

# Advocating for Abolition

---

Staging an Abolitionist Society Meeting



### **About the authors**

Joan Brodsky Schur is a teacher, consultant, and curriculum developer who holds a B.A. and M.A.T. from New York University. She is the author of *Eyewitness to the Past: Strategies for Teaching American History in Grades 5–12*. Joan's lesson plans appear on the Websites of the National Archives and PBS Online, for which she served on the TeacherSource Advisory Group. She and Andy Robinson were teaching colleagues for over ten years at the Village Community School where Joan is currently Social Studies Coordinator. It was at VCS that Andy first formulated the Abolitionist Society Meeting curriculum and where Joan implemented and further developed the idea with students at the school.

Andy Robinson is a teacher, a director, and an actor who holds a B.A. in English and Religion from Rhodes College, an M. Div. from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and a Masters in Educational Theatre from the Steinhardt School at New York University. He learned to be a better teacher from both hallway chats and formal collaboration with Joan Brodsky Schur at Village Community School. He was a pioneering member of Shakespeare To Go, a program that brought productions of Shakespeare's plays to dozens of New York City schools. He is currently a faculty member at the Chicago Academy for the Arts, where he teaches drama and uses drama to teach.

**Revised January, 2011**

**Product Code: INT856**

**©2010 Interact**

**10200 Jefferson Blvd. • P.O. Box 802 • Culver City, CA 90232**

**Phone: (800) 359-0961 • [www.teachinteract.com](http://www.teachinteract.com)**

**ISBN# 978-1-56004-648-6**

All rights reserved. Interaction Publishers Inc. grants permission to reproduce activity sheets and student handouts for classroom use. No other part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission from the publisher.

# ● Table of Contents ●

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standards.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Setup Directions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Bibliography of Teacher Resources .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Bibliography of Student Resources .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Materials For the Teacher .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Background Essay:	
The Uphill Battle of the Abolitionists.....	17
Making Connections to the	
Abolitionist Movement Throughout U.S. History ...	21
List of Abolitionists .....	22
How to Use the Teacher’s	
Reference Guide to the Abolitionists.....	28
Teacher’s Reference Guide to the Abolitionists.....	30
Teacher Checklist of Student Work .....	35
Assessment Chart for the Pamphlet .....	36
<b>Assessment Rubrics for the Abolitionist Society</b>	
<b>Meeting and Related Activities .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Unit Time Chart .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Daily Directions .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Day 1.....	41
Day 2.....	44
Day 3.....	46
Day 4.....	48

# Table of Contents

Day 5: Opening the Society Meeting .....	50
<b>Agenda Items</b> .....	<b>54</b>
Aligning Our Fight With the Women’s Movement .....	54
Proposals Regarding the Corrupt Constitution .....	57
Supporting Back-to-Africa Recolonization .....	60
<b>The Agenda—Interrupting Telegram:</b> <b>“Sword of the Lord Army”</b> .....	<b>62</b>
Final Day: Debriefing .....	65
<b>Student Materials</b> .....	<b>68</b>
Timeline of Abolitionism .....	68
Primary Source Document #1: “Outrage” .....	72
Primary Source Document #2: “Anti-Slavery Meetings!” .....	73
Assignment One: Finding Out About Your Role in the Abolitionist Movement .....	74
Assignment Two: Self-Assessment Grid .....	75
Assignment Three: The Pamphlet .....	76
Assignment Four: Writing a Speech .....	77
The Agenda .....	78
Assignment Five: Ally Grid .....	79
Telegram From the “Sword of the Lord Army” .....	82
Assignment Six: Debriefing Reflection .....	83
Assignment Seven—Optional: Newspaper Account of the Historic Meeting .....	84
<b>Teacher Feedback Form</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>Release Form for Photographic Images</b> .....	<b>86</b>

## Background Essay: The Uphill Battle of the Abolitionists

It is hard for us to imagine how radical the abolitionists seemed to people in 19th-century America. Without understanding this context, however, students will not be able to grasp the courage of the abolitionists and how many Americans responded to their actions. The abolitionist drive to end slavery challenged almost every aspect of antebellum life—economic, religious, social, and political.

Economically, the South became increasingly dependent on cash crops, especially tobacco, cotton, and sugar cane—all grown with slave labor. In the North, the thriving growth of the mills also relied on the products of slave labor. Cotton and other slave-grown products became major U.S. exports to Great Britain and elsewhere around the world. By 1860, cotton represented more than half of all U.S. exports. Many Americans preferred not to think about the life of the enslaved, whose toil made their own wealth possible.

