The Founding Mothers of Abolitionism: Garrisonian Women's Anti-Slavery Activism in the Antebellum North between 1830 and 1840

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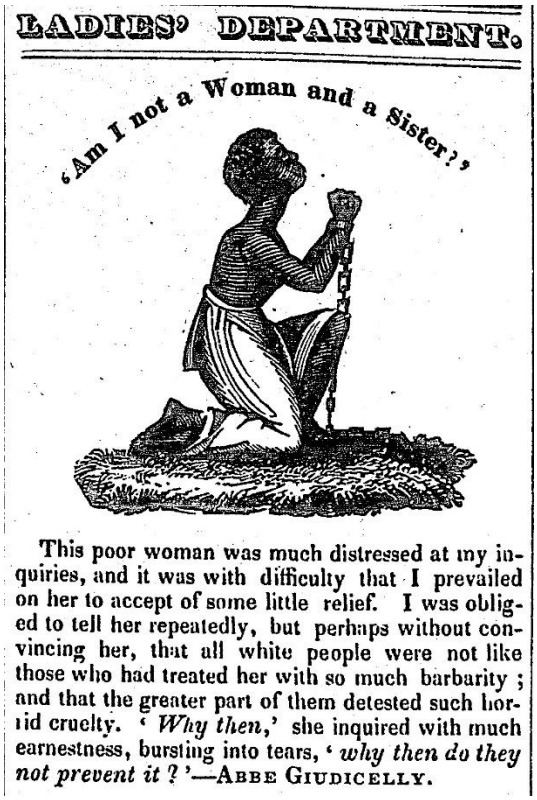
LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

'Am I not a Woman and a Sister?'

This poor woman was much distressed at my inquiries, and it was with difficulty that I prevailed on her to accept of some little relief. I was obliged to tell her repeatedly, but perhaps without convincing her, that all white people were not like those who had treated her with so much barbarity; and that the greater part of them detested such horrid cruelty. '*Why then*,' she inquired with much earnestness, bursting into tears, '*why then do they not prevent it?*'—ABBE GIUDICELLY.

[1]

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[1] The Liberator, Jan. 7, 1832, in: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*, Universiteit Leiden.

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Introduction

Thanksgiving Hymn.

Have we not all one Father?

Then let us all with filial hearts unite,

As on this hallowed festival we gather,

To bring an offering precious in his sight.

We stand before thine altar,

Oh, God of freedom! with the free hearts' gift;

Then wherefore should our troubled accents falter,

As at thy shrine our orisons we lift?

Because the voice of weeping

From long-forgotten slaves who wear our chain,

Comes to our hearts where brotherhood was sleeping,

And stays the utterance of our choral strain.[2]

These are the words of Maria Weston Chapman, who was born in 1806 in Weymouth, Massachusetts. Her husband, Henry Grafton Chapman, had introduced her to the abolitionist movement and she became an abolitionist as well. Through her husband she met abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and over time, she began working for his newspaper *The Liberator* as one of his fellow editors.[3] Garrison not only advocated the immediate abolition of slavery on the basis of morality, but also campaigned for gender and racial equality. Over time, people in

[2] The Liberator, Nov. 1, 1840, in: *SAS*.
[3] Kim Reynolds, "Notable Women, Notable Manuscripts: Maria Weston Chapman", *Boston Public Library Blogs* (March 1, 2022) https://www.bpl.org/blogs/post/notable-women-notable-manuscripts-maria-weston-chapman/.

the antebellum North associated with Garrison, giving rise to the Garrisonian movement.[4] Chapman's "Thanksgiving Hymn" is a clear example of the Garrisonian ideology as it represents equality of all people and requests that all "filial hearts unite".[5]

The fact that Garrison advocated gender equality and women could affiliate with the Garrisonian movement is worth noting, as this was not common in every anti-slavery movement or society in the early days of abolitionism, especially when these movements were not based on moral reform. In addition, as Garrison advocated racial equality, black and white women worked together, with black abolitionists wanting to collaborate with white abolitionists whenever it was appreciated.[6] It was, however, not self-evident that every anti-slavery organization accepted the effort of black women. As it turned out, even though there was a concerted struggle for abolition, black abolitionists within the anti-slavery movement still faced racial prejudice.[7] For example, the non-Garrisonian Ladies' New York City Anti-Slavery Society (LNYCASS) did not allow black women to become a member of its society.[8] Nevertheless, the Garrisonians were known for their ideal of equality, but it is unknown how exactly this was manifested within the movement. Therefore, the research question of this thesis reads as follows: How did Garrisonian women abolitionists implement different types of anti-slavery activism in the antebellum North between 1830 and 1840? By researching different forms of activism of both black and white Garrisonian women and comparing these with each other, it is also possible to study how interracial relations were formed and developed. The period 1830-1840 has been selected, as in this decade the Garrisonian movement emerged which had an enormous appeal to women. In the late 1830s, the "woman

[4] Thomas Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), 28-30.
[5] The Liberator, Nov. 1, 1840, in: *SAS*.
[6] Dorothy Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 114.
[7] Shirley J. Yee, *Black women abolitionists: a study in activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 3-6.
[8] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 114.

question", which will be explained in the first chapter, sparked controversy within the anti-slavery movement. Ending the period in 1840 avoids this debate and lays the focus solely on female activists.

Throughout the twentieth century, the abolitionist movement has been a highly researched theme, and the topic of women abolitionists has increased in the last three decades. Margaret M. R. Kellow's article "Women and Abolitionism in the United States: Recent Historiography" shows that research on women abolitionists concluded that black women abolitionists often faced challenges within the American society and that the "sisterhood" was not applicable to them when they tried to join or were already members of female anti-slavery societies.[9]

Shirley J. Yee argues that not all white abolitionists were in favor of racial equality. They advocated the abolitionist cause and when slavery was abolished, they did not think about a former enslaved persons' rights as they saw this as inappropriate. As long as every person within the United States was a free man, the goal was achieved. Yee describes this as "a myopic version of abolitionist goals". She also argues that those who were in favor of racial equality, sometimes approached black persons in a racial manner or held racial prejudices.[10] This is the reason why black women "shared a common experience with racism that differentiated them from their white colleagues".[11] Therefore, her argument is that racial prejudice was present in every anti-slavery movement.[12] Yet, this makes a humanitarian movement such as the Garrisonians worth investigating; were they as all-encompassing as they did or pretended to be?

Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne argue that because some women

[9] Margaret M.R. Kellow, "Women and Abolitionism in the United States: Recent Historiography", *History Compass* vol. 11 no. 11 (2013): 1008–1020.
[10] Yee, *Black women abolitionists*, 6.
[11] Ibid., 35.
[12] Ibid., 6.

abolitionists advocated abolition as well as racial prejudices, they did not only face criticism from "outside the abolitionist movement" such as from Southern slaveholders, but also from the "inside". Northerners were offended by women who addressed the fact that racial discrimination occurred in the North as well.[13]

Gay Gibson Cima argues that during the 1830s, female anti-slavery societies began shooting up. These societies transformed the anti-slavery activism into "a more efficacious activist practice focused on dismantling systemic violence".[14] Also, Garrisonian women shaped their daily life around anti-slavery activism. In their activism, they did not speak as if they were an enslaved person but remained aware that they were abolitionists who stood up for the enslaved as they were not able to do it themselves.[15]

It appears that no research has been done that focused solely on the different types of activism black and white Garrisonian women implemented and how they worked together. Taking the character of Garrison himself into account, one could say that within the abolitionist movement, he was an everybody's friend since he not only fought for the abolitionist cause, but also advocated racial equality and women's rights within societies.

To conduct this research, an analysis of several primary sources is needed. The most important primary sources to conduct this research are anti-slavery newspapers such as *The Liberator*, a newspaper founded in 1831 by William Lloyd Garrison. The Boston-based newspaper was the voice of the Garrisonians and women abolitionists were able to express themselves in the "Ladies' Department" section. In addition, both black and white women abolitionists have written for *The Liberator*, which also makes the source suitable for a comparison between the two.[16] Also, documents of female anti-slavery societies and national

[13] Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, ed., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 3.
[14] Gay Gibson Cima, *Performing Anti-Slavery: Activist Women on Antebellum Stages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3.
[15] Cima, *Performing Anti-Slavery*, 17.
[16] The Liberator, in: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*, Universiteit Leiden.

conventions will be analyzed, such as constitutions of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) and the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), proceedings and petitions. The database *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive* will provide access to many sources relevant to this thesis.

To pursue the idea of a comparative thesis as well, primary documents from several Garrisonian women will be analyzed. A selection was made based on the certainty that the women could be regarded as Garrisonian and the amount of anti-slavery contributions. Also, a fair division of both black and white women has been made in order to compare their contributions with each other. The documents of black abolitionists Sarah Mapps Douglass, Sarah Forten Purvis and Maria W. Stewart and white abolitionists Lydia Maria Child and Angelina Emily Grimké have been analyzed. Throughout the thesis, other women will be studied as well but the main focus will be on the women selected specifically.

The thesis is structured in three chapters. In the first chapter, an answer will be given to the question: How did the women's anti-slavery movement become more organized? The chapter will be a general explanation of the origins of women's anti-slavery activism, the origins of Garrisonianism and reasons for women to unite themselves with Garrison. The second chapter will give an answer to the question: How did Garrisonian female anti-slavery societies contribute to the abolitionist cause? The BFASS and PFASS have been chosen as the primary organizations as they corresponded with Garrison and implemented Garrisonian principles such as immediate emancipation, non-resistance and the aspiration of being an interracial society. Besides, national women's anti-slavery conventions, anti-slavery petitions and anti-slavery fairs will be studied. The third and final chapter will consist of an analysis and an answer to the question: How did Garrisonian women contribute to the abolitionist cause individually? This chapter will first analyze anti-slavery documents written by Garrisonian female abolitionists, such as poems, essays and books. The second section will

analyze anti-slavery documents of Garrisonian women who spoke in public, such as their lectures and appeals.

Even though a wide variety of sources will be analyzed, the subject of the thesis remains very specific. It must be taken into account that a general conclusion will be drawn on the basis of the specific researched Garrisonian societies and individual women.

Chapter 1: Development of Women's Anti-Slavery Activism

The introduction has briefly discussed Garrisonianism and its female adherents. This chapter will elaborate more on the history of women's anti-slavery activism in general, how the Garrisonian movement started and motives for women to affiliate themselves with Garrison.

The theory of Mason I. Lowance is used to understand the historical period. Lowance has distinguished three phases within the anti-slavery movement. The first phase began at the end of the seventeenth century and lasted until 1808, the year in which the United States Congress banned the transatlantic slave trade. The second phase lasted from 1808 to 1830 with the main focus on gradual emancipation: "the argument that slavery should be tolerated for the existing slave population, but that the status of the mother should no longer determine the status of the child". The third and last phase included the period 1830 to the end of the Civil War. At the center is the more organized and powerful anti-slavery movement in which abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison took the lead.[17]

In this chapter, the distinct phases of Lowance will be used to present an overview of the anti-slavery movement. As women's anti-slavery activism was encapsulated in the general anti-slavery movement, significant contributions of men will be discussed as well. This chapter will show that women's anti-slavery ideology grew from a more individual level into an organized movement. While the first section will explain the first two phases of the movement, the following sections will discuss various aspects of the third phase, which is also the most important time period in this thesis. These sections consist of the subjects immediatism, characteristics of Garrisonianism, emergence of female anti-slavery societies and women's rights. Ultimately, an answer will be provided to the question: How did the women's anti-slavery movement become more organized?

