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“THAT SUBLIME MINGLING OF RACES:” ABOLITIONIST SUPPORT FOR
INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

by

Charles Boyd

Under the Direction of Wendy Venet, PhD

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines abolitionist support for interracial marriage. It demonstrates that far from being a marginal viewpoint within the movement, support for interracial marriage was widespread among both black and white abolitionists. Many abolitionists stated they personally did not recommend interracial marriage at present due to the backlash couples would face, while also denying that it was unnatural or immoral. A few abolitionists eschewed such a disclaimer. A few also married people of different races themselves. To a considerable extent, defense of interracial marriage was part of a larger push for racial integration and equality. This thesis also looks at British abolitionists who criticized the American stigma against interracial marriage, and children and grandchildren of abolitionists who defended interracial marriage, the most prominent being the famous, controversial lawyer, Clarence Darrow.

INDEX WORDS: Abolitionism, slavery, interracial marriage, racial equality

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CHARLES BOYD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Art
in the College of Arts and Sciences
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2016

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FOR INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

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DEDICATION

To all the people who have stood up for the freedom to marry.

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I want to first thank my adviser, Dr. Wendy Venet, for all the time she has put into helping me make this the best thesis possible. I want to thank my other committee member, Dr. Robert Baker, for his support and feedback. I want to thank Dr. Jacqueline Rouse for encouraging me on this project and helping me sharpen my scholarship/research skills. I also wish to thank Drs. Ian Fletcher and Denis Gainty for their enthusiastic encouragement. And finally, I would like to thank all of the friends and family who gave me advice and encouragement in this thesis. I hope you all know how much help you have been.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| CHAPTER 2: “THEIR MARRIAGE IS NEITHER UNNATURAL NOR REPUGNANT TO NATURE:” ABOLITIONISTS WHO DEFENDED INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE | 12 |
| CHAPTER 3: “TO REPEAL ALL LAWS IN THIS STATE, WHICH MAKE ANY DISTINCTION AMONG ITS INHABITANTS, ON ACCOUNT OF COLOR:” THE ABOLITIONIST CAMPAIGN TO LEGALIZE INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN MASSACHUSETTS..... | 46 |
| CHAPTER 4: “I WOULD NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TRY TO SEPARATE PERSONS WHO REALLY LOVED:” BRITISH ABOLITIONISTS WHO CRITICIZED AMERICA ON INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE | 65 |
| CHAPTER 5: “THIS PROVES I AM IMPARTIAL:” ABOLITIONISTS WHO CROSSED THE COLOR LINE IN MARRIAGE | 73 |
| CHAPTER 6: “IS THERE ANY REASON WHY A WHITE GIRL SHOULD NOT MARRY A MAN WITH AFRICAN BLOOD IN HIS VEINS?:” NEO-ABOLITIONIST SUPPORT FOR INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE..... | 101 |
| CHAPTER 7: “AN INVASION OF ONE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF EVERY MAN”: COMMON GROUND BETWEEN ABOLITIONIST SUPPORTERS OF INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND MODERN GAY MARRIAGE ADVOCATES..... | 112 |
| CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION..... | 119 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 128 |
| APPENDICES | 147 |
| Appendix A: Interview with Dr. James McPherson | 147 |
| Appendix B: Interview with Eric Foner | 147 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Out of all the manifestations of racism in America, the stigmatization of interracial marriage has been one of the most virulent. While bans on interracial marriage originated largely as a method of solidifying slavery, these bans and the stigma that they helped foster have far outlasted the end of legalized human bondage. Indeed, this stigma was not eliminated as a result of interracial marriage being legalized. In 2009, a Louisiana judge was revealed to have a policy of refusing marriage licenses to interracial couples.¹ In 2012, a Montana judge was revealed to have forwarded via email a joke that compared interracial relationships to bestiality.² In 2013, a commercial for Cheerios that featured an interracial couple and their daughter prompted so many derogatory comments after being uploaded to *YouTube* that the comments section had to be disabled.³ And in 2016, an interracial couple in Mississippi was ejected from an RV park after neighbors objected to their relationship.⁴ The continued refusal of many Americans to accept interracial couples is part of a long, deeply rooted opposition to interracial marriage in American history. The author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, supported legislation to strengthen the 1691 ban on interracial marriage in Virginia.⁵ When the Declaration was written, the majority of the thirteen colonies banned interracial marriage. As recently as the end of World War II, thirty out of forty-eight states, including perceived liberal bastions Oregon and California, still had interracial marriage bans.⁶ It was not until the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* decision that interracial marriage became legal in the South.

While opposition to interracial marriage has been longstanding in American society, there has also been a long tradition of support, exemplified by abolitionists in the nineteenth century. In order to understand abolitionist support for interracial marriage, it is necessary to define the term “abolitionist,” which, for the purposes of this thesis, will refer to anyone who favored immediate

emancipation for all slaves. Many white and black members of the movement defended interracial marriage. Many racially egalitarian abolitionists, men and women, blacks and whites, saw the breaking down of barriers for interracial couples as an essential part of the struggle to liberate African Americans and end the scourge of racial bigotry in America. While often giving disclaimers stating that they advised against people marrying individuals of different races in the current society, due to the stigma such marriages would encounter, these abolitionists insisted before, during, and after the Civil War that interracial marriage was not unnatural or immoral and that interracial marriage bans were unjust. The abolitionists who defended interracial marriage were motivated largely by a belief in racial equality that included integration, equal rights, and in some cases, the idea that all races in the United States would eventually merge together.

The significant amount of primary sources related to the topic notwithstanding, the historiographical treatment of interracial marriage support in the abolitionist movement has been mixed. Paul Goodman's overall superb book, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality*, centers on abolitionist support for racial equality but gives minimal attention to abolitionists' defense of interracial marriage. However, other historians have shown more interest in studying pro-interracial marriage abolitionists. In 1955, Louis Ruchames published an essay called, "Race, Marriage, and Abolition in Massachusetts," documenting the push for legalization in the Bay State. In 1964, a young James McPherson discussed a number of abolitionists who offered explicit defenses of interracial marriage in *The Struggle For Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. In *Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years*, Herbert Aptheker used McPherson's evidence as a starting point to draw attention to other abolitionists who supported interracial marriage. James Brewer Stewart's biography of Wendell Phillips, Carolyn Karcher's biography of Lydia Maria Child, and Henry

Mayer's biography of William Lloyd Garrison all mentioned their subject's defense of interracial marriage. And in 2015, Amber Moulton wrote a very well-researched book about abolitionist efforts to repeal the interracial marriage ban in Massachusetts called *The Fight for Interracial Marriage Rights in Antebellum Massachusetts*.

Why has there been relatively little attention given to this topic? Part of the lack of awareness about abolitionist support for interracial marriage is caused by the tendency of many scholars to marginalize the widespread support for black equality among white abolitionists. For instance, historian August Meier writes that "the white abolitionists . . . were not, for the most part, genuinely committed to a belief in the essential human dignity of Negroes." Doris Kearns Goodwin claims that with regard to racial equality, "almost every white man was against it, even most abolitionists." To be sure, white supremacy was deeply entrenched in the fiber of nineteenth-century America to a degree that is sometimes hard for people to understand today, despite the racial tensions and inequalities that still exist. It is almost certainly accurate to say that no nineteenth-century individual, regardless of their race, was able to fully free themselves of any trace of unconscious racial prejudice. Even abolitionists had certain unconscious prejudices that they failed to shed. This could be seen at times by their actions and statements, such as when William Lloyd Garrison displayed a paternalistic attitude toward blacks that helped lead to a vitriolic feud between him and Frederick Douglass, or when Douglass himself suggested that the proper response to a black person unable to pull himself up by his bootstraps after slavery was to "let him fall."⁷ It is flawed reasoning to extrapolate that all white abolitionists believed in black inferiority and opposed equal rights. Scholars like Paul Goodman, James McPherson, Lerone Bennett, Jr., and Herbert Aptheker have demonstrated that, contrary to common misconceptions, many white abolitionists did support equality for blacks. As Noel Ignatiev writes, "It has been

charged—often by persons seeking to discredit the movement—that white abolitionists were no different from other white Americans in their feelings of superiority and condescension toward black folk. If so, they surely fooled their opponents at the time, who held it as one of their greatest crimes that they refused to tow the color line.” However, the common assertion that anti-racism was a marginal view in the abolitionist movement has probably caused many people to assume that few if any white abolitionists supported interracial marriage. After all, one of the most fundamental cogs in the machine of white supremacy has been opposition to interracial marriage.⁸

Far from opposing interracial marriage, many racially egalitarian abolitionists, men and women, blacks and whites, saw the breaking down of barriers for interracial couples as an essential part of the struggle to liberate African Americans and end the scourge of racial bigotry in America. While often giving disclaimers stating that they advised against people marrying individuals of different races in the current society, due to the stigma such marriages would encounter, these abolitionists insisted before, during, and after the Civil War that interracial marriage was not unnatural or immoral and that interracial marriage bans were unjust. Some were involved in efforts to repeal anti-interracial marriage laws, and a handful married people of different races themselves.

In a fundamental way, this thesis is also about slavery and emancipation. A crucial question for opponents of slavery in antebellum America was what would be done with blacks after they were emancipated. Antislavery Americans could be divided into three categories on this question. In the first category were those who believed that following emancipation, blacks should immigrate to Africa—either voluntarily, as Abraham Lincoln believed, or involuntarily as Montgomery Blair, co-counsel for the slave Dred Scott during the infamous *Dred Scott v.*

Sandford case and U.S. Postmaster General under Lincoln, believed.⁹ In the second category were those such as John Quincy Adams who believed that immigration to Africa was impractical and/or undesirable but did not support full racial integration. In the third category were those who believed that after emancipation, blacks should remain in the United States and that full integration should follow. An aspect of this integration would be interracial marriage. This was the stance of many black and white abolitionists (as well as some Radical Republicans.) Thus, in antebellum America, the question of interracial marriage was inextricably linked with the issue of slavery.

CHAPTER 2: “THEIR MARRIAGE IS NEITHER UNNATURAL NOR REPUGNANT TO NATURE:” ABOLITIONISTS WHO DEFENDED INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

It was not until the early 1830s that an organized movement of both blacks and whites for immediate emancipation of slaves began, coalescing into the American Anti-Slavery Society. The ostensibly antislavery organizations of people like Alexander Hamilton and John Jay had generally preached gradual emancipation and excluded blacks. In the South, St. George Tucker, one of the foremost “antislavery” public figures, owned slaves and proposed a plan of emancipation that would allow slavery to continue for about a hundred years.¹⁰ A reputed antislavery leader from Pennsylvania, Benjamin Rush, proposed to “make their [slaves’] situation comfortable by good treatment,” instead of immediately emancipating them. On the subject of interracial marriage, Rush theorized that blackness was a symptom of leprosy, and whites must avoid copulating with blacks or risk catching the disease.¹¹ Nevertheless, some black and even a few white antislavery Americans took positions in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that would later be championed by abolitionists. Among these positions was support for

interracial marriage, as exemplified by a white Baptist minister named David Barrow. Born in Brunswick County, Virginia in 1753, Barrow owned slaves for a time but freed them in 1784. Disgusted with slavery and failing to experience prosperity, he moved to Kentucky, where he futilely hoped slavery would not take root. In 1798, Barrow began making vehement denunciations of slavery, calling for equal rights for all Americans, and attacking the concept of black inferiority. Baptist authorities were outraged, leading him to organize a coalition of antislavery Baptist churches, one of which was attended by Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas Lincoln. Barrow died in 1819, leaving it unclear whether he would have joined the abolitionist movement that cropped up after his death. The views he expressed in life would not have constituted abolitionism in the 1830s, as he disavowed a belief in immediate emancipation. But it appears very likely that he would have become further radicalized and joined the abolitionist movement had he lived another fifteen or twenty years. David Brion Davis points out that "as early as 1808, David Barrow ... anticipated the later doctrine of the American Anti-Slavery Society by refusing to recognize the lawfulness of slavery or the justice of compensation. Holding that slavery was the crying sin of America, he urged a prompt beginning of manumission in order to avert the retribution of God." Barrow also foreshadowed both the critique by many abolitionists of sexual abuse of slave women and their support for interracial marriage. "It has long been my contention," he wrote in his 1808 antislavery pamphlet, "that any woman who is good enough to make a man a concubine, etc., ought to serve him as a wife."¹²

The lack of a relatively cohesive, biracial movement championing immediate emancipation changed with the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Born to a poor family in Newburyport, Massachusetts and abandoned by his father at a young age, Garrison became an activist in the 1820s. At that time, he called for gradual emancipation and "colonization."

Promoted by the American Colonization Society, colonization focused on settling free blacks in Africa, especially Liberia. By 1831, largely influenced by black abolitionists, Garrison had broken with the mainstream antislavery movement on both gradualism and colonization. In that year, he started a newspaper called *The Liberator*, wherein he called for an immediate end to slavery, rejected colonization as a “solution” to racial issues in America, and promoted support for interracial marriage.¹³

Among Garrison’s first displays of support for interracial marriage was an essay presented as a pair of dreams that appeared in *The Liberator* in April of 1831. Written under the pseudonym T.T., the piece begins with the narrator having just planted a tree and reading Samuel Johnson’s writing on the non-linear concept of time. Suddenly, the tree is fully grown, and T.T. is in his first dream, which takes place in the future. He attends a party where blacks and whites interact as social equals. Abolitionists have quickly and peacefully ended slavery, and racial equality has been achieved. Interracial marriage is explicitly referenced in the dream. A handful of blacks have married into “respectable white families,” helping to further accelerate the end of racism.¹⁴

Interracial marriage was only a small part of the essay, but it was not an inconsequential part. Every abolitionist was aware that any expression of support for interracial marriage would attach further unpopularity to the cause. Hence, no abolitionist would have made even an off-handed comment of support unless they felt strongly about the issue. It is true that Garrison seemed to favor shocking the public via radical acts, as his decision to publicly burn the Constitution demonstrates. However, there is no reason to think that either his stated hatred of the Constitution or support for interracial marriage were anything but genuine. It was one thing to shock the public by expressing radical opinions which he agreed with, but it would have been

quite another to risk violence and ostracism over opinions that he did not legitimately hold. More to the point, in letters to abolitionists including his brother-in-law, George Benson, and the Irish activists, Hannah and Richard Webb, Garrison reiterated his support for interracial marriage.¹⁵

It seems clear that in addition to immediate emancipation and racial equality in general, the essay published in *The Liberator* was meant to promote the idea that the stigmatization of interracial marriage was immoral and that acceptance of interracial marriage was a necessary part of an enlightened new age. The following month, Garrison wrote an article that more explicitly stated his belief in interracial marriage as part of a future utopia. Garrison quoted Acts 17:26 to say that God “made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,” and extrapolated to conclude that “They [all people] are one species, and stand on a perfect equality: their intermarriage is neither unnatural nor repugnant to nature, but obviously proper and salutary; it being designed to unite people of different tribes and nations.” In time to come, “the earth is evidently to become one neighborhood or family.”¹⁶

These statements did not mean that Garrison personally recommended that people in 1830s America should marry people of different races. He once warned that, “At the present time, mixed marriages would be in bad taste.” His reason for advising against it at present was that he feared the stigma interracial couples faced. Still, he was adamant that legal barriers to interracial marriage be removed at once, and he believed that “the time is to come when all the nations of the earth will intermarry.”¹⁷

Garrison’s radical beliefs on marriage were highly unpopular at the time and were a factor in anti-abolitionist riots that began sweeping the North. These beliefs were not universal even in the abolitionist movement. Some abolitionists used the same arguments against interracial marriage as did conservative Christians in the South. After a crowd of anti-abolitionist rioters

destroyed his church, Newark abolitionist minister William R. Weeks stated, “I believe that God, in making men of different colors, has sufficiently indicated the duty to us of keeping them separate, and of allowing no intermarriage between them.”¹⁸ Charles Finney, a revivalist active in the Second Great Awakening, gave mild support to abolitionism but was uncomfortable with supporters and critics of the movement trying to tie it with racial equality. It was a mistake, in Finney’s mind, to believe “that the principles of abolition and amalgamation are identical . . . a man may certainly from *constitutional taste* feel unwilling to mar[r]y a colored woman or have a daughter mar[r]y a colored man and yet be a devoted friend of the colored people.”¹⁹ Samuel Gridley Howe, an abolitionist physician who had offered secret support for John Brown, wrote to the scientist Louis Agassiz in 1863 that interracial relationships were “hybridism” and maintained that they were “unnatural and undesirable.”²⁰

However, plenty of abolitionists agreed with Garrison and disagreed with Weeks and Finney. The abolitionist movement included only a small portion of the Northern population, meaning that views common in the abolitionist movement were still radical in society at large. One such abolitionist who shared Garrison’s views was Reverend Hosea Easton, a businessman and educator in addition to a minister and activist. Born in Middleborough, Massachusetts, Easton’s heritage was a mix of white, black, and Native American. In his 1837 work written shortly before his death, *A Treatise on the Intellectual Character and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of U. States*, Easton attacked racism by invoking “one great truth,” conveyed in the same Bible passage Garrison had quoted, that “God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”²¹ While the quote did not directly address the topic, Easton clearly intended it to apply to both the general scourge of racism and stigma against interracial marriage specifically just like Garrison had. But for

Reverend Easton, it was a personal matter relating directly to his family. Without shame, he drew attention to the fact that two of his uncles had married white women, one of whom came from a “first family” of North Bridgewater, Massachusetts.²²

Sometimes, abolitionists who supported interracial marriage did so during debates over other civil rights issues. A year after *The Liberator* began publication, the town of Canterbury, Connecticut became engulfed in a controversy over racial integration that encompassed the issue of interracial marriage. Prudence Crandall, a white Quaker abolitionist originally from Rhode Island, began running the Canterbury Female Boarding School in 1831. In 1832, a young black woman named Sarah Harris asked to be admitted. Crandall honored her request, and the community recoiled. So many white parents objected that Crandall began teaching only black girls, some of whom came to her school from out of state. Still unsatisfied, the state legislature passed a law in 1833 forbidding any schools with black students from out of state without permission from the town in which they operated. The case became a cause celebre among Garrison and other abolitionists. A group of white Canterbury residents consisting of Rufus Adams, Daniel Frost, Andrew Harris, and Richard Fenner warned Crandall that if she did meet their demands, they would claim that her school promoted “the amalgamation of the whites and blacks.”²³

During the argument with these men, Crandall allegedly made a remark in favor of interracial marriage. According to her opponents, she pointed out that “Moses had a black wife,” in reference to the account in the Bible of Moses marrying an Ethiopian woman named Zipporah. According to the Bible, in fact, when Moses’s sister, Miriam, objected to the marriage, God punished her by turning her skin deathly pale with leprosy. At the time, the alleged quote was only printed in accounts that opposed Crandall. Yet after corresponding with Crandall, historian

Ellen D. Larned included the quote in her writing about the Quaker woman's school. Another biographer, Donald E. Williams, Jr., says that "Crandall likely delivered the 'Moses' retort," pointing out that she never denied saying it. Given the way in which her opponents used the issue against her educational work, it seems implausible that Crandall would have let the claims of people like Frost go unchallenged unless she had indeed made the comment.²⁴

At least one abolitionist who defended Crandall affirmed his support of interracial marriage directly in reference to the school controversy. Reverend Samuel Joseph May was a traveling Unitarian minister originally from Boston who had begun preaching in Connecticut and became a disciple of Garrison. In time to come, he would involve himself with the Underground Railroad. May published two rebuttals in response to a state legislator named Andrew Judson who was working to stop Crandall. May denied that the school had anything to do with promoting marriage between people of different races. He then added that, "Of course we do not believe there are any barriers established by God between the two races. Whether marriages shall or shall not take place between those of different colors is a matter which time must be left to decide . . . We only say that such connections would be incomparably more honorable to the whites as well as more consistent with the laws of God and the virtue of our nation than the illicit intercourse which is now common especially at the south."²⁵

In pointing out the prevalence of interracial sex taking place on Southern plantations, May was making an argument that other abolitionists would frequently use: slaves were very often sexually exploited by whites, which had led to a large number of biracial people in the South. By contrast, interracial marriages were undertaken between consenting parties and prevented out of wedlock sexual intercourse. Ergo, for slaveholders and their Northern sympathizers to use the fear of interracial relationships as a weapon against abolitionists was the height of hypocrisy.

Around the same time as Crandall and May addressed interracial marriage, and Garrison began *The Liberator*, Lydia Maria Child was forced to wrestle with the issue as well. Child was a white female writer from Massachusetts who wrote a slew of both fiction and non-fiction works that covered everything from slavery to parenting. She had travelled a long road in the first thirty-one years of her life to becoming a pro-interracial marriage abolitionist. In 1824, she had written a novel called *Hobomok*, which had attacked racism against Native Americans and seemed to support interracial marriage between Native Americans and whites. In her 1829 text, *The First Settlers of New England*, Child had condemned the brutality inflicted on indigenous people by Puritan newcomers and suggested that interracial marriage with the Native Americans would have been preferable.²⁶ Still, in the 1820s, she was not an abolitionist. At any rate, the two issues did not generate equal controversy. Native Americans were subjected to horrific persecution throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and marriage between whites and Native Americans was stigmatized and often banned. That said, the stigmatization was less extreme than the stigmatization of marriage between whites and blacks. Patrick Henry, the same man who kept slaves because he felt living without them was too burdensome, supported financial incentives to encourage Native Americans and whites to marry each other. Thomas Jefferson believed in interracial marriage as a way for whites and Native Americans to “become one people.”²⁷ In 1831, Child wrote an essay condemning bigotry against African Americans. Even then, she avoided expressing support for abolitionism and labeled interracial marriage “in bad taste” and “unnatural,” though she asserted that it should be legal as a matter of personal choice. The description of interracial marriage as “unnatural” was the one part of her essay that Garrison, who ran it in *The Liberator*, wrote that he took issue with.²⁸

Child’s views were still evolving, and by 1833, she was a full-fledged abolitionist. Her

views on interracial marriage had become in line with Garrison. No longer was interracial marriage unnatural in her eyes. In *An Appeal In Favor Of That Class Of Americans Called Africans*, she demolished the idea that blacks were inferior to whites, called for equal rights, and finally defended interracial marriage from both a legal and moral standpoint. Part of her argument centered, as had her earlier writing, on personal choice. “In the first place, the government ought not to be invested with power to control the affections, any more than the consciences of citizens,” she posited. “A man has at least as good a right to choose his wife as he has to choose his religion. His taste may not suit his neighbors; but so long as his deportment is correct, they have no right to interfere with his concerns.”²⁹

Child struck an even more radical chord earlier in the text when she denied that interracial marriage was intrinsically immoral, writing, “While the prejudice exists, such unions cannot take place; and when the prejudice is melted away, they will cease to be a degradation, and of course cease to be an evil.”³⁰ Child was saying that interracial marriage would currently be unwise due to societal racism but that racism will have drastically decreased in the future, at which point there would be no reason why two people of different races should not get married. She also argued that due to the social prejudice against interracial marriage, “none but those whose condition in life is too low to be much affected by public opinion,” would marry someone of another race at present and that they would do so regardless of legal restrictions. She described a handful of white working-class women in common law marriages with kind, hardworking black men. According to Child, if these women inherited any property, they could be prevented from willing it to their children, “because the law pronounces them illegitimate.”³¹ In Child’s view, interracial marriage bans were cruel and pointless for a host of reasons. For the remainder of her life, she never retreated from this stance. In an 1862 piece published in the *New York Daily*

Tribune, Child reminded readers of the rampant sex between slaves and masters, defended monogamous, consenting interracial couples, and wrote, “legalized amalgamation can never become common so long as there is a prevailing prejudice against color; and when that ‘phantom dynasty’ passes away with the centuries, its disappearance will harm no one, and posterity will wonder at the power it once exercised, as we now marvel at the terror our ancestors had of witchcraft.”³²

Child was not the only abolitionist to defend interracial marriage while pointing out that it would be uncommon as long as racism was the norm. Amos Phelps, a Congregationalist minister originally from Farmington, Connecticut, made a similar point that showed support for interracial couples. “Do you think, Mr. Objector,” Phelps remarked in reference to white supremacists, “that with your present feeling there is any danger of your amalgamating? ... Only keep your prejudice alive, and instill it in your children, and rely upon it, neither you nor they will ever marry a Negro.” If in time to come, “this prejudice should melt away,” there would no reason for “objection to amalgamation.” Phelps indicated that he felt less certain than Child or Garrison that interracial marriage would one day be uncontroversial—and given the controversy it still generates, it is easy to see why—but he too hoped for such a day.³³

Some abolitionists used eschatological arguments to support interracial marriage. Gilbert Haven illustrates this point well. A Methodist Episcopal Church minister from Malden, Massachusetts, Haven became an abolitionist due to his outrage at the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. He spent the remaining thirty years of his life preaching against racism, slavery, and sexism, eventually becoming a bishop and serving in Atlanta. He waged a vigorous battle against segregation in churches and believed that not only churches but also marriages should be racially integrated. Interracial marriage, in Haven’s opinion, was, “the Creator’s mode of compelling”

whites “to overleap the narrow boundaries of families and tribes.” Moreover, he predicted, “The hour is not far off when the white hued husband shall boast of the dusky beauty of his wife, and the Caucasian wife shall admire the sun-kissed countenance of her husband as deeply and as unconsciously of the present ruling abhorrence as is his admiration for her lighter tint.”³⁴

