetic critics of the Williams abolition thesis. In The Mighty Experiment (2002), Drescher shows the role of social science arguments in the contest leading to the enactment of laws abolishing the British slave trade and slavery in the British Caribbean. Drescher’s narrative suggests that Adam Smith’s pronouncement that slave labor was more costly than free wage labor, leading to the prediction of the inevitable triumph of free labor, and Thomas Malthus’s demographic theory, which implied that emancipation would enable labor to reproduce itself naturally in the British Caribbean, were applied to good effect by the abolitionists to make the British public and the government have overly optimistic expectations about the economic effects of abolition and emancipation. Both the British public and the government were made to believe that free labor would be more profitable than slave labor.

It was only after the abolition and emancipation laws had been enacted that the editor of the 1835 edition of Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, exposed the contradiction between Smith’s argument that gang organization permitted a greater division of labor (thus greater productivity) and his general statement of the superiority of free
over slave labor. Wakefield demonstrated that wherever cheap access to land existed gang organization of free labor for staple production was not possible; only coerced labor would allow gang organization under such conditions. Because these conditions prevailed in the plantation zone of the Americas, Wakefield contended, Smith's generalization, though valid for densely populated regions like Western Europe, was not valid for the plantation Americas. Ultimately, the empirical evidence after abolition and emancipation—from Sierra Leone in Africa to the plantation zone of the Americas—turned out to be contrary to the expectations of the abolitionists and the British government; it rather supported Wakefield's analysis. In consequence, as Drescher narrates, the observed economic consequences of British abolition worked against its global extension. In the end, that extension had to be forcefully imposed by state power. What is more, as the unexpected economic consequences of abolition and emancipation unfolded, the British public turned against the abolitionists, leading to their humiliating defeat in Parliament in the 1840s.

Drescher's evidence also confirms the declining bargaining power of the West India interest in British politics. The constitutional reforms of 1832 that extended the franchise (largely a function of the growing economic and political power of the rising industrial capitalists and their entrepreneurial and labor connections) effectively destroyed the so-called rotten boroughs of agrarian England. In consequence, there was "a much reduced West Indian presence in the reformed Parliament."

On the issue of abolition and emancipation, therefore, it can be said that the main arguments and conclusions of Eric Williams have stood the test of time rather well. Several of the individual arguments have been shown to be wrong or inadequately supported by evidence. But, taken together, the central issues raised and the main arguments developed have not been disproved by the sustained research of six decades inspired by Williams. The evidence produced by recent research shows that from the 1780s to the 1830s the bargaining power of the West India interest in British politics declined under the impact of growing industrial capitalism and changes in the emerging global economy, as Williams argued. What is more, perception even far exceeded reality; the public and the government were made to believe that abolition and emancipation would increase prosperity. The recent research thus shows, among other things, that the "official mind of abolition" can only be discovered by focusing on what the government actually knew and believed at the time the laws were enacted. What the deployment of statistics can tell us today may be different; but that is not important if what we want to know is the origin of state policy.

On the issue of whether economics or anti-African racism caused the exclusive focus of New World demand for slave labor on sub-Saharan Africa—a somewhat peripheral issue in Capitalism and Slavery—the same conclusion can be reached that Williams's argument and conclusion have stood admirably well the test of time. Initially, this issue did not receive much attention. But in the last two decades or so it has been attracting growing attention. To disprove Williams's argument that the enslavement of Africans in the Americas gave rise to anti-African racism, some participants
in the debate sought to show that anti-African racism in the Western world predated the transatlantic slave trade. This stimulated some fascinating research and exchanges in the leading journals in history in the 1980s and 1990s. Biblical evidence featured prominently, especially the history of Noah and his offspring. While that debate continues, it is fair to say that the more persuasive arguments center on the invention of ideological rationalizations long after the event—the mythical curse of Noah on his son, Ham (that his children will be enslaved because of his alleged transgression), was invoked long after the actual fact of the enslavement of a people. Thus, the Slavs of central Europe became identified as the children of Ham after centuries of enslavement. As enslavement shifted from central Europe to sub-Saharan Africa, Africans became the children of Ham. A careful scholarly scrutiny of the history of the Bible has offered no support for this reconstruction of ethnicity and racial identity.