[17] Mason I. Lowance, *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America, 1776-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), xxx-xxxii.

§1.1 The Beginning

During the colonial period, the early anti-slavery movement was mainly religious in nature; groups such as Puritans and Quakers already recognized that the institution of slavery was morally wrong. It did not mean that these groups advocated racial equality or did not hold racial prejudices, but the right to freedom was a fundamental principle.[18] An example of this activism is the anti-slavery tract of the Puritan Bostonian Samuel Sewall. In this tract, titled *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial*, there is a clear message against the institution of slavery: "It is most certain that all Men, as they are the Sons of *Adam*, are Coheirs; and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all other outward Comforts of Life". To support his opinion, Sewall referred to various verses from the Bible several times.[19]

In this eighteenth century, slavery existed in almost every state of the United States, but in the northern states abolitionism gained momentum from the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. As it was stated in the official document that "all men are created equal", denying the right to liberty was implausible.[20] In 1780, Pennsylvania became the first state to gradually abolish slavery. A law was passed stating that any person born after the law's entry into force was a free person if they reached the age of majority. Massachusetts became the first state where slavery was abolished completely as black woman Elizabeth Freeman, also known as "Mum Bett", successfully contested her status as an enslaved person. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 stated the equality of men and the right to obtain safety and happiness. Freeman's lawyer, Theodore Sedgwick, argued that this "had rendered slavery unconstitutional", which proved to be a legally valid argument. Other northern states

[18] Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 35.
[19] Samuel Sewall, "The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial, 1700". Retrieved from Massachusetts Historical Society https://www.masshist.org/database/53, 1.
[20] "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription, July 4, 1776". Retrieved from National Archives https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript.

followed, but Massachusetts was the only state to abolish slavery at once.[21] However, this type of activism did not succeed in the southern part of the U.S., because slavery became even more ingrained. A large part of the South became economically dependent on slavery, creating enormous resistance to abolitionists in this area.[22]

In the same period, it was not self-evident that the position of women was merely within the confines of the domestic sphere. There were different views on women's life in public and what women were allowed to do. Churches in Massachusetts, for example, opposed women's interference in public activism, insisting women should remain in the private sphere. Of course, not all women accepted this ban and based on their religious beliefs, they continued their anti-slavery activism. It did help that not all male (church) leaders disapproved women's activism, some men even supported them.[23] Besides, there were enslaved women who succeeded in writing anti-slavery texts. An example is Phillis Wheatley, who was sold as a slave and bought by the slaveholding Wheatley family, who taught her to read and write. In 1772, she wrote a poem to "William, Earl of Dartmouth" in which she asked him not to rule "with a lawless hand". Also, Wheatley shows that her "love of freedom" originates from her abduction when she was a child: a "seeming cruel fate, was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy feat".[24]

In the nineteenth century, compared to the previous century, it became considerably easier for women to express themselves on different types of issues. The number of men encouraging women's activism grew over the years and American women managed to contact each other and exchange ideas, for example with women in Britain.[25]

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[21] Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty : African Americans and Revolutionary America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 169-172.
[22] Elizabeth J. Clapp and Julie Roy Jeffrey ed., *Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5-6.
[23] Clapp and Jeffrey, *Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery*, 2.
[24] Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on various subjects, religious and moral. By Phillis Wheatley, negro servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston, in New England* (London: A. Bell, 1773), in: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*, Universiteit Leiden, 73-74.
[25] Clapp and Jeffrey, *Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery*, 111.

Lowance argues that the first phase of the anti-slavery movement ended in 1808, when the transatlantic slave trade was abolished. While in the emphasis in the first phase was on the resistance against the institution of slavery on moral and religious grounds, the focus in the second phase was placed on gradual emancipation.[26] Simultaneously with the phase of gradualism, meaning that the status of the mother would not determine the status of her child, there was a group of people who advocated a "plan of return to Africa". Known as the Colonization Society, they would support free blacks on their journey back to Africa, specifically to the West African country of Liberia. However, this movement was unsuccessful and relatively short-lived because free blacks were not attracted to the idea of moving to an African country and the achievement of "voluntary emancipation" failed. In fact, many free blacks had been in the U.S. all their lives and therefore were not interested in a journey that would take them to a place they had never been or had never known.[27]

§1.2 From Gradualism to Immediatism

During the 1820s and 1830s, it became increasingly clear that gradual emancipation did bear fruit and was successful throughout the North, but it would not lead to the abolition of slavery in the South. The concept of gradualism was a long-term process and to achieve the abolition of slavery in the southern part of the U.S., a tougher and more drastic approach was needed.

A Quaker woman living in Britain named Elizabeth Heyrick came up with a theory in the early 1820s, becoming "the author of the first full articulation of the necessity for immediate abolition of slavery". Heyrick only experienced the beginning of the third phase of the anti-slavery movement, because she passed away in 1831. Still, she did not leave the world without leaving behind a great impression and it could be argued that Heyrick was one of the forerunners of this final phase. During the 1820s alone, Heyrick wrote seven anti-

[26] Lowance, *A House Divided*, xxx-xxxi.
[27] Clapp and Jeffrey, *Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery*, 6.

slavery pamphlets.[28]

In her best-known work, a tract titled *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition* and published in 1824, Heyrick comes to the conclusion that since the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in Britain in 1807, not much has changed. Hence, a more radical approach was needed to achieve this goal. It should be noted that Heyrick her focus lies on the immediate abolition of slavery in Britain, but it will be shown that she proved to be a major influence on American women. Several points of Heyrick's tract will be discussed to best describe its essence. First of all, Heyrick argues that Great Britain must be divided in "active supporters" and "active opposers of slavery".[29] There is no middle ground anymore: you are either for or against. Secondly, she foresees that the term immediatism will be interpreted as a sort of gradual emancipation. According to Heyrick, this argument is not valid because all gradual abolitionists do is object slavery and nothing else: "therefore, [it] may seem a most presumptuous, as well as hopeless attempt" and "this GRADUAL ABOLITION, has been the grand marplot of human virtue and happiness; the very masterpiece of satanic policy".[30] Thirdly, if slaveholders had to give in to the pressure of abolitionists, then they would demand compensation. This would mean that those least entitled to it would be rewarded. Instead of compensating the slaveholder, the slave should be compensated "for his long years of uncompensated labour, degradation and suffering … justice cries aloud for *compensation*".[31]

At the end of the 1820s, Heyrick's influential tract was distributed in the U.S., with white abolitionist and editor Benjamin Lundy being the first one to publish *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition* in his newspaper *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.[32] Throughout the

[28] Peter Hinks and John McKivigan ed., *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 325.
[29] Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition, 1824*, in: Bob Blaisdell, *Female Abolitionists* (Garden City: Dover Publications, 2021), 5.
[30] Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 8-10.
[31] Ibid., 17.
[32] Hinks and McKivigan, *Encyclopedia*, 326.

1830s, it became apparent how important Heyrick had been in the development of abolitionism in the antebellum North. White abolitionist Angelina Grimké wrote in 1836 about Heyrick in her *Appeal to the Christian women of the South* to report the impact she had had as a woman in the early stages of the anti-slavery movement: "Who wrote that pamphlet which moved the heart of Wilberforce [British parliamentarian] to pray over the wrongs, and his tongue to plead the cause of the opposed African? It was a *woman*, Elizabeth Heyrick".[33] In addition, the Philadelphia Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society republished Heyrick's tract in 1836. The society attached a note that described the success of the tract as "it proved greatly advantageous to the cause of Emancipation in the British West Indies". A reprint in Philadelphia was issued by the society "to the American public because slavery in the West Indies is similar to slavery in the U.S. and therefore the society believed it would have "beneficial consequences".[34]

In comparison to gradual emancipation, immediatism was a rather radical theory, for it would not only imply the immediate abolition of slavery, but also that slaveholders would not be compensated for loss of income as a result of abolition. This accumulation of extremities meant that "the average American" did not want to participate in this form of abolitionism.[35]

§1.3 The Origin and Characteristics of Garrisonianism

Benjamin Lundy's newspaper was the first in the U.S. that focused completely on the cause of abolition. In 1829, however, he was forced to stop publishing his newspaper since he was not able to gain a foothold in slavery states. Later that year, Lundy reestablished his newspaper

[33] Angelina Emily Grimké, "Appeal to the Christian women of the South", *The Anti-Slavery Examiner, 1836*. Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/11007392/, 23. The introduction of Grimké has been kept brief in this chapter. It was decided to introduce her extensively in chapter 3, because Grimké is a significant person in this chapter. This choice also fits better in the thesis as a whole.
[34] Philadelphia Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, *Immediate, not gradual abolition; or, An inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West Indian slavery* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1836), in: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*, Universiteit Leiden, 2.
[35] Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement*, xiii.

with the help of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler and William Lloyd Garrison.[36] Chandler was a woman abolitionist who, in her short life as she died when she was only twenty-six in 1834, edited and wrote anti-slavery essays and poems.[37] Because Lundy was part of a select group of men at that time who encouraged women's public participation. He put this into practice by setting up a section, titled "Ladies Repository" in his newspaper, in which Chandler was one of the women who contributed several works. This created a snowball effect, as other publishers went overboard for this as well and were subsequently in favor of women's activism in general.[38]

The other person that helped Lundy, William Lloyd Garrison, was born in a small town near Boston in 1805. Coming from a poor family whose father left the family in despair when Garrison was three years old, he did not have the possibility of a proper education. Yet, Garrison was able to teach himself great general knowledge and started writing at a young age. As an ambitious adolescent, he tried to free the world of moral wrongs and young Garrison despised the way politics were handled. By the time he became acquainted with the idea of abolitionism, Garrison still lacked sufficient money to live a normal life. He realized, however, that there were millions of people who had had a much harder and more horrible life than he, namely the enslaved or formerly enslaved persons. With this realization, as well as the rise of a "new generation of abolitionists" in the 1820s, Garrison gradually became more radical. This new generation looked up to forerunners of the abolitionist movement, such as Lyman Beecher, father of the later famous abolitionists Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher.[39]

When Garrison met Lundy, he had already published three newspapers, none of which

[36] Hinks and McKivigan, *Encyclopedia*, 53.
[37] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 323.
[38] Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement*, 27.
[39] James Brewer Stewart ed., *William Lloyd Garrison at Two Hundred: History, Legacy, and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-5.

had succeeded, but then "he came under the influence of a genuinely radical abolitionist. It was here that Garrison converted to immediatism".[40] It turns out that Lundy has had an enormous influence on the life of Garrison. Unfortunately, Lundy did not live long enough to witness Garrison's true successes as he passed away in 1839. Lowance named Garrison "possibly the most important of the antebellum abolitionists, certainly the most influential of the American antislavery advocates".[41]

The abolitionist movement, because it was still in its early stages, only consisted of a small percentage of the American population. Besides, in the first instance, Americans living in the North in the 1830s were not fond of the abolitionists.[42] Garrison was not intimidated, rather the opposite. The indication that Garrison was not afraid to speak his mind about racial prejudice but also criticize whites, is well illustrated in a quote of the man himself in an Address, delivered before the Free People of Color in June 1831, in the city of Philadelphia: "There are many colored men whom I am proud to rank among my friends … The necessities of the case require not only that you should behave as well as the whites, but better than the whites … (and I do not think the task would be difficult to excel them)".[43]

The Address was delivered a few months after Garrison founded *The Liberator* and published its first edition, on the first of January, 1831. In the decades that followed, *The Liberator* became the most famous abolitionist newspaper and "the longest-lasting antislavery publication in America".[44] Similar to Lundy, Garrison set up a section in his newspaper in which women could contribute miscellaneous literary works. Chandler was one of the women who contributed to *The Liberator*. In one of her anti-slavery sonnets, signed "E.M.C.", she

