

Slavery and Freedom in the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Papers

Houghton Library, Harvard University

The following excerpts are from a sampling of letters and journal entries written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) that represent the many anti-slavery visitors to his home as well as his personal views on the subject. Most of the original documents are in the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Papers at the Houghton Library at Harvard University (MS Am 1340). Longfellow's outgoing correspondence was published in six volumes as *The Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, edited by Andrew Hilen.

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Letters and Journal Entries in Chronological Order

1837

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Stephen Longfellow, December 1, 1837:*
“. . . The Little-Peddlington community of Boston is in a great toss, or has been; first about the College, and then about Dr. Channing and the Abolitionists. But all this you will see in the papers. Boston is only a great village. The tyranny of public opinion there surpasses all belief.”

Note: After the abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy was killed on November 7, 1837, while defending his printing press against a mob in Alton, Illinois, Channing and others petitioned city officials to use Faneuil Hall for a protest meeting. Their petition was first denied and then granted. The rally was finally held on December 8, and after much heated oratory by abolitionist sympathizers and their opponents the huge crowd passed Channing's resolutions regarding liberty of speech, free discussion, and freedom of the press.

1838

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Friday, March 1838:*
“Went to town to hear Miss Grimke speak on slavery at the State House.”

1842

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, from Dickens Study, October 16, 1842:*
“. . . I have read Dicken's book [*American Notes*]. It is jovial and good natured, and at times very severe. You will read it with delight and, for the most part, approbation. He has a grand chapter on Slavery. *Spitting and politics at Washington* are the other topics of censure. Both you and I censure them with equal severity, to say the least. . .”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Samuel Ward, December 18, 1842:*
“. . . I sent you on Saturday a copy of the Poems on Slavery. I trust you will like, at least, the spirit in which they are written. . .”

1843

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Stephen Longfellow, January 1, 1843:*
“ . . . How do you like the Slavery Poems? I think they make an impression; I have received many letters about them, which I will send to you by the first good opportunity. Some persons regret that I should have written them, but for my own part I am glad of what I have done. My feelings prompted me, and my judgment approved, and still approves. . . ”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to George Lunt, January 4, 1843:*
“I have been so busy for the last week, that I have not been able to answer your letter until now. I have, however, found time to read your Age of Gold: and am delighted with the elevated spirit it breathes, and the fine poetic passages which stud its pages, and particularly the solemn and beautiful melodies of its close. I sympathize with you throughout. The theme is one which should be repeated and re-echoed from every heart and true, through the whole country; for the country seems bent upon disgracing itself in every possible way. I say it with deep humiliation and grief, the American character seems often wanting in many of the more generous and lofty traits which ennoble humanity.

I am sorry you find so much to gainsay in my Poems on Slavery. I shall not argue the point with you, however, but will simply state to you my belief.

1. I believe slavery to be an unrighteous institution, based on false maxim that Might makes Right.
2. I have great faith in doing what is righteous, and fear no evil consequences.
3. I believe that every one has a perfect right to express his opinion on the subject of Slavery as on every other thing; that every one ought so to do, until the public opinion of all Christendom shall penetrate into and change the hearts of the Southerners on this subject.
4. I would have no other *interference* than what is sanctioned by the law.
5. I believe that where there is a *will* there is a *way*. When the whole country sincerely wishes to get rid of Slavery, it will readily find the means.
6. Let us, therefore, do all we can to bring about this *will*, in all gentleness and Christian charity.

And God speed the time!”

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to John Forster, February 28, 1843:*
“ . . . I hope the Slavery Poems did not disappoint you. I have attempted only to invest the subject with a poetic coloring. People here have so long looked upon the ridiculous side of the Negro character (and you have no idea what a *broad* side that is) that their sympathies for the race are deadened. These I have tried to awaken “by gentle force soliciting their hearts.” This is the point of view from which I want to look at poems. Thank you for your promise to notice them in the Examiner.”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to John G. Whittier, September, 1843:*
“It is impossible for me to accept the Congressional nomination you propose, because I do not feel myself qualified for the duties of such an office, and because I do not belong to the Liberty Party. Though a strong anti-slavery man, I am not a member of any society, and fight under no single banner.
I am much gratified that the Poems on Slavery should have exercised some salutary influence; and thank you for your good opinion of them. At all times I shall rejoice in the progress of true

liberty, and in freedom from slavery of all kinds; but I cannot for a moment think of entering the political arena. Partisan warfare becomes too violent, too vindictive, for my taste; and I should be found a weak and unworthy champion in public debate.”

1846

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 26, 1846:*
“. . . In the evening Mr. Henson, a Negro, once a slave, now a preacher, called to get subscription for the school at Dawn, in Upper Canada, for education of blacks. I had a long talk with him, and he gave me an account of his escape from slavery with his family. There was never anything more childlike than his manner. Not one word of abuse. The good-natured ebony face, the swarthy-bearded lip, the white teeth, the whole aspect of the man so striking and withal so wild, - it seemed as if some Egyptian statue had come to life and sat speaking in the twilight sonorous English not yet well learned. What pleased me most in the Negro is his bon-homie. Moreover, almost every Negro has the rheumatism. This man had it. His right arm was crooked and stiff. It had been broken with a stake from a fence.”
Note: Josiah Henson later became the model for Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 4, 1846:*
“. . . At noon we walked to Lowell’s. He had gone to the anti-slavery picnic in Dedham. We saw his gentle wife, who, I fear, is not long of this world. Speaking of the Abolitionists, she said, “They do not modulate their words and voices. They are people who live with the deaf, or near waterfalls, and whose voices become high and harsh.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 18, 1846:*
“Exhibition of young theologians: their dissertations read in the chapel. Twelve in all, and no Judas among them, I trust. O.B. Frothingham, son of our friend, was very good; so was Samuel Johnson.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 25, 1846:*
“. . . In the evening Mr. Giddings of Ohio gave a lecture on the Rights of the North, in reference to Southern Slavery. A plain, straightforward man, and no orator. I hope his words will have a good effect here, where there has been such apathy on the subject. Saw Whittier there.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 27, 1846:*
“Phi Beta Kappa. A grand, elevated, eloquent elegance from Sumner. He spoke it with great ease and elegance; and was from beginning to end triumphant.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, August 1, 1846:*
“The mail brings me an Anti-Slavery Standard, with a long and violent tirade against me for publishing the Poems on Slavery in the cheap edition, - taken from a South Carolina paper. How impatient they are, those hot Southrons. But this piece of violence is quite ridiculous. . .”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 25, 1846:*
“Last night old John Quincy Adams presided at a monstrously crowded meeting in Faneuil Hall, about the slave taken in the streets of Boston and carried back to his slave master in New Orleans by the captain of a coaster. Sumner, Wendell Phillips, and Howe all spoke. Alas, that I was not there to hear!”

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 27, 1846:*
“. . . After church we called on Mrs. Follen, who has come back to Cambridge to live.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 30, 1846:*
“Read Sumner’s Letter to R.C. Winthrop in The Whig; a very noble, powerful, direct, unflinching appeal. As a speech it would have echoed through the land. Though here and there a phrase might have been omitted, it must carry conviction with it.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 22, 1846:*
“Weiss preached. I told him after church that I felt like applauding him, as the people of old did St. Chrysostom.”

