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## Combating Slavery and Colonization: Student Abolitionism and the Politics of Antislavery in Higher Education, 1833-1841

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COMBATING SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION: STUDENT  
ABOLITIONISM AND THE POLITICS OF ANTISLAVERY IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION, 1833-1841

A Thesis Presented

by

MICHAEL E. JIRIK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
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Department of History

COMBATING SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION: STUDENT ABOLITIONISM  
AND THE POLITICS OF ANTISLAVERY IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1833-1841

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By

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## **ABSTRACT**

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AND THE POLITICS OF ANTISLAVERY IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1833-1841**

**MAY 2015**

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During the early 1830's, the nascent American Antislavery Society needed support at the local level. This thesis argues that college and seminary students were a crucial demographic that helped garner support for, and spread, abolitionism. Examining the proliferation of radical abolitionism at three locations, Lane Seminary, Andover Theological Seminary, and Amherst College, reveals that students developed intellectual and moral arguments to justify their abolitionist sentiments. Typically, student abolitionists rhetorically battled with faculty, administration, and other students, who all supported colonization, over competing solutions to the problem of slavery. At all three locations, faculty and administration sought to suppress student abolitionism for a number of reasons, chief among them was the adherence to contemporary racial prejudices. Despite faculty restrictions, student abolitionists remained active in the movement in various capacities and were pivotal actors that helped spread abolitionism. Centering these locations in the historical narrative of the antebellum era illuminates the power dynamics at institutions of higher learning and how concepts of race, freedom, citizenship, and free speech were intellectually debated. In turn, students were resolved to engage with the foremost problem facing society, racial slavery, and believed immediate emancipation and racial equality were the solutions. This history complicates the current

trend in the historiography that focuses on the complicity of America's universities with the institution of racial slavery and reveals that the history of student activism in the United States can be traced back to antebellum era campuses.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past twelve years, several prestigious American universities have investigated their connections to the institution of racial slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In 2003, President Ruth Simmons of Brown University appointed a committee of scholars, administrators, and undergraduate and graduate students to investigate Brown's ties with slavery. The team conclusively determined that from Brown University's inception in 1764 until the abolition of slavery in 1865, the university financially benefited from slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.<sup>1</sup> After Brown's troubled past became known, other institutions, such as Harvard, William and Mary, Emory, and the University of Maryland conducted studies that yielded similar results. These universities subsequently initiated resolutions aimed to promote public awareness of their respective roles in perpetuating, and profiting from, slavery. Some of these initiatives consisted of the construction of physical and digital memorials, the coordination of public forums and academic conferences to promote awareness of the injustices of slavery and its legacies, and the creation of projects to engage the local and broader national community in order to initiate dialogues on the contemporary significance of slavery's legacy.<sup>2</sup> While these studies and resolutions are vital in

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<sup>1</sup> "Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice," published in 2006, accessed May 15, 2014, [http://brown.edu/Research/Slavery\\_Justice/documents/SlaveryAndJustice.pdf](http://brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/documents/SlaveryAndJustice.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Slavery and Justice"; Sven Beckert, and Katherine Stevens, "Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History," published in 2011, accessed on May 15, 2014, <http://www.harvardandslavery.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Harvard-Slavery-Book-111110.pdf>; "The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation," The College of William and Mary, <http://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/index.php>; "Slavery and the University," Focus of Emory Conference February 3-6, 2011, Emory University, last modified February 1, 2011, [http://shared.web.emory.edu/emory/news/releases/2011/01/slavery-and-the-university-focus-of-emory-conference.html#.U3eVVLkU\\_IW](http://shared.web.emory.edu/emory/news/releases/2011/01/slavery-and-the-university-focus-of-emory-conference.html#.U3eVVLkU_IW).



recognizing these institutions' complicity with slavery, they fail to acknowledge the rancorous debates over slavery on college campuses and, more specifically, students' pivotal contributions to the abolition movement.

The first scholarly analysis that synthesized the histories of America's oldest universities and their ties to slavery is historian Craig Steven Wilder's provocative narrative *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (2013). Wilder's study revealed that early American universities -- Harvard, Yale, the College of New Jersey (Princeton), King's College (Columbia), Queens College (Rutgers), Brown, and the College of William and Mary -- all had financial ties with the forced removal of Native Americans, racial slavery, and the international and domestic slave trades. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, university endowments brimmed with donations from prominent merchants who were beneficiaries of the slave trade. University trustees were wealthy merchants, governors, judges, and doctors who gained enormous profits from owning and/or selling slaves.

Wilder also argued that the pseudoscientific creation of race took place at many of these universities. More than simply benefiting from the profits generated by the trade, universities helped found and promote theories that were used to justify the enslavement of African Americans. Finally, Wilder provided a brief overview of the contentious topic of slavery on nineteenth-century college campuses, as he examined the rise of the American Colonization Society (ACS) and the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) at several institutions. Wilder found that while college officials, faculty, and some students tended to support the former, college students overwhelmingly supported the latter.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsburg Press, 2013), 8-11.

Wilder's examination of the ACS and AASS illuminated a fascinating dichotomy that existed between faculty and students on several college campuses.<sup>4</sup> However, Wilder regulates this important history to a single chapter that is consequently subsumed by his larger narrative. Thus, Wilder's analysis is mostly centered upon institutions and their leaders rather than the activism of the individuals who occupied them. Illuminating the intellectual discourse regarding the slavery question at institutions of higher learning during the nineteenth century helps explain how and why the antislavery movement of the early antebellum era emerged as it did.

Scholars have traditionally dismissed or fleetingly referenced the conflicts over slavery at nineteenth-century colleges and seminaries as sporadic or isolated occurrences.<sup>5</sup> Russell Nye argued that "abolition did not become an important issue" at institutions of higher education and that "The suppression of abolitionist discussions was never a problem of overwhelming importance on Northern campuses."<sup>6</sup> Other scholarship has focused almost exclusively on the antislavery controversy at Lane Seminary to explain the origins of student abolitionist ideology. This focus implies that Lane student abolitionism was atypical or that they were the sole precedent for student activism in the movement.<sup>7</sup> One scholar argued that the antislavery controversy at Lane was the only

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<sup>4</sup> Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 267. Wilder traced antislavery sentiment among students and faculty on northeastern college campuses back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to the fear of a multiracial society, most faculty members' antislavery beliefs gave way to the colonization movement. See Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 243-45.

<sup>5</sup> Russell B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom: Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963), 107, 116; Lois W. Banner, "Religion and Reform in the Early Republic: The Role of Youth," *American Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (December 1971): 688; Lewis S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 321-2.

<sup>6</sup> Nye, *Fettered Freedom*, 107, 116. Nye explains that antislavery was systematically discouraged and essentially banned in southern schools. See Nye, *Fettered Freedom*, 86-96.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence T. Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), 146; Banner, "Religion and Reform," 688.

student movement in the antebellum era.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, historians who have explored student antislavery used frameworks confined to institutional histories or focused exclusively on student auxiliary antislavery societies at one college or seminary.<sup>9</sup> The problem with the current portrayal of student antislavery in the historiography is the absence of an analysis that systematically examines the emergence of student abolitionism and explains its significance in the broader narrative of the antislavery movement and the antebellum period.<sup>10</sup>

An analysis of student abolitionism at multiple locations during the 1830's and early 1840's helps to explain the emergence of radical abolitionism of the era. The proliferation of antislavery dialogues at Lane Seminary, Andover Theological Seminary (ATS), and Amherst College exemplify this tendency. Discourses regarding slavery at these institutions coincided with the ideological evolution of radical abolitionism and colonization as competing solutions to the problem of slavery. Likewise, the debates that occurred at Lane, ATS, and Amherst involved colonizationists and radical abolitionists. Trustees, administrators, and students tended to support the ACS while students overwhelmingly became advocates of abolitionism and the nascent AASS.<sup>11</sup> These

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<sup>8</sup> Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations*, 321-2.

<sup>9</sup> Claude Moore Fuess, *Amherst: The Story of a New England College* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935), 110-11. For a more in-depth look at antislavery activity at Amherst College, see William S. Tyler, *History of Amherst College during its First Half Century 1821-1871* (Springfield MA: Clark W. Bryan & Co., 1873), 245-51; Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 122, 139-40; J. Earl Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," *The New England Quarterly* 47, no. 2, (June, 1974); Lesick, *Lane Rebels*; Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York: Harbinger, 1933) has two chapters devoted to the antislavery controversy at Lane.

<sup>10</sup> I use the phrase "student antislavery" and "student" along with variations of the word "abolition" interchangeably in order to avoid repetition. These phrases are used to invoke students' radical ideology, as they were advocates of immediate emancipation and racial equality.

<sup>11</sup> Western Reserve College professors are known to be the only faculty to publically support abolitionism prior to the emergence Oberlin College as an abolitionist stronghold (1835-36). See Lawrence B. Goodheart, "Abolitionists as Academics: The Controversy at Western Reserve College, 1832-1833," *History of Education Quarterly* vol. 22, no 4 (Winter 1982): 421-433.

campuses can thus be perceived as sites of intellectual debates over the problem of slavery and concomitantly, concepts of freedom, emancipation, citizenship, and racial equality.

Student abolitionists developed arguments fused with reason and morality to articulate their support for radical abolitionism, which to them meant immediate emancipation and racial equality.<sup>12</sup> Faculty and administrations at each respective institution sought to regulate and sometimes even suppress students' abolitionist activism. Therefore, these controversies necessarily included competing concepts over free speech and the role it played in higher education during this period.

The influence of public opinion also dictated faculty's reactionary measures to student activism. In turn, these conflicts tested power relations that existed on nineteenth-century campuses. The antislavery controversies at Lane, ATS, and Amherst College were chronicled in contemporary newspapers and northerners and southerners alike followed these events closely. Abolitionist leaders sought the support of the younger generation as evidenced by their lectures at seminaries and colleges like those of Andover and Amherst. Whether students would support abolitionism or not had important implications for the future of slavery and abolition, as they were the country's future intellectual and religious leaders. Therefore, in the early antebellum era, acquiring student support for a particular movement was essential.<sup>13</sup> Examining the problem of slavery at

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<sup>12</sup> For Lane abolitionists' arguments see, Henry B. Stanton, "Cheering Intelligence," *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50; and "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6; For ATS abolitionists' arguments see, D.T. Kimball and L.S. Laine, "Apology For Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4; and, "Appeal of Abolitionists of the Theological Seminary," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139; For Amherst College abolitionists' arguments see, "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*, July 19, 1833, Anti-Slavery Records 1833-1842, Clubs and Societies Collection, box 1, Folder 18, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>13</sup> I'm referring of course to a specific historical time and place and am invoking historical contingency regarding the impact of student abolitionists during the 1830's.

institutions of higher learning can help explain who supported abolitionism at the local level and how the movement spread. A brief overview of colonizationism and abolitionism in the early antebellum era is required in order to contextualize the debates that transpired at colleges and seminaries.

In 1816, the ACS was established by two white clergy Robert Finley and Samuel Mills as a benevolent organization that aimed to “repatriate” free African Americans to Liberia, an African colony established to “civilize” and Christianize its inhabitants.<sup>14</sup> White colonizationists argued that the ACS was an altruistic organization, as they believed their doctrine would ameliorate the condition of African Americans and liberate them from white animosity. According to the ACS, gradual emancipation and repatriation were the only solutions to the problem of slavery.<sup>15</sup> The ACS also believed in educating African Americans in Christian doctrine prior to sending them to Liberia, so that they could act as missionaries to the African continent.<sup>16</sup>

Despite colonizationists’ supposed benevolent platform, their ideology was predicated on contemporary racial prejudices. They believed that African Americans were inherently inferior and were not capable of living as free citizens with white Americans.<sup>17</sup> Along with deep racial prejudices, the ACS plan was problematic for two main reasons. Black abolitionists like James Forten, Maria Stewart, and David Walker

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<sup>14</sup> A co-founder of the ACS was Samuel Mills, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. For an examination of the ACS see P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), 6-8; Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 17, 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 20. Exporting Christianity through African Americans was arguably a form of American imperialism.

<sup>17</sup> Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 3.

vehemently opposed “repatriation,” as free and enslaved African Americans were born in the United States so “sending them back” to Africa was a logical fallacy. Second, pragmatically as well as financially, the ACS doctrine was nearly impossible to implement on a large scale.<sup>18</sup> Still, many white Americans were drawn to repatriation ideology. During the 1820’s, the ACS received enormous support across the country. White northerners, southerners, and state legislators believed “repatriating” African Americans to Africa was the solution to slavery.<sup>19</sup> By 1828, the number of local and state auxiliaries to the ACS was over two hundred.<sup>20</sup> However, the most important perspective was that of African Americans and their opposition to the ACS. Without the support of a majority of African Americans, the ACS would struggle and ultimately success remained elusive for the organization.<sup>21</sup>

Despite these serious issues, the ACS doctrine, especially its emphasis on missions, logically appealed to faculty and students of theological institutions where the educational philosophy was to prepare pious youth in careers as ministers and missionaries. Faculty and some students had influential roles in local auxiliaries and the national ACS organization. Black abolitionists’ opposition to the ACS helps explain the emergence of radical abolitionism in the early antebellum era.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> David Walker, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (Boston: David Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1830); *Maria W. Stewart, America’s First Black Woman Political Writer*, ed. Marilyn Richardson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), xiii; W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 37-8.

<sup>19</sup> Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002), 111.

<sup>20</sup> *The Eleventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society For Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States* (Washington D.C.: James Dunn, 1828), 36-42.

<sup>21</sup> Additionally, proslavery ideologues opposed any manumission scheme that would deplete their labor forces and forfeit their property in enslaved persons.

<sup>22</sup> McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 37-9; Ousmane K. Power-Greene, *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle Against the Colonization Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

Historians have written numerous accounts on the topic of American abolitionism, the origins of which have been traced back to seventeenth-century Quaker ideology.<sup>23</sup> Abolitionism waxed and waned throughout the 18th century, reaching an apex during the American Revolutionary era and remained mostly unpopular during the early nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The emergence of the colonization movement provoked African-American opposition that instigated the antislavery movement of the antebellum era. In fact, black abolitionists' opposition to the ACS helped influence William Lloyd Garrison's creation of the *Liberator* and subsequent antislavery organizations, such as the AASS, committed to immediate emancipation and racial equality.<sup>25</sup> In its early years, Garrisonian tactics included utilizing abolitionist orations as a medium to convert public opinion to abolition and to acquire signatures for antislavery petitions that would be sent to Congress. Women's signatures outnumbered those of men by a two to one ratio, signifying the importance of female activism—a key component of Garrisonianism.<sup>26</sup> Coinciding with the Garrisonian brand of antislavery, evangelical antislavery was an influential sect of the movement. Drawing on the Second Great Awakening's impact on society, evangelical abolitionists emphasized the notion that slavery was a sin and demanded the repentance of all white Americans for either owning African Americans as

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<sup>23</sup> Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657-1761* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> The historiography is vast. Among others, see James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976); Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery*; Stacey Robertson, *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992); R.J.M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Christopher Cameron, *To Plead Our Own Cause: African Americans in Massachusetts and the Making of the Antislavery Movement* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 37-8.

<sup>26</sup> Drescher, *Abolition*, 307.

slaves or for their complicity in allowing slavery to persist.<sup>27</sup> During the early 1830's, student abolitionists possessed the characteristics of evangelical antislavery and were ardent supporters of the AASS. Not until the fissures in the movement during the late 1830's would student abolitionists reject Garrisonianism.<sup>28</sup> The conflicting ideological basis of the AASS and ACS provided fertile ground for debates over the solution to the problem of slavery and institutions of higher education were prime locations for the development of intellectual arguments for the respective movements.

This study seeks to demonstrate how and why competing intellectual interpretations of abolition and colonization emerged at Lane Seminary, Andover Theological Seminary, and Amherst College. Emphasis on these three schools reveals the unique contexts in which students came to embrace radical abolitionism and the challenges they faced. These case studies also reveal the fluidity of the movement and demonstrate that the activities of a single student abolitionist organization was not necessarily representative of student abolitionism as a whole.

Chapter one explores the history of abolitionism at Lane Seminary. Theodore Weld's utilization of antislavery revivalism explains how Lane students were converted from colonizationism to radical abolitionism. More specifically, the abolitionist speeches of James Bradley, an African American student, and white southern students are central to explaining the emergence of abolition at Lane. Lane student abolitionists also worked with the free black community in Cincinnati to establish educational programs. Because of public opposition to students' activism, namely the fear of racial integration and

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<sup>27</sup> For an emphasis on evangelical antislavery, see Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*.

<sup>28</sup> By 1840, Garrisonians supported women's participation in abolitionism and supported women's rights. Student abolitionism also rejected Garrison's critique of religious leadership's failure to preach abolition in their churches. See McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 69.



“amalgamation,” and concern over the reputation of the seminary, Lane administration and faculty explicitly denounced the characteristics of the students’ abolitionism. As a result, trustees and faculty implemented harsh restrictions on student activism that provoked the student-faculty controversy over free discussion of abolition which led to the student rebellion. The Lane Rebellion was an unprecedented event, as students explicitly rejected the faculty’s authority. However, Lane faculty’s restrictions would prove influential at other institutions of higher learning.

Chapter two examines the colonizationist stronghold that was Andover Theological Seminary and how student abolitionism challenged that prevailing opinion. Prominent abolitionist leaders, most notably the British abolitionist George Thompson, also made Andover a destination for their lectures and had some success converting students to abolition. However, like Lane faculty’s regulations, ATS faculty appropriated similarly harsh restrictions on student activism. Unlike the Lane Rebels, students abided by faculty rules but became involved in antislavery societies in the community. ATS student abolitionists also responded to and rejected Garrison’s critique of religious leaders’ abstention from antislavery which foreshadowed the broader fissures in the antislavery movement.

Chapter three shifts to Amherst College and traces the student auxiliary organization’s activities. Amherst student abolitionists initially dealt with the faculty’s harsh restrictions but continued their activism on campus in various forms. Robert McNairy, a white southern student, violently assaulted John Ashley, a white northern student, for his abolitionist views, a significant catalyst that changed faculty opinion to allow organized abolitionism on campus. Therefore, Amherst College represents the only

institution in this analysis where faculty perspective ultimately changed and allowed organized student abolitionism on campus. As a result, student abolitionism flourished at Amherst College and it became an abolitionist stronghold.

The epilogue demonstrates how student abolitionists helped spread the movement. Many of the Lane Rebels became agents of the AASS and were instrumental in spreading abolitionist ideology. Theodore Weld, Henry B. Stanton, and James A. Thome went on to become abolitionist leaders at the national level. A majority of students in this study ultimately supported political abolitionism and the Liberty Party while simultaneously rejecting the Garrisonian faction. The epilogue also addresses the inherent limitations of student abolitionism, as most students conceptualized an abolitionist movement comprised of, and led exclusively by, white males. In doing so, students overtly ignored the contributions of black male and female abolitionists as well as white women. Therefore, the history of student abolitionism explains a demographic that endorsed socially conservative evangelical abolitionism. In this light, radical student abolitionists supported and spread a movement that helps explain the polarization of society over racial slavery and the origins of the Civil War. For these reasons, a framework that centers student abolitionists and their role in antislavery is an essential addition to the historiography of abolitionism.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE CONTROVERSY OVER ABOLITIONISM, FREE SPEECH, AND RACIAL INTEGRATION AT LANE SEMINARY

In 1835 Senator, and future president, John Tyler gave a speech in Virginia in which he castigated abolitionists' portrayal of southern slaveholders. Tyler was outraged that the cover of an American Antislavery Society pamphlet depicted slaveholders as "demons," while enslaved persons appeared next to "Arthur Tappan, Mr. Somebody Garrison, or Mr. Foreigner Thompson," who were "patting the greasy little fellows on their cheeks and giving them lovely kisses."<sup>1</sup> Not only was Tyler enraged over the caricature of white southerners, but he was infuriated over the pamphlet's promotion of racial integration. Many anti-abolitionists across the United States shared John Tyler's sentiments. During the 1830's, white northerners expressed similar concerns over racial "amalgamation" to justify anti-abolitionism.<sup>2</sup> For example, white Cincinnatians vehemently opposed the abolitionist activism of white students from Lane Seminary because it included racial integration, as white male students were publicly seen interacting with black women. The white population perceived and feared the students' activities as promoting interracial sex.<sup>3</sup> Public opinion, or more specifically, white anti-abolitionist animosity in Cincinnati was a crucial force that influenced Lane faculty to suppress student abolitionism at Lane Seminary, which in turn provoked the student rebellion and ultimately provided a major victory for the abolitionist movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Lyon G. Tyler, *The Letters and Times of the Tylers* vol. 1 (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1884), 575-7.

<sup>2</sup> W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 53-6.

<sup>3</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

The history of antislavery at Lane Seminary is well-known to historians of abolition and has received a considerable amount of attention, mainly from religious scholars who have emphasized the centrality of evangelicalism in the antislavery impulse of Lane students.<sup>4</sup> While evangelicalism, in part, is critical to understanding the foundation of Lane students' antislavery activism, the purpose of this study is to center Lane students' contributions to the abolitionist movement and the precedent the Lane Controversy and subsequent student rebellion had for other student abolitionists. Utilizing this framework reveals that the events of Lane Seminary from 1834-1835 were integral in bolstering the antislavery movement and spreading its ideology. The conflict at Lane Seminary over colonization and abolition was the first of its kind after the emergence of the American Antislavery Society (AASS). Lane students confronted the slavery question through discourse and sought concrete solutions to one of the country's most pressing issues. The radicalism of the student abolitionists led by Theodore Weld and their conspicuous defiance of authority figures, such as president of the seminary and nationally-known preacher Lyman Beecher and other faculty, made the events a matter of national importance. While these points form the crux of the antislavery history at Lane, there was another key component of the student abolitionists' activities. They worked

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<sup>4</sup> The first scholarly assessment of antislavery at Lane Seminary was Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York: Harbinger Books, 1933, 2nd ed. 1964) which focused on decentralizing the importance of William Lloyd Garrison in the abolitionist movement and emphasized the importance of religious revivalism that helped spread antislavery. Russell B. Nye included Lane abolitionists in his study of abolitionism and free speech, Russell B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom: Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963). This was followed by scholarly articles that emphasized evangelicalism in Lane students' abolitionism, Lois W. Banner, "Religion and Reform in the Early Republic: The Role of Youth," *American Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (December 1971): 677-695; Stuart C. Henry, "The Lane Rebels: A Twentieth Century Look," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 1-14; This history has also been explored in chapters of college histories, see Robert S. Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College: From Its Foundation Through the Civil War* Vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press, 1971), chapter 13. The most complete history of antislavery at Lane Seminary is Lawrence T. Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1980).

within the community to establish schools and other institutions of learning to help educate free African Americans. The opposition perceived the students' actions and interactions with free African Americans as promoting amalgamation, which only added to the controversy and helped create a nationally prominent story. The student abolitionists' defiance exemplifies the tension and significance of power relations at institutions of higher learning that arose from clashes between student activism and the authority of administrations and faculty. For those reasons, the history of antislavery at Lane Seminary is in some ways exceptional.

However, the events at Lane were not entirely unique. Lane was not the catalyst for debates over colonization and abolition at other colleges -- discourses regarding colonization and abolition at other colleges occurred simultaneously, and in some cases, preceded the Lane Controversy, as the succeeding chapters will demonstrate. But the precedent of Lane students' rebellion would have stark implications for other student abolitionist activity. What makes the history of antislavery at Lane unique is the outright rebellion of student abolitionists, their contributions to the free African American population in Cincinnati, and their leadership in spreading antislavery ideology.

This chapter will examine the history of student abolitionism at Lane Seminary. Black and white males were admitted at Lane and many of the white students were converted to abolitionism by Theodore Weld.<sup>5</sup> Before coming to Cincinnati, Weld attended the Oneida Institute in western New York where Charles Finney taught the techniques of revivalism.<sup>6</sup> During the 1820's and 1830's, some evangelicals believed that

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<sup>5</sup> Weld was offered a teaching position at Lane but refused and instead enrolled as a student. He quickly became a leader among the student body. See <sup>5</sup> Robert H. Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 80-2.

<sup>6</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 44-50.

religious revivalism was the solution to issues that hampered society's progress and helped initiate reforms such as the temperance movement. It also had a significant impact on the antislavery movement.<sup>7</sup> The evangelical revivalism of Finney consisted of the individual's realization of imperfection and subsequent repentance from sin by embracing the Holy Spirit. It also placed emphasis on morality and removing all that was sinful from one's life and society in preparation for a millennial era.<sup>8</sup> While Weld embraced revivalism, he also converted to the doctrine of immediatism with the help of British abolitionist, Charles Stuart. Stuart corresponded with Weld during the early 1830's and sent abolitionist pamphlets along with his letters.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most pivotal influence on Weld's conversion was his meeting with Beriah Green, Elizur Wright Jr., and Charles B. Storrs. Writing to Wright after their meeting, Weld stated "Since I saw you last my soul has been in travail upon that subject. I hardly know how to contain myself" and he proclaimed "Firstly and Mostly: Abolition *immediate universal* is my desire and prayer to God."<sup>10</sup> Weld was now armed with abolitionist doctrine and his strategy, that of revivalism.