[40] Stewart, *William Lloyd Garrison*, 5.
[41] Lowance, *A House Divided*, 327.
[42] Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement*, xiii.
[43] William Lloyd Garrison, "An Address, delivered before the Free People of Color, in Philadelphia, New-York, and other cities, during the month of June, 1831". Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/91899125/.
[44] Stewart, *William Lloyd Garrison*, 5-6.

describes that God made the world beautiful. Yet, in the "yellow glare", there is a person "purchased with the torturing sigh … [a] wretched slave".[45] Chandler's poem captures the tenor of many anti-slavery poems published in *The Liberator*, namely the use of religion combined with slavery. The fact that Garrison had set up a Ladies' section, was much appreciated. A woman named "Phila" wrote an essay entitled "What have ladies to do with the subject of anti-slavery?", arguing that they have a right to speak up. At the top of her essay, she wrote to the editor that she is grateful he "kindly opened your columns to me".[46]

Since Garrison did not discriminate based on skin color, his newspaper was welcome to every individual who wanted to contribute. Besides, free blacks were drawn to write for *The Liberator* not only because it contained no racial prejudice, but also because they were in favor of immediate abolition.[47] The will for immediate abolition can be found in all the organizations Garrison was involved in, of which there are many. The New England Anti-Slavery Society had, for example, its intentions and beliefs documented: "We shall advocate Immediate Abolition. Let not our readers startle at the words. We shall show by abundant facts before the year is out, that wherever the experiment of immediate abolition has been tried, it has been successful".[48]

§1.4 Emergence of Anti-Slavery Societies

Anti-slavery movements already existed, with one of the first American societies being the "Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage", which was founded in 1775.[49] It took, however, until the nineteenth century before similar societies were

[45] The Liberator, Jan. 26, 1833, in: *SAS*.
[46] The Liberator, March 29, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[47] William Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists & Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 38.
[48] "The Abolitionist", *New-England Anti-Slavery Society, 1833*. Retrieved from HathiTrust Digital Library https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t4vh5nh47&view=1up&seq=11&skin=2021.
[49] Beth Ann Salerno, "Networks and Spheres: Female Anti-Slavery Societies in the United States, 1820-1860" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2000), 20.

widespread, decisive and able to truly enforce something. In addition, almost all societies founded in the 1830s had "anti-slavery society" in their name, which is a marked difference from the societies founded before that.

The first female anti-slavery society in the U.S. was the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society (SFASS). "Females of color" founded the society on February 22, 1832, in Salem, Massachusetts because "of the importance … to promote the welfare of our color". The constitution was published in *The Liberator* and included five resolutions, such as the support of the "Boston Liberator … and all anti-slavery publications", voluntary contributions and the establishment of an administrative hierarchy.[50] From the moment the SFASS was founded, women's societies began shooting up. In the next year and a half, seven female anti-slavery societies were founded and in the upcoming five years, there were 140. Some societies evolved from pre-existing ones, but others were established as a means of resistance to societies that had only male members. "In keeping with tradition" that women belonged to the private sphere, all-male societies did not allow women as eligible members. [51] One of these all-male societies was the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), founded by Garrison and the Tappan brothers in December 1833. Initially, 95 percent of members were white and, self-evidently, all-male. Even though Garrison was one of the founders, the majority of the male members was not in favor of women's participation. The AASS was formed because its founders had the idea to assemble all anti-slavery societies in the antebellum North. By the time of its founding, however, women's anti-slavery movements had already caused an extensive spread of "grass roots level" abolitionism, with Adams Upchurch denoting this as "one of the ironies of abolitionism".[52]

Thus, in the 1830s, it was not a given that women could join any anti-slavery

[50] The Liberator, 17 Nov. 1832, in: *SAS*.
[51] Salerno, "Networks and Spheres", 40-42.
[52] Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement*, 30-31.

movement. For example, the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) was founded in 1833 by women who had attended the founding meeting of the AASS but were not allowed to become an equal member. Among the eighteen founders, there were four black women.[53] Within most female anti-slavery societies, racial or class distinctions were not frequently made. There were organizations that were purely black or white, such as the SFASS, but most of them were interracial. In addition, some organizations that started out as exclusively black or white eventually grew into interracial societies.[54]

In the late 1830s, friction developed within male-only societies to such an extent that, for example, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MASS) and the AASS fell apart. This friction, also known as "The Great Schism", had arisen because of a few issues. The last straw that broke the camel's back was the "woman question", namely the proposal to give women an equal voice in anti-slavery societies.[55]

In the AASS, a conflict arose between a pro-Garrisonian side and an anti-Garrisonian side, with proponents encouraging female emancipation and continuing to promote moral suasion. The actual split took place in 1840 after white abolitionist Abigail (Abby) Kelley Foster was elected to the executive committee by a slim majority. The half that voted against seceded and founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS).[56] These anti-Garrisonians can be classified among religiously orthodox and socially conservative people in particular, because these groups saw no point in reforms other than the abolition of slavery.

Dissatisfaction with the secession was expressed in an article in *The Liberator*. Those who seceded were blamed for wasting time, as the matter of slavery was the main point of the society's existence. By making a fuss about the election of a woman to the executive committee, they distracted the members of the society's purpose. The remaining members

[53] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 6-7.
[54] Cima, *Performing Anti-Slavery*, 18.
[55] Yee, *Black women abolitionists*, 7.
[56] Ibid.

were urged not to worry and encouraged to continue, because: "We have no time to waste with those who love sectarianism better than liberty".[57] Moreover, there were groups that favored a more violent approach as the strategy of moral suasion did not produce the desired result for them. This contrasted with what the Garrisonians stood for and the person Garrison himself: "Garrison, unlike most white antislavery reformers before him, did not pull any punches but rather waged a war of words against slavery in no uncertain terms, calling it the most heinous sin against God and crime against humanity that ever the mind of mankind conceived".[58]

§1.5 Women's Rights

"Abolition nurtured women's activism", argues Manisha Sinha.[59] Women were already active in female anti-slavery societies and broke through the tradition of being entitled to affairs within the private sphere only. Duties or offices normally reserved for men were performed by women within the societies, which blurred the tradition of specific gender roles. The disagreement within the AASS that eventually led to the establishment of the AFASS, had exposed the visibility of conflicts over the role of women. Yet, the judgment of exclusion of men such as anti-Garrisonians caused women to bond with each other, but also with like-minded men.[60] The fact that Garrison advocated women's rights as well, is what attracted many women to join him in his fight for abolition. Besides, when Garrison advocated women's rights, he advocated all women's rights. As Garrison did not discriminate based on a person's skin color, many black women were drawn to unite with him as well. At a convention of the MASS in 1838, founded by Garrison and formerly named New England Anti-Slavery Society (NEASS), women were given the right to vote for the first time in the

[57] The Liberator, 17 July 1840, in: *SAS*.
[58] Adams Upchurch, *Abolition Movement*, xiii.
[59] Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 269.
[60] Salerno, "Networks and Spheres", 42-43.

history of anti-slavery societies. This moment was the beginning of a series of developments in obtaining the right to vote for women at a non-political level.[61]

In 1840, the World Anti-Slavery Convention (WASC) took place in London, where many notable abolitionists attended. The convention among anti-slavery activists turned out to be a significant moment for the women's rights movement as well. At the time, white women such as Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were promoting women's rights within the abolitionist movement, but after meeting at the convention, both women realized that a movement was needed that would only advocate women's rights.[62] While Stanton already was and remained a women's rights activist, Mott continued to advocate for both. Mott had been on Garrison's side since 1830. She treated every person equally and advocated immediate abolition as well.[63]

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the development of the women's anti-slavery movement. In order to study the historical empathy and to maintain an overview, it was decided to divide the chapter on the basis of the three different phases of Lowance.

It has become clear that legal documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the constitution of the state of Massachusetts became a motive for enslaved persons to challenge their right to liberty as both documents stated that "all men are created equal". Elizabeth Freeman became one of the first enslaved persons that successfully contested her status based on the argument of equality. This does not only show the attempt to emancipation of an enslaved person, but also as a woman. Thus, Freeman also became one of the first women that stood up for themselves as she challenged her status in the 1780s.

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[61] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 285-286.
[62] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 301.
[63] Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 60-61.

While Phillis Wheatley was one of the first black women to write anti-slavery texts, more women followed in her footsteps, both black and white. In the nineteenth century, women in general became more resistant to the tradition of the private sphere. The fact that women became more aware of their social position caused them to oppose traditional beliefs and stand up for themselves. With the support of men, such as Benjamin Lundy and William Lloyd Garrison, women were able to express their opinions. Influenced by Elizabeth Heyrick, American women began advocating immediate abolition rather than gradualism from the 1820s onwards.

It appeared, however, that some men still adhered to traditional beliefs. Even though these men advocated the same abolitionist cause as women, they stood firm and did not allow women to become an equal member. This turned out to be one of the reasons for women to organize themselves in female anti-slavery societies. Also, women wanted to align themselves with Garrison as he did not discriminate on the basis of gender nor race.

The “woman question”, meaning women’s equal voice within anti-slavery societies, eventually led to a split in several societies. It became clear that this strive to equality within the abolition movement is inextricably linked to the women’s rights movement, with the WASC as key factor.

The fact that the women’s anti-slavery movement became more organized did not mean that women only advocated abolition from a society for example. Yet, it did become considerably easier for women to express their opinion as they were supported by a society.

Chapter 2: The Anti-Slavery Debate among Women's Societies

The previous chapter has given the reader an insight into the developments prior to the height of the anti-slavery movement, how it became more organized, as well as important characteristics of a more specific group within this movement, namely the Garrisonians.

This chapter mainly focuses on the anti-slavery activism of female anti-slavery societies that were affiliated with Garrison and how they advocated the abolitionist cause. The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) are the organizations most central to this chapter and from which most of the documents will be analyzed. The BFASS and the PFASS have been selected based on their size and affiliation with Garrison, indicated by propagating from the same principles. In addition, the nature of these societies represents black and white women abolitionists in the 1830s well: the BFASS started as an exclusively white society but became interracial fairly quickly and the PFASS was interracial from its founding. Other societies that attended joint events will also be used in the analysis, but it mainly focuses on the BFASS and the PFASS. It will be argued that there were several types of anti-slavery activism practiced by female anti-slavery societies and that the interracial nature of the BFASS and PFASS was based on mutual support.

The first section will describe how the BFASS and PFASS originated and what their principles and objectives were. Sections two, three and four will discuss different types of anti-slavery activism applied by women's societies, respectively anti-slavery conventions, anti-slavery petitions and anti-slavery fairs. Finally, this chapter will answer the question: How did Garrisonian female anti-slavery societies contribute to the abolitionist cause?

