William Lloyd Garrison was born December 10, 1805 in Newburyport, Massachusetts.  In 1830 he started an abolitionist paper, The Liberator. In 1832 he helped form the New England Antislavery Society. When the Civil War broke out, he continued to blast the Constitution as a pro-slavery document. When the civil war ended, he at last saw the abolition of slavery. He died May 24, 1879 in New York City.

*By 1854 William Lloyd Garrison was the most prominent abolitionist in the United States.  Beginning with his newspaper, the Liberator, which he established in Boston in 1831, Garrison led the effort to end slavery in the nation.  In this 1854 speech which appears below, Garrison called for complete freedom for the slave and urged all Americans to support this cause.*  
LET ME DEFINE MY POSITIONS, and at the same time challenge anyone to show wherein they are untenable.   
  
I am a believer in that portion of the Declaration of American Independence in which it is set forth, as among self-evident truths, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Hence, I am an abolitionist. Hence, I cannot but regard oppression in every form-and most of all, that which turns a man into a thing-with indignation and abhorrence. Not to cherish these feelings would be recreancy to principle. They who desire me to be dumb on the subject of slavery, unless I will open my mouth in its defense, ask me to give the lie to my professions, to degrade my manhood, and to stain my soul. I will not be a liar, a poltroon, or a hypocrite, to accommodate any party, to gratify any sect, to escape any odium or peril, to save any interest, to preserve any institution, or to promote any object. Convince me that one man may rightfully make another man his slave, and I will no longer subscribe to the Declaration of Independence. Convince me that liberty is not the inalienable birthright of every human being, of whatever complexion or clime, and I will give that instrument to the consuming fire. I do not know how to espouse freedom and slavery together.  
  
I do not know how to worship God and Mammon at the same time. If other men choose to go upon all fours, I choose to stand erect, as God designed every man to stand. If, practically falsifying its heaven-attested principles, this nation denounces me for refusing to imitate its example, then, adhering all the more tenaciously to those principles, I will not cease to rebuke it for its guilty inconsistency. Numerically, the contest may be an unequal one, for the time being; but the author of liberty and the source of justice, the adorable God, is more than multitudinous, and he will defend the right. My crime is that I will not go with the multitude to do evil. My singularity is that when I say that freedom is of God and slavery is of the devil, I mean just what I say. My fanaticism is that I insist on the American people abolishing slavery or ceasing to  
prate of the rights of man ....  
  
The abolitionism which I advocate is as absolute as the law of God, and as unyielding as his throne. It admits of no compromise. Every slave is a stolen man; every slaveholder is a man stealer. By no precedent, no example, no law, no compact, no purchase, no bequest, no inheritance, no combination of circumstances, is slaveholding right or justifiable. While a slave remains in his fetters, the land must have no rest. Whatever sanctions his doom must be pronounced accursed. The law that makes him a chattel is to be trampled underfoot; the compact that is formed at his expense, and cemented with his blood, is null and void; the church that consents to his enslavement is horribly  
atheistical; the religion that receives to its communion the enslaver is the embodiment of all criminality. Such, at least, is the verdict of my own soul, on the supposition that I am to be the slave; that my wife is to be sold from me for the vilest purposes; that my children are to be torn from my arms, and disposed of to the highest bidder, like sheep in the market. And who am I but a man? What right have I to be free, that another man cannot prove himself to possess by nature? Who or what are my wife and children that they should not be herded with four-footed beasts, as well as others thus sacredly related? ...  
  
If the slaves are not men; if they do not possess human instincts, passions, faculties, and powers; if they are below accountability, and devoid of reason; if for them there is no hope of immortality, no God, no heaven, no hell; if, in short, they are what the slave code declares them to be, rightly" deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever"; then, undeniably, I am mad, and can no longer discriminate between a man and a beast. But, in that case, away with the horrible incongruity of giving them oral instruction, of teaching them the catechism, of recognizing them as suitably qualified to be members of Christian churches, of extending to them the ordinance of baptism, and admitting them to the communion table, and enumerating many of them as belonging to the household of faith! Let them be no more included in our religious sympathies or denominational statistics than are the dogs in our streets, the swine in our pens, or the utensils in our dwellings. It is right to own, to buy, to sell, to inherit, to breed, and to control them, in the most absolute sense. All constitutions and laws which forbid their possession ought to be so far modified or repealed as to concede the right.  
  
But, if they are men; if they are to run the same career of immortality with ourselves; if the same law of God is over them as over all others; if they have souls to be saved or lost; if Jesus included them among those for whom he laid down his life; if Christ is within many of them "the hope of glory"; then, when I claim for them all that we claim for ourselves, because we are created in the image of God, I am guilty of no extravagance, but am bound, by every principle of honor, by all the claims of human nature, by obedience to Almighty God, to "remember them that are in bonds as bound with them," and to demand their immediate and unconditional emancipation ....  
  
