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MORAL SUAISON IN THE WEST:
GARRISONIAN ABOLITIONISM,
1831-1861

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Douglas Andrew Gamble, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1973

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Most scholars who have written about Garrisonian abolitionism have focused upon the movement's activities in the northeastern United States. This is perhaps natural, since William Lloyd Garrison, his newspaper, and many of the abolition societies associated after 1840 with the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Society were located in that region. There was, however, a sizeable and persistent Garrisonian movement west of the Appalachian Mountains which was centered in Salem, Ohio, and led by the Western Anti-Slavery Society.

Even the historians who are correcting old errors about the nature of Garrisonianism have ignored the western movement. This oversight is partially because Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, influential historians of the anti-Garrison school, emphasized the predominance of the more moderate Charles G. Finney, James G. Birney, and Theodore D. Weld in the West--to the virtual exclusion of any Garrisonian sentiment. Barnes and Dumond
and the other writers who have tried to establish the destructive and fanatical nature of Garrisonianism have focused their attacks upon eastern abolitionists, and historians who have recently revised these hostile conclusions have accepted the geographical limits of the men whose works they have challenged.

Nowhere within the debate over the nature of Garrisonian abolitionism has anyone studied the movement in the West, even though the Western Anti-Slavery Society functioned for fifteen years in that very area which Barnes and Dumond claimed expressed its antislavery sentiment in exclusively moderate and eventually only political ways.

Research for the following pages was undertaken from the position accepted by most recent and significant investigation of abolitionism, that effective scholarship of the movement must give credence to the honesty and seriousness of its participants. It breaks new ground in continuing the recent analysis of the means and ends of abolitionism by investigating a geographical and ideological segment of the Garrisonian impulse which for the most part has heretofore been ignored by historians.
The original scope of this project included only the life and death of the Garrisonian Western Anti-Slavery Society, but it soon seemed desirable to analyze the beginning of sentiment in the West which was sympathetic to Garrison's influence within abolitionism. The investigation then widened to locate the beginning of Garrison's western influence, and it led rather clearly back to 1831 and the initial publication of the *Liberator*. For most of the 1830's, it is difficult to separate Garrisonianism from the rest of western abolitionism, as Westerners consciously avoided most of the internal struggles which convulsed the eastern movement with increasing frequency as the decade drew to a close. By the time the American Anti-Slavery Society formally divided in 1840, however, a body of abolitionists in the West was convinced that Garrison's reliance upon the power of moral suasion to cleanse American society of all of its impurities was preferable to others' attempts to utilize partisan politics merely to cripple Southern slavery. It was those persons who provided the foundation for the Western Anti-Slavery Society, an organization which in a number of ways was more consistent in its adherence to the mandate of moral suasion than were Garrison and many of his eastern co-workers.
What follows, then, is a study of the birth, life, and death of Garrison's influence in western abolitionism. Most but not all of that influence was in Ohio, where late in the decade before the Civil War, many moral suasionists began to challenge even Garrison's dedication to resisting compromises with the slave power. Western Garrisonians learned their lessons well, perhaps finally having their movement die because they refused to exempt the rapidly emerging Republican majority in the Old Northwest from their demand that the foes of slavery remain uncontaminated by that institution's pernicious influence.

I have organized this study chronologically in the hope that its major contribution--the presentation of previously unknown information about western Garrisonians--will thereby be easily accessible.

I am grateful to a number of people and institutions for providing me with assistance in the preparation of this study. A University Fellowship from The Ohio State University allowed me to devote a year's study to the project. The history department at Northern Illinois University arranged my teaching schedule to give me time to write.
The staff at the Ohio Historical Society Library, where most of my research was done, was friendly and helpful. The same was generally true at the Western Reserve Historical Society, the Rare Book Division of the Boston Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society, Cornell University, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. Interlibrary loan librarians at The Ohio State University and Northern Illinois University performed their jobs well.

Several historians and friends at Ohio State gave valuable encouragement and advice. Mary E. Young's teaching and her candid criticism of my M.A. thesis; Gary W. Reichard's careful reading of an early draft of this study; and Merton L. Dillon's knowledge of abolitionism and patient editing of my prose all contributed greatly to whatever is good in this work. Winifred Evans's accurate and cheerful service in typing made finishing almost enjoyable.

My greatest debt is to Janet Wells Gamble--friend, companion, critic, editor, and occasional optimist.
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CHAPTER I

GARRISON AND IMMEDIATE ABOLITION IN
THE WEST, 1831-1833

Many Westerners were ready for the impetus which William Lloyd Garrison gave to the nation's sluggish anti-slavery movement when he began publishing the Liberator in Boston in January of 1831. This newspaper's unmuffled demand for the immediate and uncompensated emancipation of America's slaves was to arouse many persons to action on behalf of its doctrines, and its influence was soon felt far west of Massachusetts. Nine months after the Liberator first appeared, George Cary, a black man in Cincinnati, began serving as the paper's first western circulation agent. A small anti-Masonic and antislavery newspaper in the same city contained the prospectus for the Liberator soon after Cary assumed his agency, and this newspaper, the Rev. Dyer Burgess's

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Anti-Conspirator, or Infidelity Unmasked, continued until its demise early in 1832 to publicize the movement for immediate abolition as it developed in the East. In addition, Cary and a group of blacks met together and passed resolutions of support for Garrison and his printer, who were having trouble financing their initial volume.  

As was true in Massachusetts, most of Garrison's early support in the West came from blacks; the only other agent he was able to engage in the West in 1831 was John B. Vashon, a prosperous black barber in Pittsburgh.  

During the next year, Garrison's influence spread into other areas of the Northwest; it also began to reach more whites. By March, Nathaniel Field of Jeffersonville and Jonathan Shaw of Nettle Creek, both in Indiana, were serving as agents for the Liberator; by July, so were Ohioans James Hambleton of Spruce Vale, William Hill of

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4 *Liberator*, March 3, 10, 1832.
Washington, and James Leach of Chillicothe. Among persons listed in the Liberator on April 21 as having recently corresponded with the paper's office was Elizabeth M. Chandler, a Quaker who had moved from Philadelphia in 1830 to Lenawee County, Michigan Territory, with her aunt and her brother Thomas. Miss Chandler, a poetess, was woman's editor of Benjamin Lundy's Genius of Universal Emancipation, and in October of 1832, she and Laura Smith Haviland formed Michigan's first formal organization to oppose slavery, the Logan Female Anti-Slavery Society. Her early death in 1834 was a severe blow to abolitionists throughout the country, but Lenawee County remained a center of abolitionism until the Civil War; Mrs. Haviland and especially Jane Merritt Chandler, Thomas's wife, maintained their early connection


with Garrison. 7

The Liberator also reached Illinois during the initial year of its publication. It was circulating in Bond County, Illinois, by the winter of 1831-32, and the first letter the Liberator acknowledged from Illinois was from Robertus H. Stephenson of Greeneville in that county on March 10, 1832. Bond County was for a time the home of William M. Stewart, secretary of the Shoal Creek Presbyterian Church, who in 1831 had written several powerful letters to the Presbyterian General Assembly condemning any compromises with slavery and demanding its immediate abolition. Stewart, and later Stephenson, soon moved from Bond to Putnam County, which became the center of early abolition in Illinois. 8

7 For Mrs. Haviland's somewhat romantic recollections, see Laura S. Haviland, A Woman's Life Work: Including Thirty Years Service on the Underground Railroad and in the War (Grand Rapids: n.p., 1897). Thomas Chandler was Michigan's vice-president of the Garrisonian Western Anti-Slavery Society throughout most of the 1850's.

8 Merton L. Dillon, "Abolitionism Comes to Illinois," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LIII (Winter, 1960), 393-397. Two students at Illinois College were receiving the Liberator during the winter of 1831-1832, and in August, 1832, two persons living in Jacksonville, where the college was located, wrote the Liberator of their belief that colonization was not the answer to the problem of slavery. Frank J. Heinl, "Newspapers and Periodicals in the Lincoln-Douglas Country, 1831-1832," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XXIII (Autumn, 1930), 410; Liberator, Nov. 3, 1832.
Early in February, 1833, eleven men signed the constitution of the Putnam County Anti-Slavery Society, the only such organization in Illinois. Stewart and Stephenson were officers, and the society was openly based on the Liberator's immediatism and on admiration for Garrison. By the following March, it had grown to sixty members, in a state where, according to the Liberator's informant, people were "so fearfully prejudiced against the blacks that they can scarcely be got to read on the subject of emancipation, except where colonization is connected with it." Putnam was probably Illinois' only county organized against slavery until 1836.9

One of the abolitionists' main objectives during the early 1830's was to eliminate the influence of the popular colonization scheme. Abolitionists thought colonization was anti-abolition, because it was primarily concerned with slaves already freed, and anti-black, in that it designed to rid the country of freed slaves. The struggle for the minds of Americans between advocates of the immediate and unconditional ending of slavery and advocates of the

9Liberator, March 29, 1834. See also Dillon, "Abolitionism Comes to Illinois," pp. 397-400.
gradual and often compensated manumission of slaves who would be expatriated occupied many of the country's antislavery forces in the early 1830's; it also provided the framework for the first significant test for immediatism in the Northwest.

Western Reserve College was a new but prospering center of religion and education in 1830. Located at Hudson in Ohio's Western Reserve, home of a growing number of New England Congregationalists, the college was controlled by men generally devoted to such genteel reform movements as temperance, manual labor education, and colonization. The inauguration of Charles Backus Storrs as Western Reserve's second president was harmonious, but during the following two years the institution was nearly wrecked by an intense battle between the colonizationists who dominated the college community and a few members of the faculty who renounced colonization and led a student and faculty assault upon the colonizationist principles on which the community seemed in agreement as the year 1831 began.

The prospectus for Garrison's Liberator had appeared in the Hudson paper as early as September, 1830, but that event did not seem portentous. In January, 1831, a
Western Reserve student, Isaac Israel Bigelow, acquired a packet of abolition literature at his home in Massachusetts. The packet included copies of the Liberator. Bigelow returned to Hudson on February 7, two days before President Storrs' inauguration, and presented his copies to Storrs; the Liberator was at Western Reserve College, then, almost from its first number.

Storrs remained a colonizationist at least through July 4, when he advocated that scheme in a public address, and it was not until the summer of 1832 that it became evident that abolition doctrine had indeed permeated the college. On August 2, there appeared in the Hudson Observer and Telegraph the first of a series of anti-colonization articles written by a member of the faculty, Professor Elizur Wright, Jr. Reaction was immediate among the school's colonizationist trustees and friends, and by November, the Observer and Telegraph, owned in large part by the college, had closed its columns to discussion of the

10 Frederick C. Waite, Western Reserve University, The Hudson Era: A History of Western Reserve College and Academy at Hudson, Ohio, from 1826 to 1882 (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1943), p. 95. Another account is that Storrs already had a copy of the Liberator on his desk when Bigelow arrived; see Carroll Cutler, A History of Western Reserve College During its First Half Century, 1826-1876 (Cleveland: Crocker's Publishing House, 1876), p. 24.
subject. That same month, Professor Beriah Green introduced
the topic into the weekly rhetorical exercises for which he
was responsible, and he preached a series of four sermons
in the college church praising Garrison and condemning
colonizationists as pro-slavery. 11 Western Reserve College,
located in a section of Ohio only recently interested in
slavery, quickly became "the center of abolition sentiment
west of the Allegheny Mountains." 12

After the controversy had been raging openly for
some time, Theodore Dwight Weld came to Hudson on October
12, 1832, at the end of a journey which had taken him into
the South, where he witnessed slavery firsthand. He was on
a tour sponsored by the New York philanthropists Lewis and
Arthur Tappan to promote temperance and manual labor
education. When Weld, who was to become one of the most
influential leaders of the antislavery movement, arrived at
Hudson, he came under the influence of three gifted advocates
of Garrison's immediatism: Storrs, Green, and Wright,

11 Waite, Western Reserve University, pp. 95-99. See Beriah Green, Four Sermons Preached in the Chapel of
the Western Reserve College on Lord's Day, November 18th
and 25th, and December 2nd and 9th, 1832 (Cleveland: n.p.,
1833).

12 Waite, Western Reserve University, p. 100.
and he was greatly affected by this encounter.  

The controversy raged on after Weld left Hudson. The Liberator of November 3, 1832, published a subscription request from someone at the college and the suggestion that an agent for the paper be found to serve the area. Later the same month, an abolitionist at Hudson wrote and the Observer and Telegraph was willing to publish an explanation of the abolitionist position and a denial of charges that it included advocacy of intermarriage "and all that sort of stuff." The principles upon which the writer's demand for immediate emancipation was based were accompanied by citations of Biblical verses which supported them; they included the following principles, which were typical of many abolitionists' position in the early 1830's:

All men are descended from the same first parents.
All men have immortal souls.
All men are bound to regard their fellow men, in whatever circumstances, as brethren.
All men are born free and equal.
No man can justly be deprived of his liberty, except when awaiting a speedy trial for some crime, or after an equitable conviction thereof.
No man can be justly retained in bondage, who has been unjustly bound.
That law is unjust which leaves any man to be governed, in any respect, by the irresponsible caprice of an individual.

The author also recommended colonizationists read the
Liberator and Garrison's Thoughts on African Colonization.\textsuperscript{14}

Elizur Wright, Jr., credited the latter with completing his conversion from colonization,\textsuperscript{15} and the former he yearned to be able to put into every town on the Reserve.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{15}Wright to William Lloyd Garrison, Dec. 11, 1832, in Liberator, Jan. 5, 1833.

Meanwhile, Arthur Tappan urged Garrison to invite Weld to speak at the upcoming anniversary of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, and he ordered two copies of the Liberator to be sent at his expense to the reading rooms at Western Reserve College and Cincinnati's Lane Seminary, where Ohio's next great abolition-colonization struggle was to take place.  

Early in 1833, abolitionists at Western Reserve College formed an antislavery society. Its constitution declared that "every person of a sane mind has a right to immediate freedom from personal bondage," and it declared that, "although we... believe that they [the slaves] have an hundred fold more provocation to rise in arms than our fathers had in 1776," the society would not help the slaves in any way not sanctioned by Christ. Students fanned out into neighboring towns speaking for abolition, and the

17 Tappan to Garrison, Dec. 12, 1832, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

colonizationists in the area were furious. The controversy dominated life at the college through the summer, but gradually the abolitionists' leaders left. In May, President Storrs became ill after giving a long abolition address in inclement weather and was granted a leave of absence by the beleagured trustees. He went to Massachusetts, never to return to Hudson. Next Beriah Green moved to New York to become president of Oneida Institute and to serve as a leader in that state's antislavery movement, so by September, Wright was the only one of the early spokesmen for immediatism, still in Hudson.

Wright wrote to Weld that the principles of abolitionism had triumphed and that only six colonizationists remained at the college. The movement was not yet harmonious—at a meeting just held to reorganize the local antislavery society, "a vigorous effort was made so as to modify our

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19 In response to those colonizationists who objected that forcing abolition was illegal and unconstitutional, Wright proposed colonizing persons who saw law as paramount to righteousness to Europe where a King or a Pope would relieve them of caring for the body politic or for their own souls. This would rid America of those liable to bow to a crowned head, help overturn slavery, and make the exiles happy. He said Europe might swap some persons democratically inclined, and everybody would be better off; Liberator, March 23, 1833. For an exchange of letters between colonizationist trustees and Beriah Green relative to Green's sermons in the college chapel, see Hudson Observer and Telegraph, reprinted in Liberator, March 16, 1833.

20 Waite, Western Reserve University, pp. 101-02.
constitution, as to please a large number of men, chiefly clergymen, who have been driven to give up their 'gradualism' and their colonization as a remedy for slavery, but who cannot give up their grudge against Garrison!" but Wright himself was leaving Hudson to work to form the national antislavery society proposed by a group of New Yorkers in the Tappans' circle. He did not leave without taking one last shot at his enemies, however. According to Frederick Waite, the college's historian, he "appeared in the Commencement academic procession with a Negro barber, whom he had brought from Pittsburgh, on his arm, and led the Negro onto the Commencement platform, traditionally reserved for trustees and faculty." The Commencement colloquy, which Wright wrote, also ridiculed colonizationists, "and some of the participants adopted mannerisms that designated local individuals."

Wright and Green went from careers at Western Reserve College to become nationally known abolitionists, and Weld's

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21 Wright to Weld, Sept. 5, 1833, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, I, 114-17. See also Liberator, Sept. 21, 1833.

22 The Negro was probably John B. Vashon with whom Wright planned to stay in Pittsburgh on his way east; see Wright to Weld, Sept. 5, 1833, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, I, 114-17.

23 Waite, Western Reserve University, p. 103.
adoption of immediatism was precipitated by his visit to Hudson. Garrison's influence on the early antislavery thinking of each man is clear, and although Wright and Green eventually turned upon Garrison and joined the clerical attack upon him later in the decade, and although Weld refused to follow the direction of Garrison's later leadership, each was for a time in the Old Northwest under the influence of his powerful attack on slavery. And Charles Storrs, who died in September of 1833, became through his death an early martyr to the cause: John G. Whittier's first poem to appear in the Liberator was entitled "To the Memory of Charles B. Storrs, late President of Western Reserve College." It began "Thou hast fallen in thine armor, Thou martyr of the Lord."\textsuperscript{24}

During 1832 and 1833, other parts of Ohio and her neighboring states and territories were exposed to Garrison's ideas. The number of letters received at the Liberator's office from people in these areas increased gradually, and more and more communities were represented by their authors. Many of these writers and their towns were to play

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 109. Wright was not always hostile to Garrison's criticisms of clergymen; in a letter printed in Liberator, Feb. 9, 1833, he defended Garrison and said that a minister's office was not important but that conformity to principle and practice of God's word were.
significant roles in the abolition movement. For instance, on June 30, 1832, as noted earlier, the *Liberator* listed James Leach of Chillicothe, Ohio, as a correspondent, and by July 28, he was listed as an agent for the paper; the Chillicothe Presbytery, under the leadership of the Revs. John Rankin and Samuel Crothers, was to become increasingly militant within its Synod and General Assembly in demanding that the Presbyterian Church become active in the war against slavery. On March 2, 1833, Garrison's paper noted receipt of the first of a number of letters from Lewis Woodson of Pittsburgh; as Martin R. Delany's teacher, Woodson has recently been nominated as a contender for the honor of being "the father of Black nationalism." Other towns in which the *Liberator* provoked responses in 1832 and 1833 included Richmond, Gustavus, Harrisville, and Copley, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; and Hennepin, Illinois.

At about the same time that the controversy over colonization and abolition was raging at Western Reserve College, there was a less excited and significant but

25R. C. Galbraith, Jr.'s official *The History of the Chillicothe Presbytery From its Organization in 1799 to 1889* (Chillicothe, Ohio: Chillicothe Presbytery, 1889) is strangely silent on this aspect of the presbytery's history.

nonetheless similar examination of the relative merits of the two schemes occurring in the southwestern part of Ohio, well away from Hudson. On January 21, 1832, John H. Purdy's Xenia Free Press copied from the Liberator a summary of events that had occurred in slave states purporting to show some of the excessive cruelties inherent in the system of slavery. Purdy made no comment upon Garrison's article, but on June 2, Purdy, a rabid anti-Mason, hinted that his objection to immediate emancipation was practical and not ideological. He called the attention of his readers to a Mexican plan for allowing slaves to buy their freedom and commented that


28 Garrison wrote in Liberator, Aug. 10, 1833, that although he did not intend to enter the current turmoil over Masonry, he was "willing to be known as a moral and political Anti-Mason." He also praised anti-masonic editors for opening their papers "to a fair discussion of the merits of the Anti-Slavery Society...." He was correct concerning Purdy.
if it be true that a speedy emancipation of the slaves is impracticable here, and the demands of justice and humanity are not loud enough to justify us in encountering the consequences, it seems to us that a remedy is suggested in the method adopted by our Southern neighbors.

On July 21 and again on October 13, the *Xenia Free Press* printed appeals on behalf of colonization, but by March of 1833, Purdy was admitting that the American Colonization Society was not posing a challenge to slavery. He regretted the dispute raging between the new American Anti-Slavery Society and the colonizationists and hoped both would survive to do their different works. His belief that the colonizationists were increasing the frequency of manumission sustained his wish that they survive the attacks of the abolitionists, whom he still saw as impractical.  

On the first of June, Purdy printed without comment resolutions passed at the initial annual meeting of the first immediate emancipation society of which he was aware: the organization formed in Tallmadge, Portage County, April 10, 1833, after a lecture by the American Anti-Slavery Society's Charles W. Denison. In May, Purdy had commended

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29 *Xenia Free Press*, March 23, 1833.

30 *Hudson Observer and Telegraph* in *Liberator*, May 18, 1833. This society's constitution, signed originally by thirty-two people, had as its object "to endeavor by all means sanctioned by law, humanity, and religion, to effect
what he had termed a victory by colonizationists over 31
Denison in a Cleveland debate, but he also published a
strongly worded resolution condemning colonization passed
by the May 8 anniversary meeting in Tallmadge. 32 This was
the meeting, incidentally, after which Charles Storrs became
fatally ill.

Purdy's readers were given more exposure to the
debate in September. Over half of the first two pages of
the Xenia Free Press of September 7, 1833, was a report,
copied from the Liberator, of a public meeting in London at
which Garrison had accused the American Colonization Society
of protecting slavery and its agent, Elliot Cresson, of
misrepresenting its goals in order to get an endorsement
for colonization from Thomas Clarkson, one of England's

the abolition of slavery in the United States, to improve
the character and condition of the free people of color, to
inform and correct public opinion in respect to their
situation and rights and obtain for them equal civil and
political rights and privileges with the whites." Denison's
tour convinced the editor of the Western Reserve Chronicle
that slaveholding Christians were slow to act their pro-
fessions, and he decided that immediate emancipation would
be a good thing for the free labor system because it would
increase the black's productivity; he rejected Denison's
less practical arguments. Western Reserve Chronicle, April
25, 1833.

31 Xenia Free Press, May 11, 1833.

32 Ibid., June 1, 1833. The anniversary was also
reported in Liberator, June 15, 1833.
leading foes of slavery. Purdy, still ambivalent about colonization and abolition, wrote "...while we admit the principle of the abolitionists be sound, we regret to see the advocates of such principles in hostile array against the Colonization Society." Purdy continued his policy of publicizing both arguments for some years to come, and in so doing gave the citizens of Greene County information they could and did use to arrive at conclusions of their own; they supported both an abolition and a colonization society well into 1836.

Other towns in Ohio formed societies for promoting Garrison's doctrine of immediate abolition and contributed to the impulse which preceded formation late in 1833 of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Sometime in the spring of 1833, citizens of Ross, Highland, and Fayette Counties in south-central Ohio gathered at Greenfield and established the Abolition Society of Paint Valley. By August, Putnam

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33 For instance, see his paper Jan. 25 and Nov. 7, 1834; May 30 and June 6, 1835; April 23, 1836. Generally, the abolitionists' disapproval of colonization was not based on its limited practical success, which was Purdy's reason for defending it, but because, as Garrison said in objecting to the Cincinnati Journal's advocacy of the plan, "its principles and measures are positively injurious to the colored people and at war with the precepts of Christianity;" Liberator, April 27, 1833.

34 Liberator, May 25, 1833.
County, in the northwestern section of the state, had formed an antislavery group which was against colonization, and in early September there was a meeting in Brown County, along eastern Ohio's southern border, of delegates from various abolition societies. By the end of 1833, according to the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which Garrison had founded on January 6, 1832, there were forty-seven local antislavery societies in ten northern states. Thirty-three were in New England, six in Ohio, five in New York, two in Pennsylvania, and one in Illinois. Although colonizationists in Ohio and elsewhere were not vanquished, they were severely damaged by the assault which Garrison's Liberator and his antislavery society had led against their dominance of the antislavery field.

Historian Roman Zorn has well summarized Garrison's impact in these early years of the 1830's:

35 Ibid., August 17, 1833.
36 Ibid., Sept. 7, 1833.
38 For instance, the Cleveland Herald of Oct. 26, 1833, reporting a failure of abolition organizers from nearby Hudson, gloated, "The citizens that compose this community are too discerning, too intelligent, to be made the willing instruments to sanction [this] fanaticism;" quoted in Annals of Cleveland, 1833.
Before 1831 the colonizationists had a virtual monopoly of the anti-slavery field: the Colonization Society enjoyed widespread philanthropic prestige, it had the support of nearly all American churches, and even the free Negro population withheld open criticism.... By the end of 1833, colonizationist "philanthropy" had been unmasked, and the American public had begun to withdraw its patronage of Negro expatriation.... By undermining public confidence in the American Colonization Society, the Garrisonians cleared the path for a national abolition crusade.39

Undermining public confidence in the status quo was to be a fundamental tactic of abolitionism, and well before the American Anti-Slavery Society was organized to direct the process, free persons in Ohio and areas to its west were helping establish a climate of opinion receptive to the notion that no man had the right to hold other humans in bondage or to force them to leave their native soil. The first national abolition society was to be an eastern organization, but part of the impulse for its formation came from beyond the Alleghenies where positive reaction to the ideas so clearly discernible in Garrison's writings was rapidly growing.

CHAPTER II

EASTERN ABOLITIONISM, 1833-1837:
UNEASY UNITY

As spokesmen for the doctrine of immediatism began to make some conversions in the West, an organized abolition movement began to emerge and, during the last months of 1833, several events occurred which were important in the developing national abolition crusade. In the East, Prudence Crandall's persecution by the people of Canterbury, Connecticut, for attempting to educate young black women in her school became a rallying point for Garrison and his circle; it also focused national attention upon the large number of openly racist advocates of colonization. ¹

Early in October, with British emancipation of West Indian slaves imminent after a long and bitter struggle, Garrison returned from a triumphant visit to England. As Charles Stuart, Weld's benefactor and friend, had done two years before, Garrison delivered powerful blows to the colonizationists' diminishing efforts to control the British antislavery movement, and he left England as perhaps the world's leading symbol of the demands of immediate emancipationists.

On arrival in New York, he encountered a riot protesting Lewis and Arthur Tappans' organization of an antislavery society in that city. The mob helped convince the New York abolitionists (who, like Garrison, had for two years been advocating the formation of a national antislavery society) that it would be prudent to postpone the organizational meeting which had been called for October 25. The Philadelphia Abolition Society, whose

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3 There is historical disagreement over the origins of the movement for a national society. Garrison favored such a society in 1831, as did those New Yorkers trying to establish a Negro college in New Haven. It was the latter
city was to serve as host and which had never really been comfortable with the call, agreed, but Garrison and Philadelphian Evan Lewis did not. Their vigorous public insistence that the movement resist mob pressure persuaded the New York committee to suppress their anxiety and call the convention for Philadelphia in December, instead of waiting until May, 1834, as they desired. 4

The meeting convened on December 4, as scheduled, with Beriah Green, formerly of Western Reserve College and then president of Oneida Institute, presiding. Over sixty delegates from ten of the twelve free states gathered and founded the American Anti-Slavery Society; this body

^Gilbert Barnes, who questioned the wisdom of the decision to hold this convention before May, 1834, contends that it was a small and unrepresentative gathering and that Garrison insisted upon it to help relieve his personal financial embarrassment, part of which was due to a debt he owed Arthur Tappan; see ibid., pp. 55-58. Roman Zorn disagrees, convincingly, it seems (Zorn, "Garrisonian Abolitionism," pp. 144-45), but whatever the truth may be, this was the formal beginning of a significant organization.

4Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, pp. 54-55.

during the next few years coordinated the abolitionizing of, among other states, Ohio, and to a lesser degree, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana, even though no officers of the convention and only three delegates were from the Old Northwest. Letters of support were read from Weld, in Cincinnati, and Ohioans Samuel Crothers, who along with Elizur Wright, Sr., was chosen as a vice-president for Ohio, and Henry C. Howells, who was to be prominent in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania abolition activities.  

Some New York abolitionists did not want Garrison to appear as the dominant force at this convention, because they feared that his notoriety as a harsh and uncompromising opponent of slavery and colonization would keep would-be abolitionists from joining the society. However, Garrison's extreme attacks upon American slavery had, while increasing some abolitionists' apprehension, also given him wide recognition as an effective foe of gradualism and colonization, and the convention could not relegate him to obscurity in its proceedings. He was placed on neither the nominating nor the constitution committee, nor was he given a significant office in the new society, but his writing of

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6 Ohio delegates were John M. Sterling of Cleveland and Milton and Levi Sutliff from Hudson and Vernon. Another Westerner, James Loughhead of Pittsburgh, was also there.
the organization's widely publicized Declaration of Sentiments insured that his ideas were "ineradicably imprinted upon the national abolition crusade" which spread quickly into the Northwest. In a speech to the assembly, Lewis Tappan admitted being "ashamed" of the "professed friends of abolition who would have been here, had they not been afraid that the name of William Lloyd Garrison would be inserted prominently in our proceedings." Tappan went on to say that if it were correct... [t]hat man is imprudent who is afraid to speak as God commands...when the hour of danger is near," then "Mr. Garrison is one of the most prudent men in the nation."^8

The Declaration of Sentiments which Garrison wrote and the American Anti-Slavery Society twice accepted contained no ideas significantly different from the principles which had been motivating the abolitionists since 1831. It was not a plan but a statement of ideas and ideals, and those accepting it recognized it as such. It declared, as did


the society's constitution, that slavery ought immediately to be abolished, being without exception wrong in the sight of God. It recognized the right of individual states to legislate on the subject of slavery within their borders, and it pledged abolitionists to use only spiritual weapons to persuade slaveowners to free their slaves immediately and to place them under the protection and direction of the law. ¹⁰

Neither this declaration nor the society's constitution indicates that their authors and supporters thought slavery would or could be abolished immediately, especially through non-coercive means. Rather, they reflect tacit agreement with a statement Garrison had made in 1831, before either of those documents was written: "Urge immediate abolition as earnestly as we may, it will, alas! be gradual abolition in the end. We have never said that slavery would be overthrown by a single blow; that it ought

to be, we shall always contend."¹¹ This distinction was lost, however, on most Americans, and the idea that immediate abolition was somehow a program and not an ideal struck terror into many men and women who feared for their safety at the hand of imagined bands of vengeful blacks running unrestrained throughout the land and voting white men from their offices. This fear was born as "immediate emancipation" became the watchwords of abolition, and Garrison was forced as early as December, 1832, for the first of many times to deny that freedmen were to be "turned loose upon the nation" or "immediately invested with all political rights and privileges."¹²

Just as most abolitionists agreed on what immediatism meant, so they were in general accord in viewing slavery as either a sin or a crime in the eyes of the God to whom they, as religious people, all looked for guidance in every move. It is not clear when most abolitionists accepted the idea that slaveholding was not only criminal but sinful,

¹¹Quoted in [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, I, 228, n. 1. "Immediate emancipation" was a "normative doctrine" and not a plan of action. The slogan was a means to reach individuals' consciences about their sin of complicity with slavery; see Aileen S. Kraditor, Means and Ends in Garrisonian Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), pp. 26-30, 78-80.

¹²Liberator, Dec. 15, 1832.
but as the decade went on they did so. Their acceptance of slavery as sin was a crucial ideological event because it imposed upon all true Christians the obligation to do their utmost to eradicate slavery from the nation; it became the abolitionists' major premise after the Lane seminarians used it so effectively in their debates over slavery in Cincinnati in 1834, but Garrison was calling slaveholding a sin as early as January, 1832.

As with the question of who originated the call for immediate emancipation or who was first to advocate a national society, the lack of conclusive evidence about the origins of the doctrine of slavery as sin is not in itself significant. What is significant is the fact that this idea dominated abolitionists' motivations and arguments throughout most of the 1830's and that it served as a bond uniting the followers of the non-ecclesiastical Garrison with the evangelical abolitionists who dominated the New York-based American Anti-Slavery Society. This essential unity of principle overshadowed occasionally serious disagreements over methods of implementing the basic goal of peacefully convincing masters to free their slaves.

13Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, pp. 101-03.

14Liberator, Jan. 7, 1832.
The squabbles concerning tactics among abolitionists who were in essential agreement on ideology were mainly over objections to the harsh and uncompromising language Garrison employed in the Liberator and elsewhere. A strong hint of this disagreement which was to simmer with varying intensity until exploding openly in 1837 occurred during discussion of Garrison’s Declaration of Sentiments at the Philadelphia convention in December, 1833. The only modification the delegates made in the wording of the declaration which was significant enough to arouse Garrison’s displeasure concerned his use of the term "man-stealer" for "every American citizen, who detains a human being in involuntary bondage as his property." An objection was raised to the inclusion of such a harsh term, probably by a delegate afraid that its usage would identify the new society in the public mind with Garrison’s well-deserved reputation for blunt language. A compromise was reached which called for the addition of "according to Scripture (Ex. xxii, 16)" before the term itself. Garrison objected to reliance on Biblical evidence for what he considered natural truths; his continued hostility to identifying the abolition movement with any sect, creed, or ritual was to be a basis for numerous objections, made primarily by clergymen, to his
language respecting persons and ideas he considered sectarian. Such uneasiness with Garrison's rhetoric characterized most of the opposition to Garrison and his sympathizers until the last of 1837, when more serious ideological differences became the object of disaffection.

After the Philadelphia convention had determined that the society it created was to have its headquarters in New York and was to be led by the evangelically motivated Tappan circle, Garrison resigned the relatively insignificant office he was given in the A.A.S. and returned his primary attention to New England and the \textit{Liberator}. There is little evidence to indicate that the leading abolitionists saw any significant differences between the vision of abolition shared by Garrison and his coadjutors and that of the rest of the movement; the only clear differences were in the bluntness of the language used against their enemies. It is difficult to identify "Garrisonian abolitionism" between 1833 and 1837 using any but criteria relating to geography and rhetorical tone; proximity and not ideology led Garrison and many New England agitators who like him were members of the American Anti-Slavery Society to function

\footnote{\cite{Garrison and Garrison}, \textit{William Lloyd Garrison}, I, pp. 406-07.}
as a unit through the New England Anti-Slavery Society (which became the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1835), an auxiliary to the A.A.S.

In a very real sense, then, there was no such thing as "Garrisonian abolitionism" in America in the mid 1830's, except possibly in New England. Garrison left to the New Yorkers the task of abolitionizing the states outside New England, including the Old Northwest, while he concentrated upon converting the area where he had always worked best, New England. The opposition which did arise from antislavery men and women who objected to Garrison's rhetoric resulted in no serious breach in the united front presented by the A.A.S. This was especially true in the West, where eastern squabbles over Garrison's vocabulary were seldom discussed or even noted until late in the decade. Even then, when the squabbles had become open warfare in the East, western abolitionists generally chose to concentrate on their own regional needs and programs.

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During 1834, both the New England and American Anti-Slavery Societies emphasized the doctrine that slave-holding was a sin which ought to be immediately abandoned. The former group, generally thought to have been the more radical, denied accusations that it was proposing that the freed slaves were to be unrestrained by law.\(^{17}\) There appeared to be unity, then, on these two ideas, but when the Rev. Amos A. Phelps tried to convince the Association of Congregational Clergymen of Massachusetts of the necessity for immediate emancipation, its members refused to approve of any of the principles and objects of the abolitionists which conflicted with those of the American Colonization Society. This stand reflected these ministers' adherence to the famous minister Lyman Beecher's incorrect belief that colonization and abolition could be assimilated, a belief which was causing Theodore Weld and the Lane Abolitionists

\(^{17}\) The A.A.S. commission to T.D. Weld in Ohio, issued February 20, 1834, read in part, "You will inculcate everywhere, the fundamental principle of IMMEDIATE ABOLITION, as the duty of all masters....Insist principally on the SIN OF SLAVERY, because our main hope is the consciences of men...;" Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844 (2 vols.; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), I, 125-28. See also New England Anti-Slavery Society, Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), pp. 12, 22-23.
a great deal of trouble in Ohio and one which led Garrison to denounce these Massachusetts clerics as foes of abolition. Garrison was not able to understand pleas of leniency for ministers of the Christian church, upon which he and other abolitionists depended to help rid America of the "heinous sin" of slaveholding; his insistence upon condemning the clergy when it would not rid itself of all connections with sinners or their supporters—which all abolitionists had once agreed included colonizationists—led to the formation of an organization dedicated to removing Garrison from association with the reform movements of the day.

Late in 1834, Arthur Tappan, president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, united with his brothers John and Charles, Congregational ministers in Boston, in forming the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race. This group, which elected its members, 

18Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, p. 92. For a statement of the idea that Garrisonism was a recognizable entity in abolitionism in the early 1830's; see Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide: A Biography of William Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 128-29.

19The Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society contained the following: "We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation in slavery...shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance;" [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, I, 408-13.
refused to call slavery a sin; it advocated "a conciliatory spirit, a Bible spirit" and hoped, as did Garrison, to secure the concurrence of slaveholders in abolition "by an appeal to their human and Christian principles." The difference lay in tactics: Garrison thought the appeal to principles should be made by exposing the hypocrisy of professing Christianity while tolerating sin, while the clergymen hoped somehow to convince slaveholders to free their slaves without having to accuse them of sinning.

The American Union did not amount to much, and Arthur Tappan, whose brother Lewis opposed the new movement from the start, withdrew his sponsorship of it and appealed to Garrison that "argument take the place of invective." This attempt to undermine reformers' support for Garrison failed, but opposition to his rhetoric continued; in a letter to British abolitionist George Thompson in January of 1835, Lewis Tappan acknowledged the existence of disapproval "of the harsh and, as they think, the unchristian language of the Liberator." Tappan said he had "vindicated" Garrison

\[\text{20}\text{Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, p. 61; [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, I, 469.}\]

\[\text{21}\text{Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, p. 62. For Lewis Tappan's role as an abolitionist, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969).}\]
as far as he could and that Garrison's error, "they say," was "in applying severe epithets to individuals rather than to bodies of men and principles."²² The conservatives' ability to recognize slaveholding as a sin without accepting the corollary that the slaveholders were sinners is reflected in Tappan's explanation of the opposition to Garrison; and it was the conservatives' continued insistence upon a distinction between the sin and the sinners which was to remain the basis of Garrison's attacks upon them. Even though this is somewhat more than a purely semantic disagreement, the conservative reformers both within and without organized abolition who objected to Garrison's terms "sinners" and "man-stealers" still claimed until well into 1837 that their attacks were mainly upon his rhetoric and not upon his ideas.

The executive committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was not in any sense under Garrison's control, reported in May, 1835, that the A.A.S. aimed "to overthrow slavery by revolutionizing the public sentiment of the country in regard to it; or, in other words, by convincing all of the sinfulness of slavery, and of the duty and

safety of its immediate abolition." Garrison's thinking was little different, though his words were. When he returned from his second trip to England in August, 1835, he encountered great turmoil in America over charges that abolitionists had sent incendiary literature to slaves. Defending his colleagues, he wrote, "The head and front of our offending is, that we hold slavery to be a blot upon our national escutcheon, a libel upon the Declaration of Independence, a SIN AGAINST GOD which exposes us to his tremendous judgments, and which ought to be immediately repented of and forsaken." Garrison was doing what the executive committee had said was the aim of the A.A.S., trying to convince Americans of the sinfulness of slavery and the duty of ending it. Though he was not an active leader in the A.A.S., neither was he working at cross purposes with its ideology. It was not abolition which was changing so much as it was America's religious establishment. In defending their father against charges of having altered his position in 1835, Garrison's sons caught the essence of the churches' predicament, albeit with a prejudiced eye:


24 Liberator, Aug. 15, 1835.
It was the conductors of a depraved religious press, rebuked without ceremony for its libels on the blacks and on the abolitionists; the trustees of theological schools invaded, or likely to be invaded, by the strife between colonization and immediate emancipation; the officers of denominations whose New England pulpits were, if usually closed, sometimes freely opened to George Thompson and other anti-slavery lecturers,—it was these classes who were changed, but only into more bitter and more open opponents of the moral revolution they had failed to initiate, and could neither direct nor resist. The American Church, with its Northern and Southern brotherhood, had always acquiesced to slavery. Now first, in the year 1835, the progress of the agitation compelled the Northern wing to take sides deliberately for or against the old connection.²⁵

The Presbyterian Church, for instance, which was flourishing in its own right in southern and eastern Ohio and as a result of the Plan of Union with the Congregationalists in the Western Reserve,²⁶ was not able in 1835 to sever its connection with slavery, despite some insistent urging from members in the Old Northwest. Meeting in Pittsburgh, the General Assembly referred a number of antislavery petitions to a committee dominated by Southerners and then referred that committee's report to another group not required to report until 1836. William A. Stewart, the Illinois abolitionist, argued vigorously against this delay,


declaring the church to be the patron of slavery and as such responsible for its cruelties. In a statement reflecting Garrison's own sentiments, he declared "[s]lavery cannot be sustained by the Bible, and if it could, the Bible cannot be sustained." 27

Theodore D. Weld was also at the Pittsburgh meeting, though not as a delegate. He had just finished helping organize the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, and he went to the General Assembly to lobby for immediatism among the clergy and elders gathered there. He claimed to have converted nearly a quarter of the delegates, but when the Assembly convened again in 1836, it was clear that the Presbyterians were not going to be able to act as a united force against what some of them saw as America's foremost sin. For at least the third time, Lyman Beecher's dogged insistence on reconciling abolition and colonization only served to set Christians against each other, and Beecher, unable to stop abolitionism in the West, went from the 1836 General Assembly to Connecticut to refuel the eastern clergy's

27 [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, I, 477. The Illinois Synod in October, 1834, had declared slaveholding to be "a crime...against which they do hereby most earnestly and solemnly testify;" see New England Anti-Slavery Society, Third Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1835), p. 12.
opposition to Garrison and his allies.\textsuperscript{28}

Beecher's hostility was rooted in his fear of evangelism's challenge to ministerial authority,\textsuperscript{29} but the leader of abolitionism in New England was not an evangelist. The organized eastern clergy's increasing hostility to Garrison resulted from eastern abolitionism's success in revealing the clergy's inaction on the greatest moral issue of the day; in the West, however, at least into 1837, many clergymen were allied with the abolitionists in trying to force their denomination into witnessing against slavery. Led by the Chillicothe Presbytery, some Ohio Presbyterians agreed with Garrison and Weld that the churches were doing too little to end slavery; among the Congregationalists of New England, on the other hand, few persons agreed with the abolitionists' charges. Garrison thought that it was not his rhetoric but his principles which upset the eastern defenders of the status quo, despite their claims to the contrary, and he may have been correct;\textsuperscript{30} eastern clergymen found themselves objecting to abolition principles shared in the middle 1830's by Garrison and the evangelical American

\textsuperscript{28}Barnes, \textit{Antislavery Impulse}, pp. 94-95.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 95-96.

\textsuperscript{30}[Garrison and Garrison], \textit{William Lloyd Garrison}, I, 460-61.
Anti-Slavery Society and its western affiliates.

Late in 1835, for instance, when the famed Congregational minister William E. Channing responded to Garrison's request that he express himself on slavery by publishing a treatise, both Garrison and William Goodell, a New York abolitionist, condemned Channing's idea that slavery could be a sin without slaveowners being sinners.

In May of 1836, the New England Anti-Slavery Convention approved nine resolutions recently passed by Ohio's Chillicothe Presbytery which condemned in no uncertain terms both slavery and the sin of participating in any way in its perpetuation; and in December, Lewis Tappan supported Garrison in his public rebuke of the New York philanthropist Gerrit Smith for justifying his conversion from colonization to abolition on the grounds that abolitionism had somehow

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32 Liberator, May 28, 1836.
changed for the better.

It seems that most white Americans at that time, antislavery or not, who saw Garrison as the leader of the nation's abolitionism, did not think of him as different from most other active abolitionists except in matters of style and tone, and Garrison himself did not believe that he was expressing doctrines at variance with abolitionist consensus. He praised James Birney's Cincinnati Philanthropist, a strong but calmly edited abolitionist paper with little of the belligerence of the Liberator but expressing essentially the same ideas as the Boston paper; he praised highly the Declaration of Sentiments Weld wrote for the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, which was founded in 1835 after extensive antislavery agitation sponsored by the American Anti-Slavery Society; and in December, after attending that organization's convention to train the nearly seventy lecturing agents the society had decided to put


34 Garrison to Birney, April 6, 1836, in Ruchames, ed., A House Dividing, pp. 66-68.

35 Garrison to Isaac Knapp, May 9, 1835, in Merrill, ed., I Will Be Heard, p. 473.
into the field, Garrison wrote, "...with regard to the fundamental principles of and measures of the anti-slavery cause, there has been entire unanimity of sentiment, all [and there were all kinds of abolitionists there] seeing eye to eye, all cherishing the same feelings and sentiments..." It is entirely possible that those New Englanders who shared Lyman Beecher's hostility to the abolitionists associated most closely with Garrison would, at least through 1836, have been similarly hostile to Weld and Birney had those men been the abolitionists attacking the clerical hypocrisy, even had they used a more conservative vocabulary.

Similarly, non-clerical opposition to abolition, in the form of vicious mob violence which peaked during the year 1835 but lasted well into 1837, was aimed at what appeared to most Americans to be a united front of abolitionists. Mob reaction to abolitionists was not focused upon the sharp-tongued Garrison, even though he was mobbed in Boston in 1835. Rather, as Leonard Richards has shown in an excellent recent study, "[i]t was Arthur Tappan and his New York associates, rather than Garrison and his Boston radicals," who were frightening America's "gentlemen of property and standing" with the immense

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36Liberator, Dec. 3, 1836.
success of their massive campaign to organize antislavery societies throughout the North and to flood the nation with abolition literature. Mobs like those which dragged Garrison through the streets of Boston, broke up antislavery conventions in all of the free states, destroyed abolitionist presses in Cincinnati and Alton, Illinois, and finally killed Elizah P. Lovejoy in Alton in 1837, did not distinguish between the extreme rhetoric of Garrison and the milder strictures of Lovejoy or Birney; they, like many of the clergymen so hostile to abolitionists, thought they were in danger of losing hegemony within their communities to an organized group of men appealing to "their" women, to Negroes, and to the young to resist the traditional authority of America's established commercial and professional interests.


38 Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing," pp. 144, 149-50. Richards does not comment specifically on the clergy in this context; see Garrison's sons' provocative suggestion quoted on p. 38 of this paper. David Donald's much discussed thesis that it was in fact the abolitionists who acted from fear they were becoming a displaced elite
In the summer of 1836, Garrison perhaps unsuspectingly touched on an issue which in retrospect appears to have begun the end of agreement on basic ideas which had unified abolitionists since the organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society. It would be over a year before other abolitionists began to recognize the full extent of the growing philosophical and ideological distance between many of them and Garrison, but Garrison's remarks in July concerning a speech made in Pittsburgh by Lyman Beecher provided a hint of what would come.

Beecher left the General Assembly in Pittsburgh in 1836 determined to carry his fight against abolitionists from Cincinnati, where Weld and Birney led a vigorous group of evangelical abolitionists, to New England, where Garrison was a leading spokesman for another active group of antislavery advocates. While in Pittsburgh, though, Beecher made a speech eulogizing the Sabbath and condemning men and women who did not observe it according to his ideas of worship. He also criticized women for speaking in public and for hearing speeches Beecher thought were anti-family.

was first proposed in a chapter called, "Toward a Reconsideration of the Abolitionists," in his Lincoln Reconsidered (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956).
A New York paper reported the essence of Beecher's remarks, and Garrison wrote a long and strongly worded letter to the *Liberator* commenting upon the minister's address. The interim editor of Garrison's paper naturally printed his employer's communication, and from that point Garrison's split with Boston's conservative clergy began to have serious ramifications for abolitionist harmony.  

Garrison wrote that he objected to Beecher's emphasizing one day of the week above the others for special attention to God's will. He said that while he did not oppose the idea of a day for worship, he did oppose the over-emphasis on Sunday; he mentioned the pro-slavery actions of upholders of the Sabbath and wondered why Beecher was more interested in their behavior on one day than in their unchristian activities on the other six; and he questioned Beecher's displeasure with women who listened to reformers and who spoke in agreement with them. Garrison also asked why Beecher was so hostile to the radical reformers Robert Owen and Fanny Wright—unlike the church, they did not support slavery.

Garrison received a bundle of critical mail about

his letter. In response, he assured his readers that he was not trying to obscure the slavery issue by his "Sabbatical animadversions" about Beecher's speech. The main design of his review, he explained, was to rebuke Beecher "for flaming so intensely in relation to a commandment, which he and nearly all Christians habitually violate,...[while] at the same time conniving at a system which annihilates the whole Decalogue." Despite his denial, however, Garrison went on to defend himself in great detail from attacks he had received concerning his position on the Sabbath. 40

Another hint of future troubles on matters of substance appeared in Garrison's report of the A.A.S.'s agents' convention. Early in December he wrote that he had enjoyed this meeting; he was especially glad that Angelina Grimké, the woman abolitionist from South Carolina who was just beginning her controversial career as a public reformer, had been invited to the training sessions and had been allowed to participate equally in them. 41 Garrison's support for women abolitionists' equal standing, and later for all women's equal rights, was to serve as the immediate cause for the formal split in abolitionism some three and

40 Liberator, August 27, 1836.
41 Ibid., Dec. 3, 1836.
a half years later, and it was to be much discussed long before that.

In the fall of 1836, publication of James G. Birney's abolition newspaper in Cincinnati was temporarily halted when a mob destroyed the press upon which the *Philanthropist* was printed. Among many letters of support the Ohio abolitionists received was one from William E. Channing, written November 1 in Boston. It praised abolitionists generally for their "rigid construction of the Christian precepts" and their "moral worth." Channing denied that abolitionists had encouraged slave revolts or endangered the Union, as many charged, but he said abolitionists' writings had been "blemished by a spirit of intolerance, sweeping censure, and rash injurious judgment." He specifically excepted Birney's publications and unnamed others but wrote that "abolitionism in the main, has spoken in an intolerant tone, and in this way has repelled many good minds, given great advantage to its opponents, and diminished the energy, and effect of its appeals." Abolitionists' "intolerance towards the slaveholder, [has] awakened towards him sympathy rather than indignation, and weakened the effect
of their just invectives against the system which he
upholds."  

Channing did not mention Garrison and the Liberator, 
but abolitionists knew them to be the targets of the 
minister's charges. The Philanthropist and the Liberator 
were not very different in the opinions they had been 
expressing up until then, but Garrison had been more 
vigorous in his denunciation both of slaveholding as a sin 
and of slaveholders as sinners. Both Garrison and the more 
conservative abolitionists, including Channing, were reexam-
in ing the future of the antislavery movement in light of its 
past successes and failures, and in late 1836 and in 1837 
it was becoming clear that they were not arriving at similar 
conclusions.  

The riotous reaction abolitionists had been 
encountering throughout America was not encouraging to persons 
who had begun their antislavery efforts believing moral 
suasion sufficient to bring about emancipation and racial 
harmony. Among the factors working against their hopes was  

42 William E. Channing, Letter of Dr. William E. 
Channing to James G. Birney (Cincinnati: A. Pugh, 1836), 
pp. 6-11.  

43A recent persuasive discussion of this reexamin-
ation is Stewart, "Peaceful Hopes and Violent Experiences;" 
pp. 293-309.
one of which they had been aware and which was pervasive throughout the land: racism, a subject too large and complicated to be discussed here, played a powerful role in white America's negative reactions to the abolitionists. Garrison seems to have understood more clearly than the leaders of the American Anti-Slavery Society that their common goals for America—abolition and an end of racism—could be achieved only if the country's entire system of values was so altered that Americans would abandon those goals and practices which depended upon their oppressing, enslaving, or dominating any of their fellow countrymen and women. How he arrived at this essentially revolutionary conclusion is not altogether clear, but the historian

James Stewart's recent discussion of the difference between Garrison's reactions to anti-abolition violence and that of other abolitionists is revealing.

Elizur Wright, Jr., formerly of Western Reserve College and in 1836 active at the New York headquarters of the A.A.S., along with many of his coworkers, assumed that the mobs' leaders were misguided patricians and that their followers were urban degenerates. They saw the riots as unpleasant but unrepresentative phenomena. This thinking led these men to believe that a well-organized and respectable organization of abolitionists could be forged out of what Wright called the "small" people, the ordinary white farmers and laborers mainly of the rural North; their plan was to counter the aggressive, Southern-inspired, spokesmen of slavery with a large, broadly-based, popular organization of Northern antislavery men and women, which was to be led, incidentally, by men.

Garrison, on the other hand, concluded that the riots were not aberrations but were instead natural results of a Northern society corrupted by more than just its connections with slavery. In Stewart's words, Garrison

decided that the abolitionists' "appeals to conscience must produce a total redoing of the nation's ethical and institutional bases, that an exhaustive reshaping of every national value was in order." 45

The diverging directions of these lines of thought were bound to lead to dissensions far more serious than those concerning the tone of Garrison's rhetoric. The more conservative abolitionists were beginning to work to make abolition attractive to the masses, while Garrison wanted abolitionists to lead a social revolution the very suggestion of which was bound to alienate most white Americans. As 1837 went by, the controversy in the East grew more serious. On January 2, Garrison replied to the implicit criticisms in Channing's letter to Birney. He acknowledged Channing's praise of abolitionists, but he nonetheless condemned the letter, especially denying Channing's implication that a majority of slaveholders were righteous. 46 Sinners could not be righteous! Birney himself refused to attack Channing, but he did disclaim the compliment offered him and he defended those abolitionists who he said, had aroused the nation

45Stewart, "Peaceful Hopes and Violent Experiences," pp. 304-07; the quotation is from p. 307.

from its slumber. He admitted abolitionists had erred, but he complained that their foes did not give allowances for the extreme provocations to which they were exposed. One sentence, however, revealed the seed of controversy to come: "If...we have at any time been rash, or indiscriminating, or unkind; if our zeal has been fierce, untempered with love, rejecting the guidance of knowledge, it behooves us at once to begin the work of reforming what is amiss in ourselves." Birney conceded the possibility that a milder tone was needed, and after his move from Ohio to New York later in 1837, he was to play a leading role in the ideological battles that developed.

Not every clergyman in the East was offended by Garrison's language. Orange Scott, who was later to turn against Garrison for ideological and tactical reasons, spoke to the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in early 1837: "But, sir, the severest language ever used by abolitionists, is calling the slaveholders man-stealers and robbers. But, if the doctrine contained in the Declaration of Independence is correct, it is true, that every slaveholder is a man-stealer and a

47Liberator, Jan. 2, 1837.
robber." The members of this meeting, bouyed by Scott's speech and Garrison's insistence that his newspaper was not a competitor with the Emancipator, the official organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, decided to assume the costs of publishing and printing the always struggling Liberator. This harmony was short-lived.

In March, Garrison met John Humphrey Noyes, a former divinity student who espoused a theology that all men were perfectible. Garrison was familiar with Noyes's newspaper, The Perfectionist, and he was contemplating Noyes's theories in relation to his own evolving conclusions about America's need for drastic change. Noyes found Garrison especially receptive to his ideas about the evils of human government and especially about the need for the overthrow of the United States government, which Noyes called "a bloated, swaggering libertine, trampling on the Bible--its own Constitution, its treaties with the Indians--the petitions of its citizens." In the Liberator of June 23, 1837, Garrison denounced the institution of human


49. [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, II, 123.

50. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, p. 133.
government, and on July 4, an especially obnoxious day to persons unconvinced of America's righteousness, Garrison delivered a speech in Providence, Rhode Island, in which he suggested that an overthrow of the federal government might help cleanse America of its transgressions against mankind.  

At about the same time, the Grimké sisters, Sarah and Angelina, arrived in Massachusetts and began a lecture tour through the state. Their versions of the horrors of slavery attracted large audiences, which heard them eloquently condemn Northern participation in the maintenance of the slave system. The sisters began to attract into their audiences more and more men, which placed them in the extremely unusual position of speaking before sexually mixed groups. To compound their problem with the conservatives who objected to this aspect of their tour, the Grimkés' activities were extensively reported in the Liberator by Henry C. Wright, who was becoming more notorious for his advocacy of "no human or church government" than Garrison.  

51 Liberator, July 28, 1837.

52 For poet-abolitionist Whittier's fears about the effects of Wright's advocating his "startling opinions" while serving as an abolition lecturer, see John Greenleaf Whittier to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Aug. 14, 1837, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore D. Weld, I,
Eastern advocates of respectability in abolition and of clerical authority in the churches were increasingly offended by these apparent advocacies of absolute equality of blacks with whites, women with men, and laymen with ministers: formal reaction was likely.

In mid-July, a "Pastoral Letter of the General Association of Massachusetts to the Orthodox Congregational Churches" under its care was issued. It completed the closing of Congregational churches to abolitionists, which had begun the year before after Lyman Beecher's trip East, by reserving exclusively for the clergy the right to present topics to their communicants. It also deplored women's participation in public meetings: "If the vine, whose strength and beauty is to lean upon the trellis and half


Catharine E. Beecher, daughter of Lyman Beecher, one of the immediate abolitionists' most persistent opponents, wrote an influential series of letters to the Grimkés advising them to avoid connection with Garrison and other coercive and divisive abolitionists and to stay within woman's "true place in society,...the domestic and social circle;" An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, with References to the Duty of American Females (Philadelphia: Henry Perkins, 1837), pp. 100-01. An excellent discussion of the society's expectations for women is Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly, XVIII (Summer, 1966), 151-74.
conceal its clusters, thinks to assume the independence and overshading nature of the elm, it will not only cease to bear fruit, but fall in shame and dishonor in the dust."\(^{53}\)

This letter was soon followed by a similar document entitled "The Appeal of the Clerical Abolitionists on Anti-Slavery Measures," which was in many respects more damaging, as it was signed by men professing to be abolitionists themselves. It rebuked Garrison and the *Liberator* by name for their hostile remarks concerning individual clergymen who were not abolitionists; and a "Second Clerical Appeal," this one from Andover Seminary, also criticized women for giving public lectures, especially to audiences including children.\(^{54}\) Here again is evidence that the conservative clergy, like the leaders of the anti-abolition mobs, feared the loss of their authority.

Many abolitionists who were not clergymen also objected to the Grimkés' advocacy of the right of women to speak in public--an advocacy to which the sisters were driven by the clerical objections to their activity.

\(^{53}\)Merrill, *Against Wind and Tide*, p. 135. The letter is in *Liberator*, Aug. 11, 1837. Garrison was proud of his willingness to print articles and letters attacking himself.

\(^{54}\)Merrill, *Against Wind and Tide*, p. 135.
Whittier wrote that their labors were themselves assertions of the rights of women. "Why, then, let me ask, is it necessary for you to enter the lists as controversial writers in this question? Does it not look, dear sisters, like abandoning the slave...for the purpose of arguing and disputing about some trifling oppression...which we may ourselves suffer?" Likewise, Weld, soon to marry Angelina, wrote that, even though he believed women and men should have absolute and total equality, he regretted the Grimkés' advocating women's rights through articles in newspapers. The best vehicle for such propaganda, he asserted, was their public activities, but as talented Southerners they ought to concentrate their efforts on making slaves men, and then upon making women women.  