§2.1 The Founding of the BFASS and the PFASS

The first female anti-slavery society was the SFASS, founded in February 1832 in Salem, Massachusetts. The establishment of the constitution, however, did not happen overnight. It was not until November 1832, nine months later, that its constitution was ratified and published in *The Liberator*.[64] The fact that the process to ratification took a long time was true for more anti-slavery movements because not only were they still at an early stage, it often took a while before people could come together and there had to be available locations for the gatherings. The length of time between establishment and the creation of a constitution also applied to another society in Massachusetts, namely the BFASS. While the society itself was founded in October 1833, its founding document was published in April, 1834.[65]

The constitution of the BFASS, which was also published in *The Liberator*, is an important primary source to research the background of the society, stating its members and objectives.[66] For example, the preamble clarifies that "slavery … [is] a direct violation of the laws of God" and can only be abolished through advocating "immediate emancipation". The BFASS was founded by women "to aid and assist in this righteous cause as far as lies within our power". Furthermore, the articles of the constitution make clear that any woman is eligible to become a member, opinions of the members can be expressed freely and that "two thirds of the members present" are entitled to vote on issues that relate to the affairs of the society.[67]

At first glance, it seems that the BFASS was an interracial society since its founding and welcomed women, whether they were black or white. However, it appears that the BFASS was established by twelve white women that were initially not truly open to recruiting

[64] The Liberator, Nov. 17, 1832, in: *SAS*.
[65] Constitution of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1834. Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.05600700/?sp=1.
[66] The Liberator, Sept. 13, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[67] Constitution of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1834.

black women. This fact has only been discovered because Garrison wrote a letter to Mary Grew, "Corresponding *Secretary*" of the BFASS at the time, in which he addressed the unwillingness of the white women and forcefully insisted them to change their position. Two days later, Mary Grew responded to Garrison that black woman Susan Paul had been appointed as counsellor and the society would be accepting black women from that moment on as well.[68] The Bostonian-born schoolteacher Susan Paul was listed as counsellor for the upcoming year and in her short life, as she passed in 1841 when she was only in her early thirties, she has proven to be a notable black women abolitionist who left behind a legacy. She closely cooperated with Garrison for the abolitionist cause. He helped her with financial issues, but also gave her advice on how to defend herself from racial prejudices.[69]

Thus, black women were soon after Garrison's reprimand welcomed in the BFASS. It cannot be argued with certainty whether Garrison solely ensured the admission of black women. As Susan Paul was appointed within two days after receiving Garrison's letter and right before the constitution was published, it is quite possible that the BFASS was already accepting black women as members. Besides, many female anti-slavery societies did accept black women within their society either way. Nevertheless, there were also female anti-slavery societies that did not accept black women, for example in New York City. As the two major women's societies forbade their admission, black women established their own female anti-slavery society.[70] An explanation for this type of discrimination is that the women of these New York societies were all-white, very conservative and highly religious. They acted according to their religious beliefs, signifying the moral wrongness of slavery rather than

[68] Salerno, "Networks and Spheres", 59. After an extensive search on the internet, it became clear that the correspondence between Garrison and Mary Grew was not available online. The original source is the BFASS Letterbook, which can be found in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston. Since the correspondence is an indispensable source in this thesis, it has been decided to refer to a secondary source. Beth Salerno's dissertation quoted a portion of the letter, allowing it to be mentioned. The original correspondence consists of a letter from Garrison (written April 9, 1834) and a letter from Mary Grew (written April 11, 1834).
[69] Stewart, *William Lloyd Garrison*, 55-56.
[70] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 114.

equality for enslaved persons and free blacks. Compared to Bostonian women, New York women "neither heard nor understood [their] argument for natural rights".[71]

Fortunately, the women of the BFASS had revised their perspective fairly quickly and became one of the most vocal societies for not only abolitionism, but also racial equality. An example of the public support for black men and women is shown during a meeting of the BFASS on October 21, 1835. The meeting was disrupted by a mob who was looking for British abolitionist George Thompson but when they could not find him, they turned to the black women attending the BFASS meeting. To provide a safe passage and to give a strong signal, white women walked arm in arm with black women. This non-violent resistance became another symbol for the Garrisonian movement. After the women were gone, the mob took Garrison. He was eventually freed because some of the mob-members realized they kidnapped an American man instead of Thompson.[72]

The BFASS was, or at least aspired to be, interracial. The same was true for the PFASS, which was founded in December 1833 and its official founding document was published in April 1834.[73] Initially, the PFASS was founded by women who had sought to become a member of the AASS but were rebuffed as the AASS refused to admit female members in its society.[74] It did not take long for Philadelphian women to unite themselves in the PFASS. The constitution specifies that these women "deem it our duty, as professing *Christians*, to manifest our abhorrence of the flagrant injustice and deep sin of slavery … and [recognize] the right of the slave to immediate emancipation". Of the nine articles, six describe the duties of management positions within the society. The other three articles explain that the society will collect correct information on issues regarding "the character of slavery" and enslaved persons, that every woman is a member of the PFASS when she unites

[71] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 44.
[72] Ibid., 283; McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy*, 54.
[73] The Liberator, April 19, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[74] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 6-7.

in the society's views and that it is recommended that members should not buy or use any product that has been created by the use of slave labor.[75] Although the constitution of the PFASS is slightly different than the constitution of the BFASS, the essence is the same.

The founding document of the PFASS ended with the names of five members of the society that were appointed officers for the ensuing year. One of these women was black, namely Margaretta Forten, daughter of wealthy black entrepreneur and abolitionist James Forten.[76] Margaretta Forten had become a member of the PFASS together with her mother Charlotte and sisters Sarah and Harriet. Since its founding, the PFASS had welcomed every woman who wanted to join its organization. When the constitution was published, it had been signed by a total of twenty-nine women and it is certain that nine of these women were black.[77] The fact that almost all of the women in the Forten family became a member of the PFASS in its early stages, can be seen as a great stimulus for other black women in Philadelphia who wanted to join a female anti-slavery society.

§2.2 Anti-Slavery Conventions

Every female anti-slavery society in the antebellum North was, in principle, an independent organization. In practice, however, some female anti-slavery societies were affiliated with other organizations. The inability for women to join the AASS because of its prohibition of female membership had led to the independent PFASS, but this was not the case for all. For example, in its founding years, the BFASS was tied to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MASS) and gave virtually all the proceeds to the MASS. In its first year, the BFASS did not organize major events as the society was still in development.[78]

[75] The Liberator, April 19, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[76] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 119.
[77] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 69.
[78] Hansen, D.G., *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 13-14.

In mid-1836, when some female anti-slavery societies already existed for a few years and were expanding quickly, the BFASS suggested to other women's societies such as the women of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and the PFASS to establish a "general executive committee". This committee would investigate how women abolitionists across the country advocated the abolitionist cause. In addition, the BFASS called for a national women's anti-slavery convention. In general, the reception of this proposal was quite positive, some organizations were more open to it than others.[79] The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women took place fairly quickly as it was already held in New York City from May 9-12, 1837.[80]

Manisha Sinha refers to the beginning of these conventions as "the high point of female abolitionism" because women in the North joined their forces in the fight for abolition.[81] The proceedings of the convention show that there were 71 delegates in total and 103 corresponding members. Corresponding members were women who could not attend physically but were present in the sense that they were aware of the affairs of the convention and communicated through correspondence. Among the women attending were members of the BFASS and the PFASS as well as women of the LNYCASS, that was not necessarily Garrisonian because they did not admit black women into their society. There were also women attending that did not have a membership of any of these major societies but belonged to other minor organizations, such as white abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster of the Lynn Female Anti-Slavery Society (LFASS). From the minutes it can be deduced that all delegates were favorable to immediate abolition and that one of the eleven women appointed to the

[79] Salerno, "Networks and Spheres", 79-81.
[80] "Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. Held in the City of New-York, May 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1837." Retrieved from Google Books https://books.google.nl/books?id=i4_0lIKmyncC&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[81] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 282.

official board was black, namely Grace Douglass.[82] Douglass was born in New Jersey but grew up in Philadelphia. The family she grew up in was very active in the anti-slavery movement and this affected Douglass as well because she became one of the founding members of the PFASS.[83]

The number of black board members gives the impression that black women abolitionists were either uninvited or unwelcome, but Sterling argues that black women worked "alongside whites wherever they were welcomed". Even though the LNYCASS did not admit black women into its society, they did not oppose black women attending the convention. However, as this society did not treat black women as equals and the convention was held in New York, it could have been a form of protest of black women. Furthermore, travelling was expensive and black women had to deal with racism and segregation additionally. These reasons could therefore be a plausible clarification on why black women were quite absent in general. Still, black women were a minority because of the women attending the convention one out of ten was black, but they were equally represented as one of eleven board members was black.[84]

The argument that black women protested, does coincide with a poem that black PFASS-member Sarah Forten Purvis contributed to the convention:

> We are thy sisters. — God has truly said,
> That of one blood the nations He has made.
> Oh, Christian woman ! in a Christian land,
> Canst thou unblushing lead this great command?
> Suffer the wrongs which wring our inmost heart,
> To draw one throb of pity on thy part!

[82] "Proceedings Of The Anti-Slavery Convention Of American Women. 1837", 3-6.
[83] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 103.
[84] Ibid., 114.

Our skins may differ, but from thee we claim

A sister's privilege, and a sister's name. — *Sarah Forten*.[85]

The poem was published in "An Appeal To The Women Of The Nominally Free States" and spread among the women attending the convention. The poem is a call to white women specifically, to which Purvis hopes them to realize "we … sisters … [are of] one blood the nations He [God] has made". A powerful poem that, in any case, left an impression on the women present.

During the four days of the convention, many resolutions were resolved and adopted. As a Bostonian delegate, Lydia Maria Child was appointed the convention's vice-president and she offered a resolution about God being the one "who created mankind free". Therefore, all humans should do anything in their power to restore a justice of liberty for all. Also, the delegates were in agreement with regarding slavery as a "*national sin*".[86] The resolutions were mostly about public affairs, but one adopted resolution contained that "we, as abolitionists, use all our influence in having our colored friends seated promiscuously in all our congregations".[87] The fact that this resolution was adopted by a majority of white women shows the willingness of these women to accept black women as their equal. Yet, black women were still not equally represented at the convention.

To substantiate that the statement above was not a snapshot but rather a continuity, the 1838 convention will be analyzed. The convention took place in Pennsylvania Hall, in Philadelphia from May 15-18, 1838. The number of delegates had almost tripled compared to the previous year, since there were 203 women present. The total of corresponding members

[85] "An Appeal To The Women Of The Nominally Free States, Issued By An Anti-Slavery Convention Of American Women. Held By Adjournments From The 9th To The 12th Of May, 1837.", 1, in: *SAS*. Sarah Forten Purvis is introduced only briefly in this chapter as she will be a significant figure in chapter 3. In that chapter, she will be introduced properly and discussed why she can be counted as Garrisonian.
[86] "Proceedings Of The Anti-Slavery Convention Of American Women. 1837", 7-11. Lydia Maria Child has also been introduced only briefly for the same reason as Grimké and Purvis.
[87] Ibid., 17.

was 73. Of the sixteen board members, at least three were black. Although the number of white and black women was by far from equal, one black woman out of six in total can be seen as quite an improvement.[88] The three board members that were black were Susan Paul, who had been appointed vice-president, Martha V. Ball as secretary and Sarah Douglass as convention treasurer.[89]

Another substantiation of the notion of equality also took place during the 1838 convention. A mob attacked Pennsylvania Hall and women were pelted with stones and threatened. Later that night, Pennsylvania Hall burned down. Instead of giving in to their fear, all the female attendees of the convention got together the next morning to adopt a resolution on racial prejudice: "That prejudice against color is the very spirit of slavery, sinful in those who indulge it … therefore, the duty of abolitionists to identify themselves with these oppressed Americans". This revealed a sense of solidarity, a conception of being all in this together and "it took strength and sensitivity on the part of both sets of "sisters" to meet and socialize".[90]