A stronger cultural argument, based on insider-outsider theory, has also failed to disprove the Williams argument. The imaginatively constructed cultural argument was put forward in the 1990s. It attempts to show that it would have been cheaper for New World employers of slave labor to enslave Europeans, but this did not happen because of the ideological constraint that prevented the enslavement of Europeans by other Europeans. This cultural explanation has been effectively critiqued for having overlooked the political situation in Europe at the time. The export of European slaves to the Middle East ended when the rise of relatively strong centralized states, more or less equally matched militarily, ended political fragmentation in Europe and raised for the leaders of European nations the political cost of exporting captives. Widespread political fragmentation in Africa, similar to the earlier situation in Europe, on the other hand, permitted a sustained response to expanding demand for captives to be enslaved in the Americas. No pan-European identity existed in Europe when the Atlantic slave trade began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, just as no pan-African identity existed at the time. It is important to note, in the context of the ideological charges sometimes made, that the issues raised and the arguments developed in this section of *Capitalism and Slavery* place Western civilization in a better moral light, racially speaking, than the counter arguments do. In the final analysis, however, it is safe to say that Williams’s arguments and conclusions on these issues remain important and are yet to be disproved.

Second in importance to the issue of abolition and emancipation, at least from Williams’s point of view, is the issue of the role of the slave trade and British Caribbean slavery in the development of industrial capitalism in England. On this subject, while the issues raised and the arguments developed by Williams are wide-ranging, ultimately the argument centers on the contribution of profits from the slave trade and Caribbean slavery to the stream of capital that financed the Industrial Revolution in England. For this reason, the voluminous literature inspired by *Capitalism and Slavery* on the role of slavery in the Industrial Revolution focused almost exclusively on the issue of profits. The debate followed two tracks. One measured the rate and the absolute magnitude of profits, quite often from the slave trade
alone, and the other computed the percentage of total national industrial capital investment contributed by profits from slavery in the late-eighteenth century. The consistent verdict is that Williams grossly exaggerated the magnitude of the profits. In any case, the critics argue, even if Williams’s magnitude of profits is accepted, when related to the total national capital invested in industry during the period the percentage contributed by profits from slavery was inconsequential. From this the conclusion is reached that the Williams arguments and conclusions are wrong. For decades no serious thought was given to the possibility that a reformulation of the issues and the application of new developments in theorizing could produce new sets of data and a new mode of analysis that would support the main conclusion that the slave trade and enslaved Africans in the Americas were critical to the Industrial Revolution.

The research and publications of the last decades of the twentieth century proceeded in that direction. The importance of profits was recognized and the profitability of the slave trade and slavery was demonstrated. But it is stated unequivocally that the emphasis on profits was misplaced. Instead, emphasis shifted to the role of slavery in the growth of Atlantic commerce, and the Industrial Revolution is presented as a function of expanding Atlantic commerce. The geographical dimension, within which the analysis is conducted, is also radically altered, from the British Caribbean alone to the entire Atlantic economy. The new direction of investigation and analysis is completed with the application of new advances in growth theory, combined with neglected insights from classical development theory. The result is strong support for the conclusion that the Atlantic slave trade and enslaved Africans in the Americas were critical to the successful completion of the industrialization process in England from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

In the main, therefore, Williams’s conclusion that slavery contributed immensely to the development of industrial capitalism in England remains valid. We can agree that Williams’s analysis centered on profits did not provide a solid proof for the conclusion. On this, the critics made some valid points. But the critics committed a fatal error in dismissing the conclusion entirely on that basis. They should have been more positive and probed deeper to see if an alternative mode of investigation and analysis could lead to the same conclusion as has now been shown.

Based on the two criteria for measuring the contribution of a scholar’s work to historical scholarship specified in the opening paragraphs of the article—the lasting relevance of the issues articulated and the amount of further research inspired, and the degree to which the conclusions stand the test of time—we can infer from the foregoing discussion that *Capitalism and Slavery* has made, and continues to make, an immeasurable contribution to the study of slavery and abolition. Thanks to the way Eric Williams framed the issues, the question of African slavery in the Americas remains very much alive today not only among scholars, but also among the reading public across the globe. The series of mega conferences organized over the years to honor the man and his scholarly work, probably the most important of which was the Golden Jubilee celebration of *Capitalism and
Slavery in Trinidad in 1996, and the translation of the book into seven languages, including Russian, Chinese, and Japanese, testify to that. The growing popularity of Atlantic World history, a byproduct of the scholarship he inspired, and the ongoing debate on reparation for the lingering adverse economic consequences of slavery for diasporic Africans in the Americas and for continental Africans will ensure the continued relevance of the issues raised by Williams and the research he inspired. What is more, the establishment of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection in Trinidad (named to UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register in 1999), the product of the indefatigable efforts of his daughter, Erica Williams Connell, adds to the resources available to sustain research on the subject. See also British Slavery, Abolition of; Bible and Slavery; West Indies Emancipation Day.