1847

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 8, 1847:*
“. . . Saw Sumner, who is writing a lecture on “Algerian Slavery,” which he begins with a comparison between the African Barbary States and the American.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 21, 1847:*
“A snow-storm. Tasted the sweet luxury of sitting all day by the fireside and hearing someone read. Sumner delivered to us from an arm-chair his lecture on “Algerine Slavery,” which is exceedingly clever, simple, and striking.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 2, 1847:*
“Prepared lectures for to-morrow. Made out a list of the books which we read last year. Hillard commences his lectures on Milton. In the evening, as the moon rose behind the Park Street tower, I went to the Tremont Temple. It was already crowded from floor to ceiling. The lecture was excellent and extremely well delivered. . . Hillard and Sumner are both eloquent men, but very different in their eloquence. Sumner stands like a cannoner, and gesticulates as if he were ramming down cartridges. Hillard is more elegant, and occasionally you think he is going to say, Let us pray. . .”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 14, 1847:*
“We kept Sumner after the feast (the Club dinner) and he passed today with us. For a rarity he went to chapel with us. We had a good sermon.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 23, 1847:*
“Sumner with us, just returned from New York. He brings us Mrs. Butler’s Year of Consolation, a year in Italy; and we read it with great delight. Sumner says that he never saw any one who impressed him so with the idea of genius as Mrs. Butler, in her presence and conversation.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 18, 1847:*
“Bring Sumner out for Sunday. His resolutions on slavery and war rejected by the Whig meeting the other evening. I must say of them, as the old lady said of the Rejected Addresses, “I don’t see why they should have been rejected; they are very good.”

1848

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 26, 1848:*
“Sumner and Felton to dine. In the afternoon we discussed Sumner’s position, social and

political. He justifies himself by saying that what he has written lately has been solely in defense of Palfrey, who is savagely attacked. We wish this ugly wound might heal up forever and yet I think Sumner is right. His last paper is very calm, and not an attack upon anybody; though from certain quarters we hear of nothing by "Sumner's attack on----"

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to George Stillman Hillard, April 4, 1848 (check date):*
". . . Sumner (who still keeps a *blue chamber* in his brain where hang the dead bodies of Ticknor and Winthrop) is hesitating whether to pronounce a Eulogy on John Quincy Adams before the New York Anti-Slavery Society. Felton says "Yes!" I say "No!" and Sumner hangs in doubt between doing this and writing a History of the Mexican War, after the fashion of Louis Blanc's "*Dix Ans*," . . ."

Note: Longfellow's advice prevailed. Adams who had vetoed against the Mexican War and had had a formative influence on Sumner's political career, died at his seat in the House of Representatives on February 21, 1848.

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 9, 1848:*
". . . My days are worn away by unprofitable trifles done for other people, who ought to be more considerate than impose things upon me. Sumner dined with us and spent the night, as usual! These hebdomadal visits are very pleasant. We count much upon them."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 24, 1848:*
"Dined in town. Saw Sumner surrounded by his captains, - Adams, Allen, and Philips. They are in great fervor touching their Anti-Taylor-and-Cass meeting in Worcester."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 26, 1848:*
". . . In the evening, read Horace Mann's speech on Slavery; very good and forcible."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 31, 1848:*
"Fanny read me Corwin's speech on the Compromise Bill, ---dashing and clever, but on the whole not so able as Mann's. Still it will have its effect with many upon whom the argument has none. He makes pretty evident what a great and fatal mistake was that the first compromise of the Constitution by which Slavery was tolerated; and what a fatal one will be the second one, if passed, which God forbid!"
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, August 13, 1848:*
"Went to the Episcopal church to hear Dr. Wainwright, a mild, gentlemanly preacher; and in the afternoon to the negro church, where we heard Mr. Hunt, a bald-headed old man upon Noah, --a sermon which I have reported elsewhere in full."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, August 20, 1848:*
"Heard Mr. Todd preach a tremendous sermon, such as I used to listen to in my college days."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 17, 1848:*
"Sumner passed the afternoon with us. After tea, I walked half-way into town with him. He looks somewhat worn. Nothing but politics now. Oh, where are those days when literature was the theme of our conversation?"

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 22, 1848:*
“Sumner stands now, as he himself feels, at just the most critical point of his life. Shall he plunge irrevocably into politics, or not?—that is the question; and it is already answered. He inevitably will do so, and after many defeats will be very distinguished as a leader. Let me cast his horoscope; Member of Congress, perhaps; Minister to England, certainly. From politics as a career he still shrinks back. When he has once burned his ships there will be no retreat. He already holds in his hand the lighted torch.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 26, 1848:*
“. . . Sumner made a Free-soil speech [in Cambridge]. Ah, me! In such an assembly! It was like one of Beethoven’s symphonies played at a saw-mill! He spoke admirable well. But the shouts and the hisses and the vulgar interruptions grated on my ears. I was glad to get away.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 29, 1848:*
“Sumner. His letter accepting the nomination of the “Free Soil Party” as a candidate for Congress is very good. Now he is submerged in politics. A strong swimmer, may he land safely!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 16, 1848:*
“Went to Concord to dine with Emerson, and meet his philosophers, Alcott, Thoreau, and Channing.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 23, 1848:*
“. . . At dinner, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Channing, and S.”

Note: This would take place at Craigie House, not Concord

1849

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 4, 1849:*
“Heard a sermon full of anecdotes, which reminded me of my promise to Mr. Spear to help by a contribution his labors among prisoners and their families. Sumner dined with us. . .”
- Note: Donations to Charles Spears appears frequently in Longfellow’s account books. Spears is also known to be actively involved in anti-slavery movement. [need to check donations in account book]
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 25, 1849:*
“A cold, rainy morning; and in the midst of it the soul of the negro murderer Goode is just at this hour going from the gallows.
“*Through the mist and the murk and the morning gray,
It is forced away from the swarthy day
To the dreaded judgment-seat.*”
And I hope and think this will be the last execution we shall hear of in Massachusetts”
 - *Letter from Charles Sumner to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, August 9, 1849 (?):*
“. . . The last Eclectic Review has a kindly article on you, ignorantly condemning the hexameters, and exalting the lyrics, especially the poems on Slavery. It says, ‘His generous and powerful advocacy of the rights of the slave, in these fine poems, has given him no common claim to the

gratitude of all benevolent minds.' This is true. By those poems your name is fastened to an immortal truth. Ever Thine, Charles Sumner"

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, August 28, 1849:*
"Enjoyed a day at home in the library. Very quiet and soothing. In the afternoon, went to town. Saw Sumner, Hillard, and Mr. Chase, Senator from Ohio, --nephew of Salmon Chase, of Portland, in whose office my father studied law; an easy, frank, and cordial man."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 4, 1849:*
"Sumner at dinner. I urged him to take ground against any coalitions, by which the anti-slavery principles of the Free-soil Party may be suppressed, as in New York. After dinner we strolled the garden."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, December 9, 1849:*
"Sumner has been arguing the case of a Negro girl against the city of Boston, for not admitting into school with white children, but forcing her to go to the African school, made and provided for those who wear "the burnished livery of the sun."

1850

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, January 20, 1850:*
"Went to the parish church, the college chapel being closed. After dinner, discussed Slavery and the probable action of the South [with Sumner]. He thinks there is really danger of a dissolution of the Union. . ."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 8, 1850:*
"Sumner thinks the South will, as usual, have its own way; and there are signs of flinching among the Whigs."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 12, 1850:*
"Went to Miss Bremer's who made a sketch of me in her book. While I was there, Ellen Crafts came in, - the slave woman who ran away disguised in man's clothes as a young master, her husband going as her slave. When Miss Bremer told me who it was, and spoke of man's clothes, Ellen hung her head and said she did not like it mentioned, - and "some people thought it shocking." Miss Bremer laughed at this prudery, as well she might; and we both urged her to be proud of her act. Then Mrs. --- came in; and among other brilliant remarks said, "Miss Bremer, do you think a woman has fulfilled her mission before she has become a mother?" Miss Bremer dropped her pencil, and lifting up both hands, explained, "Yes, indeed! Those women who have no children of their own have more than those who have many. . ."
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 8, 1850:*
"A brief report comes of Webster's long-expected speech. It makes us very sad to read it. Is it possible! Is this Titan who hurled mountains at Hayne years ago?"
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 9, 1850:*
"Went to town. Found everybody complaining of Webster. "Fallen, fallen, fallen from his high estate!" is the universal cry. In various phraseology. Yet what has there been in Webster's life to lead us to think that he would take any high moral ground on this Slavery question?"