The abolitionists also challenged the status quo in American churches. With the exception of the Quakers (and some members of other churches), American congregations were taught that the Bible sanctioned slavery. The abolitionist movement, inspired by the Great Awakening, challenged the pervading religious view of the day. In fact, the abolitionist movement and the Second Great Awakening seemed to merge in key places. Conversion from sin and from slavery seemed to go hand in hand, and abolitionist conventions took on the fervor and organization of revival meetings. The Second Great Awakening's message of equality before God lent credence to the abolitionist movement and led to a coalition of blacks and whites dedicated to ending slavery. The Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists regarded slavery as a sin, and consequently won African American converts by the thousands, radically changing the demographics of each denomination. Later, each of the mainline Protestant denominations split over the issue of slavery: the Presbyterians in 1838, the Methodists in 1844, and the Baptists in 1848. These divisions have endured long past the end of slavery: some either still exist or have only mended in the last decades.

Antebellum society was organized around the understanding that African Americans (both male and female) and white females were ordained to be in subservient roles. This understanding had profound repercussions that influenced every aspect of life. It was expressed in everyday social interactions and in the application of strict rules of etiquette. In terms of the propriety of the day, abolitionists broke all the rules. Whites and blacks, and men and women worked in public side by side. This scandalized a good part of the American public at the time.

Politically speaking, the abolitionists had to confront or work around the U.S. government. The Constitution acknowledged the existence of "such persons" (i.e., slaves) in Article I, Section 2, which said that slaves counted as three-fifths of a person when calculating how many seats Southern states would be granted in the House of Representatives. In Article IV, Section 2, the Constitution said that a "person held in service or labor" escaping from one state to another had to be remanded to the state from which he or she fled. To change these laws required a constitutional amendment, an unlikely scenario given the increasing power and numbers of the slaveholding states. Many Americans did not want to see a systematic challenge to the very basis of America's political system—especially if it led to unrest or violence.

## Anti-abolitionists strike back

The foes of abolitionism were myriad and they expressed themselves in both the North and the South. After Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion, in which more than 50 white people were killed, many Southern states passed legislation banning all abolitionist literature as incendiary. Southern postmasters refused to send abolitionist literature through the mail, and Congress initially acquiesced in this demand. In 1837, abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered defending his press from attack on the banks of the Mississippi River in Illinois, a free state.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, the "Gag Rule" was in effect from 1836 to 1844. During this time, the House refused to consider any petition concerning the abolition of slavery. Some Americans became abolitionists out of a recognition that the very right to free speech was at stake over the issue of slavery.

Mobs in the North intimidated abolitionists through the use of violence. In 1834, anti-abolitionists in Philadelphia burned 45 black homes. In Boston in 1835, a lynch mob dragged William Lloyd Garrison through the streets with a rope around his neck before he was saved by local authorities. Philadelphia Hall, where abolitionists spoke, was burned to the ground in 1838 while city officials sat by. It took courage to be an abolitionist in antebellum America; nonetheless, none of these tactics intimidated them. It is against this backdrop that students need to understand the rise of abolitionism and how it found its voice in America.

## Slavery in America from 1790 to 1830

In the early years of the Republic, it was reasonable to believe that slavery would die a slow death. The years following the American Revolution showed evidence of this promise. Inspired by the rhetoric of the Revolution, most Northern states passed legislation that ended or gradually phased out slavery. On a national level, Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery north of the Ohio River from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River. In 1808, Congress took the step of banning the further importation of enslaved people from Africa.

However by the early 1830s it became apparent that, far from dying out, slavery was spreading west into the region south of the Ohio River—the areas that would become the new slaveholding states of Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 banned slavery north of the parallel 36°30' (with the exception of Missouri), but opened the doors to slavery south of 36°30'. At the time of the bill's passage, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "This momentous question like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union."

The spread of slavery was accompanied by an exponential growth in the number of enslaved Africans in America as well. In 1790, the U.S. Census counted 697,681 slaves in America; by 1830 that total had risen to approximately two million enslaved persons. Those who had always objected to slavery on moral grounds (especially the Quakers) were not heartened by these developments; slavery was not going to die out gradually, and abolitionists felt that something had to be done to end it immediately.