In the minutes of the last Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, which was held in Philadelphia from May 1-3, 1839, Lucretia Mott who was one of the founders of the PFASS, informs the attendees of her encounter with Isaac Roach, the mayor of Philadelphia. A few days before the start of the convention, the mayor had called Mott with several questions, such as where the convention would be held, if there would be women only and if so, only white or "white and colored". The section in which Mott speaks about this occurrence almost looks like as if she were interrogated by the law enforcement. Consequently, the mayor gave several suggestions. He told Mott to gather in Clarkson Hall as it was guarded already, not to meet in the dark and keep the convention as short as possible. Whether the

[88] "Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in Philadelphia. May 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, 1838." Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n1926, 12-14.
[89] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 114.
[90] Ibid., 115; "Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1838", 8.

mayor gave all these suggestions because he wanted the best outcome for the women abolitionists cannot be deduced from the source. Yet, it does become clear what the mayor thought of white women associating themselves with black women. His negative undertone can be read between the lines as he told Mott that they "should avoid unnecessary walking with colored people". Moreover, he accused the women of making "a parade" out of walking with black women. Mott countered this by arguing that a parade had never been the case and that they would exactly behave as they had always done: "walk with them as occasion offered; … it was a principle with us, which we could not yield, to make no distinction on account of color; [and that they were] expecting delegates from Boston of that complexion, and should, probably, accompany them to the place of meeting".[91]

§2.3 Anti-Slavery Petitions

The proceedings of the 1838 convention are similar to the proceedings of the 1837 convention, as it describes the implementing of several resolutions. The resolutions are generally continuations of resolutions passed the previous year, but more extensive. For example, the sending of petitions was named in the proceedings of 1837 in singular. The proceedings of 1838 move from word to deeds by increasing the call for petitions. It states that "whatever may be the sacrifice, and whatever other rights may be yielded or denied, we will maintain practically the right of petition, until the slave shall go free … [and] we will endeavor to send *five* the present year; and that we will not cease our efforts until the prayers of every woman within the sphere of our influence shall be heard in the halls of Congress on this subject".[92] It seems that the text the women chose for their resolutions was much more decisive than before, probably to appear more compelling.

[91] "Proceedings of the third Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in Philadelphia, May 1st, 2d and 3d, 1839.", 5-6, in: *SAS*.
[92] "Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1838", 5.

The fact that petitioning was named in both proceedings of the national conventions did not come unexpectedly. Since the late eighteenth century, there had been anti-slavery petitions, but mainly in religious spheres where only the clerk of the church signed the petition. This changed in the late 1820s when Garrison began advertising petitioning, and in the mid-1830s, men began encouraging women abolitionists to petition as well.[93] A significant example is that of John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the U.S. and prominent opponent of slavery. After his presidency, Adams was a member of the House of Representatives.[94] During a debate, Adams defended the political activism of women. When "Mr. Howard", [Benjamin Chew Howard, chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs], evaluated a petition and it was signed by women, he considered it as "discreditable". Adams responded in a speech: "I trust to the good nature of that gentleman that he will retract such an assertion". Adams thought he had the right to rectify Howard's judgment because "it is to the wives and to the daughters of my constituents that he applies this language"; "Can he have forgotten the innumerable instances … where women … immortalized their names, by the part they took in the affairs of their country?".[95] If powerful men like Adams stood up for women's activism, they could achieve significantly more.

That petitioning turned out to be successful is substantiated in the research of Daniel Carpenter and Colin D. Moore. In their article, they conclude that women's petitioning was far more successful than petitions filed by men: petitions organized by women had at least 50 percent more signatures. Carpenter and Moore argue that women, such as Angelina Grimké, were canvassing petitions during public lectures, encouraged other women to circulate

[93] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 179-180.
[94] Hinks and McKivigan, *Encyclopedia*, 3.
[95] John Quincy Adams, "Speech of John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts : upon the right of the people, men and women, to petition; on the freedom of speech and debate in the House of representatives of the United States; on the resolutions of seven state legislatures, and the petitions of more than one hundred thousand petitioners, relating to the annexation of Texas to this Union : delivered in the House of representatives of the United States, in fragments of the morning hour, from the 16th of June to the 7th of July 1838, inclusive", 65-67, in: *SAS*.

petitions and that they "invested significant time and energy in trying to persuade others … as they covered entire communities". In addition, it has been determined that leaders in the women's rights movement were initially petitioning for the purpose of the anti-slavery movement.[96]

The fact that petitioning was successful is also because it paved the way for a collaboration between female anti-slavery societies. The national conventions of women abolitionists are a significant example of this increase in co-operation. Societies also independently petitioned for the abolitionist cause. For example, petitions were sent "to the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled" and these were all signed by women. The places where the petitions originate from were spread throughout the North. A petition was sent by "Ladies of Erie County Pennsylvania" in which they demanded "to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia". The same applies to "Ladies, Resident in the State of Ohio, in Clermont County".[97] The "inhabitants of the County of Seneca in the State of New York … respectfully and earnestly entreat you, not to admit any new State to this Union, whose Constitution tolerates Domestic Slavery".[98] There were also women who petitioned themselves, such as Lydia Maria Child. In her petition, published in newspaper *The Cradle of Liberty*, Child asked that "the law barring intermarriages between people of different complexions … [must] be immediately repealed".[99]

The quantity of petitions was large to such an extent that a "gag rule" was passed by the House of Representatives in 1836. All the petitions it would receive from then on were

[96] Daniel Carpenter and Colin D. Moore, "When Canvassers Became Activists: Antislavery Petitioning and the Political Mobilization of American Women", *American Political Science Review* vol. 108 no. 3 (2014): 479-498, at 479-480.
[97] "Antislavery Petitions from Women, 1835–1849". Retrieved from the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/antislavery-petitions-women-1835-1849.
[98] "Antislavery Petitions from Women, 1835–1849".
[99] The Cradle of Liberty, April 27, 1839, in: *SAS*.

piled up and unread. However, the gag rule caused the absolute opposite as women were even more eager to petition and a huge increase in petitions occurred.[100] Yet, the criticism did not come from anti-abolitionists only, but also from women who signed anti-slavery petitions themselves. Their critique was based on the petitions being used as a means of exerting political pressure, instead of "prayerful requests".[101]

While mass petitioning led to more criticism of women's activism, it also unwittingly sparked ideas about civil rights for women. This was still in its infancy, as it was a moral duty to fight for abolition first. Some women, usually collective as members of a female anti-slavery society, began signing petitions whose text had been pre-written and used by men. In the 1840s, the number of women's petitions declined enormously because it was linked more to political involvement than to anti-slavery activism. The "woman question" had caused a great debate within male anti-slavery societies such as the MASS and the AASS and by 1840, women abolitionists began asking for equal political rights for themselves through petitioning. This meant that petitioning had evolved from a moral ground to a political means requesting women's political rights. Women abolitionists that used petitions in their anti-slavery activism linked it to political involvement, and therefore refrained from petitioning.[102]

§2.4 Anti-Slavery Fairs

The BFASS began organizing anti-slavery fairs from 1834, in first instance to raise funds for the society itself. As the fairs turned out to be a successful way to raise money, more female anti-slavery societies began organizing anti-slavery fairs as well.[103] As of 1836, the PFASS started holding fundraising fairs to raise money for the abolitionist cause. During these

[100] Carpenter and Moore, "When Canvassers Became Activists", 480.
[101] Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 185.
[102] Ibid., 186-190.
[103] Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 108.

fundraisers, money was earned by the selling of all sorts of products such as handmade articles, works of art and homemade food.[104] Besides, fundraisers were organized by a collaboration of both black and white women. This is apparent from, for example, the pamphlet of the women of the MASS who proposed to hold an anti-slavery fair in October, 1840 in Boston. From the women who organized this fair and undersigned the pamphlet, it is certain that at least two of them were black, namely Susan Paul and Thankful Southwick.[105]

An example of a major fundraising fair was the New York City fair, held on December 22, 1836. A report of the fair was written by Maria Weston Chapman and published in *The Liberator*. "The Ladies' Fair" attracted many people that were not abolitionists, "but belonged to a large and increasing class of the community, who have been strongly abolitionized by Anti-Slavery efforts". This comment shows that anti-slavery activism was noticed in public life and that the common American was drawn to it. The main goal was to persuade people of the injustice of slavery: "We wish to bring Truth and Falsehood in continual juxtaposition". The fair was incredibly successful as $550 dollars was raised. The editor of *The Liberator* put this into perspective and stated that it was "Pretty well for a single day's receipts, when money is at 3 per cent. a month - equal to a thousand dollars ordinarily".[106]

Smaller and more local fairs were held as well, for example by the SFASS. These fairs raised less money than large fairs, but they were no less successful. Fairs in general contributed significantly to abolition as it generated income and became visible in daily public life.[107]

Thus, the money that was raised during anti-slavery fairs was used by societies to continue advocating the abolitionist cause, for example by funding anti-slavery newspapers. It

[104] Ira V. Brown, "Cradle of Feminism: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1833-1840", *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 102 no. 2 (1978): 143-166, at 153.
[105] "Anti-Slavery Fair. Proposed by women of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society". Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.24800700/.
[106] The Liberator, Jan. 2, 1837, in: *SAS*.
[107] Jeffrey, *Great Silent Army*, 109.

also served to support fugitive slaves on their way to freedom.[108] The fact that assisting freedom seekers was a national women's affair appears from a resolution that was adopted during the 1837 Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. In this resolution, it was stated that the practice of sending fugitive slaves back to their enslavers should not be maintained and people should help fugitive slaves by protecting them because this practice is "as utterly at variance with the principles of liberty".[109]

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed how two Garrisonian female anti-slavery societies, the BFASS and the PFASS, contributed to the abolitionist cause. The first section has discussed the origin and principles of these societies. The most remarkable difference between the BFASS and the PFASS is that the BFASS initially did not allow black women to become a member, while the PFASS immediately welcomed every woman in the society regardless of them being black or white. However, the BFASS changed its admission policy fairly quickly and allowed black women to become a member before the founding document was published. A significant example of this turning point was the moment when black and white women walked arm in arm after a meeting of the BFASS was disrupted by a mob. This proved the organization's interracial solidarity.

Even though the BFASS did not start all-welcoming, it quickly turned into one of the most prominent female anti-slavery societies. It gave the impetus to organize a national convention of women abolitionists. These conventions have proven to strengthen the bond between female anti-slavery societies and became a breeding ground for racial equality and mass petitioning. During these conventions, there were women attending who excluded black women in their society. Yet, they put themselves over this difference in views when they

[108] Ibid., 108.
[109] "Proceedings Of The Anti-Slavery Convention Of American Women. 1837", 8.

attended the national convention. This could, however, be a reason for black women not to attend the convention and would also explain why black women were a minority. Nevertheless, a firm statement was made during the 1838 convention when a resolution on racial prejudice was adopted by all its female attendees. Besides, it appeared that within the BFASS, PFASS and national conventions, it was attempted to increase the number of black women by including them in decision-making as some black women were appointed as board members.

By analyzing three different types of anti-slavery activism conducted by female anti-slavery societies, it can be concluded that anti-slavery conventions, anti-slavery petitions and anti-slavery fairs contributed significantly to the abolitionist cause. More importantly, they also served as a way to improve interracial relations and advocate racial equality.

Chapter 3: Individual Women's Anti-Slavery Activism

As the previous chapter has explained the various forms of anti-slavery activism that female anti-slavery societies put in practice, this chapter will focus on the ways in which Garrisonian women sought to achieve abolitionism individually. To give structure to the chapter, it has been decided not to collect all kinds of sources made by women without a specific purpose. A selection was made based on the type of writing or lecture and whether the woman can be counted as Garrisonian. In addition, a fair division of both white and black women has been made in order to compare the type of activism of these women with each other as well. All of these women will be introduced briefly throughout the chapter. In this chapter it will be argued that there were various ways of expressing anti-slavery ideas and that the anti-slavery activism of black and white women to some extent differed from each other.