The Grimkés responded to Whittier and Weld jointly, and their defense of their course was "Garrisonian" in its ideas. The Pastoral Letter challenged their right to speak against slavery, they said, and they had to respond in order


56 Ibid., pp. 425-27. As Aileen Kraditor has pointed out, Weld and Whittier were not themselves in agreement. Weld was in favor of women's rights, Whittier was not; Kraditor, Means and Ends, p. 76, n. 76.
to guarantee women generally their rights to act as equals in the struggle. Just as men had to establish their right to free discussion, so, too, did women. Further, they denied the implication that specific reforms could be singled out from the general reform movement, and they insisted that the obstacle which church government was posing to general reform had to be removed. Like Garrison but unlike Weld or Whittier and most other abolitionists, the Grimkés were at this time also non-resistants, or persons who denied any human beings the right to restrain or coerce any other persons by force or the threat of force. This religiously inspired principle was at the base of the Grimké sisters' hostility to any sort of human governments, secular or clerical, and it was to many within the antislavery movement and to most non-reformers yet another sign that the Grimkés and their allies were dangerous to the status quo.

Reactions hostile to Garrison's "tone" and "spirit" faded before the rush of criticism of his newly promulgated ideas. On August 23, 1837, the Reverend James T. Woodbury's letter praising the Reverends Charles Fitch and Joseph Towne, authors of the first Clerical Appeal, appeared in

57 Ibid., pp. 427-32.
the New England Spectator. Garrison reprinted it in the 
Liberator of September 1, along with his reply. 58 Woodbury 
accused Garrison of laboring to overthrow the Christian 
Sabbath and Christianity itself and of indoctrinating his 
readers on matters of human and family government. Claiming 
to be an abolitionist, Woodbury seemed proud that he had 
"never swallowed William Lloyd Garrison, and...had never 
tried to...."

Garrison's reply was sarcastic and indignant. He saw Woodbury's letter as an attack not only upon himself 
but also upon all abolitionists. Garrison thought it 
irrelevant whether any abolitionists agreed with him on 
matters unrelated to the antislavery movement. "Who in all 
the world," he asked, "ever supposed that abolitionists 
must be responsible for each other's political or religious 
predilections" so long as they all agreed upon the 
Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery 
Society?

Like a friend of mine, you sometimes put cayenne all 
over plum pudding. ...[T]he Liberator was not 
established to give you nothing but veal; and...though 
you do not like onions, &c. there are a great many per­
sons who do. If you do not fancy my dishes, you need 
not eat them; but, in the name of vigorous appetites

58Both are in Ruchames, ed., A House Dividing 
Against Itself, pp. 292-98.
and good digestion, I protest against your making your table a standard by which my customers shall regulate theirs.

This exchange and those between the Grimkés and Weld and Whittier are clear evidence of the nature of the controversy which was to destroy the unity of organized abolition. As Aileen Kraditor has shown, it was the conservatives who felt that they had to rid the movement of the Garrisonians, who wanted to include equally on the abolition platform all persons in agreement on the need for the immediate end of American slavery. The conservatives wanted "to show white Northerners that antislavery was respectable and perfectly compatible with conventional views on all other questions." To accomplish the broad public support these men wanted and thought possible meant they had to dissociate abolitionism from the other eccentric and unpopular crusades undertaken by those who, like Garrison, thought that slavery was but "a symptom of a basic flaw pervading the entire society." Although the formal separation of the American Anti-Slavery Society was not to occur until 1840, by September of 1837, its probability was clear.

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60Kraditor, Means and Ends, p. 54.

60Ibid., p. 103.
Garrison was incensed that the executive committee of the national society did not leap to defend him and themselves from the charges in the clerical appeal and in Woodbury's letter, and Elizur Wright, Jr., wrote to Garrison that he deplored the introduction of "novel views" to the public before abolitionism was "half achieved." The Emancipator remained silent on the controversy. Wright's letters, unlike most complaints Garrison received from abolitionists, dwelt upon his doctrines and not his spirit or tone, and Lewis Tappan's reply to Garrison's letter complained mainly that "the SPIRIT EXHIBITED BY THE EDITOR PRO TEM., AND SOMETIMES BY YOURSELF, HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY KIND AND CHRISTLIKE." Tappan said he thought Towne and Fitch came "up to the average abolitionist of the day," and that denouncing them was a denunciation of a majority of abolitionists.

Although an antislavery society in New England which


62 Quoted in Garrison to George W. Benson, Sept. 23, 1837, in ibid., pp. 304-07. This letter is also in [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, II, 167-70, as is another similar letter from Wright to Garrison on Nov. 6; pp. 178-81

was restricted to abolitionists of evangelical religious sentiments did not last, and although Garrison agreed to sever the Liberator's short official relationship with the Massachusetts society, "most of [Garrison's] alienated brethren [E. Wright, L. Tappan, William Goodell, Henry B. Stanton, J. G. Whittier, J. G. Birney, B. Green, S. S. Jocelyn] were," according to Roman Zorn, still "prepared to jettison Garrison if such action should be necessary to conciliate evangelical abolitionists." It was not, but mostly because the news of abolitionist editor Elizah P. Lovejoy's martyrdom at the hands of a mob in Alton, Illinois, served for a time to unite all abolitionists in defense of the right of free expression.

Garrison knew that his pessimistic view of America was not that of many of his fellow abolitionists. He knew, too, that the unity was superficial and could not last. Writing to the Englishwoman Elizabeth Pease in November, he said he had "relinquished the expectation, that [the slaveholding states] will ever, by mere moral suasion, consent to emancipate their victims." He believed "that

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64 Zorn, "Garrisonian Abolitionism," p. 220.
65 Lovejoy's life and death are examined in Merton L. Dillon, Elijah P. Lovejoy, Abolitionist Editor (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961).
nothing but the exterminating judgments of heaven can shatter the chains of the slave and destroy the power of his oppression," and that America's "sins have gone up over our heads, and our iniquities unto the clouds, and a just God means to dash us in pieces." Garrison had little remaining faith in the potential of saving America by ending slavery alone. The prospectus for the eighth volume of the Liberator, which was to commence in January of 1838, indicates that he was committed to a course that could not keep the temporarily united abolitionists together.

...[T]he abolition of slavery will still be the grand object of our labors, though not, perhaps, so exclusively as heretofore. There are other topics which, in our opinion, are intimately connected with the great doctrine of inalienable human rights; and which, while they conflict with no religious sect, or political party, as such are pregnant with momentous consequences to the freedom, equality, and happiness of mankind....

[Our goal will be] the emancipation of our whole race from the bondage of sin--and bringing them under the dominance of God, the control of an inward spirit, the government of the laws of love, and into the obedience and liberty of Christ, who is "the same, yesterday, TO-DAY, and forever."

...The abolition of American slavery we hold to be COMMON GROUND, upon which men of all creeds, complexions, and parties, if they have true humanity in their hearts, may meet on amicable and equal terms to effect a common object....For ourselves, we care not who is found upon this broad platform....However widely we may differ in

our views on other subjects, we shall not refuse to labor with him against slavery, in the same phalanx, if he refuses not to labor with us.67

This insistence upon keeping the abolition platform open to advocates of women's rights and non-resistance, causes Garrison pledged to advocate as parts of his vision of perfecting society, was to lead those abolitionists who wanted their crusade to appear respectable to leave the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840, when it became clear they could not control it and limit access to its platform. As 1838 began, forces within abolitionism clearly were undermining the unity of the movement in the East.

67Liberator, Dec. 15, 1837. This prospectus is also in [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, II, 199-204.
CHAPTER III

WESTERN ABOLITIONISM COMES OF AGE,
1834-1837

The abolitionists in the Old Northwest from 1834 through 1837 were not much concerned with the remote quibbling among their eastern allies. Ohio, by 1830 the country's fourth most populous state, led the attack upon the colonization idea in the Old Northwest, just as it was to continue to dominate that region's abolitionism for three decades. The antislavery activists in Ohio were mainly concerned with the tremendous task of organizing and propagandizing the state's rapidly growing population into an effective force for immediate emancipation. They were in essential agreement with the ideas of the New York and Boston groups with whom they frequently cooperated, and they had no time or wish to dissipate their limited resources in arguments over semantics or rhetoric.

As 1833 drew to a close, there occurred in Ohio an event more portentous to local and national abolition
than the uproar at Western Reserve College. Theodore Weld's visit to Hudson, Ohio, had as one of its primary objects the selection of a likely place for the Tappan brothers to establish a manual labor seminary. Weld found his spot in Cincinnati, where a seminary begun by some merchants named Lane was struggling for life, and he convinced the Tappans to take it over as their own. Lyman Beecher, the famous eastern minister, was persuaded to serve as president, and Weld himself decided to enroll as a student. While the Tappans and Garrison were planning and attending the organizational meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Weld was gathering around him in Cincinnati perhaps the largest and most dedicated and mature group of seminarians ever assembled in the country. Weld was determined that abolition be a primary activity of the students, and this determination was to lead during the next year to a confrontation at Lane which dealt colonization a staggering blow in the West.¹

By February, 1834, Weld had finished his efforts to convert most of the numerous Southern students at Lane

to immediatism, so the series of eighteen meetings the Lane community held to discuss the slavery question was essentially an antislavery revival which the seminary's colonization society was unable to counter. The evangelical nature of the Lane abolitionists was of course no coincidence, as most of them, as well as the sponsors of the seminary, were adherents of the type of evangelism taught by Charles G. Finney, America's foremost revivalist; their existence and Lane's were dedicated to Finney's evangelical Christianity and its insistence upon "being useful in the highest degree possible." The old Calvinistic demand that salvation from the flames of hell be man's only goal was being replaced, especially in the West, by the doctrines


of men like Finney; as the events at Lane revealed, young Protestants burning with the need to be useful to mankind were quickly finding in the abolition movement a challenge of immense proportion. 5

After nine evenings of debate, all but four of the students in attendance voted that the people of the slave-holding states should abolish slavery immediately. This action seemed to vindicate the power of moral suasion to convince the South to act on its own, and when the meeting nine nights later voted that the Christian public should not support colonization, it was logical that the excited students would form a society dedicated to the immediate emancipation of "the whole colored race in the United States," exclusively through providing Southerners with the truth that slaveholding was a sinful act. 6


6 Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 153-54.
Weld had turned down a request from the American Anti-Slavery Society in December, 1833, to serve as a permanent general agent, even though his friend Elizur Wright, Jr., urged him to accept, especially since Garrison had chosen to concentrate his efforts on the \textit{Liberator} rather than to accept an agency.\footnote{Wright to Weld, Dec. 31, 1833, in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., \textit{Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké}, 1822-1844 (2 vols.; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), I, 121-24.} Weld did not want to leave his labors in Ohio, however, so in February, 1834, the national society appointed him a state agent. His commission urged him to emphasize the sin of slavery and to avoid detailing plans for effecting emancipation,\footnote{Wright to Weld, Feb. 20, 1834, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 124-30.} and this emphasis was dominant in the Lane debates, with excellent results. The student abolitionists also insisted upon witnessing their convictions concerning the capabilities of Cincinnati's numerous free blacks, for they thought it was essential in the struggle to discredit colonizationism to discredit the theories of Negro inferiority which often buttressed that movement; it is probable that it was the seminarians' concrete efforts along this line and not their...
espousal of abstract moral truisms which ignited white Cincinnati's smoldering hostility toward the city's Negroes and forced Lane's trustees to try to repress their students' activities in the black community.

Lane students conducted lectures three or four times weekly on grammar, geography, and arithmetic; they ran evening reading classes every week night. Two students, Marius R. Robinson and Augustus Wattles, dropped out of seminary and ran day schools for black men; other students conducted three large Sabbath schools and Bible classes, and later, assisted by three young women sent from New York by Lewis Tappan and by Mary Ann Fletcher of Oberlin, they started day schools for black women. The students also mingled socially with blacks, whom they visited in their homes, and they had a group of black men and women visit the seminary.

Cincinnati whites had rioted against the Negroes there in 1829, and the city's merchants had close ties with the South, so it is not surprising that Lane's trustees bowed before the city's rising hostility. President Beecher

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9 Robinson and Wattles are identified by Barnes and Dumond, *ibid.*, p. 133, n. 4.
still believed colonizationism and abolitionism could be assimilated, and he and his son-in-law, Lane Professor Calvin E. Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe of Uncle Tom's Cabin fame, hoped trouble between the school and the town could be avoided by letting "the evil...pass away." Another Professor, John Morgan, sided with the students. All three of these men were in the East, however, when the pressure from townsmen forced a response, and on August 20, 1834, the trustees announced a ban on student societies and on discussions and conduct likely to "stir up evil passions amongst themselves, or in the community." They also fired Morgan and threatened to expel Weld and William T. Allan, president of the antislavery society. 11

The students waited for Beecher's return to see if the trustees' actions were to stand, but on October 10, with Beecher still absent, the entire board affirmed the executive committee's summer actions. The trustees' explanation of their action made it clear they intended to

11 Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 156-59. Cincinnati was in many respects an urban center little different from eastern cities. Its aspirations and prejudices are well documented in Daniel Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942); see esp. pp. 444-76 for the city's response to abolitionism in the 1830's.
pacify the town, and Beecher seemed to endorse their actions when he did return, so in mid-October, some forty Lane students requested and were given dismissal from the institution. In November, Beecher persuaded the trustees to repeal the most obnoxious parts of their actions, but the students had already established themselves in their own school nearby, and they chose to stay there. In December, "the Rebels" issued a fiery denunciation of the trustees' assault on the right of free speech, and their case became a national symbol in the Liberator and the rest of the abolition press to illustrate the tyranny of slaveholders. The Lane Rebels themselves embarked on careers which involved many of them in leadership of the antislavery movement for its duration; meanwhile, Weld continued directing the abolitionizing of Ohio as an agent for the American society.

On January 19, 1834, almost immediately after the A.A.S. was founded, citizens in New Garden, Ohio, formed an auxiliary society. The clerks at the organizational meeting

12 Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 160-63; Liberator, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 1835. For the students' protest, see [Theodore D. Weld], Statement of the Reasons Which Induced the Students at Lane Seminary to Dissolve Their Connection with That Institution (Cincinnati: n.p., 1834).
were Joseph A. Dugdale and Benjamin B. Davis, who were also appointed to the committee to draft a constitution. Both men, but especially Dugdale, were to play important roles in Ohio abolition; Dugdale, his wife Ruth, and members of the Galbreath family, which was also active in this early society, became leaders of Ohio's Garrisonian abolitionists.

In March, the Liberator printed a letter from an anonymous Ohioan who reported that the cause of abolition was gaining in the eastern Western Reserve, though many converts still held back from denouncing colonization and helping blacks gain legal protection, and on May 27, citizens in Ashtabula in that area established a county antislavery society dedicated to the principles of the American society. The Liberator's correspondent was aware of the abolitionist activity of the Chillicothe Presbytery, south of him, and in June, Weld, too, was

13 Liberator, March 22, 1834.

14 Ibid., March 15, 1834. The writer could have been Milton Sutliff of Hudson, an agent for the Liberator, along with Charles Olcut of Medina, since February.

optimistic. Writing to James G. Birney, he predicted that slavery in America would end in twenty years, "if the cause advances with only the ratio in which it has moved for the last twelve months...." He said there were thirty newspapers advocating immediatism, as opposed to three a year earlier, and two hundred antislavery societies, rather than three or four. To add to Weld's optimism, he and Birney were also discussing Birney's letter of resignation from the Kentucky Colonization Society, publication of which was to place that capable Kentuckian on the road to leadership as an abolitionist, first in Ohio and then nationally. 16

Ohioans were active at the first anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was held in early May in New York and which reaffirmed the organization's dedication to Garrison's Declaration of Sentiments.

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16 Weld to Birney, June 19, 1834, in Dwight L. Dumond, ed., Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (2 vols.; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966) I, 119-22. There was not yet an abolition paper in the Mississippi Valley, despite the fact that a few papers gave space to abolition activity; see a letter from "N" to the Ohio Free Press supporting James A. Thome's remarks to this effect in New York in Liberator, July 5, 1834. Birney's letter, which was often republished and distributed nationally by abolitionists, was Letter on Colonization, Addressed to the Rev. Thornton J. Mills, Corresponding Secretary of the Kentucky Colonization Society... (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834).
James A. Thome, a Lane rebel, spoke about his school's successful abolitionization, and Henry B. Stanton, also of Lane, condemned the American Colonization Society's acceptance of racial prejudice. Three men from northern Ohio participated on key committees, and the abolitionists at Western Reserve College gave the A.A.S. twenty-eight dollars. Four Ohioans were chosen as vice-presidents and eight were named managers.

Abolition societies continued to be organized throughout the state during the summer and fall. Lot Holmes, a Garrisonian during the forties and fifties, was secretary of a society formed April 5 in Columbiana County, which was to be the seat of Garrisonian abolitionism in the West after 1845.18 James A. Dugdale and Benjamin B. Davis reported

17 American Anti-Slavery Society, Second Annual Report... (New York: William S. Dorr, 1835), pp. 6-12, 23-26, are Thome's and Stanton's speeches. The Ohio vice-presidents, all active in the abolition movement, were Asa Mahan, the only Lane trustee who sided with the students and later president of Oberlin, Elizur Wright, Sr., Lane Professor John Morgan, and the Rev. Samuel Crothers of the Chillicothe Presbytery. E. P. Hastings of Michigan was the only other vice-president from the Old Northwest. Among the managers were J. B. Vashon of Pittsburgh, Weld and Stanton, Henry C. Howells of Zanesville, and John M. Sterling of Cleveland, who had served with Garrison on the declaration committee at Philadelphia in December, 1833.

18 Liberator, June 14, 1834.
encouraging the formation of the "Lexington Abolition Society of Colored Persons and Whites who feel desirous to join" among a prosperous community of blacks in Stark County, like Columbiana, in northeastern Ohio. 19 Charles Stuart, the English abolitionist who had sent Weld to college, lectured on the Reserve in November and helped form the Portage County Anti-Slavery Society. He wrote to Weld, who was beginning a lecture tour in southwestern Ohio, that the Reserve's abolitionists agreed with Weld that the convention to form a state abolition society, announced for January at Zanesville, ought to be postponed, and that they thought it was up to Weld to set the new time and place. 20

Anticipation of a state society spurred the activity of Ohio abolitionists. In late November, Henry C. Howells wrote fellow Englishman George Thompson, who was a close friend of Garrison, urging him to visit Ohio and the January convention; and by then Stuart had made his way to

19 Ibid. An anonymous, religious, white, "true hearted and devoted abolitionist," later claimed to have started this and a similar society at Massillon; ibid., July 5, 1834.

20 Stuart to Weld, Nov. 24, 1834, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore D. Weld, I, 176-77. The Liberator of November 1, 1834, contained notice of the original call, as did Xenia Free Press of December 27, 1834.
Cincinnati. James Hambleton wrote from Spruce Vale that citizens of Columbiana County had formed a society pledged to immediate emancipation and equal rights. Among its officers were some men who were to remain loyal to Garrison: William B. Irish, Hambleton, George Garretson, and Nathan Galbreath.

The number of Westerners Garrison reported as having written him during the year went up, too, as abolitionism gained momentum. Many names were of men increasingly influential in western antislavery: Robertus H. Stephenson, who had moved from Illinois to Ohio; Joseph A. Dugdale; John B. Vashon; Abraham Baer, Jr., president of the Columbiana County society; Theodore Weld; and others. It was logical that western abolitionists communicated with the Liberator and its famous editor, and as yet there was no antislavery paper in the Old Northwest, but Weld and James G. Birney were determined by 1835 that the West have its own abolition press.

In early January, Weld wrote Birney, who was then living in Danville, Kentucky, that he had found the abolitionists around Ross County in south-central Ohio receptive to a new antislavery paper. He urged Birney to

21 These letters are in Liberator, Nov. 29, 1834.
attend the organizational meeting for Ohio's state society, which had been reset for April 22, in order to meet Ohio abolitionists and to get their support for the paper the Kentuckian planned to start. The Zanesville convention occurred on schedule, but Birney's paper was due for considerable delay.

Weld knew that Ohio was far from abolitionized, and he discouraged George Thompson from attending the April gathering. Weld may have been correct. A minister in Ohio, possibly Howells, reported to Thompson that Kenyon College was against abolitionism and that many advocates of revivals in Ohio could not see the connection between revivals and abolition. In addition, Abraham Baer, Jr., found Stark County whites uninterested in sending a delegation to Zanesville, and the small society he helped form in Canton had only nine white members.

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23 This letter was printed in Liberator, March 21, 1835; its author wrote Thompson that he wanted him to "see the desire of your heart accomplished, and with dear Garrison, be among the first to shout the Jubilee!"

24 Liberator, April 23, 1836.
In early February, 1835, though, the trustees of failing Oberlin Institute finally agreed to accept the conditions laid down by the exiled Lane Rebels and their financial supporters in New York and thus grant to their faculty control over the admission of students. This action, taken after much negotiation, meant that many ex-Lane men would come to Oberlin and study there, along with Negroes and women, under their abolitionist friends Asa Mahan, John Morgan, and Charles Finney himself, and that Oberlin would survive and flourish as a college and a center of antislavery thought in northern Ohio. Meanwhile in the East, Garrison's Liberator had begun in January to acquaint its readers with the details of the Lane turmoil and with the singular leadership qualities exhibited by Weld and his co-workers.  

The most encouraging event of 1835 for western abolitionism, however, was the founding of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society. The organizational convention was  

25Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 167-78. For Oberlin and abolition, see also Clayton S. Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement up to the Civil War" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1930), and Wilbur G. Burroughs, "Oberlin's Part in the Slavery Conflict," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XX(1911), 269-334.  

26Liberator, Jan. 3, 10, 1835.
scheduled for Zanesville, but the arrangers had trouble finding a suitable meeting place there and moved across the river to nearby Putnam, where the citizens were a little less hostile. Persons opposed to abolition still managed to convince some potential delegates that the convention had again been postponed and also to scare Negroes away; in addition, Joseph Dugdale's attempts at holding abolition meetings on his way to Putnam were not very well received. He wrote to Garrison, "I am really disgusted with the course pursued by some half-way immediatists...; and the terms Garrisonites, visionaries, enthusiasts, [etc.] are heaped upon those who fearlessly advocate the righteous principles of universal equality." 27

These difficulties were not extreme, though, in that violent time, and some 115 delegates, nearly one-sixth of whom had lived in the South, gathered in Putnam on April 22, 1835, to form the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society, an auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society. 28

27 Henry B. Stanton to Garrison, April 27, 1835, and Dugdale to Garrison, April 22, 1835, both in Liberator, May 16 and 9, 1835. For Weld's troubles arranging the meeting and for the citizens' intimidation of Zanesville's blacks, see Thomas, Theodore Weld, pp. 93-95.

28 Stanton to Garrison, April 27, 1835, in Liberator, May 9, 1835.
The call for the meeting included "all persons who advocate the principle of immediate emancipation without expatriation," but the chairman invited only "gentlemen" to enroll. Twenty-two delegates were ministers; these included John Rankin, Samuel Crothers, and William Dickey, Presbyterians from southeastern Ohio; Weld, Sereno W. Streeter, Henry B. Stanton, Huntington Lyman, and Augustus Wattles, formerly of Lane; Henry C. Howells of Muskingum; and Elizur Wright, Sr., who was one of the three ministers and five medical doctors among the twenty-one vice-presidents chosen, from Hudson. James G. Birney, along with J. A. Thome and William T. Allan of Lane, were enrolled as corresponding members. Birney chaired the business committee, which included Weld and Rankin, and the committee to prepare resolutions; Weld wrote the Declaration of Sentiments. 29

The constitution these men adopted opened membership to "any person" who approved of it and who was not a slaveholder. This wording, like that of the constitution of the parent society, did not exclude women, but none participated in the organizational meeting; a few women did sign the

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29 This information and that which follows on this convention is, unless otherwise noted, from [Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society], Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention held at Putnam...1835 (n.p.: [1835]).
Declaration of Sentiments. The society's object was "the entire abolition of Slavery throughout the United States, and the elevation of our colored brethren to their proper rank as men;" and, again like that of the A.A.S., this constitution acknowledged the states' control of slavery in their boundaries but pledged to use "all lawful means" to convince the country's citizens of the necessity and safety of immediate abolition.

This gathering, dominated by clergymen, assumed an uncompromising position on the duty of the American church concerning slavery. There was little hint of the kind of clerical temerity which was simultaneously surfacing in Massachusetts, a fact which helps explain western abolition's lack of interest in the controversies in the East. Among the resolutions adopted was one stating that "the Christian Church is eminently criminal in the indulgence she has shown to the acknowledged sin of slave-holding--and her ministers and rulers pre-eminently so...." Others denied any plans for racial amalgamation, condemned colonization, and declared "prejudice is vincible." The convention also adopted an address to ministers and members of Ohio churches which charged, "You therefore are not only responsible as citizens of the United States, for the existence of slaves
within the jurisdiction of Congress, but for the participation in the sin, directly chargeable on your fellow Christians in the South." 30

Garrison had high praise for Weld's Declaration of Sentiments, which he called "an uncommonly powerful production" with "its standard as high as heaven, and its spirit full of holy resolution and uncompromising integrity." 31 He was correct; the declaration began, "We believe Slavery to be a sin--always, everywhere, and only sin." Slavery, it went on, is "sheltered under the wings of our national eagle, republican law its protector, republican equality its advocate,...the church its city of refuge, and the sanctuary of God and the very horns of the altar its inviolable asylum." The document pledged its signers to rely upon the "ceaseless proclamation of the truth" and "to organize Anti-Slavery Societies throughout the State, employ agents, circulate tracts...invoke the aid of the pulpit, and wield the power of the press." The Ohioans looked for guidance "to God alone," but there was plenty of

30 This address is in ibid., pp. 12-16; the resolutions on pp. 4-5.

31 Garrison to Isaac Knapp, May 9, 1835, in Merrill, ed., I Will Be Heard, p. 473 and in Liberator, May 16, 1835. The Ohio declaration is in the Proceedings, pp. 5-11, and in Liberator, May 16, 1835.
work for His people to do.

Clearly, this society was in the mainstream of national abolitionism, and its leadership had high hopes for its utility. Henry B. Stanton, for instance, predicted to Garrison that by the society's first anniversary, "the moral influence of the State will be enlisted in favor of immediate abolition." This was a bit optimistic, but the next year was to see a great increase in organized anti-slavery activity by Ohioans.

Stanton and Howells were two of six delegates from Ohio who attended the second anniversary of the A.A.S. in May in New York. Samuel Crothers was chosen Ohio's vice-president, and nine Ohioans were named managers. No other state in the Old Northwest sent delegates; only Indiana was granted a vice-president (Nathaniel Field) and there were no non-Ohioans made managers from west of Pennsylvania. This was but one reflection of the fact that organized abolition activity in the other states of this area was

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32 Stanton to Garrison, in Liberator, May 9, 1835.
33 American Anti-Slavery Society, Second Annual Report..., pp. 24-25. Other delegates from Ohio were Horace Bushnell, Huntington Lyman, Thomas Pennock, and Dyer Burgess; half were ministers.
meager in 1834 and 1835. As noted before, Illinois had but one antislavery society, the one in Putnam County, well into 1835, and the same is essentially true for Michigan, where Elizabeth Chandler's group was weakened by her death late in 1834, and where the A.A.S. made no discernable efforts to organize during this period. 34

There were in Michigan in 1835 a few signs of life among abolitionists. The Detroit Presbytery and the Michigan Synod condemned slavery, and the state constitutional convention agreed to prohibit it in Michigan, but the same convention emphatically refused to adopt a motion argued by Lenawee County delegates which would have given the franchise to all men, regardless of race. 35 There was not even this much antislavery effort in Indiana.

On the other hand, western Pennsylvania, where James Loughhead of Pittsburgh served as a self-supported A.A.S. agent for a year ending in May, 1835, was "effectively" indoctrinated by two visits by Weld in the spring of 1835 and others that winter, following the Zanesville-Putnam meeting. Weld's first trip included two


35 Ibid., pp. 105-10, 115-16.
weeks in Pittsburgh, where there was an antislavery society with which he met in addition to his efforts among the delegates to the Presbyterian General Assembly. During his second trip, Weld spent two successful weeks in Washington County, where an abolition society had been founded in July, 1834; and in December and January, 1836, he and Augustus Wattles of Cincinnati are said to have finally routed Pittsburgh's established colonizationists.

It was in Ohio, though, where antislavery activity flourished, especially after the state society was begun. Birney found it inexpedient to publish his paper in Danville, Kentucky, as he first planned, and he and Weld communicated about the project throughout the autumn. Weld and Western Reserve abolitionists urged Birney to begin the paper in Ohio, and Birney finally decided to try Cincinnati.


37 Myers, "The Early Antislavery Agency System in Pennsylvania," pp. 69-70. The Washington County society was the first immediate abolition society in western Pennsylvania; Francis J. LeMoyne, later a leader of political abolition, was a founder. During 1835, Beaver, Mercer, Allegheny, and Venango Counties were similarly organized; Robert Wallace Brewster, "The Rise of the Antislavery Movement in Southwestern Pennsylvania," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XXII (March, 1939), 8-10.
where Weld was sure Birney would be able to overcome the citizens' suspicion and hostility. Birney was reading the Liberator, and when Garrison refused to be cowed by his October mobbing in Boston, Birney wrote to Lewis Tappan, "I can make great allowance for what is called his [Garrison's] violence—he sees the odiousness of oppression and of the auxiliary efforts for maintaining it, more clearly and more purely than I do." Birney was not always to think so highly of his Boston ally, but during this period of danger and persecution for abolitionists, there was relative harmony between those two giants of reform.

Meanwhile, Weld was working hard in northern and eastern Ohio to turn Henry Stanton's hopes for abolition unity to reality. He was mobbed more often than not, but his eloquence and power as a speaker combined with his persistence to make converts of many of his hecklers. The high point of his efforts that fall was a triumphant twenty-one night stand at the rough backwoods campus of Oberlin College, where between five and six hundred men and women


39 Birney to Tappan, Nov. 28, 1835, in ibid., pp. 274-77.
shivered nightly, on benches without backs, through Weld's lengthy abolition revivals. A number of Oberlin students, most of them exiles from Lane, agreed to accept antislavery agencies for the winter vacation, and Weld tutored them nightly during his stay. When in November Weld agreed to go to New York to work for the A.A.S., he spent two full weeks in Cleveland finishing his training of five Oberlin students to continue his unfinished task of abolitionizing Ohio. These ex-Lane men--William Allan, John W. Alvord, Huntington Lyman, Sereno W. Streeter, and James Thome--were joined by Augustus Wattles, and these six, working through the winter of 1835-36, continued the job begun by Weld.

The other portions of Ohio did not receive as much organized attention, however, as the northern and eastern counties, during the year after the state society began. The organization's executive committee resided in Putnam, on Ohio's eastern border, and it had no access to a press, an essential item in the propaganda struggle, and little

40 Thomas, Theodore Weld, 100-11, 97-99.
means of employing agents. Birney's Philanthropist was begun January 1 in Cincinnati, but it was not initially connected with the state society; the considerable abolition activity and organization which did take place during the year after May, 1835, was largely the result of local and individual efforts. Despite this fact, the number of anti-slavery societies in Ohio affiliated with the A.A.S. rose from 38 to 133, and Ohio took the lead over all the other states, including Massachusetts, in the number of anti-slavery societies by May, 1836. This was largely due to the efforts of Weld and his colleagues.

Ohio abolitionists continued to keep their standards as high as their declaration of sentiments, and they were rewarded by the increased activity of the Quakers in the state. When Joseph A. and Ruth Dugdale moved from New Garden in eastern Ohio to Green Plain in Clark County, they found there a dedicated body of Friends ministers and "uncompromising abolitionists." On January 10, 1836, the

42 See the executive committee's first report in [Ohio Anti-Slavery Society], Report of the First Anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society... (Cincinnati: Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1836).

executive committee of the new antislavery society at
Green Plain commended Garrison and Arthur Tappan for their
behavior in the face of assaults upon their persons and
property; it rejoiced "that the precious principles of
non-resistance, practically enforced by our Holy Redeemer,
have been so steadfastly maintained by the unswerving
advocates of the suffering millions...", and adopted an
A.A.S. resolution urging Friends to cooperate in aboli-

Green Plain, where men and women Friends met
together in the same abolition society, was to be a center
of radical Quakerism and abolition for decades, but in
1836 it was not especially different from other active Ohio
antislavery groups, though it was unusual for the sexes to
act together with apparent equality as early as they did
there.

Anti-abolition sentiment in Ohio was still strong
and its manifestations often violent, but the antislavery
forces did little to compromise their positions and demands
in the face of such hostility. James G. Birney's efforts

44 J. A. Dugdale to Garrison, Jan. 11, 1836, in
Liberator, May 21, 1836. The executive committee's
resolutions were printed in the Cincinnati Philanthropist,
Feb. 19, 1836.
to publish his paper in Cincinnati were countered by anti-abolition meetings, egg-throwing incidents, and finally by the destruction of his printing press, but he refused to defend his paper with physical force, even though he believed it would not be too difficult to do so. To Lewis Tappan he wrote, "...to the Lord we commit our cause," an ideal he shared at this juncture with Garrison and many other abolitionists, East and West.

Other Ohioans refused to make compromises, and in so doing they paralleled Garrison's own changing ideals. An anonymous Cincinnatian who signed himself "Moses" wrote Garrison criticizing a speech Lyman Beecher had made on Thanksgiving, 1835: "But is it not time, at least for the ministers of religion, to stop the ridiculous practice of eulogizing American liberty when there are two million

45 See Liberator, Feb. 13, 1836.

46 Xenia Free Press, April 23, 1836.


and a half now in bondage....?" Abraham Baer, Jr., wrote that Stark County ought to be noted for its "ignorance, bigotry, selfishness, avarice, and cupidity," and Abner Kirk of Salem, where Augustus Wattles had just concluded a series of eight lectures with the formation of a sixty-member antislavery society, denounced gradualists and damned slavery as a sin.49 Perhaps more indicative of the independence of the Ohioans, the new Salem Anti-Slavery Society included women on its executive committee fully a year before the Grimké sisters began their tour of New England; 50 Salem's abolitionists were in 1836 already on the road to prominence in Garrisonian abolitionism.

When the Ohio state society held its anniversary meeting in Granville in late April, 1836, it also took high and unpopular ground, despite riotous opposition by much of Granville's citizenry which forced the abolitionists to meet in a barn outside of town.  51 For the first time, the organization enrolled a sizeable number of women as delegates, but that innovation was insignificant compared with the sentiments expressed in an "Address to the Ladies of Ohio"

49 Liberator, March 12, April 23, and May 21, 1836.
50 Ibid., May 21, 1836.
51 The meeting is discussed in Robert Price, "The Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention of 1836," The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLV (1936), 173-88.
which was read to the convention. Over a decade prior to the famed Seneca Falls Convention on women's rights and a year before the question of women's role in reform was to divide Eastern abolitionism, the Ohioans received an appeal which read in part:

A sphere is arrogantly assigned to woman, narrowed down to the circle of the parlor, or measured by the circumference of her spinning-wheel; and if she venture for a moment to turn aside from her very servicable concernment with domestic cares, she is branded with every ungenerous and abusive epithet, and bid back to her proper sphere.

We cannot away with the ferocious spirit of presumptuous superiority, in which sentiments so degrading upon the influence of woman, originate. We must ever rebuke that selfish exclusiveness, which--arrogating to man the peculiar endowments of intellect and heart--designates every exercise of the same on the part of woman as impertinent and assuming....

The appeal assigned to women "superior sympathies," "purity of principles," a "delicate sense of right," and a "confiding trust of consequences to God;" but it was women's role as the "mother of mankind" which spurred the appeal to plea: "What an attitude of responsibility! Such, woman, is yours! O see how the world's hopes are anchored in you!"

This was in no way a brief for women's equality,

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53. Ibid., p. 29.
but for its time it was nevertheless a bold statement. It urged white women to take up the cause of the Negro slave, especially because of their supposed particular interest in the institution of the family and in other women, both of which were especially exploited by slavery. It asked women to get out of their homes and circulate antislavery petitions and pamphlets, to support (male) agents, to write tracts on slavery, to work in and encourage "colored schools," to form ladies antislavery societies, to influence their families and especially their children, to pray, and to "labor among your female friends--taking as large a circuit as your leisure, or rather your other duties, will permit."

The appeal closed by saying that identifying immediate emancipation with women would "effectually raise it above the contempt and violence of its enemies." Ohio women were already organized: a Cincinnati Female Anti-Slavery Society was founded early in 1836, and the Muskingum

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54 Ibid., pp. 35, 38-40. A speaker at the anniversary of the Massachusetts society in January had advocated women's having "the same duties and the same rights" within the abolition movement as men, and the meeting adopted that resolution. The defense of the motion praised the formation of separate women's societies, and no woman served as an officer of that organization until 1842. Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1836), pp. 52-53.

55 Philanthropist, Feb. 13, 1836.
County Female Anti-Slavery Society was able to assume responsibility for coordinating women's antislavery efforts after a state women's society was formed during the Granville meeting, but this address marks the beginning of women's really significant contribution to abolition in Ohio and perhaps in the nation. Many Ohioans who accepted the implications of the address's pronouncements were, like the Salem Anti-Slavery Society, later to side with Garrison in his advocacy of women's rights, but in 1836 there was no sign of disagreement among the Westerners over the "woman question" that was to divide eastern abolitionism.

Likewise, the Ohioans continued to demand that the country's churches act against slavery. While acknowledging that two of the three Presbyterian Synods had joined the Chillicothe Presbytery and the Seceders, Covenanters, and Friends in adopting strong resolutions against slavery, the Ohioans' executive committee nevertheless complained in their report of the churches' general inactivity and especially of their apparent assumption that immediate abolition was a greater offense than was slavery. The convention resolved that "it is the duty of the church to debar from her privileges, all who persist in the sin of holding

56Ibid., May 27, 1836.
their fellow men in the bondage of slavery," and it listened to the Rev. John Rankin make a lengthy speech urging the churches to assume their duties. James Birney, a power in the society, wrote Lewis Tappan later in the summer, "We can no more reform the present church, than Luther could the Roman, or Wesley the Episcopalian. Do we not in some measure abandon principle, by remaining in the slaveholding and pro-slavery churches?" Mary Ann L. Gage of Concord, Ross County, Ohio, wrote in September to the women abolitionists of her old home, South Reading, Massachusetts, "It is the apologist in the church that supports slavery," though "the Bible is an abolition Bible. Oh! The apathy of christians!"

This anniversary was also significant for Ohio abolitionists for reasons having little to do with ideology. A secretary of the meeting, Abram Brooke of Stark County, began an abolition career which was to make him the leading figure in the development of Garrisonian abolitionism in Ohio after 1840. In addition, the society's seat of operations was moved from Putnam to Cincinnati, giving

59Liberator, Sept. 17, 1836.
the southwestern Ohioans control of the organization and setting the stage for the adoption of the Philanthropist as the group's official organ; and James G. Birney, by virtue of the move, became in effect the boss of Ohio abolition. Birney chose the society's "official" speakers, and his employment of Thome, Streeter, William Allan, and John Rankin as paid lecturers and of many others as unpaid local lecturers helped add some eighty new antislavery societies in Ohio during the year following May, 1836. By contrast, there was but one new society in neighboring Indiana during that time.

After the Granville mob, Ohio abolitionists had other encounters with their foes. The most important of them and the nadir of the early life of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society, was a Cincinnati mob's destruction of the Philanthropist's press on July 30-31, an event which forced suspension of the paper and its temporary relocation outside Cincinnati. The paper survived, however, and Ohio abolitionism was strengthened by reaction to the mob's persecution. John H. Purdy, editor of the Xenia Free Press,


abandoned his toleration of colonization, and antislavery societies were founded in Green and Clinton Counties. More importantly, Dr. Gamaliel Bailey emerged from the turmoil as Birney's main helper and assistant editor.

Birney accepted an agency from the American Anti-Slavery Society in the early fall, but he and the New Yorkers agreed that his moving east from Cincinnati in the aftermath of the riot could be construed as "a desertion." Birney was determined to stay and make the paper succeed; the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society was out some $1200 for damages incurred during the riot, so Bailey, a physician and former editor who had supported the Lane rebels after they left the seminary, was engaged to raise money for and to help edit the Philanthropist. After Birney finally left Ohio in 1837, Bailey became one of the most influential abolitionists west of the Alleghanies for the decade he remained in Cincinnati as editor of the Philanthropist and an officer in various state and local antislavery

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64Birney to Lewis Tappan, Sept. 26, 1836, ibid., pp. 358-60.
organizations, before going to Washington, D. C. in 1847 to edit the National Era. 65

Despite Ohio abolitionism's encouraging support of the troubled paper, the antislavery movement was still hardly popular. In December, Birney was hoping that by April a church could be found in Cincinnati where abolitionists would be allowed to gather, but he predicted that Ohio would be "tolerably effectually abolitionized by the end of next year." 66 Part of Birney's optimism on the latter point may have resulted from his understanding that "the seventy" agents to be trained by Weld for the American Society were to be sent into new districts in Ohio and to Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana, but Weld's physical collapse cost the effort his leadership. In addition, the pressure from established eastern abolitionists for the new lecturers was intense, so the plan for the national society to abolitionize the West was dropped, leaving the Westerners to

65 Published information on Bailey is scarce. Joel Goldfarb, "The Life of Gamaliel Bailey Prior to the Founding of the National Era: The Orientation of a Practical Abolitionist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1958), is a thorough discussion of Bailey's Ohio career.

their own devices.

Even before this decision, there had been little antislavery activity in Illinois and Indiana, so prospects for abolitionism there were not good. In the former state, the Putnam County Anti-Slavery Society was supplemented by the organization of a society at Union Grove, but the Rev. David Nelson, a moderate abolitionist who had never even preached the sin of slavery, was driven out of Marion County because of his antislavery activity. As in Illinois, Presbyterians led the beginning of organized abolition in Indiana. There, antislavery societies had by March, 1836, been organized in Decatur County and at Hanover College, and the Indianapolis Presbytery barred ministers who held slaves or ever sold one "unless he will first make all the reparations that may still be in his power." The Rev. Nathaniel Field, an agent for the Liberator, was again

67Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, pp. 105-06.
69Liberator, July 2, 1836.
71Liberator, July 16, 1836.
chosen Indiana's vice-president at the A.A.S. anniversary, but there is no evidence that anyone from the Hoosier state either attended the anniversary or was actively involved in the affairs of the national society.  

As noted earlier, Weld had a successful series of lectures in Pittsburgh early in 1836. Some of his converts are said to have begun the Anti-Slavery Society of Western Pennsylvania, for a time the A.A.S.'s only auxiliary in the state, and an antislavery newspaper, The Christian Witness. In May, the A.A.S.'s Samuel Gould was denied the chance to speak at Uniontown, where colonizationists were strong, but he had greater success at Washington, the oldest abolition center in western Pennsylvania.  

It was Michigan, though, where non-Ohio abolitionism was most active in the Old Northwest during 1836, for there Presbyterians and some Quakers succeeded in founding the area's second state antislavery society. The call for the organizational meeting, to be held October 12, was issued in September; it was signed by 254 persons, 106 of whom lived in Lenawee County, home of the Thomas Chandler family.


73 Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, p. 84; Brewster, "Rise of the Antislavery Movement," pp. 11-12.
Weld and Birney and other abolitionists invited to attend 
sent word they could not, so the meeting was re-set for 
November 10, in Ann Arbor. Weld still could not be there, 
but he sent some newly commissioned A.A.S. agents from 
Oberlin, where he was holding a series of meetings and 
training agents. The convention finally opened on November 
10, with seventy-five delegates choosing Darius Comstock 
of Lenawee County as their president.

The society which emerged, an auxiliary to the 
national organization, was like it pledged to rely upon 
moral suasion to accomplish the "entire abolition of slavery" 
in America, "and the elevation of our colored brothers to 
their proper rank as Men." Most of the initiators of 
this society were Presbyterian, as were most of its 
officers, but the Quakers of Lenawee County were also very 
active. The convention branded slavery as a sin and

75 Ibid., pp. 143-44.
76 [Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society], Proceedings 
of the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Convention of 1836, 
77 Kooker, "Antislavery in Michigan," pp. 148-49, and 
Merton L. Dillon, "Elizabeth Chandler and the Spread of 
Antislavery Sentiment to Michigan," Michigan History, 
XXXIX (1955), 493.
condemned churches which maintained fellowship with slave-owners; it was a typical auxiliary of the American Anti-Slavery Society. It did not include women in its meeting or appeal to them for help.

Back in Ohio, anti-abolition spirit remained high and a mob broke up an emancipationists' meeting in Dayton. The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, still in debt because of the riots of the previous summer, was unable to redeem its pledge to the national society, and, in fact, was itself operating only on loans from its treasurer. Financial affairs were little better in May, when Dr. Bailey wrote Birney, who was in New York state, that "the effects of the money pressure[resulting from the panic of 1837] have reached us." Bailey was not aware that a single pledge made at the state anniversary in late April had been paid; subscription payments for the Philanthropist were, as usual, also in arrears. Bailey also reported, however, that prejudice against the abolitionists was "certainly greatly abated," one reason being that "money, or the want of it

78 Xenia Free Press, Jan. 21, 1837.
The New York leaders of the parent society also thought Ohio abolition was essentially healthy. They wanted Birney to leave Ohio, which Weld deemed the country's second most important antislavery post, and come to New York as corresponding secretary, the day-to-day head of the organization. Weld and the New Yorkers were aware that disputes among abolitionists over the tactics and goals of their movement were potentially more disastrous than the quibbling of former years, and they wanted Birney to come to New York to mediate. In May, Weld wrote, "In the present stage of the cause somebody must fill that office in whom the whole Abolition Community have perfect confidence and who will be greatly respected by the church and heeded by the world." John G. Whittier, the executive committee's second choice, would not do, Weld said, and he urged Birney to accept.

Birney went to New York to attend the anniversary of the parent society, which elected him Ohio's vice-president. When he returned to Ohio and revealed his

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80 Bailey to Birney, May 27, 1837, ibid., pp. 384-86.
81 Weld to Birney, May 23, 1837, ibid., pp. 399-402.
82 Philanthropist, June 16, 1837.
intention to accept the A.A.S.'s offer and go to New York, the Ohioans understandably protested to the A.A.S. that they needed Birney. He encouraged the A.A.S. to give serious consideration to their objection, and he also suggested that he might wait until the next spring to move. On August 2, before any decision could be made, the first Clerical Appeal appeared in New England, reinforcing the New Yorkers' fears of open schism. Henry B. Stanton again urged Birney to come and try to hold the factions together; he said the national society was in danger of losing the Garrisonians on one hand and the conservative clergy on the other, and that Birney's appointment was approved by representatives of each group. Nevertheless, the A.A.S. executive committee reluctantly agreed to let Birney remain in Ohio until spring, if he thought that would be best. The committee did want Birney to visit in Illinois prior to the formation of their state society "and give them the right sort of fire."

Birney decided to heed appeals that he hurry, and

83 Birney to Lewis Tappan, July 29, 1837, in Dumond, ed., Birney Letters, I, 399-402.

84 Stanton to Birney, Aug. 7, 1837, ibid., pp. 404-12.

he informed Lewis Tappan that he would move to New York before winter. "I have for a long time thought that H. C. Wright would bring some evil on us by his multiplied writing and his violent spirit," Birney wrote in reference to Wright's activities on behalf of women's rights and non-resistance. The national society must repudiate his doctrines "as dogmas of the A.S. cause." He ended his letter on a note of hope:

The affair in Boston of the 5 ministers etc. is a lamentable thing. There are faults enough on both sides. Their [the signers of the Clerical Appeal] object is a good one--but they are loose in their argument--too declamatory. [Oliver] Johnson [who was editing the Liberator] has the best of the argument but his temper is inexcusable. I hope for the best from Garrison. If I do not mistake him, he will be discreet under such circumstances of danger.86

Garrison was not discreet, however, and Stanton correctly predicted continued trouble between him and the conservative clergy.87 Birney was disappointed in Garrison's angry denunciations of his accusers, and he planned to deal prudently but firmly with the Boston agitator: "I have no expectation that G[arrison] can be reduced to moderation, and I am not prepared to say that his

86 Birney to Tappan, Aug. 23, 1837, ibid., 417-19.
87 Henry B. Stanton to Birney, Sept. 1, 1837, ibid., 420-24.
departure from us may not be the best thing he could do for the cause of emancipation."

Clearly, Ohio's leading abolitionist was brought to New York to deal with Garrison's unwillingness to make abolitionism as inoffensive and thus as popular as possible.

Western abolitionists, however, continued their refusal to allow distant quarrels to divert their attention from their own affairs, and they pursued their organization and propaganda campaign as they had before Birney left, with Dr. Bailey assuming editorship of the Philanthropist and leadership of the western movement. At its anniversary in late April, the Ohio society had continued its verbal assault on the majority of churches, which a resolution branded as "indifferent to the evils of slavery, as well as hostile to abolitionism." As evidence, the convention knew that every church in Cincinnati was closed to abolitionists; that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in the Queen City, had censured two delegates for attending an antislavery meeting and had passed a resolution condemning abolition; and that the Presbyterian General Assembly had elected a slaveholder as moderator. Given


the Ohioans' displeasure at these events, it is not surprising that they were not at this point especially offended by Garrison's battle with conservative eastern clergymen, particularly as their only contact with the struggle was at a great distance and generally through the impersonal medium of print.

A further indication that the Ohioans were not then especially sympathetic to the criticism of Garrison is that they continued to regard women as important abolitionists. The 1837 anniversary was attended by a sizeable number of female delegates--nearly half of those from Columbiana County, for instance, were women--and one woman spoke before the entire gathering in support of a resolution.

Bailey took over the Philanthropist in the early fall of 1837. He was offended by what he considered the "disgusting, gross egotism" of Garrison's course of action concerning the Appeals, and also by "the loathsome adulation of his [Garrison's] idolators," but he vowed in a private letter to Birney, "whatever may be my feelings, however, I will always strive to consult the good of the cause." 91

90 Ibid.

This self-discipline for the good of abolitionism was to characterize Bailey's career in Ohio; as we shall see, he repeatedly let pass without public criticism opinions and activities on the part of other abolitionists with which he personally disagreed in order to try to maintain a united movement. His treatment in the newspaper of the controversy surrounding the Clerical Appeals is an example of the gap between Bailey's private opinions and his public ones; although he was critical of Garrison, his remarks showed little of the revulsion he seemed to feel. He objected to the indirect manner in which what he thought were the clergy's well-founded complaints against the Liberator were presented; he criticized Garrison for the harshness of his rhetoric and for advocating his new ideas in a newspaper temporarily sponsored by a society organized solely for promoting abolition; but he also maintained, "Our feelings toward the Liberator are of the most friendly character," a statement a bit less than completely true.

The Philanthropist was the only abolition paper which agreed with the substance of the Appeals' critique of Garrison, but its readers appear to have been generally unaroused by the controversy. An exception came from

92Philanthropist, Oct. 31, 1837.
Columbiana County, where women seem to have been participating more nearly equally with men than anywhere else in the antislavery movement in the mid 1830's; the antislavery society at New Garden passed a resolution:

That we have no unity with the course of the clergymen who have recently made sundry protestations against the editor of the Liberator, and regret that some abolition editors [Bailey] have connived at their conduct, or expressed a want of sympathy for him, but feel it our duty to assure W. L. Garrison that his conduct as editor has always received our warmest approbation, that as far as we can discover, he is fully sustained in his course by every abolitionist in this part of Ohio.... 93

Clearly, there were seeds of disagreement in Ohio, as in Massachusetts, but Bailey did not comment on the Columbiana County statement, and the issue did not reappear. A month later Bailey wrote to Birney that he was "greatly gratified" by Birney's wish that the eastern controversy die out. He also indicated that he would publish Garrison's prospectus for the new volume of the Liberator because, he said, "I like any man, whatever may be his faults, who dares to think for himself and utter his own thoughts in this age of time serving and violence." 94

93 Ibid., Nov. 21, 1837.
94 Bailey to Birney, Dec., 19, 1837, in Dumond, ed., Birney Letters, I, 423-26. This was the Liberator's prospectus which announced Garrison's intention to discuss peace and women's rights in addition to abolition; see above, pp. 64-65.
Perhaps one of the reasons Bailey felt more charitable toward Garrison was that he, like other abolitionists, was profoundly affected by the murder of Elijah Lovejoy in Illinois on November 8, 1837. Antislavery men and women seemed for a time after that tragic event to try to minimize their differences and unite in defense of their rights of expression. Abolitionism in Illinois had made considerable progress in 1837. The American Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary in May chose the Rev. David Nelson, who had returned to the state from his exile, as one of its vice-presidents, and it elected five managers for Illinois. During the summer, the abolitionist-preacher James H. Dickey arrived from Ross County, Ohio, to assume the pastorate at Union Grove, and a number of persons from the Rev. John Rankin's church in Brown County, Ohio, settled in Putnam County. Pressures for a state antislavery society mounted, and in late October delegates from across the state gathered in Upper Alton in response to a call for a meeting

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to organize such a society. 97

Elijah Lovejoy presided over the tense opening meeting, and the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, an elderly former Tennessean from Carlinville, Illinois, was chosen to serve as chairman pro tem. 98 Unruly townsmen then forced the meeting to adjourn. It reconvened the next day, enrolled members, and chose Blackburn president of the new society. 99 The sessions continued through the 29th, with fifty-five delegates finally adopting a constitution similar to those of other western state groups. They resolved to entertain "the most fraternal feelings toward the American Anti-Slavery Society" but not to affiliate with it, and they decried the destruction of abolition presses and resolved...

97 The list of names and hometowns of the signers of the call which appeared in the official minutes of the society and in the account of the proceeding of the organizational meeting in an "Extra" of the Alton Observer was inaccurate. A corrected list is in "Printer's Error in Call for Antislavery Convention," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XLVII (1954), 321-23.


to reestablish Lovejoy's recently destroyed Observer. 100 This determination led directly to Lovejoy's death in defense of his new press and to Illinois' abolitionists ending 1837 disillusioned and confused but further united by the tragedy. 101

There was also antislavery activity in Michigan. A correspondent to the Emancipator estimated that there were 3,000 abolitionists in the state, some of whom were in the state legislature. 102 Two agents from the A.A.S.'s "seventy" spent over four months in Detroit and southeastern Michigan, and the first anniversary of the state antislavery society, which was held in Detroit in late June, saw that organization essentially healthy; but agents were not very successful in organizing new societies during the last of 1837. 103


102 Emancipator in Xenia Free Press, March 25, 1837.

Western Pennsylvania's considerably more organized abolitionists reacted as did their Ohio neighbors in Columbiana County to the Clerical Appeals' attacks on Garrison. The executive committee of the region's society resolved that the appeal was "uncalled for" and "inconsistent with the principles of Christian freedom set forth in the constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society;" it also expressed "unabated confidence in [Garrison's] moral intrepidity and straightforward honesty." The Pittsburgh and Allegheny Ladies Anti-Slavery Society agreed, and Henry C. Howells, who was by then living in Pennsylvania, wrote Garrison similar sentiments.

Indiana antislavery sentiment remained essentially dormant until the murder of Lovejoy, which stimulated the Decatur County Anti-Slavery Society to pronounce Lovejoy a martyr and to call for a state society. The state had been given only three managers at the A.A.S. anniversary in May, two fewer than Illinois and Michigan, seven fewer than Ohio, and only two more than sparsely-settled Wisconsin, which for the first time was given a vice-president and a

105 Liberator, Oct. 20, 1837.
106 Philanthropist, Feb. 20, 1838.
As 1837 closed, Ohio led the Old Northwest in abolition activity: the Cincinnati circle and Gamaliel Bailey controlled the state organization and hoped to keep western abolition united and to lead further abolitionizing in the states to the west; but a group of men and women in the northeastern part of Ohio and their ideological allies near Pittsburgh were showing signs that their eyes were turned eastward toward the conflicts brewing there. Indiana and Wisconsin were showing signs of antislavery sentiment; and Michigan and Illinois had state organizations dedicated to immediateism. Abolitionism had come far in the West.

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107 Liberator, June 2, 1837. The vice-president was Samuel F. Phenix; the manager, D. S. Hollister.
The uneasy unity of abolitionism in the East did not last very far into 1838, and within three years the American Anti-Slavery Society split into two distinct groups with different ideas about the proper course for the movement. During the same three years, however, western abolitionists for the most part continued to abstain from the controversies embroiling their eastern allies. Because the leadership of the national antislavery movement was deeply involved in the developing schism, there were temptations for the Westerners to take sides. They did not then do so, but this was not because many of them were unaware of the divisive issues; as eastern abolitionism fell apart, the Westerners watched and waited, for the most part keeping their opinions to themselves. Their unity was also temporary, though, and when abolitionists in the West
did divide, it was over basically the same issues which split the eastern movement.

In January of 1838, Garrison's Liberator abandoned its short affiliation with the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison's foes were no longer able to object that he was misrepresenting a specific anti-slavery group; he was again writing only for himself. The Massachusetts organization's anniversary meeting in January nevertheless endorsed Garrison's condemnation of the Clerical Appeals as it appeared in his annual report to the group, and the delegates instructed the managers to express the society's "decided and unanimous condemnation" of the appeals, "but without unnecessary or any personal severity."¹

Garrison continued to incorporate ultraist doctrines into his paper and to denounce both his avowed opponents and those other persons he thought were not fighting slavery. He opposed human government, the traditional status of women, and perhaps most offensive to the conservative mind, he denounced most churches and clergymen. On account of these radical doctrines, many abolitionists by early 1838

¹Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), p. x.
abandoned the spirit of unity which had followed the Alton riots and prepared for the possibility, which Birney had already suggested, of directly challenging Garrison.

Meanwhile, Garrison was developing and explaining his own religious ideas. The results were not likely to placate his detractors. To his wife, Helen, he wrote, "Religion...is nothing but love--perfect love toward God and toward man--without formality, without hypocrisy, without partiality, depending upon no outward form to preserve its vitality, or prove its existence." And in response to an inquiry from his friend and fellow abolitionist Francis Jackson, Garrison asserted, "I discard all human creeds, and all ecclesiastical combinations, forms and ordinances, as constituting no part of christianity, and as being contrary to that liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free." He was aware that his advocacy of freedom

2 Roman Joseph Zorn, "Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1828-1839" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1953), p. 230. Even that unity had been marred by serious disagreement about the correctness of Lovejoy's defending his press with the force of arms; many non-resistants were appalled and tried to get the A.A.S. to condemn Lovejoy's action, but Garrison and others did not want non-resistance to be a test of abolition, so the effort failed. See Carleton Nabee, Black Freedom: The Nonviolent Abolitionists from 1830 Through the Civil War (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1970), pp. 38-50.
from oppression for all persons was unpopular; his letter to Jackson closed: "...it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment [because] the Lord knoweth them who are his."³

Opposition did not crystalize until late in the year. In fact, as late as April, Gerrit Smith went to great length to explain away Garrison's hostility to America's republican government. Speaking at an abolition convention in Albany, Smith said that Garrison, who possessed "as large a share" of discretion "as any man," had "mistaken the abuses and perversions of the government for the government itself" and thus turned his back "in deep disgust...on all civil government."⁴ In late September, however, Garrison made it apparent that Smith was wrong by leading the peace convention which organized the New England Non-Resistance Society. Its Declaration of Sentiments clearly committed its members to truly radical ideals.


