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Black Abolitionism and Antislavery in Scotland, 1833-1861

Supervised by Professor Simon Newman

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List of Abbreviations:

AASS	American Anti-Slavery Society
AFASS	American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
ASSC	Anti-Slavery Society of Canada
BAP	<i>Black Abolitionist Papers</i>
BFASS	British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
BNA	<i>British Newspaper Archive</i> < www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk >
EES	Edinburgh Emancipation Society
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FDP	<i>Frederick Douglass Papers</i>
FUR	<i>Fair Use Repository</i> < http://fair-use.org/the-liberator >
FPM	Free Produce Movement
FSL	Fugitive Slave Law
GES	Glasgow Emancipation Society
GFAAS	Glasgow Female Association for the Abolition of Slavery
GNAAS	Glasgow New Association for the Abolition of Slavery
NYVC	New York Vigilance Committee
SBTM	Send Back the Money Campaign
UTC	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>

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Introduction:

On 1 September 2016 a plaque was unveiled in the Scottish city of Dundee commemorating a speech given by Frederick Douglass in that city in January 1846. The plaque was one of a number being unveiled throughout Britain in association with the BBC series *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, which broadly aimed to document and raise awareness of the historical contribution of black people to British history.¹ Douglass was the best-known nineteenth-century black American abolitionist, and he visited Scotland in 1846 to agitate for the abolition of slavery in the United States of America. American abolitionists carried out lecture tours to raise awareness of American slavery and gain public support for its abolition, just as British abolitionists had in their successful campaign against slavery in the West Indies. In contrast with this earlier campaign which had been dominated by white abolitionists, African Americans were far more prominent and were arguably the later transatlantic movement's most dynamic orators. From 1833 onwards they could be found addressing large audiences throughout Scotland and the rest of the British Isles. Black abolitionists spoke at meetings organised with the help of Scottish abolitionists, who constituted a small but influential part of the wider abolitionist movement.

This dissertation will explore the intersection of Scots and black abolitionism with the principal aim of assessing the extent and analysing the significance of the black contribution to Scottish antislavery. Richard Blackett claims that the antislavery approach of black abolitionists in Britain helped keep a fracture-prone movement "alive

¹ Cara Longmuir, 'Dundee lecturer part of BBC documentary to highlight Black British History', *University of Dundee*, <<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/news/2016/dundee-lecturer-part-of-bbc-documentary-to-highlight-british-black-history.php>>, [accessed 02/01/2017].

and vibrant.”² Similarly, this dissertation will argue that Scottish antislavery of the pre-Civil war era would have been notably less active and unquestionably less vibrant had it not been for the effort and approach of the black abolitionist. Black abolitionists brought abolitionism before Scots audiences to an extent and in a manner that could not have been achieved by any other abolitionist group.

Historian C. Duncan Rice contends: “No aspect of the nineteenth-century antislavery movement is more important than its internationalism, and none is more crucial to an understanding of the Scots abolitionists.”³ The oft-cited words that adorned the masthead of William Lloyd Garrison’s antislavery publication the *Liberator* were indicative of the movement’s mentality: “My country is the world, my countrymen are all mankind.” Abolitionists viewed slavery as an issue that transcended national boundaries and worked to create an international community dedicated to its abolition. The Scots constituted part of this international community and the importance Rice places on internationalism becomes more understandable when taking into account the prevalence of Garrisonian abolitionism within Scotland. Garrisonian abolitionists were known for their adherence to “nonresistance”, which broadly entailed the adoption of nonviolent methods for achieving emancipation and also nonparticipation in institutions implicated in American slavery, particularly the American government and religious bodies.⁴ Garrisonian abolitionism was perhaps more reliant on harnessing an international appeal against slavery than other types of abolitionism (such as political

² Richard Blackett, “‘And There Shall Be No More Sea.’ William Lloyd Garrison and the Transatlantic Abolitionist Movement” in *William Lloyd Garrison at Two Hundred*, ed. James Stewart (London: Yale University Press, 2008) p. 39.

³ C. Duncan Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists: 1833-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 3.

⁴ Carelton Mabee, *Black Freedom: The Nonviolent Abolitionists From 1830 Through the Civil War* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), p.2.

abolitionism) due to its adoption of “moral suasion”⁵ as the principal method by which to agitate for emancipation.⁶

Despite its internationalist credentials, the narrative of the abolitionist movement to end American slavery is in many ways one of a particularly Anglo-American cooperation.⁷ In fact it is “impossible to discuss the organizations of one country without some reference to the societies of the other.”⁸ Transatlantic abolitionist networks allowed for fundraising and the exchange of ideas, tactics, antislavery material (such as newspapers) and most importantly, personnel. The travels of Garrison and English reformer George Thompson early in the history of the movement illustrate this point. On his first visit to Britain in 1833, Garrison studied the various methods employed by British abolitionists in their successful campaign against slavery in the West Indies.⁹ Thompson’s reciprocal visit to America the following year allowed him to collect a substantial amount of antislavery material, which he put to effective use in Britain.¹⁰

The fostering of internationalism during the 1830s culminated in the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 at Exeter Hall in London. The convention allowed for the further development of an international response to the issue of slavery.¹¹ Temperley

⁵ I.e. attempting to convince people (particularly slaveholders) that slavery was wrong by appealing to their conscience. See: Manisha Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016) p. 226

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁷ See: Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Cooperation*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972)

⁸ Clare Taylor, ‘Introduction’ in *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding*, ed. Clare Taylor (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974), p. 1.