These are solemn times. It is not a struggle for national salvation; for the nation, as such, seems doomed beyond recovery. The reason why the South rules, and the North falls prostrate in servile terror, is simply this: with the South, the preservation of slavery is paramount to all other considerations above party success, denominational unity, pecuniary interest, legal integrity, and constitutional obligation. With the North, the preservation of the Union is placed above all other things-above honor, justice, freedom, integrity of soul, the Decalogue and the Golden Rule-the infinite God himself. All these she is ready to discard for the Union. Her devotion to it is the latest and the most terrible form of idolatry. She has given to the slave power a carte blanche, to be filled as it may dictate-and if, at any time, she grows restive under the yoke, and shrinks back aghast at the new atrocity contemplated, it is only necessary for that power to crack the whip of disunion over her head, as it has done again and again, and she will cower and obey like a plantation slave-for has she not sworn that she will sacrifice everything in heaven and on earth, rather than the Union?  
  
What then is to be done? Friends of the slave, the question is not whether by our efforts we can abolish slavery, speedily or remotely-for duty is ours, the result is with God; but whether we will go with the multitude to do evil, sell our birthright for a mess of pottage, cease to cry aloud and spare not, and remain in Babylon when the command of God is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Let us stand in our lot, "and having done all, to stand." At least, a remnant shall be saved. Living or dying, defeated or victorious, be it ours to exclaim, "No compromise with slavery! Liberty for each, for all, forever! Man above all institutions! The supremacy of God over the whole earth!"

Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became a prominent activist, author and public speaker. He became a leader in the abolitionist movement, which sought to end the practice of slavery, before and during the Civil War. After that conflict and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, he continued to push for equality and human rights until his death in 1895.

**THE FREE NEGRO'S PLACE IS IN AMERICA,  
Speech delivered at National Convention of Liberty Party, Buffalo, New York, September 18,1851  
Frederick Douglass' Paper, October 2, 1851**  
  
... It is my purpose to occupy but a few moments of the meeting on this subject, as I know you are anxious to hear our other friend (Mr. Scoble) from England. In listening to the remarks of our friend from Jamaica, I was struck with the similarity of the reasons given by him for the emigration of colored persons from his country, to those which are given, but with very different motives, by the agents of the American Colonization Society—a society which ever has and, I hope, ever will receive the utter detestation of every colored man in the land. I know that our friend (Mr. A. will find it difficult to appreciate the reasons which induce the free colored people of these states to insist upon remaining here. He sees us, a suffering people, hemmed in on every side by the malignant and bitter prejudice which excludes us from nearly every profitable employment in this country, and which, as he has well said, has had several of the states to legislate for our expulsion. In the extremity of our need, he comes to us in the spirit of benevolence, I believe, and holds out to us the prospect of a better country, the prospect of a home, where none shall molest or make us afraid. And he will think it strange that we do not accept of his benevolent proffer, and welcome him in his mission of mercy and good will towards us. And yet we must say that such a welcome cannot be given by the colored people of this country without stabbing their own cause to the vitals, without conceding a point which every black man should feel that he must die for rather than yield, and that is, that the prejudice and the mal-administration toward us in this country are invincible to truth, invincible to combined and virtuous effort for their overthrow. We must make no such concession. Sir, the slaveholders have long been anxious to get rid of the free colored persons of this country. They know that where we are left free, blacks though we are, thick skulled as they call us, we shall become intelligent, and, moreover, that as we become intelligent, in just that proportion shall we become an annoyance to them in their slaveholding. They are anxious therefore to get us out of the country.—They know that a hundred thousand intelligent, upright, industrious and persevering black men in the northern states must command respect and sympathy, must encircle themselves with the regard of a large class of the virtue-loving, industry-loving people of the North, and that whatever sympathy, whatever respect they are able to command must have a reflex influence upon slavery. And, therefore, they say "out with them," let us get rid of them! For my part, I am not disposed to leave, and, I think, our friend must have been struck with the singular kind of applause at certain sayings of his, during the address—an applause that seemed to come from the galleries, from the door, and from that part of the house that does not wish to be mixed up with the platform. Straws show which way the wind blows,. I fancied, too, that when our friend was portraying the blessings that would result from our removal from this land to Jamaica, that delightful visions were floating before the minds of those gentlemen in the distance. Now, sir, I want to say on behalf of any Negroes I have the honor to represent, that we have been with, and still are with you, and mean to be with you to the end. It may seem ungrateful, but there are some of us who are resolved that you shall not get rid of your colored relations.—Why should we not stay with you? Have we not a right here? I know the cry is raised that we are out of our native land, that this land is the land of the white man; that Africa is the home of the Negro, and not America.  
  
But how stands the matter? I believe that simultaneously with the landing of the Pilgrims, there landed slaves on the shores of this continent, and that for two hundred and thirty years and more we have had a foothold on this continent. We have grown up with you; we have watered your soil with our tears; nourished it with our blood, tilled it with our hard hands. Why should we not stay here? We came when it was a wilderness, and were the pioneers of civilization on this continent. We levelled your forests; our hands removed the stumps from your fields, and raised the first crops and brought the first produce to your tables. We have been with you, are still with you, have been with you in adversity, and by the help of God will be with you in prosperity.  
  