According to F. Douglas Powe, Jr., “Haven strongly felt that amalgamation was God’s intent for humanity and that it was a foretaste of Heaven.”³⁵

Gilbert Haven was not the only abolitionist to suggest that interracial marriage was America’s salvation on Earth. If Haven was the chief mouthpiece for such an idea among white Northern abolitionists, the chief spokesperson among the tiny number of white Southern abolitionists was John G. Fee, Jr. Fee was born in Kentucky, the son of a slaveholder. He became an abolitionist while studying to become a Presbyterian minister but eventually left the church when the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky balked at his decision to withhold fellowship from slave masters.³⁶ In 1853, Fee founded the village of Berea, Kentucky with a land grant from Cassius Marcellus Clay, a wealthy Kentuckian who did not share Fee’s belief in racial equality but still despised slavery. Two years later, Fee established Berea College, the only college in Kentucky at the time that was open to all, regardless of race or gender, until the state government forced it to segregate in the early twentieth century. One of his goals in founding the school was to encourage interracial marriage. In an 1857 book that attacked America’s racial “caste system,” Fee warned, “Better that we have black faces than bad hearts, and reap eventually the torments of Hell. We may have pure hearts if our faces should, after the lapse of a century or two, be a little tawny.”³⁷

Even among the administrators of Berea, Fee’s views garnered great controversy. At a boarding meeting in 1872, a resolution was passed stating that it was not “desirable in general for

those of either race to cultivate the most intimate social relations with those of the other sex and a different race, especially when the difference in race is quite marked.” While the school stopped short of forbidding interracial marriage entirely, the majority of the administration shrank from Fee’s full-throated endorsement, and restrictions were imposed on interracial relationships. Two trustees, John Hanson and Gabriel Burdette, voted against the restrictions, and a handful of professors resigned in disgust. In 1889, a group of alumni circulated a petition calling on the administration to allow unrestricted social equality at Berea.³⁸ In practice, the point was almost moot. Since its admission to the Union, Kentucky law had forbade interracial marriage, and this prohibition would not be reversed until the Supreme Court intervened in 1967. Nevertheless, when the state government forced Berea to segregate in 1904, fears of interracial marriage helped fuel the policy.³⁹

Fee was not the only white Southern abolitionist to follow in the footsteps of David Barrow and defend interracial marriage. Moncure Conway had grown up in a wealthy slaveholding family in Virginia but became an abolitionist as a young man. His belief in racial equality, including marriage equality, was as firm as his belief in abolitionism. This may have been influenced partly by an incident during his childhood, in which he observed a black boy kept as a slave by the Conway family become embittered as a result of not being allowed to attend school, until Moncure’s father deemed the boy incorrigible and sold him.⁴⁰ Conway mocked his fellow white Southerners who balked at the pro-interracial marriage views of abolitionists, pointing out that, “although the marriage ceremonies have been few, the mixture of blood has been very extensive. These Southerners have proven that the repulsion to the alliance of the two bloods extends only to so much of it as the person and the magistrate have anything to do with.” He also said that, “I, for one, am firmly persuaded that the mixture of the blacks and

whites is good; that the person so produced is, under ordinarily favorable circumstances, healthy, handsome, and intelligent. Under the best circumstances, I believe that such a combination would evolve a more complete character than the unmitigated Anglo-Saxon.” Conway felt that Caucasians tended to lack adequate goodness, kindness, and affection, traits black people exemplified, and therefore that the descendants of current day white people would benefit from a mixed heritage.⁴¹

An argument similar to Conway’s came from another abolitionist named William Wells Brown. The son of his white master’s cousin and a slave woman, Brown had been born in Kentucky and escaped from Missouri as a young man, becoming an activist and writer in the North. When he was in his sixties, he wrote *My Southern Home: or, The South and Its People*. One of the most radical statements in the book was that “all history demonstrates the truth that amalgamation is the great civilizer of the races of men. Wherever a race, clan, or community have kept themselves together, prohibiting by law, usage, or common consent, inter-marriage with others, they have made little or no progress.” Both Conway and Brown included remarks that were fairly derogatory toward certain white ethnicities. Conway contrasted the physical attractiveness of Spaniards and Italians unfavorably with that of people who had mixed black and white ancestry. Brown wrote that, “The Jews, a distinct and isolated people, are good only at driving a bargain and getting rich. The Gipsies commence and stop with trading horses. The Irish, in their own country, are dull.”⁴² Though they abhorred racism directed against blacks and sought to heal the rifts between races, they were unwilling to shed their own prejudices against certain white ethnic groups. William Lloyd Garrison himself was not immune to this contradiction, making unkind, stereotyping remarks about Jews while denying black inferiority and defending interracial marriage.⁴³

Some abolitionists who offered religious defenses of interracial marriage used the tactics of proslavery Biblicists to advocate positions that these fundamentalists would surely abhor. Slaveholders were fond of pointing out that, in the words of proslavery Reverend Alexander Campbell, “there is not one verse in the Bible inhibiting slavery, but many regulating it. It is not then, we conclude, immoral.”⁴⁴ Abolitionists could do little to find explicit condemnations of slavery in the Old or New Testament. However, the Bible also had no verses that directly forbade interracial marriage. Indeed, as Crandall probably pointed out, the Bible stated that Moses had been married with God’s approval to an Ethiopian woman. Lewis Tappan was one of the evangelical abolitionists who chose to use this argument. A businessman living in New York City, Tappan had established himself as a conservative in a radical movement.⁴⁵ He largely opposed separation of church and state and was a leader in the faction of abolitionists that split with Garrison’s American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) over the latter’s opposition to the Constitution and support for women’s rights. One area where his conservatism did not extend was justice for African Americans. Tappan pointed out that the Bible said nothing in condemnation of interracial marriage, and neither should mortals.⁴⁶ In a response to fears of interracial marriage expressed by Reverend Lyman Beecher, the conservative abolitionist responded, “In a thousand years probably all the inhabitants on this continent would be of one color, neither white nor black (both being exotics) but copper colored, the original color of this climate. That is, if emancipation takes place. By the present system of bleaching, the blacks will disappear sooner.”⁴⁷ On another occasion, he addressed the possibility of a white missionary marrying an African woman with the response, “If he finds one of any race, who is educated, refined, converted & whom he loves he could marry her without offending God or anyone who sympathizes with God.”⁴⁸ Interracial marriage was acceptable to Tappan, so long as both spouses

were Christian.⁴⁹ A fact that he would never have admitted, though a theological liberal like Garrison or May might have, is that abolitionists were on much stronger Biblical ground defending interracial marriage than they were denouncing slavery.

Furthermore, just as proslavery Southern Christians like Jefferson Davis and James Henry Hammond used the Genesis story of Ham's descendants being cursed in order to justify slavery as God-ordained, some abolitionists defended interracial marriage by arguing that God had created only one race. Frederick Douglass advocated this principle. Born as a slave in Maryland, Douglass was the son of a slave woman and a white slaveholder, and this heritage likely made him acutely aware of the fact that race was more of a human construct than a scientific concept. After all, Douglass was almost always considered a "Negro," even though he was half white. The "one drop rule" meant that for all intents and purposes, anyone with any traceable black heritage was considered black in American culture, while such a rule was not typically applied to people with small amounts of Native American ancestry. In an interview, Douglass said, "there is no division of races. God Almighty made but one race ... You may say that Frederick Douglass considers himself a member of the one race which exists."⁵⁰

For some abolitionists, expressing support for interracial marriage at a young age was part of a "trial by fire." A prime example of this fact was John Mercer Langston. A participant in the Underground Railroad, a town clerk in Ohio, the first president of the historically black Virginia State University, and a six-month Congressman from Virginia's Fourth District in 1890 and 1891, Langston attended Oberlin College as a student. Similar to Berea, Oberlin had been founded by abolitionists and was open to black students but also experienced disputes about racial integration. In his biography of Langston, William F. Cheek brings up a public statement the great uncle of poet Langston Hughes made during his time at the college, which he attended in

the 1840s and early 1850s. Langston, “boldly brought up both white bars on interracial marriage and racial discrimination at Oberlin.”⁵¹

Some abolitionists expressed support for interracial marriage by referencing trends in other countries and pointing out that Europeans tended to be far less ethnically homogenous than they liked to believe. In an antislavery text called *Despotism in America*, Richard Hildreth, a novelist and historian from Deerfield, Massachusetts, addressed the objection to abolition that there was a natural animosity between blacks and whites that would make integration impossible. Calling such an argument “this narrow and cruel theory, the greatest libel upon human nature ever yet propounded,” Hildreth responded, “All the nations of Western Europe, the most civilized and enlightened communities in the world, have been formed by an intermixture of races so complicated that it is utterly impossible to trace it.” Celtic and Teutonic people had enslaved each other for hundreds of years and had been believed to be “natural and irreconcilable enemies,” but they had mixed to create the Anglo Saxon race. Hildreth also pointed to the “Spanish American states,” writing that, “in several of those republics, the mixed race, sprung from the intermarriage of the Spaniards and the Africans, furnishes a large proportion of the most enterprising, trustworthy, and respectable of the people.”⁵² In a later book detailing the history of the United States from 1497 to 1789, Hildreth skewered America’s hypocrisy in the realm of interracial relationships. While interracial marriage was stigmatized and banned, he explained, “neither the Gospel, nor public opinion could prevent that amalgamation which, according to all experience, inevitably and extensively takes place whenever two races come into that close juxtaposition which domestic slavery of necessity implies. Falsehood and hypocrisy took the place of restraint and self-denial.” Amalgamation was already the norm in America, yet it was unacknowledged, and white men enslaved their own children. Surely, it would be preferable to allow blacks and

whites to marry each other openly.⁵³

Perhaps for William P. Newman, an African American abolitionist Baptist minister and former slave, Canada, with its absence of interracial marriage bans or government-sanctioned slavery, was the best place to make his dream of amalgamation a reality. In a November 17, 1855 article for the *Provincial Freeman*, an Ontario-based journal that he edited, Newman made his case to former slaves who had fled from the United States to Canada that interracial marriage would be the appropriate way to move beyond the legacy of slavery and break down racism. “Doubtless,” wrote Newman, fear of amalgamation, “is common to some extent to all nations, but it is awful indeed, to see it increase with what is called civilization and the spread of christianity. Is it not apparently true, that those, who are the most devoted religionists, give it the greatest power?”⁵⁴ While most white Canadians in 1855 would have disagreed with Freeman’s recommendation, his vision achieved more long-term success there than in the United States. In 2010, just over forty percent of black Canadians who were in romantic relationships had non-black partners. Among black people born in Canada, the number was sixty-three percent.⁵⁵

At least two abolitionists, Reverend Henry Highland Garnet and Alvan Stewart, suggested that whites who ranted against amalgamation were covering up their own desires. Born into slavery in New Market, Maryland, Garnet’s family had escaped slavery during his childhood and eventually moved in New York. Forced to use crutches starting at age fifteen, via a knee injury in a sporting event, Garnet went on to become a Presbyterian minister. From the pulpit, he became controversial even in the abolitionist movement for his support of violence as a tool to achieve emancipation. In an 1848 speech called “The Past and the Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race,” Garnet drew attention to the large number of biracial Americans. Black people had put down roots in America, as evidenced by the fact that “our blood is mixed with

every tribe from Cape Horn to the Frozen Ocean.” By now, it was impossible to come up with an accurate formula for delineating black and white people. As for the idea of colonization, it was “too late to make a successful attempt to separate the black and white people in the New World. They love each other too much to endure a separation.” However much they might protest, even slaveholders were drawn to blacks. “*This western world*,” the Presbyterian minister prophesized, “*is destined to be filled with a mixed race* ... It is a stubborn fact that it is impossible to separate the pale man and the man of color, and therefore the result which to them [colonizationists] is so fearful, is inevitable ... It matters not whether we abhor or desire such a consummation, it is now too late to change the decree of nature and circumstances.” To further support his point, Garnet pointed to a number of prominent biracial Americans. People who opposed interracial marriage might as well “attempt to shake the Alleghanies with our hands, or to burst the rock of Gibraltar with our fists.”⁵⁶

A native of South Granville, New York, Alvan Stewart was once confronted at a convention by a young white male heckler who asked whether he would accept a white man marrying a black woman. Stewart explained his belief in civil rights and freedom of marital choice and tried to continue his speech, but the heckler repeated his question and demanded an unequivocal answer. Flummoxing his opponent, Stewart replied, “Let me say to the gentleman that if he should fall in love with a colored girl, and should find that he could not be happy without her, *I should interpose no objections to the marriage*.” He then asked, “Is my young friend relieved of his anxiety?” His response reduced the audience to a fit of laughter.⁵⁷

Even abolitionists who moved to the South did not always shy away from supporting interracial marriage, as the cases of Myrtilla Miner and Esther Hawks attest. Born in Upstate New York, Miner traveled to Washington, D.C. and began teaching six black students in the house of a

black Washingtonian in 1851. In 1853, she found a permanent location for the school, which was named the Normal School for Colored Girls, in another part of the city. While the District of Columbia is commonly regarded nowadays as a Northeastern city, slavery was legal there until the Lincoln Administration. Direct quotes from Miner on the subject of interracial marriage have been difficult to locate. Nonetheless, scholars Philip S. Foner and Josephine F. Pacheco write in *Three Who Dared: Prudence Crandall, Margaret Douglass, and Myrtilla Miner—Champions of Antebellum Black Education* that Miner “seems not to have distinguished among,” her light-skinned and dark-skinned students “and to the horror of at least one of her friends, concluded that intermarriage, or, as her friend termed it, ‘amalgamation,’ was the solution to the problems caused by a mixed society.”⁵⁸

A New Hampshire native, Hawks was one of the first women in America to obtain a medical degree. During the Civil War, she and her husband John joined the National Freedmen’s Association and moved to South Carolina to provide education and medical treatment for blacks.⁵⁹ In July of 1865, she threw a party for black soldiers from the Massachusetts 54th Regiment and white teachers and nurses from New England. During Reconstruction, she and John moved to what is now Daytona Beach, Florida and continued their work among African Americans until a mob of whites burned down the school the Hawkses had helped set up. During her time in Florida, Esther Hawks debated a local minister who refused to marry a black man and a white woman. “I took the ground that he had no right to refuse to perform the ceremony *simply* on account of color,” she recorded in her diary. “If a white woman *chooses* to marry a black man who can say her nay.”⁶⁰

Gerrit Smith, a wealthy New York abolitionist, philanthropist, and one of the primary financiers of John Brown’s Harpers Ferry raid, turned the idea of white repugnance to marriage

with blacks on its head. Smith wrote a letter to moderate Congressman John A. Gurley (R-OH) in December of 1861 that was published in *The Liberator* in its first 1862 edition. The letter was a criticism of Gurley's bill, which proposed to seriously restrict the liberties of ex slaves. Smith devoted a few sentences to the issue of interracial marriage, writing, "And would I let them intermarry with the whites? That is a personal and private matter, with which neither Congress nor any other law-makers have aught to do. Nevertheless, I am free to say that I see no objection to a colored lady's accepting the hand of a white gentleman, provided she can possibly surmount her prejudices against his complexion." By presenting a black woman as having to overcome her repulsion toward a white man, Smith was wryly critiquing the ideology that held whiteness up as the ideal and portrayed blacks as constantly desiring relationships with white people.⁶¹

Some abolitionists went out of their way to not only support interracial marriage but to eschew the usual disclaimers about not recommending it in the current era. At least two white women in the rank and file of the abolitionist movement stated that they themselves would be open to marrying black men. Frances Drake, an Underground Railroad participant from Leominster, Massachusetts, recalled an incident in which she was interrogated about her attitude on interracial marriage. "One lady to test my principles," Drake recalled, questioned whether, "I would marry a colored man." According to Drake, "I answered very frankly (as my mother ever prompted)—yes—if he was as worthy in every respect as a white man ought to be." Townspeople were shocked, but Drake apparently felt that it was important to be honest in her reply.⁶² This reply is particularly noteworthy, because Drake clearly did not even agree with the statement of many radical abolitionists that interracial marriages were inadvisable currently due to public backlash. Instead, she felt willing to marry a worthy person of any race and was unwilling to hide this fact. Gulielma Estes of Lynn, Massachusetts was interrogated by her minister after being

seen going for walks with a black man. The minister asked whether she would be willing to marry a black man. Like Drake, Estes replied that she would be willing to if he were of good moral character.⁶³

A male abolitionist who responded in a similar manner, albeit to the prospect of a black son-in-law rather than spouse, was Elizur Wright. Born in Connecticut and raised mainly in northeastern Ohio, Wright served as the American Anti-Slavery Society's national secretary in the 1830s before joining the pro-Constitution, pro-electoral participation faction of the movement. In an essay entitled, "Caste in the United States," Wright eviscerated abolitionists who refused to give full-fledged endorsement to interracial marriage when asked whether they would "*have your daughter marry a Negro.*" These abolitionists, Wright seethed, would utter, "not a word to vindicate your daughter's sacred right to the disposal of her own affections! Not a word for the equally sacred right of the colored brother to win affection where he can!" The national secretary ridiculed the notion that "'African blood'" was "a poison so unconscionably strong that dilution will not weaken it,--but a single drop will kill no matter what 'talents, and enterprise, and virtues,' as a drop of prussic acid kills a dog." Wright's essay revealed that even within the abolitionist movement, interracial marriage was a contentious issue.⁶⁴

One of the most prominent abolitionists to defend interracial marriage through oratory was Wendell Phillips. Phillips's ancestors had arrived in Massachusetts on the *Mayflower*. One of his ancestors had loaned money to colonial leader John Winthrop, and his father had served as Boston's first mayor.⁶⁵ As a child, Phillips believed that it was just for him to be privileged by his race and gender and had participated in violent altercations with black boys. Through a constellation of factors that included his marriage to abolitionist Ann Terry Greene, the influence of William Lloyd Garrison, and the murder of Illinois-based antislavery activist Elijah Lovejoy,

the Boston Brahmin became a devoted disciple of the movement by the late 1830s.⁶⁶ By 1839, he had gone on record as supporting interracial marriage of whites with blacks and Native Americans.⁶⁷ In 1853, he produced a written rather than rhetorical defense of interracial marriage, giving particular attention to Chinese and East Indian immigrants in “The United States of the United Races.” In this essay, Phillips predicted that “whether the varieties of the race begin in one family or not, they are destined to meet in one family of people at last.” One day, “you will not be able to tell black from white, for any purpose that you now make the distinction.”⁶⁸

Most of Phillips’s defenses of interracial marriage came from speeches, particularly during the 1860s. At the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society’s annual meeting in 1860, he praised the runaway slave and black abolitionist, Reverend J. Sella Martin, for his belief that interracial marriage was part of America’s future. “I,” Phillips told his audience, “never did dread that terrible word *amalgamation*. I hold it to be the secret of almost all progress, viewed from the point of race. We Saxons were nothing while we were pure Saxons.” “Our thirty states,” he prophesized, “are probably to receive the finish and complement of civilization by the melting of the negro into the various races that congregate on this continent, and that the historian of a hundred years hence will view with utter incredulity the popular nightmare of amalgamation, and will trace some of the brightest features of that American character which is to take its place in the catalogue of the world’s great races, to the root of this black race, mingling with the others that stand around them. Undoubtedly, to every thoughtful mind, that is the ultimate solution of the problem which is working out in these States.”⁶⁹

In a May 16, 1863 speech, Phillips called a light skinned biracial girl to stand with him, then declared that in her “runs the best blood in Virginia’s white races, and the better blood of the black race of the Old Dominion—to whom, in its virtue, belongs in the future a country, which

the toil and labor of its ancestors redeemed from nature, and gave to civilization and the nineteenth century ... This blood represents them all—the repentant master, when he sees matters in their true light, the slave restored to his rights, when at last for the first time in her history, Virginia has a government, and is not a horde of pirates masquerading as a government.” While the Boston orator despised the way that slaves were sexually exploited by whites, once describing the South as “one great brothel,” he also portrayed the biracial offspring of these sexual encounters as pioneers of a new racially egalitarian age.⁷⁰

Phillips made another speech less than two months later in which he once more gleefully embraced the charge that radicals like him longed for the different races in America to merge into one. Abolitionists had long considered the week of Independence Day to be a time for radical jeremiads attacking America’s persecution of African Americans. Previously, William Lloyd Garrison had used it as an opportunity to burn a copy of the U.S. Constitution for its sanctioning of slavery. Frederick Douglass had delivered his iconic “What To The Slave is the Fourth of July” speech describing how the holiday was hypocritical in light of the millions of Americans still denied freedom. On July 4, 1863, Phillips followed this tradition. “Remember this, the youngest of you:” Phillips proclaimed “that on the 4th day of July, 1863, you heard a man say, that in the light of all history, in virtue of every page he ever read, he was an amalgamationist, to the utmost extent. I have no hope for the future . . . but in that sublime mingling of races, which is God's own method of civilizing and elevating the world. Not that amalgamation of licentiousness, born of slavery--the ruin of both races--but that gradual and harmonizing union, in honorable marriage, which has mingled all other races, and from which springs the present phase of European and Northern civilization.” Like a significant number of other abolitionists, Phillips saw interracial marriage as a positive good in a future America purged of racism. That it was not

uncommon for abolitionists to hold views of this nature is borne out by the fact that his designation of himself as “an amalgamationist” was met with applause from the crowd.⁷¹

Phillips was not done. On November 26, 1864, he made another utopian statement about interracial marriage during a lecture in Portland, Maine. He may have felt emboldened by the fact that Abraham Lincoln, running on a platform that included a constitutional amendment to ban slavery, had won reelection a couple of weeks earlier and that the Confederacy was being pushed closer and closer to defeat. In Portland, Phillips compared racially unmixed countries to marriages between cousins (at the time actually less stigmatized in white society than interracial marriage.) His description of Spain differed with the way that Richard Hildreth had characterized a portion of Spanish America. “Spain,” Phillips claimed, “is an unmixed nation, and she has sunk to a third-rate power.” For a positive contrast, he turned to France. “France blends a dozen races,” Phillips said, “and she leads the van.” If America wished to avoid the fate of Spain, Phillips warned, it had best drop its objections to amalgamation.⁷²

There is a case to be made that along with the campaign during 1830s and 1840s to legalize interracial marriage in Massachusetts, the 1860s represented a high point of public expressions of support from abolitionists. This is not to say that abolitionist support for interracial marriage was lower in other periods. Rather, abolitionists were exceptionally vocal about interracial marriage during the 1860s. There are two probable explanations for this trend. Firstly, abolitionists were emboldened by the way in which the Civil War and the early years of Reconstruction put the momentum in their favor. Secondly, as legalized slavery fell, the question of how to solve issues of racism in America became even more pressing. But for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. As State-sanctioned chattel slavery withered, and abolitionists became more outspoken, national attention became more focused on interracial

marriage in a negative way. In the months following Phillips's Fourth of July speech, two Democratic Party supporters named George Wakeman and David Herbert Croly devised a scheme to harness the widespread public disapproval of interracial marriage to propel their candidate, George McClellan, to victory. They wrote a pamphlet called *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, which claimed to promote views that were in fact the opposite of Wakeman's and Croly's actual beliefs. The pamphlet was purported to have been written by supporters of Lincoln, declared that interracial marriage was America's inexorable destiny, and called for a pro-interracial marriage plank to be added to the Republican Party platform.⁷³ Clearly, the idea of racial mixing as America's salvation was not an anathema among abolitionists, and this made it easy for readers to think that the pamphlet had been written in sincerity.⁷⁴

Croly and Wakeman made every effort to make it as provocative as possible in order to stir up the greatest possible amount of backlash. With New York City fresh off of a race riot by a largely Irish American mob, the authors described working-class Irish Americans as, "coarse-grained, revengeful, unintellectual, with very fewer of the finer instincts of humanity . . . Take an equal number of negroes and Irish from the lowest communities of the city of New York, and the former will be found far superior to the latter in cleanliness, education, moral feelings, beauty of form and feature, and natural sense . . . The blending of the Irish in this country with the negro will be a positive gain to the former." The pamphlet quoted Phillips and a number of other abolitionists in support of interracial marriage.⁷⁵ The writers also sent copies to a series of abolitionists with the goal of bamboozling them into expressing support. Some abolitionists, such as Wendell Phillips, gave no reply. Many of these abolitionists may have avoided replying because they ascertained that the pamphlet was a trap. Another likely factor in Phillips's decision

not to reply was that he had long sympathized with the plight of the Irish and considered the statements about Irish Americans to be offensive.