Weld's influence would prove crucial to converting Lane students to abolitionism. For some reformers, like those from Lane, slavery was an abominable sin that needed to be eradicated along with the inherent racial prejudices it produced. Weld and other Lane students combined the concepts of revivalism and abolition at Lane Seminary in order to

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<sup>7</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 3-5. The rise in revivalism was a product of the Second Great Awakening.

<sup>8</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 44-5.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Stuart to Theodore Weld, March 26, 1831, Stuart to Weld, June 1831, Stuart to Weld, April 30, 1832, *Letters of Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké 1822-1844* vol. 1, eds. Gilbert Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (New York: D. Appleton, 1934), 44, 48-9, 74. The correspondence in April most likely contained Stuart's pamphlet for immediate abolition *The West Indian Question*, which had tremendous influence in the United States.

<sup>10</sup> The specific details of the meeting are unknown, Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 86-8, 318n51; Weld to Elizur Wright Jr., January 10, 1833, *Letters of Weld*, 99.

spread the antislavery movement during the 1830's. The antislavery discourse at Lane yielded astonishing results for the antislavery movement, as northern and southern students alike at the seminary were successfully converted to abolitionism. Through the presentation of facts and reasoned argument, Lane student abolitionists believed southern slaveholders could likewise be converted and would then manumit enslaved African Americans. Perhaps the most important facet of the antislavery dialogue at Lane Seminary was the testimony of James Bradley, an African-American student at Lane who had purchased his own freedom. His personal history provides an emphatic argument in favor of immediate emancipation and refuted the claim that emancipation would incite insurrections of African American retribution. An emphasis on Bradley's and white southern students' testimonies can help explain why so many students at Lane embraced abolitionist ideology and became intransigent in their opposition to slavery and colonization. After the conversations over the slavery question, students created the Lane Seminary Antislavery Society (LSASS) which provoked a rhetorical confrontation with faculty and subsequently led to the rebellion. A total of ninety-two percent of students withdrew from Lane and at least fifty-one students withdrew because of faculty imposed restrictions on student activism at the seminary.<sup>11</sup> These restrictions prompted the student abolitionists to invoke the First Amendment which constitutionally sanctioned their abolitionist activism. After the students withdrew, many went on to become members of the AASS agency system that helped garner critical support for the burgeoning abolitionist movement. Although Bradley's testimony was key, the economic and social

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<sup>11</sup> Ninety-five of the one hundred and three students (92%) enrolled at Lane did not return after the student rebellion. Out of the ninety-five students that withdrew, fifty-one cited faculty restrictions as the reason why they left Lane. See Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 131, 155n86.

environment of Cincinnati as well as its proximity to Kentucky, a slave state, provides the context for the Lane Seminary antislavery controversy.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1830's, Cincinnati was an emerging industrial city. There were two hundred and forty cotton gins, twenty sugar mills, and a plethora of steam engines that facilitated trade.<sup>13</sup> Located on the Ohio River in the southwest corner of the state, Cincinnati was an important site of commerce for the region. Some of the city's most important exports included cotton, lumber, and whiskey which contributed to six million dollars in economic revenue.<sup>14</sup> Cincinnati's industry and products signified its economic ties to the South and its proximity to the slave state of Kentucky made most white Cincinnatians fundamentally southern sympathizers. Many Cincinnati whites opposed free African American assimilation in the community. In 1826, white Cincinnatians established a local chapter of the American Colonization Society (ACS) and supported the forced removal of free African Americans from the city. In the summer of 1829, white colonizationists raided free African American neighborhoods in an attempt to forcibly remove them from town but met resistance from the African American community. This escalated into a violent confrontation and came to be known as the "Cincinnati Riot of 1829."<sup>15</sup> As a result some 1,100 African Americans left Cincinnati due to racial violence.<sup>16</sup> This was the economic and social context in which emerged Lane Seminary, which was located just outside of Cincinnati.

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<sup>12</sup> Ohio also shared a border with the slave state of Virginia.

<sup>13</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Richard C. Wade, "The Negro in Cincinnati, 1800-1830," *Journal of Negro History* vol. 39, no. 1 (January 1954), 52-7.

<sup>16</sup> Wade, "The Negro in Cincinnati," 56.



In the 1820's, wealthy white merchant Ebenezer Lane agreed to finance the construction of a Presbyterian seminary at Walnut Hills. Lane as well as local religious leaders believed the western part of the country needed a seminary to train ministers for the region. In order for Lane to finance the project, two key components had to form the seminary's ideological foundation. The first was finding faculty and administrators who were members of the Presbyterian Church. The second premise was implementing a manual labor system which meant students would work three to four hours a day in agricultural or mechanical labor to pay their fees for schooling.<sup>17</sup> These principles would be the foundation of the seminary and explain the name given to the new institution. Lyman Beecher accepted the presidency and a Professorship of Theology at the newly established Lane Seminary and Thomas Briggs, John Morgan, and Calvin Stowe comprised the core faculty. Lyman Beecher was the most famous clergymen in the United States during the 1830's and he was the father of Henry Ward and Catherine Beecher. Calvin Stowe, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, eventually married Lyman Beecher's daughter Harriet, author of the influential novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.<sup>18</sup> Given the location of Lane Seminary and the cultural context of Cincinnati, it was no surprise that students and faculty would become involved in discussions over slavery.

The first known example of discourse regarding slavery at Lane Seminary took place in 1832, prior to the arrival of Theodore Weld. During the summer, students discussed whether or not it was the duty of the North to assist in the suppression of a slave insurrection. Every student, except for Henry B. Stanton voted in the affirmative.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 29-31.

<sup>18</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 38, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Henry B. Stanton, *Random Recollections* (New York: Harper, 1887), 46-47.

This was a timely discussion, as it took place in the wake of Nat Turner's Rebellion. As will be discussed in the epilogue, Stanton would become a famous abolitionist leader and eventually married Elizabeth Cady, the famous women's rights activist. After the discussion, Stanton wrote to Theodore Weld that "the intellectual and moral condition of this institution is low—very low."<sup>20</sup> The discussion at Lane in the summer of 1832 indicates that an overwhelming majority of students' were in favor of assisting slaveholders in suppressing African American insurrections. However, it is less clear why students supported this notion. Pro-southern sympathy or opposition to black violence might have been key motivations. What is evident is that Lane students were not explicitly advocating for immediate emancipation in 1832. Stanton's writings to Weld probably helped influence him to come to Lane Seminary, as Weld believed the west, particularly Ohio, was fertile ground for a dialogue over colonization and abolition.<sup>21</sup> Another important development at the seminary signified the potential for discussions over slavery. By 1833, Lane Seminary had underwent a change in student demographics. For the first time students from all over the country, North and South, were enrolling at Lane and not just the broader Ohio area.<sup>22</sup> The change in students' cultural backgrounds would play a key factor in the antislavery dialogue at Lane. Some twenty students from the Oneida Institute followed Weld and a number of southern students provided ripe ground for a discussion over the slavery question.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Henry B. Stanton, E. Weed, S.W. Streeter, and C. Waterbury to Theodore Weld, August 4, 1834, *Letters of Weld*, 84.

<sup>21</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 71.

<sup>23</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 77.

In June 1833, the students and faculty of Lane Seminary were decided proponents of colonization. Lane faculty members, most notably Lyman Beecher, were members of the local branch of the American Colonization Society.<sup>24</sup> The majority of students also favored colonization.<sup>25</sup> Weld observed that in the summer of 1833 “there was not a single immediate abolitionist in this seminary” and that “A large colonization society existed, and abolitionism was regarded as the climax of absurdity, fanaticism and blood.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, Weld had a difficult task as he set out to convince students to join the abolitionist movement. One conversion is particularly noteworthy. Weld successfully converted William T. Allan, who was born in Alabama, raised on a plantation, and was an heir to his father’s slaves, to the cause of immediate emancipation.<sup>27</sup> Allan’s transformation to abolitionism was a monumental achievement for Weld and helped to justify the Garrisonian strategy of appealing to morality, logic, and sentiment in order to gather support for abolitionism. Subsequently both Weld and Allan set out to discuss the merits of immediate emancipation and had success converting several other students.<sup>28</sup> With an emergent group of abolitionists, Weld proposed to have an open dialogue among students to discuss abolition and colonization.

Students brought the request to have an open forum on the slavery question to faculty for consideration. After deliberation, faculty decided that it would be inappropriate for students to discuss such controversial issues.<sup>29</sup> Given the location and history of race relations in Cincinnati, Beecher and other professors perceived the

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<sup>24</sup> *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* vol. 9 (Washington: James Dunn, 1834), 88-89.

<sup>25</sup> *Emancipator*, March 24, 1834.

<sup>26</sup> Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834, *Letters of Weld*, 132.

<sup>27</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834, *Letters of Weld*, 132.

<sup>28</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834, *Letters of Weld*, 132, Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 78.

<sup>29</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 78.

proposed debates as potentially harmful to the seminary and broader community. They also argued that the seminary was also in its infancy and still needed to acquire additional funds and endowments from key benefactors in Cincinnati. If such divisive issues were discussed at Lane and made public, the institution risked the potential for losing financial support. Finally, faculty believed that discussions over the slavery question would cause students to neglect their theological education and create divisions amongst students that would ultimately be detrimental to the seminary.<sup>30</sup> At Lane Seminary, the faculty were clearly opposed to students discussing the slavery question at the present time. However, the Lane students decided to hold the forum despite the faculty's verdict, planting the seed of dissent.

Beginning on February 5, 1834, Lane students resolved to discuss the pressing issue of racial slavery. Two questions were brought to the assembly and tabled for discussion. The first was should slavery be abolished immediately in slaveholding states. The second concerned the merits of the colonization movement and inquired if it deserved Christian support. Over the course of the next eighteen evenings, each question was explored for nine evenings with two and a half hour discussions each night.<sup>31</sup> Almost the entire student body attended the forum. Some faculty even sporadically attended, including Beecher and Calvin Stowe. Professor John Morgan appears to have been the

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<sup>30</sup> "Statement of the Faculty Concerning the late Difficulties in the Lane Seminary," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10. The Lane faculty's sentiments would have a tremendous influence on faculty at other institutions. Faculty at both Andover Theological Seminary and Amherst College would cite similar reasons why students should not discuss the slavery question on their respective campuses. See chapter 2 and 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834. Very little is known regarding the exact details of the debates. The primary account available was written by Henry B. Stanton and published first by the *New York Evangelist* and then reprinted in publications such as the *Liberator* and *Emancipator*.

only faculty member to support the students.<sup>32</sup> Some members of the community also attended, most notably Gamaliel Bailey, a local physician who was converted to abolitionism at Lane and later became an abolitionist editor.<sup>33</sup> Of the students present, eleven were born and raised in slave states, seven were sons of slaveholders, one student was a slaveholder, and one, James Bradley, had been a slave himself and purchased his freedom. Bradley was the only black student in the group. The students had also compiled all the major pamphlets and documents of the ACS and AASS so the discussion could be based on factual evidence regarding each organization's principles.<sup>34</sup>

A total of seventeen students participated in the first nine evenings of discussion, eight of whom were sons of slaveholders, eight had lived in slave states for at least six months, and one was Bradley.<sup>35</sup> Historians have not agreed on who spoke first during these proceedings. However, it is likely that William T. Allan spoke first. Allan's testimony, lasting for two sessions, was an articulation of facts concerning slavery and arguments in favor of immediate abolition.<sup>36</sup> According to Lane students like Allan, immediate emancipation was defined as the abolition of slavery and employment of African Americans as free laborers. They proposed that free African Americans be fairly compensated and be treated as equals politically and socially.<sup>37</sup> Over the next four

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<sup>32</sup> Morgan supported students' exercise of free discussion and adoption of abolitionism. Lesick only alludes to Morgan's convictions on antislavery but given his support for the students' actions, Morgan most likely was an abolitionist.

<sup>33</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 79, Stanley Harrold, "The Perspective of a Cincinnati Abolitionist: Gamaliel Bailey on Social Reform in America," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* vol. 35, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 175.

<sup>34</sup> Henry B. Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>35</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>36</sup> *Emancipator*, April 22, 1834, also see Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 80, 105n85; Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>37</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834, April 22, 1834,

meetings, speakers articulated arguments that supported abolition based on empirical evidence concerning the condition of slavery.

Andrew Benton, Marius Robinson, and James A. Thome were among the white Lane students who lived in slave states and spoke about their experiences with African Americans and their condition as enslaved persons.<sup>38</sup> Based on their testimonies, several conclusions were presented to the audience and supported the cause of immediate abolition. Based on their first-hand experiences, speakers observed that enslaved African Americans longed for freedom and frequently discussed the topic amongst themselves. Enslaved African Americans believed that slaveholders did not have the right to own them as property.<sup>39</sup> The southern students also explained how enslaved African Americans described their subversive actions in certain contexts. Enslaved African Americans revealed that they acted ignorantly at times in order to remove responsibility from themselves and when asked by their masters if they were satisfied in their circumstances they responded favorably in order to prevent cruel treatment. These were strategies of resistance enslaved persons utilized to their advantage. Historians have revealed that enslaved African Americans used subversive tactics in order to ameliorate their conditions and avoid harsh punishments from their overseers or masters. In other words, enslaved African Americans employed tactics of resistance in order to combat the harsh realities of slavery.<sup>40</sup> The southern students' testimony also explained the mental and

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<sup>38</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>39</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>40</sup> The historiography of slave resistance is vast. Among others, see Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Douglas Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Sylviane Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* vol. 37 no.1 (Fall 2003), 113-125; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams:*

physical suffering endured by enslaved persons at the hands of slaveholders and the horrendous conditions of enslaved African Americans in Louisiana on sugar plantations where some were worked to death for extra profit. Their testimonies explained that overseers were widely known for their cruelty and licentiousness. They also highlighted the actions of slave traders who captured free blacks in Ohio and sold them to slaveholders in the South. Finally, their testimonies revealed that African Americans emphatically opposed the colonization movement, and would only support it if it was the only means to escape slavery.<sup>41</sup> These same arguments were articulated by African American abolitionists during this time.<sup>42</sup> This signifies a limitation in Lane students' abolitionism. There is no evidence to suggest that student abolitionists explicitly worked with black abolitionists, with the exception of James Bradley. Even though they shared the same ideology with black abolitionists, students conceptualized abolitionism as a movement led by white men. After explicating their interactions with enslaved persons and their observations of the southern institution, James Bradley provided his account in favor of immediate emancipation.

James Bradley was an African American student at Lane Seminary during the 1830's. Prior to his time at Lane, Bradley was enslaved in the South and eventually bought his freedom. He was a proponent of immediate emancipation and described his life story from slavery to freedom at the antislavery forum at Lane. His nearly two hour testimony articulated the legitimacy and safety of abolition to opponents of the movement

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*Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) 8-9, 212-17 passim.

<sup>41</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>42</sup> David Walker, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (Boston: David Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1830); Maria Stewart, "Cause For Encouragement," *Liberator*, July 14, 1832, 110. Also see Marilyn Richardson ed., *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Women Political Writer, Essays and Speeches* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987).

and provided an emphatic account of enslaved people's capabilities. Bradley was born in Africa, stolen from his home, and sold into slavery in the United States. He survived the trans-Atlantic voyage and was transported to an Arkansas plantation.<sup>43</sup> When Bradley was eighteen years old, his master died and his master's widow promoted him to a managerial position on the plantation. The death of Bradley's master was a defining moment in the black man's life, as he "purchased his time by the year, and began to earn money to buy his freedom."<sup>44</sup> In his new role on the plantation, Bradley was able to earn wages through labor and trade. After five years, he purchased his freedom papers for the sum of \$655, moved to Ohio, and was at the time of the debates a "beloved and respected member of the institution."<sup>45</sup>

Bradley's life demonstrated the capabilities of free Africans and African Americans to opponents of immediate emancipation. When Bradley was posed the question if blacks could take care of themselves if emancipated he shrewdly responded by stating "They have to take care of, and support themselves *now, and their master, and his family into the bargain*; and this being so, it would be strange if they could not provide for themselves, *when disencumbered from this load*."<sup>46</sup> Of course, Bradley's life was also a fervent affirmation of this notion. Adding to or perhaps confirming the previous testimony by white southern students, Bradley expressed that enslaved people yearned for freedom and education.<sup>47</sup> Bradley was "shrewd and intelligent" as described by Henry B. Stanton who also lauded his speech, as it "contained sound logic, enforced

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<sup>43</sup> Stanton, "Cheering Intelligence," *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50; *Emancipator*, 25 March 1834.

<sup>44</sup> Stanton, "Cheering Intelligence," *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>45</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>46</sup> Bradley quoted in Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>47</sup> Stanton, "Cheering Intelligence," *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.



by apt illustrations.”<sup>48</sup> After Bradley’s account, the assembly voted on the first question regarding the expediency of immediate emancipation and it was decided overwhelmingly in the affirmative with only a few opposing votes.<sup>49</sup> The testimony of Allan and white southern students who described the atrocities of the slave system and support for immediate abolition had a significant impact on Lane students’ sentiments. Since such cogent arguments were made by southern students favoring abolition made their testimonies persuasive.<sup>50</sup> Most importantly, James Bradley’s compelling life story and speech galvanized the vast majority of the student body into supporting the abolitionist movement. Perhaps the most compelling aspect of Bradley’s presentation is that his life exemplified the safety, economically and socially, of abolition as well as the equality and ability of African Americans to be productive, self-reliant citizens. The astute logic and morality of these testimonies were key components that helped garner support for immediate emancipation at Lane Seminary, as they were catalysts for the conversion of many white students to abolition. The second question, regarding colonization, was discussed the following evenings and the results would likewise have a significant impact on the development of antislavery at Lane Seminary.

Lane students involved in the debates addressed the question of colonization by interrogating the platform of the ACS. In doing so, the students examined the various publications of the colonization organization in order to consider the merits of the supposed benevolent movement.<sup>51</sup> Two speakers, one on each side, spoke on the subject

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<sup>48</sup> Stanton, “Cheering Intelligence,” *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>49</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>50</sup> Southern student advocacy for abolition at Lane Seminary set a significant precedent that would have a direct impact as Lane student abolitionists comprised their antislavery objectives and tactics at the conclusion of the debates.

<sup>51</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

and testimony was given in favor of the Liberian colony. According to Stanton, several students were supposed to speak in favor of colonization at the beginning of the debates but had been converted to abolitionism.<sup>52</sup> Other Lane students who initially supported colonization converted to the cause of “Anti-Colonizationism” after examining the ACS platform.<sup>53</sup> These students expressed that they had supported colonization without fully understanding the movement’s principles until the debates. They claimed they could not “find the words to express their astonishment that they should have been so duped into the support of this society as a scheme of benevolence towards free blacks, and a remedy for slavery” and that “They now repudiate it with all their hearts.”<sup>54</sup> While we do not know exactly why these students revoked their support of colonization, they mostly likely understood the flaws of the ACS. By examining the various publications that justified the movement, students likely became aware of the inherent prejudices of the movement. Additionally, Lane students would have understood that pragmatically, the proposition of repatriation was irrational, especially without the support of the majority of the African-American population.<sup>55</sup>

One anecdotal piece of evidence that was probably presented during the debates was the conversion of Augustus Wattles from colonization to abolition. Wattles’s conversion highlights a key component that helps explain Lane students’ convictions. Wattles initially had been the president of the Colonization Society at the Oneida institute prior to his matriculation at Lane.<sup>56</sup> As he traveled to Ohio, Wattles made an effort to

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<sup>52</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>53</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834; Stanton, “Cheering Intelligence,” *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>54</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>55</sup> See Ousmane Power-Greene, *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle Against the Colonization Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

<sup>56</sup> Stanton, “Cheering Intelligence,” *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

Wattles speak with African Americans he encountered on the subject of repatriation. Wattles “talked with some thirty or forty [African Americans], all of whom except one, were incorrigible in their preference to remain in their native land, rather than emigrate ‘home’ to a foreign shore.”<sup>57</sup> Wattles’s conversations with African Americans clearly indicated that they had no interest in leaving the United States which was their native home. Herein lies a persuasive argument against the ACS. If African Americans explicitly disagreed with the repatriation movement, it would be virtually impossible to implement such a scheme. For all these reasons, the vast majority of Lane students solidified their sentiments in opposition to colonization. Once the testimonies were over, a vote was taken whether or not Lane students believed the colonization movement merited Christian support. The result of the vote was an emphatic rejection of colonization.<sup>58</sup>

The results of the antislavery forum at Lane were clear and decisive. Lane students voted in favor of abolition while rejecting ACS ideology. Stanton admitted that initially he was apprehensive about the event, as the majority of students supported colonization. However, he explained that “the kindest feeling prevailed. There was no crimination, no denunciation, no impeachment of motives” and the results of the debate convinced him that “prejudice is vincible [sic], that colonization is vulnerable, and that immediate emancipation is not only right, and practicable, but is ‘*expedient*’.”<sup>59</sup> Stanton’s conviction regarding abolition was thus representative of Lane students as they were successfully converted to abolitionism.

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<sup>57</sup> Stanton, “Cheering Intelligence,” *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>58</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834. Only one vote was casted in the affirmative. Lesick believed it was John E. Finley the son of Robert Finley, the founder of the ACS, Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 82.

<sup>59</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834. Emphasis in the original.

The debates elicited the establishment of organized antislavery at Lane Seminary. On March 10, 1834, Lane abolitionists established the Lane Seminary Antislavery Society (LSASS).<sup>60</sup> Weld penned the preamble and constitution of the student abolitionist organization. Its main object was:

the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race, within the United States; the emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, LSASS was a radical abolitionist organization, as its members would promote immediate emancipation and social and political equality for African Americans. The constitution highlighted justifications for abolitionism such as slavery's contradiction of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, which made the country a beacon of hypocrisy on the world stage. Another important facet elucidates the impact of religion on the student abolitionists' ideology. They believed slavery inhibited the spread of Christianity, as enslaved African Americans were prevented from reading and learning about the gospel. Finally, the student abolitionists invoked the golden rule, entreating slaveholders and other proslavery advocates to treat everyone the way they themselves wished to be treated.<sup>62</sup> The Lane student abolitionists' objectives were not to incite insurrections, violence, or war but to present slaveholders with the principles of truth and justice in a reasoned and logical argument that would be irrefutable.<sup>63</sup> The officers of the antislavery society were all from southern states—William T. Allan, President

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<sup>60</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834.

<sup>61</sup> "Extract of a Letter," *Liberator*, April 26, 1834, 67; Theodore Weld, "Preamble of the Anti-Slavery Society at Lane Seminary," *Liberator*, April 12, 1834, 57.

<sup>62</sup> Weld, "Preamble," *Liberator*, April 12, 1834, 57; Citing the golden rule to justify emancipation had a long tradition in antislavery rhetoric dating back to antislavery Quakerism in the seventeenth century, see Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657-1761* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>63</sup> Weld, "Preamble," *Liberator*, April 12, 1834, 57.

(Alabama), Marius Robinson, Vice President (Tennessee), Andrew Benton, Secretary (Missouri), James A. Thome, Treasurer (Kentucky), and C.S. Hodges, Auditor (Virginia). Weld and Stanton were made managers as was Huntington Lyman who was from Louisiana.<sup>64</sup> The antislavery forum culminated in organized abolitionism on campus.

The antislavery discourse at Lane has been characterized as debates, but did not function as such. Historians have highlighted this notion but strangely the name remains applied to the proceedings. Instead of debates, the meetings mirrored a revival synthesized with antislavery arguments.<sup>65</sup> The structure of the meetings consisted of protracted examinations regarding slavery's harsh realities, its sinful nature, and justifications for immediate emancipation that appealed to the moral sentiments of Lane students, which initiated deep reflection.<sup>66</sup> By the end of the near forty-eight hours of antislavery and anti-colonization testimony, Lane students acknowledged the sin of slavery and embraced abolitionism. The nature of the revivals are no surprise, given that Theodore Weld orchestrated the forum and had been trained in revivalism. Lane student abolitionists seemed to have discovered an effective strategy in converting proponents of slavery, and even colonization, to abolitionism. One particular conversion story of a Lane student to abolitionism is noteworthy. Upon entering the debates Henry Thompson, a student from Kentucky, owned two enslaved African Americans and hired out their labor in order to pay for his fees at Lane. After the antislavery revivals, he manumitted the two African Americans, hired them as wage-laborers, and facilitated their education.<sup>67</sup> If

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<sup>64</sup> Stanton, "Cheering Intelligence," *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>65</sup> Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, 66; Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 82; Banner, "Religion and Reform in the Early Republic," 689.