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 10, 1850:*
“Sumner at dinner. He feels sadly about Webster’s speech. But I say, Let us have it all and read it before judging.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 16, 1850:*
“. . . Talked with Mr. Sam Appleton about Webster. He says, “I think it is a most abominable speech.” And so do I. Ah, good old man! You are always true as steel!
“My friend, what sordid days of dross are these, of coward cringing and of cheap content!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 26, 1850:*
“The slave-hunters are in Boston. I hope they will be imprisoned, as they deserve. What a disgrace this is to a republic of the nineteenth century.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 27, 1850:*
“Sumner at dinner. The Fugitive Slave, Crafts, has got a warrant against his pursuers, and had them arrested for slander in calling him a thief, the damages laid at ten thousand dollars. They found bail. This is a good beginning. I hear they will be drummed out of town.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 10, 1850:*
“Sumner dined with us. There is much excitement in the political world just now. Tomorrow is the election; and the Free-soil and Democratic triumphs, as probably will, Sumner will doubtless be made Senator at Washington for six years. I do not think he most desires it, save so far it will be a vindication of himself and his course.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, November 13, 1850:*
“I am glad I am not a politician, nor filled with rancor that politics engender. The Whigs are beaten—horse, foot and dragoons. This owing to the dereliction from the avowed principles of freedom. I think Daniel Webster has broken up the Whig party Massachusetts, and those who have been so active in upholding his “Fugitive Slave Bill Speed and trying to ride over everyone that differed from them, must thank him and themselves for this signal defeat.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, December 8, 1850:*
“Sumner at dinner. We discussed the pro-slavery aggressions since the formation of the Constitution; the purchase of Louisiana, that of Florida, the annexation of Texas. These three great violations of the compact between the States, and consequent increase of the Slavery power, the North has submitted to, fascinated by increase of territory.”

1851

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 15, 1851:*
“Drove into town in a deluge of rain. Had a political chat with Uncle Sam, who said, ‘I don’t let my Whig friends know all I think about affairs. I shall not express my opinions fully, but I think I do not differ much from you.’ Good old man! Your heart is large and in the right place. Hear that a fugitive slave, or a man accused of being one, escaped to-day from the court-room during the recess, aided by other blacks. Very glad of it. This government must not pass laws that outrage the sense of right in the community.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 9, 1851:*
“A Sunday without Sumner is an odd thing but today we had one. . .”

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 4, 1851:*
“There is much excitement in Boston about the capture of an alleged fugitive slave. O city without soul! When and where will this end? Shame, that the great Republic, the “refuge of the oppressed,” should stoop so low as to become the Hunter of Slaves!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 5, 1851:*
“Troops under arms in Boston; the court-house guarded; the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court forced to stoop under chains to enter the temple of Justice! This is the last point of degradation. Alas for the people who cannot feel an insult! While the “great Webster” comes North to see that the work is done!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 6, 1851:*
“Sumner came notwithstanding the rain. He says that Charles G. Loring is to defend the fugitive Simms. They want to get a chance to argue the constitutionality of this infamous Fugitive Slave Law.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 12, 1851:*
“Dined in town; had some political chat with Uncle Sam. Good old man! Who is true to his pure and upright instincts, and holds the Fugitive Slave Law in proper detestation.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 28, 1851:*
“Sumner at dinner. He is rather low-spirited, and does not like the black gulf of political life before him.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, October 23, 1851:*
“Sumner takes his last dinner with us. In a few days he will be gone to Washington for the winter. We shall miss him very much. He passed the night here as in the days of long ago. We sat up late talking.”

1852

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 9, 1852:*
“Began Uncle Tom’ Cabin, a pathetic and droll book on Slavery; a book of power.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 22, 1852:*
“Every evening we read ourselves into despair in the tragic book, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. It is too melancholy, and makes one’s blood boil too hotly.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, September 5, 1852:*
“Sumner has been making a grand speech in the Senate; really a grand speech, upon the unconstitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Bill.”

1853

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 24, 1853:*
“Mr. and Mrs. Stowe came to dinner. Him I have known since my college days; her I have never seen before. How she is shaking the world with her Uncle Tom’s Cabin! At one step she has reached the top of the stair-case up which the rest of us climb on our knees year after year. Never was there such a literary coup-de-main as this. A million copies of a book within the first year of its publication.”

1854

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, February 21, 1854:*
“It is now eleven o’clock of the forenoon, and you have just taken your seat in the Senate, and arranged your artillery to bombard Nebraska! We listen with deepest interest, but shall not hear the report of your guns till to-morrow, you are so far off! If, after all, the enemy prevails, it will be one “dishonest victory” more in the history of the world. But the enemy will not prevail. A seeming victory will be a real defeat. You will have a brave ally in Fessenden, who, I hear, passed through Boston on his way to Washington two days ago. I have seen-----; but I gave him such a lecture on the Nebraska business that I am afraid he will never come again. F. joins me in words of cheer.”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, February 27, 1854:*
“All this morning of my birthday, my dear Sumner, I have devoted to your speech on Nebraska, which came by the morning’s mail. It is very noble, very cogent, very eloquent, very complete. How any one can get over it, or under it, or through it, or round it, it is impossible to imagine. If this does not prevent, the South—ah, poor South!—from committing a breach of faith, and losing its character wholly, no speech of man will!
That unlucky sentence from Everett’s speech (I dare not trust myself to speak of it here) in which he gives his opinion that Slavery will not go into Nebraska on account of soil, climate, etc., is kept standing in type in the office of the Boston Morning Post, and appears in full feather every day in its columns! What a compliment! I beg you write me a letter. Let me know about this speech of yours. Do not keep me in the dark about the most important act of your life.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 1, 1854:*
“Read Sumner’s speech on the Nebraska Bill in full. A noble speech, bravely spoken. Though it may not keep Slavery out of Nebraska, it will keep it out of many hearts forever.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 29, 1854:*
“Sumner is still going from town to town stirring the hearts of men with his noble words on Slavery. God speed him!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 3, 1854:*
“Yesterday a fugitive slave was arrested in Boston. To-day there is an eclipse of the sun. “Hung be the heavens in black!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 27, 1854:*
“Late night there was a meeting in Faneuil Hall, and afterward an attempt at rescue, which, I am sorry to say failed. I am sick and sorrowful with this infamous business. Ah Webster, Webster, you have much to answer to!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 28, 1854:*
“The air is pestilential with this fugitive-slave case.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 30, 1854:*
“The slave case drags along. There is great and wide-spread excitement, and a healthy one. The general feeling is, “We will submit to this not longer, come what may!”

