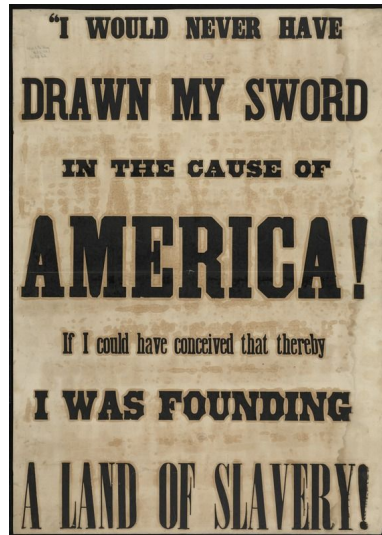


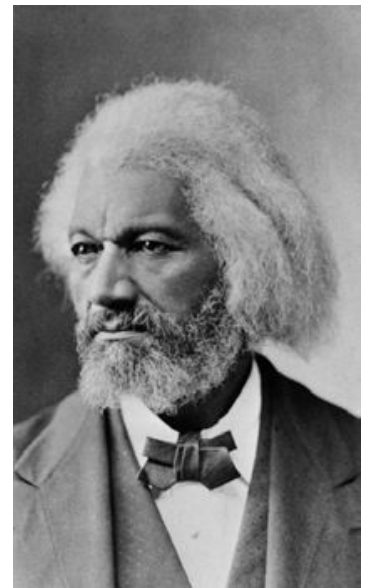
The Abolitionist Movement



Antislavery Broadside
(Boston Public Library)

On December 12, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, making slavery illegal except as punishment for crime and ending the system of racialized chattel slavery. This was largely made possible by the abolitionist movement. Led by generations of Black advocates joined by some white allies, abolitionists persistently worked to end slavery in the face of institutional opposition and widespread, violent resistance.

David Walker, a free Black abolitionist from Boston, published *An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* in September 1829. The pamphlet demanded the immediate emancipation of the enslaved and called on free and enslaved Black people to actively fight against racial oppression and the institution of slavery. Walker's *Appeal* also warned white Americans who were complicit in racial oppression that their "destruction is at hand, and will be speedily consummated unless you repent."



Afraid and enraged, Southern white authorities branded the pamphlet dangerous and destroyed copies found within their borders, and the State of Georgia offered a bounty for Mr. Walker's capture. The next fall, North Carolina passed two laws banning the dissemination of any publication with the tendency to inspire revolution or resistance among enslaved or free Black people. Georgia and Mississippi legalized use of the death penalty against free Black people caught spreading anti-slavery materials. And multiple state legislatures prohibited anyone from teaching Black people to read. Anti-slavery publications still persisted, including Frederick Douglass's *North Star* newspaper, and white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*.

After enslaved preacher, Nat Turner's, rebellion in Virginia in 1831, the Mississippi legislature barred any African American person, free or enslaved, from becoming a preacher, and the city of Mobile, Alabama banned gatherings of more than three enslaved people. Anti-slavery sentiment and activity continued to grow in the North where, in 1830, free Black people began organizing annual abolition conventions to gather and strategize.

In response, the South intensified efforts to suppress abolition. On two different occasions in 1854, white "slave patrollers" in Mt. Meigs, Alabama, burned enslaved Black people alive for suspicion of possessing anti-slavery materials. White abolitionist John Brown led a biracial, armed raid at Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, in an attempt to overthrow slavery; he was hanged for treason on December 2, 1859.

The abolition of slavery followed the Civil War but resulted from the tireless work of many Black leaders and others who risked their safety and sometimes lost their lives to stand against the denial of their humanity. "Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation," said Frederick Douglass in 1857, "are men who want crops without plowing up the ground."