⁴Cincinnati Philanthropist, April 24, 1838.
Garrison determined the nature of the gathering by proposing that in order to compile the roll of the convention each person write "his or her name" on a slip of paper. This move avoided discussion of women's rights and allowed a number of women to serve on the meeting's committees. A few men later asked that their names be removed from the roll because of this departure from tradition, but Garrison felt optimistic about the temper of the group. He drafted and the convention of 150 adopted a Declaration of Sentiments about which Garrison himself wrote, "[N]ever was a more 'fanatical' or 'disorganizing' instrument penned by men." He was astonished at the acceptance of his most extreme thoughts, after "a very long and critical debate," by a five-to-one margin. He reported that all who voted affirmatively were abolitionists, and that the document, which "swept the whole surface of society, and upturned almost every existing institution on earth," was initially too extreme for even such loyal non-resistants as William Ladd, America's leading pacifist, and abolitionism's peacemaker, Samuel J. May. The document censured human government, politics, and penal enactments, and it denied that any body of men had the right to imprison or destroy other
men for their crimes. It is no wonder that Garrison was surprised at his success and that even Anne Warren Weston, a loyal Garrisonian and an officer in the new society, objected to Garrison's use of the Liberator as a vehicle for such an unpopular cause. As a further indication of the reformers' confusions, the Liberator of October 26 published a disclaimer by the old American Peace Society that it had anything to do with the new group and a reaffirmation of the older society's belief that civil government was ordained by God.

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This information concerning the convention is from letters Garrison wrote to Helen E. Garrison on Sept. 21 and 22, 1838, in Ruchames, ed., A House Dividing, pp. 389-92; 394-96. Liberator, Sept. 28, 1838, has the Declaration and a list of delegates, none of whom was from the West. Historian John Demos has suggested that "non-coercion" is a better term to describe this movement, but that "non-resistants" was chosen because the original split in the peace movement some years earlier was over the difference, or lack of it, between offensive and defensive war; see Demos, "The Antislavery Movement and the Problem of Violent Means," New England Quarterly, XXXVII (Dec., 1964), p. 511. A recent examination of the New England Non-Resistance Society as an expression of abolitionism is Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 55-91.


For a discussion of the genesis of Garrison's ideas about non-resistance and his emergence as the motive force
Sarah Grimké, whose lectures were disturbing many reformers, was pleased that the convention had "organized ...on the basis of humanity" by granting women equality. She wrote to Henry C. Wright, however, that she could not accept the sentiments of the declaration; although she generally agreed with them, she was unable to reconcile the contradiction she saw between the commandments of the loving God of the New Testament and the warlike God of the Old. As historian Peter Brock points out, Grimké's dilemma about the nature of Christians' responsibilities was to trouble non-resistant abolitionists until the outbreak of the Civil War, but her doubts indicate the severity of the widening splits among even the most insistent abolitionists. In February, she was scheduled to be the first woman ever to address an American legislature, but she was ill on the appointed day and her sister Angelina

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of the movement, see Peter Brock, Radical Pacifists in Antebellum America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 77-112. For an examination of the life and ideology of the New England Non-Resistance Society, see ibid., pp. 113-69.


delivered the series of speeches instead. It was a dramatic climax to a turbulent tour through New England, and when Angelina pled before the Massachusetts legislature for justice for both women and slaves, Garrison and his allies rejoiced at the discomfort of their conservative opponents. But now, nine months later, these women, who were deemed so radical and who were great admirers of Garrison and Henry Wright, could not follow them so far as to renounce civil government. Clearly, the reaction of more conservative reformers than the Grimkés to the new peace society was bound to be sharply critical.

The formation of the non-resistance society as an entity entirely separate from abolitionism in organization and principles, though not in membership, is evidence against some of the contentions of the group's critics. Garrison, to whom the doctrine of no-human-government, like that of immediate emancipation, was an ideal and not a plan of action, insisted, in the words of historian


Aileen Kraditor, "on an organizational distinction between abolitionism and his other causes." Certainly the distinction Garrison made between the different goals of his several groups was lost on most Americans, including many abolitionists, and early in 1839 he established the Non-Resistant as a newspaper separate from the Liberator. He hoped by divorcing non-resistance from the Liberator to emphasize his desire that abolitionism welcome men and women of conflicting beliefs on other matters, including non-resistance.

Garrison's efforts to hold abolitionism together appeared to many reformers to be little but hair-splitting distinctions, though, and the movement continued to be strained by the strategic and ideological divisions within it. By this time, it appeared that Eastern abolition was either to be a movement of masses of men with the limited objective of ending slavery, or part of a struggle of men and women to try to guarantee peace, justice, and equality to all, regardless of sex, creed, or race. Garrison's conception of an antislavery movement encompassing all true foes of slavery--conservative and radical, male and female, black and white, religious and not--appeared too dangerous

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12 Ibid., p. 83.  
13 Ibid., p. 87.
to those abolitionists whose conception of the cause was more narrow; as a result, early in 1839 Henry B. Stanton wrote to James Birney that the split in eastern abolitionism was irreversible unless the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society could be separated from "everything which does not belong to it."

This did not happen, and at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York from May 8 through 10, 1839, the abolitionists were forced to vote, in an undisguised test of strength between the developing factions, on a resolution "that the roll of this meeting be made by placing thereon the names of all persons, male and female, who are delegates from any auxiliary society, or members of this society." The resolution carried, 180-140, with Massachusetts abolitionists providing by far the most "yea" votes and New Yorkers the most negative ones. Among the latter group were James G. Birney, Orange Scott,

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Beriah Green, and Lewis Tappan, who also signed, along with 119 others, an official protest against giving women voting rights in the society's decision making.  

The advocates of maintaining a broad base of antislavery workers within the A.A.S. won a second victory later in the meeting; defeated were those who hoped that by excluding proponents of unpopular doctrines from the organization, the antislavery movement would attract more ordinary Northerners and thus become broadly based at a more popular level. The second issue was that of abolitionists' obligation to vote. The non-resistants had rejected use of the franchise in a government based upon force, but a growing number of abolitionists, led primarily by James G. Birney, were beginning to think not only of abolitionists' duty to vote for men not hostile to their cause but also of organizing a separate antislavery political party. These political impulses were soon to materialize in the formation of the Liberty Party, with Birney as a candidate for President, but at this meeting Birney was unsuccessful in his efforts to table a resolution sponsored by Garrison and his editorial colleague, Oliver Johnson. The delegates

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15 The meeting was reported in *Philanthropist*, June 11, 1839.
accepted the resolution

[that in the original formation of this society, it was not contemplated, nor is it now desired to exclude from its membership any persons, on account of their being prevented by conscientious scruples from participating in all the measures which the mass of the society, either originally or subsequently, may have contemplated as proper for the advancement of the antislavery cause.

This action blunted the effect of a resolution passed the previous day, with New Yorkers providing most of the votes, declaring abolitionists had a duty to vote, and it set the stage for a determined counterattack by the defeated political activists which was to end the next year with the famous formal split of the national organization.

After the anniversary, the executive committee of the A.A.S., headed by Arthur Tappan, published an "address" to the country's abolitionists. It acknowledged the disagreement on the question of the position of women, but, in an attempt to make the delegates' decision as unobjectionable as possible, it claimed that the vote could not "be justly regarded as committing the Society, in favor of any controverted principle, respecting the equal rights of women to participate in the management of public affairs."

Of course Garrison never intended that it could or should be

16 Ibid.
so interpreted. The address continued with a strong
denunciation of the no-government doctrine and an affirmation
of the necessity of political action; it quoted the resolution
affirming the duty of voting, but it did not mention the
one granting non-voters the right to adhere to the dictates
of their consciences. It also declared the committee's
recognition of the importance of the West to the future of
abolition and pledged to step up its work in that area, and
it mentioned plans for a convention to be held in Albany,
technically independent of the A.A.S. but by persons who
adopted the principles of its constitution, for discussion
of abolitionism and the use of the franchise. 17

Garrison attended the Albany convention in late
July, but his attempt to substitute the word persons for
freemen in the meeting's call was soundly beaten. He
subsequently refused to serve on the business committee and
entered a formal protest of the convention's refusal to
seat women delegates or to allow discussion of "extraneous

17 Ibid., June 25, 1839. During 1838, the state
antislavery societies in the East had assumed most of the
responsibility for abolition in their areas, so the A.A.S.,
which was in financial difficulty, planned to send some 20
agents into Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana, where state
societies were not prepared to mount extensive efforts of
their own. The national society was unable, however, to
finance the campaign, and its effect was minimal. See
Janet Wilson [James], "The Early Anti-Slavery Propaganda,"
More Books: The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library, XIX
(Dec., 1944), 399-400.
matters;" he also objected to the arrangement committee's assumption that the main business of the convention was political. The few dissidents contended that none of this was part of the A.A.S.'s intention in appointing the arrangements committee, but the protest was futile. The meeting's leaders--Birney, Stanton, Lewis Tappan, Orange Scott, William Goodell, William Chaplin--served notice that they intended to continue their exclusionary tactics in pursuit of popular support.18

There is no doubt the combatants knew they were engaged in a major struggle. On October 13, Elizur Wright, Jr., who was editing the Abolitionist, the organ of the newly formed, anti-Garrisonian Massachusetts Abolition Society, wrote Henry Stanton a letter which so exposed Wright's and Stanton's maneuvering that Garrison, who received a copy of the letter from a friend, published it no less than six times during December and January. In the letter, Wright urged Stanton to convince the forthcoming A.A.S. meeting in Cleveland to support an independent abolition nomination for president of the United States. He said such an action was absolutely essential if the

18 The meeting was reported in Philanthropist, Aug. 20, 1839.
Massachusetts Abolition Society were to survive, as Garrison would oppose the nomination and in the turmoil the issue of women's rights, which was retarding the growth of the new society, could be removed from the center of attention. The plan failed when the Ohio abolitionists at the Cleveland meeting, the first attempt to hold a major abolition convention in the West, refused to accept the idea of a separate nomination, but the advocates of the plan continued their efforts anyway. 20

In November, a larger meeting in Warsaw, New York, authorized requesting Birney and Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne of Washington County in western Pennsylvania to accept nominations as antislavery candidates for the country's highest offices. They declined, but another convention at Albany on April 1, 1840, renominated Birney and substituted Philadelphian Thomas Earle as the vice-presidential candidate. Both men accepted this meeting's call, 21 and the Liberty Party was born a month before the American

19 The Liberator's reprintings of and comments upon this letter are in the issues of Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27, 1839; Jan. 3, 10, 17, 1840, and even March 15, 1844.


21 Ibid., pp. 152-53.
Anti-Slavery Society formally split in two.

In some aspects, then, the A.A.S. anniversary meeting in May of 1840 was an anticlimax. A boatload of delegates from Massachusetts insured a Garrisonian victory, and Arthur Tappan, president of the society, did not bother to attend. When the eloquent Quaker Abby Kelley was elected to the business committee, the conservatives withdrew and formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society—which provided for separate societies for each sex and for the women's society to be represented in policy decisions by men. Even before the meeting began, the New Yorkers running the national office, which was over $6,000 in debt, secretly transferred the society's paper, the Emancipator, to the New York City society and its books to Lewis Tappan. Garrison and his victorious colleagues took over little but the name of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and they had to begin a new official organ, the National Anti-Slavery Standard, to compete with the new society's Emancipator.

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22 Details of the meeting are in Philanthropist, June 16, 1840.

23 Kraditor, Means and Ends, p. 52.

24 Filler, Crusade Against Slavery, p. 136. The American society's financial difficulties during this period
The new society was formed mainly by persons who thought that the abolition of slavery was the final goal of the movement and that abolition could best be accomplished through the methods of traditional political agitation and legislation. The doctrines of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society did not require that Americans change in any essential way their values and behavior; the society generally accepted white male dominance of a country its leaders thought was marred primarily by the existence of slavery, and it relied on an interpretation of the country's constitution as a document which, if properly adhered to, would end that offending institution and hence the need for reform.

Garrison and those who remained under his rather loose leadership within the American Anti-Slavery Society after 1840 were not always in agreement about non-resistance, or later about disunion of the North from the country's pro-slavery constitution. Many men and women who did not share Garrison's views on these and other subjects remained in the "old organization," which, as Kraditor emphasizes,


25Kraditor, Means and Ends., p. 107
they saw as essentially a "propaganda center, from which abolitionists with a wide variety of philosophies and affiliations would go, armed with agitational weapons to use in whatever parties, churches, or other organizations they chose to belong to." The most important belief which the "Garrisonian" abolitionists shared after 1840, and the one which best distinguished them from the rest of the antislavery movement until the Civil War, was the conviction that the abolitionists' cause was still primarily a moral one which was but a part, albeit a major one, of a moral revolution which would free all human beings from their oppressors, be they clergy, men, whites, or governments.

Garrison, as a non-resistant, opposed all political parties in any government based on force, but as an abolitionist, he opposed the Liberty and other "antislavery" parties because he thought they detracted from the more important movement to reform the minds and hearts of his countrymen through moral suasion. Not all men and women in the Garrisonian circle were in agreement as to the correct manifestation of that suasion, but it is possible to identify a generally stable group of abolitionists, East

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26 Ibid., p. 165. 27 Ibid., pp. 158-60, 183-85.
and West, who retained the primacy of the movement's initial emphasis on persuading white Americans through moral suasion that slaveholding and racial prejudice were sins which should immediately be abandoned. Abolitionists of this belief became or remained loyal to the A.A.S. during the 1840's and 1850's, and it was they who were for that reason "Garrisonians."

In the East, where the movement for a separate political party coincided with that for a narrowed abolition platform, hostility between Garrison and his allies and the leaders of the insurgent movements was open and bitter. The men and women who remained in the badly crippled A.A.S. saw Birney and his co-workers as conspirators determined to destroy the moral tone of abolition by thrusting it into partisan politics and divorcing it from general reform; the three years of constant ideological and organizational warfare culminated in the East in the bitter division between the A.A.S. and the rival Liberty Party with its supporting antislavery society. 28

The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society remained allied with the Liberty Party, and when in 1848 that party

was swallowed by Free Soilism, the antislavery society, never very healthy, faded into obscurity. It never was strong in the West, where political abolitionism thrived and where most Liberty men ignored both it and the Garrisonians.  

The A.A.S. was also weak for several years after 1840, but unlike the new society, it began to revive during 1842. By the end of 1845, largely with the stimulation of a number of spectacular successes in the West, the Garrisonian society emerged as an increasingly militant force for revolutionizing public opinion and awakening private consciences.

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29 Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), p. 332. This is the only modern biography of either Arthur or Lewis Tappan.

30 After the A.A.S. anniversary in 1843, Garrison wrote an address to the society's "friends" which said it had emerged healthy and zestful from its trials; he welcomed all into the work of the organization, emphasizing the need for a broad platform and each individual's freedom to act by his own conscience, see Philanthropist, June 7, 1843.

31 There is as yet no scholarly study of the non-political antislavery organizations between 1840 and the Civil War, partly because that date coincided with the beginning of political abolition, a movement more readily studied and measured than the moral one. Biographies of Garrisonians active during this period provide some help; see Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide: A Biography of Wm. Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); John L. Thomas, The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963); Oliver Johnson, William Lloyd Garrison and His Times... (Boston:
The American Anti-Slavery Society never officially prescribed the beliefs and behavior of its members and affiliate organizations, but it did take some positions in 1844 which further distinguish "Garrisonian" abolitionists until the Civil War. The annual meeting voted that all abolitionists should withdraw from slavery-supporting churches. This endorsement of the increasingly frequent movement of church members "coming out" of churches which were not actively opposing slavery meant that affiliation with the A.A.S. thereafter was an act supporting that idea. Likewise, the same anniversary adopted as its creed Garrison's contention that the country's constitution was "a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell; inasmuch as it was effected by a bloody compromise..." and had resulted in slavery's control of the nation, and that it was the duty of abolitionists to withdraw their allegiance from it and to peacefully work to overthrow it. Not all


32 Mabee, Black Freedom, pp. 205-43 and Perry, Radical Abolitionism, pp. 92-128 discuss "come-outerism," which was not confined to Garrisonians, and the related tactic of disrupting the meetings of congregations deemed inactive against slavery.

33 Quoted in Kraditor, Means and Ends, pp. 200-01 which also discusses the convention's decision and the opposition to it voiced by some who demurred, primarily for tactical, not ideological, reasons.
Garrisonians or supporters of the A.A.S. agreed with these propositions, and later there was considerable disagreement over such subjects as the necessity to avoid using slave-made goods and the morality of slave rebellions, but "Garrisonians" can nonetheless generally be identified as vehement advocates of persuading white Americans through the moral suasion of words and examples that the sin of slavery and racial prejudice must immediately be abandoned by all persons and institutions. In pursuit of that end, they maintained more than token association with the American Anti-Slavery Society, its leaders, publications, and local affiliates.

CHAPTER V

WESTERN ABOLITIONISTS BEFORE THE STORM,
1838-1839

By 1838, Gamaliel Bailey had established himself as the dominant force in western abolition. He used the Philanthropist and his central geographic location in Cincinnati to agitate for his version of the antislavery movement, which, in many ways like Garrison's, insisted on a broadly-based coalition united in abolition societies by their commitment to immediate abolition and undivided by an insistence upon unanimity on other subjects. He was willing to subordinate his dislike of Garrison for the unity of abolitionism, and he worked hard to keep the members of the Ohio state society, which was composed of many different sorts of reformers, from becoming involved in the eastern dissensions.

Ohioans could of course not be kept completely ignorant of the troubles "up East." In March, the Liberator
listed five agents in the state, and a Congregational minister complained that, "In Ohio, an abolitionist must hold up Oberlin and fight Lane, because Garrison &c. do it." Bailey seized this complaint as the occasion to assert Ohio's independence; he claimed "...Ohio abolitionists would feel themselves degraded by identifying the cause of anti-slavery with names or institutions," and they will not "...descend to personal squabbling, sectarian conflict, or humiliating strifes for the mastery [of abolitionism]." Bailey denied that abolitionists in his state did anything because Garrison did: "For Mr. Garrison they justly have a high regard; but they 'are of age;' they have arrived at years of discretion; they are in the habit of judging and acting for themselves...." Bailey's remarks seem to be accurate, but his newspaper did not very often provide sufficient information about Garrison and his enemies to aid his readers in making their own decisions. He feared

1Liberator, March 2, 1838. They were C. Bushnell and William M. Johnson in Cincinnati, William Hillis at Oberlin, James Austin in Marlborough, and Lot Holmes in Columbiana County. The paper of July 23 added N. Miller, Jr. of Sandyville, and that of Sept. 28 listed Joseph A. Dugdale of South Charlestown (Green Plain), Clark County.

2Philanthropist, copied from New England Spectator by Liberator, March 9, 1838. Much antislavery news was circulated in this indirect way.
that such information would contribute to divisive quarrels in the West, so he chose carefully the exposure he gave to the eastern movement.

He did, however, give space to all abolition activity in his own region, and so revealed that some Ohioans were discussing the same subjects which were splitting Easterners. The executive committee of the Dugdales' Green Plain society of antislavery Quakers, for instance, deplored Lovejoy's murder but voiced disapproval of his attempt to defend his property; it commended to abolitionists' attention the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society, especially the rejection of doing evil that good might come. In Putnam, meanwhile, the town's lyceum was given over for three evenings to discussion of non-resistance. A resident of the town wrote Garrison that he was one of only a few of Putnam's many abolitionists who took the side of non-resistance in the discussions; he reported that the subject was again to be the topic at lyceum and that he wanted some help concerning the question of whether it was

3Philanthropist, May 1, 1838.
ever acceptable to take a human life. This was six months before the New England Non-Resistance Society was formed.

There was one issue dividing the country's abolitionists, however, concerning which Bailey took a firm position. He thought that the nomination of separate antislavery candidates for public office would be a grave tactical error that could ruin the united movement he was trying to maintain. Here again, Bailey and Garrison agreed, though for somewhat different reasons. Bailey did not object to the traditional parties; he felt that they and the established churches were redeemable, and that schisms in either would only harm the cause.

The abolitionists who gathered in May for the state society's third anniversary agreed with Bailey on this and most other subjects. Joseph Dugdale's resolution that "all persons" who agreed with the principle of immediate emancipation without expatriation be requested to sign

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4 George Hemlick [?] to Garrison, Feb. 3, 1838, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library. Hemlick had been paying for the Liberator subscription of a George Eustis of nearby Zanesville.

5 Philanthropist, March 27, 1838, in an editorial response to the suggestion that Levi Whipple be nominated as an abolition candidate for governor.
as members of the convention was accepted, and a number of women enrolled. Bailey, who adamantly defended the ability and right of American women to judge for themselves what was proper behavior, reported that women participated equally in the meeting and that no one objected. There is, however, no record of a woman's speaking to the convention or serving on any committee.

This apparent discrepancy was partly the result of the women's holding a separate meeting at which Augustus Wattles, husband of one of the meeting's secretaries, Susan E. Wattles, encouraged the women in their decision to devote their energies, as he himself did, to supporting and staffing schools for black children. During the preceding year, the Ohio women spent $322.26: nearly one-third went to build schools in black communities in Indiana; one-fifth helped pay teachers; one-seventh was given to the A.A.S.; $30 was spent on circulating petitions to Congress. Elizabeth Borton, the president of the group; Ruth Dugdale;[Ohio Anti-Slavery Society], Report of the Third Anniversary... (Cincinnati: Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), p. 3.

Philanthropist, June 12, 1838. He did not think it proper for women to lecture to "promiscuous assemblages" as a "general custom," but he did think women had the right to disagree and act accordingly. Liberator, June 29, 1838, copied these remarks.
Clarissa Wright; and Emily Robinson, an unsalaried teacher in a high school for Negroes in Cincinnati and the wife of Marius R. Robinson, who was chosen corresponding secretary of the state society, were the leaders of these women. Primarily educators, they saw their roles as different from the men's, but many of them expended more time, talent, and energy than most of the men, who felt they had to "earn a living" with the majority of their efforts.

The report of the executive committee of the state society did not mention Garrison, the Clerical Appeals, the Grimkés, or anything which had taken place in the East, but the meeting did appoint a committee "to report on the best plan of operations for the future, and to define the relations between this society and the American Anti-Slavery Society."

This group, however, did not have time to deal with its assignment. The anniversary adopted several resolutions which show that it generally agreed with the parent society: it branded the holding of slaves a sin; rejected the use of carnal weapons and resolved to use only spiritual ones

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8 Interview with Emily Robinson by Wilbur H. Siebert, Aug. 13, 1892, typescript in Wilbur Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus. Both Robinsons and Ruth Dugdale were to be very important Garrisonians.

9 Philanthropist, June 19, 1838.
(but it denied that this was a prohibition of voting); and opposed the idea of an abolition political party.

The delegates also resolved, "That all abolitionists who believe in the lawfulness of our representative governments are sacredly bound by their principles, so to bestow their suffrage, as to promote the election to Congress of men, whose sentiments are known..." to favor: the right to petition, free press and speech, Congress's duty to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and the territories, Congress's power over the interstate slave trade, and refusing to admit new states or territories with slavery. This resolution allowed those who did not believe in voting to remain abolitionists in good standing. Bailey was proud of the breadth of opinion among his state's abolitionists. In an editorial, which praised Granville's citizens for being hospitable toward this second state abolition meeting there, Bailey wrote:

Although some of us are orthodox, some heterodox, some infidels, some loco-focos, some Democrats, some Whigs, we are very sure that at our conventions, we all felt, simply, as abolitionists. We knew our point of unity, and all other points were for the time forgotten.

Bailey said the majority of abolitionists would not insist

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10 Ibid., June 12, 1838.
that non-voters disobey their consciences, and in Ohio
"...neither would the disbeliever in the lawfulness of human
government oppose a resolution urging [other] abolitionists
to exercise their right of suffrage."

Even in this era of tolerance there was a hint of
discord. Bailey as editor assumed the responsibility for
printing a report which the executive committee had sub­mitted to the convention's committee on political action;
Bailey himself may have been its author. The report had
been withheld from the anniversary to prevent controversy.
It claimed that because political parties were formed to
obtain power, they could not be interested in justice; it
then suggested three ways abolitionists could relate to the
parties. They could adhere to the present ones, form a
separate one, or sever all ties with any party and only
support worthy individuals. The report rejected the first
two choices and accepted the last (which was Garrison's
position when he was asked what men who voted should do), but
then came a statement which was bound to offend some of
Bailey's readers: "There is another course which abolitionists
may follow; and that is, to take no part in elections;
but this would be burying their talent in the earth, and

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Ibid.
surely no friend of the...slave will dare answer such a charge to his God, or his conscience." There were a number of friends of the slaves who were choosing that very course, as editor and strategist Bailey well knew, so he must at least have been casting about to test the opinions of what amounted to his constituency. Simultaneously, however, he employed the Rev. James Boyle, a "perfectionist" and "no-government man," as a member of the state society's staff and assured Birney that Boyle would do no harm. Bailey, like Garrison, wanted to keep the antislavery society open to all, but he was not averse to printing opinions in his newspaper which could offend some of his antislavery readers.

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Bailey's task as day-to-day director of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society remained difficult. Pressure to discontinue the Philanthropist in favor of the eastern papers mounted, and Bailey was unhappy to learn that only a very small percentage of professed abolitionists were subscribing to it. He wrote somewhat angrily to Birney at the A.A.S. office in New York, "You know how much ought to be done, and must be done in the West, and you know too what a wretched set of work operatives we are. Have you resolved to let us alone altogether?" He complained that there was not one efficient man working anywhere in Ohio and little prospect of getting one without first receiving some money. "There is no man in Cincinnati or out of it, that seems willing to do anything but [William] Donaldson [the society's treasurer] and myself," he complained. The fact that the Philanthropist's subscribers owed over $4000 must have contributed to Bailey's frustration.


16Philanthropist, June 26, 1838.
Ohio abolitionism continued to grow. According to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, the state had 251 of 1300 societies in the country on May 1, 1838, and on July 31, the Philanthropist claimed it had the names of 308 societies in the state and estimated a total of 25,000 abolitionists belonged to them. However, only one copy each of the Philanthropist and the Liberator was received in Geauga County, with 1500 known abolitionists, and Bailey quoted Augustus Wattles, recently returned from a lecture tour, as saying that, unlike in the lower half of the state, the abolitionists he encountered north of the National Road were lifeless. There was much work to be done.

Bailey's efforts during the close of the year were concerned with propagating his ideas of antislavery politics


18 Goldfarb, "Life of Gamaliel Bailey," p. 98. Such figures obviously complicate the task of estimating the effectiveness of organized abolitionism.

19 Philanthropist, Sept. 4, 1838. This number has a complete list of Ohio abolition societies, their secretaries, and estimated membership.

and with helping organize Indiana's late-starting state society. On October 23, his paper printed and commended the A.A.S. executive committee's endorsement of abolitionists' exercising the franchise by organized interrogation of candidates and prudent voting; Bailey also admitted there was some truth to allegations that abolitionists' favoring the Democrats had helped defeat the Whigs in the recent state election. Such prudent use of the franchise was encouraging to Bailey and other voting abolitionists opposed to separate antislavery political organization, but the Liberator of December 14, 1838, copied from Bailey's own paper an ad for copies of the anti-political declaration of sentiments of the New England Non-Resistance Society on sale in Cincinnati.

Bailey continued during the year following Lovejoy's death to try to stimulate interest in abolitionism in Indiana, and he began to get help from that state's residents.

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21 The Whig candidate for re-election as governor had honored Kentucky's request to turn the Rev. John B. Mahan, a Brown County abolitionist, over to trial for allegedly helping some slaves escape to Ohio, and many abolitionists wanted to return antislavery Democrat Thomas Morris to the U.S. Senate; see Francis P. Weisenburger, The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850, Vol. III of The History of the State of Ohio, ed. by Carl Wittke (6 vols.; Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1941-44), p. 350.
Indiana had only seven antislavery societies by May 1, 1838, and a committee of abolitionists there declared the state was "in a great measure asleep on the subject of American slavery," but the Decatur County Anti-Slavery Society nonetheless renewed its agitation for a state abolition organization. The Decatur men urged those interested in that project to send their names to the office of the Philanthropist, and lists of names began to come to Cincinnati with increasing frequency as the summer wore on. By August, Bailey had agreed with the suggestion of Kersey and Pusey Grave of Richmond that Milton, a village in western Wayne County, should be the site of the organizational meeting, which was then called for September 12.

The signers of the call were generally from the counties in southeastern Indiana bordering on Ohio, especially Franklin, Union, Dearborn, Decatur, and Wayne, home of a growing number of Quakers; among the signers

22 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Seventh Annual Report... , p. 9.

23 Philanthropist, Feb. 20, 1838.

24 See, for instance, Philanthropist, June 19, 1838.

were Dr. Nathaniel Field of Jeffersonville, Franklin County, the state's vice-president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and Dr. Edwin Fussell of Pendleton, Madison County, which was in the approximate center of Indiana and was, along with Morgan, Monroe, and Owen Counties, the only non-eastern center of antislavery sentiment represented in this movement. 26 Fussell was to be one of Garrison's leading supporters in the state in the early 1840's.

The organizational meeting opened on schedule. A motion was adopted which specified women were to be allowed to enroll, although very few did so. The group's declaration of sentiments was quite like that of the A.A.S., but it lacked the clause conceding Congress had no right to interfere in the slave states in relation to slavery. The constitution pledged "to promote the great objects of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Indiana," and the delegates adopted resolutions deploring a separate political party but pledging to vote for good men. There was no discussion of an exception for non-voters.

Bailey did not attend the meeting, but a number of representatives of the Ohio society did. He did, however,  

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26Philanthropist, July 3 and Aug. 14, 1838.

27Ibid., Sept. 25, 1838.
write a long letter to the meeting encouraging their activity, and the delegates voted to publish it with their minutes. They also adopted the *Philanthropist* as their official organ, further assuring that the Indiana State Anti-Slavery Society was to be within Bailey's widening circle of influence. Bailey's position of leadership was further strengthened when the American Society's agency committee was unable to come to terms with the Rev. A. T. Rankin concerning an agency in Indiana until nearly a year later.

Already, however, there were signs of a struggle among Indiana's Quakers which was to badly weaken the efforts of Bailey and the state's abolitionists to mount a united campaign against slavery. The *Liberator* of November 30, 1838, copied a letter from a Quaker abolitionist in Indiana which complained of growing pressure from the Elders of the Indiana Yearly Meeting to keep abolition doctrines away from Friends. According to the writer, some of the Elders were members of the colonization society; thus, he said, their prohibition against reading abolition newspapers

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28 Ibid.

29 American Anti-Slavery Society, Agency Committee Minutes, Meetings of Dec. 20, 1838 and May 2, 1839, Boston Public Library.
was obviously not, as they claimed, an attempt to ban Quakers' association with all reform organizations outside of the church.

Abolitionists in Illinois were also struggling to develop their movement, but the state society had during its first year been unable to hire an agent or to add more than a few auxiliaries. The first anniversary of the state society, which was held at Farmington in east central Illinois, was anxious to broaden the appeal of the organization, and it adopted measures to accomplish that aim.

Early in the anniversary, the delegates reversed their decision of the year before and affiliated with the American Anti-Slavery Society—an action that probably resulted from the fact that several of the organization's leaders, including William M. Stewart, Benjamin Lundy, and George Washington Gale, were serving or had recently served as managers of the parent society. The delegates also resolved their opposition to attempts some Easterners were making to delete from the A.A.S. constitution the statement that only the states had power to abolish slavery in their borders. 30 They recommended that abolitionists vote

for no candidate for state or federal office who was known to oppose the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia or the rights of petition or speech or to favor either the admission of slave states or the annexation of Texas to the Union. In asking abolitionists to withhold their votes from their foes, the Illinois organization took a position that was less restrictive than the insistence of Ohio and Indiana abolitionists that acceptable candidates had to be on record as favoring their position; its strategy was even less demanding compared to those eastern abolitionists who were opposing the inclusion of electoral politics anywhere among abolitionism's tactics. An additional indication that Garrison's increasingly radical ideas were not making much impression in Illinois was the nearly total absence of women as participants in the state society's affairs. The Presbyterian ministers dominating the organization were interested in organizing an abolition society


large enough to have some influence, and they seem to have seen no place in that scheme for advocates of women's rights and non-resistence.

Even after this seemingly successful and moderate meeting, Illinois antislavery workers were not able to accomplish much. They did not have enough money for a newspaper or many pamphlets or any paid agents, so local volunteers were left with the propaganda efforts. The Illinois State Anti-Slavery Society was during the winter of 1838-39 forced to concentrate primarily upon sending petitions to Congress and to the openly hostile state legislature.

Neither was the year 1838 a good one for Michigan abolitionists. Most of the effort went into planning for a much-needed antislavery newspaper, but response was disappointing. "An association of gentlemen" proposed publishing a paper at Jackson to be "devoted to the discussion of the abolition of American Slavery," but it probably never began. Only a little more is known about the state society's anniversary meeting: the Ann Arbor

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34Liberator, June 1, 1838.
Presbyterians denied it the use of their building; the delegates encouraged the Rev. William M. Sullivan in his plan to follow up on Nathan M. Thomas's suggestion for the establishment of the American Freeman in Jackson; and the executive committee was still controlled by the Detroit men who had been instrumental in the society's formation.

Meanwhile, the opponents of abolitionism were on the offensive. The Michigan Methodist Conference passed resolutions condemning all abolitionists and especially Methodist ones, and the winter of 1838-39 was one of considerable mob violence against antislavery meetings. As in the last half of 1837, there were no paid agents in Michigan during any of 1838, so the task of spreading antislavery propaganda fell to local groups and to printed materials. During the winter of 1838-39, though, the situation began to improve. By December, Sullivan was able to print a prospectus for his newspaper, and a group of


abolitionists from over the state agreed to support it; in February, some Methodists formed a state antislavery society, hired a lecturer, and encouraged local churchmen to follow suit; and in April, the American Freeman began what was to prove to be a brief existence. None of this antislavery activity appears to have been related to or particularly conscious of developments in the East.

Such was not the case in western Pennsylvania. Across Ohio's eastern border and far from the influence of Gamaliel Bailey, abolitionists were struggling with organizational difficulties which were related to Eastern abolitionism. The Pennsylvania State Anti-Slavery Society had been organized early in 1837, quite late given the state's antislavery history. At the society's initial anniversary in January, 1838, two separate executive committees were created to try to better serve the long, mountain-divided state. The eastern committee was centered in Philadelphia; the western one in Pittsburgh. The six-man committee for the western half of the state reported that under the leadership of the old, state-wide committee, western Pennsylvania had been allotted no lecturers or agents and that it was uncertain how many antislavery

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Ibid., pp. 276, 283, 277.
societies there were in the area. They estimated the number as being between seventy and one hundred, but said many were infested with colonizationists; they also complained that a series of lectures by James G. Birney had been the only effort in their section sponsored by the national organization. They suggested that the creation of two separate sister societies might benefit their efforts: the Christian Witness, their abolition newspaper, had attracted 900 subscribers, and they wanted to try to operate on their own.  

The idea of divided operations was acceptable, so the officers for the western section, who included Francis J. LeMoyne as president, and Thomas S. Sproull and H. C. Howells as corresponding and recording secretaries, began planning the organization of the abolitionists in their area. On April 24, the Philanthropist announced that there was to be a meeting of delegates from Pennsylvania's twenty western counties at Pittsburgh on May 16, and on August 21, the same paper announced plans for the first annual meeting of the western division of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society to be held in the same city on  

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39 Ibid.
September 12. There was already some conflict among the leadership: LeMoyne complained (1) that the western executive committee had chosen to have the May meeting, its first public effort, without trying to make it a large one, (2) that it was not sending anyone to the A.A.S. anniversary in New York, and (3) that it had chosen to send only one delegate to Philadelphia to the state convention in the fall. 40

LeMoyne's unhappiness was over tactical considerations, but in November there occurred an event which was to have serious ideological consequences for the abolitionists who looked to Pittsburgh for leadership. A meeting was held for the purpose of formally dividing the Pennsylvania state society into two separate entities, and the Rev. Orange Scott, Methodism's leading abolitionist, attended as a representative of the national society. As was the custom, he was placed on the committee which was to prepare the meeting's agenda. That committee reported the preamble and constitution of the state society, with modifications supposedly suitable for the western section, and proposed their adoption by the new organization. The delegates

accepted without significant discussion both this suggestion and the committee's wording, but for some reason the committee's version did not include the clause pledging "that we will in no case countenance the slave in a resort to physical force to obtain his liberty," and that pledge was thus omitted from the constitution of the new Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. The omission of that pledge to abjure coercion was to be the cause for a bitter war of words when it was noticed a year later, but during the month following the organization of the W.P.A.S., a hint of the troubles to come appeared in the Liberator.

The Rev. Henry C. Howells, "a preacher of the gospel of peace, formerly of England," wrote a letter to William Lloyd Garrison early in December of 1838 praising what he had heard of the position taken by the newly organized New England Non-Resistance Society. Howells asked for a copy of the group's constitution so he could study it, and Garrison praised his "excellent" letter as being "in exact accordance" with the ideas of the nonresistance society. It was Howells, his pacifist sentiments awakened, who in 1839 was to lead the vigorous assault upon the omission of

41 Howells to Garrison, April 24, 1840, in Liberator, May 15, 1840.

42 Howells to Garrison, Dec. 5, 1838, and Garrison's comments, ibid., Dec. 21, 1838.
the non-resistance clause from the W.P.A.S. constitution and thereby force the abolitionists in his area to deal with the eastern schism before any major antislavery group in the Old Northwest did so.

Gamaliel Bailey's efforts to keep Ohio's abolitionists working together—whatever their beliefs on subjects other than the need for immediate abolition—continued to be successful during 1839, but there did begin to appear evidence that some Ohioans were siding with Garrison in his struggles in the East. The Philanthropist gave little space to the agitations over non-resistance and women's rights, but the Liberator, increasingly devoted to these issues, was distributed to interested abolitionists in most parts of Ohio. Among its agents were James Boyle, the non-resistant employed by Bailey; Abner G. Kirk and Lot Holmes, leaders of antislavery forces in Stark and Columbiana Counties; William Hillis of Oberlin; and Joseph A. Dugdale of Clark County.43 Not surprisingly, Garrison began to get increased reaction to his positions from Ohio, and a lot of it was favorable.

43Liberator, Oct. 4, 1838.
On February 8, 1839, the *Liberator* printed extracts of a letter from an Ohio man who had stopped taking religious and political newspapers, which he said were "subservient to the cause of sectarianism and the reign of anti-Christ," but who still read Garrison's paper and who encouraged its editor to continue "to obey God's call."

That same month, The Rev. Amos Dresser, the Oberlinite who in 1835 had been flogged in Nashville, Tennessee, for allegedly distributing inflammatory literature along with the Bibles he was selling, wrote Garrison a joint letter with Israel Mattison, Dresser's friend and disciple from Licking County. They approved of the course of Garrison's actions, especially the new non-resistance society, and subscribed to its newspaper. In addition, Dresser asked Garrison for documents to help him in bringing the "ultra peace" question before Oberlin's Society of Inquiry. He hoped to be able to convert some of his friends who were "in an inquiring state of mind" to their common acceptance of total non-resistance. Later he was to have considerable success in this effort.  

44 *Ibid.*, April 5, 1839. For Dresser's experience in Tennessee and his non-resistant ideas, see Amos Dresser, *The Bible Against War* (Oberlin: by the author, 1849). For later success, see below, p. 204.
James Boyle, another Ohioan who was reading the *Liberator*, also wrote Garrison in February. He commended the New England Non-Resistance Society and expounded on the duty of Christians to expose the sin and corruption rampant in churches and governments. Garrison, who did not know Boyle personally, responded that he wished Boyle had his own newspaper devoted to Christianity "in its broadest and most comprehensive term." Garrison was probably aware that Boyle was then serving as the publishing agent for the *Philanthropist*, which was subtly but consistently hostile to non-resistance, when he wrote of Boyle, "There is no man living with whom we are in more perfect agreement--none whom we love more devotedly--." A week later, the *Liberator* published a letter from Boyle's wife, who testified of that paper: "Each successive week it is to me a most valuable feast." She was interested in news from the East, especially events concerning women; she lauded both the Grimkés and the non-resistance society, which she wanted to join despite the fact that four years before the Lord had "delivered" her spirit "from all sects, parties, and societies."  

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46[?] Boyle to Garrison, *ibid.*, April 5, 1839.
Other active Ohio abolitionists supported the general thrust of Garrison's course. Abner Kirk wrote that he wanted to continue taking the Liberator, despite its advocacy of non-resistance, because of its "anti-slavery matter" and its support of women's rights; and a Rev. E. Judson of Milan tried without success to have the annual meeting of the Huron County Anti-Slavery Society declare itself against making abolition anything but a moral question.

Such potential advocates of positions liable to upset Ohio's antislavery harmony helped prompt editor Bailey to caution his readers against getting involved in the "unpleasant and injurious collision" occurring between the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the A.A.S. He again emphasized the necessity of harmony among western abolitionists, but he maintained his bias toward the New York leadership by urging continued support for those whom he said were conducting the affairs of the A.A.S. "with signal wisdom and efficiency." This was not a very subtle endorsement of Garrison's foes within the A.A.S., but an

47 A. Kirk to Garrison, ibid., May 3, 1839.
48 Philanthropist, April 9, 1839.
49 Ibid., April 16, 1839.
editorial two weeks later was even less neutral, despite Bailey's repeated assertions to the contrary. Writing about the upcoming A.A.S. anniversary, which was clearly going to be a tumultuous affair, he again proposed supporting the A.A.S. and, referring to Garrison's Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, denied that any state society, "though it may have been the first established," could represent him or abolitionism at the convention.

Bailey did not, however, oppose all that Garrison stood for. In the same editorial, he explained quite clearly his position relative to political action, and it was similar to Garrison's advice to persons who chose to exercise the franchise. As noted above, Garrison thought a separate political party would be a bad tactic for abolitionists to use because it would compromise their moral stance and limit the possibilities of their success to areas affected by legislation. Bailey, although he did not like Garrison's hostility to civil government, also thought that separate political action by organized abolitionists would not accomplish the movement's "leading object,...the extinction of slavery in the states," which was obtainable, "only through the instrumentality of free discussion, and those moral influences that may spring from
individual political action, where it is constitutional."

Both men believed the federal government had no legal right to interfere with slavery in the states; Garrison because he thought slavery was sanctioned by a pro-slavery constitution, and Bailey because he thought that the constitution, though antislavery, did not give the federal government powers to extinguish slavery where it existed as a creation of state law. Garrison and Bailey, then, both opposed the movement for a third party, although for different reasons, and this fact helps explain Bailey's reluctance publicly to express his private dislike for Garrison and for many of his radical and divisive causes.

There were of course forces hostile to Garrison in the same areas in the West where persons supported him. A minister in Stark County, for example, wrote to the anti-Garrisonian Rev. Amos A. Phelps in New England, "I fear the Garrison Abolitionism as carried out by his party at present so far as their influence extend [sic] will but prepare the way for anarchy, infidelity, etc." He wanted to sift out the trouble-makers, primary among whom were the advocates of women's claiming the prerogatives of men." In addition,

50 Horace Moulton to Phelps, May, 1839, Phelps Family Papers, Boston Public Library.
there was a revival of colonizationism around Cleveland and in western Pennsylvania, so the Ohio antislavery leaders faced the anniversary season with threats to their unity from various directions.

The first major convention of the summer of 1839 was that of the A.A.S. Ohio's delegates, John Rankin and Isaac Colby, represented well the ideas of their state's abolitionists. On the crucial question of whether to seat women delegates, which passed with the mass support of Garrison and the Massachusetts delegation, the Ohioans voted yes; this reflected the Ohio state society's own policy. The two Illinois representatives, on the other hand, voted against the resolution, as did two of three from western Pennsylvania. Michigan's Warren Isham did not vote on the motion, but he joined George W. Gale of Illinois and 121 others in signing a protest against the giving of voting rights to female delegates. On the other significant vote at the meeting, though, the Ohioans voted with Isham and the Illinois men and against Garrison in adopting a resolution that voting to help abolition was a "high obligation" and a "duty." Though there is no evidence

\[51\] Cleveland Herald and Gazette, March 11, 1839.

\[52\] Philanthropist, June 11, 1839. Illinois' other delegate was Frederic W. Graves; there were none from other western states. For this anniversary, see above, pp. 126-28.
that Rankin and Colby had been instructed by Bailey or anyone else on how to vote, Bailey obviously agreed with their position on these two critical issues.

The Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary was held only a short time later at Putnam. Riotous behavior by some rowdies from nearby Zanesville did not substantially disrupt the convention, which was praised for its harmony by, among others, Bailey and James G. Birney, who was visiting his old friends after an absence of two very unharmonious years in the headquarters of the A.A.S. Bailey reported that there were no "extravagence" or arguments and that Friends and "excellent women" were active participants; Birney seemed surprised that a gathering representing such a great divergence of religions could have been so harmonious.

The executive committee reported that support for its activities had been down during the year past, but it too echoed pride in the unity of the cause.

The best feature of Western Abolition is, its unity of sentiment and purpose. If there be any universal reformers among us [and there were], they have too much discretion and honesty to think of using abolition

53Pbid.

54Emancipator, in Liberator, June 28, 1839.
societies as instruments in the promotion of their more general objects....The peace question and other kindred topics, important as some think them, do not divide or agitate us. 55

Bailey was also optimistic. The Philanthropist had 3,000 subscribers, the most ever, but lagging subscription payments still made the paper's financing a week-to-week operation. The 284 delegates pledged almost $4,000.00 to the society, but it could not hire any agents until the money was actually paid. 56 At the meeting's conclusion, though, despite these financial problems, there appeared to be reason for optimism. Instead of dividing in hotly contested roll-call votes over major ideological and tactical questions as the A.A.S. just had done, Ohio abolitionists united behind a series of carefully prepared resolutions condemning: (1) the state of Ohio's denial of citizenship rights to Negroes; (2) Congress's "subservience" to the "slave interests;" and (3) the politicians Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren. 57 They also amended a resolution proposed by Birney, who was still smarting from his rebuff in New York on a similar effort, which insisted that citizens


56Philanthropist, June 11, 1839.

57Ibid., June 18, 1839.
use the franchise to elect "those only who, being of good moral character, are known to be favorable to human rights, and to the abrogation of all distinctions in right founded on color," There was objection that Birney's motion was offensive to those who for reasons of conscience did not vote, and the resolution was therefore amended to provide exception for non-voters.  

The Liberator was, of course, pleased by this amendment. Oliver Johnson, temporarily serving as editor, wrote with undisguised sarcasm, "Thus had the Ohio Society, (according to the doctrines of the seceders here [the new, conservative Massachusetts Abolition Society]), lowered the standard and suffered the staff of accomplishment to pass out of its hands. Wonder if there will be a new organization in that State?" Johnson was also pleased that women had been allowed to participate in the Ohio anniversary in addition to their separate meeting to plan for the continuation of their efforts to educate blacks.

Encouraged by resolutions proposed by Oberlin's Charles G. Finney, the Ohioans repeatedly insisted that the churches and all Christians had a duty to campaign actively

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58Ibid., June 11, 1838.  
59Liberator, June 28, 1839.  
60Philanthropist, June 11, 1839.
against slavery. They also accepted Finney's doctrine that man's primary obedience was to God and that there was therefore a "higher law" than that of the state, a "higher law" which Christians must obey, even if such obedience was contrary to man's legislation.

During the debates over Birney's political resolution, a letter was read from the Medina Anti-Slavery Society which protested the state society's growing interest in political matters. In his report for the Philanthropist, Bailey did not take seriously the sentiments in the statement, and he began an editorial on July 23 in the same paper, "Every true Abolitionist in Ohio has laid it down as a settled principle, that he is bound to carry his antislavery sentiments to the ballot box...." Bailey, like the executive committee of the national society, chose to disregard the explicit exception which an anniversary had stated to this principle and to devote much energy during the fall of 1839 to supporting antislavery political action.

Bailey was primarily a practical reformer, and as such he was often in conflict with antislavery leaders motivated by ideology. His opposition to a separate

61 Ibid., June 11, 18, 1839.

antislavery party and to non-resistance and non-voting resulted from his political orientation. Not surprisingly, then, he disagreed vigorously with some other men over what sort of demands the abolitionists should make of candidates for whom they wished to vote. He urged, in the same editorial which ignored the non-voters' influence in his society, that Ohio abolitionists not demand too much from candidates for the state legislature. Focus on reforms which are possible, he advised, and do not insist that politicians promise to get rid of the entire system of Black Laws, not to mention the entire system of slavery—even though of course they ought to be repealed instantly. "in grasping at too much, [abolitionists] may lose all." He insisted that such advice was not inconsistent with the ideal of immediate abolition, and he asked why even the most radical were not calling for equal suffrage for blacks—the answer, of course, being that such a demand upon a politician, like that for immediate abolition by law, was inexpedient. This position is entirely consistent with both Bailey's and Garrison's belief that traditional participation in the political sphere was not the place for the exercise of moral suasion.

The A.A.S.'s official newspaper, the Emancipator, questioned Bailey's theory about antislavery politics, a
theory which he admitted was increasingly unpopular with voting abolitionists. In his explanation, though, he merely added a fourth criterion—that a candidate favor reception by the legislature of petitions from blacks—to the three changes candidates should support which he had enumerated in his original editorial: that blacks be allowed to testify in court, that persons accused of having fled slavery be given a jury trial, and that Ohio's legislature repeal its recently enacted laws designed to help Kentucky retrieve her runaway slaves. Bailey contended that these reforms were of immediate importance in Ohio, that there was a chance they could be accomplished through wise use of the vote, and that there was no chance that voting only for immediate emancipationists would lead to any substantive legislative results. Bailey expressed some uncertainty about his contention, however, and asked his readers to continue to debate and analyze their proper course.

The Ohioans were increasingly aware of their position within the national abolition movement, and during the last half of 1839 they became more interested in the

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growing divisions among their co-workers in the East. The Easterners, more aware of the importance of the western movement, simultaneously gave more attention to the Old Northwest. In August, for example, the *Liberator*, noting James Boyle's appointment as an agent for the Ohio Society, commented on the harmony of Boyle's ideas with Garrison's, and asked facetiously if the O.A.S. would not now be condemned as a "no government" society. Meanwhile, Charles C. Burleigh, a Connecticut-born antislavery agent who was working for the A.A.S. and who was to be one of Garrison's most eloquent co-workers, was making a successful tour through Ohio which took him to Clinton County at about the same time some of the citizens of Chester Township there organized an abolition society which accepted men and women equally and resolved "that W. L. Garrison...has our entire approbation for the firm and uncompromising stand he has taken in opposing a proslavery clergy; 'dumb dogs that will not bark.'"

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65 Burleigh to James Miller McKim, Aug. and Sept., 1839, in McKim Papers, Cornell. This excellent letter, which gives details of Burleigh's experiences in Ohio, was written over a period of nearly two months. The Clinton County meeting was reported in *Philanthropist*, Oct. 29, 1839, and in *Liberator*, Nov. 15, 1839.
The Cincinnati-based leadership of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, responding to instructions of the annual meeting and to their feeling that their influence was weak north of the National Road, called a meeting for the abolitionists of the Western Reserve to be held at Painesville, Geauga County, on September 11. The American Society then announced an A.A.S. meeting for Cleveland in late October. Bailey, who was somewhat irked by the New Yorkers' lack of consideration for the Ohioans' plans, nonetheless urged that both meetings be well attended, and most of the formal antislavery action in Ohio during the fall of 1839 was therefore concentrated in the northern part of the state.

The meeting in Painesville adopted Bailey's position on political action when it resolved:

That Abolitionists ought not, and that we will not vote for any man, for any legislative or executive office, who is not heartily opposed to SLAVERY, and who will not openly meet and honestly sustain all constitutional measures calculated immediately to restore to the oppressed their rights.

This resolution, as Bailey pointed out, rejected the idea embodied in the actions of the A.A.S.'s recent meeting at Albany which had urged abolitionists to vote only for

66 Philanthropist, Sept. 3, 17, 1839.

67 Ibid., Oct. 8, 1839.
immediate emancipationists. Garrison, who had led opposition to the Albany meeting's exclusion of women and emphasis on politics, gave first-page coverage to the Ohio meeting, probably because it rejected separate nominations by abolitionists. Here again Garrison and Bailey found a common tactical enemy in the separate party men; they were both satisfied that at the A.A.S. meeting in Cleveland on October 23-25, Ohio abolitionists again rejected a determined effort to commit the movement to forming its own party.

Garrison's satisfaction with this failure of his enemies within the American Anti-Slavery Society--this was the meeting at which Benjamin Stanton had been told it was essential for the A.A.S. to endorse a separate nomination in order to remove abolitionists' attention from the woman question--was, however, the result of several factors which Bailey chose not to emphasize. Garrison commented sarcastically upon the fact that a few women were seated at the meeting called by men who had so strenuously opposed such action in New York. He also noted that a resolution calling for all men who desired the overthrow of slavery to

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69Ibid., Nov. 15, 1839, and Philanthropist, Nov. 5, 1839.
vote was amended so that it called for abolitionists not
to vote for candidates who would not "do all that [they]
constitutionally can for immediate securing to all men
their inalienable right." This move, of course, again
blunted the New Yorkers' attempts to obligate non-resistants
to vote, but as Garrison noted, another resolution accepted
at Cleveland contained a clause which might have been deemed
"sufficient as a 'cudgel' for the wicked non-resistants."70

Despite apparent unity in the Ohio antislavery
movement, the fall was difficult for the primary architect
of that movement. The Philanthropist of October 22 appeared
after having skipped several issues, and Bailey announced
that the uncertain nature of the paper's finances forced him
to resort to practicing medicine. At about the same time,
the A.A.S. informed agents who were planning a campaign in
the West that it could not support them, an event Bailey
regretted but blamed on that aspect of Americanism which
seemed "adverse to centralism of any kind." Bailey hired

70Liberator, Nov. 15, 1839. That clause was: "Nor
should [abolitionists] neglect any opportunity to record
their votes against slavery where proper candidates in all
respects are put up for office in the district of their
location." Ohio's voting abolitionists clearly were not in
harmony with the original movement which resulted in the
Liberty Party. See Joseph G. Rayback, "The Liberty Party
Leaders of Ohio: Exponents of Antislavery Coalition,"
Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, LVII (1948),
166-67.
ten agents in the hope of being able to raise enough money to allow Ohio to fulfill its pledge to the parent society and thus help it recover its declining role in financing the country's antislavery struggle, but he told Birney that he was not especially hopeful.  

Bailey's pessimism, which may have been a partial result of the growing support the separate party movement was receiving and the increasingly bitter struggle for power within the A.A.S., was deepening during a period when Ohio's antislavery affairs appeared in some ways to be improving. Charles Burleigh received a harsh racist reaction from the Cadiz, Ohio, newspaper to his speech in that city, but he found the state of the cause in Cincinnati to be "very encouraging," especially when contrasted with two or three years earlier, and Arnold Buffum, who was one of the ten agents Bailey had hired, reported successful lectures in the southeastern part of Ohio. In addition, a Presbyterian synod meeting in Ripley commended the A.A.S. to the prayers

72 Cadiz Sentinel, in Liberator, Oct. 18, 1839.
73 Pennsylvania Freeman, in Liberator, Dec. 6, 1839.
74 Emancipator, in Liberator, Dec. 6, 1839.
and patronage of its churches, and the General Conference of the Freewill Baptist Convention, held at Conneaut, Ohio, affirmed that slavery was a sin, encouraged active moral and religious (but not political) opposition to it, and, to Garrison's delight, denied a seat to a slaveholding minister.

The abolition movement in neighboring Indiana, which had finally become organized only the year before, did not accomplish much in 1839. In April, the A.A.S. agency committee began negotiating with E.O. Hull of New York concerning an agency in the Hoosier state, and in May agreed to pay him $500 per year as he requested, but the letter the committee received from Hull in late June on his way to Indianapolis is the last bit of information available about the venture. The committee decided in June to employ A. T. Rankin for a year's agency in Indiana, and in the fall Arnold Buffum went to the state as a part of the A.A.S.'s

75 *Philanthropist*, Oct. 29, 1839.

76 *Liberator*, Nov. 8, and Dec. 6, 1839. Garrison was further pleased to receive a request from John Smith of Trumbull County, Ohio, that his name be added to the role of the New England Non-Resistance Society, the first annual meeting of which had been attended by Amos Dresser and Nancy Dagett of Oberlin; *ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1840, and Oct. 11, 1839.
effort to abolitionize the West, but on December 19, the agency committee even had to refuse Buffum's request to pay only his travel expenses. It is probable that Rankin, like Buffum, was forced to find other employment. Meanwhile, the state society met on June 5 near Greensburgh, Decatur County, but there is no record of what went on at the society's first anniversary.

There was enough abolition agitation in Indiana to provoke an anti-abolition meeting in Jefferson County, but the dispute within the Quaker Yearly Meeting over Friends' antislavery affiliations certainly dissipated considerable energy which otherwise would have gone into antislavery activity. At least one Indianian nonetheless was following the course of eastern abolitionism; Edwin Fussell of Pendleton wrote Garrison a long and eloquent letter condemning as "supremely ludicrous" the "hypocritical

77 American Anti-Slavery Society, Agency Committee Minutes, Boston Public Library.


79 Philanthropist, Sept. 3, 1839.

80 That the struggle was still going on is shown by a letter from a member of the Yearly Meeting's highest governing body, the Meeting for Suffering; see Liberator, Sept. 27, 1839.
pretense" that the national movement had to split up because its leadership disagreed over matters, like women's rights and worldly politics, which they were never intended to agree upon.

This relatively lethargic year was not matched in Illinois, where the Rev. Chauncey Cook of Hennepin began effective service as an agent for the state society in late February. He was joined in the fall by the Rev. John Cross of New York, who moved to Chicago in the false expectation that the A.A.S. would be able to employ him to serve in Illinois. Cross had opposed Garrison on the resolution at the A.A.S. anniversary obliging abolitionists to vote, as had Illinois's George W. Gale and Hiram H. Kellogg, president-elect of Knox College, so it is not surprising that the state anniversary meeting at Quincy late in September adopted a resolution encouraging all who had the right (not the will) to vote, to do so. More unexpected was the convention's adoption of the Albany resolution that abolitionists not

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81 Ibid., Oct. 4, 1839.


vote for any man who was not an immediate emancipationist. Gamaliel Bailey's political ideas did not influence abolition in Illinois. Clearly the abolitionists there agreed with the anti-Garrison, anti-women faction of the A.A.S. which was agitating for a political party composed of advocates of immediate abolition; nevertheless, the anniversary did resolve that the Philanthropist would serve as the official organ of the I.A.S. until it could get a paper established in the state. Because of the society's embracing the position of the conservatives in the national organization relative to politics, it is not surprising that the Illinois antislavery movement was for the most part a movement of males.

A meeting of men at Canton, Illinois, in early December sharply condemned those who misused or failed to use the elective franchise, which it resolved was a gift of God. Clearly, very few antislavery persons in the state followed Garrison in his refusal to vote, either for tactical or ideological reasons, or in his advocacy of woman's rights; but, as the historian of Illinois

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84 Records of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society; Philanthropist, Nov. 26, 1839.