⁹ Howard Temperley, *British Antislavery: 1833-1870*, (Harlow: Longman, 1972), p. 21.

¹⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹¹ R.J.M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983) p. 82.

summarises its significance: “For the first time in history, a gathering of abolitionists drawn from many countries had succeeded in viewing the antislavery struggle as a single conflict of worldwide dimensions.”¹² The extended travels of the American delegates around Britain afterwards helped expand abolitionist networks.¹³ American abolitionists admired the example set by their British counterparts in their successful campaign against British slavery and viewed them as key allies in the fight against American slavery. When black abolitionists visited Britain they made it their duty to arraign American slavery and democracy in front of what was perceived as that country’s “greatest rival.”¹⁴

International travel had transformative potential for black abolitionists and the generally positive treatment they received whilst abroad resulted in them acquiring a greater sense of confidence and resolution. After a tour of Britain, black Americans usually “worked with renewed and increased dedication and commitment to the idea of effecting change at home.”¹⁵ Historians have repeatedly emphasised the significance of Douglass’s British sojourn in his personal development, suggesting that it contributed to his becoming the leading abolitionist of his day.¹⁶ In detailing his experience in Britain in 1846 to William Lloyd Garrison Douglass affirmed: “The white man gains nothing by being white, and the black man loses nothing by being black.” He then proceeded to

¹² Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 92.

¹³ William Caleb McDaniel, *Our Country is the World: Radical American Abolitionists Abroad*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, John Hopkins University, 2006) pp. 119-132.

¹⁴ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 203; As Temperley points out: “Britain was America’s traditional enemy and at times during the early 1840s the two countries were close to war,” *British Antislavery*, p. 91.

¹⁵ Vanessa D. Dickerson, *Dark Victorians*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008), p. 71.

¹⁶ Diane Barnes, *Frederick Douglass: Reformer and Statesman*, (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 44; Alan J. Rice and Martin Crawford, ‘Triumphant Exile: Frederick Douglass in Britain, 1845-1847’, in *Liberating Sojourn: Frederick Douglass & Transatlantic Reform*, ed. A.J. Rice and Martin Crawford, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), p. 3-4.

borrow a line from famous Scots poet Robert Burns, “A man’s a man for a’ that.”¹⁷ Charles Remond even drew upon his treatment abroad when arguing for the desegregation of travel facilities in Massachusetts before the legislative committee of the House of Representatives, being the first African American to address that body. Remond detailed his experience aboard a ship travelling from Glasgow to Dublin: explaining that he had been issued the same cabin number as an Irish merchant, who at once offered to vacate the cabin so that Remond could take it up.¹⁸

Remond, Douglass, and others were acutely aware of how their work and warm reception in Britain might annoy and disgust the proslavery American public.¹⁹ Blackett explains: “The popularity of blacks in Britain rankled American nationalists who were conscious of the contradictions between their lauded principles of equality and the existence of slavery and discrimination.”²⁰ Black abolitionists regularly commented on the seemingly ironic fact that they were afforded considerably better treatment in monarchical Britain as opposed to the American republic.²¹ This difference in treatment also pleased Scots audiences and was played upon by the fugitive slave William Wells Brown, who drew a loud cheer from a Glasgow audience when he informed them that while crowds in the US gathered to welcome “refugees from Hungary, from the banks of

¹⁷ Frederick Douglass to William Lloyd Garrison, London, [Eng.] 23 May 1846, in *Frederick Douglass Papers, Series 3, Volume 1, Correspondence, 1842-1845*, ed. John R. McKivigan (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2009) p. 132. (Hereafter cited as *FDP3.1*)

¹⁸ *The Liberator*, February 25, 1842, *Online Archive @ Fair Use Repository*, <<http://fair-use.org/the-liberator>> (Hereafter cited as *FUR*)

¹⁹ For an example see: Frederick Douglass, ‘An Account of American Slavery: An Address Delivered in Glasgow, Scotland, on 15 January 1846’, *The Frederick Douglass Papers Series One, Volume One: Speeches, Debates and Interviews*, ed. John W. Blassingame, et al., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 138-9 (Hereafter cited as *FDP1.1*).