<sup>66</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 83.

<sup>67</sup> Stanton, *Emancipator*, March 25, 1834, Wattle, *Emancipator*, April 22, 1834.

white southern students, not only heirs to inheritance in enslaved persons but also slaveholders, at Lane could be persuaded by reason, logic, and sentiment, then surely other white southerners could be converted to understanding the expediency of immediate emancipation. Stanton shrewdly observed this, as he believed that southern minds could “be reached and influenced by *facts and arguments, as easy as any other class of our citizens*.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore, through intellectual discourse, Lane student abolitionists believed proslavery advocates could be morally converted to abolitionism by employing antislavery revivalism.

Along with abolitionist ideology, Lane abolitionists were also dedicated to improving the condition of free African Americans in the community, even in spite of the prevailing racial opinions of white Cincinnatians. In a letter to Lewis Tappan, Theodore Weld wrote that “faith without *works* is dead.”<sup>69</sup> At the time of the Lane antislavery revivals, Lane students were active in establishing schools, libraries, and other educational institutions for free African American men and women in Cincinnati.<sup>70</sup> They lectured three to four nights a week on various subjects such as geography, arithmetic, and natural philosophy. Lane students developed evening classes every weekday dedicated for teaching African Americans to read and also established a library.<sup>71</sup> Three Sabbath schools and Bible classes were opened for religious instruction which indicates the seminary students’ dedication to spreading Christianity. On March 1, 1834, Augustus Wattle opened a school for African Americans in a black Cincinnati church and by the

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<sup>68</sup> Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, December 11, 1834, *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857*, ed. Dwight L. Dumond (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1938) 155n3; Stanton, “Cheering Intelligence,” *Liberator*, March 29, 1834, 50.

<sup>69</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, *Letters of Weld*, 133.

<sup>70</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, *Letters of Weld*, 133-4.

<sup>71</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, *Letters of Weld*, 133.

end of the week had 150-300 students, from ages sixteen to sixty, come through the school.<sup>72</sup> Wattles withdrew from Lane in order to devote all of his time to educational programs for African Americans. Marius Robinson also took a leave from the seminary in order to assist Wattles in leading the black educational programs.

In addition to acquiring knowledge, these African-American students were former slaves who purchased their own freedom and were working as wage laborers in order to secure the freedom of other family members, friends, and relatives. Weld wrote “Of the almost 3,000 blacks in Cincinnati more than three-fourths of the adults are emancipated slaves, who worked out their own freedom. Many are now paying for themselves under large securities. Besides these, multitudes are toiling to purchase their friends, who are now in slavery.”<sup>73</sup> White abolitionists clearly made the point that if anyone needed proof of African American capabilities in education and wage labor in the 1830’s, one need not look further than Cincinnati. Writing in July 1834, Wattles highlighted the fact that any opposition to the schooling of free blacks had been overcome as he stated, “There has been no opposition to our schools and I am induced to believe the citizens generally approve of them.”<sup>74</sup> Wattles’s statement held true, at least initially. Lane student abolitionists were dedicated to assisting free African American men and women in their education with the goal of elevating their condition in society. They were also dedicated to disseminating abolitionist information in white communities.

Lane student abolitionists were integral to spreading abolitionist sentiment in Ohio during the mid-1830s. In July, Elizur Wright Jr. sent Weld a plethora of various

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<sup>72</sup> Augustus Wattles, “Statement in Regard to Cincinnati,” *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam April 1835* (Beaumont & Wallace, 1835), 21; Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 89.

<sup>73</sup> Weld to Lewis Tappan, *Letters of Weld*, 134-5.

<sup>74</sup> Wattles quoted in *Emancipator*, July 3, 1834 in Weld to Lewis Tappan, *Letters of Weld*, 134n6.

antislavery tracts and publications. He forwarded 400 copies of the *Annual Report* of the AASS, 150 copies of the *Antislavery Reporter*, and 73 abolitionist pamphlets, and asked Weld and other Lane abolitionists to circulate them throughout white communities.<sup>75</sup> Lane abolitionists also distributed eight thousand copies of James G. Birney's *Letter on Colonization, Addressed to the Rev. Thornton J. Mills, Corresponding Secretary of the Kentucky Colonization Society*. Similar to the conversion of southern Lane students, Birney converted to abolitionism after being an ardent advocate of colonization and a former slaveholder. He denounced slavery as antithetical to the premise that all men are created equal in the Declaration of Independence and also cited the golden rule to justify abolition.<sup>76</sup> Along with Henry Stanton, James A. Thome, a Lane student abolitionist, attended the anniversary meeting of the AASS in 1834 and gave speeches in favor of abolition. Thome in particular urged the society to redouble their efforts in converting white southerners to abolition.<sup>77</sup> Historian Thomas Lesick's account of Lane abolitionism even implies that Weld, Stanton and Edward Weed may have assisted fugitive slaves.<sup>78</sup> Lane student abolitionists were dedicated to spreading abolitionism throughout Ohio. They acquired valuable experience that would impact their future decisions regarding their participation in the movement. The results of the Lane antislavery revivals and subsequent student abolitionist activism provided a major boost to the broader antislavery movement, as Lane student abolitionists help spread the movement in Ohio.

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<sup>75</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 90.

<sup>76</sup> James G. Birney, *Letter on Colonization, Addressed to the Rev. Thornton J. Mills, Corresponding Secretary of the Kentucky Colonization Society* (New York: Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1834), 45.

<sup>77</sup> *The First Annual Report of the American Antislavery Society* (New York: Hall & Bates, 1834), 32; James Thome, "American Antislavery Society: First Anniversary," *Liberator*, May 17, 1834, 78.

<sup>78</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 90.



The combination of forming an antislavery society on campus, developing and promoting educational organizations for free blacks in Cincinnati, and spreading abolitionist ideology indicates that not only Lane students' dedication to abolitionism, but it also signified a major shift in the broader Cincinnati community. Not everyone was in favor of the students' abolitionist activism and promotion of racial equality. An anonymous letter to the *Emancipator* claimed the abolitionist agenda would be detrimental to social order in Cincinnati and in the South. The article also condemned whites and blacks "mixing promiscuously" as "barbarity."<sup>79</sup> James Hall adamantly opposed the establishment of the LSASS. Hall was originally a politician and judge from Illinois. In the 1830's, he relocated to Cincinnati as editor of the *Western Monthly Magazine* and penned a response to the student abolitionist activity at Lane. Hall argued that students at institutions of higher education should not become involved in political arguments such as slavery.<sup>80</sup> He wrote:

There ought to be some spot hallowed from the contests of party, sacredly protected from contamination of the malignant passions, where the mind might be imbued with the lessons of truth, and peace, and honor, unalloyed with prejudice. Such sanctuaries should all our seminaries of learning be.<sup>81</sup>

Hall was an advocate of keeping colleges and seminaries impartial on political issues, such as slavery, because he believed their sole purpose was to foster the accumulation of knowledge. This argument is, of course, based on the false premise that racial slavery was not a moral issue. If students became involved in antislavery, Hall argued, they would contribute to the excitement of public sentiment and incite antagonistic feelings. If

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<sup>79</sup> *Emancipator*, August 19, 1834.

<sup>80</sup> Weld to James Hall, Editor of the *Western Monthly Magazine*, *Weld-Grimke Letters*, 136, 137n2.

<sup>81</sup> James Hall, "Education and Slavery," *Western Monthly Magazine* (Cincinnati: Taylor & Tracy, 1834), 267.

that were to happen, colleges and seminaries usefulness would be diminished.<sup>82</sup> Theodore Weld read Hall's article and confronted the editor in order to see "if he would correct any of the misrepresentations of his article" but Hall adamantly refused.<sup>83</sup>

After failing to persuade Hall to recant his statement, Weld penned a refutation of Hall's claims. He argued that Lane students were mature enough to articulate informed opinions on political issues. Weld emphasized that theological seminaries were supposed to "educate the heart, as well as the head" and to "deepen emotions, as well as to provide the means of knowledge."<sup>84</sup> Weld went on to defend the free discussion at colleges and seminaries, especially ones that train ministers, on important societal issues of their time. "He who would preach in the nineteenth century, must *know* the nineteenth century."<sup>85</sup> Weld demonstrated his mental prowess by refuting Hall's assertions and highlighting the reasons why places of higher education should not only educate society's youth academically, but also to engage with society's problems and mold informed opinions. Weld's response also acknowledged the right of free discussion which would have a tremendous impact on Lane students' ideology. The *Cincinnati Gazette* and *Cincinnati Journal* both criticized students for adopting abolitionist principles. The latter newspaper argued "There may be room enough in the wide world for *abolitionism* and *perfectionism* and many other *isms*, but a school, to prepare pious youth for preaching the gospel, has no legitimate place for any of these."<sup>86</sup> Despite the objections Weld and Lane

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<sup>82</sup> Hall, "Education and Slavery," 269.

<sup>83</sup> Weld to James G. Birney, May 28, 1834, *Letters of Birney*, 114.

<sup>84</sup> Weld to James Hall, *Letters of Weld*, 143.

<sup>85</sup> Weld to James Hall, *Letters of Weld*, 144.

<sup>86</sup> "Lane Seminary," *Cincinnati Journal* reprinted in *Liberator*, October 25, 1834, 170.

abolitionists faced for their activism, they continued to promote antislavery and racial equality.

Students also faced rhetorical opposition to their efforts in promoting educational opportunities to the free black community. Articles in the *Cincinnati Journal* criticized the students for attending church with African Americans and intermingling with blacks in their homes. Cincinnatians condemned them as promoting racial amalgamation.<sup>87</sup> These critiques were perhaps the most explosive ones. Lane faculty became concerned not only with the students' antislavery activism but with the growing hostility towards the seminary in community.

Faculty's convictions on the slavery question are noteworthy as they shaped professors' responses to student activism. Lyman Beecher, Calvin Stowe, and Thomas Biggs were advocates of colonization. However, Beecher tried to mediate between the student abolitionists and the faculty as well as the broader community. Beecher pressured Weld and Lane students to be more discrete in their interactions with African Americans in the city in order to quell the hostility and negative publicity the seminary was receiving. As summer vacation approached, Beecher and other faculty members were confident the heightened agitation on the subject would subside. Unfortunately for Beecher, this would not be the case.<sup>88</sup>

In the summer of 1834, Lane Seminary's all-white trustees convened to address their concerns with Lane students' abolitionism and promotion of racial equality. Many of the trustees were native Cincinnatians and wanted to maintain the status quo which meant a continuation of economic prosperity for the local community and the

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<sup>87</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 92-3.

<sup>88</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 94-5.

preservation of racial hierarchy. This also meant a continued relationship with the institution of racial slavery, as Cincinnati's economy was reliant on commerce with southern states.<sup>89</sup> Trustees were also concerned over the potential of mob violence that could erupt in the city over the students' activities. During the mid-1830's, anti-abolitionist mob violence proliferated throughout the United States, most notably in New York.<sup>90</sup> Lane trustees realized the threat of such violence in Cincinnati was possible and overwhelmingly disapproved of the students' antislavery activities. Only four of the twenty-five trustees supported abolitionism. The majority of the trustees believed students acted without regard of the consequences and how their decisions might impact the seminary.<sup>91</sup> For these reasons, the trustees believed it was necessary to place sanctions on Lane students' activism.

Professor Thomas Biggs was in favor of punishing student activism at Lane Seminary. He believed that students' engaged in abolitionist activities subverted the authority of faculty and by extension their leadership and reputation, as well as the reputation of the institution.<sup>92</sup> Biggs was also a colonizationist and published a series of essays in the *Cincinnati Journal* in support of the ACS.<sup>93</sup> The support of Biggs cemented the trustees' resolve to restrict student activism at Lane. In August 1834, trustees drafted a resolution that would empower faculty to regulate student activities. The report also demanded the Lane antislavery society dissolve, and discouraged students from

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<sup>89</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 116.

<sup>90</sup> David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1861: Toward Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35-7.

<sup>91</sup> Lyman Beecher, Thomas J. Biggs, Calvin E. Stowe, "Statement of the Faculty Concerning the late Difficulties in Lane Seminary," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 118-9.

<sup>93</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 118, "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

discussing any topic that was politically relevant.<sup>94</sup> The trustees seemingly endorsed James Hall's ideology regarding the place of higher education in society. Additionally, Lane faculty and administrations as well as public opinion seemingly consented to the matriculation of black male students to Lane but vehemently opposed student abolitionism because students integrated into the black community. More specifically, the opposition abhorred the fact that white male students interacted with black women. The trustees' deliberation and subsequent creation of resolutions occurred while both Beecher and Stowe were away in the east fundraising for the seminary.<sup>95</sup> In a correspondence with Professor Nathaniel Wright, Beecher urged the faculty to be cautious and not act irrationally. Per Beecher's advice, trustees and faculty prolonged the decision on implementing the resolutions until the fall.

By October of 1834, public animosity towards the student abolitionists and their activities reached its crescendo and on October 6, the trustees were compelled to enact their provisions. With Beecher still absent from the seminary, the trustees voted in favor of the resolutions.<sup>96</sup> The provisions empowered faculty to regulate student societies, demanded that the LSASS be dissolved, prohibited students from meeting and discussing any topic without the consent of the faculty, and allowed faculty to dismiss any student from the seminary without providing reasonable cause.<sup>97</sup> Competing perspectives were printed in newspapers across the country. Local Cincinnati newspapers praised the resolutions and supported the notion that institutions of higher education should be impartial on political subjects. The *Boston Recorder* and the *Cross and Baptist Journal of*

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<sup>94</sup> "Defence [sic] of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>95</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 117-9.

<sup>96</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 126.

<sup>97</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

*the Mississippi Valley* also favored the position of the Lane administration.<sup>98</sup> In response and opposition to Lane faculty, abolitionist and editor of the *New York Evangelist*, Joshua Leavitt asked “In what age do we live? And in what country?”<sup>99</sup> The trustees’ resolutions were made public and Lane abolitionists acted swiftly and decisively.

The implemented resolutions compelled an overwhelming majority of Lane students to withdraw from the seminary. In 1834 the total enrollment at Lane Seminary was one hundred and three students. By the end of the year, ninety-five students withdrew or did not return for the fall semester because of the newly adopted sanctions.<sup>100</sup> At least fifty-one students explicitly withdrew because of the prohibition of antislavery activity and the restriction of open discussion.<sup>101</sup> This event has come to be known as the Lane Rebellion. In January 1835, the *Liberator* printed an expose on the tumultuous events at Lane from the perspective of both the students and faculty. These statements provide fascinating details regarding the students’ resolve to discontinue their relationship with the seminary and the faculty’s endorsement of the sanctions. They also provide competing interpretations of the role of free speech at institutions of higher learning.

In “Defence [sic] of the Students,” Lane student abolitionists provided a reasoned, pragmatic argument to justify their actions. Their main grievance centered on faculty suppression of free discussion. The student abolitionists explained they seceded from the seminary because “free discussion and correspondent action have been prohibited by

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<sup>98</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 120.

<sup>99</sup> Joshua Leavitt, *New York Evangelist*, September 20, 1834, quoted in Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 120.

<sup>100</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 131.

<sup>101</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

law.”<sup>102</sup> They believed free discussion was an inherent and inalienable right and no authority, including faculty, could infringe on that right. Student abolitionists condemned the faculty’s actions as “robbery of the mind, burial of truth” and noted that the “Proscription of free discussion is sacrilege.”<sup>103</sup> The students revered free discussion and investigation and considered them foundational components of education and knowledge. Upon the application of these concepts to the slavery question, students had resolved that immediate emancipation and the promotion of racial equality were expedient.<sup>104</sup>

After students consulted with faculty, they realized faculty believed free discussion was a privilege rather than a duty and a right.<sup>105</sup> Students believed the main reason faculty endorsed the sanctions was that the topic of slavery was too divisive and public sentiment abhorred the promotion of racial equality. For these reasons, trustees demanded that any discussion on slavery had to be “*excluded from the seminary.*”<sup>106</sup> Student abolitionists perceived this to be a major folly. They could not be associated with an institution that bowed to public sentiment or allow it to dictate their activities. Student abolitionists’ sentiments aligned with other radical abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phelps. These abolitionist leaders believed public sentiment to be both the problem and solution to democracy. W. Caleb McDaniel argues that the problem of democracy during the first eighty years of the country’s existence was the majority opinion favored slavery and racial prejudice.<sup>107</sup> Conversely, abolitionism was the minority opinion. Therefore, abolitionists such as Lane students necessarily faced

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<sup>102</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>103</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>104</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>105</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>106</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>107</sup> McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 4-5.

opposition to their activities but adamantly refused to acquiesce to majority opinion because of their reasoned and moral opposition to slavery and racial prejudice. Like Garrison and Phelps, Lane students believed agitation was the key to help convert majority opinion to abolitionism. Lane abolitionists refused to concede to administration's notions, which crystalized their convictions. A passage of Weld's response to James Hall summarizes the students' position:

What! are our theological seminaries to be awed into silence upon the great questions of human duty? Are they to be bribed over the interests of an unholy public sentiment, by promises of patronage or by threats of its withdrawal? Shall they be tutored into passivity...Are theological students to be put under a board of conservators, special instructions to stifle all discussion, except upon the popular side?<sup>108</sup>

Weld and other student abolitionist perceived bowing to public sentiment as antithetical to morality and logic and, as theological students, rejected such passivity. They felt it was the duty of all educational institutions to acquire knowledge on the most important topics of their time. As future ministers and leaders in society, student abolitionists believed they had to know the political context in which they lived. This necessarily required the discussion and investigation into issues such as slavery.

A key component of the student abolitionists' statement was the perspective from Professor John W. Nevins of Western Reserve Theological Seminary (WRTS). A spokesman for WRTS faculty, Nevins endorsed free discussion and sided with the student abolitionists. Nevins believed that students' could not be lawfully restricted from discussing the political, moral, and religious issues of their time. Faculty at WRTS "disproved of any thing resembling a *gag-law*."<sup>109</sup> WRTS faculty conspicuously opposed

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<sup>108</sup> Weld to James Hall, *Letters of Weld*, 140-41.

<sup>109</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.



free speech restriction and their choice of language foreshadows the national controversy in Congress over abolitionist petitions and the gag rule. This reveals that the precursor to the gag rule was the discrepancy between faculty and students over free discussion and abolitionist activity at Lane Seminary and similar institutions. By attempting to suppress student abolitionism, faculty and trustees were implementing their own gag rule. Nevins goes on to explicitly critique Lane Seminary trustees and faculty for adopting and publicizing their resolutions that “shut out the light of truth and exclude[d] free discussion.”<sup>110</sup> The Lane student abolitionists explicitly endorsed Nevins’s perspective.

Lane student abolitionists also believed that the faculty provision of dismissing any student was a flagrant abuse of power. Under this provision, at any moment and without providing reason, a student could be removed from the seminary at the faculty’s discretion. Student abolitionists believed this was an unequivocal misuse of power and transformed the seminary into a beacon of despotism. They could not comply with these sanctions and stated “We cannot break our plighted faith, we cannot surrender inalienable rights, and we cannot abandon a cause that is deeply rooted in human interests and human rights.”<sup>111</sup> In doing so, the student abolitionists affirmed their right of free discussion and moral opposition to slavery.

The Lane rebels’ statement also accused faculty of hypocrisy and provides quantitative evidence suggesting it was the faculty sanctions that caused enrollment to decrease and not the students’ abolitionism. The trustees and faculty asserted that no institution should have a partisan reputation regarding any question that was publicly contested. The rebels astutely argued that position was in of itself political, that it was a

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<sup>110</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

<sup>111</sup> “Defence of the Students,” *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 5.

direct endorsement of the majority opinion, and a veiled effort to maintain the status quo.<sup>112</sup> Ironically, twenty-one out of twenty-five trustees had ties to colonization, Beecher, Stowe, and Biggs all were colonizationists and prior to the establishment of the LSASS, the majority of students were colonizationists.<sup>113</sup> The rebels also explained that there were not any qualms regarding colonization prior to the antislavery revivals. By highlighting the hypocrisy of the administration's regulations, the students also revealed the administration's animosity towards abolitionism. The student abolitionists also emphasized the fact that forty students expressed interest in enrolling at Lane after the antislavery revivals took place. Once the sanctions were made public, twenty-four recanted their interest in Lane Seminary.<sup>114</sup> In terms of enrollment, the faculty's sanctions were to blame for the decrease in prospective student interest in the seminary and not the emergence of abolitionism. The Lane rebels had one more point to defend that illuminates the reason public sentiment adamantly disapproved of their activities.

As Lane students became involved in the black community in Cincinnati, they were consciously integrating the community. One Lane student supposedly boarded with a black family for an undisclosed period of time. The student was most likely Augustus Wattles, as the article explains that the individual was formerly a student at the seminary but at the time of this incident had severed ties with the institution in order to focus exclusively on African-American educational programs in the community.<sup>115</sup> Once again the fear of amalgamation was the cause for white public unrest in Cincinnati and accusations placed Lane student abolitionists at the forefront of the controversy. Another

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<sup>112</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>113</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>114</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>115</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6; Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 92.

example that caused civic unrest was white Lane students who also taught African Americans and were seen walking with black women in the streets of Cincinnati. One student's testimony stated he simply gave directions to a black woman who was new to the area and another student asserted they were both walking to the same church.<sup>116</sup> Public opinion was in opposition to the students' abolitionism, but it was their promotion of racial equality and integration that galvanized public opinion against student abolitionists' activities. It was for these reasons public opinion elicited the trustees' resolutions that were subsequently adopted by the faculty.

Consequently, Lane student abolitionists withdrew from the seminary. They asserted that it was not because the student-faculty relationship was strained. To the contrary, Calvin Stowe and Lyman Beecher spoke highly of the students and vindicated their behavior when it came to academic matters, and praised the students' respectful demeanor.<sup>117</sup> According to the Lane rebels, the reasons they withdrew were twofold. They left because "the authorities above us have asserted the right to suspend free discussion upon their own arbitrary wills" and "Because they sanction the principle of prostration to public sentiment..."<sup>118</sup> The student's statement was signed by fifty-one student abolitionists, including James Bradley, Henry Stanton, James Thome, William Allan, and Theodore Weld.<sup>119</sup> By articulating this argument, the Lane rebels accused the faculty of violating their First amendment rights which necessarily meant by extension their right to abolitionist activity and denounced their adherence to public sentiment. The student abolitionist statement was a reasoned, logical, and pragmatic defense of their

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<sup>116</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>117</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>118</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

<sup>119</sup> "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6.

actions. News of the Lane Controversy spread across the country, as newspapers reprinted the students' statement.<sup>120</sup> The *Emancipator* even printed 5,000 extra copies of their edition that printed the "Defence of the Students" and reported that 4,000 were in circulation by early February 1835.<sup>121</sup> A week after the publication of the students' statement, the *Liberator* printed the faculty's perspective on the turbulent events at Lane Seminary.

Lane faculty were compelled to give their perspective on the controversy that surrounded the seminary as they claimed to have had all the facts.<sup>122</sup> Their statement was comprised of several important topics. They presented what they believed were the reasons why students withdrew from the seminary. Their testimony was also an endorsement of the trustees' sanctions and provided an interpretation of the First amendment that contradicted the students' perspective. The faculty's testimony also elucidated their perspective on the role of free discussion at institutions of higher learning. Faculty believed that the students' withdrawal was not caused by multiple factors. More specifically, they were assured that the students' actions were not prompted by a strained student-faculty relationship, which mirrored the rebels' testimony. Faculty asserted it was not because abolition deterred students' study, for they lauded the students' acumen. Faculty claimed that despite some students' questionable judgment and possession of "great imperfections," they knew the students acted rationally and according to their consciences.<sup>123</sup> The faculty's most dubious claim was that students did

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<sup>120</sup> Abolitionists newspapers reprinted the students' statement, "Defence of the Students," *Liberator*, January 10, 1835, 6; *Emancipator*, January 6, 1835. Also, reactions lauding Lane students' educational programs for African Americans and other general support was printed in *Liberator*, January 3, 1835, 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Emancipator*, February 3, 1835.

<sup>122</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>123</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

not withdraw because faculty and the trustees were hostile to abolition. From the student abolitionists' perspective, this was clearly inaccurate and false. The faculty went as far as to express that they wished to preserve the LSASS but that they were "foiled by an influence and action beyond their control."<sup>124</sup> The faculty deferred to public opinion, which was against the abolitionist activities of the LSASS, hence they were against student abolitionism. After explaining the supposed reasons why students did not withdraw from the seminary, the faculty explained why they supposedly did.