85 Philanthropist, Feb. 4, 1840.
abolitionism has pointed out, there were in Randolph County some who, "probably without knowing it," did accept Garrison's view that the U.S. Constitution was pro-slavery and that voting under it was a denial of the supremacy of God's law. These were the "Old Light" Covenanters or Reformed Presbyterians, some of whom played a role in the activities of abolitionists in Western Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, in Michigan a shift in the center of power in the state antislavery movement was taking place. In April, the American Freeman published its first number, at Jackson, with some 400 subscribers. It experienced critical financial problems, and by late September, it had published but five issues. It was then taken over by an ex-New Yorker named Seymour B. Treadwell who edited it under the direction of the state society's executive committee as the Michigan Freeman. Though this newspaper, too, was short of money, it appeared more regularly than its predecessor. Meanwhile, control of the state society, which was also primarily a male organization, passed from men in and around Detroit to a group of men in the central

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part of the state, especially in the town of Jackson. The new leadership in Michigan, like the band of men in Galesburg, Illinois, who had assumed control of that state's organized movement, was becoming increasingly interested in emphasizing political action against slavery. 88

When a third party ticket appeared in Jackson County early in the fall, the state society advised against supporting it, but the state anniversary in October appointed a large delegation to attend the A.A.S.'s special meeting on political action in Cleveland. The foes of a separate party twice succeeded in postponing a decision altering the society's primary reliance on moral means, but the meeting did pass a resolution that "the agency of an unfettered suffrage came fully within the scope of moral influence," 89 and the executive committee circulated an "official address" reserving the right to form a separate party "should circumstances render it advisable." Among the address's signers were the antislavery editors William M. Sullivan and Seymour Treadwell, who were also the society's secretaries, and Zephaniah Platt, its treasurer and several times the state's vice-president of the American Anti-Slavery

88 Ibid., pp. 301-02.
89 Ibid., pp. 308-09, 314, 298.
Society. Platt had also been on the business committee of the Albany Convention in July.

It appears that Garrison's influence in Michigan at this time was slight and for the most part confined to Lenawee County, where there were reported to be 700 members of 15 different abolition societies. Thomas Chandler was the state's only agent for the Liberator, which was read at least by Laura Smith Haviland, co-founder, with Chandler's sister, of the state's first antislavery society. Haviland corresponded with Garrison, praising both the free discussion allowed in his paper and the declaration of sentiments of the convention which formed the non-resistance society; she also accused Quakers of resting on their past record on the slavery question, and of never having gone far enough on temperance, sex equality, and "the Christ-like principle of non-resistance." Non-resistance also had supporters in western Pennsylvania, but the editor of the section's antislavery newspaper was not one of them. The Christian Witness refused to print a letter it received from an Ohioan, who

90 Liberator, Nov. 15, 1839.
91 Pennsylvania Freeman, ibid., June 14, 1839.
92 Liberator, March 22, 1839.
signed himself "E. N.," which was extremely critical of professing Christians' lack of concern for the poor and enslaved. "Z," of Allegheny County, sent the rejected letter to Garrison, who printed it together with "Z"'s criticism of Henry B. Stanton and A. A. Phelps for their hostility to non-voters. A week later, the Liberator published a letter from "Z" himself, part of which the author claimed the Christian Witness had also rejected. The portion which the Pennsylvania paper had printed objected to its editor's statement that the New England Non-resistance Society was against all existing institutions; "Z" rephrased this statement and said the society merely would apply its principles to all institutions, but the editor rejected the distinction and denounced the organization as a "General Destruction Society." The rejected part of "Z's" letter claimed that if Christians carried their avowed principles to their logical conclusion, they would not support ungodly politicians, governments, and churches.

In October, a group of citizens in western Pennsylvania gathered to form the Union Anti-Slavery Society of Pittsburgh and Alleghany. It was during this meeting, 93

93 Ibid., April 5, 12, 1839.
just prior to the anniversary of the then-separate Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, that someone noticed that the W.P.A.S.'s constitution adopted a year before had omitted the clause forbidding slaves from using force to obtain their freedom. The meeting debated the omission and refused to restore the clause, but the subject touched off what Henry C. Howells, a bitter foe of omission, termed a "heated" discussion at the November anniversary of the regional organization. According to Howells, there was also controversy at the November meeting over antislavery politics; the insistence of some delegates upon demanding political action by abolitionists led to the departure of the "Old Covenanters" and their respected leader, the Rev. Thomas Sproull, from the movement. The result, according to Howells, was that "the sweet spirit of harmony and mutual confidence" among the region's abolitionists vanished. He complained that charges that the dissension was the non-resistants' fault were unjust, as "not a single proof can be adduced to show that the non-resistants have ever attempted to either lower the standard, [or] to narrow the platform..." of the cause. This, of course, was true

94 Howells to Garrison, April 24, 1840, in ibid., May 15, 1840. According to a Covenanter writing to Garrison a few years later, all of their sect, also called
at least of the eastern movement, where it was the foes of
the non-resistants who precipitated the split in aboli-
tionism, in part by agitating for an antislavery political
party. The western Pennsylvanians, like the eastern
opposition to Garrison, were interested in political
action, but in 1839 they opposed the separate party move-
ment as being "at this time, at least,...exceedingly unwise
and impolitic."95

As the year of the formal split in the national
abolition movement began, then, there was to be found among
the antislavery forces in the West a wide variety of
positions concerning the best future course for the cause.
Most abolitionists in the area were in favor of using their
voting power in some way, but most of them for purely
tactical reasons also opposed a separate party. The state
societies everywhere but Indiana were relatively well
established, and all of them were controlled by politically
oriented men. But there was also a growing number of men
and women in the West who were receptive to Garrison's

Reformed or Scottish Presbyterians, had refrained from
voting until 1830, when a group calling itself "New
Light" Covenanters decided to participate in politics with
the idea of reforming it; ibid., Sept. 13, 1844.

95*Philanthropist*, Dec. 24, 1839.
ideas and tactics as they were formulated in his struggle to keep the movement open to all abolitionists and dedicated to moral suasion.
CHAPTER VI

WESTERN ABOLITIONISM AND THE EASTERN SCHISM, 1840

While the antislavery movement in the East disintegrated during the year following the American Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary in 1839, Gamaliel Bailey's campaign to keep western abolitionism united and opposed to the formation of an antislavery political party continued to be successful. During the first half of 1840, several local antislavery societies in Ohio and the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society resolved to oppose James G. Birney's efforts to politicize abolitionism. The state organization employed a larger and more organized group of agents than at any other time in its history. Bailey was aware that the American Anti-Slavery Society might not be able to exclude those allies of Garrison who were insisting upon

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1 For the Salem abolitionists, see Liberator, Feb. 7, 1840, or Philanthropist, Feb. 11, 1840; for Bailey and the Ohio society, see Philanthropist, May 19 and June 9, 1840.

2 Philanthropist, June 9, 1840, prints the entire report of the Ohio society's executive committee for 1839-40.
an open organization, and he suggested that the A.A.S. be quietly dissolved because of its inability to function effectively on a national scale.  

Bailey's displeasure at the nomination of Birney by the Liberty Party was partially a result of his aversion to Garrison. Bailey believed that Garrison's cause would be aided by the nomination, in that it would drive opponents of a separate party into Garrison's camp, and he knew that the carefully nurtured harmony of Ohio's abolitionism was in danger. He saw Garrison and his insistence upon associating abolition with non-resistance and women's rights as "the thorn in the side" of Eastern abolitionism, as he told Birney in a letter in which he expressed a desire "to be at" Garrison with his pen. Bailey was frustrated because he thought there had been no specific provocation allowing him to express himself on Garrison without offending some Ohioans, but he was glad that there was no Garrison, non-resistance, or "tomfoolery" in Ohio to upset the unity there. He thought abolitionists in the West could do "far more" for the slaves than those in the East, if only they had the force of numbers necessary to influence the region's

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3Ibid., Feb. 18, 1840.
growing population. Of course, such a vision would be clouded by disunity within western antislavery, and evidence continued to mount that there were indeed just such forces of division, and not only from Garrisonians but also from the third party impulse and from some sincere Whig abolitionists.

In early February, Augustus and Susan E. Wattles, leading abolitionists and devoted teachers of Ohio's black citizens, wrote Garrison praising the Liberator for its positions on the clergy and women. They also subscribed to the Non-Resistant. In May, Leicester King, until recently a Whig state senator who had fought a lonely fight against Ohio's Black Laws, publicly defended his continued participation in the affairs of his party, and he was soon thereafter reelected president of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society during an anniversary meeting after which a number of men met to form a committee of "friends of

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5Liberator, Feb. 28, 1840.

6Philanthropist, May 5, 1840.
independent political action." Clearly, the Ohio abolition community entered the 1840 anniversary season with a wide variety of plans for advancing the cause which drew, or held, them together—the immediate abolition of slavery.

Gamaliel Bailey continued his efforts to steer his allies past the controversies which threatened their unity, but the task was more difficult than ever, both because of the rising public awareness of the issues which were splitting the eastern movement and because of Bailey's own growing hostility toward the ideas which were associated with the Garrisonians. In an editorial in the Philanthropist of April 28, he warned against any attempts by "our Boston friends" to change the operations of the A.A.S. to suit "their own notions of things." He said he would continue to advocate the dissolution of the parent society if it became "an arena for strife and debates on unprofitable questions" or if it became controlled by any one state, by which he meant Massachusetts. Scarcely a month later, Bailey again challenged the Bay State abolitionists' complaints against the A.A.S. and refused to print an address of their board of managers explaining their position. He

7Ibid., June 20, 1840. The committee included J. H. Purdy of the Xenia Free Press, a Whig who was one of the most persistent opponents of Bailey's position relative to the third party.
optimistically claimed that Ohio abolitionists were still
united "on all points except that of political action"
and maintained, "Far be it from us, then, to introduce into
our Western ranks foreign topics of discord."

Bailey's declaration of neutrality, besides being
a bit less than accurate, appeared on the day the 1840
anniversary of the A.A.S. began, so it was hardly possible
that "foreign topics of discord" could be kept from western
abolitionists. A split so bitter between America's leading
antislavery advocates could not be hushed up, and in
addition, a number of Westerners participated in the meeting
which formalized the division. Ohio's Robert Hanna was one
of three replacements for men who quit the business
committee when Abby Kelley was voted onto it, and he also
served on the society's nominating committee, which took
on increased significance when the convention decided to
have the society's executive committee chosen by the
organization's members instead of by its board of managers.

8 Ibid., May 12, 1840.
9 Ibid., June 16, 1840. Hanna complained that this
change in choosing the A.A.S.'s functional leadership was
harmful to the West's influence, but the Liberator claimed
that this was untrue in that the board of managers was
weighted in favor of the East but that the nominating
committee, upon whose recommendation the membership was to
act, was made up of essentially the same number of delegates
from each state; see Liberator, May 29, 1840.
John J. Miter, more a power in Illinois abolition than was Hanna in Ohio, refused to serve on the nominating committee, and perhaps as a consequence, his state was not allotted any managers for the coming year. 10 Each of the western states with its own abolition society had at least one delegate in attendance at the anniversary, 11 and Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the Wisconsin territory each had at least one member elected to the executive committee of the rival American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society when it was formed that same week. In short, there was no way that the issue of the split in the A.A.S. could be kept out of western abolition, and it naturally became the subject of great interest at the fifth annual meeting of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society in late May.

According to Bailey, who had published with no comment in the Philanthropist of May 19 a small notice of the transfer of the Emancipator from the A.A.S. to the New York City society, information regarding the split in New York reached Massillon, where the Ohioans were meeting, only two days before the anniversary opened on May 27.

10 Liberator, May 22, 1840.
11 For a list of all delegates, see ibid., May 29, 1840.
12 Ibid., June 5, 1840.
Early in the meeting, which was the largest ever held by the Ohio society, some delegates asked for information concerning the recent events at the A.A.S. anniversary. In response, Bailey read a private letter he had received from Lewis Tappan, which doubtless gave a less than absolutely objective version of the split. A committee of ten was appointed to study Tappan's letter and also one from Charles C. Burleigh which had appeared in the Pennsylvania Freeman; the committee recommended that it was "inexpedient...in the present state of our information" for the society to take any "ultimate action" on the subject of the "unhappy division of our eastern fellow-laborers." They also recommended that the Ohioans act "for the present" as an independent organization. 13

Bailey seized upon the committee's report, and he urged severing the Ohio Society's constitutional affiliation with the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was then controlled by Garrison. Heated debate on the proposal was followed by recommitting the subject to the same ten men and six more, including Bailey. This new group then recommended adoption of Bailey's plan to remove from the society's constitution the clause making the

13Philanthropist, June 9, 1840.
organization an auxiliary to the A.A.S. They also resolved to "disclaim all intention of censuring the old organization, or approving the new, or expressing any opinion on the merits of the controversy between them."
The expanded committee's recommendations were "unanimously accepted and adopted."

Although this was the most significant action taken by the convention, other questions were considered. Primary of those was political action by abolitionists, a subject also very much dominant in the thoughts of the nation's antislavery forces. One of the resolutions proposed by the business committee said that whether to make a separate nomination or not to vote at all was a tactical question about which the convention should make no statement. This resolution was adopted quickly, but another one opposing making a separate political party out of the present anti-slavery organization passed only after lengthy debate. This was the first time an anniversary of the Ohio state society had debated the political question, even though it had passed resolutions pertaining to it at former meetings. Debate on the political issue was heated but impersonal, according to Bailey, and the meeting was too absorbed with

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Ibid.
it and with the matter of affiliation to act on a resolution introduced by a Mr. Brooke of Clinton County calling for the society's continued support of the primarily moral tactic of using only free produce.

Bailey commented at some length concerning the Ohio movement's relationship with the forces which he believed had divided the Easterners; he blamed advocates of woman's rights and non-resistance for the trouble:

No questions respecting non-resistance or the rights of women have ever been agitated in our conventions. A few non-resistants,...and a comparable number of "Friends" belong to our organization in Ohio. They have never attempted to thrust their peculiarities upon the society, or make abolition subservient to them. They are devoted friends of the cause....As to the dissensions among our Eastern friends, the abolitionists of Ohio have taken very little interest in them, except in regret to their existence; and generally they are not to any considerable extent informed respecting their true causes or history.

Bailey explained that the action of the convention in severing its organic ties with the A.A.S. was intended as a neutral course which would help western abolitionists maintain "an undivided front." He said that he knew of only two persons "who were dissatisfied with this settlement of the question," and that Ohio's abolitionists

\[15\] Ibid. The Mr. Brooke was probably Dr. Abram Brooke, who moved from Stark to Clinton County sometime before 1840.
remained "united, zealous, [and] unfaltering."  

The Liberator tactfully commented that in ending its ties with the A.A.S. the Ohioans acted in good faith, having had incomplete information, and temporary editor Oliver Johnson hoped they would rejoin the A.A.S. when they understood what had really happened. He also sharply criticized W. H. Burleigh, the conservative antislavery editor of the Pittsburgh Christian Witness, for having predicted that the Liberator would surely denounce the Ohioans as traitors.  
Neither Bailey nor Burleigh, then, was given any immediate provocation for the attacks both would have liked to make against the forces which remained in control of the old organization. All Bailey felt he could say in an editorial review of the causes of recent events in the East was, "It is needless to enter into an explanation...but they may be ranged under the general heads of non-resistance, woman's rights, denunciation of the clergy, personal ambition, unavoidable sectarian affinities and prejudices."  
The implication is clear enough that in Bailey's mind these items or their advocacy caused the trouble, and that it was primarily Garrison's fault, but

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16 Ibid.  
17 Liberator, July 3, 1840.  
18 Philanthropist, June 16, 1840.
Bailey's desire to maintain a united movement which could, among other things, resist the separate-party forces, left him unable to appear as hostile to the Garrisonians as he wanted.

Some other Ohio abolitionists, however, were not equally obsessed with unity. On June 5, the Liberator published part of a letter from James Boyle, an employee of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, who was still upset about the efforts of some persons in Massachusetts to deny the Grimké sisters and other abolitionists freedom of expression. Boyle wrote, "Lawyers, Doctors, and Priests are the devil's trinity,--and professions as such must perish. The redemption of the human race demands it." Dr. Bailey was disturbed. "it is such cant as this, [sic] (we say it with much respect for our agent, who is a estimable man,) [sic] that has brought so much odium on our cause...and created the suspicion that Abolitionism is disorganizing." He declared on behalf of the Ohio society's executive committee and ninety-nine hundredths of the state's abolitionists that they had "no sympathy" with Boyle's sentiments, and he printed a list of names of lawyers, doctors, and ministers who had been active in Ohio antislavery. 19

19 Ibid., June 23, 1840.
Scarcely two weeks later, Bailey published a letter written June 13 by Dr. Abram Brooke of Oakland, Clinton County, which contended that the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society dodged the issue of women's rights by its declaration of neutrality and that, contrary to Bailey's statement, all was not harmonious in Ohio abolitionism relative to that subject. Brooke contended that the desire to present an undivided front had led to compromises concerning slavery by the writers of the country's constitution, and he argued that the same desire had harmful influence at the recent anniversary. Delegates were not united on the issue of the participation of women in antislavery societies, Brooke wrote. While the delegates claimed neutrality "on the real question at issue," in fact they acted in such a manner as to censure the organization with which they had been congenially associated for five years. 20

On June 30, the Philanthropist carried an editorial by Bailey which was probably written after he received Brooke's complaint. Bailey denied that the woman question played a part in the decision of the state's antislavery society to disaffiliate with the A.A.S., and he contended

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20 Ibid., July 7, 1840.
women in the society had never been prohibited from doing whatever they wished to do. Brooke responded, in a letter published on July 21, that the Ohioans severed their connection knowing that the woman question had been the precipitating one in New York. He added that if a woman were ever actually placed in an office or on a committee of the Ohio state organization, many members would desire that the movement split as it had in the East.

Brooke, who incidentally caught the essence of recent abolition scholarship, wrote:

By refusing to remain connected with the Am. A.S. Society, because some of the members of another auxiliary society [Massachusetts] differed in opinion with them upon topics independent of the anti-slavery cause, they [the delegates at Massillon] show a disposition so to narrow the anti-slavery platform, as to render an effective national organization impracticable.

His position was entirely reasonable. Whether or not the delegates intended it, their rebuke, without a hearing, of the organization with which they had been affiliated was a rebuke of the concept of an open and broadly based abolition movement. A growing number of Ohioans came to agree with this position after 1840.

Bailey encountered more problems in relation to the Garrisonians throughout the rest of that year. An Ohio woman named M. H. Grisell wrote Garrison expressing disagreement with the Ohio society's new independence and
praising the *Liberator* and the A.A.S. for their position on women. James Boyle continued to embarrass Bailey by writing letters to Garrison expounding upon the wickedness of the federal government, the constitution, and organized churches. A particularly pointed letter requested that Bailey publish the letter from Lewis Tappan which he had read at the Ohio meeting and which claimed that the A.A.S. would pretend that the woman question was the leading issue in the division. In addition, Amos Dresser finally succeeded in June, 1840, in organizing the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society, a group of students who ignored the faculty's objections to the radical nature of the non-resistance doctrines of Garrison and Wright.

Not all of Bailey's critics were non-resistants. Abram Brooke approved of Bailey's call for a meeting of abolitionists at Hamilton, Ohio, to discuss the political duties of antislavery men, but he urged that the gathering be for all Ohioans, not just those from the southern half

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21 *Liberator*, June 19, 1840.

22 *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1840. See also *ibid.*, Sept. 18 and Oct. 9, 1840.

as implied in the call. Bailey's own political opinions were not set: in June he urged abolitionists to withhold votes from both major presidential candidates and to support the Liberty Party's James G. Birney if they voted at all. Meanwhile, two of his closest antislavery allies--the Revs. John Blanchard and John Rankin--perhaps caught off guard by Bailey's new position, continued to advocate support for William Henry Harrison as the lesser of two evils.

The Hamilton meeting convened on September 1. Bailey, chairman of the arrangements committee, was a member of the business committee. Its resolution urging support for Birney and Thomas Earle, the Liberty Party candidates, was passed 57-54 on a roll-call vote, but a sizeable number of "nay" voters protested that this was the first step to the formation of a permanent third party--an allegation Bailey denied while claiming that it merely

24 Philanthropist, July 28, 1840.
25 Ibid., June 30, 1840.
26 For Blanchard, see Liberator, July 17, 1840; for Rankin, Philanthropist, Aug. 4, 11, and Sept. 8, 15, 1840. Bailey reported in his paper of Dec. 9, 1840 that Rankin and J. H. Purdy of Xenia both promised after the election never again to support a pro-slavery party or candidate.
committed Ohio antislavery men to "independent abolition."\textsuperscript{27} Ohio antislavery men were not, however, committed to any such thing. In October, Bailey complained in a letter to abolitionist John A. Collins that "party spirit... threatens to quench that genial enthusiasm which so long has been the unfailing source of anti-slavery action."

According to Bailey, antislavery lecturers could not raise audiences in parts of Ohio because many abolitionists were afraid "something should be said or done detrimental to the interests of their party." Bailey regretfully predicted that three-quarters of Ohio abolitionists were going to "dishonor their professions" be voting for tickets "pledged to the support of the cause they abhor." He was probably correct in his estimate, for only 903 Ohioans actually cast votes for the Liberty candidates that year. The Liberty Party was indeed alive in Ohio, but barely so. Most of the state's male abolitionists in 1840 stood by their traditional voting habits, despite a few advocates of "independent abolition" and even fewer vocal non-resistants.

The \textit{Liberator}, meanwhile, rushed to defend Nathaniel P. Rogers's handling of the editorship of the  

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Philanthropist}, Sept. 8, 1840

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Liberator}, Oct. 23, 1840.
A.A.S. newspaper, the National Anti-Slavery Standard, from Bailey's criticism of that paper's so-called war against the third party. Bailey had written, according to the Liberator, "Grant that a third party ticket is a visionary project, so far as success may be contemplated, still it is before the people." Garrison rejected this position because of his tactical opposition to any third party: "...if no better reason can be given why it should be espoused by abolitionists than that 'it is before the people,' we think that the sooner it is put down, the better." By the end of 1840, then, with Bailey having abandoned his opposition to the existence of a third party, the ground upon which he and Garrison could stand in common became quite narrow.

In the meantime, Ohio's few non-resistants and universal reformers increased their activities. New Lisbon's Samuel Myers addressed a letter of support to a Boston convention on the question of the divine authority of the institution of the Sabbath, which had been the subject of one of Garrison's earliest public attacks upon the clergy. John O. Wattles of Ohio was present at the Boston meeting, as were Garrison, Francis Jackson, and Samuel J. May. Another Columbiana Countian,

29 Ibid., Nov. 6, 1840. 30 Ibid., Nov. 27, 1840.
William W. Lamborn of North Georgetown, sided with Garrison on another divisive issue. Lamborn explained in a letter to the New Lisbon *Aurora* that he did not vote because the office of the president was based upon force; this was also one of Garrison's reason for not participating in electoral politics.

Most of Ohio's abolitionists in 1840 were not Garrisonians, and even Bailey had given up his struggle against the formation of a separate party. Nonetheless, the state antislavery leadership's willingness to subordinate consideration of moral weapons against slavery to discussion of political ones, as in the anniversary's ignoring Abram Brooke's resolution on free produce, was leading slowly to a revolt. There were men and women, the latter of whom were of course excluded from political action, who retained their primary interest in "moral suasion," the tactic with which the national abolition crusade began almost a decade earlier.

The swing away from purely moral suasion to emphasis on politics was equally pronounced in other parts of the Old Northwest. The state society in Illinois, where

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31 New Lisbon *Aurora* in *ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1840.
Garrison had never been especially popular, met at Princeton early in July. It then severed its connection with the A.A.S., and, like the Ohio society, refused to affiliate with the rival American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society—
even though two of Illinois' leading abolitionists, Edward Beecher and David Nelson, were members of the new organization's executive committee, and though John Cross and John Miter, advocates of a separate nomination, were on the anniversary's business committee. The executive committee of the Illinois society resolved that slavery was a moral, religious, and political question, and the state organization's membership, as in Ohio, was made up of advocates of not voting, of the Liberty Party, and of what Bailey called "independent abolition." Unlike the Ohioans, whose separate party men had not decided until September of 1840 to endorse Birney and Earle, the Illinois political abolitionists, in a meeting in Chicago immediately after the


33 Philanthropist, June 16, 1840.

34 Ibid., Aug. 25, 1840.

anniversary adjourned, voted to support the Albany ticket. The Galesburg group led this movement, which resulted in the state society's essentially abandoning its emphasis on non-political antislavery action. The only voice raised against this tendency during 1840 was that of Roswell Grosvenor, an abolitionist who feared that abolitionism in politics would lose its Christian emphasis.

Information on Indiana abolitionism during 1840 is not plentiful. Because the state anniversary was held in April, before the split in the American society, it did not have to make a decision on allegiance. The delegates at that time opposed a separate society and favored Bailey's position concerning voting, but by November an antislavery convention in Economy pledged support for separate political nominations for state and federal offices, and, in the words of the historian of the antislavery movement in Indiana, "Thus was born the Liberty Party in Indiana."  

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38 Philanthropist, May 19, 1840.

With few exceptions, the same men who had led Indiana's early antislavery movement were active in the Liberty Party, and the party's initial organizational meetings in Indiana were held in conjunction with abolition meetings. In addition, the state's Quakers continued to quarrel among themselves relative to their participation in antislavery organizations, and there is no evidence any of them carried their pacifism to the extreme of supporting Garrison's advocacy of non-resistance. Arnold Buffum, who may still have been an employee of the Ohio State Society, gave a series of successful antislavery lectures in Indiana during 1840, but he did not engage in the formation of any abolition societies.

In Michigan, the political abolitionists who were concentrated in Jackson County retained their grasp of the

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40 Ibid., p. 84.

41 See a letter from "No Quaker" in Liberator, May 5, 1840. The Indiana Yearly Meeting of (Orthodox) Friends in 1838 had advised its members to stay out of benevolent societies, and in June, 1840, the Yearly's Meeting for Sufferings specifically advised against Friends' participating in the antislavery enterprise; Walter Edgerton, A History of the Separation of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends... (Cincinnati: Achilles Pugh, printer, 1856), pp. 38-41.

state antislavery society, \(^43\) even though a convention in January of 1840 at Pontiac resolved against a separate nomination. Since it was unable to agree as to what sort of candidate to support, no definite recommendations were made. \(^44\) A year later the *Michigan Freeman* ended its existence as the voice of the state's abolitionists with an "Extra" edition published for the use of the State Liberty Party Convention: it featured Alvan Stewart's speech at Albany nominating James G. Birney for president. \(^45\) The Michigan state abolition organization showed little interest in moral suasion; its orientation was consistently political.

The situation was quite different in western Pennsylvania, where topics related to the eastern division occupied center stage in 1840. The executive committee of the W.P.A.S. published its "decided conviction of the manifest impolicy and impropriety of identifying the American Anti-Slavery Society, or any of its auxiliaries, with"


\(^44\) Philanthropist, April 21, 1840.

with the corrupting influence of political partyism..." 46

The women's rights issue was not especially important in any

part of the state. 47 All was not peaceful, however, in the Pittsburgh area.

Henry C. Howells's angry letter to Garrison dealing with the W.P.A.S.'s constitution and non-resistance 48 was published in the *Liberator* of May 15. The resulting struggle between Howells and William H. Burleigh dominated abolitionism in the area for the rest of the year. Howells claimed that "the sweet spirit of harmony and mutual confidence" was gone from the region. He reported there was substantial support for Garrison in western Pennsylvania and asked that non-resistant Henry C. Wright visit Pittsburgh to boost that movement. Burleigh replied quickly to Howells's charges that a conservative conspiracy had caused the omission from the society's constitution of the "momentous clause" denying slaves the right to use physical force to obtain their freedom. He claimed that the proposed constitution for the W.P.A.S. had been presented to the

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46 *Christian Witness* in *Liberator*, May 1, 1840.


48 See above, pp. 187-89.
convention article by article and adopted by the delegates, and that the omission was a unanimous recommendation of the business committee. The recommendation was based on the assumption that the preamble's acceptance of exclusively peaceful means was a sufficient statement of the subject. Burleigh, a member of that business committee, said Orange Scott had not been responsible for the omission, as Howells charged. "There is entire harmony throughout the great body of abolitionists in this section of the State," he claimed, except for Howells "and some half dozen others [who] stand aloof from our enterprise." He also denied that the Old Light Covenanters had actually withdrawn from the movement and suggested that Howells was not lying in presenting his conspiracy charge but was just carried away by his good intentions. 49

Meanwhile, the A.A.S. convention was meeting in New York. A letter read to the assembly reported the results of a special meeting on May 5 "of members of the Old Pittsburgh and Allegheny A.S. Society," which was unable to send a delegate of its own. The letter deprecated the executive committee's transfer of the Emancipator to the New York City society, all moves to exclude non-voters,

49Liberator, June 5, 1840.
and all attempts to narrow the scope of the A.A.S. It also expressed unshaken confidence in Garrison and his paper. On the day before the *Liberator* carried this letter, W. H. Burleigh penned a "confidential" note from Pittsburgh to the anti-Garrisonian Rev. Amos A. Phelps predicting that the Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society would not go with Garrison in the split. "We are not prepared," he wrote, "to endorse his ultraisms—to shoulder his 'woman's Rights' and his no-governmentism."

Burleigh regretted that he had two brothers siding with Garrison, and he admitted that there were "a very few" non-resistants in his area. He said there was "too much good sense" in Pittsburgh" to admit to the rapid growth of such a monstrosity." He was proud to have set his face "steadily against the beastly delusions" and thereby to have "incurred no small share of the hatred of this quarrelsome clique."

Howells and Burleigh continued their propaganda warfare. Burleigh, through the *Christian Witness*, pointed out that the resolutions from Pittsburgh which were read at the A.A.S. anniversary had been drawn up by a meeting of

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51 William H. Burleigh to Amos A. Phelps, May 21, 1840, Phelps Family Papers, Boston Public Library.
only six persons and that the societies to which the six belonged had not been active for over a year. The Liberator responded weakly by correctly denying that the resolutions were put forward as representing the societies, as opposed merely to certain members of them, and the acting editor, Oliver Johnson, was forced to admit that only six persons participated. Johnson retaliated by criticizing Burleigh's characterization of the Massachusetts women who had gone to New York and given Garrison's forces their victory during the 1840 anniversary; he expressed sorrow that Burleigh, an abolitionist, had referred to them as "a whole squad of women" and had implied that they were but tools of men.  

Meanwhile, Howells himself wrote a letter to the Boston paper hotly denying Burleigh's suggestion that his version of the circumstances surrounding the omission of the non-resistance clause was a fabrication. He said that "it would rejoice my heart to see...Burleigh worthy of the office he holds, and the name he bears." Burleigh, a more tactful man, responded that Howells's own source of information had claimed to have told Howells that Orange Scott's role in the event was a passive one. Burleigh also said that he was in the minority in characterizing Howells's

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52 Liberator, June 5, 1840  
53 Ibid., July 3, 1840.
defects as intellectual and not moral. Howells's response was not especially convincing, except that he resented Burleigh's mentioning his being a foreigner. The letter was ended essentially in a stalemate, but nonetheless the November anniversary of the W.P.A.S. restored the omitted clause to its constitution. The non-resistants' victory was short-lived, though, because the meeting, chaired by Dr. Julius LeMoyne, also affiliated itself with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and resolved to keep from its meetings discussions of "questions foreign to its objects." Among the "questions" specifically excluded were non-resistance, no-human government, woman's rights, and--somewhat oddly--political partyism. Members were given the option of following their individual consciences on these subjects, but clearly the organized abolition movement in western Pennsylvania took a decidedly anti-Garrison turn. Moreover, the local groups which had been affiliates of the A.A.S. gradually ceased their activity.

54 Ibid., Aug. 7, 1840.  
55 Ibid., Sept. 4, 1840.  
56 Ibid., Nov. 20, 1840.  
Historian Theodore C. Smith was correct when he wrote late in the last century that "the main interest of Western antislavery men [found] its outlet in political action" after 1840, but his contention that "in the Northwest there was, after 1840, very little knowledge of Garrison and his methods" is somewhat misleading, despite the coolness with which the A.A.S. was accepted by organized abolitionism immediately after the split. Garrison abolitionism was in fact an active part of the western antislavery movement from 1840 until the Civil War.

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CHAPTER VII

SCHISM IN THE WEST, 1841-1842

The two years following the split in the American Anti-Slavery Society constituted a period of adjustments for abolitionists in the Old Northwest. The Liberty Party movement gained strength and forced antislavery men to give serious thought to their relationship with the new party. Although many chose to align with it, a number, mainly in Ohio, decided to follow the direction of the eastern Garrisonians and to maintain non-political pressure on the institution of slavery.

In Illinois, the state antislavery society continued its drift toward the Liberty Party. Financial problems kept the organization from accomplishing much,¹ and hostility from the citizenry in the part of Illinois south of Alton forced the society's agent, William T. Allan, to move his

activity into the northern part of the state. Late in February, 1841, a special meeting of the state society at Lowell enthusiastically accepted the offer of the LaSalle County society to transfer to the state group the anti-slavery newspaper it had begun the previous December, and the state executive committee formally approved the change a few months later. The result was that the _Genius of Liberty_, edited by Hooper Warren and Zebina Eastman, became the official voice of organized abolition in Illinois. The _Genius_ lasted only a short time. In May of 1842, Illinois' first Liberty Party Convention, which was organized by the leaders of the state antislavery society, decided to establish a paper and hired Eastman to move to Chicago and begin the _Western Citizen_. The state antislavery society held its fifth anniversary in Chicago in late May, with men from Cook County dominant; from that time, northern Illinois and its Liberty Party advocates controlled the organization.

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3 Norman D. Harris, _The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois, and of the Slavery Agitation in that State, 1719-1864_ (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1904), pp. 137-38. This paper was a continuation of Benjamin Lundy's _Genius of Universal Emancipation_, which had been stopped on Lundy's death in 1839; see Dillon, "Antislavery Movement in Illinois, 1809-1844," pp. 282-83.
The annual meeting resolved "that the Liberty Party had its origins... in the ordinance of heaven...," and provided convincing support for Eastman's later testimony that Illinois abolitionists were for the most part uninterested in the eastern controversy and devoted to the Liberty Party. 4

The situation in Michigan was similar. The Signal of Liberty, first issued as the official organ of the state society in April, 1841, 5 was devoted primarily to advancing the cause of the antislavery party. Thomas Chandler, a Garrisonian of Lenawee County, was chosen a manager of the A.A.S. in 1841, 6 and a Mr. Reynolds of Michigan reported to the third annual meeting of the New England Non-Resistance Society that there were non-resistants living near him, 7 but the state's antislavery society was decidedly allied with political action.

In Indiana, where the tensions within the Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) finally exploded in open revolt in 1841,

4Quoted in Harris, History of Negro Servitude, p. 144.


6Liberator, May 28, 1841.

7Ibid., Nov. 19, 1841.
the state organization also allied itself with the Liberty movement. In early February, 1841, in New Garden, Wayne County, the state society's anniversary meeting was dominated by political abolitionists who assembled for a State Political Antislavery Convention the same day in nearby Newport. The Philanthropist reported "little division of sentiment in regard to political action" among Indiana abolitionists.

Most of the state society's officers were Quakers. Their active participation in the movement led to a bitter division among the Friends in the Indiana Yearly, but the disagreement was not one of politicians versus moralists. On July 17, 1841, Joseph Sturge, a Quaker abolitionist from England who was visiting America, wrote an open letter to America's Friends. Sturge urged them to participate actively in the national abolition movement by affiliating with its organizations; Indiana's antislavery Quakers

8Philanthropist, March 3, 1841.
10This letter was widely circulated in antislavery circles. It was printed in Liberator, Aug. 13, 1841, and in Walter Edgerton, A History of the Separation in the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends... (Cincinnati: Achilles Pugh, 1856), pp. 50-57.
who were encountering resistance from the conservative leadership of their Yearly Meeting naturally wished to use Sturge's influence in their own struggle. The Meeting for Sufferings of the Yearly Meeting advised the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings against the circulation of Sturge's letter, and the Yearly adopted this "advice" as its own. The document, which also warned against opening meeting houses to abolition meetings and lectures and against patronizing the Quaker Arnold Buffum's antislavery newspaper, *The Free Labor Advocate*, was too much for the Quaker abolitionists to tolerate. In February, 1842, they formed the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends. This Meeting, which was quite orthodox in its structure and doctrine, was composed of thirty-seven local meetings and nearly 2000 members. Many of its leaders, including Levi Coffin, Walter Edgerton, and Arnold Buffum, were also leaders of the Indiana State Anti-Slavery Society, which was becoming more and more identical with the state Liberty Party. The Indiana Orthodox Quakers who founded the Yearly Meeting of

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Anti-Slavery Friends were not, then, non-resistants or religious reformers. What they wanted and got was freedom to participate in the political abolition movement, which most of them did.

The closest the Garrisonian movement came to an open advocacy in Indiana during 1841 and 1842 was an angry resolution by the Henry County Female Anti-Slavery Society which condemned the United States Congress for censuring Ohio's Whig abolitionist Joshua R. Giddings's speech defending the actions of the slaves who took over the ship Creole as it carried them to be sold in New Orleans. In March, 1842, the Henry Countians warned that "such usurpations of political power and abridgement of Constitutional liberty" could eventually "kindle the subterranean fires of disunion into unquenchable flame." A more portentous event was Joseph A. Dugdale's leadership in 1842 of a group of liberal antislavery Hicksite Quakers from that body's Indiana Yearly Meeting into an organization of Congregational Friends who, unlike the abolitionists in the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, were also religious liberals. A sizeable number of Quakers who maintained


14 Willard Heiss, A List of All the Friends Meetings that Exist or Ever Have Existed in Indiana (Indianapolis:
their allegiance to the Garrisonian abolitionists were later to become active in the Congregational or Progressive Friends movement. For the most part, though, Indiana abolitionists followed the same political path as their allies in Michigan and Illinois.

The western Pennsylvania abolitionists, who had affiliated with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in 1840, held their anniversary in 1842 immediately after a Liberty Party convention. The abolitionists in western Pennsylvania had been unable to sustain the Christian Witness for a time in 1841, but they had revived it and renamed it the Spirit of Liberty to reflect their increasingly political orientation. The Methodist minister Edward Smith was editor, and W. H. Burleigh had briefly been his associate, but Burleigh soon quit in order to devote his efforts to temperance. There was also some support in

John Woolman Press, Inc., 1961), p. 82. The Quaker Church divided in 1828 into two branches, Hicksite and Orthodox. As in most areas, the Indiana Yearly Meeting, which included Friends in western Ohio, Michigan, and Iowa, had two separate Yearly Meetings. It was the Orthodox one which split in 1842 over the slavery question. The division in the Hicksite branch was over both slavery and religious reform; the Progressive Friends objected to being controlled by bodies other than at the local (or "Congregational") level.

15 Philanthropist, Oct. 8, 1842.
16 Liberator, Oct. 8, 1841. 17 Ibid., Nov. 19, 1841.
the area for Garrison and his policies on peace and women: John Gordon of Washington County wrote a letter of encouragement which appeared in the Liberator of April 2, 1841. Gordon later moved to Ohio and served as a leader of the area's Garrisonians during the 1850's.

The Wisconsin Territory had seen its first anti-slavery society founded in the spring of 1840 by forty-one citizens of Burlington and Spring Prairie in the southeastern corner of the territory, a section dominated by settlers from New England. In the fall of that year, the Central Baptist Association of Wisconsin resolved that "as a component part of the American church" it was "duty bound to use every lawful and Christian means to bring about the speedy and effectual abolition of slavery." The delegates also declared their unwillingness to hold church fellowship with any persons or churches which were "in any way voluntarily implicated in the sin of slaveholding." Within two years, the Wisconsin Territorial Anti-Slavery

18 Philanthropist, July 7, 1840.
Society was organized just east of Burlington at Delavan in Walworth County. The society was led by Samuel and Henry Phoenix, brothers from New York state who founded the town of Delavan as a refuge from liquor.  

Samuel Phoenix had served as Wisconsin's vice-president of the A.A.S. in 1838, but not afterward, and there is no specific indication whether or not the new Wisconsin organization affiliated itself with either of the two national antislavery societies. At its anniversary in 1843, however, the political abolitionists Zebina Eastman and William T. Allan of the Illinois society were featured speakers. Since the organization eventually changed its name to the Wisconsin Liberty Association, there is no doubt that Wisconsin's early abolitionism was not taking a Garrisonian turn.

In the early 1840's, the Iowa Territory was likewise awakening to the slavery issue. In February of 1841 an abolition society was formed in Salem, a small village

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22Philanthropist, May 29, 1838.

of Virginia Quakers in the southeastern part of the territory; one of the organizational meeting's first goals was to arrange to have the Salem antislavery library, which evidently had been founded earlier, serve as an agency of the new group. The society planned to subscribe to a number of abolition newspapers, including the Philanthropist and Emancipator, but not the Garrisonian Liberator or National Anti-Slavery Standard. But in nearby Crawfordsville, in July of the next year, the Iowa Anti-Slavery Society of Crooked Creek was formed as an auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society. Thus, early Iowa abolition was not uniform in ideology.

Ohio abolitionism, still the most healthy in the area, was also not a monolithic movement after 1840. As during the preceding few years, Dr. Bailey encountered problems in trying to steer the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society on an independent course through the ideological tangles of antislavery reform. The national elections in the fall of 1840 had embittered many political abolitionists who watched Birney garner few votes as most male

24 Ibid., April 21, 1841. Many abolition societies established libraries and "depositories" where they made available their literature to the persons in their communities.

abolitionists supported Harrison. Bailey spearheaded a meeting for reconciliation held in Columbus in January of 1841, but even after the meeting was called, the Rev. Jonathan Blanchard published his defense of having supported Harrison. The January convention turned out to be a gathering representative of Ohio's antislavery community.

Bailey, who could not attend, explicitly instructed his allies in the details of running the meeting. There is no doubt of his continued power in the movement. He insisted women be allowed to enroll if they wanted to, especially because of the existence of "a great deal of jealousy" on that point "owing to eastern quarrels." He urged that the Quaker leader Dugdale not be embarrassed by having to participate in a meeting opened formally by prayer. He insisted the Rev. Mr. Blanchard must be allowed to speak and that J. H. Purdy, who like Blanchard opposed independent nominations, ought to be made a vice-president.

The convention progressed much as Bailey planned, and as he hoped, it avoided controversy over procedural procedures.

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26 Ibid., Jan. 6, 1841.

27 These instructions were in a letter carried by non-resistant James Boyle to the Rev. Thomas E. Thomas, who was to be one of the meeting's organizers. See [Alfred A. Thomas], ed., Correspondences of Thomas Ebenezer Thomas (n.p.: Alfred A. Thomas, 1909), pp. 31-32.
matters. The delegates clearly distinguished the appropriate functions of abolition societies from those of anti-slavery politics; the former were to use only non-political means and to focus their attention on the slave states, while the latter was to concentrate upon areas under the jurisdiction of the federal government or the free states. The convention elaborated upon the duties of voting abolitionists, resolving after great debate that they put forward their own nominations except when they knew beforehand that the established parties would nominate acceptable men. Purdy was made vice-president, as Bailey advised, but this did not reduce him to silence. He led an unsuccessful effort to pledge abolitionists to wait until after the regular parties made their nominations before deciding whether to make their own.

The convention accepted Bailey's leadership in other ways, too. It declared confidence in him and pledged to support his twin projects, the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society and the Philanthropist. Women and non-resistants participated in the proceedings, and Dr. Abram Brooke, increasingly disaffected with Ohio abolitionism's political emphasis, was a secretary. The only action which the

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28 Philanthropist, Jan. 27 and Feb. 3, 1841.
approximately two hundred delegates took which Bailey disapproved was authorizing the executive committee of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society to appoint delegates to a convention in New York which was to nominate antislavery candidates for the federal elections of 1844. Bailey was still serious about his insistence that the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society and the Liberty Party be separate in practice as well as in theory. It was this insistence which kept men like Dugdale and Brooke, who were mainly interested in the tactics of moral suasion, allied with those men who were devoting increasingly more of their time to politics.

Brooke, in fact, challenged Garrison's non-resistance and the hostility to politics which resulted from it. In a letter written shortly after the Columbus convention, he insisted that there would be a need for human governments based on God's laws as long as mankind remained imperfect; he claimed that the third party might be a useful tool to end slavery, and that because it could hardly hurt to withdraw support from political support of slavery, Garrison might be more tolerant of the Liberty Party. Brooke also pointed out that in the West, unlike

29 Ibid., March 3, 1841.
in the East, the third party conventions did not exclude non-voters and foes of the Liberty Party. Despite Brooke's letter, his position regarding the philosophy of non-resistance was not in conflict with that of Garrison and Henry C. Wright. All three thought that non-resistance was expected by God of all Christians who were perfected, which obviously excluded most people. Human government would not be needed when men accepted the government of God, but no one was contending that that time had yet come. Brooke thought that until then, the Liberty Party might help contain slavery, while Garrison did not, but this was a tactical disagreement.

Another Ohio abolitionist, however, opposed non-resistance for its philosophy, not its tactics. The Rev. John Blanchard sharply criticized Garrison, Wright, and non-resistance, and somehow, Wright got a copy of the letter containing Blanchard's attack. Wright's response, which is a clear statement of the doctrine of non-resistance, was printed in the Philanthropist of February 26, 1841, along with Blanchard's letter. The Ohioan, who had not accepted the need for an abolition party, insisted that non-resistance

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opened the door to universal anarchy. He granted women the right to participate equally, but he claimed that it was not proper for them to do so; "Will it make them...better wives, and daughters, and sisters?" he asked. Blanchard closed his letter by asserting that the mother of his correspondent would not "have been what she was, if taught by Garrison & c. instead of learning of Christ in the PRESBYTERIAN church." In early 1841, the main thrust of Ohio abolition obviously had become quite broad; it included both Blanchard and Brooke.

It also included James Barnaby, Jr., a Quaker from New Lisbon who wrote Garrison on behalf of some men and women in his county in response to suggestions which had appeared in the *Liberator* of December 25, 1840, regarding Christian communitarianism. Barnaby, who like Dugdale and Brooke was to be a mainstay of the Ohio Garrisonians, encouraged the calling of a meeting to discuss the idea on the ground that the West, with its abundance of land, would be a good area for such an experiment in communal living as the non-resistant Adin Ballou had discussed. 31 Dr. Brooke and some of his Quaker friends in and around Clinton County had done even more planning than the Columbiana County

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31 Barnaby to Garrison, Feb. 17, 1841, *ibid.*, March 5, 1841.
group, for they had held at least two planning meetings by February 21 and another in late March at the Green Plain meetinghouse in Clark County. They were planning a public meeting on July 4 at Oakland, Brooke's home, to consider a constitution for a Christian community. Thus when the sixth anniversary of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society convened at Mt. Pleasant in Jefferson County in late May, a number of Ohio abolitionists were concentrating on matters far removed from politics.

The anniversary revealed that the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society had languished during the previous year and that the Philanthropist was in financial trouble more serious than usual. Pledges of increased support were made by the

32 Brooke to Garrison, n.d., ibid., May 7, 1841. Leaders of the Clinton County movement were six members of Brooke's family, Abraham and Cata Allen and their son David B., and Joseph and Elizabeth Lukens. All were Hicksite Quakers.

33 This is especially true of Dr. Brooke, whose conviction by a Warren County court for aiding the escape of some slaves being illegally transported through Ohio was still pending in the state's supreme court; see Philanthropist, Dec. 16, 1840, April 28, 1841, and Liberator, Nov. 20, 1840. Brooke was acquitted. A large part of the work of the underground railroad in Ohio between 1840 and 1844 was the rescuing of slaves being transported over Ohio's free soil from Virginia to Missouri; see an article from the Des Moines (Iowa) Register of Sept. 4, 1892 concerning the antislavery activities of Joel P. Davis in Clinton County during this period; a copy is in Wilbur Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
delegates, who represented all types of abolitionists from radicals like Brooke, Dugdale, and Barnaby, to more moderate men like Purdy, Bailey, and former Senator Thomas Morris. No sign of disharmony was evident. But, as in 1840, the meeting refused to consider a resolution condemning abolitionists "who scruple not to make use of the products of slave labor," because according to Bailey, they desired to adjourn the society in order to convene as a political convention. None of the leading Quakers were chosen officers for the next year, although a number were there, and of them only Brooke was active in the subsequent political convention. 34

Dr. Brooke was upset at what he thought was the anniversary's general desire to shorten the discussion of moral issues in order to have more time for politics, but he was glad that the majority of political abolitionists did not insist that everyone must vote. 35 Similarly, the Rev. E. D. Hudson, attending as a delegate from the American Anti-Slavery Society, reported that the political abolitionists in Ohio were democratic, egalitarian, and not associated with the hated "new" organization, the American

34 Philanthropist, June 9, 1841.
and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Hudson was substantially correct in this, but less so in his report that ninety percent of Ohio abolitionists were "decided and uncompromising friends of the old antislavery society."  

Dr. Bailey corrected Hudson's mistake in an editorial which revealed much about the composition of the movement that he still held together. He identified three different "classes" of members of the state society--Quakers, abolitionists of other sects, and members of no church at all--who had agreed, "for the sake of perpetuating their harmony," to stand independently of any other organization. Bailey went on to admit that these groups had their private preferences:

The middle class, which...is the largest, generally inclines to the seceders from the old American [Anti-Slavery] Society. Of the Friends, many...if not most sympathize with the latter, chiefly on account of its recognition of the rights of women, and what they believe its most liberal spirit. The last class can scarcely be said to have any preference....

But he concluded by reaffirming the organization's independence and essential unity:

In regard to all the classes, or the body of them, they are as firm friends of Arthur Tappan as W. Lloyd Garrison, but firmer friends of abolition than any of its advocates.

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36 Ibid., July 14, 1841.  
37 Ibid.
The state's non-resistants, not all of whom were Friends, continued to praise Garrison, but the forces of unity remained strong. The destruction of the Philanthropist's press for the third time during a vicious anti-Negro riot in Cincinnati early in September provided a boost to the unity of Ohio abolitionism, especially in that it even resulted in a donation of $100 from the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison and Wendell Phillips, in offering the money, said their board of managers felt gratified in being able to help despite the fact that they had "seriously differed in opinion with the Philanthropist in regard to the unhappy division" in the antislavery crusade, and they praised Bailey's purity of motives, his candor, and his ability. Ohioans, with fewer

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38 See, for instance, letters from Oberlin to Garrison written by P. D. Hathaway and Charles Stearns published in Liberator, July 16 and September 24, 1841.

39 This was true despite Charles G. Finney's attempts at Oberlin to prove human government was a divine institution; see ibid., Oct. 29, 1841.

40 See Philanthropist, Sept. 8, 1841 and Levi Coffin, Reminiscences (Cincinnati: Western Tract Society, 1876), pp. 528-34. Both Dayton and Cleveland had had similar antiblack riots earlier in the year; see Philanthropist, Feb. 3, 1841, and reports from Dayton and Cleveland papers printed in Liberator, Feb. 12, 26, March 19, and April 30, 1841.

41 Philanthropist, Oct. 13, 1841.
reasons to withhold assistance, were for a time even more united than formerly behind Bailey's press.

Even while the Massachusetts society was sending money to help Bailey maintain his leadership, however, forces were at work in Ohio which were to result in disruption of the unity of the state's antislavery organization. The American Anti-Slavery Society had planned in 1839 to extend its operations into the West, only to be foiled by financial and ideological problems, but during the fall of 1841 two representatives of the eastern Garrisonians were at work exploring the antislavery ground in the West. Oliver Johnson encountered some opposition in arranging for and giving speeches, and Charles G. Burleigh's series of lectures in Cincinnati was plagued by organized disturbances; nevertheless, Burleigh did


43 New Lisbon (Ohio) Aurora and Philanthropist, in Liberator, Nov. 12, 1841. This opposition probably was a part of the same movement which included the founding during the fall of 1841 of the rabidly racist quarto, the Cincinnati Post and Anti-Abolitionist and its companion society, the Cincinnati Anti-Abolition Society. See Cincinnati Post and Anti-Abolitionist, Feb. 5, 1842, which was the fourth number of volume one. The editor and publisher was L. Greely Curtiss; the paper became the Cincinnati Post with number thirty of the first volume, Aug. 6, 1842. The only files I have found of this paper are in the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.
deliver some fifty-seven lectures, mostly on slavery, in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio from the middle of September until the middle of November, and Johnson found some warm friends of non-resistance in Clinton County. There he was presented with a written protest from members of Center Monthly Meeting against anti-nonresistance sentiments recently expressed by George F. White, a New York Quaker. The signers were members of the Brooke, Allen, and Whinnery families. Johnson also obtained more subscribers for the A.A.S.'s Standard, and he returned from his trip aware of the existence of growing support in Ohio for the position of the "old" organization.

This was true even though the Quakers who made up most of that support were not at the end of 1841 especially hostile to the Liberty Party or to political action in general. An exception to this generalization began to appear, however, in Stark County, and it was led by Edward Brooke, a Quaker farmer and one of Dr. Abram Brooke's brothers. In a letter in the Philanthropist of March 16,

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44 Philanthropist, Dec. 8, 1841.

45 Johnson to Hopper, Oct. 25, 1841, Ohio Historical Society Library. As 1842 began, the Liberator had seven agents in Ohio. Among them were James Boyle, Abner Kirk and Lot Holmes (both of Columbiana County), and Joseph A. Dugdale.
1842, he took issue with resolutions passed at the Liberty Party State Convention the previous December. Calling for the federal government to aid the economic interests of the free labor states more generously, the convention had said it also desired that "a full measure of protection and regard [should] be extended to the interests of the states in which slavery exists, so long as they shall think it fit and right to continue its existence;" it also had admitted the legitimacy of constitutional provisions for the return of runaway slaves. Brooke, who demanded an absolute divorce of the federal government from slavery, wrote, "If we consider slavery to be wrong under all circumstances, why offer to sustain it by legal protection? Are we not bound to withdraw all protection from it?" The federal Constitution must be changed so that it no longer supported slavery, or "we are under the highest obligations to abolish it." Brooke, like Garrison, was arguing that the Constitution was founded "in the quicksand of despotism" and that "as a moral agent" he could not support slavery "in any manner whatever." He specifically repudiated the compact the Founding Fathers made with slavery and said that "by the laws of God" he was bound "to go counter to it."
Edward Brooke's letter was apparently the first statement of these sentiments by an Ohioan to appear in the state's antislavery press, and Gamaliel Bailey replied to them in the same issue in which they appeared. He reiterated his idea that the object of the Liberty Party was to divorce the U.S. government and the various legislatures from the system of slavery, but not to abolish slavery where it existed under state authority. He admitted that the part played by the Liberty Party in the broader movement to eliminate slavery might fail, however, when he wrote that if slavery survived under Liberty Party rule, it might then be necessary to amend the Constitution to allow the national government to destroy the states' support of the institution.

Bailey was continuing to insist that antislavery politics be separate in goals and means from antislavery societies, even though both movements had for their goal the eradication of slavery. There were a number of Americans, however, whose consciences would not allow them to sanction the moral compromises inherent in such a distinction. Slavery was a sin, they believed, and as such its existence could not be tolerated. Such ideas were not new to abolitionism in the early 1840's, but the number of
men and women was growing who then felt that that moral truth meant that the new Liberty Party, with its seeming tolerance of "legal" slavery, was condoning the very sin it hoped somehow to eliminate. Garrison and his eastern allies were the most famous of these persons, but there were some in the West, too, where the Liberty Party was not nearly so hostile to Garrisonians as it was in the East.

The Marlborough Anti-Slavery Society, where opposition in Ohio to the Liberty Party's acceptance of slavery seems to have begun, adopted resolutions by Edward Brooke which reflected the thinking in his letter. The key resolution said that the society could not sanction the departure from antislavery principles which it saw in the declaration of the Liberty Convention "that they would not interfere with the restoration of fugitive slaves, and would...give slave labor legislative regard and protection." 46

Bailey responded immediately. If proper construction was made of the convention's declaration, he said, there was no departure from principle. The only pledge that was made was that the Liberty Party "would not as a party interfere by violence with the restoration of fugitives."

46 Philanthropist, April 6, 1842.
He further explained that "the resolutions...pledging to
the slave states a due measure of protection and legislative
regard" were true expressions of the mind of the convention.

Such explanations might have satisfied the Friends
who dominated the Marlborough Society had not their abhor­
rence of the political power of representatives of those
same slave states which Bailey thought were entitled to
"a due measure of Protection and legislative regard"
recently been strengthened by an act of the U.S. Congress.
The speech of Congressman Joshua R. Giddings of Ohio's
Western Reserve in defense of the slaves who had seized
control of the brig Creole had not been well received by
his colleagues, and the House, angered anyway by Giddings's
continual insistence on speaking against slavery, passed a
resolution censuring him. Giddings had resigned his seat
and returned to his constituents to stand for reelection.
The heavily antislavery Western Reserve returned him to
Congress with an overwhelming vote of confidence, but the
actions of the House in censuring him had a profound effect
on many abolitionists' perception of the federal govern­
ment: as the Garrisonians charged, it did appear to be
controlled by defenders of slavery.
Among those offended abolitionists, in addition to the Indiana group mentioned above, was the Green Plain Anti-Slavery Society, which resolved at a meeting on April 2:

That such startling revelations of the ascendancy, abominable tyranny, and encroachments of the slave power upon the rights of freemen induce us to adopt the opinion, that the peaceful union of liberty and slavery is about as practicable as the coalition of fire and gun powder; therefore,...a peaceful dissolution of the Union would be preferable to us than the position of bodyguard to slavery.

Joseph A. Dugdale sent these resolutions, which placed the Green Plain Quakers squarely on the road to accepting Garrison's advocacy of disunion, directly to the Boston editor. As the seventh anniversary of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society approached, there were new indications that there were serious ideological rifts in the fabric of the state's abolitionism.

The Garrisonians in the East, who had begun to recover from the chaos of the 1840 division, were meanwhile...

47 See above, p. 224.

48 *Liberator*, May 6, 1842. Dugdale was chosen a vice-president for the A.A.S. at its anniversary in May, as were Robert Stewart of Illinois, Herbert Williams of Indiana, and Zephaniah Platt of Michigan. James Boyle and Lewis C. Gunn were named to the board of managers from Ohio, as were Edwin Fussell and Daniel Wilson of Indiana; the board did not have members from Illinois or Michigan; see *ibid.*, May 27, 1842.
preparing to extend their propaganda and organizing efforts westward. No doubt encouraged by Oliver Johnson's favorable reception in Ohio, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society had loaned its general agent, John A. Collins, to the A.A.S. to develop a western strategy. When the national society's annual meeting in May of 1842 decided to try to raise $50,000.00 to help spread abolition ideas into all the free states, Collins suggested to Garrison and others that the A.A.S. hold some promotional and fund raising meetings in the West. The proposal was favorably received, and Collins made a hurried trip via railroad, steamboat, and stagecoach to get to Ohio in time for its anniversary.

The Ohio abolitionists had been called to meet at Mt. Vernon, a small town near the center of the state. A Liberty Convention was scheduled to occur there simultaneously, but Bailey, in his call, made it a point to distinguish between them. The attendance at the anniversary was the largest ever—some 500 delegates from forty counties, with a total attendance approaching 1500.

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49 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, 1843), p. 45.