There was a time when certain learned men of this country undertook to argue us out of existence. Professor Grant of New York reckoned us of a race belonging to a by-gone age, which, in the progress of the human family, would become perfectly extinct. Yet we do not die. It does seem that there is a Providence in this matter.—Chain us, lash us, hunt us with bloodhounds, surround us with utter insecurity, render our lives never so hard to be borne, and yet we do live on—smile under it all and are able to smile. Amid all our afflictions there is an invincible determination to stay right here, because a large portion of the American people desire to get rid of us. In proportion to the strength of their desire to have us go, in just that proportion is the strength of our determination to stay, and in staying we ask nothing but justice. We have fought for this country, and we only ask to be treated as well as those who fought against it. We are American citizens, and we only ask to be treated as well as you treat aliens. And you will treat us so yet. Most men assume that we cannot make progress here.

It is untrue, sir. That we can make progress in the future is proved by the progress we have already made. Our condition is rapidly improving. Sir, but a few years ago, if I attempted to ride on the railroad cars in New England, and presumed to take my seat in the cars with white persons, I was dragged out like a beast. I have often been beaten until my hands were blue with the blows in order to make me disengage those hands from the bench on which I was seated.— On every railroad in New England this was the case. How is it now? Why, a Negro may ride just where he pleases and there is not the slightest objection raised, and I have very frequently rode over those same roads since, and never received the slightest indignity on account of my complexion. Indeed the white people are becoming more and more disposed to associate with the blacks. I am constantly annoyed by these pressing attentions. I used to enjoy the privilege of an entire seat, and riding a great deal at night, it was quite an advantage to me, but sometime ago, riding up from Geneva, I had curled myself up, and by the time I had got into a good snooze, along came a man and lifted up my blanket. I looked up and said, "pray do not disturb me, I am a black man." "I don't care who the devil you are, only give me a seat," was the reply. I told you the white people about here are beginning "to don't care who the devil you are." If you can put a dollar in their way, or a seat under them, they don't care "who the devil you are." But I will not detain you longer. I know you are anxious to hear our friend from England.

**Wendell Phillips**, (born November 29, 1811, [Boston](https://www.britannica.com/place/Boston), [Massachusetts](https://www.britannica.com/place/Massachusetts), U.S.—died February 2, 1884, Boston), abolitionist crusader whose oratorical eloquence helped fire the antislavery cause during the period leading up to the [American Civil War](https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War).

After opening a law office in Boston, Phillips, a wealthy Harvard Law School graduate, sacrificed [social status](https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-status) and a prospective political career in order to join the antislavery movement. He became a close associate of the abolitionist leader [William Lloyd Garrison](https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Lloyd-Garrison) and began lecturing for antislavery societies, writing pamphlets and editorials for Garrison’s The Liberator, and contributing financially to the [abolition movement](https://www.britannica.com/topic/abolitionism-European-and-American-social-movement).

**FROM "Proceedings of the American-Anti-Slavery Society at its second decade." New York, 1854. Twelfth Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society.**

**Digital document courtesy of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition"**[**http://www.yale.edu/glc/**](http://www.yale.edu/glc/)

MR. PRESIDENT:

I wish, before this audience separates, to make a single remark in regard to an observation of my friend Mr. Barker, that a distinction drawn between the condition of the suffering classes of his own county and the slave, may lose us the sympathy of his countrymen, settled here. I know that his long experience entitles him to speak on this topic with far more authority than any words of mine ought to have; while his marked fidelity and disinterested devotion to our cause, on both sides of the Atlantic, entitle his statements to still more weight. I must, however, say that, judging from my own experience, I have no hope, none whatever, of help to the Anti-Slavery cause, from the English emigrants, those from Ireland, or from the oppressed classes of any country in Europe. I believe they will be found the enemies, generally, of the Anti-Slavery movement, and that emigration would in itself be a serious obstacle to its progress, if beneath this opposition there did not lie the great principle, that every thing which tends to lessen conservatism, helps every other element of progress; and, consequently, that these classes of men, though hating the slave, as they uniformly have, and calumniating his friends, as they uniformly do, are in themselves unconsciously helping to resist the conservative tendency of this government, which so effectively supports the system of Slavery.

Again, before this assembly separates, I want to add my protest against the doctrine that it is true, in any degree, that the sufferings of men under European governments ought to be put on the same level which the sufferings of the slave in this country. Here, again, I would speak with due submission to the long experience and mature judgment of our friend. But he will allow me to say, that he seems to me to have overlooked one most important consideration—the first and greatest characteristic of his country—which is, that, in spite of all the disabilities he has mentioned, from the masses themselves—below the Aristocracy, below the class legislators, below the landholders—has sprung a very large share of the progress and improvement which England boasts; and that those very laws which he has cited have been beaten down again and again by the intelligence and energy of those very classes they were meant to subdue. Where is there any picture like this among the slaves of the South? Every effort in their behalf is made from without. Slavery has been taking a downward course for seventy years; adding horror to horror, bloody statute to bloody statute, selfishness to selfishness, privation to privation, until the Anti-Slavery movement, from without, has succeeded in turning the eye of the world upon the Slave Power, and restraining its course of unmixed selfishness. But, contrariwise to this, the sources of the improvement made in Great Britain for a hundred and fifty years, and all over Europe, have been from within,—from the indignation, the intelligence, the force of the very classes with which the slave is assumed to be compared. While this fact remains, I do not care how often, in single items, the slaves may be compared to the oppressed of other lands. It is manifest, that the result of Despotism is one thing, and that of Slavery is quite another thing; that in the one case, Slavery kills the mind and cripples the intellectual energy of the enslaved class; that every generation sinks a degree lower than that which preceded it. The slave of to-day is worse off, practically, than the slave of our Revolutionary times, and the slaveholder of to-day would be a more cruel and remorseless master, but for the influence of the Anti-Slavery movement, (he was so before this movement commenced,) than his ancestor of seventy years ago. Now, it is a singular fact, not to be denied, in the face of the history of the last one hundred years, that the poorer classes of Great Britain and Ireland have not only not fallen lower in the scale of manhood during the last century, but have grown better.