According to faculty, the students withdrew because the LSASS was dissolved. They felt the society's activities necessitated its restriction. The faculty stated "It was the spirit and manner of doing a few things not necessary to the prosperity of the society itself, against the advice of the faculty, and reckless of the consequences in doing violence to public sentiment."<sup>125</sup> From the faculty's perspective, it was not students' abolitionist ideology, it was their actions that forced the administration's restrictions. Faculty explained that they advised the student abolitionists not to have the antislavery forum in the fear it would cause a larger crisis. They critiqued the students' interactions with African Americans and cited the public outcry regarding students boarding with black families. Faculty asserted that they advised students to act discretely, but they had ignored their advice.<sup>126</sup> Their statement also addressed the issue of integration. Faculty admitted that newspapers greatly exaggerated the fact that several African-American women visited Lane Seminary. There are not any extant sources that document what actually took place between Lane students and African Americans but it is likely that

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<sup>124</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>125</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>126</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

these episodes coincided with their educational efforts in the black community. However petty these events may seem, public sentiment condemned the student abolitionists' actions that promoted integration and racial equality. What is not acknowledged and is lost in the faculty's statement is the fact that African American men were admitted at Lane and thus the seminary was already a place of racial integration. Clearly, the integration faculty and public sentiment were concerned over was integration between white male students and black women, and more specifically, interracial sex. According to the faculty, this is what caused uproar in the community.<sup>127</sup> Faculty went on to elucidate their interpretation of free inquiry.

Lane faculty believed that "free inquiry and associated action could be enjoyed only in subordination to the great ends of the institution, and in consistency with its prosperity" and that it was at the faculty's discretion to judge not the students.<sup>128</sup> For faculty, an individual's first amendment rights were limited upon entering the seminary and the interest of the institution superseded the students' rights of free speech. Administration believed faculty could act unilaterally on this matter. The faculty's interpretation illuminates the power relations at Lane Seminary. Faculty were able to deem what was or was not injurious to seminary. According to the faculty, the students had no say in this process and necessarily had to acquiesce to their judgment. Faculty maintained that the implementation of the trustees' sanctions was justified, as they acted out of concern of the best interest of both the seminary and the students' welfare. From the faculty's perspective, they had not suppressed free inquiry.

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<sup>127</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>128</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

The students' and faculty's statements reveal two competing interpretations of the First Amendment provision of freedom of speech. The student abolitionists believed it to be an absolute and inalienable right that could not be restricted by any authority. Lane faculty's interpretation was more fluid and regulatory in nature. Once a student matriculated at the seminary, according to faculty, that individual's freedom of speech became limited and was superseded by the interests of the institution. The trustees believed that public sentiment necessitated the empowerment of faculty with regulatory capabilities in order to preserve the integrity and prosperity of the institution. From the administration's perspective, this meant the suppression of student abolitionism, which also meant integration and the promotion of racial equality, was justified and not in violation of any constitutional rights of the students. However, student abolitionists had done nothing unlawful and simply acted according to what morality and logic dictated. Conversely, faculty bowed to public opinion which was in opposition to radical abolitionism and explicitly suppressed minority opinion. Therefore, Lane faculty implemented the first institutionalized gag rule against radical abolitionism in the United States. The faculty's statement continued as an affirmation of their regulations and blamed students' actions for all the trouble at the seminary.

The faculty statement also took on condescending tone towards students' abolitionism. Faculty maintained throughout the statement that students should have taken their advice, acted more discretely, and kept quiet on the matter of slavery. Faculty went as far as to assert that students should have "laid their hand upon their mouth, and their mouth in the dust, than to open it in unmeasured denunciation against" the faculty

who were supposedly acting in the students' best interest.<sup>129</sup> Lane faculty disapproved of the students' abolitionism because they promoted racial equality and cited that as the cause of all the problems that befell the seminary. In particular, faculty mentioned that "all our difficulties were originated and continued by the instrumentality of an influential member of the Abolition Society, with the express design of making the institution subservient to the cause of abolition."<sup>130</sup> The faculty accusation signified that Theodore Weld was to blame for giving abolition precedence over the seminary.<sup>131</sup> After blaming Weld, faculty believed and reiterated that their sanctions were common law at other institutions and were committed to protecting the seminary at their discretion which meant the supervision of students' freedom of speech to ensure it was "safely" exercised.<sup>132</sup> For Beecher, Stowe, and Biggs, the entire issue came down to who would rule the seminary, students or faculty. By 1835, it was clear what direction the institution would take. The faculty and students' competing ideologies indicated that their relationship was irreconcilable as the Lane rebels severed their ties with seminary. Some of the rebels would embark on careers dedicated to the cause of ending slavery and promoting racial equality.

The events of Lane Seminary were historically significant for the antislavery movement and illuminate the origins of institutionalized regulation of free discussion of abolition. The context and location in which the seminary was established and the leadership student abolitionists, particularly James Bradley, Henry B. Stanton, William T.

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<sup>129</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>130</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

<sup>131</sup> Weld and other student abolitionists' radicalism foreshadows the crisis of 1850's that centered issues of slavery and freedom in national discourse that helped to explain the cause of the Civil War.

<sup>132</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.



Allan, and Theodore Weld, provided fertile ground for antislavery discourse. The success of the antislavery revivals led by Weld signified a decisive victory for radical abolitionism in the western part of the United States. For Lane student abolitionists, the promotion of immediate emancipation was not sufficient as they developed educational systems in order to benefit free African Americans in Cincinnati and advocated for racial equality and integration.

White Cincinnatians vehemently opposed the students' abolitionism and elicited Lane trustees and faculty to implement suppressive sanctions on student activity. Faculty and trustees used the veil of protecting the interests of the institution to justify their suppressive sanctions. Conversely, student abolitionists condemned the sanctions as violating the inalienable right of free discussion because they believed it could not be regulated by any authority and criticized the administration for bowing to public sentiment. In other words, the Lane administration was complicit in perpetuating racial prejudices and indirectly supported slavery by suppressing student abolitionism.

The events at Lane Seminary indicate that students and faculty develop two distinct interpretations of free discussion. Students believed in free discussion in absolute terms while faculty asserted that upon entering an institution of higher education, the individual's freedom of speech became limited, as the institution's reputation took precedence. It was also clear that the central objection of faculty and white public opinion to Lane students' abolitionism was over the fear of interracial sex between white male students and black women in the community.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Extant sources on these interactions are extremely limited. Faculty acknowledged that local media had embellished these interactions which caused the public outcry against Lane student abolitionism.

The implications of the tumultuous events at Lane Seminary would have stark consequences for students and faculty at other similar institutions in the country. The outcome of the antislavery revivals and subsequent student rebellion was a grand achievement for radical abolitionism, as students seemingly had a proven strategy in antislavery revivalism to convert Americans to abolitionism. However, the Lane Controversy actually had adverse effects on student abolitionism at other institutions, as Lane administrators and faculty established the precedent of institutionalized regulation of student abolitionist organizations. A passage in the Lane faculty's statement expressed the hope that the events of Lane would not be replicated across the country. They wrote, "We cannot but hope that our experience will modify beneficially, the conduct of abolitionists and the faculty, in all our literary and theological institutions, so as to escape the repetition of our unhappy experience."<sup>134</sup> The events at Lane did influence administrations and students alike at colleges and seminaries across the country. As the antislavery controversy transpired at Lane Seminary, student abolitionism was simultaneously stirring in New England.

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<sup>134</sup> "Statement of the Faculty," *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: A PREEMINENT BATTLEGROUND BETWEEN ABOLITION AND COLONIZATION

On April 6, 1833, a short but significant letter was published in the *Liberator* that provides a window into the controversy over the slavery question at Andover Theological Seminary (ATS). The original letter was part of a correspondence received by the student antislavery society at Andover from a “distinguished Philanthropist,” Arthur Tappan, and forwarded to William Lloyd Garrison for publication.<sup>1</sup> The contents of the letter centered on a question of contemporary importance regarding the issue of slavery: should Christians support the colonization movement?<sup>2</sup> Initially a colonizationist but converted to abolitionism, Tappan expounded on his repudiation of colonization and support for immediate abolition. Tappan also cast his support for organizations like that of the student antislavery society at Andover, as he prayed that those societies be “eminently instrumental in dissipating prejudice, and pouring light upon the intellect of the millions of our countrymen who are held in bondage.”<sup>3</sup> The Andover antislavery students were receptive to Tappan’s sentiments and supported his conclusions regarding colonization and abolition.<sup>4</sup>

Tappan’s letter reveals that the contentious topic of the slavery question was prevalent at Andover Theological Seminary and students sought the advice of leaders in

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Tappan, “Letter From Arthur Tappan,” *Liberator*, April 6, 1833, 55.

<sup>2</sup> A question that Lane students would not take up until 1834.

<sup>3</sup> Tappan, “Letter from Arthur Tappan,” *Liberator*, April 6, 1833, 55.

<sup>4</sup> The students’ antislavery convictions were published later that year in the *Liberator*, September 28, 1833 and coincide with Tappan’s repudiation of colonization and support of abolition. A discussion of the student’s sentiments will be explored in this chapter.

the abolition movement. Like Lane Seminary and Amherst College, students at Andover were enthralled with the national discourse regarding antislavery and were eager to support an organization that upheld their moral convictions as Christians and future clergy. Tappan's quotation supporting the student antislavery society and their efforts to elevate the condition of African Americans exemplifies the platform Andover seminary students would follow as Christian ministers and abolitionists. Moreover, the school and the surrounding community was a destination for many famous abolitionist lecturers and leaders, such as Amos Phelps, Henry B. Stanton, Theodore Weld, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, William Lloyd Garrison, and the British abolitionist George Thompson. Since these abolitionists traveled to Andover suggests that the theological students and other citizens of the community were a targeted demographic for membership in the abolitionist movement. It also signifies that Andover was a battleground between colonization and abolition.

From 1833-1837, a struggle for organized abolitionism transpired on campus. The colonizationist movement had received tremendous support from students and faculty at Andover and even led Garrison to proclaim the seminary as a "hotbed of Colonization."<sup>5</sup> However, as early as 1833, a student antislavery society was formed which represented the first example of dissent from the prevailing colonizationist opinion on campus. After Tappan's *Liberator* letter drew attention to the student antislavery society, leaders of abolitionism targeted the seminary as a key destination for their lectures and hoped to convert the institution to an abolitionist stronghold. Ironically, it was not Garrison, Weld, nor even Phelps who had the most success spreading abolitionism at the seminary, but

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<sup>5</sup> William Lloyd Garrison to George W. Benson, November 25, 1833, in Walter M. Merrill ed., *I Will Be Heard! 1822-1835: The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison* (Cambridge MA: 1971), 272.

rather George Thompson. In 1835, Thompson lectured and met with students in January and then several more times in July. It was no coincidence that 1835 marked the most rigorous abolitionist activity on the Andover campus. The *Liberator* printed competing interpretations of Thompson's lectures and provide detailed accounts of the British abolitionist's impact at Andover. Ultimately, however, the efforts of Thompson and other abolitionists were unsuccessful in converting the majority of students to abolition. Like Lane faculty, ATS faculty adamantly opposed abolitionism. However, Andover faculty had success in regulating student abolitionism, as they demonstrated their tremendous influence over the students by urging them to dissolve their antislavery society.

The faculty, led by Moses Stuart, presented the students with a seemingly indisputable argument against organized abolitionism to which students unequivocally acquiesced. But students did not abandon their abolitionist sentiments. After Thompson's second visit in July, when he was accompanied by Phelps and Garrison, student abolitionists petitioned faculty to reorganize the student auxiliary antislavery society. Mirroring the events at Lane, the ATS board of trustees became involved in the dispute and authorized faculty to regulate student societies at the seminary, which essentially suppressed organized abolitionism on campus. Despite these actions, antislavery students publicly affirmed the American Antislavery Society's core sentiments and participated in organized abolitionism external from the seminary.<sup>6</sup> The history of antislavery at Andover Theological Seminary provides an important perspective on student abolitionist activity. Overwhelming faculty support for colonization notwithstanding, students defiantly organized an antislavery society. Even after students complied with faculty

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<sup>6</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists of the Theological Seminary," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

wishes and dissolved their society, they maintained and supported organized abolitionism, albeit outside of the seminary.

The Andover students' 1837 "Appeal of Abolitionists" reveals the ultimate fate of abolitionism at the seminary, as it foreshadows the split in the abolitionist movement and the emergence of distinct abolitionist factions. While this history is somewhat distinct from that of Lane student abolitionist activity, it closely resembles the history of antislavery student activism at Amherst College, but with a different outcome. However, the dramatic rebellion of Lane students' withdrawal from that seminary and ensuing conflict with faculty had significant ramifications for ATS, especially the power dynamics between faculty and student abolitionists. Student abolitionist sentiments in 1837 illuminate the emerging division within the movement and explains a segment of the constituency of what would become known as evangelical abolitionism. The origins of the seminary reveals how faculty and students came to support colonization.

Established in 1807, Andover Theological Seminary was the foremost Protestant seminary in the United States during the antebellum era.<sup>7</sup> Boston Congregationalists founded the school to train pious youth for the ministry and to counter the Unitarians at Harvard.<sup>8</sup> Missions and reform were central to Andover students since the seminary's formation. In 1809 Luther Rice, Samuel Mills, Gordon Hall, and Adoniram Judson were among the founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the first association of its kind in the country. These students also established the nation's first Society of Inquiry on Missions, and Judson is considered America's first foreign

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<sup>7</sup> J. Earl Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," *The New England Quarterly* 47, no. 2, (June, 1974): 240.

<sup>8</sup> Lois W. Banner, "Religion and Reform in the Early Republic: The Role of Youth," *American Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (December 1971): 684.

missionary.<sup>9</sup> Andover students believed their theological education necessary required that they convert African Americans from a degraded condition to religious salvation through instruction in Christian doctrine.<sup>10</sup> Mills also gained national recognition in 1817, as co-founder of the American Colonization Society (ACS).<sup>11</sup> In 1823, while a student at Andover Theological Seminary, Leonard Bacon wrote and published an influential tract “Report on Colonization” which was widely published in New England and helped garner support for the ACS.<sup>12</sup> By 1825, Andover Seminary was known for its leading role in missions and ties to colonization, as both faculty and students came to support the concept of “repatriation.”

During the 1820’s, the ACS received enormous support across the country. The students and faculty of ATS and the surrounding community were not an exception to this trend. The Committee on Colonization of the Society of Inquiry was the main student organization for colonization activity on campus. Its operations centered on comprising ways in which to support and disseminate the principles of the ACS.<sup>13</sup> The Committee on Colonization even pledged to raise three thousand dollars to emancipate and repatriate at least one hundred enslaved African Americans in Kentucky within a six month period.<sup>14</sup> While Andover faculty did not publicly endorse any faction of the antislavery movement on campus, they most likely supported the colonization movement. At least four faculty

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<sup>9</sup> Banner, “Religion and Reform,” 684-85. Banner attributes these accolades to a combination of ambition and piety, characteristics common to the student body of Andover Seminary.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson, “Abolition and Theological Education,” 241.

<sup>11</sup> *The Christian Spectator*, V, (New Haven: S. Converse, 1823) 486.

<sup>12</sup> “Review of the Reports of the American Colonization Society,” *Christian Spectator* vol. 5 (Sept. 1, 1823) 485-94; Also see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 146-7 and 147n2.

<sup>13</sup> *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* vol. 9 (Washington D.C.: James Dunn, 1834), 30; The Society of Inquiry recorded a vote of 55-9 in favor of supporting the ACS and 60-4 in favor of supporting the colony and spreading Christianity throughout Liberia.

<sup>14</sup> *The African Repository* vol. 9, 154.

members either lectured, fundraised, or expressed interest in the ACS.<sup>15</sup> The mere fact that the colonizationist activity described above took place at the seminary and faculty made no identifiable effort to oppose these activities suggests they supported the students' affiliation with colonization. Colonization ideology coincided well with the emphasis on missions championed by Andover Seminary. Students and faculty believed through the "repatriation" process, Christianity would spread throughout Liberia and Africa, thus fulfilling their duty as clergy by spreading the word of God. They also believed this ideology would rid the country of free black persons who were perceived to be a threat to social order and an undesirable demographic of the population. By July 1833, the secretary of the Committee on Colonization Asa Smith stated that "a very large majority---nearly or quite nine-tenths" of students supported the ACS.<sup>16</sup>

Even though ATS was essentially a colonizationist juggernaut, a minority of students affiliated with the abolitionist movement and established an auxiliary organization to the New England Antislavery Society (NEASS).<sup>17</sup> Contrary to historian J. Earl Thompson's claim, the antislavery controversy at the Andover Seminary preceded the events of 1835 associated with George Thompson's and other abolitionists' visits to campus and actually began in the summer of 1833. This was also the year British Parliament ratified emancipation legislation in the British West Indies. This coincided with the creation of the AASS and can help explain the explosion in student organizations, like those at Lane, ATS, and Amherst, as well as other auxiliary

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<sup>15</sup> Thompson, "Abolition and Theological Education," 244, 250 n36.

<sup>16</sup> Asa A. Smith, "Dr. Porter on Slavery and Colonization," July 10, 1833, *The Religious Intelligencer* vol. 18 (New Haven: N. Whiting, 1833), 181.

<sup>17</sup> Tappan, "A Letter From Arthur Tappan," *Liberator*, April 6, 1833, 55; Anonymous, "For the Liberator," *Liberator*, August 31, 1833, 138, D.T. Kimball and L.F. Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.



societies.<sup>18</sup> In August 1833, a report in the *Liberator* stated that a “little band of Abolitionists at Andover are driving the advocates of *prejudice, gradualism, ‘exile,’* and *slavery* into close quarters.”<sup>19</sup> This account reveals that abolitionism had emerged on campus and that the antislavery minority challenged the colonizationist majority and suggests that they had some success. This marked a precedent for abolitionism that would remain on campus in some form over the next four years. The next month, the antislavery society at the seminary provided a detailed account that explained their support of immediate abolition and their opposition to colonization.

The student antislavery society at Andover Theological Seminary issued a compelling statement that defended their abolitionist convictions and affiliation with the NEASS. The student abolitionists sarcastically entitled their statement “Apology For Antislavery” only in order to pacify their colonizationist opponents because they supposedly offended them by denouncing their movement.<sup>20</sup> Written by society president D.T. Kimball and secretary L.F. Laine, the abolitionist statement reveals an astute and reasoned argument that methodically refutes anti-abolitionist sentiments. The antislavery students maintained they had morality, truth, and the Bible on their side. They also cited their First Amendment right of free speech to defend their agitation and discussion of abolitionist principles.<sup>21</sup> The student abolitionist aim was to “attack the spirit of slavery” in the entire Union and employ “truth and duty” as their motivation to implement

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<sup>18</sup> Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 303-5.

<sup>19</sup> Anonymous, “For the *Liberator*,” *Liberator*, August 31, 1833, 138, emphasis in the original article.

<sup>20</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4; Since the student abolitionists took the position of apologists for that simple reason, suggests they successfully defended the doctrine of abolitionism against their fellow classmates who supported colonization.

<sup>21</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4. Also, see Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism*, 144, and Russell B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom: Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963) 86-116.

immediate emancipation.<sup>22</sup> That ATS student abolitionists made these arguments in 1833 is telling and further indicates that Lane student abolitionism was not atypical or that student abolitionism originated from the Ohio seminary. The Biblical argument was integral to both sides of antislavery at Andover and that of religious peoples across the United States. According to colonizationists, it was the duty of Christians to urge southern slaveholders to be kind to their slaves. Student abolitionists refuted this notion on the grounds that white slaveholders understood the concept of freedom, which was articulated in the Declaration of Independence in the famous line that all men are created equal. They maintained that these notions were inspired and ordained by God.<sup>23</sup> The young abolitionists “appealed to conscience and common sense” in understanding a fundamental distinction between human and property and that there was no greater crime than subjugating a human being to the status of a chattel slave.<sup>24</sup> They then invoked the golden rule to cement their argument. The following passage summarized the students’ goals:

Understand us when we contend for immediate emancipation, as insisting upon nothing but the abolition, at once, of that which is morally wrong---wrong not merely in the abstract, or independent of circumstances, but wrong in all circumstances. We are earnest for the removal at once, of every thing which, in the present condition of the slave, can be accounted oppression... We shall place the negro on an equality with the white man.<sup>25</sup>

The student abolitionists clearly articulated their convictions based on morality and equality. In addition to that emphatic support of immediatism, the students provided an illuminating commentary on the safety of abolition and their keen awareness of

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<sup>22</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>23</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>24</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>25</sup> Kimball and Laine, “Apology for Anti-Slavery,” *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

international trends in abolition and emancipation. They cited examples of emancipation without violent insurrection in the British West Indies, Mexico, and also Haiti prior to the attempts of re-enslaving the freed population.<sup>26</sup> The Andover students utilized this premise in their argument for immediate abolition by perceiving their cause as linked to broader trends external to the United States that coincided with issues of race, freedom, and citizenship. This facet of the student abolitionists' argument illuminates their place amongst reformers in the transatlantic movement to abolish slavery and establish equal rights for subjugated peoples.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to exposing their abolitionist ideology, the student abolitionists attacked what was considered by their opponents to be their greatest maleficence: opposing the colonization movement. Like Lane student abolitionists, the ATS abolitionist minority could not consciously support an organization that promoted inequality and prejudice against enslaved African Americans and that neglected efforts to ameliorate their condition in the United States.<sup>28</sup> The student abolitionists considered the colonization movement to be the antithesis of their abolitionist beliefs.<sup>29</sup>

With their convictions clearly articulated, the student abolitionists pledged to use moral and nonviolent means to advance the cause of immediate emancipation and proclaimed their devotion to abolition.<sup>30</sup> Over the course of the following year, there

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<sup>26</sup> Kimball and Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>27</sup> On the influence of transnational abolitionism and emancipation, see Matthew Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Edward Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Kimball and Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>29</sup> Kimball and Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

<sup>30</sup> Kimball and Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4.

were not any noteworthy conflicts between abolitionists and colonizationists at ATS.<sup>31</sup> The latter group probably accepted the so called apology penned by the antislavery society, as it seemed to quell the tension between the two groups.<sup>32</sup> It was also in 1834 when the tumultuous events at Lane transpired and became a national story. Faculty and students most likely followed the events at Lane and waited to see the repercussions of the student-faculty conflict. It is possible that the results of the Lane controversy could have prompted the end of the student antislavery society at Andover. In March 1835, a report in the *Liberator* stated that in wake of George Thompson's visits in January, the students "re-organized the antislavery society which had previously existed in the Seminary" and that they had to re-draft a constitution as the old one "had somehow mysteriously disappeared."<sup>33</sup> Amherst College Faculty would also cited the ATS student abolitionist society's dissolution as reason to disband Amherst students' organization, an indication that students and faculty were aware of student abolitionism at other institutions.<sup>34</sup> This evidence suggests that the ATS antislavery society dissolved sometime 1834, perhaps in the fall. However, by 1835 the antislavery controversy at ATS was reignited by George Thompson's visit to campus.

During a trip to England in 1833, William Lloyd Garrison successfully persuaded the British abolitionist George Thompson to lecture in the United States in the hopes of spreading abolitionism. Garrison believed that Thompson would symbolically embody

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<sup>31</sup> Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 244.

<sup>32</sup> There is not available evidence suggesting the two groups had any quarrels during the following year (1834). There also was no direct interference from the faculty regulating either group at this point which suggests no major conflicts arose on campus.

<sup>33</sup> "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

<sup>34</sup> Heman Humphrey and Amherst Faculty, "To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College" February 19, 1835, Anti-Slavery Society Records 1833-1842 in Clubs and Societies Records (Box 1, Folders 18-20) Amherst College Archives.

British emancipation, as Parliament passed the West Indian emancipation bill in 1833, and argue the merits of abolitionism through the strategy of patriotic shaming. W. Caleb McDaniel explains that patriotic shaming was meant to assert Britain's superiority over the U.S. because they were in the process of abolishing slavery. Garrison hoped Thompson would persuade Americans of the merits of emancipation by arousing nationalistic sentiments for emancipation.<sup>35</sup> Thompson arrived in the United States in September 1834 and lectured in northern states until November 1835.<sup>36</sup> However, Garrison's plan did not have its intended effect. Thompson's visit coincided with the height of anti-abolitionist mob violence. Most of the riots occurred 1834-35 in major cities across northern states, most notably in New York City.<sup>37</sup> A major cause of the riots was the fear of racial "amalgamation" between white abolitionist and African Americans. Foreign abolitionist influences such as Thompson's were also cited as causes for anti-abolitionist riots and Thompson himself was the victim of mobs in Connecticut, Maine, and Massachusetts.<sup>38</sup> ATS was part of Thompson's lecture circuit and was one place he did not meet mob violence.

January 1835 marked George Thompson's first of two visits to Andover.

Thompson accepted the request of Andover students to speak to them on the subject of

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<sup>35</sup> McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 46, 49.

<sup>36</sup> On Thompson's visit see C. Duncan Rice, "The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834-1835," *Journal of American Studies* 2, no. 1 (April 1968): 13-31, esp. 21-25; McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 53, 55.