50 Collins to Garrison, in Liberator, May 20, 1842.

51 Collins to Garrison, ibid., June 17, 1842.
The executive committee reported that its work since the preceding summer had been confined to trying to save the Philanthropist, which lost some $850 in the riots and $250 more in a fire in April, and Bailey reported that there was a total of $4155.53 then due on subscriptions alone. William Birney, son of James G. Birney, offered to take over the burdens and cost of publication in return for the subscription list and an advance on the next number, and the society agreed. Bailey was to continue as editor and the O.S.A.S. would pay his salary, but Birney would be responsible for the paper's debts. 52

Other business of the anniversary was more crucial for the future of the organization, and not merely because the transfer of responsibility to Birney did not last long. 53 Dugdale and Abram and James Brooke, members of the

52 Details of this agreement and of the anniversary are, unless noted, from Philanthropist, June 15, 1842. Bailey's biographer says that Bailey encouraged this transfer so that the paper could be removed from its theoretical affiliation with the antislavery society and he could retain leadership of all segments of the state's abolition movement; see Joel Goldfarb, "The Life of Gamaliel Bailey Prior to the Founding of the National Era: The Orientation of a Practical Abolitionist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1958), pp. 241-44.

53 The July 9 Philanthropist was the first under Birney's proprietorship, and the next issue, without explanation, announced transfer to Bailey, who said he would print the paper whenever subscription payments allowed.
meeting's business committee, persuaded it to offer a resolution that the society reaffiliate with the American Anti-Slavery Society. The convention would not consider the issue, however, and it tabled the resolution indefinitely. Essentially the same result occurred on resolutions concerning whether or not the authors of the U.S. Constitution intended that any of the country's officers or citizens would be required "to do any immoral act" and also on a resolution denying that abolitionists were required to support slavery in any way, laws to the contrary notwithstanding.

The majority of Ohio abolitionists were unwilling even to debate steps which a minority considered proper for a society claiming to rely solely upon the moral power of truth. This refusal was too much for those delegates who were increasingly disgusted with the dominant role of political considerations in the state antislavery society. Their response was to hold a separate meeting on June 8, the second day of the gathering, at which they formed the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society and promptly affiliated with the A.A.S.

Explanations of this action varied, naturally enough, depending upon the orientation of the commentator.
William Birney, the most hostile, wrote his father that Dr. Brooke had led a secession by a group of "Garrison malcontents" who were "incited by the wily arguments and plausible sophistry" of John A. Collins, whom Birney said had been sent out from Massachusetts "expressly for the purpose of fomenting our dissensions."  

Bailey, who still wanted to avoid intra-abolition warfare, publicly blamed the action on displeasure with the vote postponing the movement to reaffiliate the O.S.A.S. with the A.A.S.  

John A. Collins, whose mission from the A.A.S. included establishing affiliates in the West, said that the cause was the fact that the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society was, despite contrary professions, under the effective control of the Ohio Liberty Party. 

A special committee appointed by the meeting which organized the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society drew up

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55 Philanthropist, June 15, 1842.

56 Liberator, June 17, 1842. As had other Garrisonian observers before him, Collins emphasized the value of Ohio's Liberty Party and its members. He reported that, despite this, however, the preference of most of the O.S.A.S. members for political abolition was "dampening the zeal and destroying the faith of [their] friends in the practicability of affecting the abolition of slavery by moral means."
its own explanation. It and a lengthy report of the founding meeting were published by Bailey in the newly independent *Philanthropist*. This "official" statement was essentially a list of grievances dating back to before 1840. It began with the charge that Bailey had withheld from his paper so much information concerning the eastern controversy that the delegates to the Ohio anniversary at Massillon in 1840 were ignorant of the issues over which the A.A.S. had split when they decided to disassociate from the "old" organization. The report claimed that a "zealous and efficient as well as a numerous portion of the Ohio Society" disagreed with the action of 1840 and wished to bring up the subject at the next anniversary. However, the committee continued, a general desire to devote time to political planning kept the subject of reaffiliation from being considered. When the Mt. Vernon meeting twelve months later refused to consider altering the action taken in 1840, the alternative of a separate society was considered and adopted. 57

The explanation blamed the "partialities of personal friendship" felt by many of Ohio abolition's leaders for those men who had seceded from the A.A.S. and what it

57 *Philanthropist*, July 9, 1842.
called "the sectarian influence embodied in our State association" for causing the hasty action of the O.S.A.S. in 1840. It added that the "political bias which has been received by the Anti-slavery mind of Ohio" since 1840 was responsible for maintaining the separation and that "the affair in its progress had rendered it clearly evident that the moral influence, once existing in the Society, was so borne down by its connexion with politics as to allow of no hope of appealing from the will of the majority." The committee showed no ill feelings toward the O.S.A.S., with which it pledged the O.A.A.S. to cooperate as "two divisions of the same army bearing down upon slavery's castles," but it made it clear that the new group intended to leave to members of the old those duties of the army which involved what they thought was overemphasis upon traditional political activity. The supporters of the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society were just not ready to give up on moral suasion, but neither were they specifically opposed to the Liberty Party. This was not a society exclusively of non-resistants, but it was "Garrisonian" in that it was organically affiliated with the American Anti-Slavery

58Ibid.
Society, was open to all immediate emancipationists, and was devoted as an organization to moral suasion.
CHAPTER VIII

POLITICS OR MORAL SUASION? 1843-44

Relations between the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society and the new Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society were cordial following the division of the older organization in 1842, and many of the same men participated in the affairs of both. Gamaliel Bailey, as proprietor of a newspaper without official connection with either, gave space to both, and although some members of the new group adopted increasingly unorthodox views on matters not directly involving abolition, the O.A.A.S. spent its initial year in a manner generally inoffensive to the spirit of harmony which still characterized the state's antislavery movement. This harmony in Ohio was especially striking in view of the discord among abolitionists in the East.

The executive committee chosen to run the new society was dominated by Hicksite Quakers, among whom were Joseph Dugdale; Abram Brooke; Hannah Brooke, whose husband Edward was Abram's brother; Ruth Galbreath of Columbiana
County; Elizabeth Wileman of Stark County; and Abraham Allen of Clinton County. These three women were among the first of their sex to serve on the executive committee of any state or national abolition society, and it was the election of women to leadership positions which most immediately distinguished the O.A.A.S. from the other state society.

Milo D. Pettibone, a Connecticut-born and Yale-educated attorney living in Delaware County, was elected president; Thomas Donaldson, a Welsh farmer from Hamilton County and a brother of Christian, the wealthy treasurer of the Ohio State Society, was a non-Quaker member of the executive committee; and Nathan Galbreath, Ruth's husband, was a vice-president. Abram Brooke and John O. Wattles were corresponding and recording secretaries; their home county of Clinton served as headquarters for the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society.¹

Most of the resolutions adopted by the initial meeting of the new society dealt harshly with those churches which did not exercise their full influence against slaveholders, but they were not notably different from the similar expressions of the older society. However, only the new group

¹ Minutes of the organizational meeting were published in Cincinnati Philanthropist, June 22, 1842.
encouraged support for the newspaper of Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society, and only the new group urged Garrison and Abby Kelley to visit Ohio. The leaders knew that their first task was to insure the survival of the society and thus did little to antagonize their antislavery friends in the state.

The first local antislavery society to begin the process of changing its affiliation to the new organization was the Stark County Anti-Slavery Society. A quarterly meeting of that society on June 17, 1842, unanimously accepted the idea of re-affiliation but postponed final decision until the annual meeting in September. A special committee meanwhile addressed a letter to the state's abolitionists explaining that the withdrawal of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society from the A.A.S. in 1840 had resulted from objection to the parent group's encouragement of women to participate in the transaction and planning of its business. This had been Abram Brooke's explanation at the time, and in light of the subsequent record of the two state organizations relative to women, and considering that prior to 1840 there had been no difference between the O.A.S. and the A.A.S. on the question of allowing women to be members and to speak

\[2\text{Ibid.}, \text{June 29, 1842, and Liberator, July 29, 1842.}\]
at conventions, the explanation seems sound.

The seating of Abby Kelley on the business committee of the A.A.S. had precipitated the division of that society in New York in 1840; objection to that innovation, coupled with the personal loyalty of many Ohioans to their former colleagues Birney, Stanton, Elizur Wright, and the Tappans— as emphasized in the Ohio American Society's own explanation— helps explain the Ohioans' renunciation of the A.A.S. in 1840. The subsequent division of the Ohio society two years later had been provoked by the majority's continued unwillingness to recognize the primacy within a movement for moral reform and human equality of moral issues and sexual equality.

The September anniversary of the Stark County society accepted the recommendation of its quarterly meeting and adopted another resolution which moved the society yet closer to Garrison's absolutism: "That in order to clear ourselves, as far as we individually can, of this guilt [of supporting slavery through supporting the U.S. Constitution], we hereby solemnly abjure such parts of the federal compact as require us in any manner to support slavery...." Edward Brooke, who had been the first publicly to voice such sentiments in Ohio, was elected president, and Elizabeth Wileman, of the

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3See above, pp. 249-50.
O.A.A.S. executive committee, was made vice-president.  

Between the two meetings of the Stark County abolitionists, other leaders of the new organization—particularly two of Edward Brooke's brothers—were becoming more demanding of abolitionists' personal philosophies. On the fourth of July, Samuel Brooke, a civil engineer, wrote from Oakland Ohio, to the Philanthropist. He said that at the 1842 anniversary he had intended to support a resolution that the country's founders had required immoral acts from officeholders in the federal government, only to be cut off by the decision to table the matter. Brooke emphasized the importance of showing the public the compromising nature of the work of the too-venerated leaders of the past, and he urged his colleagues to concentrate on the evils of the present, irrespective of their origins.  

More significant, though, than the opening public statement of Samuel Brooke's lengthy abolition career, was his brother Abram's decision to renounce the Liberty Party for which he had worked for the two years of its existence. In a letter to the Philanthropist, the ex-Whig confessed his

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4Philanthropist, Oct. 22, 1842.

5Ibid., Sept. 10, 1842. For a similar letter from Brooke written October 19, see Ibid., Dec. 14, 1842.
disappointment with the new party, which he had originally thought was dedicated to "equality of rights and privileges to all rational beings." He had since come to concur with his brother Edward's argument that the Liberty Party, in agreeing to abide by all constitutional safeguards to slavery, was unworthy of support. His closing sentence must have seemed ominous to Dr. Bailey as he published his friend's words: "If the same doctrine [of not doing evil so good may come]...leads me among the so-called no human government party, I cannot help it."  

Even in his defection, Brooke remained close to his Liberty Party friends and joined Bailey in defending the Ohio branch of the party from an attack by Gerrit Smith which appeared in the Cazenovia (New York) Abolitionist. According

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6Ibid., Oct. 6, 1842. Edward, Abram, and Samuel Brooke had moved from Maryland to Ohio in the early 1830's. They were active abolitionists and leaders of religious and social reform throughout the ante-bellum era. Abram, a medical doctor and a thoroughgoing radical, was one of the western abolitionists' most thoughtful and consistent spokesmen; Samuel, an efficient fund-raiser, had a stormy but generally pleasant relationship with the leaders of Garrisonianism; Edward seems to have lost his early interest in abolitionism and communism when the Marlboro communitarian experiment which he helped organize broke up in the mid 1840's. For biographical data see William Henry Perrin, ed., History of Stark County... (Chicago: Baskin and Battey, 1881), pp. 718-20, 921, and William Wade Hinshaw et. al., Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, vol. V (Washington: William Wade Hinshaw, 1946), 478, 891.
to Brooke, Smith's charge that the Ohio men were "selfish" resulted from Smith's anger at the Philanthropist's objection to his encouragement of fleeing slaves to steal provisions to sustain their flight. Brooke reiterated his belief that the use of evil means was not justified to achieve desirable ends. The Liberty party in Ohio, he wrote, was composed of honorable men whose own errors resulted from the kind of inconsistent thinking in which Smith was indulging. Bailey also objected to Smith's charges; he repeated that the Ohio party had always had as its goal the abolition of unconstitutional slavery and the removal of the government from the grasp of slaveholders, and he joined Brooke in calling Smith's advocacy of theft "immoral."  

Bailey's reactions to his New York colleague's political position during this exchange reveal a disharmony between the philosophies of the two states' antislavery parties. The New Yorkers insisted that voters support only men pledged to abolish slavery wherever it existed, while the Ohioans insisted only that for candidates to be acceptable, they must promise to fight for such legislation as would stop their governments from directly supporting

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\[\text{Ibid.}, \ Aug. 27, 1842. \quad \text{Smith retracted his charges later; } \text{ibid.}, \ Nov. 12, 1842.\]
slavery and from imposing legal discriminations against
blacks. These intraparty squabbles were eventually resolved,
but what is significant for this study is that Dr. Brooke
denied that either position was morally sound as long as the
party was pledged to support a pro-slavery constitution.

Growing local support for the Ohio American society
soon persuaded the leadership of the American Anti-Slavery
Society to plan a series of meetings in the West to con­
solidate its gains. The Clinton County Anti-Slavery Society
at its annual meeting in late August affiliated with the new
organization; an affirmation of support was passed
simultaneously by the Georgetown society in Harrison County
on the other side of the state, so those two counties were
selected as sites for major conventions during the proposed
tour by Garrison and Charles L. Remond. One convention was
to be at Cadiz in Harrison County on October 18, another at
Oakland, Clinton County, on the twenty-fourth. A third was
proposed for somewhere in central Ohio, possibly at Granville.

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8 Ibid., Sept. 17, 1842.

9 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1843, and Sept. 10, 1842. The
citizens of Granville served notice that Garrison was not
welcome there, so no meeting was actually announced for
central Ohio; see Ibid., Sept. 24, 1842.
On September 30, however, the Liberator announced that Garrison was unable to make the trip, probably because of the serious illness of an alcoholic brother who was living with him, so the Ohioans' plans for a major effort on behalf of moral suasion in 1842 had to be adjusted. October was nonetheless busy.

The Oakland convention, to which all abolitionists were invited, convened on schedule and elected Abram Brooke its president. Two of its vice-presidents were women. The meeting's first item of business was the adoption of a tribute to the Ohio American society's ex-president, Milo D. Pettibone, who had died in office. It then moved to consider and adopt a large number of strongly worded resolutions. Among them was one avowing that slavery was a national institution rather than a sectional one because the United States Constitution provided for the suppression of slave rebellions and the return of fugitives and because the federal government tolerated slavery in the territories, made war on Florida Indians who protected fugitives, and denied to its antislavery citizens freedom of press, speech, freedom of thought, and equal protection of the law. 

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10 For details of the meeting, see ibid., Nov. 12, 1842. The vice-presidents were Hannah Brooke and Ruth Dugdale, whose husband was Joseph A., and Christian Donaldson and George Barrett of Hamilton and Delaware Counties.
and petition. Other resolutions held churches accountable for the sins of slaveholders with whom they associated, censured the Quakers for closing their meetings to abolitionists, pledged to aid runaway slaves, and rebuked abolitionists who exhibited racial bias. The delegates also encouraged support for the A.A.S.'s newspaper and for the postponed visits of Garrison, Kelley, and Frederick Douglass. And in a departure from the Ohio Liberty Party's position, the meeting urged antislavery voters to support only men pledged "to go for the immediate and complete abolition of slavery."

Many of the leaders of the abolition convention stayed in Oakland after it ended to participate in the founding of the Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform. Though it was not the beginning of a lasting or especially influential phase of abolitionism, the second meeting provides some insight into what Garrisonianism's leaders in Ohio were thinking about the nation's problems. The chairman was Edwin Fussell of Pendleton, Indiana. John A. Collins of Boston moved that the meeting organize "a society of inquiry for ascertaining the best means of reforming the

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\[^{11}\text{Details of this meeting are in Liberator, Feb. 17, 1843.}\]
present social systems," and Collins, Samuel Brooke, and Mary L. Gilbert were made a committee to draft a constitution. Meanwhile, a nominating committee of Collins, Samuel Brooke, and Marius R. Robinson reported a slate of officers which the gathering accepted. Abram Brooke was made president, Collins was corresponding secretary, and Abram Allen, Edward and Samuel Brooke, and Elizabeth Lukens were placed on the executive committee along with the other officers. Among the vice-presidents were eastern abolitionists Lucretia Mott and Maria Weston Chapman, and the list of associate corresponding secretaries—whom the meeting hoped would join the organization—included famous reformers Frederick Douglass, Charles L. Remond, Harriet Martineau, Parker Pillsbury, A. Bronson Alcott, Elizabeth Pease, Garrison, Abby Kelley, 12 Henry C. Wright, and George Thompson.

The preamble to the constitution adopted by the meeting blamed capitalism for the "toil, anxiety, disease, intolerance, poverty, intemperance, war, and slavery" which characterized civilized society. The human mind, they believed, was "in its nature progressive." Sects, parties, 12

12In his introduction to these minutes as they appeared in the Liberator, Collins acknowledged that many officers were elected without their permission, but they were persons thought to be "friendly to an investigation of the nature and influence of the present social system."
governments, creeds, and authorities were enemies of human progress. These men and women thought the initial step to reform should be organizing the social system in such a way that mankind would be "regarded as an equal brotherhood [and] joint proprietors of the soil and all products of human industry;" their new society was designed as a forum for discussing and planning that revolutionary change. Their constitution welcomed all human beings regardless of "sex, sect, condition, color, country, creed, or character," and their preamble was a brief for communism. It is little wonder they were uncomfortable with organizations which excluded women or abolitionists or non-resistants, nor could they have been expected to condone a political party or a government pledged to recognize the property rights of men to other men.

This flirtation with communism did not last long or involve many Garrisonians, but it reveals that a vital segment of the leadership of the emerging Garrisonian movement in Ohio was convinced that more was wrong with American society than could be repaired only through traditional political channels and only through the abolition of slavery.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid., Feb. 24, 1843. In October of 1843 Collins resigned from abolitionism to found a communistic settlement at Skaneateles in central New York; see John Humphrey Noyes, History of American Socialisms, with an introduction
For a time, the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society and the movements led by Bailey continued to co-exist amiably. Samuel Brooke worked as the soliciting agent for the Philanthropist, and Bailey's comments concerning the Oakland abolition meeting were friendly and conciliatory, though he criticized the American Anti-Slavery Society for opposing the Liberty Party when it was—he claimed—but an expression of the very antislavery sentiment which the A.A.S. had created.

Part of Bailey's lack of resentment of the other Ohio group was surely due to its insistence on helping the old state organization meet the debts it had incurred before the split,¹⁴ but soon his attitude changed. Bailey learned of a disturbing resolution adopted by the large convention the O.A.A.S. had held in October at Cadiz. The convention there had resolved that "the Ohio American Society, as such, by Mark Holloway (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), pp. 162-80. For a discussion of perfectionism and communitarianism, see John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly, XVII (Winter, 1965), 674-79.

¹⁴Philanthropist, Nov. 12, 1842. Valentine Nicholson, a colleague of Joseph Dugdale in Quaker reform and a devoted abolitionist, had also criticized the A.A.S. for calling for withdrawal from the world at a time when its original ideas had finally gained some popular support; ibid., Oct. 22, 1842.
is no more bound to approve or condemn the Liberty party, than it is bound to approve or condemn the Whig or Democratic party." Bailey was indignant, and he demanded an explanation. Abram Brooke responded that he understood from a Liberty man who was there that the resolution was meant to be conciliatory and that it had been proposed by a non-resistant and fought by John A. Collins. He went on, however, to say that he did not think the Liberty Party or any political party operating under the United States Constitution could faithfully apply true antislavery principles, but he admitted that many in the O.A.A.S. were Liberty men who disagreed with him. This exchange, intended to placate, instead began a serious strain between Brooke and Bailey.

The immediate source of misunderstanding was that Bailey interpreted the Cadiz resolution as placing the Liberty Party on the same low plane with the two major parties. He did not expect the O.A.A.S. to refrain from criticizing the Liberty Party, which he said was no more nearly perfect than the O.A.S.S., but the suggestion that the antislavery party was no more moral than were the

15 Ibid., Dec. 14, 1842. 16 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1843.
Democrats was hard for him to take. In rebuttal, he explained how he thought the federal government, constitutionally proscribed from directly interfering in the states, could bring about the end of slavery. The solution, which was not unique to him, assumed that there would someday be a rebellion of the slaves. If the Liberty Party were in power when such a rebellion occurred, it would, as any other party, be constitutionally required to "ensure domestic tranquility" and to guarantee each state a republican government. Liberty men would be unable conscientiously to restore the rebels to slavery, which would but re-establish the cause of the insurrection, so they would "by suppressing the violence of both master and slave, secure justice to both," presumably leaving the slaves free in the process.

Bailey's unspecific assurances of the potential of the Liberty Party did not convince Abram Brooke of its morality, but many of Brooke's colleagues in the O.A.A.S. rejected his position. Three members of the society's executive committee, including Joseph Dugdale, indicated that although they did not themselves vote, they did not approve of any suggestion that the three parties were on the

17 Ibid.
same moral plane. John O. Wattles, another executive committee member, and Samuel Brooke were delegates in December, 1842, to the Liberty Party Convention in Columbus.

The O.A.A.S., which hired a black man, Walter Yancy, as its first travelling lecturer, did not receive enough response to its executive committee's request for encouragement to hold a series of winter meetings, so it was unable to do much abolitionizing until the spring of 1843. The eastern Garrisonians who had sent John Collins to investigate the West were nevertheless pleased with the situation at the close of 1842, and the managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society reported that "a strong impulse" had been given to their cause in Ohio and western New York, "which needs but to be efficiently followed up, to help strenuously forward the moral revolution in which we are

18 Ibid., Jan. 25, 11, 1843.
19 Ibid., Nov. 12, 1842.
20 Collins had a severe attack of pleurisy on his trip back east. John Wattles blamed it upon Collins having to carry the lecturing burden when Garrison and Remond did not come west. Liberator, Nov. 11, 1842.
The Clinton County abolitionists kept the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society alive through the spring of 1843 with a series of meetings in Clinton and Warren Counties which resolved that it was the duty of Christians to "come out" of churches which hindered antislavery action. Abram Brooke reported that these gatherings advised the slaves of their duty to run away and Ohioans of their duty to help, and he claimed that many Ohioans who said they were anti-Garrison actually advocated Garrison's ideas without realizing it. Other residents of the state knowingly supported the Boston leader. In April, Amasa Walker of Oberlin sent twenty-five dollars to the Liberator; even though he disagreed with its stands on non-resistance and the Sabbath, he thought Garrison was "a great and glorious leader in the most important movement of the

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21 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Oliver Johnson, 1843), p. 45. A Western New York American Anti-Slavery Society was founded at Rochester on November 15, 1842; Liberator, Jan. 6, 1843.

22 A. Brooke to Garrison, March 4, 1843, in Liberator, March 24, 1843. Brooke did not say how the slaves were to hear of their duty to flee.
"A. W." of Freeport wrote Garrison at approximately the same time to declare that the Methodist churches in his town, which had just finished a series of revivals, were "the bulwarks of crime, and an abomination in the eyes of the suffering slave, and of God."

Ohio's Garrisonians were determined to carry forward the movement they had rejuvenated the previous year. In May, a group of eleven men and women from among their largely Quaker leadership made the long trip from Ohio to New York for the anniversary of the A.A.S.; they rode in Abram Allen's large carriage named the LIBERATOR. Upon arrival they were welcomed by having two of their number, Abram Brooke and Indiana's Edwin Fussell, placed on the business committee, and another, John O. Wattles, on the

23 Ibid., April 21, 1843. Walker and Garrison had previously engaged in a written disagreement over the propriety of Oberlin's denial of admission to anyone who traveled on Sunday to arrive there; Garrison thought such a rule was discriminatory against Quakers, Walker that it did not require Quakers to do anything against their religion but only to refrain from doing something against others' scruples; ibid., July 15, Aug. 12, 1842.

24 Ibid., May 19, 1843.

25 Allen, an Irish-born weaver, rigged his wagon so that a bell rang every mile it went nearer freedom for slaves; it was used a great deal in various aspects of antislavery work. Seth Linton to W. H. Siebert, Sept. 4, 1892, in Wilbur Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
committee for nominations. They heard debate upon resolutions condemning voting and office-holding under America's pro-slavery constitution, which were not passed, and they voted upon a successful resolution to recommend that the A.A.S. executive committee hold a meeting of the society somewhere in Ohio during the summer or fall. 27

When the travelers returned home, they attended the eighth anniversary of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society, with which the Ohio Garrisonians were still on good terms. Dr. Brooke served on both the business and nominating committees of the meeting, and Bailey wrote that the question of affiliation with the A.A.S. was the only difference between the societies. This was not exactly accurate, as there were still no women active in running the old state society's affairs, and Bailey himself implicitly acknowledged the truth of the seceders' charges that the state society had become too political when he

26 Liberator, May 26, 1843. Brooke was chosen a vice-president, as were Herbert Williams, Robert Stewart, and Zephaniah Platt from Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. Among the managers chosen for Pennsylvania was Pittsburgh's Benjamin Bown; Ohio's were Robert Hanna, Amasa Walker, Joseph Dugdale, J. Wattles, David Galbreath, Elizabeth Robinson, Jesse Garretson, Lydia Irish, and A. Allen; from Indiana were E. Fussell and David Wilson, and from Illinois, Luther Birge.

27 Ibid. 28 Philanthropist, July 5, 1943.
wrote, "Our anniversaries are now what they were before the commencement of the Liberty movement. ...The society confined itself strictly to its proper object, the extinction of slavery everywhere, by means technically called moral...."  

Members of both societies got along well at the anniversary, and when the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society informed the abolitionists of the western states that it planned to coordinate a series of one hundred conventions in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, Bailey welcomed the suggestion and urged his readers to give the effort their wholehearted support. He was aware that many of the scheduled speakers were hostile to the Liberty Party, but he hoped exposure to Ohio's brand of Liberty-ism would change their minds; he also did not mind that the visitors would find in his state "many working abolitionists...who are not Liberty men, or who do not regard the [Liberty] movement with a favorable eye."  

Most of the eastern Garrisonians still harbored a bitter antipathy toward the Liberty Party. Maria Weston Chapman, for instance, in her public comments on Arnold Buffum's Free Labor Advocate welcoming "the 100" to

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29 Ibid. 30 Ibid., July 12, 1843.
Indiana, wrote that the third party, "as at present constituted, governed by the motives in which it originated, with...James G. Birney...for its presidential candidate" deserved constant exposure "that its evils may...be overruled for good." And privately, she wrote to a Philadelphian "...the western men will soon find out they can't be friends with us and our Lib. party opponents also."32

Despite such hostile attitudes, however, and in spite of a growing split within the Liberty Party leadership in Cincinnati,33 the series of conventions, which was conceived and planned by John A. Collins, served as but another example of the difference between the political

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31Liberator, Aug. 4, 1843.

32M. W. Chapman to J. Miller McKim, Oct. 22, 1843, J. Miller McKim Papers, Cornell University Library. McKim, who was not yet in accord with Garrison's non-voting ideas, replied that he did not like Chapman's accusations against the Liberty movement and correctly predicted that "our friends West of the mountains" would not agree with her either. McKim to Chapman, Nov. 6, 1843, Weston Family Papers, Boston Public Library.

abolitionists in the East and West. The reports which the lecturers sent back to their eastern colleagues often commended the true abolitionist nature of Ohio's Liberty Party men and the fact that they were not aligned with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and the managers of the sponsoring Massachusetts abolitionist organization reported that the "virulent opposition" given to the lecturers in New York by the Liberty leaders there was not duplicated in Ohio.

The lecturers were divided into two groups, each of which was scheduled to tour Ohio during August and to meet at Oakland early in September for the first anniversary of the host Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society. They were then to separate and spend most of that month in Indiana, returning to do another series of meetings in Ohio during October before moving into Pennsylvania in November on their way to the anniversary of the first decade of the A.A.S. The paid lecturers were George Bradburn, a Unitarian minister and until 1842 a Whig member of the Massachusetts

34 See Sidney H. Gay to Garrison, Aug. 17, 1843, in Liberator, Sept. 8, 1843.

35 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Oliver Johnson, 1844) p. 36. For the New York Liberty Press's objections to "the 100" and Abby Kelley's reply, see Liberator, Aug. 4, 1843.
legislature; 36 James Monroe and Jacob Ferris of New York; and the famous blacks Charles L. Remond and Frederick Douglass. Sidney H. Gay, who was to serve for a time as editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard, and William A. White, a Boston philanthropist who in 1844 resigned from the A.A.S. over its adoption of the disunion creed, 37 volunteered to serve at their own expense. With the exceptions of Remond and Douglass, these were not especially militant or outspoken men—none was a non-resistant—and with the same exceptions, they were almost universally well received in the West.

Gay, White, and Monroe, having left Douglass in Buffalo at a meeting of blacks, arrived in Ashtabula on August 11. Whig Congressman Joshua Giddings directed their successful tour of his home county. Gay reported that "the friends seemed to vie with each other in heaping upon


us kindness and attention...because we were abolitionists."

Their reception in nearby Warren was similar, with Whig leader Leiscester King serving as their host and accompanying them to Salem in Columbiana County just south of the Western Reserve, where he presided over "a glorious meeting" of nearly 1000 persons in a grove near town. Liberty Party men and non-resistants served together on the business committee of the Salem gatherings, which ended with another large meeting in the grove. Cyrus McNeely, a Liberty man, brought two horses and a barrooche for the travelers to use until the Oakland anniversary. The success at the Salem meeting, which the local paper described as "much the largest ever held" there by reformers, was significant in that it indicated, again according to the Village Register, that "the prevailing sentiment" of Salem was "becoming favorable to the objects of emancipation."

38 These representatives of the American Anti-Slavery Society did not advocate disunion or non-resistance--White even lectured on the political nature of slavery--; nonetheless

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38 Sidney H. Gay to Garrison, August 17, 1843, in Liberator, Sept. 8, 1843.

39 Salem (Ohio) Village Register, copied ibid., Sept. 22, 1843.

40 This is additional evidence that the A.A.S. was not during the early 1840's committed to the radical ideas which its critics accused it of demanding of its followers.
their appearance in Salem in 1843 marked the beginning of the emergence of Columbiana County as the center of Garrisonian abolitionism in the Old Northwest.

Oakland and Clinton Counties were still the home of the O.A.A.S., however, and the three anniversary meetings there early in September, even without Douglass and Remond, who had yet to catch up with their colleagues, were the high point of "the 100." The host society's financial problems had been complicated by the death of its president, and it had been unable to do very much during its initial year, but the scope of the series of which the anniversary meeting was a part was a favorable sign for the organization's future.

Joseph Dugdale, chairman pro tem, appointed George Bradburn to be head of the business committee, which included Easterners Monroe and Ferris, and he asked Abram Brooke to

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41 A letter from William A. White to Garrison written Sept. 6 details this group's activities between Salem and Oakland. White said that the crowd at Wooster was quite hostile, that houses in Ohio were surprisingly close together for there being so much land, and that many more women brought their small children to abolition meetings than in the East; see Liberator, Sept. 22, 1843.

42 Philanthropist, Oct. 4, 1843. The executive committee's report was erroneously printed in the midst of a report on a convention of blacks in Columbus.
Cyrus McNeely was elected to replace Milo Pettibone as president. The new recording and corresponding secretaries and the treasurer, Jesse and Lot Holmes and George Garretson, were all from Columbiana County, as were over half of the executive committee. The active leadership of the organization at its founding in 1842 was primarily from Clinton County; the election at this first anniversary was another reflection of the increasingly antislavery nature of Columbiana County.

The resolutions adopted by the meeting were not unique for Ohio abolition, but two did distinguish the O.A.A.S. from the O.S.A.S.: one supported the doctrines and measures of the A.A.S., and another recommended abstinence from the products of slave labor, an antislavery tactic which the O.S.A.S. had twice refused to support. The real excitement of the Oakland series came after the anniversary had ended, when Douglass and Remond finally

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Details of the anniversary are from ibid., Sept. 13, 1843. Among others on the business committee were ex-Senator Thomas Morris, Cyrus McNeely, and Esther Whinnery, who had quit the Friends Church because of its inaction on the slavery question; see ibid., June 12, 1843. The nominating committee also included Jane Donaldson McNeely, wife of Cyrus and a sister of Christian and Thomas Donaldson.
arrived. With but two hours notice, they assembled a crowd which Dr. Brooke estimated at near 1000 and made speeches which were given, in the words of a Presbyterian minister and Liberty Party man, "with a boldness and power which I have never seen surpassed." From there, the two hurried to join up with the others and began what turned out to be a tumultuous and exciting but dangerous tour of Indiana.

A resident of Steuben County, Indiana, had warned Garrison in March that his state was "asleep" on the slavery subject and that all that was being done there for man's redemption was by priests and politicians, who did not "think of humanity." Such a judgment may have been a bit harsh, but it was true that leadership of the state anti-slavery society had been assumed by a young lawyer named Stephen S. Harding, who, although he read the Liberator, Brooke sent a copy of this minister's letter, which had appeared in the Clinton Republican, to Garrison to try to show the truly antislavery nature of the western Liberty Party; Liberator, Oct. 13, 1843. For some reason, Brooke privately suspected that the men's late arrival at Oakland "happened through design," but he did not hint publicly of any disharmony; see Abram Brooke to Maria W. Chapman, Oct. 5, 1843, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

Prentice H. Evans to Garrison, March 20, 1843, in Liberator, April 14, 1843.

Someone gave Harding a copy of the paper, and he wrote asking to subscribe; S.S.H. to Garrison, March 16, 1843, ibid., April 7, 1843.
was primarily a politician. In addition, the Indiana Anti-Slavery Friends, whose Yearly Meeting was held in Newport on September 4, were not involved with "the 100," so there was little impetus within the state for concentrating on "moral suasion."  

White and Douglass arrived on September 14 in Pendleton, home of Dr. Edwin Fussell, who was in charge of the Indiana tour. They soon heard a rumor that a mob from nearby Columbus, Indiana, in White's words "a miserable, rum-drinking place," had threatened to break up their meetings, but Douglass spoke the next morning without incident, although to a crowd with some "strange looking men" in it. That afternoon, the Baptist church used that morning having been closed to them, White and Douglass held another meeting on the church's steps. What White called a "drunken mob" was there, but the gathering was broken up by

47 The same is true for Illinois, where William T. Allan of Peoria wrote Garrison on May 18 that abolition in the state was mainly a Liberty Party project and that he knew of only three persons there who subscribed to the Liberator. He named L. N. Ransom of Springfield as one; he himself was too poor to subscribe; ibid., Aug. 25, 1843. Ransom had earlier admitted being a "Garrisonian" and a non-resistant; ibid., May 26, 1843.

48 This account of the Pendleton riot is from a long letter from White to Garrison written Sept. 22 and printed ibid., Oct. 13, 1843. This was some eight years after similar treatment was meted out to Weld and his colleagues in Ohio.
showers of rain, not stones, and that evening some townspeople met and formally condemned the mob's insolence.

The abolitionists, encouraged by the evening meeting to think they were safe, scheduled their first meeting of the sixteenth for the woods near town. They had underestimated their opposition's tenacity. A mob quickly formed but withdrew, leaving some 100 men and 30 women to hear the speeches. Soon a group of thirty men, led by a man wearing a coonskin hat and another without shoes, attacked the group with eggs and stones; they met with no resistance—the women remained seated—and proceeded to dismantle the speaker's stand. There probably would have been no further trouble had not Douglass incorrectly thought William White had been knocked to the ground. Douglass rushed with a club to his friend's defense, but the weapon was taken from him, and a crowd of ten men yelling "'Kill the damn nigger'" caught him and was beating him when White arrived and prevented a man from continuing to hit Douglass over the head. White's hat saved him from serious injury when a rock hit his head. Soon a crowd arrived and the violence ended. Douglass appeared to be seriously hurt but he was able and willing to lecture the next day. That evening an armed watch protected Dr. Fussell's home, where
White and Douglass were staying.

The mob's success "called up the devilish spirit," which according to Sidney Gay, "animates so large a portion of the people" of Indiana, and despite a few peaceful meetings, the threat of violence hung over the rest of the tour there. Remond was afraid to go to Indianapolis and unable to travel openly without being insulted and threatened. The two black lecturers were persecuted most, but all of them were glad to return to the more friendly soil of Ohio. Dr. Fussell, fearful for his life, fled Indiana and moved to Chester County, Pennsylvania, and the Garrisonians did not make another serious effort to bring Indiana abolitionists into their fold for nearly a decade.

Back in Ohio, Remond was the main speaker at a meeting of blacks in Cincinnati, where according to Garrisonian Sarah Ernst "there was no society of any kind among any class of antislavery people" until she started one in the form of a ladies sewing circle in 1843.

51 Philanthropist, Nov. 10, 1843.
52 She excluded from this generalization organizations devoted to freedmen. Sarah Otis Ernst to Ann Warren Weston, July 28, 1850, Weston Papers, B.P.L.
Douglass was well received in New Lisbon, where the executive committee of the O.A.A.S. tried unsuccessfully to get him to accept a year's appointment as its main lecturer, and he was equally popular in Putnam after he made a speech there on his way into Pennsylvania.

By the time the Easterners reached Pittsburgh, only Douglass and Remond were still healthy enough to speak, and they made an extremely favorable impression. According to the anti-Garrisonian Spirit of Liberty, more was done "to push forward the great and glorious cause" in a few days "than could have been hoped for in months, by any other instrumentality." The same paper reported Douglass to be the better speaker of the two, but not by much, and it claimed that together they did more than any white men could

53 New Lisbon Advocate in Liberator, Nov. 17, 1843.

54 Samuel Brooke to G. Bailey, Dec. 22, 1843, in Cincinnati Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, Dec. 27, 1843. Bailey's paper had assumed this name and extended its attention to other reforms in addition to abolition with the issue of October 18, 1843, which declared that "the radical error of this nation, and of this age is, that woman is regarded as an inferior, ... weak and altogether dependent."

ever do to combat the city's racial prejudice. "The 100"
in the Old Northwest ended as they began, on a positive note,
and Garrison proclaimed that the lecturers had "planted the
seeds of a rich harvest yet to be gathered in...."  

Garrison later concluded that "the 100" had not
received the attention they deserved, especially in the East,
so he asked Sidney Gay to write a lengthy article reflecting
on the trip. Gay complied, and Garrison published his effort
in the Liberator of January 19 and 26. Gay had praise and
hope for Ohio, but he called Indiana a "mob state" which was
socially and morally backward. He had found, as Bailey
predicted, that the West was more advanced politically than
the East, but he thought it had done less to expose the
corrupt church. He explained by suggesting that in the
fluid western society the "time-serving priesthood" had
less influence over the population than in the "more advanced
and fixed state of society" in the East, and that there was

56 Liberator, Dec. 1, 1843.

57 Ibid., Dec. 22, 1843. "The 100," financed from a
special fund administered by Francis Jackson, turned a small
profit for the Massachusetts society. This would not have
been true had Gay and White been paid, or had Thomas Sturge
of England, the single largest donor, not given over $400.00
of the $1810.29 collected; Massachusetts Anti-Slavery
Society, Twelfth Annual Report..., p. 71, and Liberator,
Dec. 22, 1843.
therefore less need to battle the pro-slavery church, especially since "the anti-slavery faith has taken deep root in the hearts of too large a portion of the people" for it to be uprooted by the "designing priesthood." He also wrote that because the Westerners had not, like the eastern Garrisonians, had to endure the ordeal of "the treachery of professed friends" or such "deadly hatred and opposition" from the Church,

Western abolitionism...and Eastern 'old organization' are...as nearly identical in character, as, under the differing circumstances of the two people, they can be at this day.

Gay meant this observation to be a compliment, but he would perhaps have been more accurate and complimentary had he just pictured the Ohioans--for it was really only they of whom he wrote--as unique. They combined the Easterners' enthusiasm and dedication to principle with a tolerance for other factions in the antislavery movement which many eastern Garrisonians could not muster; at least in the early 1840's, they were perhaps a more effective force for moral suasion because of the breadth of the movement within which they maintained an influence.

The cooperation in Ohio between the Liberty men and the men and women who emphasized moral means was strengthened
during 1842 and most of 1843 by Gamaliel Bailey's sympathy with the communistic thinking and experiments which characterized many of the leaders of the O.A.A.S. Even if, as charged by William Birney, Bailey had become "overbearing and dictatorial" since he began to publish his paper independently, he still controlled the paper most read by Ohio's antislavery people. When he was no longer organically bound to an abolition society, however, he did begin to advocate the rights of women and workers and to attack the excesses he saw in capitalism. He refused to join any of the communitarian experiments which sprang up around the state, but he was interested in the work of the Utopian followers of Charles Fourier. He befriended many members of the Ohio Phalanx, defended them publicly from charges of infidelity, and allowed them and other "associationists" use of his paper to publicize their activities. Bailey's

58 William Birney was also angry because Bailey was opposed to his father's being the nominee of the Liberty Party; see W. Birney to J. G. Birney, Dec. 28, 1844, in Dumond, ed., Birney Letters, II, 892-94.

59 This analysis of Bailey is essentially that of his biographer, Joel Goldfarb, who discusses at some length Bailey's use of the Philanthropist to support general reform; "The Life of Gamaliel Bailey Prior to the Founding of the National Era: The Orientation of a Practical Abolitionist (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1958), pp. 293-305.

For a suggestive analysis of the popularity of
position on these matters gave the social reformers of the Ohio American society a vehicle through which they could express themselves and thereby kept the Ohio antislavery movement from squabbling over freedom of the abolition press.

Dr. Brooke was still the spokesman for the social reformers among the abolitionists. On August 16, 1843, the Philanthropist published a long and clear essay in which he advocated a more comprehensive reform than that which was inherent in antislavery. Like Garrison some years before, Brooke thought that slavery was "but one variety of the bitter fruit, which our false and unchristian social institutions necessarily produce." Garrison and most of his co-workers rejected a communistic solution in favor of one based on non-resistance, but Brooke and his friends in the Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform had decided by 1843 that society could be made more humane by the use of small communities in which property was held in common. Garrison thought that the use of force was both the root of the country's problem and the immediate protector of slavery; Brooke thought private property was the same evil influence.

Unlike most political abolitionists, though, both men believed American society was in need of a drastic revolution in basic ideas and social relationships.\textsuperscript{60}

There was naturally some controversy over Brooke's hostility to private property, and some abolitionists suggested that this new interest in social reform would dull its advocates' ardor for antislavery work. Valentine Nicholson, a Quaker colleague of Brooke's, denied the intimation and suggested that community living would in fact strengthen people's abilities and desire to work for the slaves "far beyond what they could experience by remaining in the selfish and anti-Christian custom of separate interests.

\textsuperscript{60}Details of Brooke's plan are not clear, but he did reject in this essay the model advocated by Fourier because he thought it "acknowledged the possibility of men having separate interests" and thereby varied "from nature and Divine law." He also refused to join a communistic experiment being led by his brother Edward near Marlboro in Stark County because it would not, as he did, completely abjure the use of money; see John Humphrey Noyes, \textit{History of American Socialisms}, introduction by Mark Holloway (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), pp. 309-15.

Garrisonians Abraham Allen and Valentine Nicholson were involved in communes in east-central Ohio in the early 1840's; see \textit{ibid.}, 317-27 and William H. Hilles to Hugh Hilles, April, 1844, and Oct. 12, 1845, in "The Community Movement' in Jay County, Indiana and in Clark, Logan, Clinton, and Champaign Counties, Ohio: Excerpts from the papers of the Dugdale and Hilles Families...,” Typescript, Ohio Historical Society.
for every family." He also denied that he and his
communitarian allies would ever bring to abolition meetings
anything but abolition subjects.  

It was not, then, the question of the ideal
organization of society which precipitated the abrupt end
of the cooperation Drs. Brooke and Bailey had enjoyed with
each other; rather, it was the old and almost forgotten
issue of the transfer in the spring of 1840 of the Emancipator
from the American Anti-Slavery Society to the anti-
Garrisonian New York City Abolition Society. In mid-
November of 1843, after "the 100" conventions had ended in
Ohio, Bailey wrote that the Emancipator under the editor-
ship of Joshua Leavitt had "attained and maintained a very high
character." He regretted the Liberator's continued
hostility to the paper which had formerly been the A.A.S.'s
organ and which Bailey claimed had done more "to expose the
aggressions of the Slave Power, the evil influence of
slavery..., and the security of the political parties" than
any other single paper.  

Dr. Brooke reacted immediately
to Bailey's not so subtle denigration of the Standard and
the Liberator, and Bailey, claiming to be surprised, printed
his letter anonymously in the hope that Brooke would thus

61 Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, Nov. 15, 1843.
62 Ibid.
Brooke said he could not believe Bailey was "unacquainted with the fraudulent and dishonorable manner" in which Leavitt came into possession of the *Emancipator*. Concluding that Bailey's "political affinities" had become stronger than "the force of moral obligation," Brooke took the surprisingly drastic step of cancelling his subscription to the *Philanthropist*. Bailey replied that he had not been shown the dishonesty of which Brooke spoke and that he still did not want to bring eastern quarrels west; he was also upset at what seemed to him to be Brooke's questioning his right to free speech. 63

Brooke countered by insisting that he be identified as the author of the complaint. He said that Bailey had denied space in his paper to a request by the Clinton County Anti-Slavery Society that he publish the versions of the *Emancipator* episode put forward by both the A.A.S. and the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and thus negated his suggestion that it was Brooke who was denying the right of free speech. Brooke added that Bailey's neutrality

63 Ibid., Nov. 22, 1843. Before they left the A.A.S., some of Garrison's opponents quietly transferred the *Emancipator* to a society under their control; see above, p. 132.
was false because Bailey had no evidence for his accusation that the Garrisonians' charges against the *Emancipator* were "unwarrantable."  

The editor was hurt by his "old friend's" charges of dereliction of principle. He said that, as Brooke charged, he had not examined the eastern controversy "with a critical eye" because he did not think it was pertinent; he also said that he had written the Clinton abolitionists that he would rather not print the versions of the controversy as requested but that he would do so if they insisted, which they did not do. Bailey also repeated that he could get along with all abolitionists, but Dr. Brooke's response indicated otherwise.

Brooke withdrew his statement that Bailey knowingly justified Leavett's "knavery." He then charged, however, that the editor was guilty of the even more serious error of having passed judgment against the A.A.S. without having examined the evidence. He also denied Bailey's suggestion that a personal controversy between Garrison and Leavitt motivated the continued wrangling, and he said that Garrison, whom he did not recognize as his "leader," was no more

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responsible for the conflict than any other member of the A.A.S.\textsuperscript{66}

This ended the public exchange on the matter, and presumably Brooke stopped receiving the \textit{Weekly Herald} and \textit{Philanthropist}, but Bailey, having openly offended supporters of the A.A.S., helped to complete the ideological split by denouncing Garrison and others for advocating disunion. Bailey, whose subscription list rose in proportion to the decline of non-political antislavery material in his paper, did not appreciate the symbolic significance of Garrison's ideals; he said disunion was impractical (because there was no logical geographical point of division and because the "free West" needed commercial ties both south and east) and unnecessary (because the constitution was antislavery and all that was needed were men who would obey it).\textsuperscript{67}

As Bailey attacked the idea of disunion, the annexation of Texas was coming closer to fruition. A

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Ibid.}, Jan. 3, 1844. Bailey was also having problems from within the Liberty Party, especially from William Birney and Thomas Morris; see W. Birney to J. G. Birney, Jan. 12 and Feb. 26, 1844, in Dumond, ed., Birney Letters, II, 774, 794-95.

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Weekly Herald and Philanthropist}, March 27, 1844. The paper's subscription list doubled during the year prior to the beginning of the 9th volume on September 18, 1844.
great many abolitionists saw annexation as proof that the slavery interests controlled the national government, and the idea of disassociation from such a corrupt government—disunion—consequently gained favor. This was especially true among persons whose primary concern was for moral issues; the American Anti-Slavery Society, composed of just such people, at its anniversary in early May of 1843 voted to adopt as its motto 'NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS.' It also decided to publicize this doctrine throughout the North, specifically condemned the Liberty Party, and resolved

That secession from the present United States government is the duty of every abolitionist; since no one can take office, or throw a vote for another to hold office, under the United States Constitution, without violating his anti-slavery principles, and rendering himself an abettor of the slaveholder in his sins.68

There were no westerners present at this meeting, which chose vice-presidents from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, and managers from only Ohio and Indiana of the western states.69 Two of the lecturers who had canvassed the West for the A.A.S. before or during "the 100"—William A. White and George Bradburn—were among the members of the A.A.S. who had serious objections to these resolutions, while three others—Gay, Collins, and

68Liberator, May 24, 1844. 69Ibid.
Remond--supported them. So did James Boyle, who had left Ohio in 1842 on Bailey's advice with a letter from his former boss introducing him to Garrison. It was not clear, then, how the O.A.A.S. would respond to the new position of its parent society, although the Liberty Party and the Ohio State Society could hardly have been expected to be overjoyed.

The Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society's initial reactions to the disunion position so strongly encouraged by the A.A.S. are obscure; Bailey no longer felt obligated to give that organization much space in his paper. The first notice of the O.A.A.S. anniversary scheduled for Salem on June 11 appeared on the last page of Bailey's paper of June 26, and it was only in the form of Bailey's summary of a note he received from a participant. Fortunately,

70 These men's attitudes were revealed in their actions at the A.A.S. or at the New England Anti-Slavery Convention in late May; ibid., May 24 and June 7, 14, 1843. Bailey's letter to Garrison, written April 15, 1839, is in Garrison Papers, B.P.L.; see also A. W. Weston to Deborah Weston, Oct. 22, 1842, in Weston Papers, B.P.L., and Goldfarb, "Life of Gamiel Bailey," p. 466, n. 16. Bradburn later joined the Liberty Party; see Bradburn to John B. Swanton, Aug. 9, 1844, in Liberator, Aug. 16, 1844.

71 The two groups held their summer conventions in Stark County in early June, with essentially the same men active in both; see Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, June 19, 26, and July 10, 1843.
Bailey mentioned the event which is crucial to this study—that the meeting had laid on the table for discussion at the next anniversary a motion to dissolve the relationship between the O.A.A.S. and the A.A.S. There was clearly pressure within the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society to reject what Bailey called "the late extraordinary proceedings and resolves of the parent society," and Bailey was glad the two state abolition societies were pledged to a joint series of conventions during the summer. United antislavery action in Ohio was still alive in 1843, but it was not prospering.
CHAPTER IX

GARRISONIAN ABOLITIONISM FINDS A HOME

IN THE WEST, 1845-1846

A number of abolitionists at the anniversary of the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society in 1844 objected to that organization's maintaining its organic tie with the American Anti-Slavery Society and its new creed of "no union with slaveholders," but they were badly outnumbered and did not persist in their objection. The O.A.A.S., still allied to the Garrisonians, was largely inactive during the fall, and Samuel Brooke, who had reluctantly consented to serve temporarily as the society's general agent in addition to his duties as financial agent for the struggling Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society, agreed to be fired from that

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1 This information is contained in a letter written by Samuel Brooke, one of the minority; (Salem, Ohio) Village Register, July 8, 1845.
The executive committee was not idle, however; it secured the services of the black abolitionist William Wells Brown for some three months, and it planned for a major effort in 1845 to publicize the doctrines of the parent society.

Ohio's supporters of the American Anti-Slavery Society knew they were few, but they believed early in 1845—as they were to continue to believe for some fifteen years—that only "efficient labor" was needed to bring about a decided increase in popular support for Garrisonian ideas. Leaders of the O.A.A.S. began efforts to strengthen their cause in a way which reflects their rejection of the movement to popularize abolitionism by removing from it so-called "extraneous" issues: they invited two women lecturers to attend their next anniversary. One of them, Abby Kelley, had been the precipitant of the 1840 split in the

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2This version of Brooke's short tenure is Brooke's, but it was approved, when it appeared in response to a less flattering explanation, by James Barnaby, an officer of the O.A.A.S.; see ibid. and Minute Book, Western Anti-Slavery Society, 1845-1857, Executive Committee Report of 1845, Library of Congress. (microfilm copy, Ohio State University Library, Columbus.) This minute book was begun in 1852 by the society's secretary, the original minutes having been lost; its essential accuracy is indicated by its similarity to reports published in the (Salem, Ohio) Anti-Slavery Bugle.

3Minute Book, Western Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Report, 1845.
Miss Kelley, who was to marry the notorious "comeouter" Stephen Symonds Foster in the fall, decided to accept the invitation to spend the summer in Ohio, but the Ohioans were not as successful in their attempt to procure Garrison himself for the effort. The person who urged Garrison to come was a "voting abolitionist" who, although not a member of the Liberty Party, defended that organization, which was thriving in Ohio, as lacking the "bitter invective" against the A.A.S. which dominated the eastern branch of the party.

Garrison did not choose personally to assist this attempt to expand the influence of the A.A.S. into the West, but his newspaper did carry the call for the anniversary and condemn Gamaliel Bailey for excusing "exceptions" to the United States Constitution's purely


5 See Abby Kelley to S. S. Foster, March 22, 1845, and S. S. Foster to Galen Foster, May 10, 1845, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

6 W. B. Irish to W. L. Garrison, April 25, 1845, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

7 Liberator, April 11, 1845.
antislavery nature; the \textit{Liberator} also asked that the \textit{Philanthropist} cease its misrepresentation of the A.A.S. as being under Garrison's personal control.

While the leadership of the Ohio American Society was preparing for its summer efforts, Ohio's other antislavery activists were also busy. During the Old School Presbyterians' General Assembly at Cincinnati, two antislavery veterans, the Revs. James Dickey and Samuel Crothers, led a Presbyterian Anti-Slavery Convention in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the General Assembly to bar slaveholders from Christian communion. More significant, however, was a large gathering of supporters of the Liberty Party in Cincinnati on June 11. James G. Birney was chosen president of the South and Western Liberty Convention by vote of the nearly 2000 delegates who came from Kentucky, Virginia, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, and, of course, Ohio. Other notables in attendance included the Revs. William Jackson and

\textit{Ibid.}, May 2, 1845. Bailey's biographer overemphasizes the role of "The Garrisonians" in "dispatching" Abby Kelley to Ohio to stave off a "crisis" in 1845. There is little evidence that these efforts by the O.A.A.S. were directed from the East. See Joel Goldfarb, "The Life of Gamaliel Bailey Prior to the Founding of the National Era: The Orientation of a Practical Abolitionist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1958), p. 288.

\textit{Liberator}, May 30, 1845.
John Pierpont of Massachusetts, the Rev. Edward Smith of Pittsburgh, Stephen S. Harding of Indiana, Illinois' Owen Lovejoy, and Salmon P. Chase, Samuel Lewis, and the Rev. Dr. William Brisbane of Ohio. The assembly rejected the idea of forming a Mississippi Valley Anti-Slavery Society and chose instead to focus on the traditional political tactics of the Liberty Party. There was little reason left for the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society to continue its efforts. The size of its anniversary a week later in Granville, where Garrison had been unwelcome the year before, was substantially reduced by poor planning, rain, and perhaps most importantly, by the competition of the like-minded Cincinnati convention.

The state antislavery societies in the rest of the Old Northwest likewise continued to be absorbed by the Liberty Party during the mid-1840's. The Illinois Anti-Slavery Society, which was far in debt, elected no officers after

10 (Cincinnati)Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, June 18, 25, 1845. Indiana's Liberty Party leader, S. S. Harding, continued at least into 1846 to subscribe to the Liberator and to pray for Garrison to continue his "eternal hostility to the slave power;" see S. S. Harding to W. L. Garrison in Liberator, Jan. 9, 1846.

11 Ibid., July 2, 9, 1845.
1846, and the prospering Liberty Association of Chicago adopted a strongly anti-Garrisonian stance. The Indiana Anti-Slavery Society, which was still meeting jointly with the Liberty Party, did not function as an entity after 1847, and most of the organized abolitionists in Michigan and western Pennsylvania had already abandoned their non-political efforts.

Ohio's Garrisonians, however, their center by mid-decade having moved to Columbiana County, were undaunted by being out of step with the main body of western anti-slavery agitation. They planned to begin the third annual meeting of their Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society less than a week before the big Liberty Convention was to be held in distant Cincinnati. The formal opening of the anniversary was scheduled for Thursday morning, June 5, 1845, in the town of New Lisbon, with Abby Kelley as featured speaker. Miss Kelley provided a preview of her rhetorical fireworks


13 (Chicago)Western Citizen, in Liberator, Feb. 19, 1847.


15 See above, pp. 221, 225.
in a speech on Wednesday evening. Handbills announcing her coming had led to considerable "low ridicule and remark" preceding her arrival, and use of the local Presbyterian church, the town's largest, was denied her, despite the efforts of a committee of "highly respected gentlemen." Nevertheless, the crowded meetings proceeded peacefully and without the use of available rotten eggs. 16

In 1837, at the age of twenty-seven, Abby Kelley had abandoned teaching school in Massachusetts and followed the Grimké sisters into the dangerous field of antislavery lecturing. 17 By 1845, she was an experienced veteran of the trials of abolitionism and a firm supporter of Garrison's doctrines; her performance in Ohio in 1845, along with those of other Easterners who worked with her and her local supporters, accomplished their object—the beginning of active promotion of the idea of disunion in the West.

The Disciple Church where the meetings were finally to be held was small, so an awning was erected outside the

16 New Lisbon (Ohio) Aurora in Liberator, June 27, 1845.

church to protect the expected overflow. The five hundred men and women who turned out for the occasion represented all parties and religions; they included "a considerable number of colored persons,"\(^{18}\) who were no doubt encouraged by the labors of William Wells Brown on the sponsoring society's behalf.

The meetings themselves were tumultuous, as most persons present had not had prior exposure to the vigorous rhetoric of disunionism offered by Miss Kelley and her companion, Giles Stebbins. The executive committee of the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society was clearly anxious to lead the membership to accept the extreme doctrines of the parent society, else it would not have paid Miss Kelley's way west or dismissed the ideologically wavering Samuel Brooke as the society's general agent, but perhaps even the committee was unprepared for what followed the opening of the anniversary.

After the routine business of the morning session of the convention and the election of officers--none of the vice-presidents elected in 1844 came--the visitors moved

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\(^{18}\) **Aurora** in *Liberator*, June 27, 1845. The Salem (Ohio) *Village Register*, June 10, 1845, confirmed the attendance estimate.
quickly to introduce their ideas. Stebbins proposed a resolution which reflected Garrison's charge that the American Constitution was but "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell" because of its Three-Fifths Compromise, its extension of the life of the slave trade, its fugitive slave provision, and its authorization of force to put down slave rebellions. Heated debate concerning this resolution extended into a number of other sessions, with Miss Kelley distinguishing herself in its defense, but it was eventually tabled permanently.

Defeat of Stebbins's resolution did not signal the final rejection of the basis of the Garrisonian idea, however, despite the society's reaction to the divided loyalties of its newly re-elected president, Cyrus McNeely, who resigned from his term after but two days. In a letter addressed to the convention, he stated that he would serve only if the society understood that he saw no incongruity in an advocate of the Liberty Party's serving as head of an organization affiliated with the American Anti-Slavery Society. The society re-elected him again, aware that he was an active supporter of the Liberty Party, but later

19 The complete report of this meeting is in Salem (Ohio) Anti-Slavery Bugle, June 20, 1845.
that same day, clearly swayed by Kelley's presence, the society adopted resolutions which removed it forever from the realm of antislavery moderation.