Again: that our slaves have not been starved by millions, is not the merit either of the system or the masters, but is owing to the fact of their dwelling in a new country a place where starvation, unless purposely and systematically sought for, cannot readily be found. The majority of the people of South Carolina have no element of improvement among them, but, on the contrary, are losing, in every generation, their manhood; their intellectual and moral condition is getting lower and lower every year, and cannot, therefore, be compared, in any respect, with that system of oppression in the old world, which, bloody as it is, has yet, by its own inherent force, wiped out bad legislation—the statute book becoming cleaner and purer every year.

Let me say, however, that my friend will not find me objecting to any efforts on his part, however earnest or frequent, to show how cruelly oppressed, how miserable, how pitiable, how wronged, the English and Irish have been; but when he has done it all, when he has made the picture black as he can paint it, I would then like to point the moral by saying, Here is the utmost that an Aristocracy, trusted with unlimited power for a thousand years, could inflict; they could do nothing blacker than this; and when you have painted it all, it is mid-noon compared with that blackness of darkness which broods over the Carolinas! (Loud cheers.) My appeal to the emigrant would be, that, no matter how deep the pit into which he had fallen, an oppression which undertakes to maintain the forms of law, which does not burn martyrs, if it burn them at all, except after trial in open court, and with a decent respect for the forms of justice, is not to be compared with one which, mocking all law as well as justice and humanity, lights up the waters of Mississippi and the Ohio, and the cane-brakes of Alabama, with the actual burning of the body of a slave and his champion, in the Nineteenth Century. When has this sight been seen in England for two hundred years? When would it be possible, even in the bloody civilization of Europe, that four instances should occur, within twenty years, of men burned at the stake because they were heretics, either in Birmingham or in Manchester?—three within six months, as my friend (Mr. Garrison) reminds me? No; to the English emigrant, or to any other, we maintain that our cause—the cause of the slave—has an essentially distinct, a deeper, sadder, weightier claim on the humanity of the world, than even his. (Cheers.)

I am anxious, Mr. Chairman, to make at least this brief expression of my opinion, before the audience, so properly disposed to yield implicit confidence to any opinion of Mr. Barker on this topic, should separate, lest his mistake, as I must think it, should weaken, in some degree, our appreciation of the unmatched wretchedness of the slave.

JOSEPH BARKER said that Mr. Phillips, in consequence of not having heard the whole discussion, had misunderstood his meaning, as well as the origin of the discussion relative to the oppressions of the British government. Mr. Barker also made a frank concession of several positions stated by Mr. Quincy, with which Mr. Q. expressed himself perfectly satisfied… (day 1 of speeches ends.)

Arthur and Lewis Tappan were successful businessmen and early leaders of the movement to abolish slavery in America.

Arthur Tappan was born in 1786, and Lewis Tappan was born in 1788. Both brothers were born in Northampton, Massachusetts. The men became successful businessmen in New York City. In 1826, the brothers began to import silk from Asia, and they earned a sizable fortune. In 1827, they began to publish the New York Journal of Commerce, a business newspaper. The brothers refused to print advertisements from what they thought were "immoral" businesses. In the Panic of 1837, the brothers lost practically everything, but they recovered and rebuilt their businesses. During the 1840s, they formed a commercial-credit rating service. Lewis also established the Mercantile Agency, which later became part of the Dun and Bradstreet Company. The brothers retired from business in the late 1840s and dedicated their lives to charitable causes.

Arthur and Lewis Tappan supported a number of causes and are often remembered for their devotion to abolitionism. In 1833, the brothers and abolitionist Theodore Dwight Weld came together to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. This organization called for the immediate end to slavery and also advocated equal rights for African Americans with white people. William Lloyd Garrison dominated the American Anti-Slavery Society, although Arthur Tappan served as president of the organization from its founding until 1840. Tappan resigned from the society in 1840 when its membership became interested in fighting for equal rights for women with men.

The Tappan brothers assisted the abolition movement in other ways. They provided financial support to Oberlin College in Ohio. Oberlin provided education for both white and black students in fully-integrated classrooms. They actively supported the Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Lewis Tappan financially supported The Emancipator, an abolitionist newspaper, and encouraged churches in New York City to end the practice of having separate seating areas for whites and African Americans. Lewis Tappan died in 1863. His brother Arthur died two years later.

In the summer of 1835 the growing [abolitionist movement](https://www.thoughtco.com/abolitionist-definition-1773360) attempted to influence public opinion in the slave states by mailing thousands of anti-slavery pamphlets to addresses in the South. The material inflamed southerners, who broke into post offices, seized bags of mail containing the pamphlets, and made a spectacle of burning the pamphlets in the streets as mobs cheered.

The interference with the postal system created a crisis at the federal level.

And the battle over use of the mails illuminated how the issue of slavery was splitting the nation decades before the Civil War.