<sup>37</sup> David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1861: Toward Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36-7; Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing," *Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 65-71; McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 53-5.

<sup>38</sup> Grimsted, *American Mobbing*, 36-7, 293 n12 and n13.

slavery.<sup>39</sup> On January 11th and 12th, Thompson delivered three lectures at the Andover Methodist church, the only building opened to him. Prior to his lectures, Thompson visited the seminary at the request of the Colonization Committee. In the seminary chapel, the students interrogated Thompson on his abolitionist convictions and he reportedly refuted every objection posed to him. After the nearly two hour discussion, Thompson admitted that he had never faced such staunch opposition.<sup>40</sup> Based on his successful refutations, an observer was assured that once the discussion was over, the students who attended left as abolitionists.<sup>41</sup> After the discussion with students, Thompson proceeded to the Methodist church to deliver his lectures. Faculty and students from the seminary were present, along with other community members. One report of the lectures praised Thompson for his reasoned argument and claimed it was “impossible for an honest and intelligent mind to retire from his lectures unconvinced of the soundness of the principles which he advocates.”<sup>42</sup> From this perspective, Thompson’s reasoned argument for abolition was difficult to refute and many left these lectures supporting abolition.<sup>43</sup> Thompson’s initial visit to Andover succeeded in arousing support for abolitionism, at least in the short-term.

After listening to Thompson’s lectures, students revitalized the antislavery society at the seminary. They drafted a constitution that advocated the principles of the American Antislavery Society (AASS). Forty students signed the auxiliary’s constitution and many

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<sup>39</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50-1 is the most detailed account of Thompson’s first visit. Articles from January through March offer supplementary details and perspectives of his first visit.

<sup>40</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50-1.

<sup>41</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50-1.

<sup>42</sup> Article from *Haverhill Gazette* reprinted in the *Liberator*, January 31, 1835, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Article from *Haverhill Gazette* reprinted in the *Liberator*, January 31, 1835, 17.

others “were known to be friendly to the cause.”<sup>44</sup> Andover student abolitionists also attended the AASS convention in Boston and would return to the seminary with various pamphlets and reports of the convention.<sup>45</sup> After reforming the antislavery society on campus and attending the AASS convention, the seminary students would be aware of the latest trends in the movement and were poised for action.

From the abolitionist perspective, the effects of Thompson’s first visit were reassuring that a colonizationist stronghold showed signs of weakness. If ATS could be converted to abolition, the ACS could have lost considerable influence and credibility. Not everyone praised the efforts of Thompson and the expression of abolitionism at Andover of course. Upon hearing of Thompson’s visit to Andover, a white southern clergyman and editor of the *Southern Religious Telegraph* penned some advice to the seminary students. The title of the article “Southern Advice to Northern Theological Students!!!” was reprinted by Garrison and it exuded proslavery sentiments. The southern editor urged the students of Andover and all New England colleges to refrain from any association with abolitionists, as he asserted that it was hazardous for them to support abolition based on impulsivity.<sup>46</sup> The clergyman also emphatically expressed that no one outside the southern states could act intelligently on the subject of slavery. By this reasoning, this critic of abolition contradicted himself, as his rule of logic would dictate he should abstain from interfering in northern affairs. Nevertheless, he continued his critique of abolition and claimed that the effects of antislavery societies on the South as

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<sup>44</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

<sup>45</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

<sup>46</sup> “Southern Advice to Northern Theological Students!!!” *Liberator*, February 7, 1835, 21. This claim of acting on impulse was definitively refuted by the student abolitionist’s reasoned articulation for supporting abolition in the *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

“eminently pernicious—injurious to the slaves, the very objects of their misguided philanthropy, and hazardous to the union of States.”<sup>47</sup> He also commented on the situation of slavery in the South, stating “Slavery as it exists here, embraces domestic and household relations, and no one from another state can interfere in these private, delicate relations...”<sup>48</sup> Domestic relationships between white male yeoman farmers, their families, and enslaved African Americans partly explains how small-scale white farmers were able to become financially independent in a world dominated by large-scale planters.<sup>49</sup>

This southerner’s perspective was representative of many proslavery advocates. Many perceived abolitionists as meddling fanatics. The tone of this article is that of condemnation and defense, as the writer articulates his support of racial slavery and opposition to northern interference in the southern institution. This column also reveals that southerners were also concerned about which side college students supported, an issue that was of national importance. Similar to the events of Lane Seminary, the antislavery controversy at the Andover Seminary was widely publicized because the results had significant implications for the future of the country. The stance college students would take as future leaders of the country would have a tremendous impact on the future of slavery. If students embraced abolitionism, it could help set the wheels of emancipation in motion and uproot the southern institution.

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<sup>47</sup> “Southern Advice to Northern Theological Students!!” *Liberator*, February 7, 1835, 21.

<sup>48</sup> “Southern Advice to Northern Theological Students!!” *Liberator*, February 7, 1835, 21.

<sup>49</sup> See Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).



If southerners like this clergymen were well aware of the importance of debates over slavery at northern colleges, faculty at Andover were also cognizant of the competing perspectives of slavery across the country. More specifically, they were concerned over the antislavery controversy on their own campus, after Thompson's visit provided a catalyst to the resuscitation of abolitionism at Andover. Faculty influence would prove instrumental to the fate of organized abolition at Andover Theological Seminary.

As student abolitionists awaited the return of their representatives from the AASS convention, pro-colonizationist forces stirred at the seminary. On January 14th, just two days after Thompson's last lectures, Andover professors met with students to discuss the potential harm organized abolition would supposedly bring to their institution. Leading up to this meeting, an Andover student writing to the *Liberator* revealed that student colonizationists ridiculed students who became abolitionists for associating with Garrison, and questioned why they could not unite with their fellow students in one society.<sup>50</sup> Almost immediately after revitalizing organized abolition on campus, student abolitionists received opposition which planted the seeds of skepticism in the young activists' minds. The night of the student-faculty meeting, Professor Moses Stuart lambasted the young abolitionists for supporting a cause that supposedly did not concern them and warned such agitation on the subject of slavery would cause discord on campus.<sup>51</sup> Stuart also claimed that abolitionist agitation would be a distraction from the students' theological education and that they were not competent enough to understand

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<sup>50</sup> "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

<sup>51</sup> "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

the ramifications of their decisions on such an important topic.<sup>52</sup> Finally, he reasoned that such agitation would tarnish the reputation of both the seminary and its faculty and prevent the young aspiring clergymen to gain a church appointment upon graduation.

Other faculty addressed the students in the days that followed, and “warned, entreated, and besought” them “not to pursue a course that would compromise the Institution, and give a party character to this sacred Seminary.”<sup>53</sup> According to this Andover student, the most important reason faculty advised against organized abolition was that conflict amongst students, or even between students and faculty, would inevitably consume the seminary. An unidentified faculty member even went as far as to claim it would be better if a member of the seminary “sacrifice his life, rather than have the subject of Slavery agitated” on campus.<sup>54</sup> These grievances were remarkably similar to those of the faculty at Lane Seminary.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the example of the Lane Rebellion just two months prior was fresh in the faculty’s minds and justified their fears. The Andover faculty had also met with Lyman Beecher, President of Lane Seminary, in New York during the previous summer and cast their support for him and his plan to deal with the situation back in Ohio.<sup>56</sup>

From the faculty’s perspective, their reasons were fairly understandable.

However, Stuart’s claim regarding the students’ competency on the matter was egregious

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<sup>52</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51.

<sup>53</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51.

<sup>54</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Lyman Beecher, Thomas Biggs, Calvin Stowe, “Statement of the Faculty Concerning the Late Differences in the Lane Seminary,” *Liberator*, January 17, 1835, 10, date accessed February 2, 2015; Given that the publication date of this statement coincided with the events that occurred at Andover, it is highly likely the Andover faculty were aware of the Lane faculty’s perspective on student abolitionism. See also “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>56</sup> Article from the *Boston Courier* reprinted under the subhead “Refuge of Oppression” in the *Liberator*, July 25 1835, 117.

and unjustified. The students who supported abolition were clearly informed on the subject and articulated a reasoned argument concerning their support for abolition. Their exposure to abolitionist print culture and lectures added to their competency which connected them to transnational trends in emancipation which likely exacerbated the faculty's opposition.<sup>57</sup> A second claim of Stuart's was contradictory: that the seminary should not have a party affiliation, neither politically nor to any antislavery organization. Beginning in the 1820's, ATS had a reputation of being a colonizationist stronghold, as both faculty and students were directly involved and ascended to positions of leadership in the movement.<sup>58</sup> The faculty opposition to organized abolitionism on campus marked the first time they became involved in student organizations. Combined with Stuart's points, it is indicative that the faculty possessed anti-abolitionist sentiments and preferred colonization as a solution to slavery. Despite the faculty's hypocrisy, they offered a seemingly overwhelming testimony that students would not or could not challenge.

In an act of what seemed like impartiality, the faculty "suggested" students from both the Committee on Colonization and the auxiliary to the AASS dissolve their societies for the present time.<sup>59</sup> The informant emphasized that the faculty did not threaten or coerce students into disbanding their organizations but merely urged them to reflect on their sentiments and what they implied for the seminary. The students were aware that when faculty highlighted the concern over the public reputation of the seminary, they most likely meant they did not want to offend proslavery northerners or

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<sup>57</sup> See Kimball and Laine, "Apology for Anti-Slavery," *Liberator*, September 28, 1833, 153-4; Article from *Haverhill Gazette* reprinted in the *Liberator*, January 31, 1835, 17; and "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50-1.

<sup>58</sup> This tendency mirrored that of the reputation of Lane Seminary prior to the antislavery revivals.

<sup>59</sup> "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50-1.

southerners who supported the institution.<sup>60</sup> The faculty, with the events of Lane in mind, chose their words and actions wisely and were resolved not to allow a public confrontation that would bring what they perceived as negative publicity to the seminary and an indictment of their leadership. Per the suggestion of the faculty, the students met to consider what was “taught” to them. After some deliberation, they drafted a statement that expressed their acquiescence to the faculty’s “suggestions.”<sup>61</sup> However, only a third of the students were present and offered their support of the statement that voluntarily dissolved their antislavery organization on campus. The final part of the student informant’s testimony of the dramatic events in early January 1835 at Andover revealed that even though there was not an abolitionist organization on campus, students still affirmed the ideology of the AASS. He stated, “But we fearlessly affirm that the fundamental principles of the Anti-Slavery Society are generally admitted to be correct...”<sup>62</sup> This declaration suggests student abolitionism, while not officially organized, was still alive at the seminary. In the short-term, students turned their focus to their theological education. However, in the summer of 1835, the antislavery controversy at Andover Theological Seminary would be revitalized, as prominent leaders of both abolition and colonization would visit Andover.

In the summer of 1835, the leading Protestant seminary in the antebellum United States once again became a battleground over competing antislavery ideologies. Prior to this tumultuous summer, peace and tranquility reigned over ATS, as there were no

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<sup>60</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51.

<sup>61</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51, the tone of the article suggests that the faculty passive-aggressively convinced the students to dissolve their societies, as “many swallowed down the dose, bitter though it was, because the Doctor prescribed it.”

<sup>62</sup> “Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835,” *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 51.

reported clashes between students and their competing perspectives regarding the slavery question.<sup>63</sup> J. Earl Thompson seemingly sympathizes with the faculty of Andover and blames abolitionists for agitating what had become a peaceful campus.<sup>64</sup> However, Thompson casually overlooks a key component of what reignited the antislavery controversy at Andover: Ralph Randolph Gurley's visit and lecture on campus. The ACS secretary and leading advocate of colonization, Gurley came to campus before the abolitionists and probably provoked their visits.<sup>65</sup> Gurley would not have been on campus had his visit not been approved by the faculty, another example that depicts the faculty's implicit support of colonization and subversion of abolitionism. From this perspective, the faculty had nobody to blame but themselves for what transpired that summer. An Andover student, under the pseudonym "Ego" and an apparent abolitionist, penned a review of Gurley's visit to campus.

Prior to Gurley's arrival, Andover students were told that his arguments were of sound logic and that he spoke with "captivating eloquence."<sup>66</sup> After listening to him, Andover students were not impressed, as Gurley's reasons for colonization were unsupported and therefore did not persuade some Andover students to colonizationism. A few of Gurley's points are noteworthy, as they reveal colonization's failures according to student abolitionists at Andover. One point was the inherent contradiction in Gurley's lecture. He claimed the ACS was not founded on prejudice and then ironically proclaimed that African Americans were intellectually inferior to the extent that they

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<sup>63</sup> Moses Stuart quoted in Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 248.

<sup>64</sup> Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 247-8.

<sup>65</sup> According to the *Liberator*, Gurley was there on June 23 while the abolitionists were there in July. See "Andover, July 10, 1835," and "Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835," both in the *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113; Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 247.

<sup>66</sup> Andover faculty most likely lauded Gurley and provided this perspective to students. *Liberator*, 18 July 1835.

could never be elevated to a level of equality with white Americans.<sup>67</sup> Another point concerned the fear that immediate emancipation would cause civil war and incite slave insurrections that mirrored those of Saint Domingue. To this point “Ego” logically alluded to the true cause of the insurrections in Haiti---Napoleon’s attempt to re-enslave freed men and women. “Ego” also cited George Thompson’s rebuke of the dangers of immediate emancipation.<sup>68</sup> Finally, “Ego” explained that student abolitionists at Andover could not support the impracticality, morally, logistically and financially, of the ACS agenda of “repatriating” the annual increase in the population of African Americans for fifty years, after which the rest of the enslaved population might be emancipated and repatriated.<sup>69</sup> For the portion of Andover students who favored abolitionism, Gurley failed to convince them to support colonization. After, and possibly because of, Gurley’s visit an influx of abolitionist leaders came to the Andover community.

A proverbial trio of abolitionist crusaders descended on Andover in the wake of the Gurley lecture. George Thompson, who was making his second trip to Andover, was accompanied by Amos Phelps, a graduate of the seminary, and William Lloyd Garrison. Over the course of two weeks in July, the three orators gave lectures at the Methodist church that defended abolitionism and denounced colonization.<sup>70</sup> Moses Stuart complained that students flocked to hear the orators, skipped class, and neglected their theological studies.<sup>71</sup> The *Liberator* printed competing perspectives of these lectures

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<sup>67</sup> “Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113.

<sup>68</sup> “Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113. For a history of the Haitian Revolution and its connection to the U.S., see Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture*.

<sup>69</sup> “Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113.

<sup>70</sup> “Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113; “Andover, July 14, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117; “Andover, July 18. 1835,” *Liberator*, August 1, 1835, 121; “Andover, July 27, 1835,” *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125; and “Grave Impeachment of Christian Character in the Theological Seminary, Andover,” *Liberator*, September 19, 1835, 150.

<sup>71</sup> Thompson, “Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover,” 247.

which provide important insights on both sides of the slavery controversy at Andover Theological Seminary and the surrounding community.

An opponent of abolition under the pseudonym “C” provided the perspective that tended to support the seminary faculty. The critic often wrote in hyperbole, claiming that academic buildings were not safe because of the presence of the abolitionists, that “women and children who hear the noise” of abolitionists “are almost frightened to death,” and compared their lectures to a melodramatic play.<sup>72</sup> What followed was as a critical indictment of the abolitionist trio and their movement. The writer accused George Thompson, Phelps, and Garrison of coming to Andover in defiance of the faculty’s wishes in order to promote insubordination and sever the ties between students and faculty. He also urged Andover students to renounce abolitionism because of Thompson’s supposed inflammatory claim that the faculty improperly convinced the students to refrain from organized abolition on campus.<sup>73</sup> The critic particularly ridiculed the abolitionist notion that immediate emancipation was expedient. “C” proclaimed that “expediency corrupts the atmosphere so as to prevent the free breathing of a free soul” and that the “wicked spirit of expediency is the spirit of hell” and the doctrine of “damned spirits.”<sup>74</sup> “C” also refers to the supposedly negative portrayal of the student-faculty conflict at Lane Seminary and asserts that the dispute left that seminary in shambles.<sup>75</sup> He evoked the Lane example as evidence that organized abolition would potentially harm the seminary. The accusations against Thompson continued. According

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<sup>72</sup> “Andover Theol. Sem. June 30, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 113.

<sup>73</sup> “Andover, July 14, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117.

<sup>74</sup> “Andover, July 14, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117.

<sup>75</sup> “Andover, July 14, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117, “C’s” acknowledgment of the Lane conflict signifies that it was a national story and had significant implications for other seminaries and colleges across the country.

to the columnist, Thompson praised the Lane students for withdrawing from that institution instead of compromising their beliefs in an attempt to guilt the Andover students into doing the same. In a revealing passage, “C” asserts that the slavery question should be left to political leaders “whose minds are instructed, and whose hearts beat with the love of their own dear native land;” according to “C” these men were Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster.<sup>76</sup> This passage is telling and indicates who “C” supported when it came to the slavery question and reveals his dislike for foreign influences, revealing his nativist beliefs. Another informant went as far as to claim that Thompson told the students to “brave authority, to violate laws, and if need be to leave the institution.”<sup>77</sup> In almost all of “C’s” critical articles, he concludes that the cause of abolition at Andover was hopeless.<sup>78</sup> These perspectives were conspicuously anti-abolition and anti-Thompson. Most of the critiques from “C” and others focused almost exclusively on chastising Thompson instead of Garrison or Phelps. The articles critical of abolition were printed alongside favorable interpretations of the abolitionists’ visit to Andover.

The pro-abolitionist articles lauded the efforts of Thompson, Phelps, and Garrison. R. Reed, a student at ATS, was the secretary of the Andover Antislavery Society—the local auxiliary to the AASS.<sup>79</sup> Reed provided detailed accounts of their visits, the eloquence of their speeches, the soundness of their arguments, and the dire

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<sup>76</sup> “Andover, July 18, 1835,” *Liberator*, August 1, 1835, 121.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted from the *New York Journal of Commerce* reprinted in the *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117.

<sup>78</sup> “Andover, July 14, 1835,” *Liberator*, July 25, 1835, 117; “Andover, July 18, 1835,” *Liberator*, August 1, 1835, 121; “Andover, July 27, 1835,” *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125.

<sup>79</sup> Reed’s position in the local society reveals that ATS students were not only involved in abolition outside the seminary but also assumed leadership positions; *Discussions on American Slavery Between George Thompson and Robert J. Breckenridge*, ed. William Lloyd Garrison (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1836), 53.



need to discuss the topic of slavery.<sup>80</sup> On the latter topic, Phelps, a former colonizationist, urged the seminary students and people in attendance that to ignore the issue would be “treason to truth—treason to the soul—treason not merely to the slave, but treason to mankind—treason to God.”<sup>81</sup> Phelps vehemently disagreed with the Andover faculty’s “suggestion” of dissolving the societies on campus, as they were important modes of discussing a topic of national importance. Reed explicitly defended Thompson against his critics and reported that previous portrayals of Thompson were “slanderous” and “misrepresentations,” for the British abolitionist simply attacked principles and not individuals.<sup>82</sup> It was also said that Thompson and Phelps denounced the seminary’s silence on slavery as it impeded the progress of immediate abolition.<sup>83</sup> This point probably offended faculty, as it was construed as an insult to their leadership. Garrison spoke once over the course of the two weeks, and explained that abolitionists would not travel to the South because they would be met with violence worse than they faced in the North. According to Garrison, death awaited abolitionists in the South. Reed also highlighted that Garrison spoke and presented himself in a way that defied his opponents’ portrayal of him as a fanatic.<sup>84</sup> From Reed’s perspective, the trio of abolitionists exposed persuasive arguments that favored abolition and had a degree of success converting seminary students and other residents of Andover to abolitionism.

According to some reports, as many as two hundred new members signed the Andover Antislavery Society’s constitution and joined the society in the wake of the

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<sup>80</sup> R. Reed, “Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 115.

<sup>81</sup> R. Reed, “Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 115.

<sup>82</sup> R. Reed, “Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 115.

<sup>83</sup> R. Reed, “Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover,” *Liberator*, July 18, 1835, 115.

<sup>84</sup> R. Reed, “Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover,” *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125.

abolitionists' lectures. As many as half of the seminary students were "firm and decided advocates of the doctrine of immediate emancipation..."<sup>85</sup> However, this proportion of decided student abolitionists was an exaggeration. At least forty seminary students, or about a third of the total enrollment, explicitly supported abolitionism and a handful of others were favorable to it but did not affiliate with a specific organization.<sup>86</sup> These students were even compelled to petition the faculty to re-organize an antislavery society on campus for a third time. The presence of Thompson, Phelps, and Garrison had a definitive impact on the seminary students and the broader Andover community.

As abolitionist fervor was buzzing at Andover Theological Seminary in the wake of the abolitionist lectures, the seminary faculty once again intervened in an attempt to suppress abolitionist sentiment on campus. Professor Moses Stuart addressed the students and explicated that the Bible did not explicitly prohibit slavery and therefore slavery was not always a sin. He urged the seminary students to respect slaveholders and to do them service, as white southerners were their faithful and beloved brethren.<sup>87</sup> From one perspective, Stuart's argument was deemed "irresistible and unanswerable."<sup>88</sup> Despite Stuart's indirect support for slaveholders and racial slavery, he proclaimed himself an abolitionist but refused to associate with the movement. Yet, this was more of a rhetorical strategy than a true conviction, as his lectures and actions did not coincide with

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<sup>85</sup> R. Reed, "Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover," *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125; "Andover Theol. Sem. July 27, 1835," *Liberator*, August 1, 1835, 122.

<sup>86</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists of the Theological Seminary," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139; Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 245; Leander Thompson to Theodore Weld, August 25, 1836, *Letters of Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké 1822-1844* vol. 1, eds. Gilbert Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (New York: D. Appleton, 1934) 334.

<sup>87</sup> R. Reed, "Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover," *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125.

<sup>88</sup> R. Reed, "Anti-Slavery Meetings At Andover," *Liberator*, August 8, 1835, 125.

abolitionism. Even though Stuart's message was convoluted, it appealed to the seminary students, since at least half of them did not support the abolitionism of the AASS.

A development late in the summer of 1835 signifies that student abolitionists had infuriated the faculty for violating their instructions. Just after graduating, several of the student abolitionists met with seminary professors. What followed was a grand indictment of the students' character. The faculty denounced the students' actions over the summer and criticized them for several reasons that were connected to the July visits of abolitionist leaders. The students were condemned for attending Thompson's and Phelps's lectures, talking to Thompson in private, attending public prayers for enslaved African Americans, and petitioning the faculty to reform the antislavery society on campus.<sup>89</sup> Subsequently, the faculty proclaimed that the students had "Compromised Their Christian Character!!!"<sup>90</sup> An apparent assault on the student abolitionists' morality and integrity, the faculty even pondered not allowing one of the students to graduate.<sup>91</sup>

The antislavery controversy at ATS had already been publicized and known across the country, but with the publication of the faculty indictment of the students' character signified the pinnacle of the antislavery controversy at the seminary. Ever since 1833, student abolitionism, although occupying a minority position, was ever present at Andover. The visits of abolitionist leaders only fanned the flame of immediate abolition amongst some of the seminary students. The faculty had finally been drawn into the controversy and their perspective was now made public. The controversial issue of

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<sup>89</sup> "Grave Impeachment of Christian Character in the Theological Seminary, Andover," *Liberator*, September 19, 1835, 150.

<sup>90</sup> "Grave Impeachment of Christian Character in the Theological Seminary, Andover," *Liberator*, September 19, 1835, 150.

<sup>91</sup> "Grave Impeachment of Christian Character in the Theological Seminary, Andover," *Liberator*, September 19, 1835, 150.

slavery could not be kept out of Andover Theological Seminary and the potential for a second Lane Rebellion was as real as ever.

The antislavery controversy at ATS did not result in student withdrawals. To the contrary, while just as important as an overt student rebellion, the developments that followed reveal the fate of abolitionism at the Andover seminary and their broader implications for the abolitionist movement. After the faculty's sentiments were made public, the tension on campus seemingly subsided. This can be explained by the fact that the seminary's board of trustees granted a faculty request that would allow them to regulate student societies on campus. In other words, the faculty had the approval of the board of trustees to suppress organized student activism in any particular movement at their discretion.<sup>92</sup> Hence organized abolition would cease to exist on campus. However, this would not spell the end of student abolitionism at Andover.

Over the course of the following year, abolitionists still made ATS and the surrounding community an important destination of recruiting for the movement. In August 1836 Henry B. Stanton, an abolitionist who was part of the Lane Rebellion, traveled to Andover and was well received by Andover student abolitionists. Stanton's visit prompted one of them to state "several of the brethren who have hitherto been enemies to our cause, have come decided *abolitionists*," and that many others were seriously considering joining the movement.<sup>93</sup> Leander Thompson, an Andover student abolitionist, wrote to Theodore Weld and inquired if he would come to Andover to speak

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<sup>92</sup> See Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 249-50. Again Thompson side-steps this issue and does not consider it a major impact on student expression and neglects to acknowledge it as faculty suppression. The Andover faculty's ability to regulate student societies mirrored exactly the power Lane faculty had.