The first section will research how women contributed to the abolitionist cause in literary writings, such as their contributions in newspapers in the form of essays and poems as well as books they wrote. The second section will discuss the activism of women in the public sphere by looking at addresses or lectures women gave and to some extent how their public appearances were received. Altogether, the research in these sections will provide an answer to the question: How did Garrisonian women contribute to the abolitionist cause individually?

§3.1 Women Abolitionists in Literature

Although it became somewhat easier for women in the nineteenth century to betake themselves in public than in previous centuries, they could still count on opposition from mainly religious quarters. While some churches adhered to abolitionism and encouraged women's activism, the majority of churches and its believers favored the traditional role of women, namely in the domestic sphere and subordinate to men. By expressing themselves in literary works, women were able to avoid this criticism to some extent. Not only did this

make a woman less visible in the public eye, but she could also express her anti-slavery motives anonymously or under another name.[110]

One of the most notable abolitionist newspapers in the North that supported women's anti-slavery activism as well was *The Liberator*. On January 7, 1832 the first issue of *The Liberator* with a section named "Ladies' Department" was published. It was decided to give women a voice in the newspaper because a million of enslaved women were "treated with more indelicacy and cruelty than cattle" and this should "ought to excite the sympathy and indignation of American women". It would not only "add greatly to its interest", but also "give a new impetus to the cause of emancipation": in "our own ladies … hands is the destiny of the slaves".[111] Since the Ladies Department had only been added to the paper recently, it did not contain many writings by women yet. Therefore, an article previously published in Lundy's newspaper *Genius of Universal Emancipation* was republished. It is unclear which woman wrote this, but she did make a clear statement. It is a call upon "American ladies" who have the duty to help enslaved women, because they are "our own sex" and God has entrusted the "American females … [that], as their fellow creatures, their oppressed sisters should be dear to them as their own flesh".[112]

In the years that followed, Sarah Mapps Douglass (1806-1882) has been one of the women who contributed frequently to this section as she wrote a countless amount of anti-slavery documents during her life. Douglass grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in a wealthy black family that was incredibly involved in the anti-slavery movement.[113] She founded a school for black children and could express her talent in writing in, for example, the Female Literary Association of Philadelphia (FLA), founded in 1831, of which she was secretary. When a Ladies' Department in *The Liberator* was created, women of the FLA

[110] Clapp and Jeffrey, *Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery*, 164.
[111] The Liberator, Jan. 7, 1832, in: *SAS*.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Jessie Carney Smith, *Notable Black American Women* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992), 288.

"found their first forum".[114] It appears that Garrison was in Philadelphia in the spring of 1832 and visited the FLA, "a society of colored ladies". He asked permission to bring with him several pieces written by the members to publish it.[115]

The first piece of one of the members of the FLA Garrison published was that of a woman who went by the name of Zillah. Research has shown that Douglass wrote anti-slavery documents under the names of Zillah, Ella and Sophanisba.[116] In the essay titled "To A Friend", Douglass refers to the story of a young, enslaved woman named Barbara Blaugdon. Through the help of God Blaugdon could "endure cruel persecution". Douglass then writes she was "particularly struck" when she knew what had happened to Blaugdon. Yet, the story of this enslaved woman's strength symbolizes that "God is on our side".[117] Douglass' way of reporting the atrocities that befell Blaugdon shows not only that slavery is something that must be abolished, but also that the spirit of an enslaved human cannot be broken.

One of the first pieces Douglass directly sent to *The Liberator* was an essay titled "Ella. A Sketch.", with a header above that says: "[By a young lady of color] – Beautiful!". In this essay, Douglass tells the story of Ella, a free woman who wakes up on a "peaceful, happy sabbath morning". Ella realizes on this joyful morning that the "sabbath is no day of rest to the poor slave", which makes her "heart … filled with sorrow for [her] enslaved sisters" as they hear "no hymn, no prayer, upon this holy morning". Nevertheless, Ella tries to hearten her sisters by ensuring them "Christ is near thee" and that he will appeal to the "oppressors himself".[118] On the one hand, this essay shows the sisterhood a free black woman felt with

[114] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 111-112.
[115] The Liberator, June 30, 1832, in: *SAS*.
[116] In Yellin and Van Horne, *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 111 it becomes clear that "Ella" was Sarah Mapps Douglass. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 270 shows that "Sophonisba" and "Zillah" were used by Douglass in her writings as well. Douglass used these names in at least three newspapers, namely *The Liberator*, *The Colored American* and *The National Enquirer* (which continued in 1838 as *The Pennsylvania Freeman*). Where Manisha Sinha generally describes that pieces by Douglass were also signed with the name "Sophonisba", documents in *The Liberator* researched in this thesis show that Douglass in fact signed with "Sophanisba".
[117] The Liberator, June 30, 1832, in: *SAS*.
[118] The Liberator, Aug. 4, 1832, in: *SAS*.

enslaved women and on the other hand, it lets believers of slavery know that Christ will haunt and correct them.

When Douglass signed her anti-slavery texts with "Ella", the texts were often in the form of a poem. In 1836, she sent a poem titled "The Voice of Warning" to *The National Enquirer*, in which a voice of warning from abroad predicted that "Oppression and bondage shall cease, The forgers and wearers of chains join in peace" and would save "From guilt the planter – from misery the slave".[119] A poem published in *The Colored American* displays the United States as "*Here* is oppression's home … [which is] felt only by the injured, suffering slave". The poem is also an attack on slaveholders because they figuratively cool their foreheads with a slave's sigh: "Bears upwards sighs of anguish from the slave, And fans the brow of tyrants".[120] An extract of a different poem illustrates the carefree life an enslaved person has when he or she is asleep and "the deepest anguish he on waking feels" and that the slaveholder has "The guilty soul – the soul that's sunk in crime".[121] From some of these poems it becomes clear that the aim was not only to elicit compassion for the enslaved, but also to expose the slaveholder as an inhumane and criminal figure.

A woman who has contributed significantly to newspapers as well, *The Liberator* in particular, is Sarah Forten Purvis (1814-1883). She grew up in a wealthy environment in Philadelphia as her father James Forten was a successful freeborn black businessman. The Forten family was quite active in the abolitionist movement and united themselves with black and white anti-slavery activists, including Garrison, who also sat "at the long family dinner table". Purvis began writing poems and other literary works at a young age and from the 1830s. Most of her works were published in *The Liberator*.[122] Her anti-slavery publications

[119] The National Enquirer, Nov. 12, 1836, in: *SAS*.
[120] The Colored American, Jan. 20, 1838, in: *SAS*.
[121] The National Enquirer, Jan. 25, 1838, in: *SAS*.
[122] Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 119-121.

Purvis signed with either Ada or Magawisca.[123]

In the March 26, 1831, issue of *The Liberator,* Purvis submitted two articles. One in the form of an essay under the name Magawisca and one poem under the name Ada. That Ada and Magawisca were the same person is made clear with a caption: "Our correspondent 'Ada' and 'Magawisca', we are proud to learn, is a young colored lady of Philadelphia". In the essay titled "The Abuse of Liberty", Purvis criticizes "this boasted land of Philanthropy" because it gives a white man freedom and an opportunity to enjoy his life whilst a black man is deprived of these rights. She openly wonders why they are treated this way: "Is it because their skins are black, that they are to be deprived of every tender tie that binds the heart of man to earth?". Besides, she sees it as a "lamentable fact" that the institution of slavery is still in place, but warns its proponents as God's wrath will fall upon them: "He … will [not] allow you to rest tranquil on your downy couches … He will shake the tree of liberty, and its blossoms will spread over the earth".[124] Purvis' essay comes across as immensely powerful, especially in its use of the wrath of God that will bring justice eventually. In the nineteenth century, many people believed in God and by using the Almighty against the oppressor, then they would fear this. Also, by showing that the black man is human as well since the only difference is the color of the skin, an appeal is made to people's feelings.

In the literary works of Purvis that were published in *The Liberator,* the name Ada appeared significantly more often than Magawisca and all of Ada's contributions were in the form of a poem. Three specific subjects can categorize these poems, namely a category with poems not necessarily about slavery, poems about the cruelty of slavery and its oppressors and poems of support for the slave and the abolitionist cause in general. It seems that Purvis did not want to write about slavery exclusively, because in other poems she addresses natural

[123] According to Dorothy Sterling, Sarah Forten Purvis signed her literary works with the names "Ada" and "Magawisca". Her works were published in two newspapers between 1831 and 1837: Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 121.
[124] The Liberator, March 26, 1831, in: *SAS*.

events in life, such as “A Mother’s Grief” that is about losing a husband.[125] In “Life” she is aware of the suddenness “how full of change” life is and the things we most appreciate “silently depart”.[126]

Although Purvis did not devote all her poems on the subject of slavery, she did make sure to confront the oppressors with their heinous actions. For example, in the poem “The Slave” she compares the history of the patriot himself with a slave because “bondage once had been their lot”. Yet, the patriot raises his sons with pride and does not remember “the wrongs they once redress’d” and does not care for the fate of a slave who “know[s] that he can ne’er be free”.[127] A poem that comes across as more emotional, is “The Slave’s Girl Farewell”, the story of a forced separation of a mother and young daughter when their master decided to move. It is unclear whether the poem is based on a real event, but it gives the impression that these incidents did occur. By taking away a young girl who is not able to take care of herself yet from her mother, the inhumane character of the master is shown. Purvis referred to the master’s action as “cruelly”.[128] As this story comes across as real and devastating, it evokes the reader’s pity for the slave’s girl and her mother. In the way Purvis contrasts the master with mother and daughter, the distinction between good and evil is clearly visible and the ruthlessness of the oppressor is emphasized once again.

In her poems about the cruelty of slavery and its oppressors, Purvis does not mince words in criticizing her own country. The poem “My Country” describes the hypocrisy in which the U.S. pretends to be “Home of the Free” while maintaining the institution of slavery and “the impress of falsehood”. She even indicates not to speak about “my country”, unless “she [the U.S.] shall be, In truth, the bright home of the ‘brave and the free!’”.[129] The

[125] The Liberator, July 7, 1832, in: *SAS*.
[126] The Liberator, Aug. 3, 1833, in: *SAS*.
[127] The Liberator, April 16, 1831, in: *SAS*.
[128] The Liberator, June 27, 1835, in: *SAS*.
[129] The Liberator, Jan. 4, 1834, in: *SAS*.

criticism of her own country remained unchanged. By the late 1830s, slavery had been abolished or nearly abolished in various places. When Purvis read that slavery would be abolished in French colonies, she wrote a poem titled “The United States come last”. The poem can be seen as a call to the southern states to do what is just and follow other countries.[130]

That Purvis her poems were acknowledged and appreciated is apparent from the responses of *The Liberator*’s readers. A man named James Scott and a woman named Augusta separately replied to Purvis’ poem “An Appeal to Woman”. In this poem, Purvis specifically addresses women who, from their Christian values, should “dare to be good” and should unite because “Our ‘skins may differ’, but from thee we claim A sister’s privilege, in a sister’s name”.[131] Scott responded to Purvis in the form of a poem in which he praised Ada because her appeal “Strikes with the force of truth upon the heart”. In addition, Scott emphasized her to be more compelling and “Urge the proud white man to undo the yoke, ere its red hands are violently broke”.[132] Augusta, who felt herself addressed by Purvis’ poem, responded in the form of a poem as well. She felt confronted when she read it “for shame is ours that we begin so late”. Besides, she agrees with Ada and writes “That Freedom’s sons may feel their guilt with shame”.[133] The responses of these two persons do not only show an appreciation for Purvis to dedicate oneself to the abolitionist cause but show the importance of the continuous spread of these anti-slavery works as well. In this case, writing these poems encourages other individuals to respond in the same way even though they were possibly not frequent writers or active in the abolitionist movement at all.