In the North, calls to censor the mails were naturally seen as a violation of Constitutional rights. In the slave states of the South, the literature produced by the American Anti-Slavery Society was viewed as a dire threat to southern society.

On a practical level, the local postmaster in Charleston, South Carolina, requested guidance from the postmaster general in Washington, who essentially dodged the issue.

After a spasm of demonstrations in the South, in which effigies representing abolitionist leaders were burned as anti-slavery pamphlets were thrown into bonfires, the battleground moved on to the halls of Congress. [President Andrew Jackson](https://www.thoughtco.com/andrew-jackson-significant-facts-1773419) even mentioned the mailing of the pamphlets in his annual message to Congress (the forerunner of the State of the Union Address).

Jackson advocated suppressing the literature by having federal authorities censor the mails. Yet his approach was challenged by an eternal rival, Senator [John C. Calhoun](https://www.thoughtco.com/john-c-calhoun-biography-1773519) of South Carolina, who advocated for local censorship of federal mail.

In the end, the campaign of the abolitionists to mail pamphlets southward was essentially abandoned as being impractical.

So the immediate issue of censoring the mails died out. And the abolitionists changed tactics and began to concentrate on sending petitions to Congress to advocate for the end of slavery.

### Strategy of the Pamphlet Campaign

The idea of mailing thousands of anti-slavery pamphlets into the slave states began to take hold in the early 1830s. The abolitionists couldn't send human agents to preach against slavery, as they would be risking their lives.

And, thanks for the financial backing of the [Tappan brothers](https://www.thoughtco.com/tappan-brothers-1773560), wealthy New York City merchants who had become devoted to the abolitionist cause, the most modern printing technology was made available to spread the message.

The material produced, which included pamphlets and broadsides (large sheets designed to be passed around or hung as posters), tended to have woodcut illustrations depicting the horrors of slavery. The material may look crude to modern eyes, but in the 1830s it would have been considered fairly professional printed material. And the illustrations were particularly inflammatory to southerners.

As slaves tended to be illiterate (as was generally mandated by law), the existence of printed material showing slaves being whipped and beaten was seen as particularly inflammatory.

Southerners claimed the printed material from the American Anti-Slavery Society was intended to provoke [slave uprisings](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-really-happened-at-stono-rebellion-45410).

And knowing the abolitionists had the funding and personnel to turn out printed material of substantial quality was disturbing to pro-slavery Americans.

### End of the Campaign

The controversy over censoring the mails essentially ended the pamphlet campaign. Legislation to open and search the mails failed in Congress, but local postmasters, with the tacit approval of their superiors in the federal government, still suppressed the pamphlets.

Ultimately, the American Anti-Slavery Society came to realize that a point had been made. And the movement began to concentrate on other initiatives, most prominently the campaign to create strong anti-slavery action in the House of Representatives.

The pamphlet campaign, within about a year, was essentially abandoned.

**Abigail Kelley Foster**, née **Abigail Kelley**, byname **Abby Foster**, (born January 15, 1811, Pelham, [Massachusetts](https://www.britannica.com/place/Massachusetts), U.S.—died January 14, 1887, Worcester, Massachusetts), American feminist, abolitionist, and lecturer who is remembered as an impassioned speaker for radical reform.

Abby Kelley grew up in [Worcester](https://www.britannica.com/place/Worcester-Massachusetts), Massachusetts. She was reared a Quaker, attended Quaker schools, and later taught in a Quaker school in Lynn, Massachusetts. She became a follower of [William Lloyd Garrison](https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Lloyd-Garrison) and in 1835–37 was secretary of the Lynn Female Anti-Slavery Society. In 1838 she joined Garrison in founding the New England Non-Resistant Society. She took part in the first and second woman’s national antislavery conventions in [New York City](https://www.britannica.com/place/New-York-City) in 1837 and in [Philadelphia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Philadelphia) in 1838, and at the latter she made her first address to a mixed audience (of men and women), a stirring speech that prompted abolitionist leaders to urge her to take to the platform regularly. She acceded to the idea, resigned her teaching job, and in May 1839 began a career as a reform lecturer. That career was a stormy one, bringing vituperation and sometimes even mob violence upon her as she was denounced regularly from the pulpit as immoral for daring to mount the public platform.

# **Abby Kelley Foster's speech**

Mrs. Abby Kelly Foster rose and said:  
Madam President: I rise this evening not to make a speech. I came here without any intention of even opening my mouth in this Convention. But I must utter one word of congratulation, that the cause which we have come here to aid, has given such evidence this evening of its success. When genius, that could find ample field elsewhere, comes forward and lays itself on this altar, we have no reason for discouragement; and I am not without faith that the time is not far distant, when our utmost desires shall be gratified, when our highest hopes shall be realized. I feel that the work is more than half accomplished.