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, June 2, 1854:*
“We read in the evening papers yesterday that some evil-minded persons were stirring up a mob against you and threatening violence. . . This morning I have read your Nebraska speech. It is one of your best, with a pulsation of freedom in every line. To-day is decided the fate of Burns, the fugitive slave. You have read it all in the papers, - the arrest, the trial, etc. Dana has done nobly; acting throughout with the greatest nerve and intrepidity. Fanny joins me in congratulations on your noble position and labors. It is a great thing in one’s life to stand so long and unflinching in the range of the enemy’s artillery.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 2, 1854:*
The fugitive slave is surrendered to his master, and, being marched through State Street with soldiery, put on board the United States revenue cutter. Dirty work for a country that is so loud about freedom as ours!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 12, 1854:*
“[Samuel] Lawrence begins my portrait. He is a scrupulous, careful, and slow worker. His head of Curtis is very good.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 16, 1854:*
“The portrait nearly finished, and much like. Lowell and Emerson and Tom Appleton at dinner. The sage of Concord came expressly to dine with Lawrence and the Howasji. After dinner Agassiz and Felton came.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, June 29, 1854:*
“News from Washington of a fierce debate in Congress on a repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, in which Sumner takes a conspicuous part, and does himself much honor.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, July 17, 1854:*
“Sumner came to dinner. He is in good spirits, and undaunted. He means to fight the battle of Freedom to the last. The rest is in God’s hand.”

1855

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, March 22, 1855:*
“Lundy Lane and old Mrs. Vassall (born a slave in this house in 1769) came to see me. And stay so long that Fields is driven away.”

Note: Lunford Lane was a successful businessman who purchased his freedom and then had to flee the South. Leaving his family behind until he earned enough money to purchase the freedom of his wife and children. In early 1840’s he moved to Cambridge living at 44 Webster St. Became active in the American Anti-slavery Society. Abolitionist, author, businessman.

“Mrs. Vassall” -- possibly referring to “Mr. Vassall” meaning Darby Vassall -- was certainly born into enslavement in the Vassall Craigie Longfellow House. John and Elizabeth Vassall, the original owners of the house, inherited their fortune from their families who owned plantations in the West Indies. Many of the homes along Brattle St. were owned by Vassall family members and all had household slaves. John and Elizabeth Vassall inherited/purchased their slaves for the house which is documented in various sources as to their names and lives.

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, April 29, 1855:*
“Sumner is still going from town to town stirring the hearts of men with his noble words on Slavery. God speed him!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 20, 1855:*
“Sumner just returned from New York, where he has been lecturing on Slavery to huge audiences in theaters. A great success, and a great sigh of the state of the public mind.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, December 6, 1855:*
“. . . In the evening, went to town to hear Mrs. ---, daughter, it is said, of Espartero and a negro mother, read Mrs. Stowe’s dramatization of her own *Uncle Tom*. A striking scene, this Cleopatra with a white wreath in her dark hair, and a sweet, musical voice, reading to a great, impassioned, immovable Boston audience”

1856

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 23, 1856:*
“A lovely morning. Was walking in the garden, when Owen arrives, and a voice broken by sobs tells me that Sumner has been brutally beaten in the Senate, by a Mr. Brooks, nephew of Butler, who was severely handled in Sumner’s speech. O Southern “chivalry!” O---!”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 25, 1856:*
“It is difficult to sit still with such excitement in the air. The newspapers pour in from all quarters their denunciations. Only the Southern presses, - and alas! A few Northern ones, - uphold the shameful deed. Conway, from Washington, dined with us. It is cheering to hear him. A Virginian by birth, his soul has revolted against Slavery.”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, May 28, 1856:*
“I have just been reading again your speech. It is the greatest voice, on the greatest subject, that has been uttered since we became a nation. No matter for insults, - we feel with you; no matter for wounds, - we also bleed in them! You have torn the mask off the faces of traitors; and the spirit of the North is aroused.”
- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 28, 1856:*
“Write to Sumner, after reading his speech again; it makes me burn with indignation and shame. A storm; but I must go to town, to hear some of the speakers at the Anti-slavery meeting.”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, August 5, 1856:*
“. . . I need not say I was delighted to get your letter. I only wish you were here, instead of being among the mountains. What a wretched piece of business! What infamy to the country! What a wound to Liberty! I sent you last week the article from London Morning Star; did you get it? Well, one good result of all this is, that at length Freedom and Slavery stand face to face in the field as never before. . .”

1857

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Robert James Mackintosh, March 9, 1857:*
“. . . We are having rather dark days in our political world. The present administration is the most shaky old piece of Cabinet-work you could possibly imagine; and the Supreme Court has

pronounced a decision in a Slave case, which makes one shutter with alarm and indignation. Only let us not despair in this momentary triumph of things evil. . ."

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, April 21, 1857:*
". . . If you were here, the thing which would most interest you to-day is Gurowski's book "America and Europe"; -four hundred solid pages, without gossip of personalities. Here are the contents.

Chap I. Population	VIII. Education
II. Character	IX. The Press
III. Democracy	X. The Pulpit
IV. Self-government	XI. The American Mind
V. Slavery	XII. Customs, Habits &c.
VI. Manifest Destiny.	XIII. Country & City.
VII. Foreign Elements	Conclusion

I have read as yet only one chapter- that on Slavery. It is very good; strong, direct, solid; with a fine page on the future of Africa, rising like a palm-tree in the midst. I wish I could send you the book, that you might read these fifty pages on Slavery. He closes with these words "The Slave States, separated and alone, would sink at the best into absolute insignifancy, would become of less interest than are the Papuans or Polynesians for the great association of mankind."

Burritt in his last "Bond of Brotherhood" records his visit to you, and says "We were rejoiced to find the great temple of his brain restored, and his whole person full and large." Of me he says; "I think he will join the movement, and sign the call for a National Convention."

I fear you are now feeling some reaction from the excitement of a first week in Paris. . ."

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, July 23, 1857:*
". . . I say nothing of politics. There is nothing very cheering, except the anti-slavery movement in Missouri and Mr. Helper's book, from Carolina-also anti-slavery."

1858

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, February 23, 1858:*
". . . I groan with you over the iniquity of the times. It is deplorable; it is heart-breaking; and I long to say some vibrant word, that should have vitality in it, and force. Be sure if it comes to me I will not be slow in uttering it. . ."

Note: In a letter of Feb.22 Sumner had written: "I long for another Anti-Slavery Poem from you - something to leaven yr next vol. Think of it--do."

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, April 7, 1858:*
". . . Do you know "The Spanish Conquest in America" by Arthur Helps? An interesting, valuable book, I should say. He looked deeply into the subject of Slavery. Livingston's "Africa" has also much for you in it."
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, May 4, 1858:*
"Though I have not written, I have not lost sight of you for a moment. I hear of you from George, from Howe, from Felton; but not such good news as I could wish. Why do you not come to us? Now that the wretched Kansas juggle is over, perhaps you will. Felton says he will take care of you, if you will go to Athens with him. But he is going too fast, and too soon. He sails tomorrow."

I shall be there to see him depart. Surely the best thing for you too is Europe. There is no good in half-way measures and compromises of any kind. . ."

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, May 11, 1858:*
"The bell has rung noon; and if I do not write at the top of my speed the mail will go without my letter, and that it must not do. Yours of yesterday made me very sad; because I see by it that you are so; and no wonder. But do not lose courage. Every thing depends on that, and your leaving Washington without delay. You must come away from that place where the miasma of the National Hotel seems typical and symbolical of the unwholesome air in the greater National Hotel. So do depart at once. We all think so. We must send you again over the sea; and the sooner the better. . ."
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, June 28, 1858:*
". . . I have had a meeting of the Mass. Historical Soc. at Head Quarters. Among other things Geo: Livermore exhibited a volume of Anti-Slavery Tracts, once owned by Washington, strongly bound, and having his signature on each!"