The business committee, of which Stebbins was a member, reported five resolutions for consideration. The four of them which were adopted placed the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society in a position decidedly hostile to the traditional party-oriented political activity undertaken by the mainstream of the antislavery movement throughout the West and much of the rest of the North. The accepted resolutions reflect Abby Kelley's influence:

(1) To hasten the day of liberty "...we will rely upon the omnipotent power of truth...to modify and radically change the pro-slavery sentiment."

(2) Since a political party large enough to help abolish slavery and still rely upon moral truth "is in the very nature of things impossible, therefore our motto should be in the very words of a circular signed by James G. Birney in 1838 'to form an alliance with no political party but to enstamp our principles upon all' "

(3) Men who refuse to vote for other men whom they deem unworthy as politicians but with whom they take communion, "as do many members of the Liberty Party," shall be condemned for the hypocrisy of setting up higher standards in politics than in religion.

(4) The Federal Union, based on the United States Constitution, is "the great bulwark of slavery, involving the North equally with the South in the guilt of slave-holding; and that it is the duty of every true friend of humanity, to give it no sanction or allegiance; but
adopting the motto of 'no union with slaveholders,' to use every effort to bring about a peaceful dissolution of the union...."\(^{20}\)

It was the fourth resolution, with its call for "disunion" and "no union with slaveholders" which most succinctly identifies at least half of these Ohioans as Garrisonians, for it pledged them to "come out" of churches and governments with organic ties to slavery or to laws recognizing slavery's existence. Editors of area newspapers were impressed by Miss Kelley's abilities as a public speaker, but they were not so laudatory of the content of her speeches. The Ohio Patriot correctly perceived the heart of the convention's action and proclaimed that the Union must be preserved, and the New Lisbon Western Palladium said Kelley's resolutions were "treasonable" and "disgraceful for an American citizen to advocate."\(^{22}\)

Gamaliel Bailey's paper hardly mentioned the meetings.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{20}\) The unadopted resolution was a pledge to "expose" corrupt churches and clergymen; its rejection supports the impression that western abolitionists tended to be less hostile to organized religion than many Easterners.

\(^{21}\) The only other treatment of this convention incorrectly states that the meeting "refused to sanction 'the peculiar doctrines' of Garrison; see Goldfarb, "Life of Gamaliel Bailey," p. 288.

\(^{22}\)Copied in Liberator, June 27, 1845; Western Palladium, June 12, 1845.

\(^{23}\)Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, July 2, 1845.
The convention ended on Saturday, but the agitation against slavery did not. The Sunday stagecoach brought from the East two abolitionists who were to be in many ways the heart of the western movement. Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock, the other woman lecturer invited by the executive committee, had been recruited into the movement by Abby Kelley and had by 1845 become an accomplished advocate of abolition. Hitchcock's companion was an obscure young Philadelphian who had for a few years been active in that city's reform organizations; in 1839, Benjamin Smith Jones had served on the executive committee of the American Free Produce Association, a Quaker dominated group which promoted the consumption of goods produced by free labor, and he publicly supported the New England Non-resistance Society. He had spent all of 1842 and over half of 1843 as a paid lecturing agent for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Subsequently, he was dismissed from the Philadelphia

24 Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones (1813-1896) grew up amidst the currents of reform which flowed over New York's "burned-over district." She devoted much of her adult life to abolitionism and women's rights, with most of her efforts focused upon Ohio, where she lived and worked with her husband Benjamin for some fifteen years after their arrival in 1845. See Keith E. Melder, "Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones," in James, ed., Notable American Women, II, 285-86.
Monthly Meeting of (Orthodox) Quakers for "disunity,"
a general offense that could well have been charged against
him because of his activity in the reform movements of the
day.  

Hitchcock and Jones held an antislavery meeting at
New Lisbon's overflowing Protestant Methodist Church on
Monday evening, before the town's organized churches had, in
the words of the Aurora's editor, "ceased writhing under the
awful flagellations of Abby Kelley," and shortly after two
local ministers had denounced the American Anti-Slavery
Society as an organization of infidels. The Aurora reported
that Jane Hitchcock was "mild and ladylike," but the
meeting refueled the turmoil and led to threats to tar and
feather both speakers.

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25 Jones died in 1862 at the age of 49. For his
obituary, see Liberator, Oct. 24, 1862; for his Pennsylvania
reform activities, see ibid., Nov. 15 and Dec. 27, 1839, and
William Cohen, "The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society"
his birth, parentage, and dismissal by the Orthodox Quakers
are in William Wade Henshaw, ed., Encyclopedia of American
Quaker Genealogy, Vol. II (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers,
1938), 383, 749.

Like many abolitionists, Jones wrote poetry. He
published The North Star, a small volume of poems, and a
book of his own verse about abolitionists; see B. S. Jones to
William L. Garrison, May 27, 1845, Garrison Papers, BPL,
and [Benjamin S. Jones], Abolitioneties; or Remarks on Some
of the Members of the Pennsylvania State Anti-Slavery
Society...1840 (n.p.: n.p., [18407]).

26 New Lisbon Aurora in Liberator, June 27, 1845.
The executive committee of the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society and the Easterners Jones, Hitchcock, and Kelley were not united concerning summer and fall strategy. Most agreed to the publication of an abolition newspaper, but Jones and Kelley were unhappy with the committee's reluctance to attack the Liberty Party and with its willingness to hire as editor Milo Townsend, a man whose chief qualifications, according to Kelley, were his being "nice," dedicated, and unemployed. Townsend was not hired, however, and while Kelley tried to get either of the noted abolitionists Parker Pillsbury or Oliver Johnson as editor, Benjamin Jones presided over distribution of the initial number of the Anti-Slavery Bugle, a four page newspaper which was to represent the Ohio Garrisonians for over fifteen years.

Neither Pillsbury nor Johnson was available, so Jones rather unintentionally became the editor; he was aided by Jane Hitchcock after her recovery from an illness which had plagued her first months in the West. The paper moved within Columbiana County from New Lisbon to Salem.

27 Benjamin S. Jones to Abby Kelley, July 14, 1845, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; Abby Kelley to Maria W. Chapman, July 17, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

28 Abby Kelley to Maria Weston Chapman, July 17, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.
after six issues, and Salem served thereafter as home for both the Bugle and the society.

The Bugle had for its motto "No Union With Slaveholders." The executive committee of the O.A.A.S. recognized that it was assuming a "great responsibility" in issuing such a radical newspaper as its official organ; there was in fact disagreement enough within the group so that it soon turned control of the paper over to a publishing committee technically independent of the organization. The paper, pledged to advocate the doctrines of the A.A.S., was to be edited by Jones and Hitchcock, who soon married and with their general agent, a Hicksite Quaker merchant named James Barnaby, Jr., published weekly a newspaper quite as demanding in its doctrine as Garrison's own Liberator. The executive committee eventually decided to end the mainly technical distinction and to readopt the Bugle as its

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29 Anti-Slavery Bugle, July 25, 1845.

30 Ibid., Aug. 15, 1845.

That the Bugle survived its shaky start was one of a number of good omens to the Ohio Garrisonians. Samuel Brooke, once fired as general agent of the O.A.A.S. for his sympathy toward the Liberty Party, abandoned his allegiance to Gamaliel Bailey and the Philanthropist and devoted his extraordinary energy to the O.A.A.S. and its war of words against political antislavery; his example was followed by half of the executive committee of Bailey's Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society. Meanwhile, the Easterners, two of whom were salaried by the A.A.S. and all of whom were in the West on Abby Kelley's request, were engaged in spreading the doctrines of the parent society through the state which had been so well "abolitionized" by Theodore D. Weld's band of "70" evangelists nearly a decade before.

The American Anti-Slavery Society had of course changed since 1835. In fact its envoys' message in 1845

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32 Bugle, Oct. 8, 1847. Some of the Joneses' friends were surprised that their editing was a success; see Stephen A. Foster to J. Miller McKim, Dec. 28, 1845, J. Miller McKim Papers, Cornell University Library.

33 Bugle, Aug. 29, 1845.

34 Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock to Maria W. Chapman, Oct. 16, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

35 Abby Kelley to Maria W. Chapman, July 17, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.
was considerably more extreme than that heard in the "100" lectures held through the West three years earlier. Jones and Hitchcock settled in New Lisbon, worked on the Bugle, held meetings in the vicinity, and discovered quickly that the successful anniversary would lead nowhere unless "a hotter anti-slavery fire" could be built to maintain the excitement Kelley had created. The others moved into the Western Reserve, where they were warmly received by the area's antislavery Whigs and other persons who shared their opposition to slavery and to the Liberty Party.

Kelley and Giles Stebbins were given some relief from their arduous schedule by the arrival of Kelley's fiance, Stephen Symonds Foster. They focused their efforts upon obtaining subscribers for the Bugle, both because they thought the paper vital and because they found money hard to raise. As had the lecturers during "the 100" conventions in 1842, Stebbins found the Liberty Party men less objectionable than their eastern party allies. He was especially

36 B. S. Jones and J. E. Hitchcock to Abby Kelley, July 14, 1845, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

37 Joel Goldfarb suggests that the Whigs in the Reserve were still blaming the Liberty Party for Henry Clay's defeat in the Presidential election of 1844; "Life of Gamaliel Bailey," p. 289.

38 Abby Kelley to Maria W. Chapman, July 17, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.
pleased with the work Congressman Joshua Giddings had done to "spread light" throughout the Western Reserve in regard to the evils of slavery; he was less pleased with the state of the Westerners' agitation against undercommitted churches and clergymen, whom he branded "our most deadly foe."

Miss Kelley was forcibly expelled from the Orthodox Friends' Yearly Meeting at Mt. Pleasant early in September, and unknown persons tried to stone Jones and Hitchcock some weeks later, but most of the opposition the Garrisonians encountered in northeastern Ohio in 1845 was not physical. Stebbins found the people of the growing town of Akron too absorbed in business affairs to pay much attention to him.

The more eloquent team of Abby Kelley and Stephen S. Foster, however, attracted substantial notice in and near the city

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39Giles Stebbins to W. L. Garrison, July 9, and Aug. 6, 1845, in Liberator, July 25, and Aug. 29, 1845. For opposition to Stebbins's speeches see Massillon Gazette in Liberator, Sept. 19, 1845.

40For Stebbins's recollections of this part of his reform career, see Giles B. Stebbins, Upward Steps of Seventy Years (New York: United States Book Company, 1890), pp. 86-90.

41Milo Townsend to W. L. Garrison, Sept. 8, 1845, ibid., Sept. 19, 1845.

42Stebbins to Garrison, Aug. 6, 1845, ibid., Aug. 29, 1845.
of Cleveland. Their attacks upon the Liberty Party during a series of meetings in early August drew no response from the party's leaders, some of whom were present. They did touch off an interesting war of political rhetoric from which only Congressman Giddings emerged sympathetic to the visitors. The Congressman, in whose home at least Stebbins stayed, appeared with the disunionists on their tour of his district. Enemies of his party quickly accused him of "aiding in the movements of those disorganizers and dissolutionists;" Miss Kelley was in fact quoted as having said Giddings privately deemed the Union a curse which "ought to be dissolved." A nearby Liberty Party newspaper, not content to see Giddings branded a Garrisonian, went to great lengths to deny a supposed Whig effort to "confound the principles and resources of the Liberty Party with those of the non-resistants...," who were among the Libertymen's "foulest detractors" and "bitterest enemies."

43 See "R" to W. L. Garrison, Aug. 15, 1845, ibid. Goldfarb contends that the Liberty men's silence was on orders from Gamaliel Bailey, who continued to publicly ignore the "Eastern" quarrel; "Life of Gamaliel Bailey," p. 288.

44 S. B. Hunter, in (Austinburg) Liberty Herald, copied from Cleaveland American, and C. T. Blakeslee and others in Cleaveland American, both copied by Liberator, Sept. 26, 1845.

45 Western Citizen, copied ibid. The major party papers throughout the region were highly critical of the
Men and women of the American Anti-Slavery Society were not among the Congressman's bitterest enemies, nor was he among theirs. Despite their differences over abolitionism's means, Giddings and most Garrisonians agreed about the movement's goals. As the Garrisonians in Ohio began their major effort to organize and spread their ideals, they found in Giddings a politician who knew that there was room for both politicians and advocates of moral suasion within the movement to separate the people of the free states from sustaining slavery. Giddings said he refused to abandon antislavery doctrines he had long held just because "some of the ablest jurists, the most devoted patriots, and purest philanthropists" of America--members of the A.A.S.--agreed with him, and Garrison, who, while regretting Giddings's rejection of the need for disunion, nevertheless expressed his great respect for the maverick Whig's sentiments. 46

The Garrisonians' tour through the Reserve in the fall of 1845 signalled the beginning of a long, close, and abolitionists, especially Kelley and Foster, although the Cadiz Republican (Whig) also condemned a mob which formed against them. The Cadiz Sentinel (Democrat) wrote that Foster was "a fanatic, out and out. His forehead is small and contracted, the hair growing almost down to his eyes, and if we were traveling with him in a stage coach, we would be sure to keep our hand upon our pocketbook." Ibid., Oct. 17, 1845.

46 See Giddings's letter to the editor of the Ohio Republican and Whig as copied in ibid., Oct. 10, 1845.
fruitful relationship between them and Giddings; it also encouraged the Easterners regarding both the need and possibilities for radical abolitionism in Ohio. Response from the East for more aid was minimal, however, and early in November a "fagged out" Abby Kelley prepared to carry her increasingly difficult campaign against the Liberty Party into the heart of Gamaliel Bailey's domain.

Kelley and Foster did not fare as well in southwestern Ohio as they had in the northeastern part of the state. Under pressure from Bailey's leadership, the Liberty Party in and around Cincinnati was broadening its appeal to the area's antislavery sentiment. Consequently, the Easterners' harsh attacks upon that party and its leaders for their support of the nation's pro-slavery constitution did not convince the sizeable Cincinnati audiences.

47 Jane E. Hitchcock to Maria W. Chapman, Oct. 16, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

48 Maria W. Chapman to Abby Kelley, Sept. 14, 1845, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; Abby Kelley to Maria W. Chapman, Nov. 8, 1845, Weston Papers, B.P.L.


Garrisonians recognized that their western stronghold, Columbiana County, was a long distance from Ohio's largest and southernmost city, but their faith in "the moral power of truth" to rally support for their insistence upon disunionism was not immediately diminished by Cincinnati's disinterest. Foster and Kelley joined with three former leaders of Bailey's Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society to form a Southwestern Anti-Slavery Society. Interest in radical abolitionism so close to the slave state of Kentucky was not to thrive, however, and Foster's faith that the new but weak society would not "prove to have been stillborn" was too optimistic; the Southwestern Anti-Slavery Society did not survive, nor did the Cincinnatians who were active in its founding maintain their interest in its doctrines after its demise.

Kelley and Foster does not justify his claim that Bailey's leadership "buried for good any chance the Garrisonians had in the West."

51[Herald and]Philanthropist in Liberator, Dec. 5, 1845.

52Stephen S. Foster to J. Miller McKim, Dec. 28, 1845, McKim Papers, Cornell.

53Christian and William Donaldson, wealthy hardware-store owners, did have a brother, Thomas, who remained a Garrisonian. The Garrisonians were certainly not helped by the fact that the antislavery Presbyterians of Southwest Ohio were in the process of forming the Free Presbyterian Church of America, which excluded slaveholders, and were
The five Garrisonians had spent nearly six busy months in Ohio by late 1845 and had found that their campaign to awaken the consciences of the state's white population had been received with varying enthusiasm. Their overall impression, though, bouyed by their success among the transplanted New Englanders in and near the Western Reserve, was favorable. Late in December, Foster, who had recently married Abby Kelley, told the Philadelphia abolitionist J. Miller McKim that the Bugle already had 800 subscribers, mostly disunionists, and that all Ohio needed to make it "second to none in the Union save Mass. in her devotion to the cause of Freedom" was intelligent and efficient leadership. He thought that the unsettled nature of western society allowed even radical change to come relatively easily, but that leadership for such change would have to be provided by the East. Western minds "of the right stamp" were in Foster's estimation too occupied with the necessity of settlement to be able to devote enough time to agitation, so he urged McKim to help persuade the leadership of the American Anti-Slavery Society to send "some of its best thus advancing the antislavery movement on another front. See Paul R. Grim, "The Rev. John Rankin, Early Abolitionist," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLVI (1937), 242-43.
agents" to make Ohio a stronghold of radical abolition. 

Eastern Garrisonians, who acknowledged that the West had been "the chief scene" of abolitionism in 1845, still hesitated to divert any of their limited financial resources westward. Abby Kelley Foster again urged her friend Maria W. Chapman to recognize and support "the great work" the Garrisonians were doing in the West. She suggested that an appropriate beginning for such support would be for the A.A.S. to send the just-married Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones a present to encourage her in her transition to the difficult task of frontier abolitionism, and the Easterners quickly responded with $100. Mrs. Foster was surprised and pleased with the success of the Bugle and with the Ohioans' ability to support their own lecturers, but she continued to insist that the A.A.S. pay the Easterners' expenses as they worked to lay the foundation for a "Massachusetts character"

54 Foster specifically requested Charles C. Burleigh for the next summer; Foster to McClellan, Dec. 28, 1845, McClellan Papers, Cornell.

55 Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers... (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, 1846), p. 54. Abby Foster was surprised at Mrs. Jones's new found strength of mind and body "since she has laid herself on the slave's altar," but she feared her friend's sensitivity would complicate her acceptance of her new life; A. K. Foster to M. W. Chapman, Jan. 16, 1846, Weston Papers, B.P.L.
in Ohio. 56

Ohioans, too, were active in the Garrisonians' battle with the Liberty Party for the support "of the mass of the slave's friends." James Barnaby, who was serving as general agent for the Bugle and the O.A.A.S., wrote to Garrison early in May of 1846 urging him to come west for the anniversary, but Garrison was planning another trip to Europe and could not comply. 57 Three of Garrison's Ohio supporters made the long trip to New York to participate in the A.A.S. anniversary, and perhaps to try to persuade Garrison to alter his plans, and returned to Ohio encouraged and ready to

56 A. K. Foster to M. W. Chapman, Feb. 18, 1846, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

57 Barnaby to Garrison, Liberator, May 15, 1846.

58 They were Samuel Brooke, Thomas Donaldson, and Betsey Cowles; Liberator, May 22, 1846. Donaldson (b. 1805) was a progressive farmer who lived near New Richmond in Clermont County. Active among western Garrisonians until the Civil War, he reported in 1865 having a file of the Liberator dating from 1840. History of Clermont County, Ohio... (Philadelphia: Louis H. Evarts, 1880), pp. 423-24; Thomas Donaldson to W. L. Garrison, Oct. 22, 1865, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

Betsey Cowles (1810-1876) was a graduate of Oberlin and a prominent school teacher in the eastern Western Reserve. She became a Garrisonian in 1845 but did not do much public lecturing, despite being urged by Abby Kelley, who wrote that no woman in the area had half Cowles's influence. Abby K. Foster to Maria W. Chapman, Feb. 21, 1846, Weston Papers, and Keith Melder, "Betsey Cowles," in James, ed., Notable American Women, I, 393-94.
participate in their own annual meeting.

The year since the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society had become thoroughly radicalized had been one of organization and solidification for the society's leadership. The crops in 1845 had been poor, and the little money that was raised went toward maintaining the Bugle, so the executive committee reported to the anniversary that little lecturing, other than by the Fosters and Joneses, had been done on behalf of the society's doctrines. The committee and the anniversary were optimistic, though; for the recent annexation to the United States of the state of Texas and the subsequent beginning of war with Mexico had helped convince many skeptics that perhaps the Garrisonians were correct in their characterization of the federal government as being in complicity with the slaveholders of the South in a "foul and dastardly scheme to perpetuate the 'peculiar institution' of our country." 59


60 Bugle, July 3, 1846.

By the June 17 opening of the Ohioans' anniversary, the eastern Garrisonians had come to accept the Fosters' estimate of the potential for radical abolitionism beyond the Alleghenies. The American Anti-Slavery Society established a fund to supplement money contributed to the Ohioans' society. Bouyed by the parent society's confidence in them, the Ohioans at their anniversary changed the name of their organization to the Western Anti-Slavery Society and planned to spread their doctrines throughout the populated areas of the Old Northwest.

The anniversary at New Garden was eventful for other reasons, too. Cyrus McNeely, the Liberty Party man elected president the year before, declined to serve again, perhaps because he recognized the society's increased militancy. The meeting went on to adopt very strongly worded damnations of all persons who supported the federal union in its war with Mexico as "murderers of no ordinary guilt." Stephen Foster supported these resolutions by claiming that individuals within a government based on a voluntary compact were morally responsible for the actions of the majority; he then proposed a sharp condemnation of Gamaliel Bailey and Kentucky's

62_Bugle, June 26, 1846. Details of the financial arrangement between the Western and American Anti-Slavery Societies are explained by Samuel Brooke in Liberator, July 17, 1846.
antislavery politician-soldier Cassius M. Clay for "advocating the protection and defense of Gen. [Zachary] Taylor and the U.S. Army in their marauding expedition against the republic of Mexico...." Only one negative vote was cast, and three hundred and fifty persons signed a pledge, circulated by the prominent eastern Garrisonian Parker Pillsbury, to neither enlist nor be drafted to fight the war and to help any unwilling draftee evade service.

By the summer of 1846, scarcely a year after Abby Kelley had fanned the flame of disunionism in Ohio, Garrisonian abolitionism had found a home in the West. "No union with slaveholders" was a demanding doctrine; advocacy of it was not a means to widespread personal popularity or political success. Nonetheless, a group of men and women in north-eastern Ohio and their allies from New England were

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63 Bugle, June 26, 1846. Foster's resolution does not fairly distinguish Bailey's and Clay's positions. Bailey opposed the war, and, like Clay, hoped General Taylor's men would be safe, but he also opposed Clay's decision to enlist in Taylor's army. Non-pacifists' duty to fight a defensive war did not extend to an aggressive one, said Bailey, and consenting to fight such a war as the Mexican was cowardly. Goldfarb, "Life of Gamaliel Bailey," pp. 364-65.

64 Bugle, June 26, 1846. Opposition to the Mexican War was widespread throughout the North, and it was by no means confined to radical abolitionists, although they were certainly outspoken in their hostility. For Ohio editorials against "President Polk's war," see Xenia Torchlight, May 21, 28, 1846; Salem Village Register, July 7, 1846. The Bugle's position is best seen in an editorial Nov. 5, 1847.
determined that disunion through moral suasion was the only moral option open to abolitionism; they looked ahead to the long struggle they knew awaited them secure in the belief that with their help the West could lead the nation out of its bondage to human slavery.
CHAPTER X

THE WESTERN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY:

CONSOLIDATION, 1846-1849

The Ohio Garrisonians' struggle against slavery had just begun as the Western Anti-Slavery Society's leaders launched their fall campaign in 1846. They had chosen the center for their agitation wisely, and the next few years were to be rewarding, despite inevitable frustrations.

Salem, Ohio, was a busy and prosperous town of nearly fourteen-hundred persons in 1846. It had twenty stores, six brick buildings, and a branch of the Ohio State Bank. Though it was not the county seat and though it had no waterfront, its citizens felt confident about its future. So did the disunionists, even though most of the men in Columbiana County were farmers with more time than money to give to the reform movements that interested them. The Religious Society of Friends, its members traditionally opponents of slavery,

\footnote{Salem (Ohio) Village Register, Oct. 13, 1846.}
had deep roots in the county, and antislavery activity had begun there almost twenty years before. It is therefore not strange that Columbiana, heavily Whig and located just south of Joshua Giddings's antislavery Congressional district, proved to be as compatible a home for the abolitionists as Giles Stebbins predicted in 1845 that it could.

The reason for the abolitionists' move within the county in the fall of 1845 from New Lisbon to Salem cannot be specifically explained; the difficulties they experienced in finding a place for Abby Kelley to speak in New Lisbon suggests that the atmosphere there was not absolutely friendly. The Salem Village Register was critical of New Lisbon's behavior in the matter, and its editor boasted that such a denial of free speech could not occur in his town. He seems to have been correct; when new editors took over the paper in 1847, they pledged themselves to be on the

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5Village Register, June 10, 1845.
side of labor against capital, for the abolition of slavery and capital punishment, and in favor of a "live-and-let-live ethic" which seemed to mean hostility toward all oppressive authority. They favored Free Soil and something they called the national reform movement, and they criticized the Western Anti-Slavery Society for its lack of concern with land reform. 6 Yet the Village Register was not Salem's "radical" newspaper. Like the Bugle, the Village Register suffered because of insufficient finances, but neither paper ever indicated its problems in Salem were the result of its free-thinking ideas. Very little of the opposition which the abolitionists encountered came from Salem. It appears that the decision to relocate the center of their operation there was a wise one.

The Western Anti-Slavery Society was assured of a stable base of operations by its relationship with Salem, and this stability was substantially supported by strong and consistent leadership. The same few individuals were repeatedly elected to the most responsible positions in the organization. Over two hundred different persons served in at least one official position or on one committee during the fifteen years after Abby Kelley's first visit. Of these,

6Ibid., June 23, 1847, and May 10, 1848.
fifty-five served during at least two years; thirty during at least five years; and seventeen for eight or more years, or over half of the society's active life. Nineteen of the fifty-five, eight of the thirty, and three of the seventeen were women.

The society's leadership, then, remained in the hands of a relatively small number of men and women, some of whom were active before the 1846 campaign began. It is not surprising that the W.A.S. maintained a generally consistent position. Its tactics and ideological justifications remained remarkably constant through a number of potentially distracting movements and events, including especially those associated with political abolitionism. It appears that the availability of money played as significant a role as any purely ideological factor in shaping the course of the society's action at least until the organization of the Republican Party; the society's goals and tactics were consistent, but its implementation of them was less so.

The year after the 1846 anniversary was a good one for the western Garrisonians. Abby and Stephen Foster devoted the rest of 1846, as they had much of the period preceding the anniversary, to laboring in Ohio, and the noted New England abolitionist Parker Pillsbury came west
and began a long and happy relationship with the Garrisonians of the W.A.S. Disunion was a major theme stressed during the year. Reception of disunionists' insistence on the necessity of separating the North from the national government and its pro-slavery constitution was enhanced by the widespread opposition in northeastern Ohio to the war against Mexico, which many in that area and throughout the North believed was being fought to expand slavery. 7

The Garrisonians' meetings were smaller than they had been a year earlier; nonetheless Abby Foster was pleased with the effectiveness of her war against the Liberty Party. There were obstacles to attracting as many Ohioans to abolition meetings in the fall of 1846 as the year previous. Full harvests were keeping "all hands" occupied making up for 1845's poor crops; the state was involved in a hotly contested governor's race; and, according to Mrs. Foster, the churches had by then had time to "fortify...against us." Even so, crowds were larger than could be gathered in an eastern summer, and fewer in

7Reports of successful antiwar meetings in Youngstown, New Garden, Unionville, and Mt. Union are in Bugle, July 3, 17, and Aug. 21, 1846, and May 21, 1847. Strangely there was opposition to an antiwar meeting in Salem; see ibid., July 10, 1846.
Opposition from the Liberty Party, which of course had more than a casual interest in the success of a crusade against antislavery politics, was fierce and determined. It reminded Abby Foster of the trials and vexations of the Garrisonians' war with the party in Massachusetts in 1840-41, and it provoked Pillsbury, who thought Westerners' lack of "mental culture" made them easily misled by politicians, into denouncing the Liberty Party's Rev. Samuel Lewis as the least deserving candidate for governor.

Pillsbury's extreme statement, which was motivated partly by disgust at the Liberty Party's supposed support for Cassius M. Clay's participation in the Mexican War and at Gamaliel Bailey's prayer for General Taylor's safety, drew an objection from an Ohio Garrisonian who urged the American Anti-Slavery Society's agents to recognize that there was some true antislavery feeling within the state's

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8 Abby Kelley Foster to W. L. Garrison, Aug. 2, 1846, in Liberator, Aug. 21, 1846.

9 A. K. Foster to M. W. Chapman, Sept. 21, 1846, Weston Family Papers, B.P.L.

10 P. Pillsbury to W. L. Garrison, July 4, 1846, in Liberator, July 17, 1846. Illinois' Liberty Party was also busy rejecting disunion; see "Declaration of the Liberty Association to Chicago..." in Western Citizen, copied ibid., Feb. 19, 1847.
Liberty Party, so it is little wonder the Fosters encountered resistance to similar doctrines during a return visit to the more moderate anti-Garrisonian abolitionists at Oberlin College.  

Oberlin's faculty had previously denied the Fosters the opportunity for a full discussion of their views concerning the pro-slavery nature of the constitution and American churches, but their presence at Oberlin stimulated a few students there to protest the college's and Charles G. Finney's insistence that revivalism was a more important antislavery tactic than was more secular agitation against the specific sin of slaveholding. The faculty did not

11William E. Lukens to Liberator, Aug. 10, 1846, ibid., Aug. 21, 1846. Edmund Quincy, who was editing in Garrison's absence, agreed with Lukens's contention that there were some good abolitionists in the party, but he held to the idea that the party was nonetheless destructive to abolitionism, and Ohioan Samuel Brooke supported Pillsbury by denying that Lewis was even an abolitionist; ibid., Aug. 28, 1846 and Bugle, May 1, 1846.

12Abolitionist James Monroe had gone to Oberlin in 1844 "rather a Garrisonian," but he modified his views in accordance with dominant pressure from the anti-Garrisonians there. See Clayton S. Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement up to the Civil War" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1930), p. 118.

13Lucy Stone to S. S. and A. K. Foster, March 25, 1846, Abby Kelley and Stephen S. Foster Papers, American Antiquarian Society. Dominant thinking at Oberlin insisted that the grace of God, acquisition of which required complete consecration to God, was necessary for man to become
want the Fosters to return for a more thorough discussion than had been permitted when the Fosters had arrived at the college during a revival, but President Asa Mahan welcomed them back to Oberlin in September anyway. Mahan and the Fosters debated for five evenings and three afternoons on whether the constitution was pro-slavery and whether Christian abolitionists could remain in a church, like Oberlin's, that refused to sever all connections with slaveholders. The college community remained unconvinced by the Fosters and maintained its allegiance to reform from within the church and state—both of which most Oberlinites believed to be divinely ordained instruments of the Christian religion—but it nevertheless allowed Garrison and Frederick Douglass to repeat the comeouter argument before even larger crowds only a year later.  

perfected. This made worship crucial. Garrisonian perfectionism, on the other hand, called only for adherence to God's law, which generally made working for man's improvement more important than preparing for personal salvation. Abolition agitation was thus more important than prayer. See Geraldine Hopkins [Hubbard], "Garrisonian Abolitionism vs. Oberlin Anti-Slavery" (unpublished honors thesis in history, Oberlin College, [1929], not paginated.

14 Samuel Creighton to Abby Foster, August 2, 1846, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement," pp. 119-21; [Hubbard], "Garrisonian Abolitionism," not paginated.
The western Garrisonians' major concern during this period, as throughout the history of their activity, was for the Bugle, which began its second volume in August with 1300 subscribers. This was a sizeable number but not enough to pay the paper's expenses. Because the main task of Garrisonians was propagandistic—to convince Northerners that there was no moral or Christian alternative to immediate abolition and the end of racial prejudice—they rightly saw the signal importance of their newspapers. Some Westerners were therefore upset when the American Anti-Slavery Society's National Anti-Slavery Standard reduced its price in response to a request from the Pennsylvania Freeman, but Edmund Quincy, editor pro tem of the Liberator, defended the move by pointing out that the Bugle had itself provided competition for the eastern papers, that Samuel Brooke had not objected very strongly, and that both Garrison and the Fosters had supported the reduction.

Quincy said that there certainly was room in the movement for both good local papers and national ones. This was true, but there was neither time nor money enough in Ohio for the Fosters to devote much energy to securing subscriptions for any paper besides the Bugle, which by

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15 Liberator, Sept. 4, 1846. 16 Ibid.
mid-September was but halfway between its figure as of the start of the second volume and the 1600 which the W.A.S. thought would relieve the paper from debt.

Abolition activity during the winter was curtailed somewhat by the Easterners' departure and the illness of Samuel Brooke, who was in charge of the lecturers, but numerous rather spontaneous local meetings and the circulation of petitions to Ohio's legislature and the Congress protesting Ohio's black laws and the annexation of Texas and demanding dissolution of the Union helped keep the disunionists active.

The Garrisonians increased their efforts in the spring; their propaganda battle against both the Liberty Party and the Mexican War continued to unify them and to expand their influence. In response, the Liberty Party charged that in 1839 Garrison's supporters had stolen and then published a letter which revealed that Elizur Wright, Jr. and Henry B. Stanton conspired to commit the American

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17 A. K. Foster to M. W. Chapman, Sept. 21, 1846, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

18 Fifth Annual Report, Executive Committee, Western Anti-Slavery Society, Bugle, Sept. 3, 1847. The Select Committee of the Ohio Legislature appointed to consider the dissolution petition branded it "traitorous and disloyal" and recommended that George Washington's Farewell Address be distributed to each school district; see Liberator, March 12, 1847.
Anti-Slavery Society to political action. The theft charge was publicly denied by persons who were participants in the alleged misdeed. This resurrection of an old issue approximately coincided with Gamaliel Bailey's departure from Ohio to Washington, where he began editing the National Era, and the absence of his moderating influence on Ohio's Liberty Party spokesmen resulted in a marked increase in the public exchange of insults between the Garrisonians and their politically-minded antislavery allies. Ohio's Garrisonians were in accord with the eastern movement in their hostility to the Libertymen, as were they in continuing their bitter opposition to the hypocrisy of a nation professing to love freedom waging an aggressive war to annex land upon which slavery would expand, but they were not in accord with all Garrisonians, including Garrison, concerning

19 Letters to this effect from Lyman Crowl, a Liberty Party man, and Edward Fuller, a Garrisonian, are in Liberator, Feb. 5, 1847. Wright's letter had been used extensively by the Garrisonians in 1839-41 to show the Liberty Party's desire to control the A.A.S.; see above, pp. 130-31.


21 The Bugle of July 2, 1847, carried an editorial rejection of 4th of July pride in the midst of such a war; it suggested that the United States would generally hang lesser criminals than General Zachary Taylor.
the first of the year's two intra-movement disputes involving the famous and respected black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Late in 1846, Garrison had supported a project to buy Douglass from the man in Maryland who claimed to own him. His decision, which Douglass supported, was based on the fact that Douglass, legally a slave, was constantly subject to capture and re-enslavement. Garrison thought that the purchasers' explicit denial of the right of Douglass's owner to receive compensation freed them of supporting the legitimacy of the master's demands, but many Garrisonians, including the editors of the National Anti-Slavery Standard and the Pennsylvania Freeman agreed with the Bugle's position that the purchase was not only a tactical error but a violation of principle.

Ohioan Abram Brooke sharply criticized Garrison, accusing him of "a complete departure from principle and an adoption of expediency as the guide to conduct," but the

22Garrison's position is summarized in Liberator, Jan. 15, 1847; Douglass's in Bugle, Feb. 19, 1847.


24Abram Brooke to W. L. Garrison, Jan. 28, 1847, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
Ohioans' displeasure with Garrison over this issue did not undermine the movement's essential unity or keep the Westerners from earnestly soliciting, this time successfully, Garrison's presence in the West for the fall campaign.

Much of the Ohioans' energy during the spring and early summer went into enthusiastic preparation for the fall. The abolitionists' spirits must have been buoyed by a number of events which indicated that their moral suasion was bearing fruit. Antislavery (Hicksite) Quakers from the Green Plain Quarterly Meeting of Clark County, Ohio, who had been in trouble with the Indiana Yearly Meeting for some years because of their abolition activity, by June stood separated from the Yearly Meeting, in the words of one of their leaders, "on account of [their] fidelity to the

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25 For testimony of support for Garrison in 1847 from Ohio abolitionists who were not especially active in the leadership of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, see C. W. Leppingwell to W. L. Garrison, n.d., and John Smith to W. L. Garrison, May 19, 1847, in Liberator, Feb. 19, and July 23, 1847; Henry B. Walcott to S. S. Foster, Feb. 5, 1847, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; and Valentine Nicholson to W. L. Garrison, July 16, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L. For the W.A.S. Executive Committee's estimate of the urgency of Garrison's visit, see J. Elizabeth Jones to W. L. Garrison, March 8, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

26 See Bugle, Sept. 19, 1845.
anti-slavery cause." 27 A Congregational Church in Ravenna resolved it could no longer have fellowship with slaveholders; Ohio's Thomas Corwin delivered in the United States Senate a blistering anti-war speech which the Bugle said would not have been accepted by the people a year before; 29 and, perhaps most important for the W.A.S., a leader in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which according to J. Elizabeth Jones had more members than any other church ready for "ultra abolitionism," left the ministry and began an extraordinarily successful and tragically short career as a lecturer for Garrisonianism.

James W. Walker had been a Methodist minister in England before he brought his family to Ohio. He joined the antislavery Wesleyan Methodist Church at its inception and quickly rose to the presidency of its Alleghany Conference, but early in 1847 he left that organization because his acceptance of non-resistance dictated that he disassociate

27 Joseph A. Dugdale to W. L. Garrison, June 1, 1847, in Liberator, June 18, 1847.


29 Corwin's speech of February 11 was printed ibid., March 19, 1847; Bugle, March 5, 1847.

himself from supporters of the constitution and the Liberty Party. He credited his conversion to the moral suasion of Stephen S. Foster. Walker devoted the rest of his life to convincing the residents of Ohio and Michigan that slavery and racial prejudice ought immediately to be ended. An indefatigable worker and persuasive speaker, he died in 1854 of a fever contracted while on a lecture tour, leaving his family dependent on the gratitude of his abolitionist friends. The Western Anti-Slavery Society was, according to Oliver Johnson, "largely indebted for its efficiency" to his labors.

Moral suasion early in 1847 was producing some converts to Garrisonian abolitionism in Ohio, and the movement's leadership was anxious to build on its successes. Walker joined the more seasoned Joneses and Samuel Brooke in a trip to New York in May for the anniversary of the parent


For the difference concerning slavery between the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church from which it split, see Ira Ford McLeister and Roy Nicholson, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, 3rd. ed. (Marion, Indiana: Wesley Press, 1959), p. 36.
society. Their presence possibly convinced the leaders of the A.A.S. to both aid and use the forthcoming western tour by Garrison, the Fosters, and Douglass by issuing the first of a projected series of "penny tracts" to be distributed throughout the West. The Garrisonians expected large crowds to attend the western meetings and to be at least partially receptive to the movement's doctrines.

Despite rivalry among Garrisonian groups in the West for Garrison's presence, which J. Elizabeth Jones was convinced could best be utilized by the Ohioans who were raising the money to bring him, preparations continued apace for the visit of Garrison and Douglass. Douglass had temporarily abandoned plans to publish his own newspaper and seemed to agree with Garrison's preference that he concentrate on the lecturing he did so well. The two men

32Liberator, May 21, 1847.

33Ibid., Aug. 13, 1847. The "Penny Tracts" turned out to be a burden on local agents because of the high cost of shipping; B. S. Jones to J. Miller McKim, J. Miller McKim Papers, Cornell.

34She urged the Philadelphians not to postpone their anniversary and keep Garrison East too long, and she was upset that New Yorkers had scheduled Garrison into Buffalo in September. J. Elizabeth Jones to J. Miller McKim, June 25, 1847, McKim Papers, Cornell.

met in Philadelphia and began the westward trek, only to encounter in Harrisburg riotous resistance to Douglass's first attempt to speak. Douglass must have remembered his brush with death in the West four years before, but he and Garrison were reassured when a few days later they were well received by the abolitionists in Pittsburgh.

The Pittsburgh area had lost one of its staunchest Garrisonians when the Rev. Henry C. Howells returned to his native England in 1845, and the old Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society had been inactive for years, but the Fosters had been successful there in the winter of 1845-46. So, too, were Douglass and Garrison. Garrison reported that he had "on this side of the Atlantic" seen


39 Pittsburgh Mystery, copied ibid., Jan. 6, 1846.
nothing like the enthusiasm shown during three open air meetings on August 13. They proceeded northwest from Pittsburgh to Beaver and New Brighton, accompanied by a number of notable "colored friends" including James B. Vashon, one of Garrison's earliest supporters, and Martin R. Delaney, then editor of the Pittsburgh Mystery and soon to become an advocate of Negro emigration as the only viable remedy for American racial prejudice. Garrison found the "priest ridden" residents of New Brighton "generally...incorrigibles," despite having heard numerous abolition lectures, and he and Douglass, whose voice was giving out, moved on into Ohio to Youngstown via a canal boat on which, to Garrison's surprise, Douglass and he were treated equally well.

The highlight for the Western Anti-Slavery Society of

40 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Aug. 12, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L. Garrison's visit to Pittsburgh perhaps influenced the city's female editor-reformer Jane G. Swisshelm to begin her anti-Garrisonian abolition newspaper the Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter to replace the Liberty Party's Albatross, which folded in 1847. Jane Grey Swisshelm, Half a Century (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, & Company, 1880), pp. 105-06, 109, 112.


42 Garrison was also surprised by the free lodging he received because of his mission from the keeper of a "rum tavern" in Youngstown; W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Aug. 16, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
the visit of Garrison and Douglass was the great anniversary
meeting scheduled for New Lyme, Ashtabula County, August 18-20,
1847. It was indeed a rousing success. The principal guests
arrived from Youngstown in time to see a fierce storm blow
down the large tent erected to house the meetings. The
Westerners' first major antislavery fair, a fund-raising
device copied from similar successful fairs organized by
women abolitionists in the East, was in progress, and the
huge crowd soon began to gather from throughout the Western
Reserve. The weary travelers found little peace. 43

Antislavery fairs, at which donated goods were sold
to support abolition activity, were to be a key part of the
financing of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, and this
initial one, although poorly run by the inexperienced women
abolitionists of Ohio, netted over $500.00. 44 The money was
much needed by the W.A.S., which reported a debt of $563.95
in addition to the $1000 owed by the managers of the still
technically independent Bugle, which was running only by

43 Ibid.

44 Bugle, Aug. 27, 1847. Douglass had remarked on
what he thought was Western women's lack of interest in the
cause during his previous trip; Douglass to Sidney H. Gay,
Sept., 1847, Anti-Slavery Standard, in Foner, Life and
Writings, I, 262-65.
virtue of a loan of $661.00 from Samuel Brooke. 45

The women who organized the fair were some of Ohio's leading Garrisonians, and because male abolitionists who were not Garrisonians allowed women subordinate roles only, they were among the state's foremost women abolitionists. Many were also to be active in the emerging woman movement. The list of twenty-eight women who signed the call for goods for the fair included Betsey M. Cowles; Lydia [Cadawalader] Irish of New Lisbon, a Quakeress who held offices in the W.A.S. for many years; Jane [Donaldson] McNeely, whose husband Cyrus gave up the presidency of the W.A.S. to continue political abolitionism, but who herself, like her brother Thomas, remained a prominent Garrisonian; Maria L. Giddings, the Garrisonian daughter of antislavery politician Joshua; Ruth Dugdale, a radical Quaker from Green Plain, Ohio, whose husband was Joseph A. Dugdale; Cordelia Smalley of Randolph; Elizabeth Holmes of Columbiana; Laura [Stanton] Barnaby, whose father and husband were also among Salem's foremost abolitionists; and Jane Elizabeth Jones.

45 Bugle, Aug. 27 and Sept. 3, 1847. Garrison commented, as did most eastern abolitionists, on the difficulty of raising money in the West. See W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Aug. 20, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

46 Liberator, July 16, 1847.
The anniversary itself, which attracted over four thousand persons, was the largest antislavery meeting which either the Joneses or Douglass had ever seen. Not surprisingly, only a small portion of that number were disunionists, but Douglass reported that "there was scarcely a dry eye among the vast audience" after the singing Cowles Family's first antislavery song. The reputations of Douglass and especially Garrison, whom the Liberty Party press--free of Gamaliel Bailey's constraining influence--had maligned to the point of making him a curiosity, drew hundreds of persons to New Lyme. Many were surprised to find the notorious Garrison a calm and composed man who eloquently defended the basic teachings of Christ.

If Garrison's appearance and manner reassured the curious, the resolutions he supported most likely did not. The business committee, itself a radical group (Garrison, Douglass, S. S. Foster, J. A. Dugdale, Maria Giddings, J. W. Walker, and J. Elizabeth Jones), quickly proposed a resolution that the Union must be dissolved because any

47 Bugle, Aug. 27, 1847. Douglass's remarks about the convention are in a letter to Sidney H. Gay in Anti-Slavery Standard, Sept. 9, 1847, in Foner, Life and Writings, I, 262-65.


49 Bugle, Aug. 27, 1847.
union with slavery was corrupt and sinful. The resolution plunged the meeting into extended debate. Garrison and Stephen Foster were the primary advocates of the resolution, and its defeat was urged by none other than the father of one of its authors, Congressman Joshua R. Giddings, while many of his constituents looked on.

Giddings's position, that slavery could best be abolished through traditional political channels, did not prevail, and the resolution reflecting the Garrisonians' faith in the efficacy of maintaining a "pure" stance was adopted; so, too, was praise of the three Easterners for being "men of God, speaking eternal truth in their Christ-like mission for the overthrow of the blood-stained American Union." The Garrisonians were glad for the debate and its role in bringing antislavery doctrines to an ever-widening circle of Ohioans; they were especially happy with Giddings's public association with and praise of Douglass and Garrison.

Congressman Giddings had welcomed Garrisonians into his district before they had established their headquarters in nearby Salem; after their move the Garrisonians

50 All details of this anniversary, unless otherwise noted, are from ibid.
endeavored to maintain this relationship. Giddings was well aware of the nature of the disagreement over abolition tactics between himself and his daughter's co-workers, as were they, but neither he nor they ignored the opportunity to praise and encourage each other while sharply disagreeing over technique.

As Giddings's biographer, James B. Stewart, has recognized, Giddings, like Garrison and his followers, was also waging a war of moral suasion, but unlike Garrison, much of his efforts were aimed directly at his political colleagues in Congress—men the Garrisonians deemed too far down the road of sin to be reformed. Nevertheless, both Giddings and the western Garrisonians worked hard to maintain the link which Giddings provided between traditional politicians and antislavery disunionists. The

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Garrisonians, for instance, invited Giddings to their

anniversary of 1846, but only a year before they had publicly
denied him the moral right to swear to support a consti-
tution which was pro-slavery "in a single clause." He could
not attend, but he denied that his interest in their meeting
was "in any respect" diminished "by the difference of
opinion existing between us as to the mode of effecting the
great object which we all have in view." 52 Scarcely two
months later, the Bugle editorially called for Giddings's
defeat for re-election because its editors thought his
remaining in Congress indicated his acceptance of Texas into
the Union. The paper acknowledged that Giddings had done
more than any other elected official to end slavery, but it
pointed to his abandoning his earlier position that the
annexation of Texas would mean the dissolution of the Union,
accused him of sacrificing principle for office, charged him
with submitting to "the yoke of tyranny," and claimed that
whoever defeated him" would do less injury to the antislavery
cause." 53

Giddings was not defeated, however, and the Bugle
tried to convince him to resign and thus dramatically

52 Bugle, Oct. 17, 1845, and J. R. Giddings to editors, June 6, 1846, ibid., July 10, 1846.
53 Ibid., Sept. 18, 1846.
repudiate Congress for having admitted "Texas foreigners;" it also praised his "utterance of Truth" and "defense of right," and the W.A.S. arranged to have him share with Garrison the platform of its most important anniversary.

Garrison and Douglass were tired but inspired after the New Lyme convention and its debate with Giddings, and they continued their series of large and successful meetings throughout the Western Reserve. Both men were impressed with their reception. Douglass wrote Sidney H. Gay that the West was "decidedly the best Anti-Slavery field in the country" and that within a year Ohio could, with effect, replace Massachusetts as the state most receptive to Garrisonian ideas. Garrison was also optimistic about the effects of his and Douglass's visit to Oberlin. Despite both the college's history of opposition to Garrison's positions and two anti-Garrisonian commencement addresses, some 3000 persons heard the visitors and President Asa Mahan

54 Ibid., April 9, 1847. The Liberator, Jan. 1, 1847, also praised Giddings's "assailing the slaveholding oligarchy" and hoped he would fully embrace disunion.

55 W. L. Garrison to editor, Liberator, Sept. 10, 17, 1847, and to Helen E. Garrison, Aug. 20, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

continue the college's series of debates on the nature of the constitution. Garrison was also encouraged by Charles Finney's advice to the graduates to support all reform and by his initial meeting with young Lucy Stone, one of a few at Oberlin willing to side with him publicly.  

A hectic schedule took Garrison's party to Austinburg, Richfield, Medina, Massillon, Zoar, Leesburg, and then to Salem, where four "immense" meetings with 5000 persons persuaded Garrison to write to his wife that "the tide of antislavery [was] rising daily." Stephen Foster and Lucretia Mott joined Garrison and Douglass as speakers during the Salem meetings, with Mott's "silvery voice" providing a calm vehicle for the disunionists' extreme rhetoric. She also spoke to large gatherings at New Lisbon, Warren, and Ravenna, leaving Garrison and Douglass to successfully complete their Ohio tour in the growing lakeside city of Cleveland without encountering the opposition hinted at by the local Plaindealer.

57 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Aug. 28, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

Douglass left Cleveland for Buffalo as scheduled with kind words for the hospitality of Ohioans of all political persuasions, but the exhausted Garrison was less fortunate. He collapsed into bed, where he remained seriously ill and quite weak for nearly a month, and where he first learned that Douglass had again decided to ignore his white friends' advice and, without fresh consultation, begin his own newspaper. Garrison acknowledged that it was "a delicate matter," but he was nonetheless quite upset both with Douglass and with Ohioan Samuel Brooke, who Garrison thought was "at the bottom of this" because of his feeling that the Bugle had no independent future of its own.

Not all Garrisonians shared Garrison's reaction. Edmund Quincy, who was editing the Liberator in Garrison's absence, publicly credited Douglass with the ability to make his own decisions correctly, and a number of Garrisonians


60 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Sept. 18, Oct. 19, Oct. 20, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L. Douglass claimed he had mentioned his change of plans to Garrison in Cleveland, but Garrison did not remember the discussion. See Foner, Life and Letters, I, 82.

61 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Oct. 20, 1847, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
served as agents for Douglass's *North Star*, but the quiet way in which Douglass had pursued his goal of establishing an abolition paper under black control rankled a number of leaders of the Ohio movement. The Joneses, editors of the *Bugle*, suggested to the executive committee of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, which had just assumed direct responsibility for the paper, that it invite Douglass to Salem as their replacement, thus satisfying Douglass's desire to edit while keeping the West's disunion paper under the control of a committee. Abby Foster agreed. She, too, thought Douglass had erred in not consulting "any of the more active and responsible of the abolitionists in the West," and, like Garrison, she was quite upset with Samuel Brooke, the one Westerner with whom Douglass had talked, for encouraging the project.

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63 Benjamin S. Jones to J. Miller McKim, Oct. 4, 1847, McKim Papers, Cornell.

64 Abby K. Foster to Maria W. Chapman, Oct. 5, 1847, Weston Papers, B.P.L. Tension between Douglass and the Garrisonians in Boston had begun in 1843, when the Boston group reacted unfavorably when Douglass and Charles L. Remond publicly criticized fellow abolitionist John A. Collins for slighting the antislavery cause for his interest in communistic land reform. There is evidence that many of the
Douglass did not assume the editorship of the Bugle, but he did change his mind about the location for his paper, which he initially announced was to be Cleveland. The North Star actually began in Rochester, New York, December 3, 1847. Douglass's decision not to establish his disunion paper close to Salem was not announced until early November, however, and the Joneses' and Abby Foster's initial hostility to their black co-worker's decision is understandable; the Bugle was itself having enough trouble without intra-state competition from such an able and well-known abolitionist as Douglass.

Garrison recovered his health, returned to the East, and praised the first number of Douglass's paper, and the Westerners busied themselves trying to solidify their recent


65 I have not determined if the W.A.S. ever offered him the opportunity. See Foner, Life and Writings, I, 82-84.

66 The Bugle, with 1400 subscribers, was still not able to sustain itself, and there was some dissension within the W.A.S. executive committee as to whether to continue publishing it; see Sixth Annual Report, Executive Committee, W.A.S. in Bugle, Aug. 25, 1848.

67 Foner, Life and Times, I, 84.
Since Jane Elizabeth Jones was pregnant, she and Benjamin continued to urge that another person be found to handle the arduous and uncertain task of editing the Bugle; they denied Stephen Foster's allegation that there was talk of transferring the paper to Rochester and pled with the Fosters to convince the American Anti-Slavery Society to give more aid to the Bugle and less to the more expensive National Anti-Slavery Standard. The Joneses later estimated that the Bugle, which was being hurt by Samuel Brooke's efforts on behalf of the North Star, could survive only if the A.A.S. would choose and pay its editor, and if the Fosters would spend the summer of 1848 lecturing in Ohio. Brooke had resigned as the general agent of the W.A.S. in December and was criticizing Stephen Foster's anti-clerical

68 For evidence that the Garrisonians' war with the Liberty Party and the clergy was having some effect, see Truman Case to editor, Nov. 13, 1847, in Liberator, Dec. 10, 1847. A number of Ohioans were also active in the peace movement, and the year-old Western Peace Society, led by Garrisonians, began an active campaign against the coercion of warfare. See Western Peace Society to New England Non-Resistance Society, Oct. 25, 1847, in Liberator, Nov. 12, 1847.

69 Stephen Foster seems to have misunderstood the Joneses' letter about the W.A.S. considering inviting Douglass to edit the Bugle to have said they were thinking of merging the Bugle with The North Star; Jane Elizabeth Jones to Stephen and Abby Foster, Jan. 23, 1848, Foster Papers, A.A.S.
book *Brotherhood of Thieves* and charging the W.A.S. with cheating him out of possession of the *Bugle*. The Joneses feared that Brooke was going to organize a summer tour by Easterners Henry C. Wright and Charles C. Burleigh which would do nothing on behalf of the W.A.S., and they kept pressure on their friends to lobby in the East on behalf of the cause in Ohio.

The Fosters did not come west in the spring, though, and the Western Anti-Slavery Society, without a general agent since Samuel Brooke's resignation in December, had a poor spring. Only James W. Walker spent the entire year after Garrison's visit lecturing for the society, and by the August anniversary the W.A.S. was in debt for $850.00. The Whig-dominated Ohio legislature rejected the society's petition for the abolition of the state's black laws, and the formation of the Free Soil party in opposition to the Whigs' and Democrats' temerity on the question of slavery in the Mexican cession diverted considerable antislavery enthusiasm in Ohio toward politics. The Garrisonians thought that the existence of the Free Soil Party with its

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70 Jane Elizabeth Jones to Abby and Stephen Foster, April 18, 1848, Foster Papers, A.A.S. Samuel Brooke's idea that the *Bugle* was his property may have been due to the fact that the paper operated from 1846 into 1847 only on a large loan from him, much of which may still have been outstanding.
opposition to the extension of slavery was proof of the
success of their agitation, but they maintained their
allegiance both to the ideal of disunion and the tactic of
moral suasion. They pointed to the Free Soilers' acceptance
of slavery in the states as "evidence of the entire supremacy
of the slave power over the nation." 71

The W.A.S. anniversary for 1848 was held in mid-
August in a large field near Salem. Though the only eastern
visitors were Henry C. Wright and Charles Burleigh, who had
that summer held a series of abolition meetings throughout
the state, the Bugle estimated that nearly 4000 persons
attended. A special finance committee raised nearly half of
the society's debt during the three days of the convention,
much of which was devoted to debate over the merits of the
Free Soil Party and the question of the Bible's position on
slavery. After extended discussion, the assembly resolved
that although the platform of the new party was too "low"
and "narrow" for "thoroughgoing anti-slavery to stand on,"
it was still an advance toward the day all Northerners would
accept the truly moral alternatives of abolition or
dissolution of the Union. They also sidestepped the Bible
question by resolving that if it sanctioned slavery, it

71 Sixth Annual Report, Executive Committee, W.A.S.,
Bugle, Aug. 25, 1848.
ought to be rejected by true Christians.

Wright and Burleigh stayed in the West for a time after the meeting, and James W. Walker continued his efforts, but the excitement of the presidential election cut into the lecturers' effectiveness. The Bugle continued to keep the W.A.S. in debt, and Walker and the Joneses applied heavy pressure on their Eastern allies for help. Once again Abby Foster rallied to the need. She prevailed upon the A.A.S. to comply with the Joneses' old request that it select and pay a new editor for the troublesome but essential Bugle. After the issue of June 15, the Joneses turned the editorship over the Garrison's close friend and occasional editorial assistant Oliver Johnson.

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72 Details of the anniversary are from Minute Book, Western Anti-Slavery Society, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, Ohio State University Library) and Bugle, Aug. 25, 1848.

73 Seventh Annual Report, Executive Committee, W.A.S., Bugle, June 29, 1849.

74 J. W. Walker to Stephen Foster, March 13, 1849, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; J. Elizabeth Jones to Anne W. Weston, March 21, 1849; Anne W. Weston to Caroline Weston, Nov. 12, 1848, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

75 Wendell Phillips to S. J. May, April 20, 1849, McKim Papers, Cornell. Phillips, who was quite worried about the movement's future, admitted that the Free Soil Party was hurting the Garrisonians and regretted that Frederick Douglass was not lecturing.
Johnson perceived correctly that the Free Soil Party was distracting many western abolitionists away from the Garrisonians' insistence on stressing principles over politics. In his "Words of Introduction" he warned that no political party was a reliable instrument for moral enterprises. The Free Soilers' efforts continued, though, and the Western Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary in June of 1849, which was again without a famous speaker, was largely taken up by debate over the organization's position concerning the party. The business committee's resolutions applauding the existence of Free Soilism but pledging not to support it or any church which did not actively fight slavery were adopted, as were others which praised the repeal of some of Ohio's black laws and called for the end of the rest of them.


77 Bugle, June 29, 1849. The black laws repealed in February 1849 had required blacks entering Ohio to post a $500 bond and prohibited blacks from testifying against
The anniversary was not especially encouraging, and the W.A.S. had trouble raising enough money during the following year to hire lecturers or to retire the debt of the Bugle—even with the A.A.S. paying Johnson's salary—so the Ohioans again turned eastward for help. The parent society responded by pledging to support Abby Foster and Parker Pillsbury on a three-month fund-raising tour in the West, and in June of 1850 they began their efforts. 78

Abby Foster arrived in Ohio after an absence of over three years. During that time, when she was caring for her infant daughter in Massachusetts, the W.A.S. had neither significantly expanded its influence nor been able to achieve financial security. The anniversaries since Garrison's successful visit of 1847 had not grown, nor had the scope of the society's activity expanded. The Bugle's subscription list had increased by some 210 to 1270 since Oliver Johnson assumed the editorship, but delinquent payments, a problem for all newspaper editors, kept the paper whites in court. Blacks still could not sit on juries, vote, hold office, use public health facilities, or go to schools for whites. J. Reuben Sheeler, "The Struggle of the Negro in Ohio for Freedom," Journal of Negro History, XXXI (April, 1946), 222.