Elijah P. Lovejoy

## The abolitionist movement begins

There are several convergent reasons that help to explain why the American abolitionist movement found its voice by the early 1830s. One was the example of England, which banned slavery throughout most of the British Empire in 1833. Another was the Second Great Awakening that swept through America's churches, convincing many of the inherent sin of slavery. Finally there was a growing sense of dismay that the slaveholding states, fearful of slave rebellions, were making it harder for slaveholders to emancipate their slaves while also worsening the living conditions of enslaved persons.

In 1829 the free-born African American David Walker issued his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. Walker was both a writer and a public speaker, and in this respect many abolitionists followed in his wake. His position on how to end slavery was more radical, however, than the ones most abolitionists advocated. "I ask you, oh my brethren, are we MEN? Did our Creator make us to be slaves?" he wrote. "I speak, Americans, for your good. We must and shall be free I say, in spite of you. You may do your best to keep us in wretchedness and misery, to enrich you and your children; but God will deliver us from under you. They think nothing of murdering us in order to subject us to that wretched condition—therefore if there is an attempt made by us, kill or be killed." Walker died in 1830, but his impact endured. At the outset of the abolitionist movement he advocated the most radical tactic to end slavery: the use of violence. Although most abolitionists disagreed with the strategy he proposed, they were inspired by his goal. In 1830, there were 150,000 free blacks living in the North, many of them prosperous and well-educated. Their contribution to the abolitionist movement cannot be overstated, nor can the voices of escaped slaves who fled North and joined the abolitionist ranks, like Frederick Douglass.

## William Lloyd Garrison and the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society

William Lloyd Garrison was born in Massachusetts in 1805, the son of immigrants from Canada. At first he was drawn to the American Colonization Society, as were several of America's founding fathers. The Society's goal was to send enslaved Africans back to the west coast of Africa. It soon became apparent that most members who sponsored colonization did so as a way to rid America of the "race problem" altogether. Rather than emancipating slaves and granting them citizenship in America they preferred to transport them away.

Garrison rejected colonization as a solution to inequality and oppression in America. In 1831, he published his own newspaper, *The Liberator*, in which he urged the immediate emancipation of all slaves. By 1833, Garrison and Arthur Tappan helped to found the American Anti-Slavery Society. It also advocated for pacifism, temperance, and women's rights. The Garrisonians eschewed working through America's established institutions, either religious or governmental, believing that they were inherently tainted by acquiescence to a slave-based society. In fact, Garrison reached the conclusion that the North should secede from the Union altogether. By 1851, Garrison and Douglass split over their interpretations of the Constitution, as Douglass came to believe that abolitionists could work within its framework to fight slavery.

It was the issue of women's rights that caused an irrevocable split in the American Anti-Slavery Society. Women who had valiantly raised money and signed petitions on behalf of abolition found themselves heckled off the speaker's podium when speaking to mixed ("promiscuous") audiences. When abolitionists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were refused seats at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, they vowed to initiate the fight for female

suffrage when they returned home. William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and other male members of the American Anti-Slavery Society believed that the fight for both racial and gender equality needed to go hand in hand. However, some male abolitionists were not ready to accept women as equals on religious grounds, while others were afraid that the vast majority of Americans would be scandalized by this joint effort. They felt fighting for women's rights would risk alienating the support of mainstream America for the antislavery cause; for the time being, they wanted to keep the focus strictly on abolitionism.

This schism led to the founding of a new organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which did not admit women. It continued to proselytize for abolition within the framework of America's major religious denominations (which tended to be conservative in regards to women's rights) and it succeeded in winning many converts to the abolitionist cause. The Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian denominations all divided into Northern and Southern branches on the basis of their rejection of or support for slavery.



Some politically minded abolitionists also broke off from the American Anti-Slavery Society. They rejected Garrison's stance that all ties to the government were inherently tainted by slavery. Some of these people formed their own party (the Liberty Party), and ran James G. Birney for president in 1840 and 1844. Unlike the subsequent Free Soil and Republican parties, the Liberty Party refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Fugitive Slave Clause of the Constitution and was prepared to demand not just an end to slavery but also equal rights for African Americans. Lincoln and other Republicans were dedicated to ending the spread of slavery, but acknowledged the current standing of slavery where it then existed under the Constitution.