I have an idea, thrown into the form of a short resolution, which I wish to present to this Convention, because no one else has brought it forward. I feel that behind, that underneath, that deeper down than we have yet gone, lies the great cause of the difficulties which we aim to remove. We complain that woman is inadequately rewarded for her labor. It is true. We complain that on the platform, in the forum, in the pulpit, in the office of teacher, and so on to the end of the list, she does not hold that place which she is qualified to fill; and what is the deep difficulty? I cannot, I will not charge it all upon man. I respond to the statement that it is chargeable upon us as well as upon others. It is an old, homely maxim, but yet there is great force in it, "Where there's a will, there's a way;" and the reason why woman is not found in the highest position which she is qualified to fill, is because she has not more than half the will. I therefore wish to present the resolution that I hold in my hand:

Resolved, That in regard to most points, Woman lacks her rights because she does not feel the full weight of her responsibilities; that when she shall feel her responsibilities sufficiently to induce her to go forward and discharge them, she will inevitably obtain her rights; when she shall feel herself equally bound with her father, husband, brother and son to provide for the physical necessities and elegances of life, when she shall feel as deep responsibility as they for the intellectual culture and the moral and religious elevation of the race, she will of necessity seek out and enter those paths of Physical, Intellectual, Moral and Religious labor which are necessary to the accomplishment of her object. Let her feel the full stimulus of motive, and she will soon achieve the means.

I believe that the idea embodied in this resolution, though not expressed so clearly as I fain would have had it, points to the great difficulty that lies in our way; and therefore, I feel that it is necessary for us to inculcate, on the rising generation especially, (for it is to these that we must chiefly look,) it is necessary for us to inculcate on them particularly this feeling of responsibility. Let mothers take care to impress upon their daughters, that they are not to enter upon the marriage relation until they are qualified to provide for the physical necessities of a family. Let our daughters feel that they must never attempt to enter upon the marriage relation until they shall be qualified to provide for the wants of a household, and then we shall see much, if not all, that difficulty which has been complained of here, removed. Women revolt at the idea of marrying for the sake of a home, for the sake of a support -- of marrying the purse instead of the man. There is no woman here, who, if the question were put to her, would not say, Love is sufficient. She says it is sufficient, and she believes it; yet behind this lies something else, in more than one case in ten.

Let us therefore inculcate upon our daughters, that they should be able to provide for the wants of a family, and that they are unfit for that relation until they are qualified to do so. If we teach our daughters that they are as much bound to become independent as their brothers, and that they should not hang upon the skirts of a paternal home for support, but secure subsistence for themselves, will they not look out avenues to new employments? Why, we all feel it, we all know it; if women could be taught that the responsibilities devolved equally upon themselves and the other sex, they would seek out the means to fulfill those responsibilities. That is the duty we owe our daughters to-day; that is the duty each one owes to herself to-day, to see to it that we feel that we must enter into business, such as will bring in to the support of our families as much as the labor of our fathers, husbands, and brothers does. Woman's labor is as intrinsically valuable as any other, and why is it not remunerated as well? Because, as has been shown here, because there is too much female labor in the market, compared with the work it is allowed to undertake. There are other means of support; there are other modes of acquiring wealth: let woman seek them out, and use them for her own interest, and this evil will in great part be done away.

Then, again, let every woman feel that she is equally responsible with man for the immorality, for the crime that stalks abroad in our land, and will she not be up and doing, in order to put away that vice? Let every woman understand that it is for her to see that disease be not inflicted on the community, and will she not seek out means to do it away? If she feel that she is as competent to banish superstition, and prejudice, and bigotry, from the world as her brother, will she not be up and doing? Here is the great barrier to woman's obtaining her rights. Mary Wolstonecraft was the first woman who wrote a book on "Woman's Rights;" but a few years later, she wrote another, entitled "Woman's Duty;" and when woman shall feel her duty, she will get her rights. We, who are young on this question of Woman's Rights, should entitle our next book "Woman's Duties." Impress on your daughters their duties; impress on your wives, your sisters, on your brothers, on your husbands, on the race, their duties, and we shall all have our rights.

Man is wronged, not in London, New York, or Boston alone. Look around you here in Worcester, and see him sitting amidst the dust of his counting room, or behind the counter, his whole soul engaged in dollars and cents, until the Multiplication Table becomes his creed, his Pater noster, and his Decalogue. Society says, keep your daughters, like dolls, in the parlor; they must not do anything to aid in supporting the family. But a certain appearance in society must be maintained. You must keep up the style of the household. You are in fault if your wife do not uphold the condition to which she was bred in her father's house. I put this before men. If we could look under and within the broadcloth and the velvet, we should find as many breaking hearts, and as many sighs and groans, and as much of mental anguish, as we find in the parlor, as we find in the nursery of any house in Worcester. But woman is vain and frivolous, and man is ignorant; and therefore, he is what he is. Had his daughters, had his wife, been educated to feel their responsibilities, they would have taken their rights, and he would have been a happy and contented man, and would not have been reduced to the mere machine for calculating and getting money he now is.

My friends, I feel that in throwing out this idea, I have done what was left for me to do. But I did not rise to make a speech -- my life has been my speech. For fourteen years I have advocated this cause by my daily life. Bloody feet, sisters, have worn smooth the path by which you have come up hither. (Great sensation.) You will not need to speak when you speak by your everyday life. Oh, how truly does Webster say, Action, action, is eloquence! Let us, then, when we go home, go not to complain, but to work. Do not go home to complain of the men, but go and make greater exertions than ever to discharge your every-day duties. Oh! it is easy to be lazy; it is comfortable indeed to be indolent; but it is hard, and a martyrdom, to take responsibilities. There are thousands of women in these United States working for a starving pittance, who know and feel that they are fitted for something better, and who tell me, when I talk to them, and urge them to open shops, and do business for themselves, "I do not want the responsibility of business -- it is too much." Well, then, starve in your laziness!