<sup>93</sup> Leander Thompson to Theodore Weld, August 25, 1835, *Letters of Weld*, 334.

on the Biblical rejections of slavery.<sup>94</sup> While Weld did not speak publically at Andover on the subject, he did travel to the seminary to recruit traveling agents for the AASS.<sup>95</sup> While the student abolitionists at Andover did not have an organization on campus, they were still active participants in the abolitionist movement in the local community. However, the movement was on the cusp of dramatic change.

By 1837, the abolitionist movement began to transform. In August, Sarah and Angelina Grimké traveled to Andover and spoke to the recently formed Andover Female Antislavery Society which according to one historian had 200 members. The meeting also had a few men in attendance.<sup>96</sup> The Grimké sisters helped mobilize female participants in the antislavery movement and demonstrated that women could labor for the abolition of slavery alongside men.<sup>97</sup> The Grimkés articulated arguments that encouraged women to become involved in abolitionism and urged them to realize that their moral agency was indispensable to the movement. In another development that year, Garrison had become extremely critical of ministers and accused them of not taking a decided position to oppose slavery in their churches. In response to Garrison's criticisms, five Boston abolitionist clergymen denounced Garrison's sentiments and perceived them as an attack on organized religion.<sup>98</sup> The combination of Garrison's critiques and women's involvement in the movement marked the beginning of a vital turning point in the history of the abolitionist movement at ATS, and more generally, the broader national

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<sup>94</sup> Leander Thompson to Theodore Weld, August 25, 1835, *Weld-Grimké Letters*, 334.

<sup>95</sup> Thompson, "Abolitionism and Theological Education at Andover," 248, 251. Weld successfully recruited up to two Andover students.

<sup>96</sup> Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 190.

<sup>97</sup> Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters*, 166.

<sup>98</sup> "Appeal of Clerical Abolitionists on Anti-Slavery Measures," *New England Spectator* reprinted in *Liberator*, August 11, 1837, 130.

movement to abolish slavery. The student abolitionists drafted a response in opposition to both the Grimké sisters' visit and Garrison's critique of religious authority, two major components that explained the emergent divide in the abolitionist movement.

The Andover student abolitionists' statement explained their sentiments in support of the "Appeal" made by the five Boston clergymen as well as their perspective regarding the state of the movement. In addition to the aforementioned developments, the students were roused to publish their convictions because of the growing national interest on the topic of slavery and abolition. Most of all, they were urged to act because of their unwavering belief in immediate emancipation.<sup>99</sup> The students' abolitionist ideology had transformed and appropriated a religious dimension. They believed abolition necessarily included teaching and spreading the gospel to African Americans. This notion had always been central to the seminary students but since Garrison openly criticized the very institutions in which students were intimately a part of prompted their public affirmation of this particular belief. The young abolitionists articulated the notion that slavery obstructed "the spread of the gospel through[out] the world" and had injured "the religious interests of the country."<sup>100</sup> Subsequently, the student abolitionist were resolved to end slavery and spread the word of God which coincided with the religious education they received at Andover. Emphasizing their radicalism, the student abolitionists maintained that "the slave ought immediately be freed" and "placed, like all other citizens, under protection of just and equal laws."<sup>101</sup> After clearly demonstrating their

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<sup>99</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists, of the Theological Seminary, Andover," *New England Spectator* reprinted in the *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139; The fact that the students' appeal was printed in the *New England Spectator* first and not Garrison's newspaper suggests that the students' perception of Garrison had shifted.

<sup>100</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>101</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

platform as religious abolitionists, the students proceeded to elucidate their displeasure for new trends in the movement.

The young abolitionists were quite disturbed by Garrison's indictment of the gospel ministry and believed he had damaged the abolitionist movement as well as organized religion in the United States.<sup>102</sup> Coinciding with the critique of Garrison, the young abolitionists explicitly expressed their disapproval for women's involvement in abolitionism. The students stated "The *public lectures of females* we have discountenanced and condemned as improper and unwise," as they believed it would hinder the movement to abolish slavery.<sup>103</sup> The student critique of women coincided with broader male perspectives regarding women's participation in the antislavery movement. Ministers and other males chastised women activists like the Grimké's because they supposedly violated their expected gendered roles in society, which dictated that women remain in the private sphere of the home away from the public and political arenas.<sup>104</sup> Critiques also condemned female antislavery lectures for preaching to crowds comprised of both men and women, as they were perceived as "promiscuous" audiences.<sup>105</sup> However, women like the Grimké's were important proponents of abolitionism and defended women's rights. Appearing alongside the ATS student abolitionists' "Appeal," the Andover Female Antislavery Society refuted the students' objection to women's participation in antislavery and defended their society's invitation to the Grimké's to lecture at their meeting.<sup>106</sup> The members of the female society were also resolved that

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<sup>102</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>103</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139. Emphasis in the original copy.

<sup>104</sup> Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) 11.

<sup>105</sup> Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, 11.

<sup>106</sup> Elizabeth W. Emery, "Andover Female Anti-Slavery Society," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

“the lectures at Andover were designed for the Ladies, and those Gentlemen who were present must sustain the responsibility of a mixed meeting.”<sup>107</sup> The women abolitionists at Andover reversed the argument of holding “promiscuous” male and female meetings by blaming men who decided to attend their meetings. Still, ATS student abolitionists maintained their ideological opposition to women’s participation in antislavery.

These critiques foreshadowed a split from Garrisonian abolitionism to a more conservative abolitionism in which the students of Andover and some from Lane would become active participants. This faction is known to historians as evangelical abolitionism. Andover students foreshadowed this split: “We have cherished the belief that the time was not distant, when a platform would be erected, on which New England Christians would be constrained to meet.”<sup>108</sup> Therefore, Andover student abolitionists were at the forefront of supporting the emergence of evangelical abolition. A fleeting passage in the student abolitionists’ appeal illuminates a vital detail that affirms Andover students were active in abolitionism external to campus. The students stated “It may be proper to add that our entire number have, in various places, enrolled themselves as members of the Anti-Slavery Society.”<sup>109</sup> Another example of ATS student involvement in the local auxiliary society was R. Reed’s position as secretary in the Andover Antislavery Society. Even though the faculty had banned organized abolitionism at ATS, student abolitionists found ways to support and promote the cause elsewhere, proving their devotions to the movement never wavered. While they did not express a complete

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<sup>107</sup> Emery, “Andover Female Anti-Slavery Society,” *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>108</sup> “Appeal of Abolitionists,” *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>109</sup> “Appeal of Abolitionists,” *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.



split from Garrison's branch of abolitionism in their appeal, they most likely embraced the evangelical wing of the movement.

The tumultuous history of the antislavery controversy at ATS reveals that students were adamant supporters of immediate emancipation. Despite the Andover seminary's prominent role in the colonizationist movement, student abolitionists like Leander Thompson, D.T. Kimball, L.F. Laine, and R. Reed time again affirmed their devotion to abolish slavery and establish African-American equality. The seminary and surrounding community proved to be a critical recruiting ground of abolitionist leaders, as evidence by their many visits during the mid-1830's. The visits of Phelps, Garrison, and especially George Thompson were integral to fanning the flame of abolitionism that existed within some of the seminary students.

The history of the slavery controversy at Andover Theological Seminary also reveals the power dynamics that existed on college campuses in the antebellum era. Like faculty at Lane Seminary, Andover faculty refused to accept organized abolitionism on campus out of fear for the institution's reputation being tarnished. Many faculty believed that immediate emancipation was impossible and any discussion or promotion of it would alienate white southerners and lead to disunion. Consequently, faculty were successful in "convincing" student abolitionists to dissolve their society and they were ultimately able to quell future attempts at reorganization. However, faculty failed to isolate Andover Theological Seminary from the slavery question and abolitionism. For student abolitionists, the fear of the institution's reputation or disunion did not supersede their steadfast moral conviction that slavery was a sin and had to be eradicated. Participation in antislavery societies external to the seminary allowed the student abolitionists a medium

to actively participate in the movement. Despite the faculty's ban, student abolitionists remained united and communicated with abolitionist leaders like Stanton and Weld. By 1837, fissures in the abolitionist movement began to emerge, and student abolitionists were at the forefront of responding to these imminent changes. Andover students exposed convictions that would align them with the evangelical wing of the abolitionist movement. The student abolitionists utilized the precedent of Garrisonian abolitionism but ultimately made it their own.

The history of the antislavery controversy at ATS illuminates that debates over colonization and abolition transpired on northern college campuses and mirrored the debates at the national level. The story of the antislavery controversy at ATS was publicized throughout the United States, as the debates over slavery on college campuses had profound implications for the future of the country. At least for some of the students at Andover, that meant working to implement the immediate emancipation of enslaved African Americans. Therefore, northerners and southerners had invested interest in these debates and followed them closely. Finally, this history explains how local debates over slavery had profound implications for the country and the role abolitionism would play in the succeeding decades. A college campus where organized student abolitionism ultimately triumphed and flourished was not far from Andover and its antislavery history, while influenced by Lane and ATS, provided an overwhelming victory the abolitionist movement.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ANTISLAVERY AT AMHERST COLLEGE: A VICTORY FOR ORGANIZED STUDENT ABOLITIONISM

The morning of August 26, 1835 was likely one of excitement and anticipation at Amherst College. It was the day of commencement for the senior class. The day began per usual for students, as they arrived at the college chapel for morning prayers. What seemed to be a normal start to the students' day drastically changed and the catalyst was competing perspectives over racial slavery. As students left chapel that morning, a confrontation ensued between Robert C. McNairy, a sophomore from Tennessee, and John L. Ashley, a junior from New Hampshire. While there are no extant records detailing the confrontation, it is likely offensive insults were exchanged, as McNairy proceeded to violently bludgeon Ashley with a heavy cane.<sup>1</sup> The incident was perceived by students and administrators as the manifestation of white southern proslavery animosity towards white northern antislavery sentiment.<sup>2</sup> College faculty investigated the violent episode and concluded that since McNairy did "violently attack and cruelly beat a fellow-student, with a heavy cane, thus maiming his person, if not putting his life in jeopardy," he was expelled from the college. This violent altercation likely overshadowed what was supposed to be a celebration of the graduating class. The McNairy-Ashley incident, though eerily foreshadowed Representative Preston Brooks's violent caning of Senator Charles Sumner twenty-one years later, was one chapter in a larger history of antislavery at Amherst College.

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<sup>1</sup> The incident is chronicled in William S. Tyler, *History of Amherst College during its First Half Century 1821-1871* (Springfield MA: Clark W. Bryan & Co., 1873), 250-1.

<sup>2</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250.

Beginning in 1833, Amherst College students were involved in antislavery. The origins and fundamental characteristics of Amherst students' abolitionism are comparable to the students of Lane Seminary and Andover Theological Seminary (ATS). Student abolitionism at Amherst College emerged out of intellectual discourse over the competing ideologies of abolition and colonization as solutions to racial slavery. Amherst students also established an auxiliary to the American Antislavery Society (AASS) that was comprised exclusively of students.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Amherst student abolitionists actively participated in the movement, as they subscribed to abolitionist newspapers, developed strategies to ameliorate the condition of African Americans, debated nationally relevant topics regarding racial slavery, and above all, advocated for the immediate abolition of slavery and racial equality. Students' activism also contradicted the Amherst College faculty's beliefs regarding racial slavery which precipitated a unique student-faculty confrontation. Like faculty at Lane and ATS, Amherst faculty supported colonization and were active leaders in local auxiliaries of the American Colonization Society (ACS). Not surprisingly, Amherst faculty also sought to restrict and even suppress students' abolitionist activism for familiar reasons—to prevent internal conflicts, to protect the repudiation of the college, and to assert their authoritative powers as leaders of the institution.<sup>4</sup>

On these fundamental levels, the histories of student abolitionism at Lane, ATS, and Amherst are noticeably analogous. However, the history of student abolitionism at Amherst is strikingly different than that of Lane and ATS. Amherst student abolitionism

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<sup>3</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*, July 19, 1833, Anti-Slavery Records 1833-1842, Clubs and Societies Collection, box 1, Folder 18, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 246.

had its trials and tribulations just like student abolitionists at the other institutions, but the trajectory and details of this history are unique. By 1835, Amherst faculty were fully aware of abolitionism's impact at Lane and ATS and the controversies surrounding student activism.<sup>5</sup> In turn, their interactions with student abolitionists and the manner in which they implemented their supposedly necessary restrictive sanctions exemplify this tendency. Even though faculty succeeded in forcing students to dissolve their antislavery society, students still actively participated in abolitionism in various capacities and defied the faculty's rules. The McNairy-Ashely incident, along with the syndication of abolitionism and free speech in the national antislavery movement, helped change Amherst faculty's opinion and allowed organized student abolitionism on campus. As a result, students' abolitionist organization flourished and by 1840, almost the entire student-body shifted their support from the AASS and Garrisonianism to political abolitionism and the Liberty Party.

The history of student abolitionism is thus unique from Lane and ATS mainly because the Amherst student-faculty relationship was more fluid. Faculty perspectives on organized student abolitionism went from suppression to authorization. During this process, Amherst students never withdrew from the college or joined local antislavery societies (mainly because local antislavery societies were non-existent in the Amherst area at the time the student society dissolved). The way in which faculty reacted to student abolitionism at Lane and ATS greatly influenced Amherst faculty and can explain their restrained approach to dealing with students' abolitionism while maintaining their

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<sup>5</sup> Heman Humphrey, "To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College," February 19, 1835, Anti-Slavery Records, 1833-1842 in Clubs and Societies Collection (box 1 folders 18-20), Amherst College Archives.

authoritative power. All the while, students remained active in abolitionism and ultimately faculty acquiesced to their wishes instead of vice versa. Therefore, of the three institutions of higher education examined, Amherst College was the only one that ultimately had success in establishing organized abolitionism on campus. A brief history of the origins of Amherst College and its religious affiliations is necessary to contextualize the initial debate between colonization and antislavery.

From its inception, Amherst College was associated with Congregationalism. September 1821 marked the beginning of the inaugural academic year at the college. The foremost principles of the institution were “to advance the kingdom of Christ the Redeemer by training many pious youth for the gospel ministry” and that Jesus Christ had “opened a way for the restoration and salvation of all men on the condition of repentance towards God.”<sup>6</sup> These ideals were articulated directly by President of Amherst College Reverend Heman Humphrey, as he emphasized that each student would receive a “moral education”, which would prepare them for careers as ministers and missionaries.<sup>7</sup> During the college’s first decade the total number of enrollment tended to fluctuate between one hundred thirty and one hundred fifty students. Due to the relatively small numbers, students were able to form filial relationships with their professors and had the utmost respect and admiration for them.<sup>8</sup> The close association between faculty and students would prove to be tremendously influential once the debate over antislavery began. For many of the students, the principles on which the college was founded were among the catalysts of antislavery activity at Amherst College, as they would invoke

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<sup>6</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 192, 193.

<sup>7</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 131.

<sup>8</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 161, 244.

these same ideals as justification for their antislavery sentiments. Following the college's founding values, administrators decided to establish a Congregationalist church on campus, which was christened "the Church of Christ in Amherst College."<sup>9</sup>

Integral to the beliefs of Congregationalists at Amherst College and in New England more generally, was their devotion to the colonization movement.<sup>10</sup> Clergy members believed they were obligated to uphold Christian morality in society and formed benevolent organizations that promoted societal reforms such as temperance, religious morality, and colonization. In doing so, religious leaders believed they would reform public evils and revive religious piety in the United States.<sup>11</sup> Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers supported colonization as a process that would remove free African Americans from the United States, which they believed would subsequently establish peace and order in society.<sup>12</sup> Like faculty at Lane and ATS, Amherst College faculty were active supporters of colonization which is evidenced by their rhetoric and leadership of local colonization organizations.

For Amherst College faculty, colonization was the only logical solution to slavery, race, and abolitionism. They condemned abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison as radical agitators and dangerous advocates of a multiracial society.<sup>13</sup> In 1832, the Hampshire Country Colonization Society, an auxiliary to the ACS, elected Humphrey

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<sup>9</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 194.

<sup>10</sup> Claude Moore Fuess, *Amherst: The Story of a New England College* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935), 110.

<sup>11</sup> George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), 6, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 266; Fuess, *Amherst*, 110.

as chairman.<sup>14</sup> Amherst College Professor Reverend Samuel Worcester was also an adamant supporter of colonization. Worcester wrote:

Unless some revolution should occur to change popular opinion, blacks must be forever excluded from a free and indiscriminate participation in white society, slaves then must be furnished a residence where their color will not inhibit their ability to live, and can prosper as independent citizens of free communities.<sup>15</sup>

Worcester clearly supported the repatriation of African Americans to Africa. His intentions were arguably predicated on benevolence towards free African Americans, as he potentially believed colonization would liberate African Americans from prejudices in the United States, a notion some colonizationists advanced to justify repatriation. However, it is evident his colonization convictions were deeply rooted in contemporary racial prejudices. According to colonizationists like Worcester, there was no possibility of equality for African Americans in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Worcester's comments also retain a tone of paternalism, which was prevalent in colonization ideology during this time. The colonizationist idea that African American prosperity required Anglo-Americans to establish a colony in Africa specifically as a destination for repatriation, exemplifies paternalist ideology because colonizationists believed they acted in the best interests of African Americans. According to colonizationists, the best interest of African Americans meant their forced removal from the United States.<sup>17</sup> Due to their religious ideology, many colonizationists believed they were morally obligated to elevate the conditions of free African Americans and repatriation was their solution. Worcester's

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<sup>14</sup> Ralph Randolph Gurley, ed., *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 8 (Washington D.C.: James C. Dunn, 1833), 282.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Worcester, *Essays on Slavery*, (Amherst: M.H. Newman, 1826), Amherst College Special Collections.

<sup>16</sup> P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 11-17.



rhetoric exemplifies colonization ideology during the 1820's and 1830's. Humphrey's leadership in the Hampshire County Colonization Society and Worcester's writings demonstrate that Amherst College faculty and administrators were involved in the colonization movement. Their involvement in the colonization movement was critical to the development of school policies and influenced the actions of students at Amherst College.

The 1830's marked a period of rapid change for the young college at Amherst. Admission numbers increased exponentially and by 1833, a total of two hundred and fifty students matriculated at the school, making it the second largest college in New England. Amherst College historian William Tyler attributed the increase in admissions to the religious revivals of the period and the college's mission to foster young ministers and missionaries.<sup>18</sup> With the increase of admissions, Tyler argued, the Amherst student body not only increased substantially, but concomitantly inhibited the development of the filial mentorships students previously had with faculty, as it was no longer feasible for faculty to administer such guidance to a large student body. While the close mentorships probably waned with the increase of enrollment, the faculty's parental supervision would endure to some degree. Students came to Amherst from different parts of the country, as they had at Lane Seminary. For the first time, southern students were admitted along with students from New England, which changed the demographics of the student body. The large enrollment of students with diverse backgrounds would produce competing ideologies over the question of slavery.

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<sup>18</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 242-44.

The influence of Garrison's antislavery publication the *Liberator* and the nascent New England Anti-Slavery Society (NEASS) had a profound impact on students' perceptions of slavery. The Amherst student periodical, *The Shrine*, reviewed Garrison's anti-colonization pamphlet, "Thoughts on African Colonization." The anonymous reviewer concluded that Garrison's "opinions will have great weight" and encouraged students to consider its contents.<sup>19</sup> After reading the column, some students began to embrace Garrison's antislavery ideology. Amherst students were among other white northerners who, after reading Garrison's attack on colonization, became proponents of antislavery based on moral grounds.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the faculty's involvement in the ACS exerted a similar influence on the student body. Like students at Lane and Andover, Amherst student abolitionists ventured to explore the competing ideologies of colonization and abolition through intellectual discourse. The Athenian Society, a student organization, held a debate on July 10, 1833 over the ethics of colonization and abolition. After a spirited debate, the society voted in favor of the colonization movement, as Athenian Society President Henry Ward Beecher, the son of Lyman Beecher, casted the deciding vote.<sup>21</sup> The young Beecher's vote is provocative, as it reveals his colonizationist sentiments during the early part of his life. The result of the debate suggests the lingering influence of the faculty, as students' admiration and respect for their professors surely effected their beliefs. The very fact that the debate occurred and the decidedly slim margin in favor of colonization indicates antislavery sentiment was prevalent on campus. Shortly after the debate, students and faculty established an auxiliary to the ACS on

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<sup>19</sup> *The Shrine*, vol. 1, number 2, in Amherst College Archives Special Collections.

<sup>20</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 27-28.

<sup>21</sup> Robert J. Brigham, "Amherst College: A Pious Institution's Reaction to Slavery, 1821-1841," unpublished Honors Thesis, Amherst College, 1985, 87; Fuess, *Amherst*, 110.

campus.<sup>22</sup> Simultaneously, eight brave students, undeterred by the results of the debate and subsequent creation of a colonization society, resolved to create an abolition society at Amherst College. On July 19, 1833, Samuel Tappan, a distant relative of Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Horace Gray, Thomas Harvey, David Fisk, and Milton Fisher were among the eight students who founded the Amherst Auxiliary Antislavery Society (AAASS), the first antislavery society in western Massachusetts.

The society's constitution and preamble affirmed they were a subsidiary to the AASS.<sup>23</sup> The AAASS constitution also indicates that these young men were heavily influenced by Garrison, and identified themselves as abolitionists. The preamble stated, "Slavery is contrary to the precepts of Christianity, dangerous to the liberties of the country, and ought immediately be abolished" and that citizens of New England had the right to protest slavery and were morally obligated to do so.<sup>24</sup> Article two of their constitution is particularly revealing, and further explains that these students were radical abolitionists:

objects of [the] society shall be to endeavor by all means sanctioned by law, humanity, and religion to: effect the abolition of slavery in the United States, improve the character and condition of the free people of color, to inform and correct public opinion in relation to their situation and rights, and to obtain for them equal civil and political rights and privileges with the whites.<sup>25</sup>

From the AAASS's inception, student abolitionists were dedicated to the abolition of slavery, to morally reform society, and to establish political and civil equality for African

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<sup>22</sup> Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 266; Fuess, *Amherst*, 110.

<sup>23</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*, July 19, 1833, Anti-Slavery Records 1833-1842, Clubs and Societies Collection, box 1, Folder 18, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>24</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>25</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," article 2, *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*.

Americans. While these provisions are significant because they undoubtedly united this organization to the AASS, they also defied the beliefs of the faculty. These students morally opposed slavery and invoked evangelical ideology, which was directly influenced by the mission of the college, to justify their convictions. This marked a significant change in the young history of the college, as students were not completely obedient to the faculty. The constitution also stated that officers of the society would correspond with other antislavery societies and in turn, offer recommendations to guide their activities, which suggests this auxiliary society was linked to the national movement and would cultivate an awareness of larger trends in abolitionism. Other aspects of the original version of the AAASS's constitution addressed positions of leadership, procedures for elections and meetings, and required a membership fee of fifty cents, which probably funded the correspondences to the parent society and subscriptions to antislavery publications.<sup>26</sup>

Subsequent meeting minutes from 1833 provide a description of the society's early activities. At a meeting on July 24th, members pledged to "enlighten and educate" African Americans who lived within their vicinity and abroad, which indicates their dedication to improve the condition of African Americans. Paternalism permeated the antislavery advocates' rhetoric and planned action. The students believed that improving the condition of African Americans was predicated on their assistance as white ministers and missionaries. The next recorded meetings took place on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> where members of the competing antislavery and colonization societies respectfully debated

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<sup>26</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society and Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society* in Anti-Slavery Records 1833-1842, in Clubs and Societies Collection, box 1, Folder 19, Amherst College Archives.

each other's convictions. Signifying the influence of Garrison's "Thoughts on African Colonization," proponents of antislavery were steadfast in their opposition to colonization because they believed repatriation would be an injustice to African Americans, as it would reinforce racial prejudices and "weaken the strength of the whole" of society.<sup>27</sup> As interest in abolition grew on campus, so did the AAASS's membership. During its first year of existence, AAASS membership increased from the original eight to upwards of seventy members.<sup>28</sup> Abolitionist lecturers probably contributed to the growing membership for the antislavery society.

