

Additional Primary Sources

Abolition in Hopedale

Speeches and Poems

This is a selection of speeches and poems told by abolitionists who attended the Hopedale Community's Anti-Slavery Meetings.

How would you have felt if you were in the audience? After reading, answer the corresponding questions on the following page.

Speech by Adin Ballou, August 1842

In 1842, Hopedale had its first celebration of Emancipation in the British West Indies. Read the article Adin Ballou's description of the event. The article was originally published in Ballou's paper, the *Practical Christian*, and republished in William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*.

Poems by Abby Hills Price, 1843

Abby Hills Price had two poems published in *The Practical Christian* on August 5th, 1843. These poems were likely recited at that year's annual Anti-Slavery Meeting in Nelson's Grove. Both poems may have been sung there, as they are both set to a tune.

Poem by Abby Hills Price, 1844

Abby Hills Price read a poem at an Upton Anti-Slavery fair in 1844. It was later published in a "community paper," most likely *The Practical Christian*. Price often recited poetry at Hopedale's Anti-Slavery meetings, so it is likely that she recited this one at that year's annual meeting at Hopedale as well.

Speech by Lucy Stone Blackwell as recorded by Abby Hills Price, September 1848

At an Anti-Slavery convention in Uxbridge, MA, Lucy Stone Blackwell gave a speech in 1848. This was two months after the Seneca Falls Convention in New York. Abby Hills Price was the secretary at the Uxbridge meeting. She recorded the minutes and the speech. Price was a member of the Hopedale Community, and those meeting minutes were then published in *The Practical Christian*. In 1998, Susan G. LaMar transcribed that record.

"Eliza Harris" by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1853

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper attended multiple Hopedale picnics. This Harper poem was published in *The Liberator* in 1853. It is possible the author read this poem at one of the celebrations in Hopedale.

"No Struggle, No Progress," Frederick Douglass, August 1857

Frederick Douglass frequented abolitionists gatherings in Hopedale. He also spoke at many meetings for suffrage and abolition in other parts of the country, and abroad. This speech was delivered in Canandaigua, NY, on August 3, 1857.

Speech by William S. Heywood, August 1857

William S. Heywood was a prominent member of the Hopedale Community. Although he was an abolitionist, he did not often give anti-slavery speeches, as he states in this piece recorded in *The Liberator* in 1857.

Speeches by William H. Fish & William Lloyd Garrison, August 1857

William H. Fish was a prominent member of the Hopedale Community. William Lloyd Garrison was an editor of *The Liberator* and the founder of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Through their speeches, both men encouraged people to travel and give lectures, like the ones given at Hopedale and other West India Emancipation Anniversary celebrations.

Speech by Adin Ballou (1842)
From the *Practical Christian*
Anti-Slavery Meeting at Hopedale.

In a humble manner, a few names gathered beneath a rude bower in His temple who fills all space, to commemorate the glorious First of August.

But short notice was given, and few preparatory measures made for the occasion. And when we take into consideration the prevailing apathy of the people of this vicinity in the cause of the perishing bondman, we can in truth say we were not disappointed in the attendance given. An address was delivered by bro. Ballou, which was most happily suited to the day that brought the boon of freedom to thousands of British slaves. The contrast was set forth in a pleasing manner between the glory of the memorable First of August, and the day which by din of arms and roar of cannon achieved victory for this land. How different the one from the other!

And when a wiser and more humane generation shall fill the places of the present, deeds of blood and mischief will cease to be remembered with exultation, and the peaceful ushering in of the day which broke the chains of the British slaves, will be hailed with gratitude to God.

O, ye dwellers in the sunny South, why will ye keep back from a banquet so rich and free! Smite off those galling chains which clank in your midst. Break those cruel yokes, and cast your whips and thumb-screws into the ocean, and say to your long oppressed brethren, be *free*!

Poem by Abby Hills Price (untitled)

Tune: *Coronation*

Published in *The Practical Christian*, August 5, 1843

The sunny Isles are Freedom's own,
Where once the Tyrant stood--
She reared her banner, dashed his throne
With power, but not with blood.

O no! the songs we hear to-day
Are all unmixed with wo;
True Freedom has no war-array,
And pure her blessings flow.

But O my country, not for thee
Those songs now fill the air;
To slav'ry thou has bowed the knee,
Deaf to the suppliant's prayer.

The pall of death has closed around,
The heavens are dark above—
In league with tyrants thou art found,
Where is thy boasted love?

Thy boasted love for liberty!
Alas, how vainly said!
While millions now are doom'd by thee
Oppression's vale to tread.

Sorrow and sighing, grief and wo,
The fetter and the chain,
Are all imbruted man can know
To die, for him is gain.