Joseph E. Inikori

Women. See Abolitionist Women; Women and Antislavery; Women’s Antislavery Societies; Women’s Rights and Antislavery

Women’s Antislavery Societies

Ladies’ antislavery societies that surfaced in the 1830s played a seminal role in raising women’s consciousness about their own lack of political, economic, and other civil rights. They posed the first organized, gender-specific challenge to slavery and racism. Their aggressiveness in the male-controlled public sphere made the societies flashpoints for debates on women’s place. Members’ experiences fermented a feminist culture that set the stage for the first women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848.
The first female-only, antislavery society comprised a group of black women in Salem, Massachusetts, who organized on February 22, 1832, in response to an invitation in William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*. Later that year, a dozen women organized the racially integrated Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, followed by the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Integration between the sexes remained more elusive, and the first of three annual all-female antislavery conventions in 1837 drew eighty-one participants from twelve states. By 1838, at least thirty-three female antislavery societies existed throughout the Northeast.

Members shook off the ridicule and violence that greeted women's entrance into politics. The praise they won for resisting a mob in 1835 emboldened the Boston women to move farther into the public sphere, appearing at political meetings to support antislavery measures. The women sued Southerners who brought slaves to their city and organized fundraisers for male abolitionists. In 1836, they coordinated an antislavery petition drive across New England that firmly planted women in politics. Female exercise of the constitutional right to petition was a crucial early bridge between the separate spheres that broadened both sexes' conception of women's role as citizens.

The Boston group's boldness appalled many Americans, however, illuminating cultural beliefs about separate spheres so deeply inscribed that even some antislavery women spurned equal rights with men. The clergy also pounced upon the ladies' antislavery societies because their techniques trespassed traditional male prerogatives, most notoriously by the radical act of women speaking in public. The Boston society sponsored the groundbreaking speaking tour of Angelina and Sarah Grimké, for instance, which ignited the famous exchanges between the South Carolina sisters and the Massachusetts clergy on women's place.

The "woman question" split the abolition movement in 1840, when Garrison supporters won control of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Foes of women's expanding role walked out to form their own organization, followed by the Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Society. Ironically, although it decried women speaking in public and linking abolition to women's rights, the New York women had hosted the Grimkés' first speaking engagements as abolition agents in "parlor talks" to women only. The ladies' society withdrew to fund-raising and domestic activities such as antislavery needlework.

The female breach into politics nonetheless widened. Lucretia Mott, Lydia Maria Child, and Maria Weston Chapman filled the male defectors' seats on the American Anti-Slavery Society's executive committee. In June 1840, Mott was among female delegates refused recognition because of their sex at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Her indignation set Mott and sister abolitionist Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the road to Seneca Falls. See also Garrisonians; Gender and Slave Emancipation; Gender Relations within Abolitionism; Seneca Falls Convention.

Linda J. Lumsden

World’s Anti-Slavery Convention (1840)

The first World’s Anti-Slavery Convention was organized by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and held from June 12 to June 23, 1840, in London. The Convention offers historians a snapshot of British antislavery activities in the immediate aftermath of West Indian emancipation, but it was also a snapshot of divisions within the Anglo-American antislavery movement, particularly regarding the participation of women in abolitionist organizations.

Calling the Convention was the first major action of the BFASS. Formed in 1839, the Society’s purpose was to turn its attention from British abolition, which had been achieved the year before in the West Indies, to “universal” abolition, to stamping out vestiges of the international slave trade, and to undermining American slavery. Although the idea for an international conference to discuss such issues was broached by Joshua Leavitt, an American, in March 1839, the BFASS embraced the notion as consonant with its global aims. In the summer of 1839, they printed a circular inviting abolitionists from all nations to a “General Anti-Slavery Convention.” Despite its global aspirations, British and American delegates predominated at the Convention. Over 200 official members were British, with a majority from England, and about 50 were American. By contrast, only half a dozen French abolitionists attended, along with a handful from continental Europe and the Caribbean.

American abolitionists initially united in welcoming the invitation. One of them, John Greenleaf Whittier, praised the “World’s Convention” in a poem by that title. But discord within the American movement was soon amplified in discussions about the conference. Garrisonians, who favored the full participation of women in antislavery organizations, disagreed with other abolitionists, generally identified with Lewis Tappan, not only on the question of women’s rights, but on the legitimacy of political action. When supporters of Tappan’s wing notified the BFASS that Garrisonians planned to send women to the Convention, the Society issued a second circular, in February 1840, that explicitly invited “Gentlemen.” In May, Tappan’s followers seceded from the Garrisonian American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) to form the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which bore more than a nominal resemblance to the BFASS. One month later, at the World’s Convention, wounds from the schism were still fresh.

The controversy over women came to a head when seven women delegates, including Lucretia Mott, presented credentials in London from Garrisonian societies in the United States. A few weeks earlier, the BFASS had made a final pronouncement excluding women from the meeting, but on the opening day, Wendell Phillips moved to rescind this decision. Almost the entire day was taken up with debate on the motion, while Mott and other women looked on from the visitors’ gallery. Very few British delegates
supported Phillips’s motion; **Daniel O’Connell** was one of them, but the Garrisonians’ longtime ally, **George Thompson**, called for compromise. Finally the motion was defeated. In protest, **William Lloyd Garrison**, along with Nathaniel P. Rogers and black abolitionist Charles L. Remond, sat in the gallery with the excluded women, after arriving six days late to the Convention, straight from the contentious meeting that had split the American society in May.