Still, some abolitionists gave replies or wrote public reviews of the pamphlet that revealed support for interracial marriage. Theodore Tilton, a New York City newspaper editor and poet in his late twenties, gave *Miscegenation* a mixed review. Tilton stated that he was against making interracial marriage a campaign issue, disagreed with attempts to actively promote interracial marriage as opposed to simply letting it occur organically, and speculated that the pamphlet might have been a ruse by Democrats. He also predicted that interracial marriage would eventually blend whites and blacks together, writing that, “The Negro of the South, growing paler with every generation, will at last completely hide his face under the snow.”⁷⁶ Tilton was not speaking as someone who wished to see the “inferior” black race absorbed into the “superior” white race. He had argued the previous year that black men were in some ways superior to white men, suggesting that he thought whites would benefit from this “amalgamation” at least as much as blacks.⁷⁷ This concept, in which whites were seen as superior in some ways and blacks superior in others, and integration was therefore desirable, would become known as “romantic racialism.”⁷⁸

By mid-January of 1864, five abolitionists had written back to Croly and Wakeman about *Miscegenation*, and all of them agreed with the ideas in the pamphlet to some extent or another. Lucretia Mott, a seventy-one year old Nantucket-born Quaker, Garrisonian, and women’s suffragist, gave the most measured reply. Mott stated that she and other abolitionists were skeptical of much of the scientific claims in the pamphlet, in particular the idea that abolitionists had taken up the cause because of a biologically hard-wired “love of opposites.” She also wrote that while she and other Garrisonian abolitionists had labored to legalize interracial marriage,

they had “never thought it expedient to advocate such unions.” The clear meaning of Mott’s wording, evidenced by the term “expedient,” was that she and many of her fellow abolitionists personally approved of interracial marriage and were adamant that the government had no right to ban it. They also felt, however, that going so far as to promote it would damage the movement. She also left the possibility open that more abolitionists would one day follow in Phillips’s footsteps and actively encourage the practice of interracial marriage, stating that it was “not yet deemed *expedient* by the anti-slavery reformers to agitate the matrimonial question.”⁷⁹ James McCune Smith, editor of the *Anglo-African Review* was more enthusiastic than Mott but also showed caution. A biracial New Yorker, Smith had become not only an abolitionist and newspaper editor but also a physician, apothecary, and pharmacist, with a degree from the University of Glasgow. With less than two years left before congestive heart failure claimed his life, Smith recounting reading “the bold *brochure* with great interest.” It possessed “acuteness, vigor, and learning.” Its tenth chapter “was worthy of special attention to all who love human kind.” Smith stopped short of endorsing a pro-interracial marriage plank in the Republican platform. For one thing, “such parties always crush any moral cause which they embrace.”⁸⁰

The replies of Sarah and Angelina Grimké are perhaps the most intriguing, given how unusual the two women’s backgrounds were among abolitionists. Of the very few white Southerners who became abolitionists, most were born in the “Upper South.” The Grimké sisters, on the other hand, had been born into a wealthy slaveholding family in South Carolina. Realizing the monstrosity of the system that gave their father his riches, they had moved North, converted to Quakerism, and become prominent abolitionists. Sarah disputed *Miscegenation*’s claim that most white Southern women were in love with black men and suggested that the claim be given “great modification.” Angelina described the pamphlet as “interesting and instructive” and

assured Croly and Wakeman that she and Sarah were “wholly at one” with its stance. However, she feared that it would generate repercussions that would stymie the progress being made toward civil rights. This progress, Angelina believed, was “*opening the way for a full recognition of fraternity and miscegenation.*”⁸¹ An interesting coincidence can be observed in light of Angelina’s comments. One of her and Sarah’s brothers, Henry, kept a slave in South Carolina named Nancy. Henry and Nancy fathered three out of wedlock children. In 1868, Sarah and Angelina learned of their nephews and embraced them and Nancy as family members.⁸²

A full-throated endorsement of *Miscegenation* came from Parker Pillsbury, a white abolitionist originally from Massachusetts and living in New Hampshire. Pillsbury had a background of disrupting the services of churches that failed to condemn slavery. He feared that a public statement of support from a radical of his nature might be counterproductive. Still, *Miscegenation* had “cheered and gladdened a winter morning.” He had long believed in the views laid out in the tract and hoped for divorce laws to be “*so modified that new marriages among the American races might even now take place* where unfruitful, or unhappy unions (or disunions) are recognized.” In essence, Pillsbury hoped that people in loveless marriages could be permitted to divorce their spouses and remarry to people of different races.⁸³

The Liberator, as well as the other main Garrisonian newspaper, *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*, advertised *Miscegenation*.⁸⁴ The *Standard* gave a review in which it stopped short of a full endorsement of *Miscegenation* but nonetheless called the pamphlet “interesting and instructive,” and thanked the authors for writing it. The reviewer felt that a Republican Party plank in support of interracial marriage was unnecessary, because divine laws would “assuredly fulfill and vindicate themselves.” The idea that any two races felt a natural repulsion toward each other was “in the highest degree improbable.” “The probability,” the paper predicted, “is that

there will be progressive intermingling and that the nation will be benefited by it.” The reviewer displayed a degree of unconscious racial prejudice by writing that, “it is agreed that the strongest, ablest, most intellectual, most practically effective race in the world is the Anglo-Saxon;” However, this remark was made in the context of defending racial mixing as beneficial. The reviewer also referred to the Anglo-Saxon race as “the product of a mixture, or rather of many mixtures.” The reviewer seems to have been arguing, in a display of romantic racialism, that blacks were superior to Anglo-Saxons in some aspects just as Anglo-Saxons were superior in others. Ergo, intermarriage with blacks would result in an improved race, just as it had created the Anglo-Saxons to begin with. This interpretation also helps to explain why the reviewer characterized Anglo-Saxons as being superior to other races only in certain ways, rather categorically describing them as the superior race overall.⁸⁵ The *Anglo-African Review* also suggested that *Miscegenation* offered a solution for uplifting the human race. Even if one began attempting to improve people in infancy, the *Review* argued, this would only be of limited effectiveness, as children inherited “the bent of their parents.” Therefore, “education and improvement should begin with the marriage of parties who, instead of strong resemblance, should have contrasts which are complimentary each of the other.”⁸⁶

By March, Democrats like Representative Samuel S. Cox of Ohio had begun seizing on the pamphlet as evidence of Republican and abolitionist plans for “amalgamation,” just as Croly and Wakeman had hoped.⁸⁷ Horace Greeley responded with less enthusiasm than Tilton, Mott, Smith, the Grimké sisters, or Pillsbury. Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune* and long an apostle of moderate abolitionism, opined, “If a man can so far conquer his repugnance to a black woman as to make her the mother of his children, we ask in the name of the divine law and of decency, why he should not marry her.” Greeley and other moderate political abolitionists “do not

say that such matches would be moral, but we do declare that they would be infinitely more so than the promiscuous concubinage which has so long shamelessly prevailed upon the Southern plantation.” Greeley was not willing to go as far as more radical abolitionists in defending interracial marriage, but he also had no tolerance for the idea of government banning it.⁸⁸

Around the same time as the *Miscegenation* controversy, some white female abolitionist writers who supported interracial marriage defended it via works of fiction. Perhaps influenced by her mother Abby Alcott and her maternal uncle Samuel Joseph May, a young white abolitionist named Louisa May Alcott penned a short story called “M.L.” during the Civil War. “M.L.” was published in *The Commonwealth*, a Boston newspaper edited by the abolitionist Frank Sanborn, who was a friend of the Alcotts and had been one of John Brown’s primary backers. In the story, a character who, like Alcott, is a young white woman, discovers that her prospective husband has black ancestry. Reflecting the views of Alcott’s mother and uncle, her protagonist does not let this stop her from marrying him.⁸⁹ In 1867, Lydia Maria Child published *A Romance of the Republic*. The novel includes three interracial married couples. She explained, “I wanted to do something to undermine *prejudice*; and there is such a universal passion for novels, that more can be done in that way, than by the ablest arguments, and the most serious exhortations.”⁹⁰ According to biographer Carolyn L. Karcher, in writing *A Romance*, Child was “holding up interracial marriage as America’s destiny.”⁹¹ In 1868, Anna E. Dickinson published *What Answer?* A twenty-four year old white Philadelphian and Quaker, Dickinson had published her first abolitionist essay at age fourteen and, at age twenty-two, had given a speech in the House of Representatives with Abraham Lincoln in attendance. At one point, she had been believed to be the author of *Miscegenation*.⁹² In her novel, an affluent, young white man from New York falls in love with a light-skinned woman of black heritage. Though he is unaware of

her race at first, this revelation does not change his feelings about her. Despite the racism of his parents, he continues to pursue her romantically.⁹³

As the war drew to a close, the African Methodist Episcopal Church's *Christian Recorder* publication serialized *The Curse of Caste, or the Slave Bride*. The story was written by Julia C. Collins, a black teacher in Williamsport, Pennsylvania who died two months after the serialization ended. *The Curse of Caste* features a woman named Claire Neville who believes herself to be fully white but is actually the child of a white man and enslaved woman. As a result of the relationship, her father was non-fatally shot by his own father. Her mother died in childbirth, and her father mistakenly thought that Claire was stillborn, leading to him going to France. In the present day (within the context of the story,) Claire is hired as a governess by her racist, violent grandfather. In a turn of events that undoubtedly frustrated readers at the time, Collins died before she could finish the novel.⁹⁴

Abolitionist support for interracial marriage did not end with emancipation in 1865 or the abandonment of Reconstruction in 1877. James McPherson once wrote that, "as individuals most abolitionists remained active and vigilant in the cause of the Negro for the rest of their lives."⁹⁵ Reflecting this point, most abolitionists who supported interracial marriage never shifted views. Thomas Wentworth Higginson illustrates this point. An ordained Unitarian minister from Cambridge, Massachusetts, Higginson had been one of the main behind-the-scenes backers of the raid of Harpers Ferry. During the Civil War, he served as a colonel of the First South Carolina Volunteers, the first federally authorized black regiment. He bore a scar on his face from a failed attempt to rescue a slave in 1854 and another wound from his service in the Union Army. A native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, he helped desegregate the public schools of Newport, Rhode Island after moving there in the 1860s.⁹⁶ With regard to social equality for blacks, he asserted in

an angry letter to presidential candidate and segregationist William Jennings Bryan that neither Higginson nor any other abolitionist he was aware of “advocated anything else.”⁹⁷ The aged abolitionist had allied himself with Bryan based on their shared opposition to imperialism and the Gold Standard, but Bryan’s racism was too much to bear. Higginson made it clear that his adamant belief in social equality extended to the realm of marriage, which Bryan had specifically denounced in his writing.⁹⁸ In 1904, the now octogenarian former abolitionist and officer wrote of his hope for a future where “marriage may come to be founded, not on the color of the skin, but on the common courtesies of life, and upon genuine sympathies of heart and mind.” Nearly sixty years before the 1963 March on Washington, Higginson had written an equivalent of the “I Have A Dream” speech for interracial marriage.⁹⁹

Another abolitionist who illustrates this point is Isaac R. Sherwood. A native of Stamford, New York, Sherwood moved to Northern Ohio as a young man and worked as a newspaperman, before enlisting in the Union Army and attaining the rank of brevet brigadier general, attempting to use his position to promote an antislavery agenda.¹⁰⁰ After the war, he spent several years as Ohio’s Secretary of State before being elected to Congress in the 1870s. His service in the House of Representatives comprised of three non-consecutive stints, the last of which began when he was eighty-seven and ended when he was eighty-nine. During the 1870s, he switched from Republican to Greenback, then to Democrat. Controversial positions that he took in Congress included support for women’s suffrage and robust pensions for Union veterans, as well as opposition to World War I, conscription, and the Eighteenth Amendment. He also distinguished himself as a maverick in the Democratic Party on race, including interracial marriage.

In 1911, interracial marriage became a more “hot button” issue when black boxing world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson married the first of three white women. A slew of states

where interracial marriage was legal considered changing their laws, though only Wyoming actually enacted a ban. In 1913, Woodrow Wilson was sworn in as president. A Democrat, Wilson had built up his political career in New Jersey but been born and raised in the South by a proslavery minister father. One black newspaperman complained of Wilson “lugging his cracker [meaning “Southern redneck”] cabinet and segregation policy” into the federal government.¹⁰¹ With Wilson’s approval, Cabinet secretaries began re-segregating federal departments. Black federal employees who objected were fired. Emboldened by their ally in the White House, Southern Democrats in the House and Senate began introducing new segregation laws for Washington, D.C. A constitutional amendment to ban interracial marriage in every state and laws to ban in it Washington, D.C. were introduced. When the House voted on a bill that would have banned interracial marriage Washington, the seventy-nine year old Sherwood was one of only seven Democrats—in comparison to fifty Republicans—to vote “nay.” Sherwood had left the comparatively tolerant Republican Party for the segregationist Democratic Party, but he seemed to consider “once an abolitionist, always an abolitionist” as a mantra to live by.¹⁰²

Of the white abolitionists previously discussed, between twelve and fourteen were born in New England, while only three were born in the South and five were born in the Mid Atlantic. (One of the abolitionists born in New England, Louisa May Alcott, was born in Philadelphia to New England parents and raised in New England.) This fact suggests that among white abolitionists, the highest level of support for interracial marriage seems to have come from those born in New England. Within New England, the state with the largest number of supportive white abolitionists seems to have been Massachusetts. However, this may not suggest that a white abolitionist in Massachusetts was more likely to favor interracial marriage than a white abolitionist in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, or Rhode Island. It is certainly

possible that Massachusetts abolitionists were the most liberal, but it is also possible that Massachusetts simply had a larger sample of abolitionists due to its greater population. This theory does not account for the aggregate differences between the interracial marriage views of white abolitionists in Massachusetts and New York. By 1830, New York's population had become more than triple that of Massachusetts.¹⁰³ White abolitionists in New York may have been more likely than white abolitionists in New England to crave some level of respectability and hence less likely to support interracial marriage. This theory can be supported by the tendency of New York abolitionists to support active participation in electoral politics and an interpretation of the Constitution as antislavery, in contrast to the tendency of New England abolitionists to see the Constitution as proslavery and the government as too corrupt to take part in. Gerrit Smith, one of the most prominent white New York abolitionists, stated during the Civil War that "if a man cannot be a patriot whilst yet an abolitionist, he should cease to be an abolitionist," and "I love the anti-slavery cause. Nevertheless, I would have the [Confederate] rebellion put down at whatever necessary expense to that cause."¹⁰⁴ A New England Garrisonian would have found this prioritizing to be anathematic. While Smith did express support for interracial marriage on certain occasions, his statement about patriotism can help explain why some other white New York abolitionists did not.

The abolitionists in this paper should not be considered anything close to an exhaustive list of abolitionists who supported interracial marriage. The true amount of pro-interracial marriage abolitionists numbered in the thousands.¹⁰⁵ Some abolitionists, such as John Brown and Levi Coffin, made statements about interracial marriage that are difficult to interpret definitively but were probably supportive. And the absence of statements on interracial marriage from an abolitionist does not prove that he or she opposed it. Some abolitionists who do not appear to

have made explicit comments about interracial marriage, such as Sidney Howard Gay, Sojourner Truth, Stephen Symonds Foster, and William Hayes Ward almost certainly supported it, given other stances that they took.

CHAPTER 3: “TO REPEAL ALL LAWS IN THIS STATE, WHICH MAKE ANY DISTINCTION AMONG ITS INHABITANTS, ON ACCOUNT OF COLOR:” THE ABOLITIONIST CAMPAIGN TO LEGALIZE INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN MASSACHUSETTS

While many abolitionists opposed the existence of interracial marriage bans anywhere and spent decades criticizing them, Massachusetts in the 1830s and 1840s was the primary site for legal battles over interracial marriage waged by abolitionists. When Garrison began *The Liberator*, a newspaper that was popular with radical white abolitionists but also drew its subscriptions largely from black Northerners, the state had its own system of Jim Crow. The oldest Jim Crow law in the state was its interracial marriage ban. Since 1705, Massachusetts law had forbidden blacks from marrying whites.¹⁰⁶ By 1786, Native Americans were also banned from marrying whites. The passage of the 1705 law was part of a trend begun by Virginia in 1691 of enacting interracial marriage bans to solidify the shift from indentured servitude to race-based slavery. In the early eighteenth century, solidifying the legal supremacy of the white race was important in Massachusetts as well the South. While antislavery sentiment would eventually prevail in New England, slavery remained legal there until the late 1700s. Punishments under the 1705 law could include fines, whipping, imprisonment, exile from the colony, and forced servitude. While these penalties were later reduced, clergyman who performed an interracial wedding ceremony could still expect to be fined.¹⁰⁷ Unlike in Pennsylvania, where the state legislature legalized interracial marriage when it passed a gradual emancipation bill in 1780, Massachusetts’ 1783 law outlawing slavery did not mean the repeal of interracial marriage bans.

Until the formation of a radical, biracial abolitionist movement, the ban remained mostly unchallenged in any public forum.

As referenced earlier, the *Liberator* gave voice to abolitionist opposition to the ban almost from its inception. In a sense, the abolitionist motivation for opposing the ban was largely a matter of principle. Massachusetts' black population hovered around one percent in the decades leading up to the Civil War, meaning that regardless of the law, only a small number of white people would marry black spouses. On the other hand, the small black population also meant that due to the lower amount of available black spouses, it could be expected that a statistically significant number of black people in Massachusetts would marry white people if not forbidden from doing so.¹⁰⁸

In the second issue of *The Liberator*, published on January 8, 1831, Garrison offered a moral argument against the ban based on racial equality and individual freedom. He wrote that the law violated the right of all men to the pursuit of happiness. The Garrisonian goal of legalizing interracial marriage gained an unlikely ally. John P. Bigelow, a Whig member of the state legislature, was not an abolitionist and would earn the enmity of the movement in later years when, after having been elected Mayor of Boston, he enforced the Fugitive Slave Act. Furthermore, he referred to interracial marriages as “the gratification of a depraved taste.” Yet while his personal feelings on interracial marriage were the polar opposite of Garrison's, he too believed that prohibiting it violated the inalienable rights of racial minorities. The same year that Garrison began attacking the ban, Bigelow introduced an amendment legalizing interracial marriage to a bill revising and re-codifying the state's marriage regulations. While very prominent legislators supported him, and the amendment was adopted, the bill itself was defeated, and interracial marriage remained criminalized.¹⁰⁹ Half a century later, Garrison's

biographer and old abolitionist compatriot, Oliver Johnson, labeled the ban “the obnoxious statute.” Johnson also wrote that “Perhaps of all his [Garrison’s] acts this was for a time the most unpopular. The press poured upon it unmeasured ridicule and scorn, denouncing him as an ‘amalgamationist,’”¹¹⁰ In an appeal to *reductio ad absurdum*, Garrison sarcastically suggested that Massachusetts demarcate the exact physical traits of skin tone and hair that would “justly deprive a man of his right of choice” and also prohibit marriages between tall and short people or thin and fat people.¹¹¹

Surprisingly for a man who was morally opposed to interracial marriage and had no abolitionist convictions, Bigelow did not drop the issue after his first attempt at legalization. In 1832, he once again pushed for repeal but failed a second time. For some years, efforts to repeal were mostly abandoned. In 1838, however, black and white abolitionists of both sexes began petitioning the state legislature to repeal every Jim Crow law in the state, including the interracial marriage ban. These petitions came from a large number of towns including Boston, Plymouth, and Nantucket and continued into the following decade. Petitioners called for the legislature “to repeal all laws in this state, which make any distinction among its inhabitants, on account of color.” All over Massachusetts, abolitionist societies urged members to collect signatures. Female signatories outnumbered male signatories 5,032 to 3,674 by the end of 1839, showcasing the extensive role of abolitionist women in this effort.¹¹² Mary Frizell Manter, a poor white Baptist from Walpole, summarized the willingness of white women to join African Americans in petitioning against discriminatory laws. Manter explained that by reading the *Liberator*, she “learnt the cause of humanity, how to feel for the oppressed, and by reading ... I lost entirely my prejudice against colour, and can feel just as well in the company of a coloured brother or sister as if their skin was the same colour as my own, and can sign a petition for the repeal of that part

of the Law, that makes a distinction on account of colour, (heart and hand) wither it be to marry or ride together.” With their right to vote denied, the ability to petition was one of the most precious political rights for women.¹¹³

A slew of prominent abolitionists were included among the petitioners. These included: Lydia Maria Child; Martha Ball and Mary Ann Johnson, both leaders of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society; Robert Morris, a future lawyer who would be involved in the court case to desegregate Boston’s public schools; Oliver Johnson, a writer, Underground Railroad conductor, and cofounder of the New England Anti-Slavery Society from Vermont; Abby May Alcott, sister of Samuel Joseph May and one of the earliest paid social workers in Massachusetts; Benjamin F. Roberts, a nephew of Hosea Easton who would become the plaintiff in the school segregation case; Francis Jackson, a white abolitionist and Unitarian businessman from Newton who headed the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society; and William Nell, a black abolitionist who had sacrificed his chance to be recognized as a lawyer after refusing to take an oath to support the Constitution.¹¹⁴

Nell had come of age in the 1830s during the early years of the abolitionist movement. Having attended segregated schools in Boston and been denied a medal for academic achievement due to his race, Nell was quite aware that while life for African Americans was less bleak in the North than in the South, institutionalized Northern racism had to be combatted.¹¹⁵ In all likelihood, Nell was also motivated by his belief in racial integration and opposition to black separatism.¹¹⁶ If, as Nell believed, an integrated society was what African Americans should strive for, then it was only logical that an African American individual must be free to marry a white person if he or she so chose. For her part, Child continued to use her pen to passionately support efforts at decriminalizing interracial marriage. In a letter sent to the legislature on March

20, 1839, she reiterated her reasons for supporting repeal of the ban and lambasted the way that the female signatories from Lynn had been treated.¹¹⁷

Perhaps the largest petition received by the state legislature in the 1839 came from the Lynn Female Anti-Slavery Society and was sponsored by Wendell Phillips.¹¹⁸ Bearing seven hundred thirty-six signatures from women, the petition was presented by a white Quaker teacher named Aroline Chase. Abolitionist women who signed these petitions were met with great ridicule. One hundred fifty-eight men, also claiming to be from Lynn, submitted their own petition that called for special legislation that would allow specifically the seven hundred thirty-six signatories to marry any “Negro, Indian, Hottentot, or any other being in human shape, at their will and pleasure.” An artist named Edward W. Clay created a lithograph that mockingly depicted white female abolitionists from Lynn in a romantic encounter with black men, including a Haitian ambassador. One newspaper suggested that, “perhaps some of these ladies despair of having a white offer, and so are willing to try *de colored race*.”¹¹⁹ A legislative committee responded to the Dorchester petition by insisting that it was “inconsistent with the modesty of a virtuous woman to solicit the repeal of laws restraining the union of the white and black races in marriage.” Another committee wondered whether women petitioning in favor of interracial marriage was “perfectly consistent with feminine delicacy.” Women’s “appropriate sphere,” according to the committee, “has heretofore been in the domestic arch, where there is still space ample enough for the exercise of the gentle charities which make life happy.” In its statement, the committee also referred to the petitioners as “those persons styling themselves ladies.”¹²⁰

For those who opposed the abolitionist movement and feared “amalgamation,” the role of women in the petitions fanned the flames of their fear. The fierce opposition by so many white men to the idea of relationships between black men and white women was based on racism but

included a presumption of white men's right to control white women's sexuality.¹²¹ Many white men in Massachusetts who opposed interracial relationships probably looked at the white women who crusaded for the legalization of interracial marriage as women who refused to be bound by the conventions of the white male power structure. In an important way, the attacks on white female abolitionists in the 1830s, including those who defended interracial marriage, were the forerunner for attacks that would be made much later against white women who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. It was eerily reminiscent of Clay's cartoon of Lynn's female abolitionists when, in 1965, white supremacists claimed that a murdered white civil rights activist named Viola Liuzzo had come to the South to have sex with black men.¹²² As historian Louis Ruchames points out, when examining the response of male white supremacists to female abolitionists who favored interracial marriage, "one gains insight into the remarkable courage of the anti-slavery women, who fought for the rights of the Negro under the most trying circumstances, at a time when their own rights were almost universally denied." Of course, the male abolitionists who defended interracial marriage were not immune from similar attacks. In the early 1830s, Garrison had been accused by critics of being motivated by a lust for black women.¹²³

A petition from Dorchester garnered its own special controversy. Sarah Baker, an official of the Dorchester Female Anti-Slavery Society, assumed that certain women who had not signed the petition supported its goals and decided to add their names herself.¹²⁴ Opponents of repeal in the legislature used this indiscretion to their advantage. A legislator named Minott Thayer called Baker before an investigative committee and tried to get her to testify that she had not understood the meaning of the petition. Baker refused and voiced her support for allowing interracial marriage. Wendell Phillips, who had agreed to serve as her counsel for the hearing, stated that

Baker's position was shared by the Massachusetts branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society.¹²⁵ To prevent further controversies over forged signatures, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's General Agent John A. Collins pleaded that each petitioner only add their own signature.¹²⁶ Some abolitionists suggested that too much fuss was being made over the forgeries. Abby Kelley, a white Quaker from Massachusetts who had become the Lynn Society's secretary, was unable to take an active part in the petition due to caring for an ill mother and a niece.¹²⁷ Later on, while traveling on the lecture circuit with Frederick Douglass, she would sometimes express a wish, perhaps tongue in cheek, that she had been born black, suggesting that she felt that public hostility was too strong for interracial marriages to withstand. Still, it was clear where her heart was. In late 1837, she expressed support for the petitions in a letter to fellow abolitionist Maria Chapman Weston and longed for "the time when our great men shall have better employment," than to examine every name on a woman's petition with a fine toothcomb.¹²⁸

When 1838 passed, and the statute remained on the books, abolitionists made a decision that they would not allow the issue to fade into obscurity the way it had after the failures in 1831 and 1832. In March of 1839, a public mass meeting was held at Boston's Marlboro Chapel. It was "probably the largest ever witnessed in the city, on this great question," according to Garrison. Only twenty-seven, Wendell Phillips was already becoming a leader in the movement and called the meeting to order. Along with abolitionists James G. Birney and Henry B. Stanton, Phillips also gave a speech in which anti-interracial marriage legislator William Lincoln "received one of the severest castigations, at the hands of Mr. Phillips, ever inflicted by mortal man." Resolutions were adopted that denounced all statutes "which proscribe, degrade or punish men on account of their complexion," and deemed the ban a "bold, deliberate, and profligate abolition of the marriage institution." Another resolution further emphasized the connection of

the ban with slavery by stating that anyone who favored the law “is opposed to the inalienable rights of men, cannot be truly virtuous in heart, disregards the law of God, hates his fellow men without a cause, and, under favorable circumstances, would not hesitate to hold another in slavery.” Attendees were encouraged to ascertain whether or not their representatives in the legislature had voted for repeal and to refuse to support those who had not. All anti-slavery groups in Massachusetts were admonished to hold local public meetings and keep making their opinions known until the ban was rescinded.¹²⁹ Some abolitionist activists felt that the outcry against the petitions was partly beneficial in that it called attention to the problem of racism. In 1839, a petitioner from Lynn named Mary E. Robbins wrote to Kelley, “there is nothing like shocking people’s prejudices sometimes, it reveals their extent and power, and oftentimes works much good.”¹³⁰ Robbins’s joy at exposing virulent racism paralleled Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s statement in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” that civil rights activists brought racism “out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.”¹³¹

In the meantime, new advocates of repeal with abolitionist connections had been elected to the state legislature. One of them, George Bradburn, was an avid abolitionist and Unitarian clergyman. To urge his colleagues to support repeal, he used the hypothetical anecdote of a man who had taken advantage of the fact that interracial marriages were legally invalid by abandoning his wife and children of a different race. He also accused the law of “denying to one portion of citizens the right to, which is accorded to others, of choosing whom they will marry, and in founding that denial on mere diversities of complexion, or of race, when neither justice nor the

Constitution of either the State or the nation recognizes any distinction between citizens on account of those diversities.”¹³² Another, George T. Davis, was characterized as a “tolerably good abolitionist” and wrote, “let not the father be excused from supporting his children on the plea that they are illegitimate. Let not the children be deprived of their inheritance because the law prohibits marriage and takes away the efficacy of the form if pronounced. Let not the parents of different races be at liberty to desert each other on every trifling disgust.”¹³³ Bradburn and Davis maintained that permitting interracial marriage would promote stronger, more stable family structures. A third, Nathaniel B. Borden, who served non-consecutive terms in this period, was the brother-in-law of an abolitionist named Arnold Buffum (who was the husband of Elizabeth Buffum Chace) and signed one of the aforementioned petitions.¹³⁴

One tactic of abolitionists was to make support for legalizing interracial marriage a litmus test for members of the movement. An anonymous abolitionist member of the legislature used the tactic of suggesting that any professed abolitionist who supported the ban was unworthy of the title. In a letter published in the *Liberator*, this anonymous individual took aim at legislators like Jacob Berry who had been considered abolitionists but voted against repeal. It disgusted the writer, “that any, who even *call* themselves abolitionists, should oppose the removal from our statute-book of this relic of slavery.”¹³⁵ Abolitionists such as this writer strove to make abolitionism by definition not just a movement to end slavery but also a movement for equal rights. This was in direct opposition to Thayer’s assertion that “the subject had no sort of connection with abolition.”¹³⁶ Of course, Thayer’s goal was not that the abolitionist movement stick to its “original” purpose. Rather, he was attempting to drive a wedge into the movement by pressuring some members into distancing themselves from people like Baker and Chase who were spearheading pro-interracial marriage petitions. His efforts met with little success.