Sad genius of Columbia, mourn
O'er thy degraded brave!
Weep that thy flag so proudly borne,
Yet rustles o'er the slave!

My country! haste to wipe the stain
From of thy star-deck'd brow—
Look to the Islands of the main,
And make thy offering now!

Poem by Abby Hills Price
“West India Islands”

Tune: *How Lovely the Place*

Published in *The Practical Christian*, August 5, 1843

How brightly they lie on the ocean's deep surge,
All gilded by Freedom and love;
The zephyr's sweet voice has sung tyranny's dirge,
And wafts their glad praises above.

The mother, who knelt where they briny waves beat,
And lifted her hands in despair,
Now feels that the fetter is loosed from her feet,
Her lov'd ones released from the snare.

There is joy in the cabin, where once there was woe,
The husband, the father is free
While blessings of Liberty sweetly o'erflow
Those beautiful Isles of the sea.

A halo of glory encircles them now,
The rain-bow is seen on the sky;
Fair Freedom looks up with a wreath on her brow,
And points to the glory on high.

Those slaves once degraded may now hope to gain
The mansions prepared for the blest!
Away from the thoughts of their bondage and pain,
With purified spirits to rest.

Rejoice! for the Islands that gem the blue sea!
But weep for America now—
O pray that she too may be happy and free,
Redeemed from her thralldom of woe.

O pray that oppression may hasten away,
And hide in the dens of the earth—
The bright star of Freedom now rising to day,
May usher full liberty's birth.

From the collection at the American Antiquarian Society (ca. 1844)

An “effusion written by Abby H. Price” of Hopedale, delivered at Upton “on Monday evening last, immediately after a lecture by Frederic Douglass” dedicated to the “Upton Anti-Slavery Fair” and printed by the community press, Hopedale, Milford, Mass.

Mothers have seen their children sold;
Love's strong ties rent for paltry gold,
And heard the auction hammer tell,
A sound more dread than funeral knell!”
“To free these millions from the chain,
To free our country from the stain
Of slav'rys foul and withering blight,
That wraps it in the gloom of night,
Is a high purpose-worth the zeal,
Which all the friends of Freedom feel.

Anti-Slavery Convention at Uxbridge

[From *The Practical Christian*, September 19, 1848.]

The meeting commenced on Saturday, as appointed in *The Liberator*, in Taft's Hall. We understood rather a thin meeting, though not present. Sunday morning the room was filled with a deeply interested audience, mostly from the towns around. The people of Uxbridge having better business to attend to than freeing three millions of chattel slaves, and relieving the country of the rifest source of crime and misery.

The Meeting was opened by reading a chapter in the Bible, by Mr. May, Prayer by Mr. Whitney of Hopedale, and singing. The meeting was then ably addressed by S.S. Foster. The fore part of his speech was eloquent upon the happiness of doing good, and the latter on the position of the "Free-Soil Party." During the discussion he was often interrupted by Oliver Johnson and others, who were very apprehensive that he would not allow them merit enough. Mr. Foster looked to the movement with pleasure as anti-slavery effect, provided Abolitionists would not confide in, or be led away by it. They looked with hope that it would lead to genuine Anti-Slavery effort. A committee was appointed to procure a larger house, if possible, for the 5 o'clock session of the convention, and the meeting adjourned one hour.

In the afternoon met again in the same small room, crowded with an attentive and highly intelligent audience. The Convention was then organized by appointing Amos White of Northbridge to the Chair, and A. H. Price Secretary. A committee on finance was appointed, in the early part of the afternoon, consisting of Charles Wing, Jared Benson Jr., and E. D. Draper. The meeting was then addressed by Lucy Stone - - an imperfect sketch of whose speech will accompany this notice. She was followed by Cyrus M. Burleigh, who was welcomed to the platform by his Anti-Slavery friends with great pleasure. A sketch of his remarks will perhaps be inserted in the next paper. Oliver Johnson of Blackstone, D. S. Whitney of Hopedale, Mr. Foster and Mr. May, followed in short but effective and interesting speeches. The committee for securing a larger room reported that the Town Hall had been obtained for the evening session, on which the meeting adjourned to meet again at half past five. At that meeting the debate was more exciting - conducted by S. S. Foster and a Conscience Whig. Lucy Stone addressed them again for a short time, when the Convention adjourned sine die.

Speech of Lucy Stone Blackwell ABRIDGED

[recorded by Abby H. Price, Secretary]

In the forenoon we found ourselves discussing the merits of the Free Soil movement.