Abolitionist lecturers were an integral facet of the NEASS. After the society was established in 1832, the NEASS dedicated almost half of its funds to traveling lecturers, which made this strategy vitally important to the spread of abolitionism. The main objective of abolitionist lecturers was to mobilize black and white Americans to join antislavery societies, sign abolitionist petitions, become political activists, and pressure politicians to enact laws to end slavery.<sup>29</sup> Arnold Buffum, the vice president and one of the most famous lecturers of the NEASS, visited Amherst College as part of his lecture circuit that stretched across Massachusetts and greater New England. Faculty instructed Buffum not to incite antislavery agitation during his visits to the college. Contrary to the faculty's advice, Buffum's visit and conversations probably encouraged students' activism and affirmed their abolitionist convictions. Buffum reported that he had encountered and conversed with "many fine young men" who possessed "correct views

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<sup>27</sup> Entries of July 24, 1833; December 4, 1833; December 11, 1833, *Record of the Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*; Brigham, "Amherst College," 99, 100.

<sup>28</sup> "Constitution of the Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society of Amherst College," *Record of the Amherst Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 154, 141.

and principles upon all important subjects.”<sup>30</sup> Amherst College being part of Buffum’s circuit demonstrates that the student abolitionists at Amherst College were a targeted demographic by one of the leading antislavery organizations in the country. Buffum, George Thompson, and other abolitionist leaders perceived students of Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary as important advocates who could spread abolitionism throughout their community. However, Amherst faculty’s influence during the following year would be pernicious to both the antislavery and colonization movements on campus.

External influences had a profound impact on the faculty’s actions at Amherst College. The Lane Controversy specifically played a decisive role in shaping Amherst faculty’s perspective regarding student abolitionism. After the Lane Rebels overtly defied Lyman Beecher and other Lane faculty’s provisions, Beecher met with college officials from New England and unanimously agreed that all antislavery agitation on collegiate campuses had to be suppressed.<sup>31</sup> The ramifications of the events at Lane convinced Amherst College faculty that antislavery agitation would tarnish the school’s reputation and would be detrimental to the peace and prosperity of academic institutions.<sup>32</sup> They certainly hoped to avoid a similar conflict at Amherst College. The Lane Controversy affirmed Amherst College faculty’s fear that agitation over the problem of slavery could potentially damage the reputation of the institution. Faculty were determined to prevent

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<sup>30</sup> Arnold Buffum, “To the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society,” *Liberator*, September 14, 1833, 146-7.

<sup>31</sup> Article from the *Boston Courier* reprinted under the subhead “Refuge of Oppression” in the *Liberator*, July 25 1835, 117.

<sup>32</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 246; Brigham, “Amherst College”, 103.

any negative confrontations on campus and thus believed it was necessary to dissolve both the antislavery and colonization societies.<sup>33</sup>

While there is no response of the AAASS regarding the results of the Lane Controversy, meeting minutes from August 11, 1834, suggests they were aware not only of the events at Lane, but also of the faculty's intentions regarding their society. At this meeting, the student abolitionists unanimously approved a resolution which stated that members had "no objections to the principles or measures of the Society."<sup>34</sup> Students discussed this resolution after both the events at Lane and the general meeting of college officials, which suggests they were aware of the condemnation student abolitionism had received. This resolution affirmed that society members were steadfast in their abolitionist convictions and legitimized their organization's continued existence, despite the demise of the student-led antislavery society at Lane Seminary. August 11, 1834 marked an important date in the history of the AAASS, as its members united in their abolitionist sentiments and continued to hold meetings. The events at Lane Seminary represent the kind of reactionary backlash the antislavery movement faced. Abolitionists had to contend with white northerners and southerners who opposed abolitionism for a variety of reasons such as the fear of slave insurrections, an adherence to both racial inequality and colonization, and the suppression of sectional animosities. Student abolitionists at Amherst College would have their own encounter with opponents of abolition, as they would clash with the faculty over their society's existence, testing the limits of their devotion to their organization.

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<sup>33</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 246.

<sup>34</sup> Entry of August 11, 1834, *Record of the Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

In the wake of the events at Lane Seminary, President Humphrey was determined to preserve the integrity, peace, and prosperity of Amherst College. He formally demanded that both campus antislavery and colonization societies be dissolved, as faculty asserted that the mission of the institution was not founded on political reform and feared the reputation and success of the college would be endangered if the societies continued to exist.<sup>35</sup> The colonization society on campus subsequently acquiesced, but did not suffer a complete loss, as an auxiliary to the ACS existed in the Amherst community, where students and faculty could continue their participation.<sup>36</sup> However, there was not a local auxiliary to the AASS as of yet that students could join if their society was terminated, which made President Humphrey and the faculty's demands particularly harsh for the members of the AAASS.<sup>37</sup>

On October 11, 1834, two months after their resolution upholding their society's existence, the AAASS convened, at the special request of President Humphrey, to discuss his recommendation to dissolve the society. After some deliberation, Mr. Haven moved that the society "henceforth and forever disband" and was seconded by Mr. Howard.<sup>38</sup> The motion was discussed "rationally" with a "good degree of interest" but was unanimously voted down, and the members moved to draft a response to the administration's request.<sup>39</sup> The next meeting on October 20, 1834, the document intended for the faculty was read in its entirety, accepted by the members, and signed by the

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<sup>35</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 246.

<sup>36</sup> Brigham, "Amherst College", 105-06.

<sup>37</sup> Though, Amherst students could have organized a local auxiliary and participated in organized abolitionism outside of the college just Andover students did.

<sup>38</sup> Entry of October 11, 1834, *Record of the Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>39</sup> Entry of October 11, 1834, *Record of the Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.



officers.<sup>40</sup> Over the next four months, a fascinating correspondence transpired between the faculty and members of the society, as the student abolitionists respectfully and deferentially protested the faculty's demands.

The AAASS's response to the faculty explained their predicament. The student abolitionists felt they could not disband their society even at the request of their beloved professors because they morally opposed slavery and were devoted to abolishing it. Representing the students, society official John E. Farwell wrote of their professors, "we know that they are our guardians, and seek our welfare both for time and eternity" and believed their requests were "made in love." Yet, the young abolitionists argued that they could not ignore that over two million of their countrymen were enslaved. They heard "the clanking of their chains" and "their moving pleas for deliverance." The students then invoked the golden rule to justify their abolitionist sentiments, as they were religiously rooted in the notion "do unto others as you would want done to you."<sup>41</sup> After conveying their critical situation, the society's response to the faculty further elucidated the reasons why they could not conscientiously disband their organization.

The student abolitionists' response explained the growing interest of abolition on campus and their civilized conduct. Over the course of fifteen months, their membership had increased from eight to over seventy individuals and their activities consisted of meeting for discussion and prayer for enslaved African Americans.<sup>42</sup> They resented the indictment that their society was detrimental to the prosperity of the institution, since

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<sup>40</sup> Entry of October 20, 1834, *Record of the Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>41</sup> John E. Farwell, Henry G. Pendleton, et al., "Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College," October 21, 1834, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Farwell, Pendleton, et al., "Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College," October 21, 1834; Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 247-48.

their activities were conducted peacefully. In this section, student abolitionists maintained that while they were fundamentally at odds with student colonizationists, some members were their “best” and “dearest friends” and that they continued to “tenderly love and esteem them.”<sup>43</sup> Since abolitionist sentiment and membership in the AAASS increased on campus, combined with their peaceful and civil interactions with their ideological opponents, the student abolitionists respectfully refuted the faculty’s claims.

The final section of the response justified their society and abolition by equating it to “the cause of God-the cause of humanity,” and subsequently supplicated the faculty to allow them to meet monthly for prayer.<sup>44</sup> Deferring to the faculty’s judgment, the response continued, “But if you think the good of the College requires that our body should be dissolved, we pray you to do the work yourselves. Should such be your course with us, we hope to exercise all becoming submission, we will be the very last persons to offer resistance; but-we say it with the kindest feelings-we cannot-No! We cannot be our own destroyer...”<sup>45</sup> The students of the AAASS were extremely conflicted and skeptical over the future of their society. While they invoked religious justification for their steadfast abolitionist convictions, they still conceded to faculty if they deemed the dissolution of the society was expedient. This response also asserted that the faculty still had patriarchal authority over the student body and had not diminished with the increase of enrollment. Unlike the Lane Rebels, Amherst student abolitionists penned a respectful, albeit obsequious, response to the faculty that expressed their devote abolitionist beliefs and left the fate of their organization to the faculty’s judgment.

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<sup>43</sup> Farwell, Pendleton, et al., “Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College,” October 21, 1834.

<sup>44</sup> Farwell, Pendleton, et al., “Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College,” October 21, 1834.

<sup>45</sup> Farwell, Pendleton, et al., “Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College,” October 21, 1834.

Over a month later, on November 26, 1834, the AAASS received the faculty decision. After reviewing and considering the supplications of the antislavery society from all sides, the faculty stood by their original decision and asserted that it was in the best interest of the college for the organization to disband.<sup>46</sup> Yet, in acknowledging the respectful and emotional rhetoric the students employed, the faculty realized the dissolution of the society “would be...afflictive” for its members.<sup>47</sup> They proposed that the organization could continue operation if it adhered to specific regulations. The society could only meet once a month for prayer; new members could join but soliciting them was prohibited; formal addresses and discussions were barred; and finally, the society and its members were barred from corresponding with antislavery newspapers and editors.<sup>48</sup> The faculty reasoned that those regulations were intended “to guard against Evil internal and external” that would potentially pervade Amherst College.<sup>49</sup> The faculty also asserted that they did not intend to influence students’ opinion on slavery and would allow civil discussions regarding slavery to occur but only under their supervision.<sup>50</sup> This decision signifies the influence of the Lane Controversy on the faculty’s policy, as they decided to restrict and not completely suppress antislavery sentiment on campus, hoping to avoid a major conflict with the student abolitionists. The faculty provisions would severely limit the activities of the AAASS, reducing them to monthly prayer services.

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<sup>46</sup> Faculty of Amherst College, “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Faculty of Amherst College, “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834.

<sup>48</sup> Faculty of Amherst College, “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834.

<sup>49</sup> Faculty of Amherst College, “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834.

<sup>50</sup> Faculty of Amherst College, “To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College,” November 26, 1834.

The final sanction that prohibited any communication or subscription to antislavery publications and their editors would be especially crippling, as the society subscribed to and read abolitionist publications in order to stay abreast of antislavery news. Antislavery publications were the lifeblood of the AAASS; without information from external publications and the parent societies, the AAASS would be forced to operate in seclusion. If the students wanted their organization to subsist, they would have to operate within these restrictive regulations.

The AAASS met twice to discuss the faculty's provisions and determine the future of their organization. After serious deliberation, student abolitionists voted unanimously that they could not consciously "as men and Christians" comply with the faculty's regulations and forwarded their results to President Humphrey.<sup>51</sup> News of the correspondence between the faculty and students spread rapidly. The *Emancipator* reprinted an article from the *New York Evangelist* that had printed the correspondence between the faculty and the young abolitionists. The editor of the *Emancipator* stated it was "with deep sorrow that we record these proceedings of Amherst College, derogatory to freedom and humanity-No discussion allowed, no communication with the press" and concluded that these events would only "add fuel to the flame."<sup>52</sup> The events surrounding the antislavery movement at Amherst College were well-known in New England and to the subscribers of antislavery publications. As was the case at Lane Seminary and ATS, the suppression of antislavery advocacy treaded closely with the violation of the First Amendment. The faculty's provisions and unequivocal assurance that slavery could still

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<sup>51</sup> Entries of December 22, 1834; December 29, 1834; *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*; William G. Howard, David Andrews, Edward Pritchett, "Letter to the Faculty of Amherst College", January 7, 1835, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*.

<sup>52</sup> *Emancipator*, January 20, 1835; Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 249.

be debated on campus even if the society dissolved suggests that Amherst faculty were fully aware of the ramifications if their ruling was excessively strict. From the perspective of the AAASS, however, the faculty's regulations were indeed exceptionally strict. After reading the students' response, the faculty subsequently replied and determined that due to the "agitated state of the public mind," the antislavery society at Amherst College "must cease to exist."<sup>53</sup> The following passage from the faculty's response reveals that they were cognizant of conflicts at other institutions involving student abolitionist activism. They wrote,

We fully accord with the opinion recently expressed by the whole body of students in the Andover Theological Seminary, that in the present agitated state of the public mind, it is inexpedient to keep up any organization, under the name of Anti-Slavery, Colonization, or the like, at our Literary & Theological Institutions. This, we believe, is coming to be more & more the settled judgment of the enlightened & pious friends of these Institutions, throughout the country. Indeed we are not aware, that such a society as your now exists, in any respectable College but our own, in the land.<sup>54</sup>

This passage is revealing for several reasons. Since faculty acknowledged the conflict over student abolitionism at Andover Theological Seminary (ATS) is especially significant. By February 1835, ATS student abolitionists must have dissolved their society and Amherst faculty believed their students should follow that example.<sup>55</sup> However, Amherst faculty were seemingly unaware of British abolitionist George Thompson's visit to ATS in January 1835 which in fact helped to resuscitate abolitionism among ATS students. Amherst faculty were also citing the Lane Controversy and the Lane faculty's ruling to abolish student abolitionist activism. Clearly, the Amherst

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<sup>53</sup> Heman Humphrey, "To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College," February 19, 1835, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*.

<sup>54</sup> Humphrey, "To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College", February 19, 1835.

<sup>55</sup> That Amherst faculty acknowledged that ATS students dissolved their society aligns with the account in "Andover, Theol. Sem. March 23, 1835," *Liberator*, March 28, 1835, 50.

faculty's sanctions were influenced by developments at Lane and ATS. President Humphrey and other administrators likely believed their actions simply aligned with how other institutions dealt with the controversial topic of racial slavery.

The faculty's reply provides another example of the gracious rhetoric that was utilized between the faculty and the student abolitionists. The faculty conveyed that their confidence in the students' "good principles and good judgment" remained unchanged.<sup>56</sup> The proceedings of the AAASS's subsequent meeting are particularly noteworthy, as they revealed how the members continued their participation in the abolitionism despite the faculty's ruling.

On February 23, 1835, the AAASS opened their meeting, as they often did, with prayer for the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. It was noted that the meeting was "unusually well-attended," as students would determine the fate of their organization.<sup>57</sup> After the faculty's response was read, attendees passed several motions that suggested the members would continue their active participation in abolition despite their organization's demise. Members voted: to continue their "monthly subscription" which would be forwarded to the American Anti-Slavery Society, to "publish the proceedings and communication with faculty," and for the secretary to retrieve from the post office the *Liberator* and *Emancipator* and make them available in his room for those who wanted to read them.<sup>58</sup> The proceedings of this meeting end with an impassioned resolution: "Whereas we are no longer Anti-Slavery brethren, Resolved that we *are* and *will be forever* Anti-Slavery Men!" and the final words stated "Brethren, we are no

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<sup>56</sup> Humphrey, "To the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in Amherst College", February 19, 1835.

<sup>57</sup> Entry of February 23, 1835, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>58</sup> Entry of February 23, 1835, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*.

more!”<sup>59</sup> Even though faculty dissolved their society formally, the student abolitionists still planned to actively support and participate in the antislavery movement. Their continued subscriptions and monetary contributions to AASS would keep them abreast of antislavery news and simultaneously defied the faculty’s regulations, which is indicative of their steadfast moral opposition to slavery. While the students were probably saddened that their society was disbanded, they refused to allow the faculty’s ruling to destroy their morale, as they continued their activism. Despite the formal student antislavery society’s termination in 1835, antislavery sentiment became increasingly prominent on campus over the next two years. The McNairy-Ashley incident chronicled at the beginning of this chapter occurred just six months after the dissolution of the student antislavery society and proved to be a catalyst for the revival of organized student abolitionism on campus.

After the antislavery society dissolved, southern students were known to ridicule other students who maintained antislavery beliefs and even sometimes threatened them with violence.<sup>60</sup> On the morning of commencement in August 1835, verbal threats escalated into violent assault. McNairy’s attack on Ashley was perceived to be the manifestation of proslavery animosity towards abolitionists.<sup>61</sup> Faculty’s fear of agitation over the slavery question finally came to fruition and proved the editor of the *Emancipator’s* prophecy. Even after the faculty attempted to control the contentious topic of slavery by dissolving campus colonization and antislavery societies, they still could not shield Amherst College from the pervasive issue of slavery. After investigating the incident, the faculty acted swiftly and expelled McNairy from the college.<sup>62</sup> The events

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<sup>59</sup> Entry of February 23, 1835, *Amherst College Ant-Slavery Society*.

<sup>60</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250.

<sup>61</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250; Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 272; Fuess, *Amherst*, 111.

<sup>62</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 251.

on commencement in 1835 marked a significant shift in students' antislavery sentiment. They believed that the beating of a fellow student because of his abolitionist beliefs signified an attempt to suppress free speech and abolitionist activism. Students subsequently began to publically endorse antislavery because they were protected under the First Amendment.

Equating abolitionist activism with First Amendment rights was a growing national trend for Northern antislavery advocates in the 1830's. Editors of abolitionist publications, such as Garrison, James Birney, and William Goodell, justified their convictions and their right to express them by stating they were simply exercising their constitutional right of freedom of the press.<sup>63</sup> Abolitionist editors also criticized southern states that denied the civil liberties of free speech and free press to their citizenry. Southern state legislators actively prohibited antislavery sentiment, with the help of proslavery southerners, in southern publications for the fear of inciting slave insurrections. Abolitionists logically asserted that they not only attacked slavery, but also defended the First Amendment and had the U.S. Constitution on their side.<sup>64</sup> Amherst College antislavery students' awareness of the merger between First Amendment rights and antislavery advocacy is another example of the students' connection to larger trends in the abolitionist movement.

The surrounding community in Amherst also became supportive of the antislavery movement, which marked a shift from the predominance of colonizationism. On January 20, 1836, the first Hampshire County antislavery convention was held in Northampton

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<sup>63</sup> Russel B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom: Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963), 126-27.

<sup>64</sup> Nye, *Fettered Freedom*, 123, 127.



and the “Old Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society” was formed with upwards of nine hundred members.<sup>65</sup> The formation of a local antislavery society combined with the violent beating of an Amherst College abolitionist would have a profound impact on the faculty’s policies and subsequent revival of organized abolitionism at Amherst College.

In the fall of 1836, a few student abolitionists led by Albert Hinckley, a former member of the AAASS, petitioned the faculty to resume meeting monthly for prayer, as stipulated by the faculty’s former provisions for the antislavery society’s continued existence. Surprisingly, the faculty granted the student abolitionists’ request.<sup>66</sup> According to Tyler, the faculty’s perspective had changed over the course of fifteen months, as opinions at Amherst College and the surrounding community had become more favorable to the antislavery movement.<sup>67</sup> The combination of the McNairy-Ashley incident and the establishment of local antislavery societies probably convinced the faculty that they could no longer suppress a student antislavery organization that would operate solely to pray for African Americans. Also, faculty fears that antislavery hysteria would plague and cripple the institution seemed to have subsided by the fall of 1836.<sup>68</sup> The students’ petition demonstrates continued interest in the antislavery movement on campus, despite the fact antislavery agitation had been banned for over a year. The faculty’s approval of the students’ petition marked a significant change in their policy and would be the first step toward the full resuscitation of the students’ antislavery society.

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<sup>65</sup> “Anti-Slavery Convention in Old Hampshire,” *Liberator*, February 13, 1836, 25-6; Brigham, “Amherst College”, 122.

<sup>66</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250; Brigham, “Amherst College”, 122.

<sup>67</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250.

<sup>68</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 250.

For the next year, the student abolitionists met monthly to pray for the emancipation of African Americans. Violence towards abolitionists, such as the murder of Elijah Lovejoy for distributing his abolitionist publication, galvanized the antislavery movement at Amherst College, as students reaffirmed their right to advocate for abolition.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, on November 18, 1837, a small group of antislavery students met privately to plan and adopt measures to formally reinstate the antislavery society on campus.<sup>70</sup> The students believed they had a right to have such an organization on campus and maintained it would provide a better medium for action “in the great cause of emancipation,” as many students supported it.<sup>71</sup> The activists met a week later to further discuss the matter and decided to appoint a committee to draft a petition to form an antislavery society, acquire students’ signatures in support of the measure, and present it to the faculty.<sup>72</sup> Euphram Allen, Erastus Barnes, and Jesse Bragg were among the leaders to revive the antislavery society on campus and presented the petition to the faculty on December 13, 1837.<sup>73</sup>

Just two days later on December 15, 1837, a meeting of the antislavery students convened and the faculty’s response was read by Allen. The petition had been “cheerfully granted” by the faculty and the antislavery society at Amherst College was fully revived.<sup>74</sup> The faculty’s approval again marked a significant change in their policy. The same faculty members and president who had forced the society to dissolve just two years earlier had completely reversed their decision. This change suggests their governing

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<sup>69</sup> Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 282.

<sup>70</sup> Entry of November 18, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*, Anti-Slavery Records 1833-1842, Clubs and Societies Collection, box 1, Folder 20, Amherst College Archives.

<sup>71</sup> Entry of November 18, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>72</sup> Entry of November 25, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>73</sup> Entry of November 25, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>74</sup> Entry of December 15, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

philosophy had been modified out of necessity, as the student abolitionists pressured the faculty to reinstate the antislavery society on campus. The student abolitionists' advocacy, the growth of public support for the antislavery movement in the local community, and the perceived suppression of free speech evoked by the murder of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, all affected the faculty's change in policy. Perhaps the faculty realized they could no longer shield the campus from the nationally relevant topic of slavery. The faculty's approval exemplified a shift in their governing methods and suggests they sought to appease the students.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, with their approval, the faculty would not be depicted as authoritarians suppressing their students' moral beliefs, like that of Lane and ATS faculty. Perhaps the faculty hoped their decision would yield a positive reputation for Amherst College.

After the faculty's approval was read, Allen, Barnes, and Bragg drafted a constitution for the society. Over the course of two meetings, the society debated and ratified the constitution.<sup>76</sup> Allen was particularly qualified, as he helped amend the original society's constitution in 1834.<sup>77</sup> The new constitution mirrored the original, which suggests the members of the resurgent society were committed to abolition just as their predecessors had been. The members also voted to draft an account of the formation of their society and have it sent to the *Emancipator* and *Liberator* for publication.<sup>78</sup> The remaining recorded meeting minutes have a particular procedural pattern. The meetings usually started with prayers for emancipation, then members read addresses that explored the expediency of abolition, followed by debates and votes to determine the support of

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<sup>75</sup> Tyler, *History of Amherst College*, 259-60.

<sup>76</sup> Entries of December 19, 1837; December 26, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>77</sup> Entry of November 24, 1834, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society* 1833-1835.

<sup>78</sup> Entry of December 29, 1837, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society* 1837-1841.

resolutions. The society held yearly elections for the positions of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a council of representatives. The antislavery society also regularly sent delegates to antislavery conventions in Northampton, Boston, and New York.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the student abolitionists were in contact with and contributed to larger regional antislavery organizations. These activities demonstrate that the members of the revived antislavery society at Amherst College were actively involved the national movement to abolish slavery.

While the revived antislavery society was comparable to the original society in their steadfast abolitionist convictions, the meeting minutes from 1837-1841 reveal some stark differences. The revived society was much more engaged with questions that confronted the national antislavery movement. For example, the society debated questions such as did the United States Constitution sanction slavery if properly interpreted, which the members ultimately decided in the negative.<sup>80</sup> The society discussed other noteworthy questions such as was slaveholding always a sin and could abolitionists consistently be consumers of slave produced products, both voted in the affirmative, and should slaveholders be compensated for liberating their slaves, decided in the negative.<sup>81</sup> These questions and resolutions indicate that the antislavery society at Amherst College was connected not only to the larger national debates over abolitionism but also to radical abolitionist sentiment. The society's dialogue surrounding these

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<sup>79</sup> Entries of December 29, 1837; April 6, 1838; July 13, 1838; August 20, 1838; February 8, 1839; July 12, 1839, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>80</sup> Entry of February 9, 1838, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>81</sup> Entries of March 9, 1838; April 6, 1838; June 22, 1838; July 13, 1838; August 4, 1839; *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

important questions offer important insights to students' abolitionist ideology and indicates their local connection to the broader abolitionist movement.

A final question that the student abolitionists debated further proves their consciousness of national trends in the antislavery movement. At a meeting on December 6, 1839, members debated whether abolitionism should be brought into formal politics. After a debate, members decided in the affirmative.<sup>82</sup> Over the course of the following year, the members of the antislavery society at Amherst College began to affiliate with antislavery political organizations, as they withdrew the society's affiliation with the Garrisonian movement and voted to become an auxiliary to the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>83</sup> With this new subsidiary status, the student abolitionists identified with a more socially conservative form of abolitionism. The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society opposed Garrison's antislavery organization, which denounced political activism and permitted the participation of women. Perhaps it is not surprising Amherst College students opposed women's participation in the movement, as their institution was comprised exclusively of men and were heavily influenced by the college's all-male faculty. Like student abolitionists at Lane and ATS, Amherst students conceptualized an abolitionist movement comprised of and led by white males. Likewise, the antislavery movement at Amherst College ultimately reflected socially conservative or evangelical abolitionism.