Douglass and Purvis frequently published their works in a newspaper as it were fairly short texts, but some women had the resources to publish a book for example. One of these

[130] The Liberator, March 1, 1839, in: *SAS*.
[131] The Liberator, Feb. 1, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[132] The Liberator, Feb. 22, 1834, in: *SAS*.
[133] The Liberator, March 1, 1834, in: *SAS*.

women was white abolitionist Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880), who grew up in Medford, Massachusetts and began writing about sensitive subjects such as slavery and American Indians since her early twenties. Through her husband David Lee Child, who was an editor for the *Massachusetts Journal*, she met Garrison at the end of the 1820s. In the years that followed, the contact between Garrison and Child intensified and she became more radical, for example by advocating immediate emancipation.[134]

This radicalism was expressed by Child in her book *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. Child was aware that her book would cause a stir in American society as she beseeches the reader in the preface "not to throw down this volume as soon as you have glanced at the title" and that she expects "ridicule and censure" but does not "fear them".[135] Three points from the book will be highlighted as they best capture its essence. First of all, Child approaches slavery from an economic point of view in which she argues that free labor is much more lucrative than slave labour. The arguments she presents are for example that in the case of an enslaved individual's illness the doctor must be paid by the slave owner and the children of the enslaved children must also be supported.[136] By attributing an entire chapter to the economic disadvantages of slavery and comparing it to free labor, Child addresses and tries to convince Southerners that it is more profitable to use free laborers instead of using arguments based on the sinfulness of slavery. Secondly, Child tries to refute an argument that pro-slavery activists often used, namely "The intellectual inferiority of the negroes". She believes that this theory is the "most absurd apology, for personal prejudice". Therefore, Child uses her book as a means "to prove that the present degraded condition of that unfortunate race is produced by artificial causes, not by the laws of nature".[137] In the last

[134] Carolyn L. Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), xix-xx.
[135] Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833). Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/11004047/, preface.
[136] Child, *An Appeal*, 77.
[137] Ibid., 155.

chapter she builds upon this statement and addresses Northerners as well by arguing that "prejudices against people of color" are only shared by ignorant persons. Hence, people should inform themselves.[138] The anti-slavery ideas that Child expresses in her book show that she did not fear any form of critique nor any financial consequences. In the 1820s, Child had founded a journal named the *Juvenile Miscellany* and when she published her appeal, she lost that many subscribers that it was no longer profitable to continue.[139] However, as Child wrote in her conclusion: "it was a duty to fulfil this task; and earthly considerations should never stifle the voice of conscience".[140] She did not renounce her anti-slavery ideas and continued her struggle for abolitionism.

Another book Child wrote was *Anti-Slavery Catechism*. The title reveals the structure of the book because "catechism" implies questions and answers of Christian principles. Child explains that her activism is based on her duty as a Christian, as well as a "conscientious citizen" of the country. She argues that slaveholders are full of hypocrisy because they draft oppressive laws and when asked why they do not emancipate slaves, it is because the law does not allow them to.[141] In addition, when Child is asked what she thinks about the slave trade, she sees it as great a sin as slavery itself because it is "the same difference as there is between the thief and the man who pays him for stealing".[142] Furthermore, she argues that immediate emancipation is a better way to end slavery than gradualism. Gradualism would mean that the slaveholder prepares an enslaved person for a life in freedom, for example by teaching him or her how to read and write. Child sees this as "utterly impossible to fit them for freedom while they remain slaves" because laws in southern states forbid a slave "to learn

[138] Ibid., 208.
[139] Hinks and McKivigan, *Encyclopedia*, 153.
[140] Child, *An Appeal*, 232.
[141] Lydia Maria Child, *Anti-Slavery Catechism* (Newburyport: C. Wipple, 1839). Retrieved from Internet Archive, via Johns Hopkins Libraries https://archive.org/details/antislaverycatec00chil/page/n3/mode/2up, 3-4.
[142] Child, *Anti-Slavery Catechism*, 12.

to read or write", on penalty of "twenty lashes".[143] As the subject of Child's book is "Anti-Slavery", one could imagine the purpose of the book was to address readers' questions regarding abolitionist intentions. She does not only explain her own motivations but criticizes Southern slaveholders in such a way that it makes them unbelievable. In contrast to her *Appeal* of 1833, Child does not present other options for slaveholders as she considers them sinners and hypocrites. The clarification of why Child advocates immediate emancipation reveal the radical element in her activism. Yet, it comes across as necessary because the concept of gradualism appears to be impracticable.

§3.2 Women Abolitionists in the Public Sphere

Some women tried to break with the tradition of being confined to the home by publishing literary works in which they sometimes used pseudonyms. However, there were also women who were more outspoken and propagated their anti-slavery thoughts in public, for example by giving lectures. One of these women was Maria W. Stewart (1803-1879), a freeborn black woman from Hartford, Connecticut. Her parents died when she was only five years old, but she was taken care of by a clergyman's family.[144] In the 1820s, Stewart moved to Boston where she met Garrison in 1831. She approached him with a manuscript she wanted to have published in *The Liberator*. From that moment on, "there began a friendship and professional affiliation".[145] As Stewart her career as public speaker only lasted two years, all four of her speeches will be discussed.

The first speech Stewart gave, was an address presented to the "Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of Boston" on April 28, 1832. In the first place, the address was meant to spread God's Word because Stewart noticed religion was inconsequential for some

[143] Ibid., 17.
[144] Hinks and McKivigan, *Encyclopedia*, 656.
[145] Marilyn Richardson, *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 10-11.

female attendees. Therefore, "God has fired my soul with a holy zeal … I am a strong advocate for the cause of God, and for the cause of freedom".[146] Stewart also hoped that her lecture would encourage others to step forward and take her place. Yet, what is most striking about this lecture is the amount of criticism Stewart has of people of her "own color". The reason is because she has experienced that "there are no people …, so unkind and unfeeling towards their own, as are the descendants of fallen Africa". She argues to improve oneself to "become a highly distinguished and respectable people".[147] Self-reflective, Stewart understands that her words come across as harsh, but she beseeches the attendees "to deal with gentleness and godly sincerity towards me".[148] At first glance, Stewart's speech may seem too critical and negative, but the underlying idea is to expose one's own shortcomings. Ultimately, it will lead to the absence of reasons for people in general to despise black people. In this way, everything is done to change continuity into a discontinuity.

As the audience of Stewart's first lecture consisted of only women, it was not as remarkable as her second lecture. Some women had given speeches within female organizations already, but with her second lecture Stewart became the first "American born woman" to address an audience of both women and men.[149] The speech, titled "Why Sit Ye Here And Die?", was delivered at the NEASS' meeting place, namely the Franklin Hall in Boston on September 21, 1832. First of all, Stewart requests all attendees to unite, come into action and "let us plead our cause before the whites". She claims they are the only ones who can save them, because if they do "we shall live".[150] Secondly, Stewart has heard "the horrors of slavery" and argues that it is indeed the worst, but life in the North is only "little better than

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[146] Maria W. Stewart, *Productions of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart, Presented to the First African Baptist Church & Society, of the City of Boston* (Boston: Friends of Freedom and Virtue, 1835). Retrieved from University of Pennsylvania Online Library https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book//lookupid?key=olbp29300, 59. In 1835, Stewart asked Garrison to collect and publish her works in one document. Hence, this thesis refers to the same source for all of Stewart's lectures.
[147] Stewart, *Productions*, 60.
[148] Ibid., 62.
[149] Smith, *Notable Black American Women*, 1084.
[150] Stewart, *Productions*, 51.

that": "may Heaven forbid that the generality of my color throughout these United States should experience any more of its horrors than to be a servant of servants". She criticizes that a poor black woman like herself cannot avoid a life in servitude, let alone a higher position on the labor market.[151] Lastly, Stewart addresses racial prejudice. She describes that she asked women "who transact business for themselves" to hire young black girls, but these women were afraid to lose their "public patronage" "as it was not the custom". She addresses these women as her "sisters" who have never had to do the tasks that free black women do to survive. Therefore, she asks the women for pity and for them to use their influence to help them. Besides, she urges the black female attendees to focus on "moral worth and intellectual improvement" because this would lead to a reduction in prejudice. Additionally, she includes a poem indicating the equality of all people:

Though black their skins as shades of night,

Their hearts are pure, their souls are white[152]

The "Why Sit Ye Here And Die?" speech can be seen as an expression of powerlessness. When she considers her role as a black woman in the North only a little better than life as an enslaved person, it comes across as unbearable. Therefore, most of her criticism concerns the North, especially white women who are supposed to treat black women equally, but still have racial prejudices and offer no opportunities. However, Stewart her speech shows that she did not want to berate these women completely, as she still referred to them as sisters.

Stewart's third lecture "An Address: African Rights and Liberty" was delivered at the African Masonic Hall in Boston on February 27, 1833. Addressed to mainly black men, Stewart criticizes their lack of willpower to become better as a race. She blames them for not protesting the role that has been imposed upon them. The consequence is that their chance is

[151] Ibid., 51-53.
[152] Ibid., 52-55.

lost, because if they would speak up now it suggests disrespectfulness. Stewart criticizes these men more fiercely as it causes her "blood to boil". She proposes a solution, arguing that "knowledge is power". She encourages black men to become "useful and active members in society" for which they must become fearless and stand up for themselves.[153] The money they earn should not be spend on gambling but rather benefit the black community, for example by founding and funding schools. Besides, they must commit themselves to the abolitionist cause by signing a petition to achieve abolition in the District of Columbia.[154] Although Stewart focuses mainly on black men, there are two moments when she speaks negatively about white people. First, she claims that "Had we as a people received, one half the early advantages the whites have received, I would defy the government of these United States to deprive us any longer of our rights".[155] Secondly, she shows the inhumane side of white Americans: "they stole our fathers … and made bond-men and bond-women of them and their little ones … and now that we have enriched their soil … they say that we are not capable of becoming like white men".[156] Yet, Stewart's criticism of her own people is the essence of her lecture. It is noticeable that she blames black people for all the injustice that has been done to them. She sees black people as the perpetrators of their own fate.