This seems to be the topic of peculiar interest at this time. To me the government of this great nation seems like a large ship, that has evidently been fitted with great care to ride nobly over the bosom of the ocean; she has put out to sea with sails unfurled and colors proudly hoisted; millions of hearts have watched her with interest, beating with high expectation in the result of her voyage, -- when lo, her crew on board discover that she has a leak! Those most desirous of saving her go to work eagerly to stop that leak; but as they work with pewter and cotton and cement to stop the water that pours in at one place, they discover that the whole bottom is rotten and entirely unfit for the voyage. Those on shore see that she cannot make the voyage, but that inevitably she must be lost, unless she puts to shore and undergoes a thorough reconstruction; but those on board think to save her by stopping that one place.

Now to me it is better to see them active and thus at work than to see them all asleep in the midst of danger. Hope is inspired that they will make greater and greater discoveries before it is too late, and that possibly she may turn around and make the necessary repairs.

We want men, at this time, of high and noble purpose; men who will take their lives in their hands and go forth in this moral warfare. We want young men whose thoughts aim at higher objects than to walk the streets like dandies and smoke cigars. We want those whose noble purpose is to elevate their race. We want women, too, whose ambition is higher than to be admired by the giddy throng. We want those who will labor and feel for others good, till their hearts grow too large for the present restricted sphere. We want mothers of more than Spartan heroism, who with deepest, purest love, would consecrate their children to this holy cause. We want individual responsibility felt deeply at this eventful crisis.

Think how the single brain of Garrison awakened, and how the truths he uttered rocked the whole nation. Think how great has been the zeal of the churches to propagate sectarianism; how mighty have been their strong combinations to send the gospel to the heathen. We want such zeal and such strength now, to put away the curse of slavery.

We care not for the puff -ball laborer, whose zeal will go out in smoke; but we want the high aim, the calm and steady purpose -- those who are willing to lose everything - - even the privilege of voting. Women are not allowed to vote, hence we know not the luxury (if it be a luxury) of coming to the polls for the first time; but we take it to be esteemed a great privilege by the manner in which it is cherished, and the consequence which it seems to add. All men have an internal love of freedom, but if the flame, burning in the slave inwardly, bursts out, the voter is pledged to quench that flame though it be in his own blood. I saw a poor old man, who, desiring to die free, made his escape by the Underground Railroad, and came to the place where I was. When offered sympathy, never shall I forget the expression of despair and woe on his face as he replied, "I see an enemy in every white man."

I tremble as I think of the influence of the church in regard to this terrible iniquity.

Ministers have the ears of the people. If we cannot influence them we must influence the people, change public sentiment, and if the people desire Anti-Slavery truth, the ministers will preach it to them.

Eliza Harris by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1853)

Like a fawn from the arrow, startled and wild,
A woman swept by us, bearing a child;
In her eye was the night of a settled despair,
And her brow was o'ershaded with anguish and care.

She was nearing the river—in reaching the brink,
She heeded no danger, she paused not to think!
For she is a mother—her child is a slave—
And she'll give him his freedom, or find him a grave!

'Twas a vision to haunt us, that innocent face—
So pale in its aspect, so fair in its grace;
As the tramp of the horse and the bay of the hound,
With the fetters that gall, were trailing the ground!

She was nerved by despair, and strengthen'd by woe,
As she leap'd o'er the chasms that yawn'd from below;
Death howl'd in the tempest, and rav'd in the blast,
But she heard not the sound till the danger was past.

Oh! how shall I speak of my proud country's shame?
Of the stains on her glory, how give them their name?
How say that her banner in mockery waves—
Her "star-spangled banner"—o'er millions of slaves?

How say that the lawless may torture and chase
A woman whose crime is the hue of her face?
How the depths of forest may echo around
With the shrieks of despair, and the bay of the hound?

With her step on the ice, and her arm on her child,
The danger was fearful, the pathway was wild;
But, aided by Heaven, she gained a free shore,
Where the friends of humanity open'd their door.

So fragile and lovely, so fearfully pale,
Like a lily that bends to the breath of the gale,
Save the heave of her breast, and the sway of her hair,
You'd have thought her a statue of fear and despair.

In agony close to her bosom she press'd
The life of her heart, the child of her breast:—
Oh! love from its tenderness gathering might,
Had strengthen'd her soul for the dangers of flight.

But she's free!—yes, free from the land where the slave
From the hand of oppression must rest in the grave;
Where bondage and torture, where scourges and chains
Have plac'd on our banner indelible stains.

The bloodhounds have miss'd the scent of her way;
The hunter is rifled and foil'd of his prey;
Fierce jargon and cursing, with clanking of chains,
Make sounds of strange discord on Liberty's plains.

With the rapture of love and fullness of bliss,
She plac'd on his brow a mother's fond kiss:—
Oh! poverty, danger and death she can brave,
For the child of her love is no longer a slave!