The antislavery society at Amherst College ultimately sided with political abolitionism because they believed the Constitution was an antislavery document and that it was necessary to work within the political system in order to enact emancipation.

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<sup>82</sup> Entry of December 6, 1839, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>83</sup> Entries of April 2, 1840; June 1840; July 14, 1840; *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

While their interpretation of the Constitution as an antislavery document were arguably justified, considering its three-fifths and fugitive slave clauses that strengthened the rights of slaveholders, the student abolitionists' assertion is grounded in a historical time and place. Their assessment of the Constitution was prior to the sectional crisis that intensified the debate over slavery in the 1850's, which was largely produced by the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854). This legislation was perceived by abolitionists, and northerners in general, as products of a Slave Power conspiracy, whose rulings were based on the premise of a proslavery Constitutional interpretation.<sup>84</sup> From that perspective, it is more understandable that student abolitionists believed the Constitution was antislavery in 1840. Students' antislavery interpretation of the Constitution adds to James Oakes's analysis of the "Freedom National" doctrine adopted by radical Republicans in the 1850's. Charles Sumner and other radical Republicans also adhered to an antislavery interpretation of the Constitution and sought to implement a national program to restrict slavery's expansion with the ultimate goal that the institution of racial slavery would collapse.<sup>85</sup> It is possible that Amherst student abolitionists were among the supporters of the Freedom National strategy.

The turbulent history of the antislavery movement at Amherst College is a significant contribution to the history of the antislavery movement and student activism on college campuses. The combination of the religious mission of Amherst College and the influence of Garrison's moral opposition to slavery had a profound impact on

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<sup>84</sup> James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), passim, Amherst student abolitionists interpreted the U.S. Constitution in a similar way Charles Sumner and other radical Republicans' would interpret it in the 1850's, stressing the document's antislavery premises at the federal level, thus making chattel slavery a state regulated institution.

<sup>85</sup> Oakes, *Freedom National*, ix, 8.

students, as they defied the beliefs of faculty and administration by creating an antislavery society on campus. As the AAASS grew in membership, the society subscribed to antislavery publications, which kept members informed on antislavery news and provided financial support to the AASS. Due to the national hysteria surrounding antislavery agitation, especially the tumultuous events that occurred at Lane Seminary and the developments at ATS, faculty at Amherst College attempted to eradicate the divisive issue of slavery from their institution by forcibly dissolving campus antislavery and colonization societies. Members of the antislavery society acceded to the faculty demands out of the respect and admiration for their professors. However, the termination of the AAASS did not indefinitely quell antislavery advocacy on campus. In the wake of the violence towards abolitionists, most notably the McNairy-Ashley incident on campus and the murder of Elijah Lovejoy, Amherst College students invoked their First Amendment rights to justify their abolitionist advocacy. With this new pressure and in order to advance a positive reputation for the college, faculty conceded to the demands of the students to revive the antislavery society on campus in 1837. The society subsequently thrived and its members were well aware of the national debates regarding slavery, as members attended antislavery conventions and subscribed to abolitionist publications. While Garrison's direct influence shaped the antislavery society at Amherst College, the organization became an auxiliary to the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society which necessarily meant a rejection of Garrisonianism. Ultimately, the Amherst student body became ardent supporters of the Liberty Party.

The antislavery society at Amherst College was a grass-roots antislavery movement that supported national antislavery organizations. A significant change

occurred in the faculty-student relationship at Amherst College when students defied the faculty by supporting abolitionism. Amherst College students demonstrated tremendous resiliency, as their abolitionist convictions never wavered and in fact increased, despite faculty attempts to restrict their activism. Unlike Lane Seminary and ATS, abolitionist agitation was never fully removed from the Amherst campus. Moreover, this history reveals that some of the first examples of student activism on college campuses was in support of the antislavery movement. It also demonstrates that these students were fully cognizant of issues regarding race, as they sought to emancipate African Americans and establish equal rights. Finally this history demonstrates how pervasive and divisive the issue of slavery was in society, as it inexorably infiltrated and induced conflict on the campus of a small New England college. Like student abolitionists from Lane and ATS, Amherst students helped spread the movement and also explain a demographic of the population that supported conservative evangelical abolitionism.



## EPILOGUE

### THE LEGACY AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDENT ABOLITIONISM

The legacy of student abolitionism had a profound impact on spreading antislavery and garnering support for political abolitionism.<sup>1</sup> After the Lane Rebellion, student abolitionists enrolled at Oberlin College, a progressive institution on issues regarding race and free speech. Oberlin became the first college in the United States to admit white and black men as well as white and black women.<sup>2</sup> As J. Brent Morris acknowledges, Oberlin College became a hotbed of abolitionism in the western United States, in large part because Lane Rebels matriculated there.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Lane Rebels, led by Theodore Weld, embarked on careers devoted to abolitionism, as agents and other leadership roles for the American Antislavery Society (AASS). James A. Thome became an emissary to Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica in order to assess the effects of British emancipation in the West Indies.<sup>4</sup> Other Lane Rebels ascended to top leadership positions in national antislavery organizations.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, student abolitionists were at the fore when the antislavery movement experienced the schisms in the late 1830's and early 1840's. Andover student abolitionists anticipated the emergence of a conservative wing of the movement which eventually became the American and Foreign Antislavery

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<sup>1</sup> Less is known about antislavery activity of student abolitionists at Andover Theological Seminary, as many of those students joined local antislavery societies in the community. However, by 1837, ATS student abolitionists were decidedly anti-Garrisonian, "Appeal of Abolitionists of the Theological Seminary, Andover," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Lane Rebels enrolled at Oberlin two years after the institution was formed; J. Brent Morris, *Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism: College, Community, and the Fight for Freedom and Equality in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) 23, 32, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Morris, *Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism*, 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), 36; Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 167-8; James A. Thome and Joseph H. Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (New York: Anti-Slavery Society, 1838).

<sup>5</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 167-8.

Society (AFASS) while Amherst student abolitionists discussed the formal politicization of abolitionism. Examining student abolitionists' activism during the 1830's and early 1840's demonstrates that they articulated transnational arguments in support of immediate emancipation, filled leadership positions on the ground, helped disseminate antislavery ideology, and concomitantly, elicited the creation of local antislavery societies. Along with these contributions, an analysis of students' abolitionism exposes important limitations to their activism. Their socially conservative ideology and conceptualization of a hegemonic movement comprised of white male leadership illustrates their ultimate failure to work with black abolitionists, male and female, as well as white women.

Of the student abolitionists examined in this study, the Lane Rebels had the most prolific careers as antislavery leaders and were the most radical in their beliefs regarding race and gender. From the mid 1830's to 1859, eighteen of the rebels worked as paid agents for antislavery societies for various lengths of time ranging from six months to seven years.<sup>6</sup> By 1836, Lane student abolitionists comprised over half of the AASS's agents. The AASS appointed Weld to recruit and train a group of agents who became known as the famous "Seventy."<sup>7</sup> William T. Allan, Marius Robinson, Sereno W. Streeter, Augustus Wattles, Huntington Lyman, James A. Thome, and Henry B. Stanton occupied various positions in local, state, and national antislavery societies.<sup>8</sup> Several of these individuals, along with Weld, were instrumental in creating the Ohio Antislavery Society. Weld personally drafted the state society's "Declaration of Sentiments" which

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<sup>6</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 167.

<sup>7</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 167.

<sup>8</sup> *Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), 36;

emphasized evangelical antislavery ideology.<sup>9</sup> From 1835 to 1836, the number of antislavery societies in Ohio grew from twenty to one hundred twenty, in large part due to the Lane Rebel antislavery agents.<sup>10</sup> The membership of these societies typically was between forty and one hundred members, while the largest had 942 members.<sup>11</sup>

Stanton and Thome were two of the rebels that ascended to national leadership positions in the AASS. After Henry B. Stanton left Lane, he became an agent for the AASS and lectured in New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. His lecture circuit in Massachusetts included a stop at Andover Theological Seminary, where he was well-received by student abolitionists and was successful in converting several students to abolition.<sup>12</sup> Stanton also served as the financial secretary of the AASS from 1837-1840, after which he joined the newly established American and Foreign Antislavery Society (AFASS) and was a delegate at the World Antislavery Convention in London. Also in 1840, Stanton married women's rights activist Elizabeth Cady.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, this marriage was ironic, considering Henry Stanton supported the AFASS, which rejected the membership of women while his wife Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a leader in the women's rights movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton commented on this irony and implicitly critiqued her husband's gendered philosophy as she stated, "It struck me as

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<sup>9</sup> *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention, Held at Putnam, on the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty fourth of April, 1835* (Putnam: Beaumont & Wallace, 1835) 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the first anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society* (Cincinnati: Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1836), 20-1, date accessed February 25, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/ASPC0002427400#page/n19/mode/2up>.

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the first anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Reinhard O. Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848: Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States* (Baton Rouge; Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 659; Leander Thompson to Theodore Weld, August 25, 1836, *Letters of Weld*, 334.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, *The Liberty Party*, 659; As his membership in the American and Foreign Antislavery indicates, Henry Stanton was solely concerned with the abolition of chattel slavery and opposed an eclectic movement.

very remarkable that abolitionists, who felt so keenly the wrongs of the slave, should be so oblivious to the equal wrongs of their own mothers, wives, and sisters, when, according to the common law, both classes occupied a similar legal status.”<sup>14</sup>

Theoretically, Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s comment was merited. However, qualitatively, the condition of enslaved African American men and women was drastically different than that of white women. Henry Stanton also became involved in political abolitionism, as he supported the Liberty Party during the 1840’s and the Free Soil and Republican Parties that followed.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps just as influential was James A. Thome in his antislavery activism after leaving Lane Seminary. In 1834, Thome became an agent for the AASS after he presented a lecture at the society’s annual meeting.<sup>16</sup> After the Lane Rebellion, Thome enrolled at Oberlin College and graduated in 1836. Upon graduation, Thome became an emissary to the Caribbean. Thome and Joseph H. Kimball, an editor of the AASS sponsored newspaper *Herald of Freedom*, were appointed by the AASS to travel to the British West Indies to assess the impact immediate emancipation had on Antigua, Barbadian, and Jamaican societies respectively.<sup>17</sup> After their voyage, Thome and Kimball published their observations in *Emancipation in the West Indies* (1838). From the abolitionist perspective, *Emancipation in the West Indies* was considered a major success for the antislavery movement, as it demonstrated the safety of immediate emancipation. Free persons in the British West Indies were employed as wage laborers and did not

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<sup>14</sup> Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch ed., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton As revealed in Her Letters, Diary, and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper, 1932), 75.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, *The Liberty Party*, 659.

<sup>16</sup> *The First Annual Report of the American Antislavery Society* (New York: Hall & Bates, 1834), 32.

<sup>17</sup> James A. Thome and Joseph H. Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (New York: Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), 3-5.

wreak havoc on the white population like many slaveholders feared if enslaved people were emancipated.<sup>18</sup> Weld and Henry B. Stanton both praised the book and considered it to be the most influential antislavery publication of the time.<sup>19</sup> The Executive Committee of the AASS believed *Emancipation in the West Indies* was so important to the cause of abolitionism that they ordered a second printing of 100,000 copies.<sup>20</sup> Thome went on to become a professor of rhetoric at Oberlin College. Both Henry B. Stanton and James A. Thome, became prominent leaders in the movement to abolish slavery and the origins of their abolitionist activism dated back to their time at Lane Seminary and their interactions with Theodore Weld.

Weld's contributions to the antislavery movement are well-known to historians.<sup>21</sup> He was dedicated to the abolitionist movement and tirelessly travelled throughout the northern states, spreading the movement. Typically, Weld would lecture on antislavery anywhere from six to twenty-five times in a given location. The antislavery revivalist strategy proved effective especially in the state of New York. In 1836, Weld converted up to seven hundred new members to the Utica Antislavery Society and elicited 1,200 signatures to antislavery petitions.<sup>22</sup> However, Weld was not always successful. In Troy, New York he met fierce opposition to abolitionism in the form of violent mobs, the severity of which Weld had never experienced. After several attempts to lecture in Troy,

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<sup>18</sup> Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, vi, passim; On emancipation in the British West Indies and its impact in the U.S. see Edward Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009) and W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 184.

<sup>20</sup> *Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1838), 46; Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 184.

<sup>21</sup> Robert H. Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) remains the definitive biography of Weld.

<sup>22</sup> Theodore Weld to J.F. Robinson, May 1, 1836, *Letters of Weld*, 295; Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 147.

Weld was stoned in the streets and was injured at least twice. The opposition Weld faced at Troy forced him from the city and marked a significant change in his antislavery activity.<sup>23</sup>

In the years after Troy, Weld gave up the exhausting lifestyle of traveling orator and decided to write antislavery treatises for the AASS. Two of Weld's most prominent publications were *The Bible Against Slavery* and *American Slavery As It Is*. The latter publication was essentially a synthesis of southern newspaper articles that Weld accumulated in an attempt to establish an abolitionist argument with southerners' own proslavery dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Radical reformers Angelina Grimké, who married Weld in 1837, and her sister Sarah were integral in drafting *American Slavery As It Is* and provided their own accounts and arguments against slavery. Predictably, abolitionists lauded the tract and it sold over 100,000 copies in its first year.<sup>25</sup>

Historians have explained the tremendous influence *American Slavery As It Is* had amongst its readers. Harriet Beecher Stowe stated that *American Slavery As It Is* was the impetus for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was one of the most influential novels in American history.<sup>26</sup> Along with Weld's contributions to the antislavery revivals at Lane and as a traveling abolitionist orator, the publication of *American Slavery As It Is* solidified Weld's legacy as one of the most influential leaders of the abolitionist movement. Weld was also an advocate for women's rights, however, conservatively.<sup>27</sup> In writing to the Grimkés, Weld asked "Now what is plainer than that the grand primitive

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<sup>23</sup> For a description of Weld's experience in Troy, New York see Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 147-9.

<sup>24</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 162, 210-1.

<sup>25</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 213.

<sup>26</sup> Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 230-1.

<sup>27</sup> Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, 174-9, 182.

principle for which we struggle is HUMAN rights, and that the rights of woman is a principle purely derivative from the other?"<sup>28</sup> While Weld argued for the equality of the sexes and promoted women's involvement in antislavery, Weld believed the abolition of chattel slavery took precedence over advocating for women's rights. Weld also invoked "human rights" which connects him to other radical reformers promotion of human rights for all humankind. Weld's life exemplifies the career of a radical reformer and was probably the most progressive of the student abolitionists.

While not as prolific as some of the Lane Rebels, but still influential, student abolitionists from Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary also provided vital contributions to antislavery. Less is known regarding the fate of student abolitionists from Andover Theological Seminary. Extant sources do not exist that detail the activities of student abolitionists. As chapter two indicates, faculty actively suppressed student abolitionists' activity and the organization of student societies required faculty approval. The lack of extant sources suggests student abolitionists adhered to the faculty's strict provisions, unlike students at Lane and Amherst. However, Andover students' "Appeal of Abolitionists" provides a bit of evidence that indicates the ATS student abolitionists became members and leaders in the community-based Andover Antislavery Society.<sup>29</sup> Given Garrison's religious critique and the inclusion of women activists, ATS students likely became members of the conservative faction of antislavery. Some ATS students, such as Jonathan Blanchard and James McKim, eventually supported the Liberty Party.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Theodore Weld to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, August 26, 1837, *Letters of Weld*, 435.

<sup>29</sup> "Appeal of Abolitionists," *Liberator*, August 25, 1837, 139.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, *The Liberty Party*, 571-2, 636. ATS faculty anti-abolitionism remained prevalent into the 1840's. See the *Liberator*, April 10, 1840, 57.

Fissures in the antislavery movement at the national level over the participation of women also caused dissension in other local antislavery societies. Amherst student abolitionists ultimately rejected the Garrisonian faction in the antislavery movement because they included female activists. By 1840, the influence of private societies began to wane, as the antislavery movement moved inexorably towards political action. After the antislavery society at Amherst College became an auxiliary to the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery in 1840, they started to meet less frequently, as they contemplated the merger of abolitionism and formal politics.<sup>31</sup> The record of the last three meetings of the antislavery society reveals the fate of the student organization.

In November 1841, the society met three times over the course of a week. Members hotly debated the expediency of the newly organized Liberty Party as a political abolitionist organization. Two meetings, one lasting over two hours, were not enough for members to reach a decision on the issue.<sup>32</sup> A third and final debate was opened to all college students and was well attended.<sup>33</sup> After a lively three hour discussion, the decision was made by the society, in conjunction with the overall student body, to support the Liberty Party. The society recorded the decision “as a *decided triumph of Abolition* over slaveocracy in this institution.”<sup>34</sup> The entry and the records of the antislavery society at Amherst College end with a poem that reads,

“Slavery rule our sacred land  
We tell thee Southerners never  
Till our Iron Strand, and rocky land  
Are known no more forever.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> After the July 14, 1840 vote to align with the AFASS, there is not a record of the society meeting until January 1841.

<sup>32</sup> November 8, 1841; November 12, 1841, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>33</sup> November 15, 1841, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>34</sup> November 15, 1841, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.

<sup>35</sup> November 15, 1841, *Amherst College Anti-Slavery Society*.



The last entries in the society's records demonstrate that not only the members of the society, but the entire Amherst student population, emphatically favored political abolitionism. The poem reveals the student abolitionist sentiments, as they directly opposed the southern institution of slavery and were determined to abolish it politically. By November 1841, the cause of antislavery was prominent at Amherst College and it seems that members felt it was unnecessary to meet again as they cast their support for the Liberty Party.

The history of student abolitionism reveals just as much through its silences. There were inherent limitations to the students' conceptualization of the abolitionist movement. With the exception of some radicals like Weld, student abolitionists overwhelmingly perceived the movement to abolish slavery as dominated by white males. Clearly student abolitionists were products of their time period, the institutions they attended were exclusively comprised of male students, faculty, and administration (with the exception of Oberlin), and they operated in a male dominated society. However, black abolitionists, male and female, argued the exact principles of immediate emancipation and African American equality that students did. For example, David Walker and Maria Stewart were both radical abolitionists that articulated immediate emancipationist arguments prior to the emergence of student antislavery organizations.

Walker condemned Christians in America as the most brutal slaveholders history had ever known and highlighted the hypocrisy of white Americans, as they praised the ideals of freedom and equality embedded in the Declaration of Independence yet they

subjugated African Americans.<sup>36</sup> During the antislavery revivals at Lane, students utilized a similar strategy of appealing to not only logic and morality, but emotional sentiment, as white southern students elucidated the harsh realities of the slave system. Maria Stewart believed that through racial solidarity and education African Americans would demonstrate their high moral character and capacity for liberty. Stewart wrote, “the day we unite, heart and soul, and turn our attention to knowledge and improvement, the day the hissing and reproach among the nations of the earth against us will cease.”<sup>37</sup>

Historians have documented the role of black male and female abolitionists which demonstrates not only their leadership in the movement but their influence on white abolitionists.<sup>38</sup> Lane student abolitionists worked with free African Americans in Cincinnati to demonstrate African American equality through educational programs, a strategy that aligned with Stewart’s ideology. White Lane student abolitionists did work with James Bradley, which signifies that perhaps they were open to working with African American abolitionists. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Lane students attempted to work with black abolitionist leaders, such as Walker or Stewart.

James Bradley was accepted by other Lane students and was a central figure in the antislavery revivals but little is known about his life after the Lane Rebellion.

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<sup>36</sup> David Walker, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (Boston: David Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1830), 84-5. On the paradox of slavery and freedom in the United States, see Edmund Morgan’s *American Slavery, American Freedom*.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Stewart, “Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality,” Marilyn Richardson ed., *Maria W. Stewart, America’s First Black Woman Political Writer* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 37.

<sup>38</sup> See Stacey Robertson, *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Christopher Cameron, *To Plead Our Own Cause: African Americans in Massachusetts and the Making of the Antislavery Movement* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2014); Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992); R.J.M Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).

Bradley's life and other free black wage-laborers in Cincinnati exemplified precisely what Stewart believed was possible for African Americans. The limitations of student abolitionism can help explain the fissures in the movement in the late 1830's. Ironically, students advocated for the abolition of slavery and African American equality but for the most part, neglected to work with free African American men and women to achieve those goals. The example of Cincinnati is the exception. Still, Lane students assumed a paternalistic position in implementing educational programs in the black community. White Lane students solely comprised leadership roles in instituting uplift programs suggesting that African American leadership was marginalized or not allowed at all. Considering they were trained as religious ministers and missionaries helps to explain their choices and approaches to leadership. Student abolitionists were a segment of the broader sect of the movement that generally failed to work with black abolitionists, male and female, and white women.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps that is the paradox of the history of student abolitionism—while students were important advocates of immediate emancipation and racial equality, they neglected to collaborate systematically with African American leaders. Student abolitionists also rejected white women's participation in the movement, as evidenced by their associations with the AFASS. Instead of envisioning an eclectic movement of social reform, student abolitionists in the early antebellum period mostly supported a monolithic movement. While historically critiquing student abolitionists for their limitations, historians must consider the context of the 1830's and 1840's in the United States in an attempt to

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<sup>39</sup> On the socially conservative sect of abolitionism, see McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 68-75.

understand the choices that were made. For most student abolitionists, the concepts of freedom and equality had their limitations.

The history of antislavery on college and seminary campuses provides an important addition to the history of abolitionism in the antebellum era. The colonization-abolition dichotomy that existed at Lane Seminary, Andover Theological Seminary, and Amherst College contributed to the debates over slavery and freedom that took place at the national level. In fact, the antislavery discourses at these institutions present the first of their kind that took place outside of print culture. College and seminary students during this period represented an important demographic for the abolitionist movement, as they would become the next generation of ministers and leaders in the country. Their position on the slavery question therefore would have a profound influence on the future of racial slavery. In this light, college and seminary campuses can be perceived as crucial sites of intellectual debates regarding slavery and freedom. The confrontations between faculty and students reveal the power relations that existed at these institutions. Student abolitionist developed moral and pragmatic arguments that justified their radical abolitionism which was infused with an evangelical education. Faculty believed abolitionism was detrimental to their respective institutions and often cited public sentiment and the fear of internal conflict. Exacerbating faculty's opposition to student abolitionism was their association with the colonization movement and adherence to racial prejudice. For those reasons faculty resolved to suppress student abolitionism in deference to their respective institution's well-being and reputation.

This tumultuous equation created issues over free discussion, most notably at Lane Seminary which had stark implications for faculty and students at Andover and

Amherst. Perhaps more importantly, it is imperative to acknowledge that while the results of the antislavery controversy at Lane had important ramifications for abolitionism at Andover and Amherst, it did not elicit abolitionist discourse at these other institutions. In fact, abolitionist discourses at Andover and Amherst preceded the Lane antislavery revivals. Illuminating student abolitionism at Andover and Amherst provides a more accurate depiction of the emergence of student involvement in abolitionism, rather than solely crediting Lane abolitionists with igniting controversies at other institutions.

Abolitionist leaders realized the importance of acquiring the support of youth in the movement. George Thompson, along with Amos Phelps, William Lloyd Garrison, and Arnold Buffum actively sought to convert Andover Theological Seminary and Amherst College to abolitionism. They were partially successful at ATS, in that a minority of students supported abolitionism but because of faculty's strong "suggestions," ATS students became immersed in local antislavery societies. Conversely, Arnold Buffum encountered a strong presence of abolitionism at Amherst College. However, Amherst faculty also sought to restrict student activism. Ultimately, Amherst faculty failed to shield their campus from antislavery, as rhetorical conflicts emerged among students and even incited a violent altercation in the McNairy-Ashley incident. Ultimately, the example of the abolitionist victory at Amherst College was what leaders of the movement had hoped for all along—converting youth and an institution of higher learning to abolitionism. Lane student abolitionists developed what they perceived as a legitimate method of converting non-abolitionists to their cause. They witnessed the success of antislavery revivalism, were determined to spread antislavery ideology, and assumed prominent leadership roles in the movement.

The history of student abolitionism in the early antebellum period helps to explain who supported abolitionism and how that ideology spread. It also explains how intellectual discourses regarding the politics of slavery and free discussion transpired at institutions of higher learning and foreshadowed problems that would consume national politics in the coming decades. Students' contributions to antislavery explains a demographic that was integral to pressuring American society to address the problem of slavery. While radical students were in the minority, they continued their agitation in the hope of shifting public sentiment towards immediate emancipation. Student abolitionists helped develop and spread a movement that would polarize society in the decades to come and culminate in civil war. Student antislavery also explains the origins of student activism on college campuses and served as a precedent for student protests one hundred and thirty years later. In this light, the origins of student activism can be traced back to antebellum campuses. Student activism in the twentieth century thus inherited the legacy of student abolitionists like Theodore Weld, D.T. Kimball, and Jesse Braggs, as they continued the fight for racial equality, a legacy that continues to inform social problems today.

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