As Amber Moulton notes, abolitionists used a host of practical, libertarian, and egalitarian arguments in the campaign for repeal, including “that the ban was racially discriminatory and a relic of slavery, useless because interracial marriages were so infrequent, an overreach of government power as it regulated domestic affairs like marriage, and made northerners complicit in slavery.”¹³⁷ Henry C. Wright, a Christian Anarchist and abolitionist minister who had grown up in Sharon, Connecticut and Western New York, went so far as to accuse the interracial marriage prohibition of going against the authority of God. Government did not have the right “to lay any restrictions” on marriage “but such as God himself has imposed. But the ‘powers that be’—the legislature of this professedly christian State—have deliberately assumed the right to abolish the marriage institution, and render it null and void; and have recorded their shame and infamy on the statue-books of the State ... If two persons marry of different complexion, this State declares it null and void, without any process of divorce.” According to Wright, the law meant that “human rights are scorned and trampled down,” was “based on prejudice and hatred toward a certain portion of our fellow-beings, on account of their complexion,” and gave “countenance and support ... to American slavery.” Yet his main focus was that the ban represented “a deliberate abolition of the marriage institution,” and forced “men and women to herd together in a state of concubinage like the brute creation.” He believed that the treatment of the petitioners by the legislature “would better become debauchees and drunkards.”¹³⁸ For Wright, the ban was doubtlessly one more example of why government was an inherently evil institution. His accusations paralleled the common abolitionist arguments that although slavery was sanctioned by human law, it was a gross violation of “higher law.” Similar to Wright’s point that the law countenanced slavery, some abolitionists suggested that it, along with other discriminatory laws in Massachusetts, opened up New England to charges of hypocrisy. An

abolitionist publication insisted that “Before New England can go forward boldly and efficiently in the cause of emancipation, she must elevate her colored population and rank them with the rest of her children.” The fact that black men in Massachusetts were citizens with voting rights was inadequate. Likewise, simply repealing some Jim Crow laws was not enough. “Reform, not partial but entire—not in the letter but in the spirit—must first commence at home.” Equal rights and racial integration, rather than “separate but equal,” was a necessity.¹³⁹

Over time, however, abolitionists began to realize that their arguments that the ban was racially discriminatory were falling on deaf ears. Therefore, they began making arguments that legalizing interracial marriage would “curb sexual promiscuity and ‘licentiousness,’” and “protect mothers and children in unsanctioned ‘marriages.’” According to this line of reasoning, “the ban on interracial marriage was tantamount to state-sponsored licentiousness. Women in interracial relationships had no choice but to engage in sex outside of legal marriage.”¹⁴⁰ Charles Torrey, a white abolitionist and Congregationalist minister who would later be arrested for helping fugitive slaves and die during his incarceration, made an argument before the state legislature that blended support for stable families with a passionate defense of interracial marriage. While Amos Phelps recorded his words, Torrey proclaimed that the current state law, “nullifies the law of God,” and “brands as fornicators persons of blameless life, because they are joined in the holiest of earthly ties, and separates them even without any legal process.”¹⁴¹

However, as Torrey’s speech demonstrates, abolitionists did not generally forsake their arguments about personal freedom and racial equality when petitioning to legalize interracial marriage. Rather, they used practical arguments about family stability to supplement their case. Following a paradigm established by Lydia Maria Child, a Concord abolitionist petition headed by Dr. Josiah Bartlett listed two practical and six principled reasons for legalization. The first

practical reason was that if even if one conceded the unnaturalness of interracial marriage, the ban was “useless at best,” since “it may be conveniently avoided.” The second practical reason was that the ban promoted “illicit and immoral connexions.” The first moral reason was that the ban was “wrong, in the sight of God, who is no respecter of persons.” The second moral reason was that it was inconsistent with the state constitution. While many abolitionists despised the U.S. Constitution for its support of slavery, the state constitution of Massachusetts was another matter, as it stipulated that “all men are born equal.” The third moral reason was that the criminalization of interracial marriage was, “an evident vestige of the slave code.” The fourth moral reason was that the ban was “furnishing an argument to Southern Slaveholders in the manifest inconsistency of such a statute” with antislavery statements from Massachusetts. The fifth moral reason was that it was “unworthy the dignity of the Commonwealth, since it stands as a perpetual insult and badge of degradation to a respectable portion of her citizens.” The sixth moral reason was that the law was “opposed to the spirit of free institutions, which know no difference among men, before the laws, except that of character and conduct.” The Concord petition concluded with a prayer for “the repeal of said law and of all other laws of this Commonwealth (if any such there be) which make any distinction among the inhabitants on account of Colour, or for any real or supposed difference of race.”¹⁴²

On more than one occasion, black and white abolitionists in Massachusetts had to deal with petitions, whether authentic or hoaxes, from African Americans in the state allegedly opposing repeal. It was “already sufficiently difficult,” according to a petition in 1838, “with all the protection which the law now affords . . . to defeat the frequent advances, which are made by whites, particularly females, for a union of those colors which divine Providence has wisely separated.” Another petition warned that repeal, “will exert a most pernicious influence on the

condition of colored women.” According to this petition, black men would begin leaving their wives in droves to marry white spouses.¹⁴³

Responding to this petition, Garrison perhaps contradicted himself. He claimed both that the signatories were unrepresentative of black population as a whole in both their views and moral character, labeling them, “among the lowest and most disreputable of our colored population,” and that the petition was a hoax. Garrison also stated that the legislator who had presented the petition, Representative Gibbens, was well known for his racist and anti-abolitionist views thereby accusing him of hypocrisy for presenting himself as the champion of black women.¹⁴⁴ This conflict prefigured the later disagreements over interracial marriage pitting the NAACP and the integrationist wings of the SCLC, SNCC, and CORE, which were generally ambivalent toward or accepting of interracial marriage, against black nationalist groups like the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Nation of Islam which opposed it.

At any rate, black female abolitionists did not cede the issue to the real or fictitious black women listed on the anti-interracial marriage petitions. The hundreds of black people in New Bedford who petitioned in favor of allowing interracial marriage included not only men, as some supporters of the ban liked to imply, but also women.¹⁴⁵ In 1839, black women in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society including Susan Paul, an educator, author, and feminist, Eunice R. Davis, an active member of Boston’s A.M.E. Zion Church, Lavinia Hilton, an anti-alcohol activist, Chloe Lee, a teacher, Jane Putnam, a hair salon proprietor, and Julia Williams, a delegate at the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, signed one of the petitions. On the eve of repeal a few years later, a group of “Colored Citizens of Boston” passed resolutions attacking the ban and the segregation of Massachusetts railroads. Davis was one of three African American women chosen for a committee to collect petition signatures.¹⁴⁶

Among all African American (and white) proponents of legalization, Charles Lenox Remond, the first black person to address the state legislature, stands out. In 1840, he referred to the interracial marriage ban as one of the “dictates of an unholy and contemptible prejudice which is searing our northern country with everlasting infamy.”¹⁴⁷ A native of Massachusetts, Remond was a second-generation abolitionist and one of Frederick Douglass’s mentors whose family composed part of the “black elite” in Salem via multiple businesses. Having once called George Washington “a villain” for his slaveholding, Remond rivaled even the fieriest of his compatriots for radicalism.¹⁴⁸ Hence, it is no surprise that he openly asserted that African Americans would be second-class citizens as long as they were not free to marry the person of their choice. His father, John, and sister, Sarah, joined him in signing the petition.¹⁴⁹

As 1841 drew to a close, pro-interracial marriage abolitionists suffered a significant setback when Bradburn lost his bid for re-election. *The Liberator* suggested that Bradburn’s own party, the Whig Party, had betrayed him. There was also speculation that Governor John Davis had played a role in preventing repeal in hopes of being made the Whig Party’s next vice presidential candidate. There may have been some substance to these charges. Both the Whig Party and the Democratic Party had antislavery, racially liberal segments in New England, but were controlled by slavery supporters. It was not until the formation of the Republican Party that antislavery politicians were gathered under one head, and an electorally viable antislavery party existed in the United States. Hence, while individual Whig and individual Democratic politicians in the 1840s opposed anti-black laws, their stances were not shared by the majority of party leadership. Yet abolitionists had good cause to be hopeful. Despite Bradburn’s loss, at the beginning of 1842 session, it seemed probable that the ban would be repealed.” Public support for legalizing interracial marriage had seen a major uptick. The state Senate quickly voted for

legalization by a heavy margin. Prospects looked less bright in the state House. Representative Gibbens declared that he would rather his daughter die than marry an African American.

Representative Park of Boston spoke in favor of the ban as a necessary measure to safeguard the white race. In the end, the ban was upheld in the House by four votes.¹⁵⁰

While abolitionists were a minority even in Massachusetts, they used their right to vote in an attempt to sway the state government toward support for repeal. In the 1842 election, a number of anti-interracial marriage senators lost their seats, while a number of candidates with more progressive views were victorious. Phelps had predicted the previous year that “our petitions will come through the ballot boxes, gentlemen, legislators, hereafter.”¹⁵¹ Although Garrisonians viewed the government as racist and corrupt and were far more skeptical of the political process than abolitionists like Phelps and Torrey, the *Liberator* also warned that legislators who had stood against repeal could expect reprisals.¹⁵² Another factor that probably advanced the cause of repeal was the November 1842 arrest in Boston of a runaway slave named George Latimer. The arrest generated great outrage in Massachusetts and not only among abolitionists.¹⁵³ Massachusetts residents felt that their sovereignty was being threatened by the South.¹⁵⁴ Antislavery activists began petitioning for a law that would prevent Massachusetts from being forced to cooperate in the capture of fugitive slaves. Over sixty-five thousand people signed.¹⁵⁵ Suddenly, the abolitionists’ claim that the state’s interracial marriage ban made Massachusetts complicit with slavery seemed far more plausible.¹⁵⁶

One successful political candidate favoring repeal was Governor Marcus Morton, who would join the antislavery Free Soil Party when it was formed later in the decade. With Morton in office, the Senate voted for repeal almost unanimously, and the House voted in favor of it by thirty-five votes. Morton signed the bill, rendering interracial marriage in Massachusetts legal in

1843.¹⁵⁷ “At last ... ” Garrison wrote with jubilation, “human beings who love each other may be united together in ‘holy wedlock,’ even though the hue of their skin may not perfectly harmonize!”¹⁵⁸ The decriminalization of interracial marriage was part of an overall year of victory for abolitionists in Massachusetts. 1843 also saw the state legislature defy the U.S. Constitution by passing a law forbidding state officials to assist in the capture of fugitive slaves.¹⁵⁹ Yet despite shifting public opinion toward support of legalizing interracial marriage and offering fugitive slaves sanctuary, the movement had still not succeeded in making the general public abolitionists. Rather, many Massachusetts whites had concluded that one could support legalizing interracial marriage and take pride in Massachusetts’ rejection of slavery without supporting immediate emancipation nationwide.

At least two of the Massachusetts legislators who voted to legalize interracial marriage eventually became national politicians in the Republican Party after it was founded in 1854. The first and more surprising of the two was Charles Francis Adams, Sr., who served in Congress from 1859 to 1861 before being appointed by Abraham Lincoln to serve as Ambassador to the United Kingdom. His antislavery paternal grandmother, Abigail Adams, had questioned whether her discomfort with the interracial relationship in *Othello* was natural or the result of irrational prejudice.¹⁶⁰ His father, former President John Quincy Adams, was also a strong opponent of slavery and opposed sending blacks back to Africa. Indeed, his racial views were probably more progressive than any president prior to Lincoln. But Quincy Adams was no abolitionist, and he lacked the introspection of his mother. Eight years before Massachusetts legalized interracial marriage, he wrote that the, “moral lesson of *Othello* is that black and white blood cannot be intermingled without a gross outrage upon the law of Nature; and that, in such violations, Nature will vindicate her laws.”¹⁶¹ In other words, Quincy Adams felt that a white woman who married a

black man should expect to be smothered to death with a pillow. Charles was also a man who opposed slavery without being an abolitionist or wholesale racial egalitarian. He wrote that although he was repelled by interracial marriage, he also believed that bans on it were vestiges of slavery that needed to be removed.¹⁶²

Henry Wilson came from a very different background than Adams. He grew up impoverished in rural New Hampshire and was a shoemaker as a young man. Unlike Adams, he identified as an abolitionist, albeit one who clashed with the more radical abolitionists from Garrison's faction. Scholars have disagreed as to whether Wilson believed that blacks were inherently equal to whites.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, it is clear that he believed they should be free from artificial limitations imposed by whites.¹⁶⁴ This extended to interracial marriage laws, and he voted to repeal Massachusetts's ban. Though Wilson was more progressive than most Republican politicians, his influence on the party is not easily dismissed. He spent eighteen years serving as a junior Senator from Massachusetts, twelve of which were also spent serving as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. This period was followed by two-and-a-half years as Ulysses S. Grant's vice president until his death in 1875.

One man who was not serving in public office in 1843 but would eventually become prominent in national Republican politics deserves attention: Charles Sumner. As a child, he grew up with black neighbors in Boston.¹⁶⁵ Trained as a lawyer at Harvard, the six-foot-four inch Sumner was a figurative and literal giant in politics and the courtroom. In the 1840s, he had spoken out and litigated against Massachusetts's Jim Crow laws, working alongside Robert Morris in the courtroom. In this capacity, he had praised the efforts of abolitionists to legalize interracial marriage in the Bay State; his father had also opposed the state's marriage law.¹⁶⁶ As a Senator, Sumner had continued to promote his abolitionist views and, along with Wilson, was a

leader among the Radical Republicans. In 1872, he reiterated the opinion he had offered as a young man. Interracial marriage laws, he argued, were rooted in “the prejudice of color which was the very basis of slavery.”¹⁶⁷ Around this same time, Sumner worked for a comprehensive civil rights bill, which became known as the Civil Rights Act of 1875, to make the guarantees of equal protection contained in the Fourteenth Amendment more concrete. Presumably realizing that such a clause would doom the bill, Sumner included no provision nullifying state laws against interracial marriage. By the time the bill passed a year after his death, the House had also, against the wishes of many abolitionists, removed the clauses that desegregated public schools and cemeteries.¹⁶⁸

For all the limits of the victory, the fact remained that interracial couples from Massachusetts had the freedom to marry. This achievement was an early and often forgotten victory in the abolitionist quest to end legal discrimination against blacks. While New England was hardly a utopia of racial equality, the efforts of abolitionists had practical, appreciable consequences for interracial marriage there. In an official report during the Civil War, Boston stated that sixteen percent of black residents who married chose a white spouse.¹⁶⁹ While the state would eventually forbid individuals from coming to Massachusetts and entering into marriages that were illegal in their native states, all subsequent attempts to reinstitute a ban on interracial marriage failed. To understand what a herculean task it was for abolitionists to legalize interracial marriage in Massachusetts in the 1840s, one need only consider the context in which Louis Ruchames wrote his detailed analysis of the legalization effort. In 1955, when his essay was published, interracial marriage had been legal in Massachusetts for one hundred twelve years but remained against the law in over half the country. Legalization of interracial marriage in the Bay State set the stage for later successes including the fight to desegregate Massachusetts’ public

schools and railroads. The success of the legalization campaign was also a display of abolitionist power.¹⁷⁰ This display makes one think of Margaret Mead's contention, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."¹⁷¹ (Mead herself would probably have applied this quote to the work of Massachusetts abolitionists. In 1958, when the legalization of interracial marriage in the South still seemed to be in the distant future, she refused to condemn interracial marriage and claimed that humanity had survived through races blending.)¹⁷² While ending slavery nationwide was still a very uphill battle that would take another twenty-two years of political agitation and a civil war, abolitionists had shown that their ability to change racist laws could not be underestimated. This success "stimulated them to renewed effort against other forms of discrimination and segregation."¹⁷³ Oliver Johnson was probably correct when he surmised that at one point, Garrison's support for interracial marriage was his most unpopular stance. By eliminating a law that was far more longstanding than school or railroad segregation and reflected the most visceral racial fears of many whites nationwide, abolitionists had demonstrated that they could potentially roll back any Jim Crow law in Massachusetts. No racially discriminatory statute was safe anymore. Indeed, the state's remaining Jim Crow laws were living on borrowed time now that the most deeply rooted statute was gone.

CHAPTER 4: “I WOULD NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TRY TO SEPARATE PERSONS WHO REALLY LOVED:” BRITISH ABOLITIONISTS WHO CRITICIZED AMERICA ON INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

Abolitionism was, to some degree, an international movement. There were close connections between the British and American abolitionist movements. Abolitionists from both sides of the Atlantic corresponded and worked together in order to promote emancipation in the United States after Britain passed antislavery legislation in the 1830s, as evidenced by the presence of American abolitionists at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention taking place in London. While British abolitionists focused primarily on slavery when giving attention to the United States, interracial marriage also came up at times. This chapter examines British abolitionists who offered critiques of America’s stigma toward interracial couples.

Given the narrative of America being founded as a beacon of liberty born out of rebellion against a tyrannical British Empire, it is one of the great historical ironies that interracial marriage was always legal in mainland Britain. In fact, interracial marriage bans were some of the only laws passed in colonial America with no firm legal precedent on the mainland.¹⁷⁴ Granville Sharp, a white British abolitionist who published one of the first antislavery tracts in 1769, defended interracial marriage.¹⁷⁵ Olaudah Equiano, one of the most prominent black British antislavery activists in the late eighteenth century and an icon in the anti-slave trade movement, married a white wife.¹⁷⁶ Keith Albert Sandiford writes of a “considerable harmony that prevailed” between blacks and English whites of low socio-economic status evidenced by, “the high incidence of interracial marriage.”¹⁷⁷ The late Caribbean American historian J.A. Rogers, who was himself married to a white woman, wrote in 1942, “that the English in England had no strong objections to race mixing, or to marriage, when the Negro was well-to-do.” He also alludes to a very interesting contrast. Fanny Kemble was an English-born actress who married a Georgia

planter and became an abolitionist after experiencing slavery firsthand and being filled with revulsion. Kemble was not a strong defender of interracial marriage, but she marveled at the extreme disgust that even antislavery Americans like John Quincy Adams often felt toward it. Her daughter, Frances Butler Leigh, was born and raised in Philadelphia, where interracial marriage was legal, but had a strong bond with her slaveholding father. When Leigh moved to England and brought a black servant with her, she was appalled that the white maids there found him more appealing than a white man and that one of these Englishwomen married him. The contrast between mother and daughter symbolizes the contrast between Britain and the United States. It is undeniable that nineteenth-century interracial couples faced stigma in the British Isles, but this stigma was a great deal less severe than in the United States.¹⁷⁸

This difference in cultural attitudes was not just a facet of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The marriage of a number of African American soldiers to white British women during World War II was met with backlash in the United States. Black soldiers and their white British “war brides” who tried to settle in America sometimes found that the rhetoric about a war for freedom had not been created with them in mind. For example, a black G.I. and his British fiancé received a sentence of six months incarceration for “unlawful co-habitation” in Virginia. In Washington State, where interracial marriage had been legal for almost eighty years by the end of World War II, a British woman was nonetheless relieved of her position as a department store clerk when her bosses discovered that she was married to a black veteran.¹⁷⁹ To this day, far more black people marry someone of a different race in Britain than in the United States.¹⁸⁰ None of this is to deny that interracial couples have faced and continue to face stigma in Britain. Yet it is hard to contest the claim that there was a marked difference in the level of cultural acceptance toward interracial couples in the United States compared to Britain. Nor can Britain’s lower level

of stigma toward interracial couples be explained mainly by its smaller black population. After all, states such as Montana, North and South Dakota, Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming have always had miniscule black populations yet banned interracial marriage until the civil rights era. In effect, Britain has had a more clearly defined class-based hierarchy, while the United States' greatest dividing line has historically been the "color line." And today, Britain remains the more racially egalitarian society, while the United States remains the more class-egalitarian society. Thus, it is no surprise that some British abolitionists took a stand against America's treatment of interracial couples.

Thomas Day, an author and poet from London, was one of the few eighteenth century white Britons to directly attack slavery itself. In 1770s, when he was only in his twenties, Day co-wrote a poem entitled, "The Dying Negro" with an old antislavery friend named John Bicknell. Supposedly inspired by true events, the poem focuses on a black slave in the West Indies who runs away in an attempt to be baptized but is recaptured by his master and decides to kill himself rather than submit. Besides the militantly antislavery message of the poem, one of the most notable facts about it is that the title character wishes to be baptized in order to marry a white, female servant. The poem is addressed to her. Early on in the poem, the slave declares to his lover, "O my lov'd bride!—for I have call'd thee mine," and states that she is "dearer than life." His love for her is a common theme throughout "The Dying Negro," making it a love poem as well as a political poem.^{181 182} It is extremely significant that Day and Bicknell chose to add to the controversy of an already incendiary poem by featuring an interracial romance front and center. The fact that they did so makes it clear that they favored interracial marriage as well as emancipation.

It seems clear that Day and Bicknell also intended to take aim at the treatment of

interracial couples in the American colonies, many of which, unlike the British Isles, banned interracial marriage. After all, the slave in “The Dying Negro” is being sent to America at the time that he commits suicide. And Day was full of contempt for the American Revolution. Day ridiculed the revolutionaries, whom he labeled hypocrites for their support of slavery. The introduction to “The Dying Negro” opines, “Let the wild inconsistent claims of America prevail, when they shall be unmixed with the clank of chains, and the groans of anguish. Let her aim a dagger at the breast of her milder parent, if she can advance a step without trampling on the dead and dying carcasses of her slaves.”¹⁸³ Day once quipped, “If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves.”¹⁸⁴ Day’s belief that England was a land of liberty in contrast to the American colonies seems rather strange considering England’s eagerness to profit from both the Slave Trade and colonial slavery.¹⁸⁵ But it would echo later, more accurate statements from both American and British abolitionists contrasting the treatment of interracial couples in the United States and the British Isles.