1860

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, May 30, 1860:*
"At the Anti-Slavery meeting, heard Remond and Douglas, colored men, speak; also Wendell Phillips. All good speakers."

1862

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 21, 1862:*
"To-day Captain Gordon, the slaver, is to be hanged. It seems illogical to hang him, and yet protect by the Constitution all our internal slave-traders."
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, April 20, 1862:*
". . . You are hard at work; and God bless you in it. In every country the "dangerous classes" are those who do no work; for instance, the nobility in Europe and the slave-holders here. It is evident that the world needs a new nobility, - not the gold medal and sangre azul order; not of the blood that is blue because it stagnates; but of the red arterial blood, that circulates, and has heart in it, and life, and labor.
I am writing you on Easter Sunday. What an Easter this is for the negroes in the District of Columbia! I rejoice, with you and all true men, on this Easter of Africa."

1863

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, June 2, 1863:*
". . . I saw the Negro Regiment pass through Beacon Street; standing at the window of No. 39, with Mrs. Chs. P. Curtis, who clapped her hands and waved her handkerchief! She has a son in the Army of the Potomac."

Note: On May 28 the celebrated Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, the Black unit commanded by Col. Robert Gould Shaw, paraded in Boston.

- *Journal entry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:*
"In town. Saw the first black Regiment, or *Regiment of Blacks*, march through Beacon St.! An

imposing sight; with something wild and strange about it, like a dream. At last the North consents to let the Negro fight for his own freedom.”

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, December 18, 1863:*
“ . . . I am glad to see you have proposed the Repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. I should like to have done it myself. I envy you! . . . ”

Note: On December 10 Sumner had announced his intention to work toward the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law; he introduced a bill to that effect on February 8, 1864 and eventually passed Senate on June 23, 1864.

1864

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, April 20, 1864:*
“ . . . I read your Report on the Fugitive Slave Bill with extreme interest and delight. It is admirable. Until the black man is put upon the same footing as the white, in the recognition of his rights, we shall not succeed, and what is worse, we shall not deserve success. . . ”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, April 30, 1864:*
“Your Report on the rejection of the ‘colored Testimony’ I read with a kind of agony, to think what we have been inflicting on those ‘ whose despair is dumb.’ This dreadful stone of Slavery! Whenever you lift it, what disgusting reptiles crawl out from under it! Your Speech on the Abolition of Slavery came this morning. I shall read it at once. It is enough for me that you have made it. . . ”

1865

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, February 10, 1865:*
“ . . . The grand event of the century-the anti-slavery enactment-has been as silent as day-break, or the coming of a new year. And yet this year will always be the Year of Jubilee in our history. Thanks to you.”
- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, October 24, 1865:*
"I found it impossible to engage "Smith and his men" [the caterers] for to-morrow; consequently I must postpone the great Mandarin Fan dinner until Friday. Will that suit you as well? I hope so; as the zig-zag of one who can, and one who cannot, makes life difficult"

Note: This would be Joshua Bowen Smith, active Black abolitionist, who lived in Cambridge and was involved in the Underground Railroad.

1866

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Charles Sumner, January 17, 1866:*
“I hardly know which is most revolting, - the article sent you in a box, or that served up for you on the dirty Round Table. Each shows about the same amount of barbarism, and each is equally harmless to yourself and discreditable to the author. So let them pass away, among the things forgotten. Meanwhile, it grows more and more evident that we shall have no peace in the country till your doctrines prevail. All accounts from the South betray a deplorable state of feeling toward the negro.
I have nothing new to write you, not having been in town since the day of the "Tattered Flags," - which was a most impressive occasion, -a month ago, or more. . . ”

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Robert Ferguson, February 27, 1866:*
“I thank you so much for your two letters, and for your subscription to the Shaw Statue. Your expression of sympathy will be most grateful to the family, as it has been to me; and when I see the young hero on his bronze horse in front of the State House, it will be pleasant to associate you with him in my thought. . .”

Note: The work was not commissioned until 1884 and unveiled in 1897

- *Letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Edward Atkinson, March 10, 1866:*
“I have received from Mr. Robert Ferguson of Morton near Carlisle, England, the enclosed contribution to the Shaw Statue. I have since read the Prospectus and having a strong sympathy with the object, will ask you, seeing your name on the Committee, to be so kind as to take charge of the enclosed and hand it to the proper quarter. . .”

African American Connected Excerpts from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Account Books

Transcription and research by James Shea and Avinoam Stillman

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's account books remain unpublished; most of his many biographers have paid them little attention. However, they contain a wealth of information about the causes and people he supported, specifically those related to abolitionism and other anti-slavery activities.

The original account books were held at Longfellow's house (now Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site), where they were written, until 1956. At that time, all of Longfellow's papers, including the account books, were transferred to the Houghton Library at Harvard University for permanent deposit. Upon transfer of the site and its collections to the National Park Service in 1972, an inventory of all the Longfellow documents removed from the site was made. This inventory included black and white low-resolution copies of the account books. In the early 1990s, upon James Shea's arrival as Museum Curator and Manager, he became aware of the account books. Color copies of the account books were made for the site, and it was from these higher resolution copies that the transcriptions contained herein were made.¹

This file includes only entries that record funds given to individuals and institutions involved with the anti-slavery/abolitionist cause. The recipients include abolitionist authors, freedom seekers, African American churches, schools, and newspapers, Unionist forces, and many anonymous African Americans to whom he gave charity. Several individuals listed had direct involvement with the Underground Railroad, both as "passengers" and "conductors." These entries clearly demonstrate that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow not only supported local efforts to help African Americans but participated in a national and international support network. His donations go to recipients in Massachusetts (Boston, Cambridge, Springfield), as well as to other states (Connecticut, Kansas, New York, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee), and to other countries where African Americans found refuge (Canada, Liberia). It is not known at this time how the money was transferred from Longfellow to the designated individual(s) or institution(s), as his published letters and journals almost never mention these transactions.

This file contains ample evidence of Longfellow's commitment to the abolitionist and anti-slavery cause. Nevertheless, it is not exhaustive; upon closer examination of the entries other connections could be made and some listed could be refuted. There are several entries which were partially illegible and require review. It is recommended that a more thorough review of the account books take place alongside Longfellow's incoming and outgoing correspondence, journals, and other papers. All transcriptions should be checked for accuracy and for a more complete recording.

¹ High-resolution images of the account book are available online through Houghton Library. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807-1882. [Personal account book] A.MS. (unsigned); [n.p.] 1840-1882. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Papers. MS Am 1340 (151). Accessed 23 September 2022. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:9028239\\$11j](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:9028239$11j)

Money Given:

1850

- October- Colonization Society 5.00²
- October- African Newspaper 3.00³

1851

- June- Negro School Michigan 3.00⁴
- June 13-Mr. Lang, negro Med. Student 5.00
- October- Mr. John Spear 5.00⁵

1852

- March- Church in Hartford 10.00⁶
- May- Colored church, Springfield 3.00⁷
- Oct.-Refugees Home Soc. Canada 10.00⁸
- Oct.-Slave mother 2.00
- Dec.6- To a slave 2.00
- Dec. 22-Mr. Spear 2.50⁹

1853

- April 21-Colonization Society 5.00¹⁰
- August- Miss Wormeley for Slave 10.00¹¹
- November-Mr. Still (slave) 5.00¹²
- December-Miss Wormeley for Slave 10.00¹³

² Probably the American Colonization Society, the foremost organization dedicated to developing colonies in Liberia made up of free African Americans.