Oh, Madam President, I feel that we have thrown too much blame on the other side. At any rate, we all deserve enough. We have been groping about in the dark. We are trying to feel our way, and oh! God give us light! But I am convinced that as we go forward and enter the path, it will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

I will speak no longer. I speak throughout the year, and those of you who speak but once should take the platform. I hope, however, that you do not feel that I speak to you in anger. Oh, no; it is in the hope of inducing you to be willing to assume responsibilities, to be willing to have a sleepless night occasionally, and days of toil and trouble; for he that labors shall have his reward; he that sows shall reap. My teacher in childhood taught me a lesson, which I hope I never shall forget. She had appointed me a task, and when she asked me if I had learned it, I said, "No, it is too hard." "Well," said she, "go into the road and pick me up an apron full of pebbles." I did it. "It was easy to do it," said she. "Oh, yes," I replied. "Go out again," said she, "and pour them down, and bring me in an apron full of gold." It was impossible. "Yes," said my teacher, "you can get that only by earnest labor, by sacrifice, by weariness." I learned my lesson, I accomplished my task; and I would to God that every person had had similar instruction, and learned the necessity of toil -- earnest, self-sacrificing toil. (Loud cheers.)

# **Angelina and Sarah Grimké**

With 13 years between them, sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimké were born into a plantation-owning, slave-holding family in South Carolina. Sarah, the elder sister, grew up feeling that she was alone in her questioning of the institution of slavery and the treatment of women. She recalled always feeling uneasy about societal inequality: "We had many outdoor enjoyments. ... I, however, always had one terrible drawback. Slavery was a millstone about my neck, and marred my comfort from the time I can remember myself."

The sisters continued to live together, fighting for the rights of women, until Sarah's death in 1873.

Angelina Grimké Weld's speech at Pennsylvania Hall

…As a Southerner I feel tbat it is my duty to stand up here to-night and bear testimony against slavery. I have seen it -- I have seen it. I know it has horrors that can never be described. I was brought up under its wing: I witnessed for many years its demoralizing influences, and its destructiveness to human happiness. It is admitted by some that the slave is not happy under the *worst* forms of slavery. But I have *never* seen a happy slave. I have seen him dance in his chains, it is true; but he was not happy. There is a wide difference between happiness and mirth. Man cannot enjoy the former while his manhood is destroyed, and that part of the being which is necessary to the making, and to the enjoyment of happiness, is completely blotted out. The slaves, however, may be, and sometimes are, mirthful. When hope is extinguished, they say, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." [Just then stones were thrown at the windows, -- a great noise without, and commotion within.] What is a mob? What would the breaking of every window be? What would the levelling of this Hall be? Any evidence that we are wrong, or that slavery is a good and wholesome institution? What if the mob should now burst in upon us, break up our meeting and commit violence upon our persons -- would this be anything compared with what the slaves endure? No, no: and we do not remember them "as bound with them," if we shrink in the time of peril, or feel unwilling to sacrifice ourselves, if need be, for their sake. [Great noise.] I thank the Lord that there is yet life left enough to feel the truth, even though it rages at it -- that conscience is not so completely seared as to be unmoved by the truth of the living God.

Many persons go to the South for a season, and are hospitably entertained in the parlor and at the table of the slave-holder. They never enter the huts of the slaves; they know nothing of the dark side of the picture, and they return home with praises on their lips of the generous character of those with whom they had tarried. Or if they have witnessed the cruelties of slavery, by remaining silent spectators they have naturally become callous -- an insensibility has ensued which prepares them to apologize even for barbarity. Nothing but the corrupting influence of slavery on the hearts of the Northern people can induce them to apologize for it; and much will have been done for the destruction of Southern slavery when we have so reformed the North that no one here will be willing to risk his reputation by advocating or even excusing the holding of men as property. The South know it, and acknowledge that as fast as our principles prevail, the hold of the master must be relaxed. [Another outbreak of mobocratic spirit, and some confusion in the house.]