Another example of a British abolitionist appalled by the American stigma against interracial marriage was Harriet Martineau. Martineau, a radical English Unitarian writer of French ancestry who had been courted by the brother of Charles Darwin but never married, was also a supporter of abolition worldwide. In the 1830s, she visited the United States. In her writing, she ridicules plantation owners who sexually brutalized slave women while accusing abolitionists of believing in “amalgamation.” Martineau felt that she could not keep silent and needed to take a clear stand. She recalled an incident in which she was asked, “whether I would not prevent, if I could, the marriage of a white person with a person of color ... I replied that I would never, under any circumstances, try to separate persons who really loved.”¹⁸⁶ According to

Martineau, despite hating slavery, her “mind had not yet really been troubled about the enmity of the races,” until discovering just how much many Americans feared “amalgamation.”¹⁸⁷ The Englishwoman also recounted that a Southern plantation owner explained to a friend why Southern states had passed laws that made it difficult to legally emancipate slaves without taking them North first. He “said that the very general connexion of white gentlemen with their female slaves introduced a mulatto race whose numbers would become dangerous if the affections of their white parents were permitted to render them free.” “There are persons,” Martineau continued,

who weakly trust to the force of the parental affection for putting an end to slavery, when the amalgamation of the races shall have gone so far as to involve a sufficient number! I actually heard this from the lips of a clergyman in the South. Yet these planters, who sell their own offspring for the sake of filling their purses, dare to raise the cry of amalgamation against the abolitionists of the North ... I met with no candid southerner who was not full of shame at the monstrous hypocrisy.¹⁸⁸

In Baltimore, Martineau heard the British novelist, Maria Edgeworth, called “a woman of no intelligence or delicacy.”¹⁸⁹ In 1801, Edgeworth had written a book called *Belinda* that included an interracial couple as minor characters. In a new edition nine years later, the interracial couple had been excised, demonstrating that even British society was not free of opposition to interracial marriage.¹⁹⁰ Yet in the 1830s, Americans still had access to copies of the infamous first edition. Martineau had considered the inclusion of an interracial marriage in the novel so insignificant that she had no memory of it, but she observed a minister’s wife hurl the book “to the opposite corner of the floor” when she arrived at the offending passage.¹⁹¹ While Edgeworth was an icon in the United States, the English traveler observes, the depiction of an interracial marriage in *Belinda* was intolerable for Americans.¹⁹² When Martineau became aware of the large number of instances where interracial marriage place on plantations, she “always knew how to stop the hypocritical talk against ‘amalgamation.’ I never failed to silence the cant

by pointing to the rapidly increasing mulatto element of the population, and asking whether it was the priest's service which made the difference between marriage and abhorred 'amalgamation.'"¹⁹³ Oddly, Martineau was unaware that American abolitionists like Garrison and Child had defended interracial marriage, claiming that she had heard of none who supported it. She had underestimated the degree to which many members of the AASS shared her views.

Another British abolitionist traveller to the United States, Edward Strutt Abdy, similarly attacked the American opposition to interracial marriage. In an 1835 account of his travels, the unjust American hostility to interracial marriage is a major theme. Abdy mentioned leaving a meeting of the American Colonization Society in disgust before Lyman Beecher spoke. "I was not sorry, the next day, that I had retired;" the traveler recounted. He was appalled to hear that Beecher had spoken positively of racism as a necessary barrier against amalgamation. Amalgamation, Abdy believed, "would confound the two races and obliterate the traces of their distinction:--a result that, in the view of common sense, is neither to be dreaded nor deprecated, as it would destroy animosity by destroying its causes."¹⁹⁴ He referenced Samuel Joseph May's support for interracial marriage and praised the Unitarian preacher as "a most amiable man and one whose sole object seems to be 'to do justly and walk uprightly.'"¹⁹⁵ Recounting a statement from Reuben Walworth, the last "Chancellor of New York," that there were not six moral women North of the Potomac River who would allow their children to marry blacks, Abdy eviscerated the chancellor's logic. He summarized it thus: "'My daughter will not marry you, because you are degraded: therefore you deserve to be degraded, and if my voice has any weight, shall be degraded, because my daughter will not marry you.'"¹⁹⁶

Abdy also mockingly described a conversation he had with a white American woman who insisted that it was unnatural for people of different skin colors to marry. Quoting the

Biblical passage that “marriage is honorable in all men,” he accused her of adding to the Bible. Abdy wrote sarcastically that the woman “would add a little to the text, and provide for a contingency, which the sacred writer, who could not probably foresee the discovery of a new continent, never contemplated.” People of every color should marry as they saw fit, “but I enter my solemn protest against a regulation which makes prohibition from marriage, and non-admittance to the family circle the same thing.”¹⁹⁷ In 1842, he again wrote in favor of interracial marriage, composing *American Blacks and Whites: In Reply to a German Orthodermist* as a rebuttal to a German writer who disagreed with the abolitionist movement. Abdy ridiculed the notion that America “could either expatriate the blacks, or keep them in perpetual subjection.” Such an idea “is the logical consequence of the hypothesis—for the position has no real foundation—that amalgamation or concord is impossible.”¹⁹⁸ What makes Abdy’s strident attacks on American slavery and racism so revealing is that he originally came to the United States largely to study a “progressive” new prison in New York.¹⁹⁹ Hence, as someone interested in prison reform, he had every incentive to paint a positive picture of the young nation. The fact that Abdy’s writing was so critical of American prejudice against interracial marriage illustrates the depths to which America denigrated interracial couples.

A more surprising figure in the British abolitionist movement to express support for efforts to de-stigmatize interracial marriage in the United States was Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham and Vaux, who served as Lord Chancellor of Great Britain from 1830 to 1834. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1778, Brougham began college as early as age fourteen. Becoming a lawyer in 1808, he successfully represented Queen Caroline against King George IV when the king attempted to divorce her on charges of adultery despite his own philandering. Starting in the early 1800s, Brougham became active in a variety of radical causes, including combatting the African slave trade and slavery itself, cofounding the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual

Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions in 1823. If Brougham was originally interested in gradual emancipation, however, he had changed his stance to support immediate emancipation by the 1830s. He used his status as a British nobleman to help pass the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833. The bill contained a proviso that slaves must undergo a period of “apprenticeship” of four years as domestic servants or six years as field laborers. Brougham appeared before Parliament to denounce forced apprenticeship, declaring that the slaves were no less fit for freedom than any of the noblemen he was speaking to. In July 1838, the apprenticeship clause was rescinded. After this victory, Brougham largely withdrew from British politics, but continued to fight for abolitionism internationally. A staunch supporter of the Union during the Civil War, Brougham lived to see slavery banned in the United States when he was eighty-seven years old.²⁰⁰ He was one of the few individuals who lived long enough to be able to participate directly in outlawing the African Slave Trade and American slavery. Brougham represented a crucial link between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century antislavery activists such as Bicknell, Day, and Equiano, and the mid-nineteenth-century antislavery activists such as Martineau, Abdy, George Thompson, and Joseph Sturge.

In 1857, Brougham offered his praise for a work that supported interracial marriage. Written by the African American author Frank J. Webb, *The Garies and Their Friends* was a poignant attack on racism in the Northern United States, but it is also notable for featuring two interracial couples: a slave owner named Clarence who moves to Philadelphia to raise two children with the mulatto slave named Emily that he loves, as well as their son, also named Clarence, who falls in love with a white woman named Birdie. Racism prevents the younger Clarence and Birdie from being together in life. He dies of a broken heart, followed by Birdie several years later. But the narrator assures readers that after Birdie’s death, she “passed away to join her lover, where distinctions in race or colour are unknown, and where the prejudices of

earth cannot mar their happiness.”²⁰¹ The defense of interracial marriage was unmistakable. Brougham wrote one of the prefaces to the novel, stating, “I hope and trust that Mr. Webb’s book will meet with all the success to which its own merit, and the great interest of the subject, so well entitle it.”²⁰² The endorsement by Lord Brougham shows that even abolitionists in the upper echelon of British society sometimes defended interracial marriage. This startling truth is further emphasized by the English noblewoman and avid abolitionist who granted Webb’s request to dedicate his novel to her. That woman, referred to as a “friend” of Webb’s in the dedication, was Lady Byron, widow of the famous poet, Lord Byron.²⁰³

Relative to their American compatriots, British abolitionists had little impact on America’s acceptance or lack thereof of interracial marriage. A defense of interracial marriage by Henry Highland Garnet or William Lloyd Garrison was almost guaranteed to receive far more attention and outrage from white American society than one from Harriet Martineau or Edward Abdy. And, understandably preoccupied with slavery itself, British abolitionists played a minimal role in efforts to repeal state bans against interracial marriage. Yet British abolitionists provided two valuable services for American interracial couples. For one thing, they provided a vital system of support for interracial abolitionist couples who had to flee the United States and make their home in Britain. For another, they highlighted the hypocrisy of “the Land of the Free” as sometimes only foreigners can. They exposed a key chink in the armor of “American exceptionalism. America might be more egalitarian purely in terms of class. Americans might not be reduced to hysteria at the thought of a duchess marrying a commoner. But when it came to a person choosing a spouse of a different race, America was far more elitist than the empire against which it had rebelled. And by expressing incredulity at this reactionary aspect of American society, British abolitionists showed that the dominant American attitude that condoned

criminalization of interracial marriage was not universal worldwide.

CHAPTER 5: “THIS PROVES I AM IMPARTIAL:” ABOLITIONISTS WHO CROSSED THE COLOR LINE IN MARRIAGE

Many, perhaps the majority, of abolitionists favored interracial marriage. For most abolitionists who accepted interracial marriage, it was a matter of principle. Blacks were equal to whites; therefore it was wrong to stigmatize or ban interracial marriage. For a few abolitionists, however, the issue was far more personal. A small number of abolitionists married someone of a different race.

Most of these marriages were between men of partial or total black descent and white women. Stereotypes about black men’s lust for white women that have been promoted by both white supremacists and black nationalists notwithstanding, there is a rather mundane explanation for this fact. Historically and to this day, white women and black men have been closer to each other on the economic ladder than white men and black women. Since people are more likely to marry within their rough economic bracket, it is no surprise that interracial marriages are more likely to involve black men and white women than black women and white men. Those few abolitionists who married outside their race are noteworthy not only for their decision to pursue love in the face of immense public backlash but also for the relative level of acceptance they received from fellow abolitionists.

Before looking at abolitionists who entered into successful interracial marriages, there are two other examples of interracial abolitionist romance that are worth examining briefly. The first involved William Wells Brown and an Irish servant, probably named Mary. On multiple occasions, Brown visited the Valley Falls, Rhode Island home of Elizabeth and Samuel Chace, a white, Quaker abolitionist couple. In a 1914 biography of her mother, Lillie Buffum Chace

Wyman recalled that Brown once fell in love with the family's sixteen year-old Irish maid. According to Lillie, Elizabeth intervened to break up the affair, though not for the reasons that one might expect. Lillie explained that, "this incident is worth noting since, as I gathered from Mrs. Chace's own after account, she did not object to the marriage because of the racial difference, but because she thought that Mr. Brown was superior to the girl. 'It would not have been well,' she said, 'to marry M. She could not have associated with the people that he did.'"

Lillie, who supported the NAACP in the twentieth century, expressed her own disagreement with Elizabeth's interference, writing that,

It always seemed to me that she acted a little arbitrarily. The girl was perfectly willing to marry Brown, considered him a 'gentleman,' and was probably modestly in love with him. It is likely that she would have made him an excellent wife, and would not have become dissatisfied because of his mixed blood.²⁰⁴

While the incident is surprising in light of Brown's rather negative comments about the Irish in *My Southern Home*, there is little reason to doubt that it occurred. It seems unlikely that Lillie would have made such a story up, since her criticism of her mother's actions seems to imply that she did not feel it presented her mother in the most favorable light. In his biography of Brown, Ezra Greenspan finds it likely the incident really occurred. He points out that after the death of his first wife, Brown was repeatedly attracted to lighter-skinned, much younger women. He also states that there were two young, Irish American servants named Mary listed as residents of the Chace household in the 1860 census.²⁰⁵ There is also little reason to question the claim that Elizabeth's disapproval of the potential marriage was based on her servant's class rather than an opposition to interracial marriage. For one thing, similar to the reason that it seems unlikely Lillie made the incident up, it seems implausible that if Elizabeth had actually objected to interracial marriage, Lillie would have even recounted the story. After all, Lillie supported interracial marriage, as evidenced by her belief that Brown and the Chace's servant would have been a good

match and her statement that, “I would neither forbid nor command anybody to marry anybody else for reasons that are merely racial.” For another, the elder Chace’s life demonstrates a commitment to racial equality—at least for African Americans, if not as fervently for the Irish. She strongly opposed racial segregation in schools and railroads and resigned from the Rhode Island Women’s Club when it refused to accept black women.²⁰⁶ In fact, she indicated support for interracial marriage in her autobiography, writing with regret that many Quakers “did not think the slaves should be set free all at once, and they did not want their daughters to marry negroes.”²⁰⁷ Chace’s wording seems to put opposition to universal emancipation and opposition to interracial marriage in the same category, suggesting that she would not have had any moral objection to Brown marrying a white woman. At any rate, it is a mark of some societal progress that many modern readers are sure to be astounded by the fact that a woman’s class, race, or ethnicity could be considered more of a reason to oppose a marriage than the fact that the woman in question was sixteen and the man approximately forty.

The second example involves the Grimké family. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Sarah and Angelina accepted their brother’s biracial children into their family. One of them, Archibald, became a lawyer, diplomat, and NAACP leader. As a young man, Archibald frequently walked an aging Wendell Phillips home at night after visits at the home of Angelina and her husband, another former abolitionist named Theodore Weld. At one point, Archibald was romantically involved with a white woman in Boston named Ellen Bradford, a member of one of Massachusetts’s “first families.” According to Mark Perry, his race “appeared to matter not at all to her or to her family,” and Theodore and Angelina welcomed the possibility of marriage. Yet the decision of Ellen’s father to take a new job caused her to move, precluding the possibility of marriage, although Archibald and Ellen maintained a lifelong friendship.

In 1879, Archibald married a white Midwestern woman named Sarah Stanley. Stanley's father, Reverend M.C. Stanley, had been an abolitionist, but he opposed the marriage on white supremacist grounds. The way he framed his opposition to the marriage in a letter to his daughter indicates that he saw himself as representing a more moderate, mainstream Christian abolitionist tradition against what he saw as the radical, New England Unitarian abolitionist tradition of his future son-in-law's associates. Reverend Stanley ranted that his daughter had come under the influence of "Boston's Unitarians" and groused that "we look upon it as a sad day ... when you went to Boston and especially when you associated yourself with the deniers of Christ and the insane theorizers of that infidel city." Given the heavy concentration of New England Unitarians among the Garrisonian wing of the abolitionist movement, it is hard not to see Reverend Stanley's disparagements as a continuation of older clashes between Garrisonians and less "extreme" abolitionists. This clash was also reflected in the minister who performed the ceremony, Reverend Cyrus Augustus Bartol.²⁰⁸ A former abolitionist, Bartol was a Unitarian minister living in Boston but originally from Freeport, Maine. Whatever the reason or reasons—and theories range from Sarah chafing under the stigma that she experienced over having a black husband to Archibald having an extramarital affair—the marriage did not last. Within a few years, Archibald and Sarah had divorced. In a bittersweet twist of fate, Reverend Stanley had grown to support the marriage, referred to Archibald as "my dear son," and attempted without success to prevent the divorce.²⁰⁹

Plenty of abolitionist interracial relationships were more successful. Although he is not well known today, Reverend Lemuel Haynes was an extremely significant historical figure in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century America. He is believed to have been both the first African American to receive an advanced degree and the first to pastor a predominantly white

congregation. Haynes was born in 1753 in West Hartford, Connecticut. Details about his parents are ambiguous, but his mother was stated to be of “respectable” white, New England heritage, his father stated to be of “unmingled African extraction.” According to a biography of Haynes written a few years after his death by Reverend Timothy Mather Cooley, “this unhappy child was abandoned by his parents in early infancy, and was never, to the end of life, favoured with a single expression of a mother’s kindness.” Abandoned by his parents, Haynes was sold as an indentured servant to a church deacon in Massachusetts named David Rose when he was five months old. He became a devout Christian, and after his term of indenture was up, he served as a minuteman in the Revolutionary War. After his military service, he became ordained as a Congregationalist minister and preached for decades at various churches in Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York. In Torrington, Connecticut, he preached to a church that included Owen and Ruth Brown, the parents of John Brown.²¹⁰

A firm believer in a wrathful, Calvinist God, Haynes mixed a fire and brimstone theology with a certain political radicalism. As was common in New England, he opposed the War of 1812. Haynes died in 1833, just after a biracial movement of radical abolitionists began in America. However, his writings and speeches include major ideas that would be embraced by abolitionists when the *Liberator* and the American Anti-Slavery Society were established. Like David Barrow and certain other Northern and Southern individuals of both races, he can be considered a sort of John the Baptist for the movement. Firstly, Haynes did not stick to attacking only the African slave trade while excusing slaveholding in the United States as regrettable but necessary for the time being. In the 1770s, he wrote an unpublished manuscript in which he called for the freedom promoted by the American Revolution to be extended to African Americans. “Men were made,” wrote Haynes, “for more noble Ends than to be Drove to market,

like Sheep and oxen.” A black person “has as good a right to his Liberty in common with Englishmen.”²¹¹ The very title of this manuscript, “Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-Keeping,” emphasizes this point, as it refers to the illegality of owning slaves, not just importing them from Africa. He repeated his antislavery stance in an 1801 speech.²¹² Secondly, he was an early opponent of colonization, calling instead for integration and fair treatment of African Americans. This set him apart from most ostensible or real opponents of slavery in his era, and it foreshadowed the later abolitionist break with the American Colonization Society.²¹³

His interracial marriage further signified his proto-abolitionist status. In the early 1780s, Haynes met the woman to whom he would be married for fifty years. Ten years his junior, Elizabeth Babbit was a white schoolteacher in Granville, Connecticut who had been born in Dighton, Massachusetts. According to Cooley, Babbit was on a spiritual journey, and Haynes became her religious mentor of sorts. “Reverence for Mr. Haynes as her spiritual father seems to have laid a foundation for a connexion both honourable and sacred for life.” What followed was an occurrence that was in marked contrast to gender norms of the era: Babbit proposed to Haynes. What is equally surprising is the reaction of other ministers. Cooley informs readers that Haynes consulted a number of ministers about whether or not to accept the proposal. “It is understood,” writes Cooley, “that he received their unanimous advice and sanction.” The fact that, even in New England, a group of white, eighteenth century ministers would be unanimous in their approval of an interracial marriage seems rather shocking. However, the late eighteenth century was certainly a period of relative racial tolerance in New England compared to the past few generations, as New England states began passing antislavery edicts. Connecticut, for example, passed antislavery legislation in 1784. Prior to the 1920s, racial tolerance had tended to ebb and flow in

the North. The early nineteenth century saw the pendulum swing back with Northern states increasingly passing anti-black laws. As discussed in Chapter 2, the 1840s and 1850s would see another shift with black and white abolitionists and other racial liberals making progress in advancing civil rights. On September 22nd, 1783, the twenty year old Babbit and thirty year old Haynes were married by Reverend Samuel Woodbridge in Hartland, Connecticut. Unlike in Massachusetts, interracial marriage was not illegal in Connecticut. The two of them remained married until Lemuel's death in 1833, and Cooley described Elizabeth as having "an amiable character as a wife, a mother, and a Christian," suggesting their marriage was happy. Elizabeth gave birth to ten children, one of whom became a physician in New York, another of whom became employed at a law office in Massachusetts.²¹⁴

Like Lemuel Haynes, Nathaniel Paul was born to a white mother and black father in New England. Unlike Haynes, however, Paul grew up in a stable family. His father, Caesar Nero Paul, was a former slave brought to America from Africa before he turned fourteen. His mother, Lovey Rollins Paul, had been born in New Hampshire, and she and Caesar remained together until his death in 1823. Nathaniel was one of at least six children born in Exeter. The family produced at least two generations of abolitionists, with one of Nathaniel's nieces, Susan, being an active member of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. Born when his father was about fifty years old, Nathaniel became an ordained Baptist minister. In 1814, he married Elizabeth Lamson of Hollis, New Hampshire, and the two of them moved to Boston. In 1819, their four-year-old son, Nathaniel, Jr., died of influenza, perhaps contributing to their relocation to Albany, New York. In Albany, Paul became a political leader in the city's black community and was one of the prominent African Americans who championed the abolitionist views which would be part and parcel of the American Anti-Slavery Society in the following decade. His personal tragedy

continued when Elizabeth died in 1828. Shortly after her death, Nathaniel moved to the Wilberforce Colony, a community of free blacks who had settled in Ontario, Canada after Jim Crow had driven them from Cincinnati. One of Nathaniel's brothers, Benjamin, was already aiding the Wilberforce Colony blacks, and Nathaniel began participating in these efforts. After his return to Albany, Nathaniel continued to champion abolitionism and equal rights while preaching at the Hamilton Street Baptist Church.²¹⁵

In the early 1830s, Nathaniel Paul traveled to Britain to raise money for the Wilberforce Colony. During this time, he married a white abolitionist woman from London named Anne Adey, who was considered an "accomplished, intelligent, amiable and pious woman," by friends. Little information has been found on Paul's courtship with Adey, but it is possible that he met her through her brother, Edward, a fellow abolitionist and Baptist clergyman. The marriage was announced in the *Liberator* on August 31, 1833. The couple experienced a significant level of support from both British and American abolitionists. British abolitionists, for the most part, viewed the marriage "in a very favorable manner," reacting without "surprise or opposition." Among the British upper class in general, Nathaniel and Anne were "most cordially received." Some months after the public announcement of the marriage, Garrison reflected on the relative acceptance the newlyweds had received in England in his *Report to the Managers of the New-England Anti-Slavery Society*. After touting the general lack of social segregation for British blacks compared to African Americans, he recounted that, "while I was in London, a colored American (the Rev. Nathaniel Paul) was united in wedlock to a white lady of respectability, talent and piety. What an uproar such an occurrence would create in this country! Even in Massachusetts, the marriage would by law be null and void," and the minister who performed it would be levied with a fine.²¹⁶

Scholar Lois Brown describes their marriage as “imbued with genuine devotion.” This was borne out by the fact that when Nathaniel returned to the United States, Anne went with him. Fellow abolitionists warned her of the hostility she would encounter from the general public, but, in the words of Garrison, “she calmly made up her mind to receive, in the spirit of her Saviour, whatever of reproach or obloquy might be cast upon her.” Her hardship was magnified when Nathaniel’s health began to decline until he passed away, leaving Anne in a precarious financial situation. Garrison wrote that Anne “is indeed a stranger in a strange land, without friends or relatives, without any certain abiding place, and without knowing where to direct her footsteps; and all this, solely because, being destitute of the vulgar prejudice against a colored complexion, she married in England the Rev. Nathaniel Paul, a man of fine personal appearance and talents, but one of those who are regarded by the pseudo democrats and christians of this country as belonging to an inferior race.” According to Brown, after Nathaniel’s death, Anne began to rely largely on the aid of white American abolitionists. Garrison, who told the couple’s story in the *Liberator*, was one of her chief benefactors. Thanks in part to Garrison’s efforts, she lived with a white abolitionist Quaker couple in Boston, Thankful and Joseph Southwick, for a lengthy period of time. While under their roof, she met other New England abolitionists, such as Abby Kelley. She also spent time in the Northampton commune. In 1853, however, she passed away from “complete nervous derangement.” Speaking at her funeral, Wendell Phillips called her a “martyr to American prejudice.”²¹⁷

It would be a mistake to assume that all American abolitionists accepted the Paul-Adey marriage. In a speech delivered to the Albany Anti-Slavery Society in 1838, Nathaniel spoke of abolitionists who, in his view, hated blacks more than they hated slavery.²¹⁸ Not all black abolitionists held a positive view of the marriage either. Austin Steward, slave-turned-

businessman and abolitionist, published an autobiography after Nathaniel's death in which he accused Nathaniel of misusing funds from the Wilberforce Board. The accusation was framed in racial overtones. In addition to Nathaniel's expenses being "considerable," said Steward, acidly, "he had fallen in love during his stay in England, with a white woman, and I suppose it must have required both time and money to woo and win so fine and fair an English lady."²¹⁹ The negative reactions of some abolitionists is unsurprising; they were, in some ways, products of a culture full of bias against African Americans. Even people who discarded some of this bias sometimes failed to discard all of it. But despite the public's antipathy toward African Americans and interracial marriage, many abolitionists embraced Nathaniel and Anne's love as embodying an end goal of the movement. For these abolitionists, in the words of Garrison, Nathaniel Paul and Anne Adey's relationship, "strongly appeals to us as the friends of humanity, and especially as abolitionists."²²⁰