78 Eighth Annual Report, Executive Committee, W.A.S., ibid., Sept. 28, 1850.
so in debt that Foster found that the Western Anti-Slavery Society, which she had been instrumental in founding and maintaining, owed nearly $1200.00 when she arrived. 79

The Free Soil candidate for the presidency in 1848 had drawn four times the votes cast for the Liberty Party candidate in Ohio four years previous, and Congressman Giddings had finally given up his stubborn hope that the Whig Party could be made receptive to abolitionism. 80 Clearly there had been growing competition from the political arena for antislavery sentiment, money, and activity. Other factors, too, may have contributed to the Western Anti-Slavery Society's lack of growth. The radical Quaker followers of Joseph A. Dugdale, most of whom were active Garrisonians, were increasingly occupied with their effort to build a Quaker organization free from restraints upon their reform activities, and they were thus busy with the beginnings of the Congregational (or Progressive) Friends movement. In

79 Ibid., and Abby Foster to Stephen Foster, Aug. 5, 1850, Foster Papers, A.A.S.


81 Many Western Quakers who were active reformers broke or were expelled from the established yearly meetings during the 1840's and 1850's and established Yearly Meetings
addition, the period from late in 1847 until early in 1850 was not one of prosperity for the wheat farmers and wool growers who were the backbone of the agricultural economy of northeastern Ohio.

There were nevertheless signs early in 1850 that the western Garrisonians were emerging from a difficult period. The leadership of the Western Anti-Slavery Society had overcome its hostility to Samuel Brooke and had hired him to work as a part-time general agent in addition to his labors of Congregational (or Progressive) Friends. This movement which had no doctrinal test, ordained ministers, "select meetings" of elders and ministers, segregation by sex or hierarchy of meetings to enforce conformity, was well established by 1849, when the first Green Plain Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends took place near Selma, in Clark County, Ohio.

Garrisonians involved in it included Oliver and Mary Ann Johnson; Joseph A. and Ruth Dugdale; Elizabeth, Abram and Samuel Brooke; and Jesse and Mercy Holmes. Many other western Garrisonians later affiliated with this movement. See Bugle, July 6, Oct. 6, Nov. 17, 1849, and Oct. 14, 1854; Minutes and Proceedings of Green Plain Yearly Meeting... (Columbus: Scott and Bascom, 1849); and Albert J. Wahl, "The Congregational or Progressive Friends in the Pre-Civil War Reform Movement" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1951).

as an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society. Money raised by him supported the Ohio lectures of Parker Pillsbury and James W. Walker. Local abolitionists, but especially Brooke, were instrumental in organizing a number of regional conventions and abolition societies auxiliary to the W.A.S. Henry C. Wright, working without organizational affiliation, was busying himself with antislavery picnics for children and conventions for their parents. Mrs. Foster was able to retire much of the society's debt during her summer in Ohio, and an anonymous donor gave the Garrisonians a forty acre farm worth nearly $200. There also was beginning to be some stirring of Garrisonian activity in Cincinnati, where most abolitionists had refused to abandon party politics or the organized church. The successful wheat crop in northeastern and north-central Ohio in 1850 began a three-year period of economic prosperity.

As important as were these signs of the improving health of Garrisonianism in Ohio, though, they were of little help to abolitionists compared to the popular reaction

83 Eighth Annual Report, Executive Committee, Western Anti-Slavery Society, Bugle, Sept. 28, 1850.


85 Berry, Western Prices, p. 507, and Clark, Grain Trade, p. 244.
throughout the northern part of the Old Northwest to one of the provisions of the Compromise of 1850. The new Fugitive Slave Law, which was designed to secure Southern support for the admission of California to the Union as a free state, was passed by Congress early in September; vocal if not widespread Northern opposition to it provided a powerful and timely boost to all facets of the antislavery cause. 86 This was especially true for portions of the movement engaged in trying to prove that the United States government was a sinful and corrupt "bulwark of slavery." The Western Anti-Slavery Society was quick both to benefit from and stimulate angry opposition to the compromise. 87

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CHAPTER XI

THE WESTERN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY:

EXPANSION, 1850-1853

Western Garrisonians were increasing their various efforts for reform as the decade of the 1850s began. Time and money expended by abolitionists on behalf of causes other than abolitionism in some ways undermined the effectiveness of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, but the Garrisonians still envisioned their abolitionism as part of a wider struggle against all forms of oppression. Their simultaneous participation in different phases of the broader movement was consistent with their conception of the complex nature of America's problems, which they recognized as arising partly from a predominance of white male leadership in the nation's social, religious, and governmental institutions. The western Garrisonians, like their eastern allies, sought to persuade these leaders to recognize the worth of their fellow human beings, of whatever race or sex, and to allow them a vastly expanded opportunity to determine their
own destiny.

Since the Grimké sisters' pioneering lecture tour of New England in 1837, a growing number of American men and women had been agitating for the right of women to function as equals with men, first as members of the abolition movement and then as members of society. Most Garrisonians and some other abolitionists supported the few women active in the beginning of the women's rights movement as a matter of principle.² The first meeting called specifically to consider the powerlessness of women in America—the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848—was in many ways the result of the refusal of the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 to seat women as delegates. Women who had identified themselves with Garrisonianism were responsible for organizing the Seneca Falls meeting, and most of the women in Ohio who endorsed the Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Seneca Falls Convention were also Garrisonian

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An excellent account of the early stage of the movement for women's rights in America is Keith Melder, "The
abolitionists.³

The woman movement had been stirring in Ohio well before 1848. Women played an active and not entirely subordinate role in Ohio abolitionism during the 1830s, and in 1841, Oberlin College produced the world's first female college graduates.⁴ Ernestine L. Rose had spoken in Ohio on behalf of female suffrage in 1844, one year before Abby Kelley and Jane Hitchcock introduced women onto the platform of western abolitionism. By the summer of 1849, probably encouraged by the Seneca gathering, women in Salem were planning to hold their own women's rights convention.⁵


⁵Ibid.

⁶Pittsburgh's woman editor Jane G. Swisshelm claimed to have evidence that Salem's women were stirred up primarily by her Visiter, which had a sizeable readership there. She declined to serve as the convention's chairperson and criticized the convention's proceedings. Jane Grey Swisshelm, Half a Century (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, & Company, 1880), pp. 141-43.
The Salem Women's Rights Convention took place in April of 1850, well before the fall campaign of the western abolitionists, and for a time occupied the attention of many of northeastern Ohio's Garrisonians. Nearly one-thousand persons attended, half of whom were men. Only women were allowed to speak, and for perhaps the only time in the first woman movement in America, men were subjected to the same "silent treatment" which had initially shown women abolitionists their subordinate position in the reform movements of the day. The women quickly organized and then prepared memorials to the Constitutional Convention that was meeting to adopt a new basis for Ohio's laws. The gathering at Salem was dominated by Garrisonians. Emily Robinson, who with her husband Marius had just moved to the Salem area,


8Data on the convention, unless otherwise noted, is from New York Weekly Tribune, May 4, 1850, and Proceedings of the Ohio Women's Convention held at Salem, April 19th and 20th, 1850; with an Address by J. Elizabeth Jones (Cleveland: Smead and Cowles' Press, 1850).

9Emily Rakestraw Robinson (b. 1819) had gone from Columbiana County to Cincinnati in 1836 to help Augustus Wattles and other abolitionists provide schooling for the city's blacks. She married co-worker Robinson in 1836, but
called the meeting to order, and Mary Ann Johnson of Salem was chosen president \textit{pro tem}. The nominating committee was with one exception Garrisonian, as were all the secretaries and members of the executive committee; \footnote{10} the main address was given by Jane Elizabeth Jones, who had taken up lecturing on physiology since retiring from the \textit{Bugle}.\footnote{11}

Among the letters of support sent by persons absent from the proceedings were a number from Garrisonians, and at least one-half of the committee chosen to supervise the woman movement in Ohio for the next year were active in the

\underline{their abolitionism was suspended when he was not able to recover from the effects of being tarred and feathered during his tour as one of Weld's "band of seventy." When they rejoined the movement, they were thoroughly "Garrisonian."} See a report of an interview with Emily R. Robinson by W. H. Siebert, Aug. 13, 1892, Wilbur H. Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus, and Charles Robert Donaldson, "The Antislavery Career of Marius Robinson, 1834-1861" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1970), pp. 25-26.

\footnote{10}These women were Caroline Stanton, Ann Eliza Lee, Sallie R. Gove, Mary H. Stanton, Johnson, Esther Ann Lukens, Robinson, Cordelia Smalley, and Jones.


\footnote{12}Active Garrisonians who wrote were Lucretia Mott, Mercy L. Holmes, Abram Brooke, and Ruth Dugdale; correspondents sympathetic to Garrisonianism but primarily active in the woman movement included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Francis Dana Gage, and Lucy Stone.
Western Anti-Slavery Society. Resolutions passed called for the ending of all legal, social, religious, pecuniary, and political distinctions between men and women, and the memorial to the Constitutional Convention asked that women be granted all legal and political rights allowed to men. The new Ohio Constitution was unchanged regarding women, and a few of the state's women, led by Garrisonian abolitionists, continued their agitation throughout the 1850's. Garrison himself addressed a national woman's convention in Cleveland in 1853, and Jane Elizabeth Jones and Abby Kelley Foster were lobbying in the Ohio Legislature on behalf of women's suffrage and property rights when Confederate forces fired upon Ft. Sumter eleven years after the Salem Convention.

Other western Garrisonians were also broadening their reform activity in 1850, but by the time of the Western

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15 Joseph A. Dugdale, for instance, attended the anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York while on a trip promoting the Progressive Friends Movement;
Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary in mid-September, the issues raised by the new and notorious Fugitive Slave Law brought the attention of many abolitionists back to the slavery question. Oliver Johnson, who was then being expelled from the Ohio Yearly Meeting of (Hicksite) Friends because of his role in the Progressive Friends movement, reported that the anniversary was "great and glorious" and that it marked "a new era in the history of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise at the West."

For the first time in a number of years, the anniversary was not dominated by debate over the worthiness of the Free Soil Party; attention was instead focused on the Fugitive Slave Law. This act, signed by President Fillmore

see Sarah A. Dugdale, Diary (typescript, Ohio Historical Society Library), and Joseph A. Dugdale, Extemporaneous Discourses (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Platt and Schram, 1850).

16 Details of his expulsion are not clear, but members of the Salem Monthly Meeting were unwilling to accept Johnson's certificate of membership in a New York Monthly and their judgment was upheld by the Yearly Meeting of 1850. The Yearly Meeting of 1852 adopted a policy that members of the Yearly who set up meetings not in accordance with the order of the society were subject to disownment; this is of course exactly what the Progressive Friends were doing. See Minutes, Ohio Yearly Meeting, Society of Friends, 1850 and 1852. Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

17 Details of this anniversary, unless otherwise noted, are from Salem (Ohio) Anti-Slavery Bugle, Sept. 28, 1850.
on September 18, 1850, authorized the owner of an escaped slave, or his agent, to seize and take before a federal commissioner any person he claimed to be a fugitive. The supposed slave, denied habeas corpus and the right to testify in his own defense, was then either freed or given over to the claimant for return to bondage. If the commissioner ruled in his favor the claimant was to pay him twice the fee called for if he did not; northern citizens were specifically forbidden from in any way interfering with the process of enforcement. Garrisonians saw the law as clear evidence that the federal government was as guilty of supporting slavery as were the slaveowners themselves, which of course was one of their basic themes, and they were indignant.

They also recognized the propaganda possibilities of a Congressional enactment that catered so boldly to Southern interests. Johnson was optimistic:

They have sowed the seeds of a Revolution which will overwhelm them in disgrace and sunder the chains they intended more effectively to rivet. They have kindled a fire of moral indignation which will wax hotter and hotter until every shackle is melted, every vestige of Slavery consumed. The Agitation which they hoped to

suppress will receive a mighty impulse from this
diabolical law and wax fiercer and fiercer until the
great body of the Northern people shall stand forth in deadly array against the crowning villiany of the age.

The convention was in accord. It adopted a series of strongly worded resolutions pledging to ignore the new law and to obey instead the "higher law" of God. It urged women and parents to denounce openly federal commissioners appointed to handle cases arising from the law; it condemned judges who complied with the law; and it declared that there could not be a Free Soil Party because there was no longer any free soil in America. The anniversary eloquently reaffirmed the Garrisonian belief that voting under such an evil government provided sanction to its sinful nature, and the members adhered to non-resistance by rejecting a resolution calling for abolitionists to accept the duty of acting under the principle of "death to Kidnappers, whether the Kidnappers be voters, Congressmen, Presidents, or slave-catchers." The Ohioans still believed in the power of moral suasion; the fact that Free Soiler Barclay Gilbert led 133 persons in pledging five dollars each to support the

19 Bugle, Sept. 28, 1850.
20 Gilbert was treasurer of the meeting which founded The Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society in 1842; Cincinnati Philanthropist, June 22, 1842.
activities of the Western Anti-Slavery Society seemed to be
evidence that moral power was effective.

The anniversary in 1850 also provided the W.A.S.
with new impetus in another way, in that a number of
persons relatively new to its activities emerged into posi­
tions of leadership which they were to hold for some time.
The executive committee chosen to guide the organization for
the ensuing year contained four such people. Lot Holmes, who
was probably a farmer, owned a bookstore in Salem. He had
lived in Columbiana County since 1833 and had served as
recording secretary of the W.A.S. before his election to the
executive committee in 1849 signalled the beginning of a nine-
year period of active leadership which included five terms as
a vice-president. Lydia Irish of New Lisbon had also
occasionally been active in the W.A.S. before 1850, but
thereafter she held a key office yearly with but one

21 He and his wife Elizabeth [also called Sarah],
at one time active Friends, moved to Iowa around 1858, and
continued their work on behalf of Garrisonian abolitionism.

Many small farmers from northeastern Ohio moved to
Iowa in the late 1850s to try to benefit from the booming
wheat production in the newer areas in the Northwest; the
Holmes family settled near Poweshiek County. John G. Clark,
The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest (Urbana; University of
Civil War Era, 1850-1873, Vol. IV of The History of the State
of Ohio, ed. by Carl Wittke (6 vols.; Columbus: Ohio State
Archaeological and Historical Society, 1941-44), p. 9; Lot
Holmes to Marius Robinson, Sept. 12, 1858, in Bugle, Oct. 2,
1858.
exception for eight years. John Gordon had been a supporter of Garrison in 1846 when he was living in Washington, Pennsylvania; this election to the executive committee was the first of seven. Sarah McMillan of Salem also began her leadership in abolition activity in 1850.

In addition, four other Garrisonians who were to be mainstays of the western movement were made officers of the W.A.S. at the Salem anniversary. Only one, Thomas Chandler, was actually new to the organization, but all were in the early stages of prominence in it. Chandler, a vice-president, was an experienced reformer and one of Garrisonian abolitionism's foremost spokesmen in Michigan. His election in 1850 marked the beginning of a major effort by the Western Anti-Slavery Society to live up to the geographic

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23 Gordon may have been a farmer; he was active in Salem's Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mechanical Association. See Horace Mack, History of Columbiana County (Philadelphia: D. W. Ensign & Co., 1879), p. 223. For his letter of support for Garrison, see Liberator, Sept. 25, 1846.
implications of its name. This trend was also reflected in the increased activity of Benjamin Bown, originally an Englishman and in 1850 a grocer in Pittsburgh who was chosen a W.A.S. vice-president for Pennsylvania. He and his wife Sarah moved to Salem later that fall, bringing with them their "adopted" daughter whom they had rescued from her "owner," a Methodist minister from Virginia. They became moderately prosperous in Salem, where both were active in abolitionism; he was president of the W.A.S. for two years and a vice-president for four others, and she was on the executive committee for five.  

The other two emerging leaders had been Ohioans for some time. Kersey G. Thomas, a physician who had studied medicine in Salem with the abolitionist Dr. Benjamin Stanton, had practiced in Marlboro, Ohio, since 1840. He had occasionally participated in the W.A.S. since its origin, but after 1850 he was an important activist. He also advocated women's entrance into the practice of medicine. His

24Chandler, a brother of the beloved abolitionist-poetess Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, was the W.A.S. vice-president for Michigan six of the next eight years.

25For the story of the slave rescue and adoption, see Bugle, Aug. 25, 1848. In 1856, they were offering considerable property for sale; see ibid., Dec. 20, 1856. See also an interview by W. H. Siebert with Mr. Bown's son-in-law, John Deming, on Aug. 13, 1892, typescript, Wilbur H. Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
second wife, Elizabeth L. Smyth Thomas, became a doctor under his direction.

Marius R. Robinson, who grew up in western New York's "burned over district," began religious service after exposure to the revivals of Charles G. Finney. He entered Lane Seminary after his graduation from Nashville University in 1832 and began his lengthy devotion to the work of abolitionism in Ohio as an active member of Theodore D. Weld's famous band of "seventy." Experienced as a printer, ordained as a minister by the New School Presbyterians, and personally knowledgable about slavery from residency in Tennessee and

26 Thomas (1818-1869) was born of Quaker parents in Pennsylvania. He was active in the Western Peace Society and Professor of Surgery at the Female Medical College of Philadelphia in 1854. See Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of Quaker Genealogy, IV, 777; William Henry Perrin, ed., History of Stark County, with an Outline Sketch of Ohio (Chicago: and Battey, 1881), pp. 278, 282; Bugle, June 8, 1850.

27 Robinson (1806-1878) was born in Massachusetts but lived most of his first twenty-one years in western New York. His pursuit of religious training led him in 1827 to a seminary run as a manual labor institution by the Rev. Issac Anderson in Maryville in eastern Tennessee. There were few northerners, few books, "ease-taking teachers," and some students with slaves to perform their labor, so Robinson left what was to become Maryville College to spend five years teaching Indians, assisting an Alabama minister, and pursing a degree at Nashville University. Homer C. Boyle, "Lives Devoted to Freedom's Cause," Salem (Ohio) Daily News, July 31, 1897; Russel B. Nye, "Marius Robinson, A Forgotten Abolitionist Leader," The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, LV (1946), 138-41.
Alabama, Robinson had been an effective ally both of James G. Birney in the difficult first years of the Cincinnati Philanthropist and of Augustus Wattles in his educational work among the Queen City's colored population. His early career was abruptly ended by his inability to recover his health after being brutally tarred and feathered by an anti-abolition mob in Berlin, Ohio, in 1837, the year of Elijah P. Lovejoy's murder, and he did not return to active service until he was elected president of the Western Anti-Slavery Society at the 1850 anniversary. From that time until the Civil War, Robinson was the western Garrisonians' single most important leader. He was corresponding secretary of the W.A.S., a key position, for the five years after his first presidency, again the society's president the succeeding five years, and meanwhile the editor of the Bugle from 1851 until early in 1859.

Abby Foster had collected over nine hundred dollars

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29 Robinson's own version of the incident was reprinted, from New York Evening Post which copied it from the New Lisbon (Ohio) Free Discussion, by Liberator, July 7, 21, 1837. It is copied in William B. McCord, ed. and comp., A Souvenir History of ye Old Town of Salem, Ohio... (Salem, Ohio: n.p., 1906), pp. 60-65. A discussion of Robinson's antislavery career is Donaldson, "The Antislavery Career of Marius Robinson."
for the Western Anti-Slavery Society since the previous anniversary and in so doing again reminded the Westerners of their dependence upon eastern assistance. To try to change this situation, the W.A.S. executive committee called upon the society to respond to the increasing number of requests for assistance which were coming from abolitionists throughout Ohio and Michigan and eastern Indiana and to itself support the cause it deemed the cause of God. An encouraging response in the form of pledges led the executive committee to expand its operations without eastern support in the hope that the pledges would be paid.

The W.A.S. had more agents than ever trying to sway public opinion to undermine the slave-supporting church and state. Samuel Brooke, who had caused the W.A.S. some trouble before, had been pressured into resigning as the society's general agent, and Oliver Johnson was afraid he would try to procure an agency from the American Anti-Slavery Society "and thereby confuse and thwart our plans by his loose scheming." Johnson warned Abby Kelley to see that the A.A.S. checked with the W.A.S. before dealing with Brooke, and Brooke, for whatever reason, did not emerge to compete with the society's campaign. James W. Walker, despite

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30 *Bugle*, Sept. 28, 1850.
poor health, and Joseph Treat, in Johnson’s words "a queer genius, but a talented and devoted man," were well-received in the society’s initial efforts in Michigan; Henry C. Wright labored in Indiana; John Selby worked part-time in western Pennsylvania. Robinson spent two months in the Western Reserve, and Charles S. S. Griffing, a resident of Litchfield, Ohio, who was just beginning an active career as an anti-slavery agent, reported some success west of Cuyahoga County. Oliver Johnson, who in February had fully expected to be retained, resigned the editorship of the Bugle in April, 1851. The W.A.S. was at that time almost solvent. Subscriptions during Johnson’s two years had increased from 1060 to 1400, although many remained unpaid. The society hoped its president, Marius Robinson, would preside over publication until someone could be found to provide the leadership which had made the Bugle western Garrisonianism’s

31 Details of the disagreement between Brooke and the W.A.S. are not clear, but see Oliver Johnson to Abby Foster, Feb. 6, 1851, Foster Papers, A.A.S.; Bugle, Aug. 30, 1851. Garrison shared a number of other abolitionists' apprehensions about Wright's tendency to express himself "in a manner liable to be misapprehended," but he also regarded Wright "as one of the best men living...." See Garrison to Elizabeth Pease, June 23, 1851, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
most important propaganda tool. Robinson did not choose to fill that interim position, so a committee headed by former editor Benjamin S. Jones published the paper for a few weeks. It was soon decided that Robinson was himself the person for the permanent job, however, and by May 24, 1851, he had assumed the position. The choice was sound: Robinson tirelessly and tactfully steered both the paper and the society for some seven and a half years and in the process earned high praise from his co-workers.

Despite a seemingly successful year since the Fugitive Slave Law ignited a vigorous hostile reaction in much of northern Ohio, the executive committee's report to the ninth anniversary of the W.A.S. was hardly exultant. It bemoaned popular acceptance of the new law, which it blamed on the public's being "paralyzed" by long familiarity with the nature of slavery, and regretted that to the Northern

32 I have been unable to determine if Johnson resigned voluntarily. He expected to be retained, and the Bugle did well under his guidance. See Johnson to Abby Foster, Feb. 6, 1851, Foster Papers, A.A.S., and Bugle, April 26, 1851.

33 Parker Pillsbury, who thought Robinson was a man "of much more intellectual culture" than his predecessors, defended the new editor's "fidelity to our extremist doctrines" from what appears to have been a negative reaction to the relatively unknown Robinson by Anna W. Weston; Pillsbury to Weston, April 20, 1852, Weston Papers, B.P.L. Robinson was paid $450.00 per year; Bugle, June 21, 1851."
public the demands of humanity were secondary to the immoral requirements of the constitution and the Congress. The committee recognized that its hope that the fugitive law would generate a massive conversion to come-outerism had been illusory, and it indicated that the general public's apparent oblivion to the immorality of the measure was forcing many antislavery people into advocating even more extreme separation from association with slavery. According to Garrisonian ideology, demands for decreased association with slavery should both awaken the North's conscience and help maintain the abolitionists' personal purity, and the 1851 anniversary, "one of the largest audiences" Robinson had ever seen in Ohio, clung firmly to come-outerism despite an eloquent plea by a minister from Cincinnati on behalf of the Free Soil Party.  

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34 *Bugle*, Aug. 3, 1851. Recent scholarship indicates that these abolitionists' assessment of the popular acceptance of the Fugitive Slave Law in the North was accurate; see Campbell, *The Slave Catchers*, p. 49.

Passage of the law encouraged a number of abolitionists to begin searching for new ways to combat the power of the slaveholders. Among tactics which became more widely accepted were sympathy for slave rebellions and efforts to openly confront the authority of the federal government; see Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "Confrontation and Abolition in the 1850s," *Journal of American History*, LVIII (March, 1972), 923-37.

35 Information concerning this anniversary is from *Bugle*, Aug. 30, 1851.
Resolutions adopted again stressed the evil nature of the Free Soil Party because it was not officially hostile to the existence of slavery. These abolitionists warred, they said, against the idea that "man can under any possibility of circumstances, hold property in man," and not only against the Fugitive Slave Law or the extension of slavery. Free Soilers, they agreed, were helping to turn Northern public opinion against the extension of slavery, but they themselves would neither sanction nor participate in a movement tainted by such limited goals and by its implicit acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the federal government.

Demand for agents of disunionism continued to rise, especially in Michigan: during the next winter James Walker picked up his successful campaign and found himself unable to fill all requests for his time. Even with the American Anti-Slavery Society paying Parker Pillsbury's salary, the Western Anti-Slavery Society could not field enough agents; the resultant lack of new pledges and the non-payment of old ones forced the organization to cut some two hundred names from the Bugle's subscription list. As a result, the paper cost the society eight hundred dollars less than it had the previous year, and the executive committee's report to the society in August of 1852 was partially optimistic.  

36Ibid., Aug. 28, 1852.
The committee sharply condemned what appeared to be a revival in the popularity of the American Colonization Society; it blamed popular acceptance of the Fugitive Slave Law for allowing colonization to be reconsidered as a viable solution to the problem posed by slavery. Nonetheless, the annual report proudly cited instances of resistance to the law and what it called the failure of recapture in Ohio as reasons for optimism. In addition an anonymous donor had made a three year pledge of $1100.00 to the organization; the society had taken in over $2600.00 in the past year; the Salem antislavery fair, aided by the women of Adrian, Michigan, had been successful, despite Massachusetts Garrisonian Anna Weston's refusal to send any goods; and the executive committee was pleased that antislavery sentiment seemed to be growing in the North.

37 Ibid. During 1851 there had been three well publicized successful instances of mob action disrupting enforcement of the fugitive slave law: the Shadrach rescue in Boston in February; the violent Christiana, Pennsylvania, riot in September; and the famous "Jerry Rescue" in Syracuse on the first of October. See Campbell, The Slave Catchers, pp. 145-57.

38 Bugle, Aug. 28, 1852. Salem Garrisonians were quite upset when Weston questioned their request but cooperated with the Cincinnati Anti-Slavery Bazaar, which was not Garrisonian. Sarah Ernst, one of a few Garrisonians in the Cincinnati Sewing Circle, did manage to divert half of that organization's $500 profit to Garrisonian activities. See Sarah Ernst to Anna W. Weston, Feb. 1, 1852, and
The committee's report mentioned two recently held antislavery conventions as more evidence of the rising consciousness of Northerners concerning slavery. Neither was a meeting of disunionists, but both seemed indicative of the effectiveness of continued moral agitation by abolitionists; Garrisonians were, after all, trying to persuade the Northern public to act against slavery, and they generally offered qualified approval of actions which they construed as actually damaging to slavery, whether or not that action met the high moral standard of behavior which they set for themselves.

The first meeting commended was the third of a series of annual "Christian" abolition conventions held in Cincinnati. The 1852 meeting had been a large and open affair. Charles Burleigh of Connecticut, whom Frederick Douglass thought to be a man with "talents of a superior order," advocated disunion, and Douglass, whose gradual rejection of the Garrisonian tactic of non-voting was by Parker Pillsbury to Anna W. Weston, April 20, 1852, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

39 Bugle, Aug. 28, 1852.
then both open and complete, spoke for his new position.

He urged the meeting to use political power to force the federal government to utilize what he had come to see as its constitutional power to abolish slavery in the states where it existed. He was challenged both by the extremist Burleigh and by other persons seeking more moderate resolutions. The convention accepted neither of these extremes, disunion or federal interference with Southern slavery, but it did favor political action to forbid expansion and to divorce the federal government from active support of slavery;

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41 For Douglass's remarks on the Cincinnati meeting, see Douglass to Gerrit Smith, April 15 and May 7, 1852, in Foner, *Life and Writings*, II, 176-79.
the executive committee of the W.A.S., which along with most western Garrisonians did not openly engage in the bitter disputes which continued between Douglass and their eastern co-workers, thought the convention to be a favorable sign.

It was even more gratified by the strong position just adopted by a convention called to Pittsburgh to revive the moribund Free Soil Party, a party it had long condemned in principle but acknowledged as evidence of rising anti-slavery feeling. Douglass, then a Liberty Party man anxious to make Free Soilism acceptable to men of his strong abolition sentiment, was active at Pittsburgh, as was a political

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42 Garrisonianism's opponents had long questioned the logic of these apparently contradictory positions; see, for example, Bugle, June 29, 1849, and Salem (Ohio) Village Register, Aug. 23, 1848.

Oliver Johnson succinctly stated the Garrisonian view:

But for the public sentiment originally created by... [moral suasion], no anti-slavery political party could ever have been formed; nor could such a party have succeeded...if...public sentiment had not been constantly fed and sustained by moral agitation, outside and independent of itself.


43 For Douglass's changing position about antislavery political action, see Foner, Life and Writings, II, 67-75.
abolitionist of long standing who was an even closer friend of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, Joshua Giddings. Douglass's break with eastern Garrisonians had but recently reached a stormy climax: the last annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society had been the occasion of public insult-swapping among Douglass and Wendell Phillips, Stephen Foster, Charles Remond, and Robert Purvis, but Giddings, a prime mover in the re-awakenings of a more "pure" Free Soil Party, was meanwhile coming closer to embracing some of the Garrisonians' fundamental principles.

Over the preceding few years Giddings had altered his theology to incorporate the notion that God intended the improvement of mankind and society. He thought the duty of Christians was, in the words of his recent biographer, "to hasten the process by preaching universal freedom and stressing the social implications of the Golden Rule." As a Congressman, he was unable to accept the whole of Garrison's similar philosophy, particularly its rejection of political action, but by 1852 he had determined to shape the federal government into a force for the perfection of American society. This meant that the government, pressed by the

44 Ibid., p. 55, and Douglass to Gerrit Smith, May 15, 1852, ibid., pp. 180-81.
voting public and their politicians, must guarantee each person freedom to achieve self-perfection; Giddings felt he had an increased personal responsibility to involve the government in the struggle to fulfill the egalitarian ideals of the country's Declaration of Independence.

Some twenty years previously, the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society had accepted in their Declaration of Sentiments Garrison's view that the antislavery crusade was to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence. Garrisonians had since adopted the tactic of "come-outerism," which removed them from the realm of the traditional political activity so vital to Giddings, but in the early 1850s the friendly working relationship between the western Garrisonians and Congressman Giddings seems to have improved. Giddings's adoption of a more radical stance must have been encouraged by this association.

Throughout his career he had wanted to find a way to

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unite morality and politics, while Garrisonians consistently tried to persuade politicians to "take higher ground" within the parties and the government. The Ohio Congressman continued to associate freely with the disunionists in his state despite the fact that throughout his political life he had rejected their pro-slavery interpretation of the constitution and chosen instead to focus upon the misinterpretations of it which lent support to slavery; his motto was "Give me Constitutional Union, or give me dissolution." Yet he both understood and took seriously the Garrisonians' absolutist rhetoric, and they recognized in him a force through which they could legitimately spread their doctrines.

The Western Anti-Slavery Society had alternately condemned and praised Giddings since his appearance on its platform with Garrison in 1847. The Bugle in 1848 commended him for opposing the successful bid for Speaker of the House by fellow Whig Robert Winthrop of Massachusetts, a man abolitionists considered a Southern sympathizer; it

47 Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings, p. 211.


49 See a letter from Giddings in Bugle, Oct. 17, 1845.
applauded Giddings's Congressional resolution calling for an investigation of the kidnapping of a black waiter from a Washington boarding house; it printed antislavery speeches Giddings made, but chastized his presence in Congress and urged him to resign and thereby increase his moral influence. Soon thereafter, when Giddings had abandoned his hope that the Whig party would repent and adopt an antislavery stance, the Bugle only mildly condemned a successful Free Soil meeting he led in Salem, and in the fall of 1849 the W.A.S. invited Giddings to address an Ohio Convention of Young Anti-Slavery Men, an event planned and run by Garrisonians. Giddings reacted vigorously to the Fugitive Slave Law, which clearly posed an obstacle to his attempt to separate the federal government from any connection with slavery. The W.A.S. sought him three times, the last successfully, to lead a protest meeting in Salem, a town where Giddings said he had spoken more often than anywhere

50 Ibid., Jan. 21, Feb. 4, March 31, May 26, 1848.
51 Ibid., Nov. 10, 1848, and Oct. 6, 1849.
52 Ibid., April 13, Oct. 12, Dec. 28, 1850, and Jan. 4, April 12, 1851. Only in 1850 did Giddings abandon his theoretical loyalty to federal law. A clear and concise discussion of Giddings's antislavery career is Pease and Pease, Bound with Them in Chains, ch. 11.
else outside of his district. Oliver Johnson's response to Giddings's acceptance is revealing: "You know that some of us differ from you on Constitutional questions, but that difference of opinion does not diminish our admiration of your course in Congress."

The Garrisonians made elaborate and extensive preparations for Giddings's appearance, billing their guest as "the slave's champion," and advertised his visit widely. The Orthodox Quakers, who owned the only building large enough for the meeting, had refused the use of their facilities, so on April 22, 1851, the Methodist church was overflowing as the rally began. The Congressman sharply condemned Daniel Webster, Millard Fillmore, Lewis Cass, John Winthrop, and many other national political figures; he denied the success of the provision in the Compromise of 1850 which was supposed to prohibit the slave trade in the nation's capital; he denounced the hypocrisy of popular religion for its inaction against slavery. Benjamin S. Jones had written a

53 Bugle, Nov. 30, 1850.
54 Oliver Johnson to Joshua R. Giddings, March 22, 1851, Joshua R. Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
55 Ibid.
56 Proceedings of the meeting were printed in Bugle, April 26, 1851.
poem for the occasion, and the meeting, its officers active in the W.A.S., unanimously resolved to adopt one of Jones's stanzas as expressing "the sense of the meeting:

Yet if our Southern Neighbor
    Shall follow here the track
Of fugitives from labor;
    WE WILL NOT GIVE THEM BACK;
No laws of Congress ever
    Shall blood hounds make of us,
For we will barter never
    Man's rights for slavery's curse.

The gathering clearly agreed with the sentiments Oliver Johnson expressed in his long and eloquent welcoming speech. He praised Giddings for his early activities against the gag rule and claimed he had surpassed "the immortal [John Quincy] Adams" in his labors for the cause. The group passed resolutions which praised Giddings for his honesty, and in a significant concession for moral suasionists, acknowledged that both the use of the ballot and moral suasion could purify the corrupt Congress; less than three weeks later, the Bugle, in noting a call for a meeting of political abolitionists, emphasized the importance of every person's doing his best in his own way "to aid in bringing about the 'good time coming' when the sun shall neither rise nor set upon a fettered human being."  

57 Ibid., May 17, 1851.
Giddings seemed increasingly inclined to exercise moral suasion in and out of Congress, and the western Garrisonians were ready to support him. Because each knew there were both the room and the need for the other within the antislavery movement, when the Free Soil Party took upon itself, in Giddings's words, "[t]he political and moral regeneration of our country; the entire reformation of this Government from...oppression, slavery, and crime...," the executive committee of the W.A.S. applauded it and called for a joint but separate effort to make the law of justice supreme.

The anniversary meeting of the Western Anti-Slavery Society embraced this comparatively conciliatory position about antislavery politics. It debated the subject fully, finally rejecting Frederick Douglass's eloquent argument on behalf of voting and Free Soilism and pledging "no union with slaveholders." Parker Pillsbury reported to Garrison


59 Proceedings are from Bugle, Aug. 28, 1852.
that the anniversary was larger than those of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Pillsbury thought the men of all political parties in northern Ohio were equally hostile to slavery, and he found "many" Free Soilers who were disunionists. In fact, the only thing Pillsbury seemed to find objectionable about Ohio's abolitionists was their practice of spitting tobacco juice.

As usual, women were well represented in the affairs of the W.A.S. Sojourner Truth, the famous black abolitionist and advocate of women's rights, spoke to the convention; Sarah Ernst, one of Cincinnati's few Garrisonians, was chosen a vice-president, as were Martha J. Tilden of Cuyahoga, whose husband had been a Congressman, and Josephine S. Griffing of Medina. Mrs. Griffing was to hold that position for six more terms in addition to being one of the society's most active and effective lecturers.

60 Parker Pillsbury to W. L. Garrison, Aug. 20 and Oct. 21, 1852, in Liberator, Aug. 27 and Nov. 12, 1852.

61 Josephine Sophia White Griffing (1814-1872) was born in Connecticut. She married Charles Stockman Spooner Griffing in 1835 and moved to Ohio seven years later. She was active in the woman movement, serving as president of the Ohio Woman's Rights Association in 1853 and later as corresponding secretary of the National Woman Suffrage Association. A Progressive Friend, she worked to aid freed slaves in Washington during Reconstruction. See Keith E. Melder, "Josephine Sophia White Griffing," Edward T. James, ed., Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary
The W.A.S. had not retreated: the meeting's milder criticism of antislavery politics was offset by its adoption of a forceful damnation of "the Pro-Slavery Church," which the abolitionists resolved, was doing and had done much more than the very guilty political parties to sustain slavery. Only New School Covenanters, who refused membership to persons not opposed to slavery, were spared contempt. The assembly resolved it would distrust the Free Soil Party as long as its members and leaders did not "come-out" of the contaminated American churches.

Religion was much on the minds of Ohio Garrisonians that summer. English reformer Joseph Barker, who attended the W.A.S. anniversary, had been trying to convince residents of the area that the Bible was not inspired by God, and, secondarily, that it was the bulwark of slavery and that neither Jesus nor his Apostles had spoken against slavery. Henry C. Wright openly agreed with Barker. Their beliefs, and especially the appearance of these beliefs in the


Abolitionist Giles Stebbins contended that Mrs. Griffing first proposed what was to become the Freedmen's Bureau; see his Upward Steps of Seventy Years (New York: United States Book Company, 1870), pp. 115-16.
Liberator, angered a number of more orthodox Garrisonians. Others supported Barker and the openness of the Liberator to his ideas, however, and the controversy raged throughout the fall. Finally, a group of reformers dominated by Garrisonians called a three-day "full and free discussion of the origin, authority, and influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures" to be held in late November at Salem. Interest in the subject was high, and the Town Hall was packed for ten hours during three days' discussions. The question—whether God gave the "rule of life" to all men or to only the few who communicated it through the Bible—was not resolved, but many western abolitionists spent valuable time and energy during 1852 contemplating the problem.

62 For Barker's explanation and defense of his idea of the human origin of the Bible, see Liberator, April 22, May 14, Sept. 17 and 24, 1852. Thomas Galbreath of New Garden cancelled his subscription to Garrison's paper after 20 years, and others voiced strong objections to the implications of Barker's position; see Galbreath to W. L. Garrison, May 29, 1852 and E. W. to Garrison, n.d., ibid., July 9, Sept. 10, 1852.

63 See James Clement to W. L. Garrison, April 1, 1852 and John Cadwallader to Joseph Barker, July 30, 1852, ibid., Aug. 13, 1852.

64 Among the signers of the call were Barker, L. A. Hine, Milo Townsend, Samuel Brooke, Sarah McMillan, James Barnaby, Marius Robinson, Mary Gilbert, Henry Wright, Kersey Thomas, Garrison, Abraham Allen, Lot Holmes, and Thomas Chandler; see ibid., Nov. 12, 1852.

65 See Henry C. Wright to W. L. Garrison, Nov. 28-29, 1852, ibid., Dec. 17, 1852. During the next year, eastern
Many of these same persons were simultaneously active in the formation of the Ohio Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, which was initiated by religious reformers around Salem that fall. The new society was an expression of the perfectionist idea that each individual, if free to follow God's lead, can approach complete conformity to true Christian behavior. By May of 1853, Ohio and Michigan had three yearly meetings organized around the Progressive or Congregational principle, and Garrison himself was praising the spirit and ideals of the movement. Because rejection of the authority of some persons over others was fundamental to Garrisonians, their preoccupation with Barker's campaign and with the movement of the Progressive Friends was no more an irrelevant diversion from the cause than their attention to women's rights.

Western Garrisonians did not expend all of their energy on the Bible question and religious reform during


the year following the tenth anniversary. Pillsbury and the Griffings spent several rewarding weeks lecturing in Michigan, closing their efforts there with a large general convention at Adrian. James W. Walker, who had been well-received in the state the year before, was specially invited to the meeting which formed a State Central Committee to direct antislavery activity in Michigan. The W.A.S. and this committee were theoretically independent of each other, but they quickly began a close cooperation which resulted in New Yorker Giles B. Stebbins spending three months laboring in Michigan as the W.A.S.'s agent but under the direction of the Central Committee. The idea that the federal union was "a covenant with death" which ought to be replaced by a northern republic "sacred to Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Man"—in the words of resolutions finally adopted by the convention—was new to most of the abolitionists in attendance, even though many of them had abandoned both their churches and parties, but Pillsbury thought the convention was a good beginning for disunionism in the state.

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67Western Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, Executive Committee Report, 1853, Library of Congress.

68Parker Pillsbury to W.L. Garrison, Oct. 21, 1852, Liberator, Nov. 12, 1852. Advocating the formation of a
The city of Cincinnati, where antislavery sentiment had for some time been led by ministers and politicians, also received a dose of disunion abolitionism. The Fugitive Slave Law seemed to an experienced abolitionist there to have increased the city's aversion to slavery and led to the taking of "decidedly higher ground" by the area's abolitionists. The women of the Cincinnati Ladies Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle, aware that Garrison's views were "not in accordance with the prevailing Anti-slavery sentiment" of the region, nevertheless invited him to attend an antislavery convention they had scheduled for April, 1853. Only three or four Cincinnatians agreed with the entirety of Garrison's disunionism, but the circle thought he was famous enough to draw a crowd and persuasive enough to bring more people "to abhor slavery," which was of course necessary before either a pro-slavery or anti-slavery interpretation of the constitution could actually bring about abolition.

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government entirely outside of the federal government was a new position which reflected disunionists' increased disillusionment with the tactic of merely refusing to cooperate with certain obnoxious federal laws; Pease and Pease, "Confrontation and Abolition," pp. 930-31.

69 Christian Donaldson to W. L. Garrison, Nov. 19, 1852, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

70 Ibid. Many non-disunionists, including Christian Donaldson, who had long been a leader in Cincinnati
Garrison did not win Cincinnati's antislavery community over to his position, but he was treated hospitably by the city which fifteen years before had tolerated a riot against James G. Birney's newspaper. The W.A.S. executive committee credited the city's political abolitionists with having received Garrison with open minds.

The western Garrisonians were encouraged, and they made some minor changes in their procedures, including increasing the size of the Bugle and concentrating on increased personal contact between their agents and the people outside of the convention format. By the fall of 1853, the W.A.S. was in the best financial condition of its history. Part of the society's total receipts of $3600 was a $700 gift, but increased revenues from the antislavery sewing circles helped. According to Marius Robinson, the W.A.S. abolitionism, and Andrew Ernst, whose wife was the city's leading disunionist, urged Garrison to come. See A. H. Ernst to W. L. Garrison, Jan. 24, 1853, and William Henry Brisbane to W. L. Garrison, March 26, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

It was at this meeting that Garrison first met the Rev. John Rankin, whose Letters on Slavery had inspired Garrison in 1832; [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, III, 379-80.

The Bugle, Sept. 3, 1853.

Ibid. In mid-summer, however, the situation had not looked favorable, and the anniversary was postponed in the accurate expectation of obtaining some "notables" to
was continually receiving solicitations for aid, "accompanied by the assurance that the people want to hear," and the Westerners were anxious to extend into new territory "the knowledge and influence of radical Anti-Slavery." Since they wanted particularly to reach farmers, who would not have time to attend antislavery lectures until after their crops were in, the society's major effort, as usual, was set for autumn.

The plans were elaborate. The American Anti-Slavery Society had resolved to use some of the money it had received from successful Boston merchant Charles T. Hovey to aid the western cause, but decisions concerning utilization of the money under the auspices of the two separate antislavery organizations were not easily made. Pillsbury and the Fosters were the representatives of the A.A.S. They worked with Marius Robinson and Samuel May, Jr., a close associate of Garrison who was responsible for the Hovey money, to set up the lecturing assignments which were to prepare the way participate in it. See Emily Robinson to Anna W. Weston, July 23, 1853, Weston Papers, B.P.L.

By comparison, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society averaged around $6000.00 in income per year; the A.A.S. often collected over $30,000.00 per year. A discussion of abolition financing is Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionist Income," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIT (June, 1945), 63-76.

Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., June 9, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
for a tour by Garrison himself in 1854.

After a few false starts, the pattern of the expansion of western Garrisonian activity was set. Pillsbury and the Griffings were to work their way to Jay, Henry, and Randolph Counties in Indiana; the Fosters were to join James W. Walker for a stint in Michigan; Robinson was to concentrate on the river counties of Ohio; John F. Selby was again to lecture in western Pennsylvania; and Charles C. Burleigh, who resisted working with any other lecturer, was given the large towns along the lakes from Erie, Pennsylvania, to Milwaukee. Walker refused to work with Burleigh, Pillsbury secretly opposed what he thought was the Fosters' willingness to turn complete control of the Hovey money over to the W.A.S., and Robinson was worried about how funds collected by the lecturers was to be divided, but the campaign began on schedule immediately after the W.A.S. anniversary. Of the Westerners, only the Griffings were being paid by the A.A.S., while Selby was drawing $7.00 per week and Walker $500 per year from the W.A.S. Robinson paid his own way, in hopes that the work in Ohio could pay Selby and Walker and make up whatever deficiencies the others incurred; he

75 See Marius Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., Aug. 26, Aug. 30, Sept. 10, 1853, and Parker Pillsbury to Samuel May, Jr., Aug. 26, Sept. 1, 12, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
had little expectation of much success in Indiana, but he thought Abby Foster would be able to raise enough money in Michigan to pay for the work there.

The Western Anti-Slavery Society's anniversary, which was to initiate the fall's labors, began in Salem on August 27. Vice-presidents for the coming year were elected from Ohio (Abram Brooke, active again after a number of years, and Josephine Griffing), Iowa (Asa Davis), Illinois (Silas Pepoon), Michigan (Thomas Chandler), Pennsylvania (J. T. Hurst), and Indiana (Joel P. Davis). This reflected the organization's expanded horizon, and a series of optimistic resolutions indicated the convention's mood. The Free Soil Party was again condemned, despite objections by the notorious Joseph Barker, who had recently moved to Salem. At the same time, a resolution denying the need for controversy between disunionists and antislavery politicians—unless they tried to interfere with moral suasion—was adopted. So was a resolution that until the Free Soil Party publicly

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76 Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., Sept. 10, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

77 Information on this anniversary is from Bugle, Sept. 3, 1853.

78 Joseph Barker to W. L. Garrison, Aug. 30, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
assumed that the constitution was completely antislavery and that it denied the legality of slavery anywhere in America, it was equally responsible with the Whigs and Democrats for slavery. Nevertheless, Free Soiler Jacob Heaton urged fellow party members to help pay the society's bills and keep agitation alive.

The W.A.S. as an organization came as close as it ever did to formally embracing the idea of non-resistance which was accepted by many moral suasionists when it adopted a resolution by Josephine Griffing pledging reliance upon "the spirit of Love" and condemning the general principle that the stronger force, numerically or physically, might control and rule the weaker. There was no attempt to exclude from the W.A.S. persons who did not accept this— or any other—resolution, and a plan to change the society's constitution to restrict membership to persons with certain specific views did not materialize, so the W.A.S. continued to accept support from all sorts of foes of slavery. Over two hundred persons promised to be responsible for two new subscriptions each to the Bugle, and an additional $500.00 in cash was

79 M. R. Robinson to Samuel J. May, Sept. 10, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
raised at the convention, so the post-anniversary work to expand the scope of radical abolitionism began amidst favorable signs.

The work was difficult. Agents for many newspapers were at work in the West, trying to garner the new subscriptions so vital to successful propaganda; the faculty of Oberlin College refused to grant the use of its chapel for a speech by Sallie Holley; and Charles Lenox Remond, as Pillsbury had predicted, welcomed a chance to leave the rigors of the western campaign to join Garrison at a "Jerry Rescue" celebration in New York. Nevertheless, agents of the Western and American Anti-Slavery Societies in the fall of 1853 introduced Garrisonian doctrine further west than ever, with Burleigh spending three months in Wisconsin. In addition, they solidified the gains made over the past

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80 A. K. Foster to "Mr. May," Sept. 15, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

81 P. Pillsbury to Samuel May, Jr., Sept. 12, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

few years in Indiana and Michigan.

The Michigan Central Committee had not been idle during the twelve months of its existence; Abby Foster found them to be a group lacking only experience to become a truly efficient force. Sallie Holley and Caroline Putnam were already in Michigan when Abby and Stephen Foster arrived late in August. Mrs. Foster was pleased with the abolitionists at Adrian, who credited James W. Walker with awakening the area to radical abolition, and she and Stephen plunged into eight weeks of strenuous preparation for Garrison's visit and the founding of the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society which was scheduled for a convention in Adrian late in October.

Garrison, accompanied by Marius Robinson and Phebe Merritt, a young Quaker from Battle Creek, arrived in Michigan two weeks before the state convention. They were met in Adrian, a town which much impressed Garrison, by

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83 Bugle, Sept. 2, 1854. Pillsbury found the campaign in frontier Indiana extremely difficult, but his encounter with a young teamster seemed to lighten the task: "She was shod, though her cattle were not. In matter of stockings, however, they were all on an equality; while her scanty skirts, retrenched nearly to Bloomer height, favored her locomotion and gave her a free and easy manner, not at all to be despised." Pillsbury to Edmund Quincy, Oct. 11, 1853, in Liberator, Oct. 21, 1853.

84 Abby Foster to "Mr. May," Sept. 15, 1853, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
Thomas Chandler, who was Phebe Merritt's brother-in-law.

Two large Sunday meetings in a hall decorated with abolition signs and pictures launched Garrison's tour. At Battle Creek he was entertained by Richard Merritt, whom he had met in New York at a women's rights meeting. That city did not seem to Garrison to have been favorably influenced by the repeated efforts of Wright, Pillsbury, Walker, and Stephen Foster. Garrison blamed religious bigotry for the town's intransigence, partly because only the Friends Meeting House was open to him; it is certain that the opinions of Pillsbury, Foster, and Wright concerning the morality of American churches did little to guarantee Garrison a friendly reception by the town's traditional religious community.

Detroit, a much larger city, was not especially hospitable either. Sallie Holley, a Garrisonian whose lectures were devoid of the sort of references to persons, parties, or churches Garrison thought likely "to probe them to the quick," seemed accepted there, but a series of meetings just concluded by the Fosters had raised quite a

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85 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Oct. 10, 1853, ibid.

86 For Garrison's views on Battle Creek, see W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Oct. 15, 1853, ibid. Garrison stayed with a farmer named Henry Willis, whose ungovernable temper, according to his guest, cost him any influence.
stir. Garrison and Robinson found no one waiting to meet them and no one willing to rent them a hall. The Fosters had been able to use the City Hall on the last night of their series only by breaking a lock and seizing it—a tactic Garrison "would not have sanctioned"—and Garrison was finally able to speak only to a colored audience and to occupy his time visiting communities of fugitive slaves. 87

Back at Adrian for the state convention, Garrison was again among friends—although the Adrian Expositor called him one of "the most inconsistent and most monstrous... of all the moral quacks that ever infested society." 88 The resolutions he wrote for the convention allowed for no middle ground: they damned all organizations or books which gave any comfort to defenders of slavery and they characterized the new state society from its beginning as a disunionist organization. The executive committee chosen was largely from Adrian, and the vice-presidents were also

87 W. L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, Oct. 17, 1853, ibid.
88 Adrian Expositor, Oct. 24, 1853, quoted in Liberator, Nov. 11, 1853.
from the southeastern part of the state: the growth of the seeds of Garrisonian abolitionism sown so many years ago through the efforts of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler were being supervised by her brother Thomas, chosen corresponding secretary of the group.

While some Garrisonian women in the Old Northwest were playing a key part in the emergence of disunion abolition in Michigan, others farther east were carrying on the growing women's rights movement. The Ohio Women's Rights Association, founded May 27, 1852, at Ravenna, held its first anniversary on May 25 and 26 of 1853. Garrisonians Josephine S. Griffing and Emily Robinson were among the speakers, and the latter was chosen four months later as one of Ohio's vice-presidents at the fourth annual National Women's Rights Convention held in Cleveland. Garrison had timed his trip so he could attend, and he, Abby Foster, Charles C. Burleigh, and Martha J. Tilden served on the business committee.

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89 Liberator, Nov. 11, 1853. Samuel Hayball of Adrian was chosen president; vice-presidents were Emeline De Garmo (Ypsilanti), Harriet Fuller (Plymouth) Jacob Walton (Raisin), A. P. Bowman (Farmer), and Warren Gilbert (Rome); the executive committee was Samuel D. Moore (Ypsilanti), Mary Rulen Illenden, Sarah Eggleston, Edwin Comstock, and William Ward (Adrian); Richard Illenden and Ann Hayball (Adrian) were treasurer and recording secretary.

The woman convention had been an eventful beginning for Garrison's second western trip that year. The Fosters and Joseph Barker alternately blamed the churches, clergy, and Bible for much of the public sentiment about women's "place," and Garrison said it was certainly fair to blame men for the situation. Their views were sharply challenged, especially by a Dr. Nevin, whom Garrison thought misrepresented Barker's views. Garrison muttered audibly that Nevin exhibited "the spirit of a rowdy and a blackguard," for which Nevin's brother later tweaked Garrison's nose.

The *Bugle*, far from objecting that the energy of disunionists was being spent at the woman's rights convention, was pleased. It defended the propriety of including coverage of the meetings by claiming that the woman movement "as presented by the principles and action of that convention" was "anti-slavery itself, in one of the purest, most comprehensive, and effective forms." The editor continued:

Every truth it utters for woman is the truth uttered for the chattel bound woman, no less than for her sister, disfranchised by law, wronged by social custom, or robbed by pecuniary usage.  

Garrison was excited by his western experience and wrote that if he ever left Massachusetts he would seriously

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91 Ibid., pp. 134-43.
92 *Bugle*, in *Liberator*, Nov. 4, 1853.
consider settling in Michigan. He was enthusiastic about the wonders brought to transportation by the railroad, and consequently he was increasingly aware, as of course were many Americans, of the importance which the West was going to play in the future of the country. Western abolitionists had impressed him—especially Robinson, Chandler, Ann Arbor's Richard Glazier, and Congressman Giddings. He visited the grave of Elizabeth Chandler, Michigan's pioneer abolitionist, and the memory of her renewed his determination.

The nation was growing, and Garrison saw it clearly.

'Westward the star of empire takes its way; and the fate of the republic is soon to be in other hands than those which now hold the sceptre of dominion.'

It was the West where the great question of human brotherhood would be settled; Garrison thought perhaps that was fortunate, because, he wrote,

Anti-slavery labor and means can be more advantageously expended at the West, where society is in a plastic state, where there is no moneyed aristocracy, and where priestcraft and bigotry are comparatively powerless, than at the East.

The Fosters had been trying to convince their eastern allies of the importance and potential of the western

93 Liberator, Nov. 25, 1853.

94 Ibid., Nov. 18, 1853.
movement for nearly a decade, and in 1853 Garrison seemed to agree. The three years following passage of the Fugitive Slave Law had been good ones for western Garrisonianism.
CHAPTER XII

THE WESTERN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY:

DECLINE, 1854-1861

On May 22, 1854, after months of debate, the United States House of Representatives accepted a bill to organize territorial governments for Kansas and Nebraska. The area thus opened for settlement was above 36° 30'; the imaginary line which since the Missouri Compromise in 1820 had divided the Louisiana Purchase between slavery and freedom. The Kansas-Nebraska Act specifically repealed the Missouri agreement and opened those territories to "popular sovereignty." Application of any interpretation of that ambiguous concept would allow for the expansion of slavery into land long closed to it; angry reaction to that betrayal of the Northern public's trust was immediate.

Abolitionists' outrage was reinforced on May 24 by the arrest in Boston of Anthony Burns, who had escaped from slavery in Virginia. Burns was tried, convicted, and returned to Virginia by the federal government, despite an
assault upon the courthouse designed to free him; even in Massachusetts, the Fugitive Slave Law seemed potent.  

The events of late May encouraged more abolitionists to embrace tactics of direct opposition to federal authority, with Garrison even publicly putting the torch to the United States Constitution, which he branded "a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell." Many persons throughout the North who were not abolitionists were opposed to the extension of slavery, and they were also upset by the pro-slavery implications of many federal laws and policies which were at least indirectly sanctioned by both the Whig and Democratic Parties; large numbers of the men so reacting were involved in the formation of what quickly became the Republican Party. The Republicans were united in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, but when abolitionists like Joshua Giddings tried to commit the new party to policies hostile to Southern slavery or to racial discrimination,

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they discovered the limitations of the abolition impulse within the party's leadership.  

Republicanism was not the only Northern movement in which abolitionists found themselves struggling over the means and ends of reform; there was also discord within the Garrisonian wing of abolition as it reacted to what it viewed as the new challenges of the slave power.  

The executive committee of the Western Anti-Slavery Society was rather satisfied with the organization's situation when it reported to the anniversary at Salem in late August of 1854. For the first time, receipts for the Bugle exceeded expenses, although this was mostly due to the


4 Information concerning this anniversary, unless indicated otherwise, is from Salem (Ohio) Anti-Slavery Bugle, Sept. 2, 1854.
cancellation of over 300 unpaid subscriptions. Financial support—from the women's antislavery fairs conducted in Cincinnati, Salem, and Adrian and from Iowan Asa Davis, whose gifts had been quite generous over the preceding three years—was adequate; and the society made plans for an extensive fall campaign into the West in conjunction with the American Anti-Slavery Society.

During the anniversary, word was received that a train bound for Salem carried a slaveholder and a young girl whom he claimed to own. Most of the abolitionists attending the convention decided to meet the train and rescue the girl. There was little opposition from within the community, and a large number of non-Garrisonians joined the crowd of 800 persons who successfully carried out the mission.

The executive committee evidently had decided not to follow its own inclination to relocate the Bugle either in Cleveland or Cincinnati, possibly because of the difficulty of choosing between the two cities; see James Barnaby to William L. Garrison, Jan. 3, 1854, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

The Cincinnati fair in November, 1853, made over $1,000.00. Over $200.00 worth of goods came from abolitionists in Massachusetts; Liberator, Nov. 18, 1853.

For information about the plans for fall, see C. S. S. Griffing to Samuel May, Jr., June 23, 1854, and Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., Aug. 7, 1854, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

Henry Blackwell of Cincinnati, who was in Salem unsuccessfully trying to persuade the abolitionists in the W.A.S. to vote, presided over the town meeting celebrating the rescue, and it was at his suggestion that the girl was christened Abby Kelley Salem.

The excitement of doing something practical to challenge slavery gave a psychological boost to the disunionists, as did the community's continued willingness to tolerate and occasionally join their activities. The summer of 1854, however, had brought a severe drought to the area, and the farmers who provided most of the abolitionists' support were already feeling its crippling effects. Parker Pillsbury, one of the Westerners' best eastern friends, was abroad trying to recover his health; and perhaps most serious, James W. Walker, one of the society's most successful agents, and Asa Davis, recently its most generous financial supporter, were dead. The anniversary, well aware of the seriousness

9I have found little biographical information on Davis, whose "almost unparalleled liberality" had made the W.A.S. "largely indebted" to him "for the means of prose-. cuting its labors during the three last years"; Western Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, Executive Committee Report, 1854, Library of Congress.