³ There were many Black newspapers published in antebellum America. This may be a donation to Frederick Douglass's paper "The North Star," published from 1847 to 1851. (http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_press.htm)

⁴ There were African American schools in the North even before the Civil War, including in Michigan.

(<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2967283?uid=47459&uid=3739984&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=67&uid=22869&uid=62&uid=3739256&sid=55851706483>)

⁵ This is probably John Spear, who with his brother Rev. Charles Spear, in 1841-1842, organized the first and second Universalist Anti-Slavery Conventions in Lynn, Ma. They are better known for their advocacy to abolish the death penalty. Henry W. Longfellow gave funds to Charles Spear on many occasions until 1863. It is not known at this time if the funds to Spears were for abolitionist causes or other.

⁶ This may refer to Faith Congregational Church, established in 1819. The oldest predominantly Black congregation in Hartford, Connecticut, the church had many connections to the abolitionist movement. (http://www.hogriver.org/issues/v03n03/congregational_church.htm, <http://hartfordheritagetrail.org/heritage-trail/churches/>)

⁷ Possibly St John's Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. The church was founded in 1844 by anti-slavery activists and was known as the "Free Church." Abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass and John Brown, worshipped at the church.

⁸ The Refugee Home Society was an organization founded by American and Canadian abolitionists in 1851 to help freedom seekers and purchase land for them in Canada. (<http://www.windsor-communities.com/african-organ-refugeehome.php>)

⁹ See note 4.

¹⁰ See note 1.

¹¹ This is Mary Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, author, historian, and daughter of British Admiral Wormeley, who visited the house several times. On July 29th, 1853, Longfellow wrote her: "I am ashamed to send you so small a sum as the inclosed(sic) for an emergency so great as the one you mention. If necessary I will double the amount... I am very glad you have undertaken this business..." He sent her another \$10 sum in December of that year, making good on his promise to "double the amount." Wormeley succeeded in freeing several enslaved people.

¹² This is probably Peter Still, brother of Underground Railroad conductor William Still. From 1850 to 1854, Peter Still raised money to purchase the freedom of his wife and children by giving lectures. (http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/narratives/bio_william_still.htm)

¹³ See note 10.

1854

- Jan. 3-Mr. Spear 4.00¹⁴
- Jan. 25-For Slave 3.00
- Feb. 16-Slaves in Canada 5.00
- March 8- Mulatress .50
- March 29-Negro Church Buffalo¹⁵
- June 29-Mr. Spence Negro School 3.00
- June 29-Mr...., Negro Churches 5.00
- Nov. 3- Conlon(sic) Soc. 10.00¹⁶
- Dec.5-Mr. Forte, Mich. Negro School 8.00¹⁷
- Dec.14-Mrs. Quakes (negress) 1.00

1855

- Feb 8- Mrs. Quakes .50
- March 13-Mr. Lang col. Church 5.00
- March 24-Mr. Vassal 10.00¹⁸
- March 24-For "Ida May"slave 6.00¹⁹
- March 30-For a Fugitive Slave 5.00
- April 29-Mr. Spence Afr. School 5.00
- Oct.-Kansas Missionary 2.00²⁰
- Miss Johnson²¹
- Dec.-Mr. Leo Lloyd 5.00²²

¹⁴ See note 4.

¹⁵ This could be one of any number of African American churches in Buffalo, NY, at the time. The first Black church in Buffalo, the Michigan Street Baptist Church, participated in abolitionist causes and is considered part of the Underground Railroad. Buffalo attracted both free Black Americans and freedom seekers because of its remote location and proximity to Canada. Buffalo was only approximately 200 miles away from Josiah Henson's Dawn settlement. (<http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/0history/hwny-michigan.st.church.html>)

¹⁶ This may be miswritten; HWL may have meant the Colonization Society (see note 1).

¹⁷ See note 3.

¹⁸ This is probably Darby Vassall who with a sister was born enslaved at the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House. In a journal entry of March 22, 1855, HWL writes: "Lundy Lane and old Mr. Vassall (born enslaved in this house in 1769) came to see me..." John and Elizabeth Vassall, the original owners of Longfellow's house, inherited their fortune from their families who owned plantations in the West Indies. Many of the homes along Brattle St. were owned by Vassall family members and all housed enslaved people. John and Elizabeth Vassall inherited/purchased their enslaved people for the house; there is documentation of these enslaved people in various sources.

¹⁹ "Ida May" is a generic reference to enslaved people taken from *Ida May*, an anti-slavery novel by Maine based author Mary Langdon (Mary Hayden Green Pike) published in 1854. Next to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, it was the best known and bestselling anti-slavery novel of the time.

²⁰ After the Kansas-Nebraska Act established "popular sovereignty" as the method of determining whether slavery would be legal or not in new states, many pro- and anti-slavery citizens immigrated to Kansas to sway the vote towards their respective sides. The conflict between the Northerners and Southerners over Kansas devolved into violence, known as "Bleeding Kansas."

²¹ This could be Jane Johnson, celebrated freedom seeker from Pennsylvania who settled in Boston.

²² Leo. L. Lloyd was a freedom seeker who, after his escape, became a barber on Brattle Street. He began impersonating a "Nubian," or native African, eventually claiming to be a "Nubian Prince." He gave speeches around the Northeast, including at Reverend Sam Longfellow's church, and received money from abolitionists, including Longfellow. The *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, an abolitionist newspaper, called him out for his charlatanism, but he seems to have succeeded in deceiving many people. He eventually went to Liberia as a merchant on behalf of Bostonian businessmen and built a sugar mill there. He later returned to the U.S. to speak about trade with Liberia, under the title of Lieutenant Colonel.

1856

- March 28-Lundfort Lane 10.00²³
- April 3-Kansas Emigrants 5.00²⁴
- April- Mr. Pounce(?) Negro man 3.00
- May- Church in Kansas 10.00
- June 3- Parson Grimes 5.00²⁵
- June 5-Father Henson 10.00²⁶
- June 13-Anti-Slavery Tract Soc. 5.00²⁷
- June 13-To free a slave 5.00
- June 20-Mich. Negro School 15.00²⁸
- June 22-Mr. Lamson 35.00²⁹
- September-Kansas 50.00³⁰
- November-Alex Pensil for Slaves 10.00³¹
- November- Loyd, the "Nubian Prince" 20.00³²
- November- Mr. Spears 5.00³³

²³ Lunford Lane was a successful businessman who purchased his freedom and then had to flee the South, leaving his family behind until he earned enough money to purchase the freedom of his wife and children. In early 1840's he moved to Cambridge living at 44 Webster St. He became active in the American Anti-slavery Society (see note 17).

²⁴ See note 19.

²⁵ Probably Reverend Leonard Andrew Grimes. Grimes became minister of the Twelfth Baptist Church in 1848. Born free in Virginia, Grimes had been part of the Underground Railroad in Washington D.C. and was imprisoned for two years in Virginia for helping seven enslaved people escape to Canada. The Twelfth Baptist Church became known as "The Fugitive Slave Church"- they helped many freedom seekers, many of whom joined the congregation. In the famous Anthony Burns trial, Grimes organized support for Burns, a freedom seeker. Richard Henry Dana Jr., whose son married HWL's daughter, defended Burns. After Burns was returned to slavery under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, Grimes helped buy Burns his freedom. Grimes remained pastor until his death in 1874. (<http://www.nps.gov/boaf/historyculture/churches.htm>, <http://www.masshist.org/longroad/01slavery/burns.htm>, <http://www.balchfriends.org/Glimpse/lgrimes.htm>)

²⁶ Probably Josiah Henson, an important abolitionist and the model for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom." He was born into slavery in Maryland, but escaped to Ontario, Canada, where he founded the Dawn Settlement for freedom seekers. He wrote two autobiographies; "The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself," in 1849, and in 1858, "Truth Stranger Than Fiction. Father Henson's Story of His Own Life."