One example of a rank and file abolitionist who married someone of a different race was Perry Young. Details about his background are difficult to ascertain. He may have been born in Maryland or Pennsylvania and may also have been a runaway slave. At some point prior to 1839, he came to New Bedford. In January of 1843, a petition calling for the legalization of interracial marriage in Massachusetts came to the state house with his name and the names of more than three hundred other New Bedford blacks. Young had a very personal stake in the fight. By 1843, he had met and become romantically involved with Sarah Belden, a white immigrant from Canada who had settled in Lowell. After interracial marriage was legalized in Massachusetts, the two of them journeyed to Boston for a wedding ceremony performed by a black minister named Elder Beenan. Sarah gave birth to four children who, thanks to the change in law, were recognized as legitimate. They resided in New Bedford, and Perry worked at various points as a

laborer, gardener, sailor, and waiter. In 1859, Perry's health began to decline, and the family required aid from the Overseers of the Poor. Before 1843, interracial couples could be refused assistance due to not being legally married. With their marriage recognized by law, however, the Overseers granted them aid.²²¹

The marriage of William Allen and Mary King reminds observers of history of the extent to which antebellum culture subscribed to the "one drop rule." William Allen was born in Virginia, the child of a free mulatto woman and a white man. In 1838, he was accepted to the Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York, receiving financial aid from Gerrit Smith. After graduating, he studied law in Boston under an abolitionist named Ellis Gray Loring before returning to New York. After editing an abolitionist newspaper called the *National Watchman* in Troy, he was hired as a professor of "Greek and German languages, and of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres" at New-York Central College, McGrawville. Founded by Baptist abolitionists, the college was one of the few that not only practiced no segregation among the student body but also hired black professors to teach in integrated classrooms. Once employed by the college, Allen did not cease his political activism. In an 1852 letter to Frederick Douglass' Paper, he wrote, "Nations worthy of the name, are only produced by a fusion of races. If Americans had less prejudice, they could read history more clearly."²²²

While lecturing for immediate emancipation and against racism, Allen spent several days in Fulton, New York staying with a white abolitionist minister named Lyndon King. While there, he met King's daughter, Mary, who was about to begin studying at the college. Within two years time, they had become romantically involved and engaged to be married. While interracial marriage was not illegal in New York, the engagement generated a massive controversy. Lyndon, along with Mary's sister, initially supported William and Mary. Mary's stepmother and

brothers did not, and they managed to cajole Lyndon into changing his position. Her father, stepmother, and brothers then set about trying to prevent the marriage.²²³

Other members of their Upstate community reacted with more deadly negativity. John and Sarah Porter, two students at Central College, however, offered support. On January 30, 1853, William and Mary were visiting the Porters when a mob of at least four hundred men arrived. Their plan was to “escort” Allen back to her father’s house, torture, mutilate, and kill Allen, and tar and feather John Porter. A “committee” of “respectable” citizens who opposed William and Mary’s engagement but hoped to avoid violence interceded and told William they could save his life if he left the village, and Mary went with them. King was then forcibly sequestered in Lyndon’s home and forbidden from meeting William or communicating with anyone who supported the proposed marriage. She escaped by pretending to accept a teaching position in Pennsylvania, then meeting William in New York City and being married by Thomas Henson, a black Baptist minister and abolitionist. From there, they spent ten days hiding in Boston with a “beloved friend” before boarding a ship and sailing for England. By William’s account, they experienced little hostility in Britain, where “the colored man feels himself among friends, and not among enemies.”²²⁴

The response of abolitionists as a group to the Allens’ marriage can be described as ambivalent at worst and supportive at best. Certainly, with the exception of Mary’s sister, the King family proved unsupportive to the point of coercion. At Central College, the trustees were sympathetic to the marriage but feared the backlash that it would bring to the school and reached an understanding with William that he would resign. One official explained in a letter that, “I am afraid that Prof Allen’s marriage will have a tendency to injure the institution and the colored people. Not that as a question of natural right I am opposed to it, but as among the things, that,

being lawful, is not expedient.” Gerrit Smith had opposed his old beneficiary’s decision to marry a white woman but gave his support once the dice had been cast.²²⁵ Smith wrote to George Thompson and Joseph Sturge, two white English abolitionists involved in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. As a former member of Parliament, Thompson in particular had a certain degree of social prominence that could be used to aid the Allens when they arrived. Calling William “a man of great mental and moral worth,” Smith hoped that he “will be both useful and happy in England.”²²⁶ Smith’s approach of counseling Allen against interracial marriage but supporting him once his decision was made was consistent with a statement the wealthy abolitionist had made at an antislavery meeting. When asked how he would feel about a daughter of his marrying a black man, Smith had replied, “I do not suppose God has given me a right to control my daughter by coercion, in her choice of a husband, yet I should feel bound to use all proper persuasiveness to prevent a union with any person of color, because it might injure her usefulness, with that of her parents, or impair her happiness.” He then made it clear that he did not consider interracial marriage sinful. While Smith felt interracial marriage was unwise due to the furor it ignited against both the spouses involved and the abolitionist movement, he thought no less of anyone who did marry outside their race.²²⁷

Back in the United States, abolitionists had begun defending the Allens. *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* firmly supported the couple.²²⁸ L.D. Tanner eviscerated Lyndon King and claimed that God “is asking you and your associates, before this State and this nation, whether you meant,” the positions in favor of freedom and equality that the minister had previously taken. Tanner warned him “not to be the Devil’s turnkey, in the great Bastille of slavery.” H.N. Gilbert pointed out how the incident showcased the illogic of American concepts of race. Since Allen was three quarters black, meaning that “if it be a sin for him to marry a white girl, it is, on their

own reasoning, a three-fold greater sin to marry a black girl . . . How few practically admit that God is the Common father of us all, and that ALL are his brethren, black or white, bond or free.” Another abolitionist pointed out the double standard at play by reminding people that if “Mr. Allen had been about to marry a woman a few shades darker than himself, or one perfectly black, . . . or, further, had Mr. Allen been a white slaveholder, fully exercising the rights which the slave code gives every master over his female slaves, those abominable rowdies would not have been at the expence of getting up a mob to mob him.”²²⁹ Garrison mocked the negative response to the marriage by reprinting derogatory articles from the *Utica Gazette* and *Syracuse Weekly Star* in “Refuge of Oppression,” *The Liberator*’s equivalent of a “wall of shame.”²³⁰ Timothy Stowe, an abolitionist from Peterboro, New York, wrote a letter to Allen reassuring him, “that there are some in the world who will not join the multitude who are trying to overwhelm you with prejudice . . . Do not be afraid to stand up your whole length in defence of your own rights.” He also urged Allen to, “come and visit us without delay. Consider my house your home while here.”²³¹

The Liberty Party, an antislavery third party formed in 1840, passed a resolution supporting the couple at its 1853 convention in Syracuse, New York. The resolution, proposed by Smith, was rather surprising, since the Liberty Party had generally positioned itself as more moderate than the Garrisonians. But the timing of these events is crucial. By the 1850s, the party was considerably more radical than it had been in the mid 1840s. During the 1840s, a number of antislavery Americans who found both mainstream parties too conservative but rejected the abolitionist label had been involved in the Liberty Party. These individuals, of which Salmon P. Chase was a prime example, had attempted to steer it away from supporting immediate emancipation and instead call for an end to all federal support of slavery, i.e. the Fugitive Slave

Act. But in 1848, many of these people joined the newly formed and more moderate Free Soil Party before becoming Republicans by 1856. Thus, the concentration of full-fledged abolitionists in the Liberty Party had spiked by the time the Allens' relationship became a matter for public consumption.

An equally surprising display of support came from the Connecticut-born author, Harriet Beecher Stowe (who was not related to Timothy.) Of course, Stowe's recent antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, had outraged slaveholders across the South. But it had also outraged some prominent white and black abolitionists, for its endorsement of colonization, positive depictions of certain masters, and seeming endorsement of obedience by slaves.²³² Nonetheless, Allen received a letter from Harriet Beecher Stowe in which the novelist lamented, "I had hoped that the day for such outrages had gone by. I trust that you will be enabled to preserve a patient and forgiving spirit under this exhibition of vulgar and unchristian prejudice. Its day is short."²³³ While her letter contrasts with the image that many radical abolitionists and many historians have of Stowe, certain passages in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* hint at "amalgamationist" views. When faced with an intelligent, handsome biracial slave named George Harris, his "vulgar, narrow-minded tyrannical master" starts "to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority." While Stowe's views of race were complex and difficult to define, there is a distinct possibility that she regarded biracial people as superior to whites.²³⁴ Furthermore, even abolitionists who had key disagreements with Stowe probably realized that, given her celebrity status, support from her could benefit them greatly.

In Britain, the Allens received a warm welcome from Sturge, Thompson, and other abolitionists in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Clearly, Thompson and Sturge supported William and Mary's decision to wed. In his first autobiographical pamphlet, *The*

American Prejudice Against Color: An Authentic Narrative, Showing How Easily the Nation Got into an Uproar, praise from the two Englishmen was included in the preface. “Commending Professor Allen to the friends of the colored American citizens who are denied their rights in their own country,” Sturge wrote, he wished “him every success in the object before him.” Thompson’s more verbose statement began by addressing William as “My dear sir,” and proclaimed that “Your determination to spend some time in Great Britain, and to employ yourself, as opportunities occur, in giving lectures and delivering addresses upon American topics, including the social position of the free colored population—for which your education and personal experience eminently fit you—has given me sincere pleasure. I trust you will meet with ample encouragement from the friends of Abolition throughout the United Kingdom, to whose sympathy and kindness I would earnestly recommend you, and still more your heroic and most estimable lady friend.”²³⁵

Allen continued his advocacy of racial justice through writing and lecturing, and he and Mary had a number of children. In 1856, they went to Dublin, before returning to England in 1860. In all probability, they remained in Britain until their deaths. With help from the Society, William began lecturing on topics on slavery, race, and other issues, collaborating with British abolitionists like Lady Byron and Richard Webb. They spent time in both England and Ireland, and Mary worked to organize a school that appears to have eventually folded despite support from British abolitionists. They experienced significant financial difficulties, possibly because of competition from other black expatriates on the lecture circuit. By 1878, they had moved to a boardinghouse in a working-class district of West London called Notting Hill, subsisting largely on charity from friends. Yet despite their poverty, the Allens had managed to preserve their relationship in the face of great opposition and found a network of support in Britain. In addition,

they had found something in England and Ireland that they were denied in the U.S., despite the sympathy of many American abolitionists: the ability to live openly as spouses and raise their three children without being in constant danger of violent reprisal.²³⁶

The fact that most members of the King family reacted negatively to the proposed interracial marriage despite being abolitionists, as did Gideon Pitts about thirty years later, suggests that white abolitionists in New York may have been more likely than white abolitionists in New England to crave some level of respectability and hence less likely to support interracial marriage. But some abolitionists from New England who supported the Liberty Party—Wright, Torrey, and Phelps—had records of defending interracial marriage. Some of them, in fact, had criticized Garrison's tactics during the repeal campaign as ineffective.²³⁷ Some black abolitionists were also involved in the Liberty Party. Hence, painting political abolitionists as universally or even mostly racist is problematic. Furthermore, as the statement of support from the Liberty Party, whose abolitionist support was more concentrated in New York than New England, shows, there were certainly white New Yorkers in the abolitionist movement who would stand in support of interracial marriage.

Five years after William Allen and Mary King wed, another black abolitionist married a white woman a couple hundred miles away from New-York Central College. Amos Beman was an abolitionist minister and champion of racial equality from Connecticut. The grandson of a slave, Beman had been born free, and his father, Jehiel, had also been an abolitionist and preacher. Amos Beman lost his first two wives to illness. Like his third wife, his first was black. His second, however, was a white woman named Eliza Kennedy. Kennedy lived in New Haven, Connecticut, where Beman was preaching at the time, but she had grown up in England. While this claim has been disputed, there is evidence to suggest that backlash over his marriage led him

to leave New Haven for a church in Portland, Maine. According to David E. Swift, “the frequent references to his new wife in Beman’s many letters written before her death of cancer in 1864 suggest a rich and devoted companionship.”²³⁸

It is interesting to consider Beman’s interactions with other abolitionists during his marriage to Kennedy. Beman worked for a time on behalf of the American Missionary Association (AMA.) The AMA had been founded by abolitionists from the evangelical wing of the movement in 1846 and provided education to African Americans, other racial minorities, and poor whites. While pastoring in Maine, however, Beman ran into conflict with AMA higher-ups. In 1860, the organization began delaying extending his commission. White ministers in Portland involved in the Maine Missionary Society, an auxiliary to the American Home Missionary Society, criticized Beman for receiving a two hundred dollar yearly grant from the Missionary Society and a hundred dollar yearly grant from the AMA. This was a technical violation of both organizations’ policies, but Beman’s situation was unusual. He had spent six weeks earlier in the year laid up due to a tubercular and ulcerous skin condition, and his family had moved back to New Haven, necessitating further expenses. The rule about multiple salaries was probably known to both Beman and Simeon Jocelyn, the AMA official to whom Beman reported. Swift speculates that Jocelyn was aware of Beman’s technical violation of the rules but that both men considered it acceptable under the circumstances. Jocelyn, a white New Haven Congregationalist minister and abolitionist, probably also had no objection to Beman’s interracial marriage. Jocelyn’s conversion to immediate emancipation had come even before Garrison’s, and he had worked to create an integrated neighborhood in New Haven.²³⁹

Lewis Tappan, the AMA’s treasurer, was far less understanding. “A stickler for exact and full accounting,” and already irate with Beman for not providing monthly summaries of AMA

contributions received while traveling, Tappan considered the issue raised by the Maine ministers to be a very serious one. Ratcheting up the controversy further, there were claims in Portland that Beman had abused his wife. The evidence was highly circumstantial. She had been heard screaming, but the minister claimed that he had simply restrained her “when she was in a disturbed state” in the aftermath of the death of both her son and parents. In the end, with Beman experiencing a barrage of criticism and the AMA Executive Committee low on funds, his time with the institution came to an end. While continuing to live in New Haven, he began ministering to a small congregation in Long Island, New York.²⁴⁰

Did opposition to Beman’s interracial marriage enter into the AMA’s treatment of him? It is impossible to approach the AMA as a monolith. Historian James McPherson presents evidence that evangelical abolitionists as a group were less likely to hold radical views on race than Garrisonians, albeit more likely than political abolitionists.²⁴¹ And at least for a time in the 1870s, with old guard abolitionist stalwarts like Lewis Tappan and Simeon Jocelyn dead or soon to die, the AMA did backslide somewhat on racial equality.²⁴² It is hardly inconceivable or even unlikely that some AMA leaders did take issue with Beman’s choice of a spouse. Some other AMA leaders may have personally supported interracial marriage but been afraid of their organization encountering further controversy if some of its employees married people of different races. Still, a significant number of abolitionists even in the political and evangelical factions, including Tappan, took a radical stance on race issues up to and including interracial marriage. It can reasonably be concluded that Tappan did not find Beman’s marriage immoral. And as Joe M. Richardson states, Beman was one of several people in interracial relationships hired by the AMA in Africa and the U.S. These facts suggest that the majority of the AMA’s leadership really did object to Beman, rightly or wrongly, on the grounds they cited, rather than the color of his

wife.²⁴³

One of the few black female abolitionists to have possibly married a white man was Sarah Parker Remond, the aforementioned sister of Charles Lennox Remond. She became an international speaker not only for the abolitionist movement but also for the women's rights movement, addressing the National Woman's Rights Convention in 1858. After traveling to England and studying a variety of disciplines, she relocated to Florence, Italy in 1866. According to Elizabeth Buffum Chace, who traveled to Italy for a visit, Remond became a physician there. Details about her later life, including her marriage, are murky. In 1887, she still lived in Italy, but little if anything is known about her death or her life post 1887. There is evidence that she married an Italian named Lazzaro Pintor. A preserved letter exists in which the veteran of the abolitionist movement signs her name as "Sarah Remond Pintor."²⁴⁴ Nineteenth-century scholars have claimed that the marriage likely ended in failure, leading to her "living in great poverty in Rome," according to British abolitionist, William Robson. Angelita Reyes finds this assertion questionable, pointing out that it is possible Pintor died rather than getting divorced from Remond. Ascertaining the truth is made more difficult by the fact that in a letter describing his visit with Remond in Rome, he made no mention of a marriage, divorce, or widowhood.²⁴⁵

The most famous black abolitionist to marry someone of another race was Frederick Douglass. For nearly forty-five years, Douglass was married to an African American woman and fellow Maryland native and abolitionist, Anna Murray-Douglass. In 1882, Anna died from a stroke. The death of his first wife is believed to have sent Frederick Douglass into a depression, but two years later, he married Helen Pitts. Pitts came from a white abolitionist family in Upstate New York, though she had ancestors who had arrived in Massachusetts on the *Mayflower*.²⁴⁶ Moving South, she worked as a teacher at a college for African Americans called the Hampton

Institute before taking up residence in Washington, D.C.²⁴⁷ There, she worked as Frederick Douglass' clerk—Douglass was employed by the federal government as Recorder of Deeds. It is possible that they had first met decades earlier. Her father, Gideon Pitts, had met Frederick Douglass in the 1840s, and the young Helen may have met him during that time also.²⁴⁸ Tall, well built, and charismatic, Frederick was sometimes seen as a sex symbol and at some point after his wife's death, he and Helen fell in love.²⁴⁹ Helen was herself stately with dark hair worn in fashionable ringlets. They were married on January 2, 1884. Unsurprisingly, they attracted significant criticism. Some claims about the marriage were factually inaccurate. A weekly journal referred to Frederick as being seventy-three years old and claimed that some of Frederick's daughters were as old as Helen, who was described as only thirty-five.²⁵⁰ In actuality, Frederick was in his sixties in 1884, and his oldest child was born the year after Helen, who was about forty-five. Frederick pointed out the double standard that, given his biracial heritage, his marriage to Helen was no more an interracial marriage than his marriage to Anna had been.²⁵¹ He also attempted to find humor in the situation, quipping that, "This proves I am impartial. My first wife was the color of my mother and the second, the color of my father."²⁵²

By 1884, the ranks of living former abolitionists had thinned, but those who remained alive responded in varying ways. The reaction in Helen's immediate family was mixed and seemed to break down along gender lines. Despite his longstanding friendship with Frederick, Gideon Pitts was outraged by the marriage and refused to visit his daughter except when Frederick was not at home. It is probable that his objections were mainly racial. While Frederick's and Helen's age difference was considerable, it was hardly unusual for the era (or even that rare in today's society.) Two years after the Douglass marriage, segregationist President Grover Cleveland married a woman when he was forty-nine, and she was twenty-one.

Furthermore, the fact that Helen was already middle aged made it hard to view Frederick as a “cradle snatcher.” Helen’s Uncle Hiram, a next-door neighbor of the couple, shunned them. Her sisters, Eva and Jennie, sided with Helen, and their daughters referred to Frederick as “Uncle Fred.” It appears that Helen’s mother, Jane, who had written Frederick a note of condolence after Anna’s death, was also supportive. Alice Mulcahey Fleming writes that “Helen Pitts’s mother and sisters were more understanding” of the marriage than Frederick’s children or Gideon. Some years after Frederick and Helen married, Jane moved in with them.²⁵³ Frederick did not enjoy a more positive reception in his own family. His five children all responded negatively. According to L. Diane Barnes, they “were appalled that their father had married someone so soon after their mother’s passing, and that Helen was a white woman only added insult to injury.”²⁵⁴

Other abolitionists were also divided. Reverend Francis J. Grimké, brother of Archibald and nephew of Angelina and Sarah, performed the marriage. Charlotte Forten Grimke, Francis’s wife and an abolitionist, poet, and teacher who had been the first African American to instruct white students in Salem, Massachusetts, also embraced Frederick and Helen.²⁵⁵ Sarah and Josie Martin, the widow and daughter of Reverend J. Sella Martin, were witnesses to the ceremony.²⁵⁶

Julia Crofts née Griffiths, a white British abolitionist and close friend of Frederick rumored to have had an affair with him in the 1850s, sent a letter stating that, “I as one of your truest and warmest friends hasten to send you (& Mrs. Douglass) my most sincere congratulations.”²⁵⁷ Frederick also received a friendly letter from Amy Post, an eighty-one year old Quaker abolitionist and suffragist from the North Shore of Long Island, New York, whom he had become friends with while living in Rochester. Frederick and Helen passed through Rochester during their honeymoon, and while Amy was out of town, the couple received a warm

welcome from Amy's sons, Jacob and Willis.²⁵⁸ Another abolitionist to express support was Jonathan Blanchard, a Vermont-born minister who had moved to the Midwest and founded Wheaton College. Under Blanchard, the college was open to both sexes and all races, and the Vermonter tried to obtain scholarships for black students. In support of Frederick's and Helen's marriage, Blanchard quoted one of abolitionists' favorite Biblical passages, "God had made of one blood all nations of men."²⁵⁹ H.W. Gilbert wrote to Douglass that he felt "great joy" to see that his old friend had "taken for a wife a lady [of] so firm accomplishment and one who will make happy your remaining years."²⁶⁰

Wendell Phillips was close friends with Frederick and undoubtedly supported the marriage. Yet he had little time to offer support. His own wife, always bedridden, was in increasingly ill health, and he was forced to spend most of his time taking care of her. He himself died exactly one month after his old friend's wedding. A few days later, Frederick and Helen attended the funeral in Boston. In a move that would have made her Uncle Samuel and mother, Abby, proud, Louisa May Alcott tacitly showed her support for the marriage by sitting between Frederick and Helen. When Frederick spoke of Phillips's fervent commitment to racial justice shortly thereafter in Washington, D.C., he was probably thinking in part of the many times the old Yankee patrician had defended interracial marriage.²⁶¹

Two of Douglass's other old friends and adversaries, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, took differing views on his second marriage. In the days before emancipation, Douglass, Stanton, and Anthony had worked together in the abolitionist movement, and Douglass credited Stanton with influencing his pro-women's rights views. Their friendship had been put at risk during the controversy over the Fifteenth Amendment. While continuing to support women's suffrage, Douglass belonged to a faction that included abolitionists such as Frances Harper,

Wendell and Ann Phillips, Lydia Maria Child, Abby Kelley Foster, and Stephen Symonds Foster. This faction believed that it was, in Phillips's words, "the Negro's hour."²⁶² They supported a constitutional amendment that gave black men the right to vote even if women's suffrage was not included. Stanton and Anthony led a faction composed of abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth, Parker Pillsbury, and Robert Purvis that opposed any voting rights amendment that did not enfranchise women. In a combination of realpolitik, unconscious prejudice, and frustration over feelings of betrayal by other abolitionists, Stanton and Anthony resorted to racially offensive rhetoric and alliances with anti-black politicians who supported women's suffrage. Yet starting in the 1880s, Stanton and Anthony were beginning to clash over racial issues. In an effort to make inroads in the South, Anthony accepted the near total marginalization of civil rights and black women in the Women's Rights Movement. Stanton, on the other hand, felt compelled to speak out against racial injustice and was becoming disgusted with a new generation of white women's suffragists who ignored the needs of black women.²⁶³

Reflecting these disagreements, Anthony and Stanton reacted differently to the news of Frederick Douglass's marriage. Anthony urged Stanton not to take a position, fearing that it would compromise the women's rights movement and implying that perhaps Pitts had married Douglass for his money. Stanton sent him a letter of congratulations that attacked both racism and sexism. Comparing the furor over the interracial marriage to a female pilot fired from her job on a Mississippi steamship, Stanton wrote, "In defense of the right to pilot ships, or to marry whom we please—we might ... suggest that in some things individual rights to taste should control." In her view, "If a good man from Maryland sees fit to marry a disenfranchised woman from New York, there should be no legal impediments to the union." At least in the case of Stanton and Anthony, the New England-New York discrepancy in abolitionist opinions on race was reversed;

Stanton had been born in Johnstown, New York, Anthony in Adams, Massachusetts.²⁶⁴

The Purvis family is noteworthy for being an abolitionist family with five interracial couples across three generations. Robert Purvis, the family patriarch, was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1810. His father, William, was a Scottish merchant. His mother, Harriet, who was in a common law marriage with his father, was the child of a Jewish man and an enslaved black, African-born woman. William relocated the family to Philadelphia in 1819, with the goal of eventually moving to Britain. William died in 1826 but left a significant inheritance for his children. Robert was able to invest in real estate and establish his own large estate. Rather than merely attempting to enjoy his relative affluence, Purvis became very politically active. He spent five years as president of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and was nicknamed “the President of the Underground Railroad” for his extensive aid of fugitive slaves. He also defended Irish home rule, Native Americans, and women’s suffrage, refusing to endorse the Fifteenth Amendment unless it had a women’s suffrage clause. His first marriage was to Harriet Forten, the daughter of James and Charlotte Forten, a pair of wealthy, black, highly influential Philadelphia abolitionists. (Charlotte and Harriet had worked with Lucretia Mott to cofound the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.) In 1875, Harriet died of tuberculosis. In 1878, Robert remarried to Tacie Townsend, a white woman from Byberry, Pennsylvania. Believed to have been born around 1827, Townsend was far younger than Robert, a fellow Quaker abolitionist, a poet, and a children’s author. Notably, she had also been a friend of Harriet and had met Robert through two of his daughters. The marriage took place in a Quaker ceremony in Bristol, Bucks County. When Frederick Douglass married Helen Pitts four years, Robert stood up for him, stating that the marriage was Frederick’s and Helen’s business.²⁶⁵