Frederick Douglass, “If There is No Struggle, There is No Progress” (1857)

ABRIDGED

Delivered August 3, 1857, in Canandaigua, New York
West India Emancipation Event

The general sentiment of mankind is that a man who will not fight for himself, when he has the means of doing so, is not worth being fought for by others, and this sentiment is just. For a man who does not value freedom for himself will never value it for others, or put himself to any inconvenience to gain it for others. Such a man, the world says, may lie down until he has sense enough to stand up. It is useless and cruel to put a man on his legs, if the next moment his head is to be brought against a curbstone.

A man of that type will never lay the world under any obligation to him, but will be a moral pauper, a drag on the wheels of society, and if he too be identified with a peculiar variety of the race he will entail disgrace upon his race as well as upon himself. The world in which we live is very accommodating to all sorts of people. It will cooperate with them in any measure which they propose; it will help those who earnestly help themselves, and will hinder those who hinder themselves. It is very polite, and never offers its services unasked. Its favors to individuals are measured by an unerring principle in this—viz., respect those who respect themselves, and despise those who despise themselves. It is not within the power of unaided human nature to persevere in pitying a people who are insensible to their own wrongs and indifferent to the attainment of their own rights. The poet was as true to common sense as to poetry when he said,

Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all-absorbing, and for the time being, putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. In the light of these ideas, Negroes will be hunted at the North and held and flogged at the South so long as they submit to those devilish outrages and make no resistance, either moral or physical. Men may not get all they pay for in this world, but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.

[Referring to the West Indies]:

The spirit of freedom was abroad in the Islands. Insurrection for freedom kept the planters in a constant state of alarm and trepidation. A standing army was necessary to keep the slaves in their chains. This state of facts could not be without weight in deciding the question of freedom in these countries. I am aware that the rebellious disposition of the slaves was said to arise out of the discussion which the Abolitionists were carrying on at home, and it is not necessary to refute this

alleged explanation. All that I contend for is this: that the slaves of the West Indies did fight for their freedom, and that the fact of their discontent was known in England, and that it assisted in bringing about that state of public opinion which finally resulted in their emancipation. And if this be true, the objection is answered. Again, I am aware that the insurrectionary movements of the slaves were held by many to be prejudicial to their cause. This is said now of such movements at the South. The answer is that abolition followed close on the heels of insurrection in the West Indies, and Virginia was never nearer emancipation than when General Turner kindled the fires of insurrection at Southampton.

Sir, I have now more than filled up the measure of my time. I thank you for the patient attention given to what I have had to say. I have aimed, as I said at the beginning, to express a few thoughts having some relation to the great interest of freedom both in this country and in the British West Indies, and I have said all that I mean to say, and the time will not permit me to say more.

**“Speech of Wm. S. Haywood, At the First of August Celebration at Hopedale, MA”
Printed in *The Liberator*, August 21, 1857**

We are gathered here to-day, friends, in commemoration of one of the noblest events that brighten the page of history. We are here to celebrate the emancipation of eight hundred thousand slaves, and the elevation of those, who, for ages, in themselves and their ancestors, have been victims of cruel oppression, to the condition and enjoyment of the rights of freemen. It is good, as it seems to me, to gather together, as has been our wont on this first of August, and call to mind the event which, twenty-three years ago to-day, was consummated, and to lend our rejoicings to those who, in the isles of the sea, now lift their unfettered hands to thank God that they are free.

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We are here, to-day, not only to sympathize with the millions of bondsmen in our own country, but to have our hearts stirred up, if possible, to a deeper hatred of the power that enslaves them. A year ago, it was fondly hoped by friends then present at hour celebration, that the political excitement through the country was passing would settle this whole matter for ever.

How is it? We went through the excitement and fury of that campaign, and slavery lives yet. Nothing has been settled. My friends, the duty for you and for me is simply, Hands off! – let go the foul system! Have nothing to do with supporting it, either personally, socially, ecclesiastically, or politically! – and then to strive to stir up each other’s minds and hearts to so hate slavery, and love freedom (that glorious gift of God to all men,) as that all may be induced to take the right position.

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It is not my forte to make anti-slavery speeches.

I wish to lend my influence in hastening on the time when the shouts of joy and gladness shall come up from the oppressed in our own land, as they did from the isles of the sea.

If we look into the history of this movement in our country, nothing will appear more prominent than the unyielding perseverance of American abolitionists.

Questions:

1. Pick two works to read. Summarize each and then compare and contrast them. How did the life experience and background of the author impact the contents of their work? Was one more emotional than another? Did one address more problems and solutions than another, and if they both did, how did their opinions on those issues differ, if at all?
2. The Abolition Movement occurred around the same time as The Second Great Awakening, a time of increased religiosity and a rapid increase in Protestant denominations. How was religion used in these sources to argue for abolition?