²⁷ The National Anti-Slavery Tract Society was founded by Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker and prominent abolitionist, in the 1820s. This is not to be confused with the American Tract Society, a missionary organization that widely disseminated Christian content throughout the United States. In 1859, the American Tract Society split over whether or not to include anti-slavery sentiments in their publications.

²⁸ See note 3.

²⁹ Possibly a reference to a member of the Lamson family whose patriarch was "Father" Silas Lamson, an eccentric and freethinker who would appear at Boston abolitionist meetings in a white robe, with a white beard, bearing a scythe.

(<http://books.google.com/books?ei=h4p8T8mUE6fx0gHP4uTICw&id=ST8TAAAI AJ&dq=Sherwin%2C+Oscar+%E2%80%9CApostles+of+the+N ewness%E2%80%9D+Phylon+1945&q=lamson>)

³⁰ See note 19.

³¹ Alex Pensil, alternatively spelled Alex. Pensile, was a Republican appointed Deputy Marshal in Charleston, South Carolina in 1870 (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1870-10-18/ed-1/seq-1/>)

³² See note 21.

³³ See note 4.

1857

- April-Mr. Wilson, Canada 5.00³⁴
- April 24-Negro Woman .50
- May-To free slave children 5.00
- June- Mrs. Hillard for slaves 5.00³⁵
- Oct.-To free a slave 5.00

1858

- Jan. 12-Chs. Spear 5.00³⁶
- Jan. 18-Dark Attorney 2.00
- Oct.-Negroes to Liberia 10.00³⁷
- Dec.-To ransom Slave 3.00

1859

- Jan. 19- Rev. W. Dennison 10.00³⁸
- Feb.-Mr. Spear 5.00³⁹
- April 22- For a Slave 2.00
- October- Mrs. Wells, slave 5.00
- Dec.- Two negro woman 3.00

³⁴ This is probably Reverend Hiram Wilson, a Black abolitionist who worked with the Dawn Settlement in Canada and assisted numerous freedom seekers escaping to Canada during the 1850's. There are also several other entries to Mr. Wilson and Rev. Mr. Wilson in later years. As Hiram Wilson died in 1864, and there is money given to a Mr. Wilson in 1865, it is possible that the other Mr. Wilson could be Henry H. Wilson, Massachusetts Senator and colleague of Charles Sumner.

³⁵ This is probably Susan Hillard, wife of George Stillman Hillard, former Five of Clubs member, and life-long friend of Henry W. Longfellow. According to a report completed for the BOAF Historic Resource Study dated December 31, 2002, "The Hillard House should be included in BOAF because of its repeated use to shelter and employ freedom seekers and its ability to demonstrate the role of committed abolitionists in that respect of abolitionism..." Wilbur H. Sieburt, professor of history at the Ohio State University, whose major research specialization was the Underground Railroad and whose research contains one of the most extensive collections of letters and interviews of participants, wrote in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 45, April 17, 1935-October 16, 1935 that "The Rev. Freeman Clarke has said that there were many places in Boston where they were received and cared for. He adds that every anti-slavery man was ready to protect them, and that some families who were not known to be anti-slavery were not less ready to do so. He gives the instance of Mrs. George S. Hillard, who secreted them in the attic of her home, at No. 92 Pinckney St., despite the fact that her husband was an ardent Webster Whig. The house was erected in 1846 and in the ell contained a closet, in the ceiling of which was a trap-door opening into an unfinished space under a slanting roof large enough to hold several persons. The ventilation came from an opening into a shaft under the skylight. That this was the place where Mrs. Hillard hid her seekers after freedom is attested by the fact that workmen found two tin plates and two iron spoons on the floor. Mr. Clarke tells us that his neighbor and friend, Mr. Hillard, was a United States commissioner, whose business it was to issue warrants to marshals for capture of runaway slaves. He believed that Mr. Hillard knew of his wife's concealment of slaves, but never interfered."

³⁶ See note 4.

³⁷ In 1858, the Cambridge Liberian Emigrant Association was formed by "some of the most respectable colored persons among us." (see *Cambridge Chronicle*, July 10, 1858). Under the direction of Enoch Lewis of Cambridge, the newly formed association issued circulars that urged freed Black Americans to join them in their object to repatriate Liberia. In November 1858, fifty-five emigrants sailed for Liberia from Baltimore on the fourth voyage of the ship *Mary C. Stevens*. Of the twenty-three that were members of the Cambridge Liberian Emigration Association, fourteen were from the prominent Lewis family of Cambridge, MA, (see note 41).

³⁸ Reverend Charles W. Dennison-This would be Reverend Charles Wheeler Denison, editor of the *Emancipator*, the first anti-slavery journal in New York. Mary Andrews Denison (1826-1911) wife of Rev. Denison (author w/ pen names N. I. Edson and Clara Vance) born and died in Cambridge, MA. Mary Denison was the author of over eighty novels including *Old Hepsy* 1850, an anti-slavery novel about the relationship between a daughter of a white man and a Black woman.

³⁹ See note 4.

1860

- January- Mrs. Johnson 3.00⁴⁰
- January 20- African Church 5.00
- January- Mr. Ch. Spear 5.00⁴¹
- March- Miss Lewis 1.00⁴²
- April- Father Henson 5.00⁴³
- June-Mr. Chapman (Political) 50.00⁴⁴
- June- Mr. Smith 3.00⁴⁵
- June-For a slave 2.00
- October 11-Mr. Chapman (Political) 50.00⁴⁶
- October 15- Wide Awakes 5.00⁴⁷
- Nov. 14- Williams (Blackman) 1.00
- Nov.- Subscription to Mr. Phillips 15.00⁴⁸
- Dec.-To slave mother 1.00
- Dec.-Mr. Wright (\$5...\$2) 7.00⁴⁹

⁴⁰ See note 20.

⁴¹ See note 4.

⁴² This donation, and others to various people with the surname Lewis, may be to a member of the prominent African American Massachusetts family of the same name. In 1781, Quaco Walker sued his master under the state constitution of 1780 which guaranteed that "all men are free and equal." Walker's case went to the state Supreme Court in 1783 and the court ruled in his favor and freed all enslaved people in the state. His family, which the Lewis family was a part of, became well-connected politically during the trial and afterwards. Quacko Walker Lewis, Walker's nephew, was an early Black abolitionist, as were other of his family members. Adam Lewis, who married Catherine Vassall (daughter of Tony and Cuba- probably born into slavery at 105 Brattle St.), relocated to Josiah Henson's Dawn Community in Canada, which included freedom seekers, former enslaved people, and free Black Americans. Members of the Lewis and Walker families harbored freedom seekers from southern states and helped them get to Canada and freedom. Q. Walker Lewis was also a leader in Black Freemasonry and served as the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the African Grand Lodge #1. He later joined the Mormon Church and became an Elder, although he was rejected by LDS leaders due to his race (see note 36). (http://people.ucsc.edu/~odonovan/walker_family.html)

⁴³ See note 25.

⁴⁴ Maria Weston Chapman was an abolitionist and editor of the *Liberty Bell*.