By the time of his father’s second marriage, one of his sons, Charles, had already married

a white woman. Charles is less well known than Robert, but he was a prominent physician who provided medical care for Union soldiers, founded the Medical College of Howard University and had a stint as the surgeon-in-chief of the Freedmen's Hospital. A Republican, Charles was also one of the physicians who unsuccessfully treated President James Garfield after he was shot. In 1871, he married Ann Hathaway, a white woman who had moved to Washington, D.C. but originally hailed from Eastport, Maine. It is difficult to determine for sure whether or not Hathaway had been an abolitionist before the Civil War, but it seems likely. Before moving to Washington, she had begun working for the New England Freedman's Aid Association, which had a strong abolitionist presence. The Association had sent her to Richmond, Virginia to provide education to former slaves. From there, she had gone to Washington to run a home set up by the National Association for the Relief of Destitute Colored Women and Children. She was also a devout Unitarian.²⁶⁶

Her profile—a New England Unitarian passionately involved in freedmen's aid work, along with her willingness to marry a black man—strongly suggests an abolitionist background. Besides their race, there was one other significant way in which the Charles Purvis-Ann Hathaway marriage defied stigma: their age. Alternate sources list Hathaway as being born in 1831 or 1833, while Purvis was born in 1842, making her about a decade older than he.²⁶⁷ In a case of cosmic irony, almost three hundred years earlier, a woman named Anne Hathaway had married a man eight years her junior, one William Shakespeare. While Ann was nearing the end of her childbearing years, she and Charles produced two children, Alice and Robert. One of the most valued objects in Charles's possession was a miniature of Ann that Alice inherited. In 1898, Ann passed away. In 1901, he remarried to another white woman, Jennie C. Butman. Like Ann, Jennie was a New Englander, hailing from Manchester, New Hampshire. Their marriage was

performed in Philadelphia by a Unitarian minister and friend of the Purvis family, Frederic A. Hinckley. Three years after Charles remarried, Alice also married a white person. She had moved to Waterton, a Boston suburb, and there she met a white bookkeeper named Frederick Robie.²⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Robert's youngest son, Granville Sharp Purvis, entered his own interracial marriage. Named for the eighteenth century English abolitionist and interracial marriage supporter, he attended Oberlin and Howard, graduating as a doctor of pharmacy. After finishing his education, he moved to Detroit and became a member of the city's black upper class, making money from a pharmacy, metal business, and investments. In 1900, now in his fifties, Granville married a much younger white woman named Elizabeth M. Gleason. They went to Philadelphia to be married, with their ceremony also being performed by Reverend Hinckley. Julie Winch attributes the decision to be married in Pennsylvania to interracial marriage being illegal in Michigan. However, Michigan had repealed its interracial marriage ban more than fifteen years before Granville and Elizabeth were married, meaning that their matrimony would have been just as legally valid there as it was in Pennsylvania. It is far more likely that they simply wished to have the ceremony be conducted by a minister who knew the Purvises well. In 1903 or 1904, their daughter, Marion was born, and by 1908, they had moved to Christchurch, England. Unfortunately, Granville lacked the longevity of Robert and Charles, who both lived to be eighty-seven, and died in 1911 at sixty-five or so. Elizabeth and Marion remained in England for another nine years before moving to Los Angeles. Los Angeles was also the city where Charles and Jennie spent the winters, despite interracial marriage being against the law there.²⁶⁹

There are several conclusions that one can reach from examining the cases of abolitionist interracial couples. Firstly, interracial marriages within the movement demonstrated divisions among members, with some abolitionists showing support and others opposition. Secondly, both

white and black abolitionists disagreed over the proper way to approach the issue of interracial marriage in general. Thirdly, Garrisonians may well have been more supportive of interracial couples than non-Garrisonians, although it was not uncommon for non-Garrisonians to also show support. Fourthly, white New England abolitionists were in all probability more likely to show support than white New York abolitionists. Fifthly, interracial marriages took place among both prominent and rank and file abolitionists. While interracial marriages among abolitionists were far from the norm, they were also far from unheard of and revealed the depths of radicalism within large segments of the movement.

CHAPTER 6: “IS THERE ANY REASON WHY A WHITE GIRL SHOULD NOT MARRY A MAN WITH AFRICAN BLOOD IN HIS VEINS?:” NEO-ABOLITIONIST SUPPORT FOR INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

Many children and grandchildren of abolitionists continued the civil rights work of their forbearers, and some of them defended interracial marriage. It was partly due to the presence of these “neo-abolitionists” that the early NAACP worked against interracial marriage bans.²⁷⁰ On some level, any person involved in combatting racism after the nineteenth century can be categorized as a “neo-abolitionist.” Ida B. Wells, a NAACP cofounder born into slavery on the eve of the Civil War, qualifies as a “neo-abolitionist,” despite not being of abolitionist ancestry. So does William English Walling, another cofounder of the NAACP who came from a family of proslavery Kentuckians. Reverend Reverdy Ransom, who performed more than a hundred interracial weddings in Chicago, also qualifies. So do early twentieth century Jewish activists for black civil rights, such as Joel and Arthur Spingarn, Frances Blascoer, Rabbi Stephen Wise, Henry Moskowitz, and Lillian Wald. Indeed, it was two Jewish lawyers working for the ACLU, Phillip J. Hirschkop and Bernard Cohen, who finally persuaded the Supreme Court to strike down

interracial marriage bans. This chapter, however, focuses on individuals who were literal descendants of abolitionists and explicitly defended interracial marriage. Six of the most notable examples are Moorfield Storey, Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, Mary White Ovington, Francis Jackson Garrison, John Haynes Holmes, and Clarence Darrow, who posed the question, “Is There Any Reason Why a White Girl Should Not Marry a Man with African Blood in his Veins?” and answered in the negative.

A white lawyer, Storey was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts to an abolitionist mother and an antislavery Whig father who later became a Republican. He was sixteen at the time that the Civil War broke out.²⁷¹ After a stint working as an aide to Charles Sumner, he became a Democrat and showed little interest in African Americans for much of his adult life.²⁷² Yet eventually, he re-embraced the legacy of his mother and became the first president of the NAACP in 1909, serving until his death in 1929. In 1913, Harvard University President Charles W. Eliot argued that interracial marriage would debase the white race. Storey took the opportunity to rebut him, responding, “*A priori*, it is hard to see why the admixture of different breeds which has produced such wonderful results in the vegetable and animal worlds should be so disastrous to the human race. Nature demands variety, and intermarriage between members of the same family or class long persisted in tends to create degenerates.” Falling short of modern sensitivity but rejecting theories of racial purity, Storey went on to make the analogy that dogs that were a mix of different breeds often possessed, “the most admirable qualities of canine nature.” Echoing the barbs of abolitionists, he remarked in a letter to a Southerner,

You wish to keep the white blood pure and free from contamination with an inferior strain. Let me ask you, do you? ... From the time when the colored people were first brought into this country until now there has been no instinct which prevents the mingling of blood, and until there is I feel that it is not race pride which controls the actions of the white people of the South.²⁷³

His views were highlighted in a Supreme Court case. In 1916, Storey argued before the Court that Louisville, Kentucky's law requiring residential segregation was unconstitutional. Storey, for his part, felt compelled to admit that he believed bans on interracial marriage and integrated schools were also unconstitutional. Stuart Chevalier and Pendleton Beckley, the lawyers representing Louisville, insisted that the NAACP's challenge to the residential segregation ordinance was part of a scheme to bring about mixing of the races and stated their shock that Storey defended interracial marriage. They marshaled arguments from a host of prominent Southern and Northern men, including Eliot, in an attempt to prove that amalgamation polluted the white race. The argument of Louisville's attorneys was that government-mandated residential segregation was necessary to prevent this pollution. In the end, Louisville's arguments were inadequate to persuade the Supreme Court. In a unanimous verdict, the judges ruled that residential segregation ordinances were a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.²⁷⁴

While some neo-abolitionists who supported interracial marriage, such as Storey, were descended from rank and file members of the movement, others were descended from abolitionist leaders. A good example is provided by one of William Lloyd Garrison's sons, Francis Jackson Garrison, also went on record defending interracial marriage. The youngest of the Garrison children, Garrison was named for his father's old abolitionist comrade and fellow interracial marriage supporter and was seventeen when slavery was outlawed. His strong sense of affinity with the movement that his parents had taken part in was clear. He coauthored a biography of his father with his brother, Wendell Phillips Garrison, and penned perhaps the only biography of Ann Phillips. He made enough money to support himself comfortably working as

an editor at Houghton Mifflin, a Boston-based publishing company. For a time, Garrison and Booker T. Washington were close associates. But as Mark Schneider writes, there were

tensions lurking under the surface between the more liberal Garrison and the more conservative Washington. By 1909, these tensions had proven too difficult to suppress, and the two men were at odds over the appropriate methods of combatting discrimination. When the NAACP was founded that year, Garrison joined, along with several of his siblings and at least one of his nephews, Oswald. A great nephew would later join. He became the first president of the organization's Boston branch, serving until his death in 1916.²⁷⁵

In response to the wave of new, mostly unsuccessful proposals to ban interracial marriage in the 1910s, Garrison wrote to a number of Massachusetts politicians to determine their stances. One of Massachusetts's Senators, John W. Weeks, supported a federal ban on interracial marriage. The other, Henry Cabot Lodge, replied that he personally opposed interracial marriage but had misgivings about banning it. When the House of Representatives voted on whether or not to ban interracial marriage in Washington, D.C., half of Massachusetts Republican Congressmen who participated voted to keep it legal, and two Massachusetts Democrats were among the seven members of their party to also oppose a ban. Notably, Garrison went beyond just defending the right of intermarriage and actually defended the practice. Pointing to the biracial heritage of such successful individuals as Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, he maintained that this demonstrated that there was no harm in marrying across the color line. In fairness, he had perhaps overlooked the fact that his argument could be misconstrued as condoning rape and slavery, since both Douglass and Washington had been born slaves. Or perhaps, Garrison was trying to engage white Southerners and "beat them at their own game," so to speak, arguing that their oppression of blacks gave lie to their statements about the evils of race mixing.²⁷⁶

Some descendants of abolitionists who defended interracial marriage were themselves of mixed ancestry. The novelist Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins was descended from the Paul family of

abolitionists through her mother. In her speech at the centennial of William Lloyd Garrison's birth, Hopkins explained that she also had abolitionist ancestry from her father's side of the family. On her mother's side, she was the great-great-granddaughter of Caesar Nero Paul, and the great-great-niece of Reverend Nathaniel Paul. Nathaniel's brother, another abolitionist minister named Thomas Paul, was Pauline's great-grandfather. Susan Paul, one of the black female abolitionists who had petitioned against the interracial marriage in Massachusetts, was her maternal cousin. Hence, interracial marriage was an essential part of her family history. Born in Portland, Maine six years before emancipation and growing up mainly in Boston, Hopkins became a prolific writer whose fiction dealt with issues of race.

She had a strong interest in interracial romantic relationships, which she depicted in a short story called "Talma Gordon," and novels such as *Hagar's Daughter: A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice*. As Lois Brown states, "the Paul-Adey marriage echoes powerfully in the fictional alliances that Hopkins creates in *Contending Forces* and in other works such as *Winona*, where marital bliss and political resolutions posit the value of interracial harmony and suggest that such promise can only be realized if the idealistic though weary protagonists depart immediately for England, the bastion of progressive prohumanity sentiment." The trauma suffered by Nathaniel Paul and Anne Adey in America "is a model of the kind of Anglo-American romance that Pauline Hopkins attempted to rectify in her writings. It is no surprise that England, the land in which Hopkins's great-granduncle Nathaniel received so warm a political and social welcome, continued to exist for her as the sphere in which it was possible to achieve racial equality and to experience meaningful life events such as marriage." It also bears attention that one of Hopkins' stories, *Of One Blood*, was named for the same Biblical passage that had been so popular with pro-interracial marriage abolitionists.²⁷⁷

In 1903, Cornelia Condict, a white subscriber to the *Colored American Magazine*, which serialized Hopkins' novels, objected to the fact that the stories published in the magazine focused on interracial romance. "The stories of these tragic mixed lovers will not commend themselves to your white readers and will not elevate the colored readers," Condict griped. Hopkins wrote a poignant reply. Her second paragraph is worth quoting in its entirety. "My stories," she explained,

are definitely planned to show the obstacles persistently placed in our paths by a dominant race to subjugate us spiritually. Marriage is made illegal between the races and yet the mulattoes increase. Thus the shadow of corruption falls on the blacks and on the whites, without whose aid the mulattoes would not exist. And then the hue and cry goes abroad of the immorality of the Negro and the disgrace that the mulattoes are to this nation. Amalgamation is an institution designed by God for some wise purpose, and mixed bloods have always exercised a great influence on the progress of human affairs. I sing of the *wrongs* of a race that ignorance of their pitiful condition may be changed to intelligence and must awaken compassion in the hearts of the just.²⁷⁸

Hopkins seemed to be suggesting that interracial marriage might not only be a solution to racism but also represented a positive step in human evolution, given her statement about the accomplishments of biracial people. It is possible that her explicit support for interracial marriage, as well as her positive depictions of amalgamation in her fiction, helped lead to the end of her working relationship with the *Colored American Magazine*. According to another of Hopkins's biographers, John Cullen Gruesser, Booker T. Washington enlisted an ally named Fred Moore to buy the magazine and eventually fire her. It seems a strong possibility that if Washington had ideological disagreements with Hopkins, these disagreements were increased by her views on marriage.²⁷⁹

As black and white supporters of racial equality coalesced into the movement that would become the NAACP during the early twentieth century, some neo-abolitionists were forced to address the issue of interracial marriage in response to controversy. One such neo-abolitionist

was Mary White Ovington. Born the year that the Thirteenth Amendment was passed, she came from a white abolitionist family that, like Storey's, was rooted in Puritan New England. She, however, was born and raised in Brooklyn.²⁸⁰ For a portion of her adult life, she lived in a New York City tenement for African Americans. Like Storey, she was involved in the founding of the NAACP and served in a leadership position for almost forty years. In 1908, she was part of an integrated dinner in New York City that consisted of a group of social reformers called the Cosmopolitan Club and focused on the race question. In an attempt to discredit the Cosmopolitan Club, journalists reported that interracial marriage had been encouraged, and black men had rubbed knees with white women.²⁸¹

Hamilton Holt, the great-grandson of Lewis Tappan, was one of the attendees singled out for controversy. Editor and publisher of Theodore Tilton's old paper, *The Independent*, Holt was quoted in the press as suggesting that interracial marriage would solve racism. Holt denied the report and insisted that he had focused on greater education of blacks as the ideal solution. The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* responded by incorrectly predicting that Northeastern states would ban interracial marriage as more African Americans moved there.²⁸² Senator "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman (D-SC), a rabid segregationist, portrayed the dinner as a Gomorrah of "social equality" and tried to use it to gain support for repealing the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.²⁸³ *The Baltimore Sun* described the dinner as "demoralizing and dangerous."²⁸⁴ But disgust was far from confined to Southern segregationists. No less a prestigious Northern paper than the *New York Times* called the event "an odious exhibition" in which "forces of evil" tried "by revolution, if necessary, to destroy society, the home and religion."²⁸⁵

When dealing with the fallout, Ovington showed a significant degree of courage. She could not resist revealing her belief that mass interracial marriage was part of society's future. "I

do not believe in intermarriages of the races ... at least not at present ... I don't believe there is any reason to talk about it. Ultimately all the nations of the world will intermarry, but these things will work themselves out." As with Hopkins and many abolitionists, Ovington may well have believed that this blending would help eliminate racism, but in any case she considered such blending to be morally neutral at worst and beneficial at best. During the controversy, her parents were sent profane hate mail.²⁸⁶ It would not be the last time in her life that Ovington referenced her support for interracial marriage.

In 1927, she wrote *Portraits in Color*, a collection of short biographies about prominent black people, devoting a section to a young up and coming black actor named Paul Robeson. Ovington mentioned his role in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, a play by the Irish American Eugene O'Neill that revolved around an interracial couple. The play, according to Ovington, "needed a colored man, not only with dramatic power, but with sensitiveness and with the intelligence to interpret a difficult theme." In *All God's Chillun*, Robeson "revealed his dramatic talent."²⁸⁷ In her memoirs serialized in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, Ovington wrote that her newspaper readers, "know, as we all do, that, with the 'rapid transit' discoveries of recent days, the people of the world will ultimately become one." In centuries to come, the races would be blended together. She also derisively referred to a Tulane University professor who, "wrote a book to show the horrible danger of amalgamation, or, rather, of intermarriage."²⁸⁸

Five of the six neo-abolitionists covered in this chapter were born at some point before slavery was outlawed in the United States, whether it was twenty years in Storey's case or eight months in Ovington's. Reverend John Haynes Holmes is a key exception. He was the youngest by almost fifteen years and the only one who lived to see the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Holmes was born in Philadelphia in 1879, but his family was one of the "first

families” of Massachusetts, and he grew up mostly in the Boston area. He referred to himself “as one who was bred in the State of Massachusetts, and who has coursing in his veins the blood of two generations of abolitionists.”²⁸⁹ A cofounder of the NAACP and the ACLU, Holmes was ordained as a Unitarian minister but resigned when denominational authorities including William Howard Taft balked at his opposition to World War I. He did not rejoin the American Unitarian Association for several decades. Holmes preached at the Community Church of New York City, where he made a point of integrating to welcome people of all races, classes, and religions.²⁹⁰

In a 1917 book on religion and politics, Holmes devoted a chapter to “The Crime of Caste.” The radical preacher compared American racism to the caste system in India, focusing mainly on African Americans but also referencing Asian Americans. “The Negro ... stands today just as truly a member of a caste as any of the Sudras of distant India,” Holmes lamented. He was careful to compare the barriers in India against people from different castes marrying each other with the American barriers against interracial marriage. He opined, “All the restrictions of the caste system upon marriage, upon the professions, upon social intercourse, especially that implied in eating and drinking, are here definitely established.”²⁹¹ He was also a staunch defender of interfaith marriages, believing, “that love, when it commands, must be obeyed.” When a white person fell in love with a black person, or a Jew fell in love with a Christian, the heart must triumph over “the barriers of creed and caste, of clan and country.”²⁹² Eight years after Holmes’s retirement from the pulpit, the NAACP’s magazine, *The Crisis*, reported on Holmes’s legacy at the Community Church. In its 1957 article on Holmes’s old church, *The Crisis* revealed that, “about one-fourth of the members are Negroes and approximately 25 percent of the membership encompasses interfaith and interracial married couples. It is a fully integrated church—Negroes are in the chorus, in all the church organizations and committees, and on all of the church’s

official governing bodies.” Due in part to the neo-abolitionist work of Holmes, interracial couples could find a safe haven at the Community Church.²⁹³

Most of the figures covered in this chapter are all but forgotten today, with one exception. Clarence Darrow would become far more famous than Storey, Hopkins, Ovington, Garrison, or Holmes. His fame, however, came not from his views on race and work for the NAACP but from his role in the “Scopes Monkey Trial.” Darrow did not merely differ from opposing counsel and three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan on the issue of religion but also on the issue of African Americans. He favored both legal and social equality for black people. Age eight when slavery was abolished, the future attorney was a native of Kinsman, Ohio, a town in the Western Reserve. The Western Reserve was an area known for having strong antislavery, pro-civil rights sympathies. Both his parents were abolitionists who filled him with stories of figures like Wendell Phillips and Sojourner Truth. In 1901, he asked rhetorically, “Is there any reason why a white girl should not marry a man with African blood in his veins, or is there any reason why a white man should not marry a colored girl?” Darrow’s answer was clear. “If there is, then they are right and I am wrong. Everybody may have his own taste about marrying, whether it is between two people of the same race or two people of a different race, but is there any reason in logic or in ethics why people should not meet together upon perfect equality and in every relation of life and never think of the difference, simply because one has a little darker skin than the other?”²⁹⁴

No stranger to controversy, Darrow brought up the issue again nine years later during an NAACP Conference at Manhattan’s Cooper Union. He compared African Americans with European immigrants who had been melded together with Anglo-Saxon Americans through marriages. Racism “will undoubtedly some time far in the future be worked out by race

amalgamation.”²⁹⁵ Shock reverberated nationwide. One of the most negative reactions came from *The Jeffersonian*, a magazine that was run by Georgia activist, politician and newspaper editor Thomas E. Watson. The magazine blended a populist support for poor whites against the wealthy with a fiery hatred for blacks, Catholics, Socialism, and eventually Jews. Ironically, the two men had once been allies due to their shared support for the agrarian Populist Movement. In 1904, Darrow had introduced Watson before a speech that the Georgian delivered in Chicago.²⁹⁶ “Clarence Darrow,” *The Jeffersonian* ranted, “a Chicago Socialist of some fame ... told the coons that the solution of the race question is, *the intermarriage of blacks and whites. THAT IS SOCIALISM.*”²⁹⁷

If Watson and his ilk wished to identify the source of Darrow’s radical racial views, they were looking in the wrong place. Darrow’s interracial marriage views had much more to do with him being raised by abolitionists than with him being a Socialist, even if he became more comfortable publicly making pro-civil rights statements as he embraced more radical stances in general. Many Socialists would have cringed at his championing of interracial marriage. It took firm intervention from the national party in 1903 to keep the Socialist Party of Louisiana from openly supporting segregation in its platform.²⁹⁸ Philip Sheldon Foner, a radical left-wing historian who supported racial equality, conceded that Socialist views on race ranged across the spectrum. Victor L. Berger, the first Socialist Party member elected to Congress, characterized black and biracial people as “a lower race” in 1902. Ernest Untermann, “a leading party theoretician,” frankly admitted during a convention debate in 1908 that, “I am determined that my race shall be supreme in this country and the world.” One of the preeminent early twentieth century Socialist publications, *Appeal to Reason*, was run by Julius Wayland, a staunch segregationist.²⁹⁹ Two years after Darrow’s Cooper Union speech, Socialist presidential nominee

Eugene Debs received over six times as many votes in Oklahoma as in Massachusetts.³⁰⁰

Oklahoma would keep interracial marriage illegal until *Loving v. Virginia* fifty-five years later.

Of equal importance is the fact that Storey, whose opinion on interracial marriage was not much different from Darrow's, was a staunch believer in laissez-faire capitalism. In the courtroom, Storey was as at home representing United Fruit Company as representing oppressed African Americans.³⁰¹ Economics was not the only area in which some of these six men and women differed. In 1924, Holmes and Darrow debated each other publicly over the issue of Prohibition, with Holmes favoring the ban on alcohol and Darrow opposing it.³⁰² The common denominator between such disparate people was that they embraced their abolitionist heritage to the greatest degree possible. This abolitionist belief in racial equality and a desire to follow in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents united a diverse set of individuals to champion interracial marriage in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 7: "AN INVASION OF ONE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF EVERY MAN": COMMON GROUND BETWEEN ABOLITIONIST SUPPORTERS OF INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND MODERN GAY MARRIAGE ADVOCATES

In April of 2014, J.D. Greear, a Southern Baptist minister who opposes gay marriage, pontificated, "Preaching against homosexuality in our day is about as popular as preaching against slavery and racism in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1861. And back then, I'm sure the politically correct people were like, 'You're just creating a lot of waves that are unnecessary, just preach the Gospel.'" This comparison prompted Rachel Held Evans, a pro-gay marriage Christian writer, to quip on *Twitter*, "Oh man. Southern Baptists comparing their fight against marriage equality to the abolition movement. So ironic." This was a reference to the fact that a controversy

over slavery in the Baptist Church before the Civil War was a key factor that led to the denomination splitting, with the Southern Baptist Convention representing proslavery members of the church.³⁰³ With a hint of defensiveness, Morgan Lee, a writer at the conservative *Christian Post*, pointed out the roughly one million black members of the Southern Baptist Convention and their recent election of a black president.³⁰⁴ The larger issue that remains a subject of debate, however, is whether it is gay marriage opponents or supporters who are following in the tradition of the abolitionists. The obvious conclusion is this: there is a great deal of commonality between the abolitionist defense of interracial marriage and the modern defense of gay marriage.