Thus, while the abolitionist movement had one goal—the immediate end of slavery—it was divided as to the best means to accomplish this goal. In order for students to participate effectively in the Abolitionist Society Convention they will need to feel passionately about their antislavery views and to know and understand the specific *means* by which the abolitionist they are representing wanted to effect momentous change in American society.

## Making Connections to the Abolitionist Movement Throughout U.S. History

Event in U.S. history	Abolitionists' reactions
<b>Lincoln and the coming of the Civil War</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many abolitionists criticized Lincoln for not advocating for immediate emancipation.</li> <li>• Many abolitionists got on board only after 1863 when Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.</li> <li>• Many male African American abolitionists fought in the Civil War and/or became recruiters for the black 55th Massachusetts regiment.</li> </ul>
<b>Reconstruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many former abolitionists became Radical Republicans, and some went south to work for the Freedman's Bureau.</li> <li>• Black men were emancipated while women of every race were denied the vote.</li> <li>• Some female abolitionists opposed the passage of the 15th Amendment because it did not give women the vote.</li> </ul>
<b>Progressive era</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many former abolitionists also fought for temperance and other reform movements.</li> <li>• White women negotiated passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, but won Southerners' support in Congress by agreeing <i>not</i> to press for civil rights for African Americans in the South.</li> <li>• Marcus Garvey revived the "back to Africa" movement.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil rights era</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was inspired by abolitionist Henry David Thoreau to fight racism through nonviolence and civil disobedience.</li> <li>• Churches once again became the locus of the fight for civil rights.</li> <li>• Whites and blacks once again worked together for a common cause.</li> <li>• Women once again found themselves treated as second-class citizens within a movement dedicated to equal rights. Women (especially white women) launched the "second wave" of feminism.</li> <li>• Debates over the best means to end oppression grew divided, as black leaders like Dr. King stressed nonviolence, while Malcolm X and the Black Panthers advocated achieving equality "by any means necessary"—including violence.</li> </ul>

# List of Abolitionists

## Gamaliel Bailey (1807–1859)

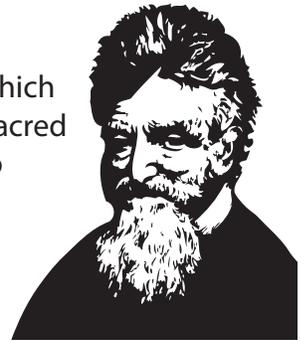
Gamaliel Bailey was a doctor who became a passionate abolitionist while teaching medicine at Lane Seminary in Ohio in 1834. He became the editor of major abolitionist newspapers, which were repeatedly threatened with mob violence. He was a supporter of the Free Soil movement and the Liberty Party.

## James Gillespie Birney (1792–1857)

James Gillespie Birney was born in Kentucky to a slaveowning family. He originally favored colonization and gradual emancipation, but had changed his position by 1834, when he freed his slaves and endorsed abolitionism. He was executive secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Liberty Party's presidential candidate in 1840 and 1844.

## John Brown (1800–1859)

Born in Connecticut, John Brown moved west to Ohio with his large family, which he struggled to support. He and his sons headed to Kansas, where they massacred proslavery men at Pottawatomie Creek in 1856. In 1857, he was introduced to abolitionists in Boston. He tried and failed to enlist the support of Frederick Douglass for his raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, but won the backing of other leading abolitionists.



## William Wells Brown (c. 1814–1884)

William Wells Brown was born a slave in Kentucky. In 1847 he published the widely-read *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself*. A prolific author who lectured for abolitionist societies, Brown also supported prison reform, temperance, and women's suffrage.

## Maria Weston Chapman (1806–1885)

The daughter of wealthy Bostonians, Maria Weston Chapman dedicated her life to the cause of abolitionism after her husband died in 1842. She was a political organizer *par excellence* and a driving force of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Chapman was a prolific writer who edited Garrison's *The Liberator* in his absence.

## Salmon Portland Chase (1808–1873)

As a lawyer, Salmon P. Chase defended fugitive slaves and later went into politics. Chase joined the Liberty Party in 1840 and was elected U.S. senator from Ohio. In the Senate, Chase was the most outspoken opponent of the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854. He was a member of President Lincoln's cabinet during the Civil War.