While representing new possibilities for transatlantic antislavery, the Convention also represented its limits, delineated by fractious issues like women’s rights. But the presence of American women at the Convention did have a formative influence on women’s movements. In meetings held outside the Convention, women like Mott met with European antislavery feminists and articulated the need for a movement of their own. **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, who visited the Convention while honeymooning with her husband, a Tappan supporter, later recalled the event as the genesis of her own commitment to women’s suffrage.

The Convention also reflected various strands in British abolitionism following West Indian emancipation. **Thomas Clarkson**’s honorary selection as the president of the Convention symbolically represented the passing of the torch from veteran reformers to a new generation of British abolitionists. It also represented the conviction of both generations, but especially the younger, that England’s antislavery mission was worldwide. “Mohammedan” slavery in Africa, Spanish slavery in Cuba, and Portuguese slavery in Brazil were prominent subjects of discussion at the Convention. Antislavery addresses to foreign heads of governments were issued. The persistence of slavery in the British Empire, specifically in India, and the continuation of illegal slave trading, despite attempts to suppress it, were also on the agenda.

If the Convention summarized the problems that British abolitionists saw remaining to be solved, it also revealed the diversity of potential solutions. Debates over strategy centered on the effects of emancipation on population growth, production, and profitability. Ardent defenders of free labor believed its superiority had been proven by West Indian emancipation; some favored competition between free-grown produce in the British Empire with slave-grown produce elsewhere. More conservative delegates argued for the maintenance of Britain’s protectionist duties on sugar until its price dropped and stabilized. Such debates about free labor and free trade occupied abolitionists throughout the next two decades, including at a second international convention called by the BFASS in 1843, which was boycotted by Garrisonians. Other roads ultimately not taken by most British abolitionists, such as the **free produce movement**, the African Civilization Society, and plans to foster competition between free-grown East Indian cotton and American cotton, were still very much on the map at the 1840 meeting.

Wright, Henry Clarke (1797–1870)

Henry Clarke Wright was a prolific American abolitionist and a radical advocate on a variety of reforms, including pacifism, women’s rights, children’s rights, marriage, and health care.

Wright’s studies began at the Andover Theological Seminary in 1819. After his ordination in 1823, Wright started his professional life as a minister in West Newbury, Massachusetts. A decade later, Wright felt he was not doing enough for the improvement of society and quit his flock, leaving him free to write and lecture on multiple agendas, which he did with a fervent passion.

Wright was always sympathetic to the unjust treatment of slaves and free blacks, but it was not until 1835 that he made the conversion to an extreme abolitionist. He was greatly influenced by William Lloyd Garrison, the American Anti-Slavery Society, and their notion of “immediatism,” which challenged colonizationism, a popular idea that freed slaves should be deported to Africa and that their former owners should be compensated. Wright’s abolitionist efforts led him to join the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the American Union for the Moral and Intellectual Improvement of the Colored Race.

Infatuated with the concept of religious pilgrimage, Wright longed to travel to exotic locales, especially Africa. Various obligations guided his travels through the eastern United States, but Wright never got past Chicago. However, he seized the opportunity to go to Great Britain in 1842 for a world’s antislavery convention. The convention never happened, but Wright stayed in Europe for five years. Wright worked to revive Great Britain’s non-resistance movement, while traveling extensively with two American abolitionists, James Buffum and Frederick Douglass.

Perhaps Wright’s most important campaign while in Great Britain was the “Send Back the Money” operation. Various churches in Scotland had cut ties with the Calvinists and had formed the Free Kirk. To finance their movement, members of the Free Kirk visited the United States and brought back $3,000 from American Presbyterians. When word got out that a great deal of the money came from Southern slave owners, the result of exploitation and suffering, abolitionists were livid. Wright and other abolitionists traveled throughout Scotland, lamenting that the only acceptable thing to do would be to “send back the money.” The campaign deepened Wright’s conviction that, by condoning slavery, churches and clergy betrayed their Christianity.

Once Wright was no longer affiliated with the ministry, he was able to voice his radical views more forcefully. Along with his extreme abolitionism, Wright was a controversial pacifist. He worked for the American Peace
Society and the New England Non-Resistance Society. Yet, Wright’s pacifist beliefs did not interfere with his support for the Union in the Civil War or antislavery crusader John Brown’s violent tactics. Wright continued his hectic schedule of traveling and lectures until his death in 1870, leaving behind a vast collection of writing that covered multiple progressive social movements. See also Immediate Emancipation.


*Ashley Whitmore*
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