How wonderfully constituted is the human mind! How it resists, as long as it can, all efforts made to reclaim from error! I feel that all this disturbance is but an evidence that our efforts are the best that could have been adopted, or else the friends of slavery would not care for what we say and do. The South know what we do. I am thankful that they are reached by our efforts. Many times have I wept in the land of my birth, over the system of slavery. I knew of none who sympathized in my feelings -- I was unaware that any efforts were made to deliver the oppressed -- no voice in the wilderness was heard calling on the people to repent and do works meet for repentance -- and my heart sickened within me. Oh, how should I have rejoiced to know that such efforts as these were being made. I only wonder that I had such feelings. I wonder when I reflect under what influence I was brought up that my heart is not harder than the nether millstone. But in the midst of temptation I was preserved, and my sympathy grew warmer, and my hatred of slavery more inveterate, until at last I have exiled myself from my native land because I could no longer endure to hear the wailing of the slave. I fled to the land of Penn; for here, thought I, sympathy for the slave will surely be found. But I found it not. The people were kind and hospitable, but the slave had no place in their thoughts. Whenever questions were put to me as to his condition, I felt that they were dictated by an idle curiosity, rather than by that deep feeling which would lead to effort for his rescue. I therefore shut up my grief in my own heart. I remembered that I was a Carolinian, from a state which framed this iniquity by law. I knew that throughout her territory was continual suffering, on the one part, and continual brutality and sin on the other. Every Southern breeze wafted to me the discordant tones of weeping and wailing, shrieks and groans, mingled with prayers and blasphemous curses. I thought there was no hope; that the wicked would go on in his wickedness, until he had destroyed both himself and his country. My heart sunk within me at the abominations in the midst of which I had been born and educated. What will it avail, cried I in bitterness of spirit, to expose to the gaze of strangers the horrors and pollutions of slavery, when there is no ear to hear nor heart to feel and pray for the slave. The language of my soul was, "Oh tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." But how different do I feel now! Animated with hope, nay, with an assurance of the triumph of liberty and good will to man, I will lift up my voice like a trumpet, and show this people their transgression, their sins of omission towards the slave, and what they can do towards affecting Southern mind, and overthrowing Southern oppression.

We may talk of occupying neutral ground, but on this subject, in its present attitude, there is no such thing as neutral ground. He that is not for us is against us, and he that gathereth not with us, scattereth abroad. If you are on what you suppose to be neutral ground, the South look upon you as on the side of the oppressor. And is there one who loves his country willing to give his influence, even indirectly, in favor of slavery -- that curse of nations ? God swept Egypt with the besom of destruction, and punished Judea also with a sore punishment, because of slavery. And have we any reason to believe that he is less just now? -- or that he will be more favorable to us than to his own "peculiar people?" [Shoutings, stones thrown against the windows, &c.]

There is nothing to be feared from those who would stop our mouths, but they themselves should fear and tremble. The current is even now setting fast against them. If the arm of the North had not caused the Bastile of slavery to totter to its foundation, you would not hear those cries. A few years ago, and the South felt secure, and with a contemptuous sneer asked, "Who are the abolitionists? The abolitionists are nothing?" -- Ay, in one sense they were nothing, and they are nothing still. But in this we rejoice, that "God has chosen things that are not to bring to nought things that are." [Mob again disturbed the meeting.]

We often hear the question asked , What shall we do?" Here is an opportunity for doing something now. Every man and every woman present may do soinething by showing that we fear not a mob, and, in the midst of threatenings and revilings, by opening our mouths for the dumb and pleading the cause of those who are ready to perish.

To work as we should in this cause, we must know what Slavery is. Let me urge you then to buy the books which have been written on this subject and read them, and then lend them to your neighbors. Give your money no longer for things which pander to pride and lust, but aid in scattering "the living coals of truth" upon the naked heart of this nation, -- in circulating appeals to the sympathies of Christians in behalf of the outraged and suffering slave. But, it is said by some, our "books and papers do not speak the truth." Why, then, do they not contradict what we say? They cannot. Moreover the South has entreated, nay commanded us to be silent; and what greater evidence of the truth of our publications could be desired?

Women of Philadelphia! allow me as a Southern woman, with much attachment to the land of my birth, to entreat you to come up to this work. Especially let me urge you to petition. *Men* may settle this and other questions at the ballot-box, but you have no such right; it is only through petitions that you can reach the Legislature. It is therefore peculiarly *your* duty to petition. Do you say, "It does no good?" The South already turns pale at the number sent. They have read the reports of the proceedings of Congress, and there have seen that among other petitions were very many from the women of the North on the subject of slavery. This fact has called the attention of the South to the subject. How could we expect to have done more as yet? Men who hold the rod over slaves, rule in the councils of the nation: and they deny our right to petition and to remonstrate against abuses of our sex and of our kind. We have these rights, however, from our God. Only let us exercise them: and though often turned away unanswered, let us remember the influence of importunity upon the unjust judge, and act accordingly. The fact that the South look with jealousy upon our measures shows that they are effectual. There is, therefore, no cause for doubting or despair, but rather for rejoicing.

It was remarked in England that women did much to abolish Slavery in her colonies. Nor are they now idle. Numerous petitions from them have recently been presented to the Queen, to abolish the apprenticeship with its cruelties nearly equal to those of the system whose place it supplies. One petition two miles and a quarter long has been presented. And do you think these labors will be in vain ? Let the history of the past answer. When the women of these States send up to Congress such a petition, our legislators will arise as did those of England, and say, "When all the maids and matrons of the land are knocking at our doors we must legislate." Let the zeal and love, the faith and works of our English sisters quicken ours -- that while the slaves continue to suffer, and when they shout deliverance, we may feel the satisfaction of *having done what we could.*

**Elijah P. Lovejoy**, in full **Elijah Parish Lovejoy**, (born November 9, 1802, Albion, [Maine](https://www.britannica.com/place/Maine-state), U.S.—died November 7, 1837, [Alton](https://www.britannica.com/place/Alton-Illinois), Illinois), American [newspaper](https://www.britannica.com/topic/newspaper) editor and [martyred](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/martyred) [abolitionist](https://www.britannica.com/topic/abolitionism-European-and-American-social-movement) who died in defense of his right to print antislavery material in the period leading up to the [American Civil War](https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War)(1861–65).