## Lydia Maria Child (1802–1880)

Lydia Maria Child was a prolific writer before she joined the abolitionist movement, after which she began to write influential antislavery tracts. In 1839, Child, along with Lucretia Mott and Maria Weston Chapman, was elected to the executive committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

**Samuel Eli Cornish** (1795–1858)

Samuel Cornish was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1822 and held high-ranking positions in the American Bible Society and the American Missionary Society. Cornish cofounded *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States. He was one of the founding members of Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society but left it for the Foreign Anti-Slavery Society over disputes about the role of religion in the abolitionist cause.

**Frederick Douglass** (c. 1818–1895)

Frederick Douglass wrote about his escape to freedom in his famed autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, published in 1845. He also published his own abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*. Douglass was an admirer of Garrison and a supporter of women's rights. He came close to supporting John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, but withdrew his support before the raid.

**Henry Highland Garnett** (1815–1882)

Henry Highland Garnet was born enslaved in Maryland and became a well-educated clergyman. Like Frederick Douglass, he was a master of oratory and a leading abolitionist; unlike Douglass and the Garrisonians, however, he advocated a violent "call to rebellion" of slaves. He was not opposed to the emigration of African Americans to Liberia and saw no contradiction between advocating emigration and abolition.

**William Lloyd Garrison** (1805–79)

William Lloyd Garrison was a printer and founder of the most prominent abolitionist journal, the *Liberator*. Garrison was a pacifist who believed that the government and the religious establishment were in essence proslavery. He therefore eschewed working through the ballot box to end slavery. Garrison championed the rights of women and under his leadership the American Anti-Slavery Society appointed women to its executive committee.

**William Goodell** (1792–1878)

William Goodell was a political organizer and author. He helped to found both the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Liberty Party. Goodell believed that churches that remained neutral in the fight to end slavery were anti-Christian. He attacked slavery on both religious grounds and political grounds, and remained a pacifist.

**Angelina Grimke** (1805–1879)

Angelina Grimke was a great orator who stirred her supporters with her appeals on behalf of both women and enslaved African Americans. She published a widely read tract, *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*. In 1837, she became the first woman in the United States to address a legislative body (the Massachusetts State Legislature).

**Sarah Grimke** (1792–1873)

Sarah Grimke and her sister Angelina were born into a prominent slaveholding family in South Carolina. She moved north to Philadelphia, where she became a Quaker and an outspoken

critic of slavery. She and her sister were among the first women agents of the abolitionist movement, and among the first to dare to speak in public to mixed audiences of men and women. She wrote two important political tracts: *Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States*, and *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*.

**Frances Ellen Watkins Harper** (1825–1911)

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was an African American born in Baltimore to free parents. She became a well-known poet and lecturer, working to promote abolition and women's rights. Following the passage in 1850 of the Fugitive Slave Law, she left the South and aided slaves on the Underground Railroad. Watkins knew John Brown, and, after his raid on Harpers Ferry and subsequent execution, comforted Brown's wife.

**Lewis Hayden** (1816–1889)

Lewis Hayden was born enslaved in 1816 in Lexington, Kentucky. After escaping, he settled in Boston where he became active in the abolitionist movement. His home became a safe haven for slaves escaping north and he was willing to use violence on their behalf. He recruited African Americans to fight in the Civil War. After the war, he served one term as a representative from Boston to the Massachusetts legislature.

**Thomas Wentworth Higginson** (1823–1911)

Thomas Higginson was a minister and graduate of Harvard College. He ran as a Free Soil candidate for the House. He supported ending the union between the free North and the slaveholding South. Higginson was among the "Secret Six" who supported John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry.

**Abby Kelley** (1811–1887)

Abby Kelley was a Quaker and radical abolitionist who supported both the abolition of slavery and full civil rights for blacks and women. She was an effective organizer and fundraiser who rose to the position of general financial agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

**James Mott** (1788–1868)

James Mott was a Quaker merchant and advocate for antislavery and women's rights. He favored boycotting the products of slave labor and supported the sale of free-labor goods (wool instead of cotton, sugar beet instead of cane sugar, etc.). He chaired the first Women's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls.

**Lucretia Coffin Mott** (1793–1880)

Lucretia Mott was a Quaker preacher who founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. At the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, she and other women were refused seats. Thereafter, she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton pledged to fight for equal rights for women. Together they were responsible for writing the Declaration of Sentiments issued at Seneca Falls in 1848.

**Theodore Parker** (1810–1860)

Theodore Parker was a Boston minister who supported women's rights and abolition. He formed a vigilance committee in order to fight for the freedom of fugitive slaves. At the time of