Walker died in April at his home in New Lyme. He left his family destitute and without relatives in America. Grateful abolitionists contributed to the support of the family, buying twenty acres of improved farm land for them; see Henry C. Wright to W. L. Garrison, April 9, 1854, in
of the situation, resolved to ask the American Anti-Slavery Society to devote much of its resources to the western field. Even though Garrison had finally deemed the West crucial, aid was not forthcoming. The W.A.S., its income reduced by the crop failure almost solely to what it received from antislavery fairs in Salem and Cincinnati and from Asa Davis's estate, was only able to employ the Griffings and James Barnaby for limited work in Ohio. William Wells Brown spent some time lecturing in the state before speaking to the Cincinnati Anti-Slavery Bazaar, which paid his way, and the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society hired Barnaby and the Griffings for work in its state. The A.A.S. sent only Charles C. Burleigh, Giles Stebbins, and A. T. Foss into the West that fall, although a member of the W.A.S. executive committee had specifically requested Charles Lenox Remond in place of Burleigh and had expressed reservations about the extent of Foss's commitment to non-voting.

The W.A.S. nevertheless kept pressure on the A.A.S.

Liberator, April 21, 1854; Benjamin S. Jones to editor, Pennsylvania Freeman, copied in ibid., May 19, 1854; Bugle, March 14, 1857.

Western Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 1845-1857, Executive Committee Report, 1855, Library of Congress.

C. S. Griffing to Samuel May, Jr., June 23, 1854, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
throughout the year and finally got assurances that some prominent eastern abolitionists would come for the next anniversary and its aftermath. The western leadership naturally sought Garrison, May, Phillips, and the Fosters, but they also continued to make specific requests for the services of black abolitionists; the W.A.S. realized that Charles Lenox Remond and Frederick Douglass had been among those instrumental in bringing Garrisonian ideas to the West, and the leadership of the western branch of the movement had refrained from the bitter public warfare which had been raging intermittently between Douglass and Garrison since their joint tour in 1847.

Late in 1853, the intra-abolition controversy had become clearly related to the question of blacks' abilities as abolitionists. In December, Garrison had written that the antislavery crusade was too complicated for blacks as a class "to keep pace with it" or "to perceive...its demands, or to understand the philosophy of its operations."

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12 For negotiations concerning the summer and fall of 1855, see Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., June 10, July 26, July 30, 1854, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

For some time there had been tension among white and black abolitionists, but this blatant public statement clearly revealed the growing ambivalence of a number of white abolitionists specifically concerning the role of blacks in effecting the freedom of their own race. 14 Black abolitionists reacted quickly and clearly to condemn Garrison's paternalistic attitude. Garrison's old friend John B. Vashon of Pittsburgh was among many who commended Douglass for fending off Garrison's attacks. 15

The other Garrisonian newspapers sided with the Liberator, but the Bugle, the organ of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, did not. It noted the raging controversy but suggested that perhaps blacks could better judge solutions to prejudice than could whites; it also contended blacks could certainly "keep pace with the anti-slavery cause" and asked both sides to exercise humility and


Although there is no evidence that it was trying specifically to counter the effects of Garrison's position, the W.A.S., while the dispute was most bitter, did attempt to procure the services of black disunionists William Wells Brown and Charles Lenox Remond and of either John Mercer Langston or Charles Langston, but with little success.

Marius Robinson hoped that the anniversary scheduled to pull the W.A.S. from the slump of the drought year would signal the beginning of a cooperative effort with the A.A.S. to follow up recent work west of Ohio. Stephen Foster was the only prominent Easterner who could arrange to attend the August anniversary, but Garrison indicated that he and Wendell Phillips could come in October. Robinson seized upon this possibility and suggested a series of major

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17 C. S. S. Griffing to Samuel May, Jr., June 23, 1854; Marius Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., Aug. 7, 1854, and July 26, 1855, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

The Langston brothers were active leaders of Ohio's black convention movement in the 1850's; see William F. Cheek, "John Mercer Langston: Black Protest Leader and Abolitionist," Civil War History, XVI (June, 1970), 101-20.

18 Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., June 10, 1855, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
conventions as far west as Milwaukee; Samuel May, Jr., thought Robinson had "mapped out too large a work," but he urged Phillips to consider a western trip and himself contemplated accepting Robinson's invitation.  

Robinson's expectations were disappointed, however. Neither Garrison, May, nor Phillips joined the fall tour, and only Stephen Foster, Aaron M. Powell, and a Mr. Phileo [sic?] worked as agents of the A.A.S. The 1855 anniversary was nonetheless a success, with between 4,000 and 5,000 persons meeting at Alliance in the large "anti-slavery tent." Aaron Powell, a young New Yorker who was a newcomer to the area and to its abolitionism, reported "strong currents and counter-currents of feeling among the people" concerning abolitionism. There were the usual lengthy debates over resolutions condemning the "American construction of the Bible" and voting for the Free Soil

19 Marius R. Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., July 30, 1855, Garrison Papers, B.P.L. May forwarded the letter, along with his comments, to Phillips.


I have not been able to determine with certainty that this "Mr. Phileo" was the Rev. Calvin Philleo who married Prudence Crandall, but it probably was.

21 Powell, Personal Reminiscences, pp. 115-16.
Party, but Foster, who was growing increasingly impatient with any antislavery tactic not directly defying slavery and governments which tolerated it, added a new and potentially revolutionary dimension to the tactical considerations.

In February, Foster had advocated the formation of a new political party in Massachusetts based on the constitution of that state and completely ignoring that of the United States. He wished to lay the foundation for direct Northern action to weaken the federal government and thereby leave the South unable to suppress slave rebellions. In August, he brought the idea west and helped convince the W.A.S. to adopt a resolution calling for the non-slaveholding states "to secede from the present Union and form a confederacy on the principle of 'No Union with Slaveholders.'" Some abolitionists in Michigan three years before had

22 Bugle, Sept. 8, 15, 1855.


25 Bugle, Sept. 1, 1855.
adopted a similar resolution at a meeting influenced by Parker Pillsbury and representatives of the W.A.S., but this was the first commitment by the W.A.S. itself to the idea of advocating a separate Northern government. To an expanding group of disunionists, the dissolution of the Union seemed a way for Northern abolitionists to cripple the pro-slavery federal government so that it could not protect Southern slaveowners from their "property." Almost since their organization, the western disunionists had been closely allied with the same Garrisonians who were leading the development of this tactic.

Foster's dissatisfaction with the progress of abolitionism was increased by the rapid growth of the Republican Party in the West, and he vowed to make the exposure of the party's "dishonesty and its utter impotency as an anti-slavery agency" the object of his mission. His mission was not easy. Abolitionists in the area were upset by charges of "improper intimacy" between disunionist

26 Parker Pillsbury to W. L. Garrison, Oct. 21, 1852, in Liberator, Nov. 12, 1852.
Henry C. Wright and a woman; Aaron Powell was distracted by doubts concerning his impending marriage; Calvin[?] Phileo [sic?] was detained by the sickness of his wife; and Powell, Phileo [sic?], and Foster were all in poor health. In addition, and more seriously, Foster found the former enthusiasm of the West replaced by "a moody gloom" and growing defection to the temptations of Republicanism.

Foster perceived a great deal of support for disunionism among western antislavery people, particularly on the Western Reserve, but he found no similar support for the tactic of non-voting. The only salvation for the disunion movement appeared to be to carry it to the ballot box, for the policy of non-voting, he wrote, was all "which separates the masses in that section of the State from us." He continued:

There are few...[persons here] who do not desire a dissolution of the Union. But vote they must, & vote they will, come what may, & so long as there is no way provided for them to vote in harmony with our principles, they will continue to be thrown into an antagonistic position, & we shall be compelled to struggle on without their aid, maintaining a bare existence, or else to abandon our distinctive enterprise altogether.

29 Ibid., and Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Sept. [?], 1855, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

30 Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Sept. [?], 1855, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

31 Ibid.
During the 1840's, Foster had half-heartedly embraced disunion voting as a tactic to subvert the constitution, but his renewed interest was more determined. However, Ohio was preparing for an election for which there was not time to propose a disunion ticket, and the state's farmers were in the midst of their busiest season, so Foster decided to delay advocating his voting plan and to move through Michigan early in October on his way to Milwaukee.

Success further west proved elusive. Crowds in Michigan were small, and conflict between Foster and Charles Burleigh over how severely to condemn Republicanism seemed to Foster to soften the impact of his crusade. He found Milwaukee unreceptive to abolitionism, and disgusted that the American Anti-Slavery Society had not assigned a general agent to oversee the society's efforts, he returned to Massachusetts before winter set in.


33 Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Sept. 15, 1855, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

34 Stephen S. Foster to Abby K. Foster, Oct. 12, 1855, Foster Papers, A.A.S.

Foster was healed of the severe lung congestion which had been hampering his activities by a Michigan woman with great electric energy. This "electric cure" may have been performed by a person versed in "Electro-Biology," a "science" related to Mesmerism; see E. Douglas Branch, The Sentimental Years, 1836-1860, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), p. 366.
The Western Anti-Slavery Society was hard pressed to survive. Its only significant income came again from the efforts of the women at the Salem Anti-Slavery Fair and the Cincinnati Bazaar, and the organizer of the latter was finding it difficult to get enough help to continue her efforts. She and other women abolitionists in the West were increasingly involved in the growing woman movement, which held its national convention in Cincinnati in October of 1855, and, according to the executive committee of the W.A.S., male abolitionists, who were more directly susceptible to the lure of the ballot, were being led "into the expediency of party politics."

Ever sure of the power of "truth," the society's executive committee blamed the inability of the W.A.S. to maintain widespread discussion of the evils of Republicanism for that party's successes among disunionists. Other factors were helping the new party, too, as violence perpetrated by opponents of the principles of the Republican

35 Bugle, Sept. 13, 1856; Sarah Otis Ernst to A. W. Weston, Jan. 13, 1856, Weston Family Papers, Boston Public Library.


37 Bugle, Sept. 13, 1856. 38 Ibid.
Party reached a peak in the early summer of 1856. Much of the pro-slavery violence was related to the struggle in Kansas between advocates of the extension of slavery and free soil. The Republican press naturally seized upon such evidence as proof that the party's organizers had correctly foreseen the evil consequences of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Two separate events in late May of 1856 especially played into the hands of Republican propagandists. On the 20th, a drunken mob of pro-slavery men burned the Free State Hotel in Lawrence, the capital of Kansas's free state settlers, and touched off the open warfare which quickly earned the territory the name of "Bleeding Kansas" in the northern press. The next day, Republican Charles Sumner of Massachusetts began in the Senate an angry two-day denunciation of the "Crime Against Kansas." Sumner was particularly caustic in his remarks about the character of South Carolina's Senator Andrew P. Butler. Butler's nephew, Congressman Preston Brooks, retaliated on the 22nd by battering Sumner senseless with a cane while the Senator was seated at his desk on the Senate floor. Throughout the North, angry citizens held indignation meetings; Sumner became an anti-slavery martyr; and the Republicans entered the presidential
campaign strengthened by the behavior of their enemies.

The Western Anti-Slavery Society, which was already barely able to sustain its newspaper, faced a new threat from the increased activity of Republicans claiming to be against slavery. The organization's leadership was well aware of the problem posed by the growing popular appeal of men whose abolition principles did not meet their standards: the leaders must have known that Republicanism was especially attractive to the same native pietists who made up much of the moral suasionists' supporters in the Midwest. W.A.S. president Abram Brooke wrote Marius Robinson to stress the importance of keeping abolitionists from being turned from the true course. Of Sumner, Brooke wrote, "[H]e is reaping the inevitable consequences of his own acts, in the ill-mannered company he has voluntarily sought," and he expressed similar contempt for the people of Kansas who opposed both the extension of slavery and the immigration of blacks into that territory.

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40 Abram Brooke to Marius R. Robinson, June 24, 1856; in Bugle, July 5, 1856; for the key role of anti-Negro sentiment in the free soil movement in Kansas, see Rawley, Race and Politics, p. 98.

For a perceptive discussion of the relationship
The American Anti-Slavery Society shared Brooke's sense of urgency and proposed another series of one-hundred conventions to be held in conjunction with its auxiliaries throughout the North. Brooke, emphasizing that the W.A.S. was nearing the end of its old resources, urged members of the society to meet the challenge of the time, and Robinson optimistically began arrangements to cooperate with eastern allies in order to try to minimize defections to the presidential candidacy of Republican John C. Fremont.

The anniversary of the W.A.S. late in August of 1856 was indeed a cooperative venture: the business committee included Easterners Parker Pillsbury, Samuel May, Jr., Charles F. Hovey, A. T. Foss, Oliver and Mary Ann Johnson, and Francis Jackson, as well as western activists; and Sojourner Truth and William C. Nell, noted black abolitionists, joined in the debates and speechmaking. Despite the Bugle's public defense of blacks' abilities to understand the intricacies of abolitionism, neither Nell nor


41 Bugle, July 12, 1856.

42 Ibid., July 19, 1856; and Marius Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., July 23, 1856, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
Truth was placed on the committee charged with planning the anniversary, but Nell did make a strong speech to the convention on behalf of equal treatment for his race in the North. If the W.A.S. continued to use blacks as propagandists instead of planners, it also continued to condemn Republicans for upholding compromises which supported black slavery in the South.

The eastern Garrisonians remained but briefly in the West after the anniversary, leaving western disunionists to their own limited resources during Ohio's most exciting presidential election campaign in years. The Republicans, stressing pro-slavery violence by the defenders of slavery, did well in the state and congressional election in October, and the next month, Fremont won Ohio's electoral vote; the Garrisonians were particularly discouraged, for as Stephen Foster had anticipated, the Western Reserve, vigorously encouraged by its pietistic clergy, cast its largest presidential vote ever for a party whose platform in effect sanctioned human bondage.

43 Bugle, Sept. 13, 20, 27, 1856.

Marius Robinson and Abram Brooke agreed that the most discouraging part of the situation was "the practical denial of all fixed moral principles of moral law" by their co-workers for reform, but the W.A.S. under their leadership continued to press for disunion. An earlier petition to the Ohio legislature urging the state to withdraw from the Union had been summarily turned down, but a second one received the attention of a "Select Committee of One" composed of Senator O. P. Brown. Brown agreed that the federal government was in the hands of evil men, but he had faith in the return of good men to control; he also thought that the true force for disunion was coming not from Garrisonians but from Southern Democrats. This response did not completely satisfy Brooke, but he was gratified that Brown had not disputed the petition's claim that the government did support slavery.


47 Ibid., April 11, 1857.
The Garrisonians' rationale for disunion still seemed sound, especially after the United States Supreme Court early in 1857 ruled that Congress could not prohibit slavery anywhere. The case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, which in effect made the crucial non-extension plank of the Republican Party's platform void, seemed further proof that the federal government was controlled by the South and no doubt stimulated interest in a northern disunion convention. There had been a state disunion convention at Worcester, Massachusetts, in January of 1857, where Stephen Foster renewed his campaign for a northern movement to create a new government, and seven months later Marius Robinson suggested that a proposed national disunion convention be held in Ohio. Two years before, Foster had claimed there was considerable sentiment in Ohio for disunion, even among voters, and he was correct. Ohioans dominated the list of 6,033 persons who signed the call for a National Disunion Convention to be held at Cleveland on October 28 and 29, 1857; of the Ohioans, 1,187 were listed as "voters" and 570 as "others."


The disunion convention was not a project of the W.A.S., although many of its members signed the call, and the society was busy with plans of its own. The executive committee reported to the anniversary held at Alliance early in September that its financial condition was still poor and that discontinuances of Bugle subscriptions had been heavily outnumbering renewals since April. The anniversary itself was again aided by a number of Easterners including Pillsbury, the Fosters, A. T. Foss, Charles L. Remond, and Lucy N. Colman. This year, though, the Easterners were to stay in the West through the fall, and the W.A.S. announced that the highest number of disunionist agents ever was to labor in its region for the rest of the year.

The anniversary provided Stephen Foster with another opportunity to push his version of disunion, and he proposed:

That the time has now fully come, when the friends of freedom who believe in the necessity of a government of force might render especial aid to the anti-slavery cause by organizing political parties outside of the present National Government, and make their respective states free and independent sovereignties.

The convention agreed with Foster that the Republican

50 Western Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 1845-1857, Executive Committee Minutes and Report, 1857.

51 Bugle, Sept. 12, 1857.
Party was "the worst foe to be encountered by the friends of freedom and humanity" but rejected his motion to commit the society to specific political action on behalf of disunion. Nonetheless, the subject of disunion continued to occupy the attention of western Garrisonians.

The lecturing agents left the meeting planning to gather in Cleveland for the scheduled disunion convention. As the W.A.S. had announced, there were plenty of agents, but the results of their extensive work were disappointing. Part of their inability to raise money or gather subscriptions to the Bugle was due to a serious financial panic in the fall of 1857 which began a three-year depression that proved especially damaging to the West. Also important, though, was what the W.A.S. executive committee called most listeners' insistence upon participating in movements, like the Republican Party, with "large and visible results." The cry for "Free Kansas," a mainstay of Republican oratory, was taking away many "weak converts" to disunionism and making it difficult to recruit new ones.

52Western Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 1845-1857, Minutes of the Fifteenth Anniversary.


54Bugle, Oct. 23, 1858.
There were other problems. Many persons interested enough in abolitionism to investigate it were sure most abolitionists were advocates of free love or spiritualism or worse, and the disunionists had to spend valuable time combatting such rumors. A number of Garrisonians were spiritualists, though, as were perhaps one million other Americans, and there were difficulties posed by loyalties divided between the positive action advocated by abolitionism and the rather passive faith of many spiritualists. This was especially a problem in Michigan, where Stephen Foster's "bitter and abusive terms" applied to Republicans had already "thoroughly disgusted" a number of potential Garrisonians.

When Parker Pillsbury and Charles C. Burleigh attended the yearly meeting of the Michigan Friends of Human Progress for 1857, they were poorly received by a number of the spiritualists there. Pillsbury reported that many spiritualists had


56 Branch, Sentimental Years, p. 378.

57 "Justice" to W. L. Garrison, Nov. 10, 1857, Liberator, Nov. 20, 1857. Sallie Holley also suggested that "some of our lecturers" had damaged the cause by "a very partial representation" of Garrison's own beliefs; see Sallie Holley to Abby K. Foster, May 13, 1857, Foster Papers, A.A.S.
abandoned abolitionism and came to fear disunion, and he was thus pleased when Andrew Jackson Davis, the leading spiritualist of the age, proclaimed to the meeting that adherence to spiritualism was not in itself a test of character. The Progressive Friends then adopted a resolution supporting disunion, and Pillsbury rejoiced that the meeting had served "to separate the Anti-Slavery cause from a morbid, mawkish Spiritualism that had infested it like the potato-rot..."  

Pillsbury felt that the departure of the more fanatical spiritualists from the abolition movement in Michigan left it in good hands. He was later disappointed that the anniversary of the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society had been postponed. Lucy Colman, like Pillsbury a spiritualist, was also upset by the damage spiritualism was doing to abolitionism in Michigan, but she was more resentful of the attacks upon abolitionism by Republicans and ministers in Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana.

Indiana had never been receptive to abolitionism,

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60 Lucy N. Colman, Reminiscences (Buffalo: H. L. Green, 1891), pp. 23-30.
and efforts there by Garrisonians since 1855 had produced little positive response; the few Garrisonians in the state affiliated with the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society. The situation in Illinois was somewhat better. Alonzo J. Grover of Earlville, who with numerous other abolitionists had abandoned hope for the end of slavery without a violent slave uprising, had been a lecturing agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society since 1856, and Lucy Colman and A. T. Foss reported finding considerable disunion sentiment among Republicans in the northern part of the state early in 1857. A Wisconsin Republican "of the most radical stripe" who was elected that state's prison commissioner reported a demand for The Liberator in the state prison, and he himself circulated the call for the disunion meeting in Cleveland.


63 Edw. M. MacGraw to W. L. Garrison, Feb. 24, 1858, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
The state of Iowa, which since its settlement had anti-slavery tendencies, became more adamant against the expansion of slavery after the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the possibility of slavery across its border, and a few advocates of Garrisonian abolition began to organize there in the mid-1850's. In 1856, according to Iowa's governor, Wendell Phillips had given a meeting at Iowa City "the length and breadth of Garrisonism" and received in return "unbounded applause," and the arrival of some seasoned Garrisonians who moved from the older West helped prepare the way for other similar ventures across the Mississippi.

The most active of the abolitionist immigrants to Iowa were Lot and Eliza Holmes, whose departure from Columbiana, Ohio, left that town without abolitionist leadership. The Holmeses reported back to their Ohio friends that the first annual meeting of the Forest Home Anti-Slavery Society in Powescheek


66 Asa Davis of Iowa had provided the Western Anti-Slavery Society with much of its financial backing until his death in 1854. Joel P. Davis, a Garrisonian and women's rights advocate formerly of southwestern Ohio and Indiana moved to Iowa in 1855; see Joel P. Davis to Wilbur H. Siebert, Sept. 10, 1892, Wilbur Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
County revealed most disunionists in the area, like some in Wisconsin, cooperating with Republicanism. A committee was appointed to investigate holding a state abolition convention, but Lot Holmes reported, as for years had many disunionists from the ever-advancing frontier of the old Northwest, that enduring hostility to the government of the United States was difficult to arouse.

Despite the effects of Republicanism and financial depression, Garrisonians active in the West in the fall of 1857 looked toward the Cleveland convention to stimulate the growth of disunion sentiment. Clevelander William F. Parker, an officer in the Western Anti-Slavery Society and formerly an active abolitionist in Northampton, Massachusetts, scheduled three meetings by Charles L. Remond and his sister Sarah Remond to help prepare the city for the convention, but heavy rain ruined the series. Pillsbury was disappointed, but he was confident that others' efforts to show the Republican Party as a white man's party would make for a successful meeting. This was a reasonable expectation:


over half of those who had finally signed the call for the
convention were from states west of New York and
Pennsylvania, and Pillsbury claimed that hundreds of persons
in Michigan alone had that autumn refrained from voting on
account of the proposed convention.  

The convention was to start on October 28, but the
Bugle of October 24 reported a notice from a New York paper
that it had been postponed because of the financial panic
and the unavoidable absence of Wendell Phillips. The Bugle
announced that a convention would be held anyway, and a
sizeable dispute ensued.

Sometime in August, Garrison had initiated a move
within the committee of arrangements to transfer the National
Disunion Convention from Cleveland to Syracuse, New York.
This was after Thomas Wentworth Higginson of the committee
had authorized Marius Robinson to hire a hall in Cleveland
and well after considerable publicity attaching the meeting
to Cleveland had been released, so Higginson argued against
the move. The Westerners remained unaware of Garrison's
feelings on the matter, so, according to Pillsbury, when
word arrived of the Easterners' decision not just to move but

69 Parker Pillsbury to W. L. Garrison, Oct. 26,
1857, ibid., Nov. 6, 1857.
to postpone the meeting, it "fell on us like lead."  

Higginson and Phillips had eventually agreed with Garrison, who must have abandoned relocation for postponement, and all three signed the arrangements committee notice. They also decided, in Garrison's words, to let "an informal meeting be held at Cleveland...of such as can make it convenient...so as not to create too great a local disappointment."

A number of the Ohioans were more than disappointed. Pillsbury regretted the decision, and the convention itself passed a mild censure of the arrangements committee, but Pillsbury and Aaron Powell went along with Garrison's contention that the convention as held was merely a disunion meeting and not the national meeting it was originally supposed to be. Abram Brooke disagreed, as did others, and the dismayed Garrison was forced to repeat his explanation for the postponement several times, adding that Marius Robinson


71 W. L. Garrison to Samuel J. May, Oct. 18, 1857, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
had hurriedly approved the decision.

The convention itself, of which Robinson was president, was attended by many of abolitionism's notables and indeed took the "high ground" the western Garrisonians generally sought. The important business committee was composed of Westerners Brooke, James Barnaby, Jane Elizabeth Jones, and William F. Parker, and Easterners Stephen Foster, A. T. Foss, Aaron Powell, Pillsbury, and William Wells Brown. The resolutions adopted by the some 160 participants who gathered despite the postponement were extreme both in tone and substance, possibly partly from anger at the initial refusal of a local hotel to serve Brown, a black man, until other delegates also refused to eat. The convention declared slaves had a duty to "strike down their tyrant masters by force of arms," which perhaps explains Brown's observation that Cleveland's blacks were more enthusiastic than the city's whites about the convention, and it also resolved to organize "a revolution among parties outside

72 Parker Pillsbury to W. L. Garrison, Nov. 8, 1857, and Aaron Powell to W. L. Garrison, n.d., both in Liberator, Nov. 13, 27, 1857; Abram Brooke to W. L. Garrison, Nov. 18, 1857, in Liberator, Nov. 27, 1857; Liberator, Nov. 6, 27, 1857.

73 Bugle, Nov. 7, 1857.
of the Federal Government, designed and calculated to effect its overthrow."

For a number of years, Pillsbury and the Fosters had been urging Garrisonians to adopt a policy of confrontation, as historians Jane and William Pease have shown, and this convention, boycotted and undermined by Garrison, widened the already growing split between advocates of accelerated hostility toward the slave power and abolitionists basically satisfied with the course of the Garrisonian movement. A sizeable part of the leadership of the Western Anti-Slavery Society was by late 1857 perhaps unconsciously siding with the dissidents.

The Bugle, the primary agent for promulgating disunionism in the West, continued to lose circulation and money. In October of 1856, there had been 993 subscribers, down from a high of 1,400 in 1851, and by April of 1858, the number had fallen to 711, of which over half owed for their subscription. The executive committee, rightfully

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74 Liberator, Nov. 6, 20, 1857; Bugle, Nov. 7, 14, 1857.


76 The total income of the W.A.S., which had been $3,597.28 during the year ending in September, 1853, was down to $2,382.49 by the same month of 1857. See Western
worried, decided to procure the services of Garrison himself, even if it meant postponing the anniversary, to try to regain momentum. Garrison agreed to come late in October; meanwhile, the Republicans were continuing to dilute the antislavery movement by broadening its appeal. Particularly ominous evidence was the refusal of Republicans in the Western Reserve to renominate Joshua R. Giddings to Congress.

The rejection of Giddings's bid to return to Washington was partly due to his poor health, but it was caused primarily by Giddings's own increased radicalism. Republican leaders interested in broadening the party's appeal began late in 1856 to deny that the party had anything to do with Garrisonians or somewhat less radical men like Giddings. Before he was able to react effectively to being read out of the party, Giddings had suffered a stroke, but while recuperating he had decided to embrace an even more extreme position. He was a leader in demanding civil disobedience to the Dred Scott decision and opposing plans

Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Minute Book, minutes of meetings Oct. 2, 1856, and April 9, 1858, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio; Bugle, Sept. 3, 1853, and Sept. 12, 1857.

77 Benjamin S. Jones to W. L. Garrison, July 4, 1858, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
for Congress to purchase and colonize Southern slaves, and his rhetoric in explanation of his positions was increasingly that of a perfectionist. He insisted that he spoke for the Republican Party, and he refused to pledge the party to abolish Southern slavery, but in the words of historian James Stewart, he was nevertheless "the political darling of 'non-political abolitionists,'" many of whom continued to use him as a channel through which to influence the Congress and the Republican Party. 78

Garrisonians were quick to send condolences to the defeated politician who in Henry Wright's words was "the most consecrated and respected in the hearts of those who have been tried in the Moral conflict with oppression." 79 When Giddings had recovered, Parker Pillsbury engaged him in a debate in the Ashtabula (Ohio) Sentinel over the true nature of Republicanism, and Giddings responded by pledging the party to protect blacks' rights to live in liberty. Soon after Giddings returned to Congress for the remainder of his term, he showed that the brief rest had not mellowed him; he delivered an impassioned speech to Congress which

78 Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings, pp. 247-57.

79 Henry C. Wright to Joshua R. Giddings, Feb. 4, 1857, Joshua R. Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus.
called for that body to work to create a government to promote the human freedom necessary for all people in all races if they were to be brought into harmony with the laws of God.

Most Republicans were furious that Giddings persisted in trying to move the party toward embracing egalitarianism, but Garrisonians were overjoyed. Oliver Johnson and Garrison privately and publicly thanked him, but as James Stewart has observed, it was Marius Robinson of the Western Anti-Slavery Society who most perceptively recognized Giddings's uniqueness as a politician who had over many years come to embrace a radical reform mentality.

Neither Giddings nor the Garrisonians could exert much direct positive pressure on the Republicans, but their long-standing working relationship seemed capable of keeping the party from further backsliding completely out of the antislavery movement. The W.A.S. was therefore angered by the unwillingness of Western Reserve Republicans to tolerate Giddings's compromised radicalism, which the Garrisonians themselves had continued to alternately applaud and condemn.

80Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings, p. 258.
81Ibid., pp. 258-59. 82Ibid., p. 259.
83See, for instance, Bugle, Oct. 23, Nov. 12, 1852; Dec. 20, 1856; March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 1857.
and the October anniversary had high praise for Giddings and
sharp words for his chosen party, which had rejected him. 84

The words historian Stewart applied to Garrisonians
nationally fit the Western Anti-Slavery Society: "Unlike
some of their chroniclers, [they] realized that realistic
political activity can mean more than just the building of
party structure and collecting of votes." 85 They supported
Giddings's presence in Congress and urged him to adopt their
ideas of moral reform, but they castigated his connection
with the political compromises to which their antipolitical
stance made them immune. He provided them with a line of
communication to the antislavery parties of the era without
diluting their cries against the immorality of the country.

Their cries were being muffled, however, by their
inability to raise money in the midst of a depressed economy
and an ascending Republicanism. When Garrison arrived in
Salem in mid-October, 1858, he found the abolitionists'
spirits low. The death of Marius Robinson's daughter had
been a blow to him and his friends, but there were other
reasons, too. Garrison explained: "The love of some has

84 Ibid., Oct. 23, 1858.

85 James B. Stewart, "The Aims and Impact of
Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1850-1860," Civil War History,
XV (Sept., 1969), 197-209.
waxed cold; some have moved away; some have failed in business; some have been drawn into politics; and hardly any are left to sympathize with and sustain our...position." He also commented on the scarcity of money "at the West" and said his trip would most likely have to be financed as a gift from the American Anti-Slavery Society. He did not anticipate a successful campaign.

Garrison was quickly surprised by "a fine magnetic spirit" and the awakening of "a very hopeful feeling," even though he found Cleveland had "almost as little anti-slavery feeling as a grave-yard." He reported that the W.A.S. anniversary, delayed six weeks for Garrison's visit, saw common hope replace despair as he, Josephine S. Griffing, and black lecturer-reformer Francis Ellen Watkins led a group of effective speakers in helping raise $900.00 in cash and pledges for the impoverished movement.

Garrison's influence upon the meeting was not unanimously hailed, however; Abram Brooke, who served with Garrison

86 W. L. Garrison to Helen Garrison, Oct. 14, 1858, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

87 W. L. Garrison to Helen Garrison, Oct. 18, 20, 1858, ibid.

on the business committee, accused him of substantially weakening a resolution proposed to the anniversary concerning the Republican Party. The original wording, according to Brooke, demanded that all who were guilty of slaveholding through connection with the government "repent of [their] great sin, and do works meet for repentance." Garrison had objected and gotten the resolution modified so as to agree that many Republicans alluded to in the resolution were acting from good motives and a failure to recognize their sin. Brooke, angry at the postponement of the disunion convention, charged Garrison, in a letter published in the Liberator, with shifting individuals' responsibilities from their actions to their motives. He said that individuals who voted for a party which was pledged to strengthen the Union were thereby personally supporting slavery, and he insisted that abolitionists protest all such sins. Garrison, who had favored Fremont in the 1856 presidential election, believed that the Republican Party was the imperfect child of abolitionism, but Brooke was sure that antislavery was the Republicans' weakest link and that "designing men" in the party's leadership were using abolitionist rhetoric only
to get power. 89

Nothing significant came of this exchange late in 1858. The A.A.S. helped pay for lecturing in Ohio during the winter by Francis Watkins, B. S. Jones, Robinson, and Massachusetts disunionist Joseph Howland, but "the Republican question" was not resolved. Meanwhile, the W.A.S. suffered a severe disruption by the rather sudden resignation of Marius Robinson as editor of the Bugle. In December, Robinson had made a trip to Illinois, where he thought many were anxious for "a purer and higher anti-slavery gospel" than Abraham Lincoln's, but on January 16, 1859, he submitted his decision to a special meeting of the executive committee. He claimed to have resigned for personal reasons, and he later enjoyed his first vacation in eight years, but he also was experiencing difficulties with Bugle readers.

89 Brooke's letter to Garrison is in Liberator, Nov. 5, 1858. For Garrison and Republicanism at this time, see [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, III, 444-47.

90 The Illinois trip is discussed in Bugle, Dec. 25, 1858; the executive committee meeting of Jan. 16, 1859, is recorded in Western Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Minute Book; Robinson's public explanation of his resignation is in Bugle, Feb. 26, 1859; his vacation is mentioned in Marius Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., May 25, 1859, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.
The chief complaint Robinson received was that the Bugle's views and programs were too narrow. Specifically, Marcena Miller, a staunch disunion abolitionist, objected that the paper placed insufficient emphasis upon destroying the pro-slavery authority of the Bible, which book he thought was the chief obstacle to abolition. Robinson did not agree with Miller, whom he further annoyed by writing that both he and most ministers wanted to leave the removal of slavery to indirect means. Robinson's position was consistent with Garrisonian tradition. He said that there must be a combination of the antislavery efforts of the orthodox and heterodox and that the cause of the slave ought not be committed to "any class of persons other than those who make it the cause for which they live and labor."

The executive committee of the W.A.S. sided with Robinson and finally settled on former editor Benjamin S. Jones as his replacement--it initially preferred Parker Pillsbury--and the W.A.S. and its paper continued to try to solve their pressing financial problems. They were

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An editorial by Robinson explaining his reactions to recent criticism is in Bugle, Feb. 12, 1859; Miller's response is in a letter from him to Robinson, Feb. 20, 1859, ibid., March 12, 1859.

Western Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Minute Book, minutes for Jan. 16, 1859.
aided in their efforts by the American Anti-Slavery Society's supporting Robinson as an agent and by the popular resentment in Ohio to the government's prosecution of the Oberlin-Wellington rescuers, a group of black and white residents of Oberlin who had released a fugitive from the custody of three federal marshalls. Robinson reported that his efforts in the summer of 1859 revealed "revolutionary tendencies more strong & decided" than he had ever before known them, but that an early frost was so severely destructive of the projected wheat crop that there was no prospect for raising money.

The W.A.S. anniversary that fall was nonetheless, according to Henry C. Wright, the most glorious ever, with 2,500 persons crowding the big tent at Alliance early in September. Area railroads granted excursion-rate tickets to travelers bound to and from the convention, and the abolitionists were additionally rewarded by a particularly exciting meeting. Henry Wright and Marcena Miller failed to get the business committee, which contained two black men, to propose resolutions denouncing the Bible as

93 Marius Robinson to Samuel May, Jr., May 25, and July 6, 1859, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.

94 Henry C. Wright to W. L. Garrison, Sept. 4, 1859, in Liberator, Sept. 23, 1859.
pro-slavery; there developed a major controversy over abolitionists' proper position relative to Republicanism; and the convention accepted Parker Pillsbury's insistence upon sanctioning slave rebellions.

Benjamin Jones, recording secretary of the meeting and editor of the Bugle, reported in that paper of September 10 that a speaker who was a defender of the Republican Party refused to recognize the chairman's recognition of a point of order raised from the floor, continued to speak after the hour of adjournment, and took over the hall which the W.A.S. had reserved for an evening meeting; Jones also charged that the commotion prohibited the finance committee from raising much-needed funds. A Republican in attendance challenged Jones's version of the events and identified black Ohio abolitionist John Mercer Langston as the speaker in question. He accused Pillsbury of calling Langston a tool of the Republicans, denied that Langston was there as a defender of the party, and denied that the Republican Party was, as Jones had insinuated, responsible for the disturbance. Jones responded that the issue was primarily a parliamentary one, a contention which his

95 Details of the anniversary, unless otherwise noted, are from Bugle, Sept. 10, 17, 1859, and National Anti-Slavery Standard, Sept. 24, 1859.
correspondent had challenged, and the exchange continued unresolved.

What was resolved, though, was the Western Anti-Slavery Society's acceptance of the position of Pillsbury and the Fosters concerning the Republican Party, which the anniversary again branded "the most efficient and most dangerous obstacle to the successful completion" of its labors and "wholly below...the respect and cooperation of any honest and impartial lover of mankind." An open break between the Fosters and Garrison over Republicanism had been impending for some time, and it had finally come at the New England Anti-Slavery Convention in the summer of 1859. Garrison, who recognized that the Republicans were staunchly opposed to the expansion of slavery and gave them credit for that, was riled by the Fosters' proposed resolutions thoroughly and completely condemning the party, and he had begun a public personal attack upon Abby Foster which resulted in their withdrawal from the A.A.S. Pillsbury had


98 Pease and Pease, Bound With Them in Chains, pp. 208-09; for Garrison's position on Republicanism at this time, see [Garrison and Garrison], William Lloyd Garrison, III, 483-86.
sided with the Fosters, and so implicitly did the W.A.S. in its unrelenting attack on the principles of Republicanism.

The anniversary did profess that its hopes, hearts, and hands ("so far as we believe they can be righteously employed") would always be on the side of slaves who took up the sword to obtain their freedom, but the W.A.S. did not ever sanction the methods employed by their sometimes co-worker John Brown in his stunning raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in October. However, the executive committee and the Bugle did, as did almost all abolitionists, praise Brown as a true friend of liberty doing what he thought was right.

Brown's ill-fated project had special significance to the abolitionists around Salem, even though there is scant evidence to show that they ever had much to do with him directly. Brown had spent a large part of his childhood in northeastern Ohio, and his father had had some connection with the antislavery enterprise, but Salem was affected by Brown's raid mainly because two of his young allies, Barclay and Edwin Coppoc, had been born and raised nearby.

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99 Bugle, Nov. 26, 1859.

100 Louis Filler, ed., "John Brown in Ohio: An Interview with Charles S. S. Griffing," Ohio State
There were sympathy meetings throughout the North for Brown and those of his band who had died or were scheduled to be executed. The Western Reserve of Ohio, where Brown had lived and where Garrisonians and others long had worked to make people hate slavery, was the scene of numerous gatherings; and a crowd of 1,400 in Cleveland, which Garrison had a year before found devoid of abolitionists, resolved:

The irrepressible conflict is upon us, and it will never end until Freedom or slavery go to the wall. In such a contest and under such dire necessity we say "without fear and without reproach" let freedom stand and the Union be dissolved. 101

There were a number of gatherings in the county, some of which, as suggested by the W.A.S., were held on December 2, Brown's execution day. A Marlboro meeting resolved that Brown had done nothing not condoned by the Declaration of Independence, and it almost passed a resolution placing Brown above George Washington in a list of American heroes; Salem gatherings called Brown's aim of forcibly freeing the enslaved "glorious." 102


102 Bugle, Dec. 10, 17, 24, 1859.
Barclay Coppoc had avoided capture, but Edwin was tried and executed, and his body was sent to Columbiana County for burial. The sympathy meetings were in some cases dominated by Garrisonians, but the crowds which gathered for Edwin Coppoc's funeral included a sizeable portion of the population in the area around the headquarters of the Western Anti-Slavery Society. The Coppocs had moved to Iowa nine years before, but more than 2,000 persons gathered in Salem for services on December 18, when the martyr was buried in the coffin in which he had arrived from Virginia. Almost immediately it was determined that he should not rest in a box furnished by a slaveholding state. A second burial, in a free-state coffin, was widely advertised for December 30, and some 6,000 persons assembled to pay their last respects to a man who had given his life trying to precipitate immediate abolition.

Antislavery enthusiasm fired by Brown's daring raid could not solve the economic problems which had plagued the W.A.S., and a crop failure due to an early frost cut into the receipts of the Western Anti-Slavery Fair. The W.A.S. could not hire lecturing agents, and

104 Bugle, Dec. 31, 1859.
only help from the committee responsible for spending the deceased Charles Hovey's $40,000.00 gift to abolitionism allowed Josephine Griffing to labor in Ohio in the summer of 1860. The Bugle was finally forced to require prepayment by its subscribers, and circulation fell from 488 to 327 between October, 1859, and the following May. The W.A.S. executive committee meetings were also increasingly less frequent.

In mid-summer of 1860, however, with the presidential election fast approaching, the western Garrisonians began to plan for what they feared would be a last effort. The Hovey Committee, which included the Fosters and Pillsbury, decided to give $600.00 to help the Bugle reach as many readers as possible before the election, and Pillsbury began to push a series of "grand" disunion conventions, funded by the Hovey estate, designed to unify the scattered abolition opponents of Republicanism west of Ohio and Michigan. The W.A.S. executive committee responded by appointing Marius Robinson and Abram Brooke to meet with Pillsbury and plan the campaign, and ex-Ohioan Lot Holmes of


106 Western Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Minute Book, minutes of meetings Oct. 9, 1859, May 27, 1860.
Marshall County, Iowa, from which the original suggestion had come, quickly helped form that state's coordinating committee.

The annual report from the executive committee, written by Jane Elizabeth Jones, was particularly long and eloquent. She compared John Brown to Horatio at the bridge in Rome; condemned the federal government; pointed out that Abraham Lincoln, the Republican presidential nominee, was against racial equality; and specifically censured Ohio's Republican state government for sponsoring a large party for the legislators of the slaveholding states of Tennessee and Kentucky. She also praised Parker Pillsbury, to whom she said "we are largely indebted for the radical anti-slavery which sustains this movement, and for the leaven which works in sects and parties."

Pillsbury was at the anniversary, along with a number of persons not previously active in the W.A.S. So was Abby Kelly Foster, whose physician had told her she could never visit the West again. She had not planned to speak, but, she said, "When I entered this meeting my heart

107 Ibid., meeting of July 8, 1860; Parker Pillsbury to editor, Aug. 10, 1860, in Bugle, Aug. 18, 1860; Bugle, Sept. 8, 15, 1860.

leaped up, as it never leaped before on entering an Anti-
Slavery gathering." Once again, she took it upon her-
self to save the Bugle; she was assisted in her enter-
prise by an enthusiastic anniversary which adopted positions
which further distinguished the western Garrisonians as the
most extreme faction of abolitionism.

H. Ford Douglass, a black abolitionist from Chicago,
urged the gathering at Salem to "do as John Brown did,—not
necessarily in the way he did, but...with the same deter-
mination to effect...the complete overthrown of slavery."
He claimed it was irrelevant who won political office,
because the real task was to make the people "recognize the
white man, the black man, the red man,—all men," as
deserving all the rights of mankind. Someone then proposed
a resolution asking for abolitionists to "use such means as
you can conscientiously and efficiently adopt" to effect
the end of slavery. There was opposition from some who
thought that sanctioned "use of the sword," but the reso-
lution was adopted after Josephine S. Griffing spoke of
having recently met John Brown, Jr., and having had "a new
baptism." She now agreed with Pillsbury that "the time for

109 This and other information about the anniversary
is from Bugle, Oct. 6, 1860.
action more stern and determined that [sic] what we had heretofore adopted, had come."

The meeting also vowed that slaveholders had "no rights which any human being is bound to respect," and perhaps uniquely among abolitionists in the fall of 1860, the Westerners specifically and harshly condemned Charles Sumner and William Seward both for being in the government and in the Republican Party. They also vowed that the Republican Party, "committed to every constitutional compromise for slavery ever claimed by [John C.] Calhoun," could not "be entrusted with the interests of humanity and liberty."

Some eastern Garrisonians were already angry at the Fosters, and they at them, as a consequence of a bitter personal controversy between Abby and Garrison which began over a disagreement about the propriety of raising money from Republicans. Oliver Johnson, once editor of the Bugle, was indignant at the W.A.S. and, as he wrote J. Miller McKim, its "assumption...of superior sagacity and fidelity as compared with Garrison." He thought it "preposterous to deny

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110 See W. L. Garrison to Abby K. Foster, July 22, 25, Sept. 8, 1859; Abby K. Foster to W. L. Garrison, July 24, 1859; Wendell Phillips to Abby K. Foster, June 30, July 20, 1859, Foster Papers, A.A.S.
that Lincoln's election will indicate growth in the right direction," and he charged the W.A.S. with reducing itself, "needlessly and recklessly to a small faction of growlers showing their teeth and snapping just where they should have been generous and conciliatory."\(^{111}\)

The W.A.S. and Pillsbury and the Fosters did not see the necessity of being conciliatory to a man and party pledged to tolerate slavery and promote segregation, and as historian James McPherson has shown, Garrisonian abolitionists throughout the Civil War were to continue to disagree over the ends and means of the movement. In the fall of 1860, though, the Western Anti-Slavery Society and its allies from the East launched yet another effort to combat the forces of evil in the West. Pillsbury and Josephine Griffing went as scheduled toward the Mississippi River, but found "with rare exceptions" that conservative Republicanism was "the highest Anti-Slavery virtue west of Ohio and Michigan."\(^{113}\)

\(^{111}\) Oliver Johnson to J. Miller McKim, Oct. 11 and Nov. 8, 1860, J. Miller McKim Papers, Cornell University Library.


\(^{113}\) Parker Pillsbury to editor, Nov. 18, 1860, in Bugle, Nov. 25, 1860.
subscriptions rose rapidly, however, equalling Abby Foster's expectations, and the W.A.S. late in November began "a vigorous anti-slavery canvass" of Ohio on behalf of disunion.\footnote{Abby K. Foster to Samuel May, Jr., Nov. 23, 1860, Garrison Papers, B.P.L.; Marius Robinson to J. Miller McKim, McKim Papers, Cornell.}

Simultaneously, an ironic series of events was occurring which was to complicate these abolitionists' tasks. As it became clear during November that Lincoln had won the presidency, the state of South Carolina, as it had done before, threatened to secede from the Union. The doctrine of states' rights was basic to the South Carolinians' move toward their own form of disunion, and fear that Lincoln was actually the voice of abolitionism was an important motivation. The state was overwhelmingly for secession as its only recourse in the face of the Republican victory.\footnote{Steven A. Channing, \textit{Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 286.}

Afraid of that party for reasons quite opposite from those of western Garrisonians, South Carolina in December of 1860 began the process that led to "Southern disunion."

The W.A.S. kept its lecturers in the field, but they found persons too interested in the possibility of civil war to be very responsive. The \textit{Bugle}, always an advocate of the
right of states to withdraw from the Union, could not but recognize South Carolina's right to secede, "even though for the avowed purpose of holding up slavery." The South's secession, according to Jones, did "for slavery politically and religiously" what the North had been unwilling to do "for freedom religiously or politically," but the Bugle warned in mid-March, 1861, that secession only weakened but did not destroy "the citadel of oppression." Disunion was merely a means abolitionists had advocated, warned Benjamin Jones, and the job of assailing slavery until it was destroyed still remained.

The W.A.S. continued to try to save the Bugle, which did not endear itself to some Easterners by getting involved in an editorial dispute with Garrison over South Carolina's right to defend with arms her decision to secede. Garrison, responding to a suggestion by the Bugle that the logic of disunionism demanded recognition of South Carolina's right to defend secession, denied that there was "any point of comparison" between "what the perfidious secessionists" had done and "what the abolitionists have urged upon the North to do...." The Bugle had said its position did not

116 Parker Pillsbury to editor, and Josephine S. Griffing to editor, n.d., in Bugle, Feb. 16, March 9, 1861; ibid., Jan. 12, March 16, 1861.
require allowing any state the right to maintain slavery, but Garrison was not persuaded; the Bugle, all that remained of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, was holding to its original ideals even as it died.  

Garrison and a number of other abolitionists soon came to support the Union's efforts to prevent secession. On April 21, the executive committee of the W.A.S. gave up its struggle on behalf of an abolition paper "in a community whose pecuniary means and interest are so wholly absorbed by the question of war, as is the case with the people of the West." A week later, Jones editorialized that the western Garrisonians could not support the United States government because, as always, the lesser of two evils was not an acceptable choice. Like Stephen Foster, the dying Western Anti-Slavery Society could not support the government until it was a force completely dedicated to the principles of abolitionism; and Lincoln's federal government was by that standard no better than James Buchanan's.  

The abolitionists involved in this reluctant decision to suspend publication of the Bugle--Robinson,  

117 The Bugle--Garrison exchange is in Liberator, April 12, 1861.  
118 Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, pp. 275-78.  
119 Western Anti-Slavery Society, Executive Committee Minute Book, meeting of April 21; Bugle, April 27, 1861; Pease and Pease, Bound With Them in Chains, pp. 211-12.
Joel McMillan, Isaac Trescott, and John Gordon--arranged for the sale of the type and the care of the press. The names of the 525 paid subscribers were supplied to the American Anti-Slavery Society's *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and the abolitionists who had worked long and hard for their organization suddenly faced decisions about how as individuals to pursue the goals of their cause. Abram Brooke, who nearly twenty years before had been instrumental in establishing a society pure enough for his high standards, correctly blamed the *Bugle*'s fidelity to its principles for its difficulties. In a letter printed in the paper.'s last number, Brooke also predicted that political and military necessity would make emancipation a necessity for the leaders of the North's war, and he urged his colleagues to persist in their agitation to make that prediction a reality.

The wartime roles chosen by most of the individuals who had been the Western Anti-Slavery Society are at present lost to history. A meeting of the executive committee on January 31, 1864, instructed Marius Robinson and Joel McMillan to sell the society's press and property and

120 Marius Robinson to Oliver Johnson, April 30, 1861, Garrison Papers, P.B.L.; Abram Brooke to editor, April 29, 1859, in *Bugle*, May 4, 1861.
adjourned to meet at the call of the president, which never came. It is said that when Robert E. Lee, who had been in charge of the capture of Edwin Coppoc, surrendered at Appomatox, some youths in Salem produced the coffin in which Coppoc had arrived from his execution. They filled it with an effigy of the courtly Lee, and carried it at the head of a noisy procession which surged through Salem's streets singing

John Brown's body lies moldering in his grave,  
His soul goes marching on. 121

CONCLUSION

The American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1833 to make Americans aware of the sin of slavery and the im­morality of not immediately ending it. The A.A.S. was the country's only national abolition society in the 1830's. During most of that decade, the New York-based organization coordinated a united effort to undermine the successes of colonizationists and then to convince America to repent of its most heinous sin. There were disputes concerning tactics, but until well into the decade most organized abolitionists either adhered to the direction of the A.A.S. or chose not to quarrel openly with it.

Eastern and western abolitionists differed but slightly in their views of the aims and techniques of the movement. They subjected Northerners on both sides of the Appalachians to a barrage of propaganda, verbal and written, designed to persuade them that slavery was sinful and could not be tolerated by a nation dedicated to freedom and Christian principles. Abolitionists circulated petitions
and accumulated thousands of signatures demanding that Congress act to limit slavery; they gave impassioned speeches imploring large crowds to repent and join antislavery organizations. By 1836, Ohio, under the fiery leadership of Theodore Weld, had the greatest number of antislavery societies of any state in the country, surpassing even Massachusetts.

If abolitionists' successes were widespread by mid-decade, so was intense mob violence against them. Milder and more tactful men than the abrasive William Lloyd Garrison faced hostile and violent resistance. Men like Theodore Dwight Weld, James G. Birney, and Elijah P. Lovejoy were the objects of abuse from "gentlemen of property and standing" in the North who feared the revolutionary implications of the abolitionists' demands for an end to slavery and racism. Their fear became a force against abolition sentiment.

These hostile mobs were a new common enemy which united abolitionists east and west against the growing strength of slavery. The western abolitionists in particular refrained from quarreling. Westerners were busy organizing their rapidly growing and unsettled land, and they ignored rumors of dissension among their eastern co-workers.
The ominous nature of anti-abolition activity, which included riots, suppression of the rights of free speech, press, and petition, and finally even murder, helped abolitionists expand. In Illinois, Michigan, and finally Indiana they followed Ohio's lead and established state antislavery societies. Numerous whites, suddenly afraid for their own rights, joined the movement, a development that pleased most abolitionists. By late 1837, however, a few, led by Garrison, were concluding that true abolitionism was no place for the masses. They believed that the real enemy was not just slavery but all forces of oppression. They hoped for a revolution in popular morality to achieve the promises of Christianity and the Declaration of Independence; they declared that such a revolution could not be effected by adhering to doctrines and tactics which, while hostile to slavery, were tolerant of sexual discrimination, racism, and coercion. They recognized that the abolition of slavery would not in itself make America just, and they thus supported such decidedly unpopular causes as women's rights and non-resistance.

The growth of abolitionism encouraged some abolitionists, including the leadership of the A.A.S., to consider forming a broadly-based antislavery political party. The
possibility of organizing such a party appeared to be weakened, however, by the public's association of advocates of non-resistance and women's rights with the antislavery movement. James G. Birney had moved from Ohio to the New York headquarters of the A.A.S. to try to hold the organization together in the face of the diverging visions for abolitionism. Nonetheless, he took issue with Garrison's contention that abolitionism was part of a larger moral revolution and therefore not a fit subject for the compromises necessary to achieve political success. The issue was joined, and by the end of 1840, Birney had led from the A.A.S. a group of important abolitionists who opposed the inclusion of women among the organization's leadership and who wanted to establish a political party composed only of men who were primarily interested only in ending slavery.

The schism in the East became open and bitter, but Westerners, many under Gamaliel Bailey's watchful leadership, paid little heed until it was complete. Like Garrison, Bailey wanted abolitionism open to all opponents of slavery regardless of sex or political affiliation, and in the early 1840's he resisted mounting pressure to make the western states' antislavery societies into appendages of Birney's new Liberty Party.
Most western abolitionists, however, believed in voting their antislavery convictions, and Bailey was unable to dissuade most of the state antislavery societies in the West from allying with political abolitionism. Only in Ohio did effective leadership emerge which insisted on keeping the Liberty Party and moral suasion separate, and even there the state society disassociated itself from Garrison's A.A.S. in 1840. By 1842 the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society was the only western state society not affiliated with the Liberty Party. The Ohio society had proclaimed itself neutral in the matter of the eastern schism, but since late in the 1830's, some Ohioans had sided with Garrison's insistence on the primacy of moral suasion and on granting women equal participation in abolitionism. As the O.S.A.S. devoted more of its already limited time and effort to political considerations and continued to exclude women from its leadership, opposition from those who had objected to abandoning the A.A.S. grew; in 1842, despairing of reforming the O.S.A.S. from within, they formed the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society, elected women to positions of leadership, and immediately affiliated with the A.A.S.

The split was amiable, but the issues separating the organizations were fundamental. In 1843 the A.A.S. adopted
for its motto "No Union With Slaveholders," a slogan decidedly too demanding for those abolitionists who wanted their movement popular enough to gain power directly through electoral politics. That same year the O.S.A.S. was swallowed up by the Liberty Party, and the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society began a new campaign to persuade Westerners to put their faith solely in the "moral power of truth."

In 1845, Abby Kelley helped convince the O.A.A.S. to adopt the A.A.S.'s slogan as its own, and for the next sixteen years Ohio Garrisonians, operating as the Western Anti-Slavery Society, spearheaded a continuous and often vigorous campaign to persuade Westerners to abandon their complicity with slavery.

Complicity included supporting churches and especially political parties which acknowledged the Christianity of slaveholders, the legality of slavery, and the legitimacy of the pro-slavery United States Constitution. The western Garrisonians, like their eastern colleagues to whom they repeatedly looked for support, saw their task to be that of persuading Northerners, by rhetoric and example, of the sin of even indirectly sanctioning human bondage.

The Garrisonians' main opposition came from political abolitionism, which was understandably leary of appeals to
its constituency to rise above the moral compromises necessary for effective electoral politics. During the last half of the 1840's, most Garrisonians east and west concentrated on undermining the Liberty and Free Soil Parties. The results of that effort in Ohio were not decisive; political abolitionism did not thrive, but neither did the W.A.S. establish financial security or widen the area of its influence—despite the efforts of famous eastern abolitionists including Abby and Stephen Foster, Parker Pillsbury, and William Lloyd Garrison.

At mid-century the fortunes of the moral suasionists turned sharply upward. In the West, good crops and new leadership stimulated a resurgence which was aided by popular reaction against the obnoxious Fugitive Slave Law in the Compromise of 1850. Disunionists' contentions that the federal government was hopelessly corrupt seemed more reasonable as Northern politicians gave their assent to the new law. The W.A.S. responded to increased demands for agents, which came from further west than ever before; Garrison made a triumphant tour of the West in 1853; and in 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which gained nothing for opponents of slavery, provided even more evidence to support abolitionists' charges that the decisions of American democracy were devoid of morality.
The Garrisonians' insistence that opponents of slavery use moral suasion from outside politics to undermine the pro-slavery government appeared to be gaining support. Westerners still thrived on politics, however, and it was in the West that the Republican Party was born. Republicanism opposed the expansion of slavery and the slave power's control of the federal government, but it did not oppose the existence of slavery or seem especially concerned about morality. Almost from its beginning, the Republican Party eroded the newly expanded base of western Garrisonianism.

In 1854, the death of two key workers and a severe drought led to shortages of both leadership and funds, which further curtailed the efforts of the W.A.S., while Republicanism, with its practical and often racist appeals to a practical and often racist people grew quickly. There was a limited amount of energy and money available for the use of agents for change, and Republicanism got increasingly more of it.

During this period, some of Ohio's moral suasionists began to quarrel with Garrison. The _Anti-Slavery Bugle_, the Ohio's society's newspaper, openly challenged Garrison's published statement that blacks could not understand the intricacies of abolition strategy. The Westerners also sided
with the Fosters and Pillsbury against Garrison's reluctance to intensify abolitionism's confrontation with the federal government.

Popular support for western abolitionism was therefore threatened in the 1850's by two manifestations of pragmatism: the moderate reform goals of the Republican party and the increasing incidence of compromise in the position of Garrison himself. Not only did Garrison help undermine a National Disunion Convention he had helped call for Cleveland, but he began to soften his public position on that same Republican Party which was the biggest organized obstacle to the efforts of the W.A.S.

Most Garrisonians claimed credit for creating the climate of opinion in the North in which the Republicans' limited opposition to slavery could thrive; this was indeed part of their plan. But the Westerners remained more adamant than Garrison and his allies in Massachusetts in their refusal to support a party pledged to tolerate slavery where it existed.

During the secession crisis many eastern Garrisonians drifted toward support of Lincoln and then toward the Northern war effort. The remaining members of the W.A.S., however, clung fiercely to the society's original insistence upon
"No Union With Slaveholders." The Bugle and the Western Anti-Slavery Society stopped functioning when the war began, perhaps victims of their own limited success. The pragmatism of politics and war had undermined the idealism of moral suasion.

The Western Anti-Slavery Society, in its steadfast adherence to the original principles of immediatism, had demanded too much of its western supporters. Republicanism offered easier and more convenient weapons than the moral power of truth--voting and eventually force--to combat slavery; in so doing it provided a painless salve for awakened consciences while freeing its antislavery supporters from the obligation to confront slavery as a moral issue.

Thirty years of moral suasion in the West revealed some of the limits to reform in antebellum America. To the western Garrisonians, those limits were unacceptable, but it took the forces of war to expand them. Even then, the moral revolution for which the Western Anti-Slavery Society strove never came.
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