⁴⁵ This could be Joshua Bowen Smith, caterer, abolitionist, and state senator, born in Coatesville, Pennsylvania in 1813. In 1836, Smith traveled to Boston and worked as a headwaiter at the Mount Washington House. After catering for prominent Black Boston abolitionist families for several years he started his own catering establishment. Over the 25 years that followed he accumulated considerable wealth catering for numerous Boston abolitionist organizations and Union soldiers. In the process he befriended many notable abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, Robert Gould Shaw, and Charles Sumner. Smith fought vigorously for the abolitionist cause. He publicly denounced the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and aided freedom seekers by employing them as caterers. He catered a host of anti-slavery events, including meetings of the Massachusetts Female Anti-Slavery Society, the Twentieth Anniversary of the Liberator, (January 24, 1851) and the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation (September 22, 1862 and January 1, 1863). (<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/smith-joshua-bowen-1813-1879>)

⁴⁶ See note 43.

⁴⁷ The Wide Awakes, founded in 1860, was a paramilitary organization of young men that supported Republican candidates through marches and demonstrations. (<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/lincoln/contents/grinspan.html>)

⁴⁸ This could be Wendell Phillips, family friend and active abolitionist.

⁴⁹ May refer to Elizur Wright (12 February 1804–22 November 1885), prominent abolitionist. Wright helped found the American Anti-Slavery League in 1833, along with William Lloyd Garrison, among others. He acted as the League's national secretary, and edited abolitionist journals such as *The Emancipator* and the *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine*.

1861

- Jan. 10- Johnson (Slave) 3.50⁵⁰
- Feb. 8- School Home Kansas 5.00⁵¹
- Feb. 22- Mrs. Cora(?) of Kansas 5.00⁵²
- March 10- Miss Johnson 3.00⁵³
- March 22 - Mr. Wright 3.00⁵⁴
- March 28- Rev. Mr. Wilson 3.00⁵⁵
- May- Missouri Soldier 25.00⁵⁶
- May 28- Mr. Wright 2.00⁵⁷
- June 20- Mr. Wright 5.00⁵⁸
- June 21- Mr. Wilson 1.00⁵⁹
- Oct. 7-To a negro 1.00
- Oct.- Rev. Chs Spear 5.00⁶⁰
- Nov.-To a negro 1.00
- Nov.-To a negro 5.00
- Dec. 20- A Negro 2.00

1862

- Feb. 18- Home Guard 10.00⁶¹
- Feb. 25- Mrs. Lewis 2.00⁶²
- March 10- C.E.N. for "Contrabands" 10.00⁶³
- April 23-To a Negro 2.00

⁵⁰ See note 20.

⁵¹ See note 19.

⁵² See note 19.

⁵³ See note 20.

⁵⁴ See note 48.

⁵⁵ See note 33.

⁵⁶ Missouri was a major Civil War battleground. Throughout May of 1861, secessionist and unionist forces were stockpiling weapons and ammunition. On June 11, war was officially declared in Missouri. (http://www.mcwm.org/history_militaryoperation1861.html)

⁵⁷ See note 48.

⁵⁸ See note 48.

⁵⁹ See note 33.

⁶⁰ See note 4.

⁶¹ The Home Guards were Unionist militia groups in various border states during the Civil War. They often arose out of the Wide Awakes (see note 46).

⁶² See note 41.

⁶³ The C.E.N. probably refers to Charles Eliot Norton neighbor and life-long friends of Henry W. Longfellow. *Contraband* was another term for freedom seekers.

1863

- Jan 12.- Charles Spear 5.00⁶⁴
- Feb. 17-Emancip. League 10.00⁶⁵
- Feb.19.- Mr. Lewis 3.00⁶⁶
- March 10- Release of Prisoners 5.00
- March 13- Rev. Mr. Wilson 5.00⁶⁷
- Sept.15 - Mr. Wilson 2.00⁶⁸
- Sept. 19- Colored Soldiers 50.00⁶⁹
- Nov. 29- Contrabands 10.00⁷⁰

1864

- March 9- Tennessee Refugees 10.00⁷¹
- March 18- Mr. Wilson 5.00⁷²
- May- Hildreth Subscription 50.00⁷³
- June 29- Cushman Memorial 5.00⁷⁴
- September- Mr. Smith 5.00⁷⁵
- November- Slave 2.00
- November -Kansas Paper 3.00⁷⁶
- November 25-Negro Church

⁶⁴ See note 12.

⁶⁵ The Emancipation League of Boston was founded in September 1861 by Boston abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. It sponsored lectures and disseminated literature with the objective of promoting emancipation of slaves to the public and government. (Frank, Lisa Tendrich, *Women in the American Civil War, Volume 1*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008. pp. 238)

⁶⁶ See note 41.

⁶⁷ See note 33.

⁶⁸ See note 33.

⁶⁹ The 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was a unit of African American soldiers authorized in March 1863. (<http://www.54thmass.org/>)

⁷⁰ See note 41.

⁷¹ Many Tennesseans who sympathized with the Union fled their home state when Tennessee aligned itself with the Confederacy. (<http://tn-roots.com/tncarroll/UnionistsWTn.pdf>, pp. 7)

⁷² See note 33.

⁷³ This would be Richard Hildreth (June 28, 1807-July 11, 1865), a journalist, philosopher, historian, and antislavery activist. His 1836 novel *The Slave* is considered the first American anti-slavery novel. His *History of the United States of America* broke new ground with its "warts and all" portrayal of the founders of the American republic. It remained a standard work for forty years. This could be a subscription to assist with funds to support Hildreth because of ill health. There are copies of Hildreth's publications in Longfellow's library.

⁷⁴ Probably Bezaleel Cushman, one of HWL's schoolteachers and a member of the Portland Anti-Slavery Society.

(http://www.mainememory.net/bin/SwishSearch?q_id=%3A%3ABezaleel%20Cushman&per_page=25, http://books.google.com/books?id=M_YWAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+abolitionist&hl=en&sa=X&ei=k0ZOT7XrK8Xv0gHG-KjuAg&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=the%20abolitionist&f=false)

⁷⁵ See note 44.

⁷⁶ This could be one of any number of newspapers in Kansas. The bitter fighting between pro- and anti-slavery groups in Kansas extended to newspapers (see note 19). (http://www.kancoll.org/khq/1941/41_1_gaeddert.htm)

1865

- February 15-Mr. Wilson 10.00⁷⁷
- March 17- Chicago Fair 10.00⁷⁸
- April- Mr. Lang for blind boy 5.00

1867

- To Gov. Andrew Fund 200.00⁷⁹
- College in Tennessee 100.00⁸⁰

⁷⁷ See note 33.

⁷⁸ The 1865 Northwestern Sanitary Fair was held in Chicago to benefit sick and wounded Union soldiers. (<http://www.nytimes.com/1865/07/15/news/new-york-contributions-to-the-chicago-sanitary-fair-letter-to-mrs-gen-sherman.html>)

⁷⁹ Governor John Albion Andrew was the governor of Massachusetts from 1861-1866. An organizer of the Free-Soil party, and a member of the Republican Party, he raised money for the defense of radical abolitionist John Brown. While governor, he authorized two Black infantry regiments to fight in the war, the 54th and 55th Massachusetts. He died in October of 1867, so it is likely that this was a contribution to a fund to benefit Andrew's family after his premature death. (http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Findingaids/john_albion_andrew.pdf)

⁸⁰ This would be for Fisk University which was founded in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee. The world-famous Fisk Jubilee Singers started as a group of students who performed to earn enough money to save the school at a critical time of financial shortages. They toured to raise funds to build the first building for the education of freedmen. They succeeded and funded construction of the renowned Jubilee Hall, now a designated National Historic Landmark. Longfellow probably heard the group in Cambridge/Boston at this time.