On September 21, 1833, with her "Farewell Address to Her Friends in the City of Boston", Stewart withdrew from her career as a public speaker. In this speech, she thanks "Mr. Garrison" for being one of the few white men who supported and advocated emancipation of women. In good spirits, Stewart embarked on her mission, but she soon lost her confidence as she was "misrepresented, and there was none to help".[157] The fact that Stewart was a woman who spoke in public brought her a great deal of criticism. This

[153] Ibid., 63-65.
[154] Ibid., 67-70.
[155] Ibid., 68.
[156] Ibid., 71-72.
[157] Ibid., 74-75.

aggravated when Stewart began criticizing the black community for not standing up for themselves and blaming them for their unequal role in society. Marilyn Richardson argues that Stewart's "gender would indeed underscore what some must have considered the unpalatable nature of her message".[158] Even though Stewart realized the public opinion would not change anytime soon and decided to suspend her career indefinitely, she concluded her speech with a piece of mind: "The bitterness of my soul has departed from those who endeavored to discourage and hinder me in my Christian progress; and I can now forgive cheerfully pray for those who have despitefully used and persecuted me".[159]

A woman who gave public lectures as well was Angelina Emily Grimké (1805-1879), born in Charleston, South Carolina as the daughter of a slaveholder. Instead of seeing slavery as the natural order of things, she perceived it as an atrocious institution. Greatly influenced by her sister Sarah, she chose the same path by moving to Philadelphia in 1829. When a pro-slavery riot in Boston took place in 1835, Grimké beheld this with horror and sent a letter to Garrison. Garrison published her letter in *The Liberator*, which meant her "entree into public life". Over time, this contact expanded into a regular publication of Grimké's writings in Garrison's newspaper and the start of her public lectures.[160]

The first lecture that will be discussed is "An Appeal To The Women Of The Nominally Free States", which Grimké gave at the "Anti-Slavery Convention Of American Women, 1837" in New York City. Her appeal is addressed to the women present and encourages them to dedicate oneself to the abolitionist cause as it is their duty "to themselves, to the suffering slave, to the slaveholder, to the church, to their country, and to the world at large; and above all, to their God".[161] The essence of the appeal will become clear by

[158] Richardson, *Maria W. Stewart*, 16.
[159] Stewart, *Productions*, 82.
[160] Stephen H. Browne, *Angelina Grimké: Rhetoric, Identity, and the Radical Imagination* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999), 8-12.
[161] "An Appeal To The Women Of The Nominally Free States", 3.

emphasizing several points.

First of all, Grimké refutes the argument that slavery is a political subject "with which women have nothing to do". She argues that every citizen has the right to think along on any subject concerning the country. She substantiates her argument by presenting an example of ancient Rome, wherein "the wife and mother of the Roman warrior … plead their country's cause".[162] Secondly, Grimké considers slavery a moral subject because it "exerts a most deadly influence over the morals of our country". Holding on to slavery is a sin and causes destruction in both the South and North. Because "colored men" are dehumanized in the South, people in the North "have erected a false standard" as they have racial prejudices as well.[163] Thirdly, Grimké presents possibilities to Northern women on how to support the abolitionist cause. They could organize themselves in anti-slavery societies, inform themselves of the "abominations of slavery", subscribe to anti-slavery newspapers, talk to friends about this subject, stop using "slave-grown products" and support "our oppressed colored sisters, who are suffering in our very midst".[164] It turns out Grimké's appeal is comprehensive and immensely powerful as she discusses every aspect of slavery. The length of the speech shows that she has thought of every possible question in advance. By providing counterarguments as well as possible ways to get involved, it not only reaches a large audience, but also offers perspective.

On February 21, 1838, Grimké became the first American woman to address a legislative body when she gave a speech before the legislative committee of the Massachusetts legislature. In comparison to her appeal at the New York City convention, this speech is rather short and the message soon becomes clear. After presenting petitions that demanded the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, Grimké tells the biblical story

[162] Ibid., 3-11.
[163] Ibid., 14-15.
[164] Ibid., 58-59.

of Queen Esther, who risked her life when she petitioned and prevented the death of "millions of her race". Grimké uses this story to describe her similar mission and says: "I stand before you as a southerner, exiled from the land of my birth, by the sound of the lash, and the piteous cry of the slave". Also, she calls it her moral duty to stand up for the slave and owes it to the "deluded master … to overturn a system of complicated crimes".[165] This speech is purely aimed at the ruling power but instead a political piece, Grimké presents a personal story. In addition, this address reflects the power of collaboration as a petition was attached that was signed by many women.

Grimké's speech during the "Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1838" at the Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia was very courageous as her speech was interrupted violently by a mob.[166] Even though this must have been terrifying, certainly because of the size of the crowd outside, Grimké continued her speech. Of the people outside she said: "Those voices without ought to awaken and call out our warmest sympathies. Deluded beings! they know not what they do".[167] The fact that pro-slavery activists were protesting reveals that "slavery has done its deadliest work in the heart of our citizens" and that abolitionists had extensive work to do.[168] Grimké went on steadfastly and considered it her duty as a Southerner. Mainly because when she was living in the South, she was unaware of the existence of anti-slavery activists. She did not know anyone in the South who shared the same opinion. Moreover, Grimké takes a strong anti-slavery position by indicating that there is no middle ground: "He that is not for us is against us".[169] Finally, she urges the female attendees to petition because, as opposed to men, women do not have the right to vote but

[165] Angelina Emily Grimké, *Speech before the Legislative Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature, February 21, 1838*, in: Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 267-269.
[166] Browne, *Angelina Grimké*, 153-154.
[167] Angelina Emily Grimké, *Speech in Pennsylvania Hall, May 16, 1838*, in: Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters*, 270.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid., 271-272.

politicians can be reached through petitioning.[170] Grimké's speech in Pennsylvania Hall can be seen as an act of fearlessness. Whilst a large crowd was trying to violently interrupt the convention, Grimké set a strong example not to bow to pro-slavery advocates and practiced what she preached.

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the different types of activism Garrisonian women practiced. The first section has discussed the literary works of black abolitionists Sarah Mapps Douglass and Sarah Forten Purvis and white abolitionist Lydia Maria Child. It is noticeable that both Douglass and Purvis published their anti-slavery essays and poems under a different name, while Child signed her books with her own name. Considering the criticism that befell Child when she published her appeal of 1833, it could be possible that Douglass and Purvis thought of this in advance. Yet, Child was aware that her book would cause a stir and went through with it.

Besides, in comparison to Douglass and Purvis, Child directly addressed Southerners and did this from a different point of view as well. She tried to inform Southern slaveholders that economically they would be better off when free laborers would work for them instead of enslaved persons. As Child explained this theory extensively in her appeal, it can be seen as a more effective way in the persuasion of slaveholders. This type of argument showed them a different and more probable alternative of which they would at least consider.

Furthermore, it appears that Douglass and Purvis chose to include the wrath of God or a similar meaning in their activist documents. These women were not necessarily more religious than Child, but they used more religious vengeance in their use of words. For example, Douglass saw Christ as the one that would go after slaveholders and Purvis literally

[170] Ibid., 273.

named God's wrath.

The second section has discussed the lectures of black abolitionist Maria W. Stewart and white abolitionist Angelina Emily Grimké. First of all, it appears that Stewart committed herself to the abolitionist cause mainly because of a religious motive. Grimké was religious as well and saw it as her duty as a Christian but was also determined by moral and political grounds.

Secondly, where Stewart criticizes black people for not standing up for themselves, Grimké blames Southerners for maintaining the system of slavery and accuses them of spreading their racist ideology throughout the North. In general, Stewart her lectures were less based on anti-slavery ideology than Grimké's lectures.

Thirdly, both women were aware that their lectures would provoke others, yet they were brave enough to continue their activism, at least for a certain amount of time. Ultimately, Stewart suffered that much from the disapproval and critique that she decided to quit her career as a public speaker. It seems that the threats Grimké received only made her more persistent in her activism. However, it must be taken into account that Stewart not only endured criticism from Southerners, but also from black Northerners as she blamed them for their own fate.

Conclusion

In this thesis, it has been attempted to answer the question: How did Garrisonian women abolitionists implement different types of anti-slavery activism in the antebellum North between 1830 and 1840? The answer to this question is based on several themes, namely the development of women's anti-slavery activism, the anti-slavery debate among female anti-slavery societies and individual women's anti-slavery activism.

The first chapter has described the history of the women's anti-slavery movement and how it developed from a more individual level into an organized movement. While the first anti-slavery documents were primarily religious, it has become apparent that since the Revolutionary Period, national and state legislation led to an increase in more political anti-slavery activism. Enslaved women such as Elizabeth Freeman successfully contested their legal status based on the principle of equality. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, northern states gradually abolished slavery, but slavery became even more ingrained in the antebellum South. A different approach was needed and in 1824, the British Elizabeth Heyrick came up with the idea of immediate abolition. This theory subsequently spread in the U.S. and was effectuated in the 1830s by the Garrisonian movement. Garrisonianism proved to be an appealing ideology for women to join as Garrison advocated not only abolition, but also gender and racial equality. Meanwhile, women also started to form anti-slavery movements, partly to break the tradition that women only belonged in the private sphere. During the 1830s, female anti-slavery societies began shooting up throughout the North. Women continued to dedicate oneself to the abolitionist cause individually but could also act collectively.

Chapter two has analyzed how female anti-slavery societies, mainly the BFASS and the PFASS, practiced different forms of activism. It has become clear that both societies, in the case of the BFASS apart from the period before the publication of the constitution, were

open to both black and white women. The BFASS called for a collaboration between female anti-slavery societies throughout the North in the form of national conventions. During these conventions numerous issues concerning abolitionism were discussed and resolutions were adopted. Besides conventions, petitioning proved to be a successful way of advocating the abolitionist cause as well. Petitioning became a form of activism because female canvassers promoted anti-slavery ideology and encouraged other women to become involved in the movement as well. Also, petitioning made women's anti-slavery societies work even more closely together. A third form of anti-slavery activism implemented by female anti-slavery societies was the organizing of fundraising fairs. These fairs not only raised money for the benefit of society itself, but also made anti-slavery activism visible in the daily public life and assisted fugitive slaves to get to a safe place.

Apart from answering the research question, this thesis served another purpose, which was to examine how black and white women worked together within these organizations. It appeared that non-Garrisonian societies such as the LNYCASS did not allow black women to become a member of their society. They did, however, attend national anti-slavery conventions even though black women were present as well. As for Garrisonian societies such as the BFASS and the PFASS, it can be concluded that there were moments when black women were cornered by for example mobs, but white women regarded black women as their sisters and stood up for them by adopting a resolution that condemned racial prejudices. This shows that there was a degree of solidarity among the women. Moreover, although black women were a minority within separate societies as well as during the conventions, the number of black female members increased through the years. This demonstrates that black women considered these interracial meetings the right way to advocate abolition and exchange thoughts.

The third and last chapter has analyzed how both black and white women Garrisonians

applied different types of anti-slavery activism. Three black women abolitionists and two white women abolitionists were discussed, respectively Sarah Mapps Douglass, Sarah Forten Purvis, Maria W. Stewart, Lydia Maria Child and Angelina Emily Grimké. These women contributed to the abolitionist cause by writing poems, essays and books and by giving public lectures. While Child published her books under her own name, Douglass and Purvis appeared to use a different name in their poems and essays. As all of these women were subjected to a certain amount of criticism, it could have been a safety precaution of Douglass and Purvis to write anonymously. In addition, the three women were all Christian, but it appeared that Douglass and Purvis made more use of religious arguments than Child. Besides these women, the anti-slavery activism of Maria W. Stewart and Angelina Emily Grimké was also examined. If the documents of these women are compared with each other, it turns out that Stewart focused her anti-slavery activism on black Northerners while Grimké criticized Southern slaveholders. Stewart blamed the free black community for not standing up for themselves and causing their own fate. This cost her dearly, because the criticism she faced came not only from outside the North but also from within. Ultimately, Stewart quit her public career within two years. Grimké also faced criticism, but it seems that she became even more determined in her activism. Overall, it appeared that the discussed black women were more cautious as they may have been more afraid of reprisals. It should be taken into account that black women were not treated equally in the North at this time and were therefore an easier target to criticize.

In general, it can be said that Garrisonian women abolitionists used many different forms of anti-slavery activism to promote the abolitionist cause. It has also become apparent that there was a great deal of solidarity within the Garrisonian movement. Since this study was limited to several Garrisonian organizations and individual women, a broader study would perhaps provide a more substantiated conclusion.

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