This issue remains an important point of discussion, because it is unlikely to go away anytime soon. The Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in all fifty states on June 26, 2015. But a significant number of Americans, including Republican presidential candidates for the 2016 Election, Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, hope to reverse the decision. Thus, to demonstrate the parallels between abolitionist defenses of interracial marriage and current defenses of gay marriage, several points should be considered. In the first place, it is important to consider William Lloyd Garrison's contention that interracial marriage bans constituted "an invasion of one of the inalienable rights of every man; namely, 'the pursuit of happiness.'"³⁰⁵ This argument can and certainly has been applied to gay marriage bans; in sum that these bans violate gay people's right to the pursuit of happiness. Similarly, abolitionists argued that interracial marriage bans were racially discriminatory, represented a government overreach of power, and encouraged promiscuity. All of this bears similarities to arguments for gay marriage. Gay marriage advocates argue that bans are discriminatory against LGBT people, that the government has no right to tell individuals whom to fall in love with, and that they promote promiscuous behavior in LGBT communities by discouraging same-sex couples from entering into stable, monogamous

relationships. Both abolitionist supporters of interracial marriage and more recent supporters of same-sex marriage also contest the notion that the marriages they defend are unnatural. Instead, they argue that the race and gender, respectively, of one's partner is an issue of personal taste.³⁰⁶

Christian Right opponents of same-sex marriage who present themselves as the successors of abolitionists may contest these claims by pointing out that abolitionists often had strong religious views, used Christian rhetoric, and had puritanical views on sex and marriage. This line of argument is problematic. In the first place, both the Gay Rights Movement and the anti-Gay Rights Movement have Christian supporters who use religious arguments. If many Christian ministers label gay marriage as an affront to God, there are also Christian ministers who champion gay marriage. This is quite similar to antebellum America, in which there were devout Christians who supported slavery and opposed interracial marriage and devout Christians who believed in abolitionism and interracial marriage. And while it is true that many abolitionists espoused puritanical stances, this usually applied to issues such as polygamy, divorce, adultery, pre-marital sex, and masturbation.³⁰⁷ As the large number of abolitionist supporters of interracial marriage shows, many abolitionists who were puritanical about sex did not object to alternatives to "traditional marriage," so long as these alternatives involved monogamous relationships. When denying marriage to a group involved denigrating members of that group based on an immutable trait, race, abolitionists called for expanding the rights of marriage, not restricting them to promote "traditional values." In today's society, the abolitionist worldview would be condemnatory of divorce, adultery, and promiscuity, not permanent, monogamous marriages between gay individuals. While most abolitionists, like just about every other American outside of some Native American tribes, would not have accepted homosexuality or gay marriage in the nineteenth century—it is important to remember that homosexuality itself was legally a crime in

every state until the 1960s and remained so in much of the country until 2003—the radical abolitionist worldview, taken to its logical conclusion, supports same-sex marriage.

It is also worth looking at the religious and regional demographics of the abolitionist movement and the Christian Right in order to assess whether the latter movement follows in the footsteps of the former. White support for the abolitionist movement was strongest in the Northeast and, among subsections of the Northeast, New England. This is reflected in the fact that, among states that banned interracial marriage, Massachusetts became the second state and the first in sixty-three years to rescind its ban. Among the other New England states, three never banned interracial marriage, and two legalized it in the late nineteenth century, well before the country as a whole. Same-sex marriage was first legalized in Massachusetts, and between 2008 and 2013, the five remaining New England states all legalized it without federal intervention.

By contrast, proslavery Christianity was the strongest in the South, and some proslavery Christians from the North, such as the minister father of Woodrow Wilson, moved there. Proslavery Southern Christians like Basil Manly and R.L. Dabney were leaders in the proslavery factions when their respective denominations, the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, split. It almost goes without saying that most of these Christians found interracial marriage immoral. According to Mark Caleb Smith, “the groups most associated with the Religious Right are concentrated in the South.”³⁰⁸ More to the point, polls have shown gay marriage support to be highest in the Northeast/New England and lowest in the South.³⁰⁹ Not a single former Confederate state legalized gay marriage without federal intervention.

Indeed, some important people and institutions of the Religious Right condemned interracial marriage *and* gay marriage/gay rights in general. Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell gave a 1958 speech against integration during which he spoke with horror of a Northern city

where "a pastor friend of mine tells me that a couple of opposite race live next door to his church as man and wife."³¹⁰ Bob Jones University not only maintained anti-interracial dating policies until 2000 but also denounced the Supreme Court's decision to legalize gay marriage last year.³¹¹ At around the same time that his school was fighting to maintain its tax exempt status despite its interracial dating policies, then-president Bob Jones III helped collect signatures for a petition demanding that the Carter Administration treat homosexuality as "an unlawful moral deviation."³¹² The Mormon Church, which has driven much of the opposition to gay marriage in the Western United States, automatically expels members who legally enter into gay marriages, and refuses to baptize children with gay parents, also warrants consideration. The denomination was led for thirty years in the nineteenth century by Brigham Young, who declared, "I am a firm believer in slavery," and called for both the participants and the children of interracial marriage to be executed. In the twentieth century, the Mormon Church's governing body warned against interracial marriage.³¹³

Another important point to consider is whether or not members of the abolitionist movement tended to hold similar theological views and be involved in the same denominations that anti-gay marriage Christian activists would later profess and join. Were most abolitionists theological conservatives, and did they attend churches that are now considered conservative? As James McPherson demonstrates, white abolitionists were disproportionately likely to be Unitarians, Congregationalists, and Quakers.³¹⁴ Even black and white abolitionists who were not Unitarians themselves sometimes found fellowship with Unitarians. Frederick Douglass attended Unitarian church services in Chicago during the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and told the Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, "I could not stay away. You are standing for a great and holy ideal."³¹⁵ Wendell Phillips's funeral was held at a Boston Unitarian church.³¹⁶ The closest

modern denomination to nineteenth-century Unitarianism is the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the closest modern denomination to nineteenth-century Congregationalism is the United Church of Christ. Both of these denominations have supported same-sex marriage for years.

Quakers are divided on gay marriage. However, as far back as the late 1980s, individual Quaker meetings were conducting same-sex weddings, and others were passing pro same-sex marriage resolutions.³¹⁷ There seems to be little Quaker presence in the current movement against same-sex marriage. Branches of Protestant Christianity that included both abolitionists and passionate defenders of slavery, such as Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Baptism, are today divided on gay marriage. Courageous, pioneering individuals such as David Barrow and John G. Fee notwithstanding, abolitionists in these churches were mostly Northern, and proslavery figures were most prominent in the South. If Greear is correct, and the spiritual heirs to abolitionists are the anti-gay marriage Baptists, one would expect to see anti-gay marriage Baptists concentrated more in the North and pro-gay marriage Baptists concentrated more in the South. Yet the exact opposite is true, as is borne out by the very words “Southern Baptist.” Northern Baptist congregations, affiliated with denominations such as the American Baptist Churches, USA, are considerably more likely to be liberal on gay rights. There are a roughly equal number of Baptist churches designated as “welcoming and affirming” for gays in Massachusetts and in Georgia, despite the vastly greater concentration of Baptists in the latter state.³¹⁸

Another galling fact for conservative Christians like Greear is that it was hardly unheard of for abolitionists to reject the infallibility of the Bible, even though they used religious language. Phillips denied that the writings of Paul—where many of the New Testament passages interpreted as anti-homosexuality come from—were the true word of God.³¹⁹ Garrison ridiculed

“the dogma” that “the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice; so that whatever it teaches or allows must be right, and whatever it forbids must be wrong, independent of all other considerations.” Garrison called such a dogma “absurd and pernicious,” and “a bold fiction.”³²⁰ Similarly, some abolitionists rejected the concept of eternal Hell, another stance few Christian Right activists would share. Sojourner Truth recalled that “As I got older I found out there wasn’t no such thing as hell,” although she still believed in God.³²¹ After hearing a sermon on the justice of eternal damnation for sinners, Samuel Joseph May commented that, “I think we ought to ask our God, whose mercy endureth forever, to pardon us for having listened in silence while our deluded brother blasphemed him.”³²² Also noteworthy is that many, though by no means all, abolitionists took stances on women’s rights that were downright radical for their day. By contrast, the Religious Right lobbied against the Equal Rights Amendment, and many fundamentalist and evangelical churches oppose the ordination of women. Abolitionists have far more in common with liberal Christians such as Reverend William Sloane Coffin and Congressman John Lewis, who took part in the Civil Rights Movement and later endorsed same-sex marriage, than with anti-gay fundamentalists.

Some historians fear that there is danger of, in the words of Reverend Peter Gomes, “claiming dead prophets.”³²³ Nonetheless, two prominent modern scholars of abolitionism, James McPherson and Eric Foner, were asked by this author whether they believe Wendell Phillips would support gay rights, including freedom to marry, if he were alive today. Both replied in the affirmative. While acknowledging that, “it is of course ahistorical to try to surmise what anyone from the 19th century would think today,” Foner concluded, “but certainly Phillips’ view of equality was so expansive that it is hard to imagine him opposing this movement.” McPherson states that, “I am confident that Phillips would be a strong advocate of equal rights for gays in

today's world. He was one of the most radical of the abolitionists, and embraced other radical causes that were ahead of his times . . . so I am pretty sure he would have embraced this cause if he were alive today.”³²⁴

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Given the obvious widespread support for interracial marriage among abolitionists, one question that bears asking is: why did so many abolitionists publicly support interracial marriage when it was guaranteed to generate more pushback from anti-abolitionists against an already unpopular movement? E. Fuller Torrey, a descendant and biographer of Reverend Charles Torrey, observes that abolitionists like Garrison, “had attended the 1837 Philadelphia convention and thus experienced the white working-class fears of racial integration. In light of this, it is puzzling why Garrison and his followers decided to petition the Massachusetts legislature in 1838, advocating repeal of the state law prohibiting interracial marriage.”³²⁵ While the younger Torrey may inadvertently be understating the opposition to interracial marriage among upper- class whites, he was correct to point out the somewhat baffling nature of many abolitionists’ approach to interracial marriage.

It is made more baffling by the fact that the Civil Rights Movement actually gave considerably less attention to interracial marriage than the American Anti-Slavery Society did in the 1830s and 1840s. Civil Rights Movement leaders, even those such as James Farmer, Jr. who themselves had white spouses, did not hold sit-ins at Mississippi courthouses to pressure clerks to issue interracial marriage licenses or include the repeal of anti-interracial marriage laws as one of the demands of the 1963 March on Washington. And as severely stigmatized as interracial marriage was in the 1950s and 1960s, it was still far more taboo in, say, 1837. By 1963, it was

legal if not socially accepted in most of the North. The fact that activists in the abolitionist movement were less cautious about interracial marriage than activists in Civil Rights Movement, despite operating in an era even more hostile to interracial marriage, underscores the need to analyze their motivations.

There are a number of contributing factors that explain why many abolitionists stood up for interracial marriage. One factor is that abolitionism was fueled to a great extent by the belief that evil and oppression could not be compromised with. This belief was demonstrated by the movement's insistence on immediate emancipation and by most abolitionists' opposition to financial compensation for slaveholders. The abolitionist demand for immediate emancipation, according to David Brion Davis, "represented a shift in total outlook from a detached, rationalistic perspective on human history and progress to a personal commitment to make no compromise with sin."³²⁶ Refusing to defend interracial marriage would certainly have been seen by many abolitionists as a compromise with the sin of racism. While even very radical abolitionists sometimes tacitly compromised with racism for pragmatic reasons, many of these radicals found the idea of refusing to support interracial marriage a "bridge too far." Here, many of them reflected the cultural influence of their Puritan ancestors. While most seventeenth century Puritans would have been horrified to see certain descendants attacking slavery and racism, the idea of not compromising with sin was very consistent with Puritanism. This idea had helped motivate Puritans to break away from the Church of England. The Church of England's "sin," of course, was its perceived failure to fully disentangle itself from Catholicism, but the Puritans' response to it came from a similar mindset as the abolitionist response to slavery.

Another factor was that support for interracial marriage was part of a larger abolitionist campaign for racial equality. As mentioned earlier, there was a concerted effort by many

abolitionists to eventually bring about an end to racial discrimination in America. Virtually every form of racial inequality in America, from school segregation, to public accommodations segregation, to residential segregation, was challenged to some extent by abolitionists. Interracial marriage was simply the next step. And to refer back to another earlier point, some abolitionists believed that the best way of ending racism was to blend the races together. After all, how could people be discriminated against because of their race if almost everyone was of mixed heritage? The radical abolitionists' vision for America was distinct from both the traditional melting pot concept and later ideas of cultural pluralism. The melting pot referred largely to cultural assimilation rather than integration, and to the extent that it endorsed "amalgamation," this usually referred mainly to marriages between people from different white ethnic groups, certainly not whites and blacks. It differed from cultural pluralism in the sense that it promoted the blurring of cultural lines through integration and interracial marriage.³²⁷

An additional factor was that many abolitionists may have believed that the movement would be in the best possible position to criticize the Southern system of slavery if black people had equal rights in New England. This belief was reflected by the abolitionist admonition that New England must be a model for the rest of the country on civil rights. Southerners could easily respond to attacks on slavery by bringing up the ample discrimination and racism that African Americans faced in New England and other parts of the North. But by the time of the Civil War, there was a notable dynamic in regard to how the South depicted race relations in New England. As slaveholders talked of seceding, some of them seemed more likely to bring up the relative level of civil rights that black New Englanders enjoyed and how this threatened the social order, rather than accuse New England of being just as racist as the South. When urging Virginia to secede in 1861, former President and soon-to-be Confederate Congressman John Tyler used

Massachusetts to symbolize the “nightmare” of black equality that might befall the Old Dominion unless it seceded. In Massachusetts, Tyler told his fellow Virginians, Frederick Douglass could be elected to national office. Speaking to a Virginian who opposed secession, Tyler warned that the Unionist risked one day sitting “down by the side of Fred. Douglass, in the Senate of the United States, cheek by jowl, and in fellowship with him as his fellow citizen.”³²⁸ This shift in Southern depictions of the Bay State showed the success of the abolitionists. After all, the lurid speeches of people like Tyler would have been far harder to make thirty years earlier, when the abolitionist movement had yet to make its mark, and black people in Boston faced Jim Crow laws comparable to pre-civil rights Birmingham. Southerners might despise New England, but they could no longer dismiss New Englanders’ attacks on slavery as hypocritical with quite the same ease.

Along the same lines, many abolitionists probably felt that they would be personally hypocritical if they did not support interracial marriage. During the Jackson Administration, when abolitionist mail was censored in the South with federal approval, Postmaster General Amos Kendall posed a challenge to abolitionists. He said that he would respect the movement only if abolitionists supported interracial marriage. Of course, Kendall, who favored censoring abolitionists, had no moral interest in seeing them embrace racial equality. His point was that he saw abolitionists as hypocrites who claimed to care about blacks but shied away from real equality. For many abolitionists, the only option was to accept Kendall’s challenge and publicly defend interracial marriage.³²⁹

In a way, interracial marriage was a particularly important issue of civil rights on which to focus. Gustave de Beaumont, a French reformer who traveled with Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote in 1835 that interracial marriages were “the most obvious index of equality.”³³⁰ In one his

statements supporting interracial marriage, Clarence Darrow surmised that interracial marriage “is the final question of the race problem.”³³¹ Decades after Darrow’s speech, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal surmised that sex was “the principle around which the whole structure of segregation ... is organized.” It was Myrdal’s belief that white Americans as a group considered interracial marriage bans to be the most vital Jim Crow laws in place. Comprehensive racial discrimination and segregation was defended on the grounds that, “say what we will, may not all the equalities be ultimately based on potential social equality, and that in turn on intermarriage?”³³² Given that interracial marriage bans were among the first Jim Crow laws, Myrdal’s theory seems reasonable and can be considered to apply to nineteenth as well as twentieth century America. If interracial marriage bans were the “crown jewel” of Jim Crow, abolitionists may have felt that successful efforts to legalize interracial marriage in the North would mean a swift end to other white supremacist laws in the region.

Abolitionists had another practical reason to de-stigmatize interracial marriage. One of the favorite arguments used by defenders of slavery and colonization (which most abolitionists also rejected) was the claim that if slavery was abolished, and the races were not kept separate, interracial marriage would result. Hence, they would need to either continue being enslaved or be deported. Elizabeth Buffum Chace recalled a conversation with an in-law, a Quaker no less, in which she asked him if he did not think that the slaves were entitled to freedom. According to Chace, her in-law responded that, “I shouldn’t want to see a black man sitting on the sofa beside my daughter.”³³³ Some of the most prominent political leaders in America used this argument. In an 1814 letter, Thomas Jefferson used the specter of interracial marriage to try without success to dissuade a neighbor, future Illinois Governor Edward Coles, from freeing his slaves. Blacks’ “amalgamation with the other color,” Jefferson pontificated, “produces a degradation to which no

lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent.”³³⁴

Jefferson’s rationale for opposing emancipation without deportation remained popular until 1865. Henry Clay warned “that those whom he [God] has created different, and has declared, by their physical structure and color, ought to be kept asunder, should not be brought together by any process whatever of unnatural amalgamation.” If civil war was avoided, “separation or amalgamation is the only peaceful alternative, if it were possible to effectuate the project of abolition.” Since most abolitionists opposed colonization, accused Clay, they obviously favored interracial marriage. Both Clay and Jefferson rejected immediate emancipation as an impossibility. While neither man expressed a wish to see slavery continue forever, they both insisted that any plan for emancipation had to be combined with black migration to Africa or some other location away from white Americans. Given the sheer logistical and financial difficulties of resettling millions of people who had been born in the U.S.—Abraham Lincoln’s plans of voluntary colonization fell apart even on a smaller scale—such a proviso meant that slavery would have to continue for the foreseeable future.³³⁵

Fears of interracial marriage helped fuel Southern secession. A secessionist newspaper in Mobile, Alabama warned that under Republicans and abolitionists, the North risked becoming a polyglot full of interracial marriage, and the South must secede to avoid a similar fate. In the words of the paper, while “the poorest white man in Alabama would cut the throat of his daughter, before he would marry her to a Negro, if he were as rich as Croesus,” Horace Greeley, Republican Senator William Seward of New York “and such representatives of Northern sentiment would be proud to have buck negroes for their sons-in-law ... Let the North, however, be the home of the mixed race; and let the South be the home of the *white man*, proud of his race, and proud of his race’s superiority.”³³⁶ Another secessionist newspaper presented the South as

being forced to choose between either “amalgamation” or “secession, with Negro slavery as the basis of a grand Southern Confederacy in which the white race shall be placed upon the most elevated level of equality and civilization of which the history of the world affords an example.”³³⁷ These were not anomalous. One Southern newspaper reported that a white abolitionist in Michigan had forced his eighteen-year-old daughter to marry a black man. Yet another paper claimed that interracial marriages were the norm in Canada now that slavery had been outlawed there, bemoaning, “It is the commonest thing to find in all Canada, burly, black buck African husbands actually legally married to white females. In fact it is the rule rather than the exception.”³³⁸

De Bow's Review, a New Orleans magazine favorable to secessionists, ran a twenty-page article in 1860 detailing the supposed dangers of “amalgamation.”³³⁹ One anti-abolitionist in North Carolina insisted that wherever abolitionism triumphed, white people “were willing to take rank with a subordinate race, and eat, sleep, intermarry and affiliate with Negroes.”³⁴⁰ A secessionist resolution passed at a mass meeting in Botetourt County, Virginia warned that if slavery was banned in Western territories, a result would be “the eventual surrender of our country to a barbarous race, or, what seems to be desired, an amalgamation with the African.”³⁴¹ In a speech to Georgia urging the state to secede, Judge William Harris warned that if Southerners stayed in the Union, one of the atrocities they would face would be “equality in the rights of matrimony.”³⁴² During the Civil War, an Arkansas slaveholder feared that if Union forces triumphed, the women in his family “are to be given up the embraces of their present ‘dusky male servitors.’” Some white Southerners who did not own slaves may have been motivated to fight for the Confederacy by warnings that a Yankee victory would cause interracial marriage. A Union soldier in the 25th Wisconsin wrote home recounting the explanation that

some captured Confederate soldiers gave for serving. When asked why they fought, according to the Wisconsin private, the prisoners responded, “You Yanks want us to marry our daughters to the niggers.”³⁴³

To some abolitionists, the best way to respond to arguments such as these was to make a case that blacks could be emancipated and remain in America without full integration. As stated in the introduction, this argument was also made, implicitly or explicitly, by some non-abolitionists such as John Quincy Adams, who rejected colonization but could not accept the thought of a fully integrated America.³⁴⁴ For other abolitionists, the proper solution was to accept a major part of their opponents’ arguments and meet them head on. It was not only immoral but also downright ineffective to concede the anti-abolitionist point that interracial marriage was unnatural. It would both sacrifice their moral high ground and play into the hands of slavery apologists if abolitionists shrunk from the idea of interracial marriage. These abolitionists agreed that if emancipation was implemented without colonization, America would indeed move toward a racially integrated society, and interracial marriage would follow. They differed from Jefferson, Clay, and many others by asserting that this chain of events would be a positive development. In effect, they came to the conclusion that in rejecting slavery and colonization, it was necessary to also promote a radical vision of integration where, to quote Frederick Douglass, “in time the variety of races will be blended into one.”³⁴⁵



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview with Dr. James McPherson

Appendix B: Interview with Eric Foner

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- ¹ Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York City: NYU Press, 2011), 1.
- ² Mary L. Rucker, *Obama's Political Saga: From Battling History, Racialized Rhetoric, and GOP Obstructionism to Re-Election* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 38.
- ³ Braden Goyette, "Cheerios Commercial Featuring Mixed Race Family Gets Racist Backlash," *The Huffington Post*, accessed October 28, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/31/cheerios-commercial-racist-backlash_n_3363507.html.
- ⁴ Jerry Mitchell, "Mississippi RV park owner evicts interracial couple," *The Clarion---Ledger*, April 4, 2016, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2016/04/02/mississippi---rv---park---owner---evicts---interracial---couple/82469086/>.
- ⁵ Sally Kitch, *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 141.
- ⁶ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 218, 376; it should be noted that despite their progressive reputations, California and Oregon have historically been less liberal on racial issues than is commonly believed. California was extremely hostile to Asian immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Oregon was a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan, and unlike the neighboring state of Washington (which legalized interracial marriage in 1868), neither had a state law against intentionally segregating public school students.
- ⁷ Nicholas Buccola, *The Political Thought of Frederick Douglass: In Pursuit of American Liberty* (New York City: NYU Press, 2013), 163---164.
- ⁸ Noel Ignatiev, introduction to *The Lesson of the Hour: Wendell Phillips on Abolition & Strategy*, by Wendell Phillips, ed. Noel Ignatiev (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2001), 12.
- ⁹ Interestingly, while Lincoln publicly gave a mild endorsement of Illinois' interracial marriage ban, he rather surprisingly stated off the record that he found the ban pointless. Stating that he had no interest in marrying a black woman, Lincoln added, "If a white man wants to marry a Negro woman, let him do it---if the Negro woman can stand it." See: James Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* (New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 127-128.
- ¹⁰ Ellen Holmes Pearson, *Remaking Custom: Law and Identity in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 130.
- ¹¹ Alyn Brodsky, *Benjamin Rush: Patriot and Physician* (London: Macmillan, 2004), 266; James Aho and Kevin Aho, *Body Matters: A Phenomenology of Sickness, Disease, and Illness* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 56-57.
- ¹² David Brion Davis, *From Homicide to Slavery: Studies in American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 250; "Barrow, David," in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015), 55; Herbert Aptheker, *Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 21, 104, 111.
- ¹³ Tom Calarco, *The Underground Railroad in The Adirondack Region* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2004), 31-32; Columbus Salley, *The Black 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential African- Americans, Past and Present* (New York City: Citadel Press, 1999), 47.
- ¹⁴ T.T., "A Dream," *The Liberator*, April 2, 1831, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://fair-use.org/the-liberator/1831/04/02/the-liberator-01-14.pdf>.
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- ¹⁶ "The Marriage Law," *The Liberator*, May 7, 1831, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://fair-use.org/the-liberator/1831/05/07/the-liberator-01-19.pdf>.
- ¹⁷ "A Noble Commentary," *The Liberator*, August 13, 1831, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://fair-use.org/the-liberator/1831/08/13/the-liberator-01-33.pdf>; Karen Woods Weierman, *One Nation, One Blood: Interracial Marriage in American Fiction, Scandal, and Law, 1820- 1870* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 148, 201.
- ¹⁸ Donald E. Williams, Jr., *Prudence Crandall's Legacy: The Fight for Equality in the 1830s, Dred Scott, and Brown v. Board of Education* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 189.

- ¹⁹William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 110.
- ²⁰Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (London: Macmillan, 2002), 116.
- ²¹Hosea Easton, *A Treatise on the Intellectual Character and Civic and Political Condition of the Colored People Of the U. States; And the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), 5.
- ²²Moulton, *The Fight*, 33-35.
- ²³Williams, *Prudence Crandall's Legacy*, 25-27, 30, 53, 84-85.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*, 52-53.
- ²⁵Samuel J. May, *Letters of Andrew T. Judson, Esq. and Others in Canterbury, Remonstrating with Them on Their Unjust and Unjustifiable Procedure Relative to Miss Crandall and Her School for Colored Females* (Brooklyn, Connecticut: Advertiser Press, 1833), 7.
- ²⁶Lydia Maria Child, *The First Settlers of New England: Or, Conquest of the Pequods, Narrangansets and Pokanokets. As Related By A Mother to Her Children* (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1829), 66.
- ²⁷Dorothy A. Mays, *Women in Early America: Struggle, Survival, and Freedom in a New World* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 2004; Phyl Newbeck, *Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Mildred and Richard Loving* (Carbondale: SIU Press, 2005).
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- ³⁰*Ibid.*, 140.
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- ³²Lydia Maria Child, "A Letter from L. Maria Child: Emancipation and Amalgamation," in *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, ed. Carolyn L. Karcher (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 264.
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- ³⁴Gilbert Haven, *Sermons, Speeches, and Letters On Slavery and Its War: From the Passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill to the Election of President Grant* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869), 624-626.
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- ⁵⁰ Rose O'Keefe, *Frederick and Anna Douglass in Rochester, New York: Their Home Was Open to All* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2013), 94.
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- ⁵³ Richard Hildreth, *The History Of The United States of America, From The Discovery of The Continent To The Organization of Government Under The Federal Constitution 1497-1789, Volume II* (New York City: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1856), 2:429-430.
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- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.
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