²⁰ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 39.

²¹ Peter C. Ripley, ‘Introduction’ in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume 1: The British Isles, 1830-1865*, ed. Peter C. Ripley, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 9, (Hereafter cited as *BAP*).

the Danube, the Tiber, and the Nile...here [in Glasgow] there were three thousand persons assembled to welcome refugees from the banks of the Mississippi.”²²

Evidently, African American abolitionists believed in the value of internationalising their cause and strove to bring world opinion (especially British opinion) to bear upon Southern slavery and American race prejudice. African American reformers worked to construct and maintain an international “moral cordon” around America.²³ They acted as “abolition’s ambassadors” who “insisted that their struggle receive an international hearing.”²⁴ Douglass articulated the internationalist position forcefully whilst addressing the first Scottish audience of his 1845-47 British Isles tour. He informed his Glasgow audience of his wish to “encircle America about with a cordon of anti-slavery feeling – bounding it by Canada on the north, Mexico on the west, and England, Scotland and Ireland on the east.”²⁵ This tactic was adopted not only in an attempt to humiliate the South but also as one of the means by which emancipation could be achieved. The desired effect of such an appeal was “international revulsion against and isolation of American slavery.”²⁶

In 2009 Stephen Mullen described the history of abolitionism in Scotland as “largely unknown and unacknowledged.”²⁷ To date there has only been one book length publication that deals exclusively with the Scottish abolitionist effort to end American

²² *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, February 6, 1851, *Black Abolitionist Archives*, Doc. No. 11247, <http://research.udmercy.edu/find/special_collections/digital/baa/item.php?record_id=711&collection_code=baa>, [accessed 12/02/2017]

²³ *Ibid*, p. 46.

²⁴ Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause*, p. 340.

²⁵ Frederick Douglass, ‘An Account of American Slavery: An Address Delivered in Glasgow, Scotland, on 15 January 1846’ in *FDP1.1*, p. 138.

²⁶ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 46.

²⁷ Stephen Mullen, *It Wisnae Us: The Truth About Glasgow and Slavery*, (Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 2009) p. 5.

slavery.²⁸ In contrast, numerous specialist books on individual black abolitionists and black abolitionism have been produced. These generally appeared during and shortly after the civil rights era, with Benjamin Quarles *Black Abolitionists* being of particular importance.²⁹ While such works helped bring to light the nature and significance of black abolitionism, general abolitionist histories of the twentieth-century tended to neglect the contribution of black abolitionists to the movement as a whole.³⁰ Manisha Sinha recently addressed this by producing a general history of abolitionism that acknowledges and details the central role played by blacks.³¹ Similarly, Ira Berlin's recently published *The Long Emancipation* argues for "the primacy of black people" in effecting the end of American slavery.³² Scholarly interest in black abolitionism appears to be growing and the topic has recently been identified as "the most vital subfield in abolitionist studies" because it challenges narratives of abolitionism and emancipation which privilege the role-played by white actors.³³

Blackett's *Building an Antislavery Wall* and the first volume of Peter Ripley's *The Black Abolitionist Papers* remain the only book length publications predominantly concerned with explaining the antislavery activities of black abolitionists in Britain. There has yet to be a single work that deals exclusively with the contribution of black abolitionists to Scottish antislavery. Authors who have written on this subject have focused entirely on Douglass. Following George Shepperson's pioneering scholarship in the 1950s, numerous authors have published essays on Douglass and his time in Scotland, some as

²⁸ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*.

²⁹ Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

³⁰ Manisha Sinha, 'Coming of Age: The Historiography of Black Abolitionism: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism' in *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, ed. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, (New York: The New Press, 2006) p. 22-23.

³¹ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*.

³² Ira Berlin, *The Long Emancipation: The Demise of Slavery in the United States*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015) p. 9.

³³ See: Sinha, 'Coming of Age', p. 22-23.

recently as 2004.³⁴ As mentioned, Douglass was one of the leading abolitionists of his day and it is unsurprising that his presence in Scotland has attracted more interest than that of other black abolitionists. Furthermore, Douglass played a central role in the abolitionist campaign against the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), who had accepted donations from churches in the American South known to have ties to slavery. This controversy was the subject of Iain Whyte's 2012 monograph *Send Back the Money: The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery*. While Douglass features prominently in Whyte's book, his main concern was exploring and explaining the actions of the FCS and its ministers, before, during, and after their acceptance of Southern donations.

This dissertation builds on but goes beyond these previous works by giving more consideration to the role of lesser-known black abolitionists, while focusing exclusively on their activity in Scotland from the 1833 to 1861. The scholarly tendency to discuss only Douglass's time in Scotland obscures the context of a wide-ranging black abolitionism in the country. Douglass's trip is best placed within this context and while his contemporaries were "individually less prominent" than he, they were "collectively...more representative of the broader problems and aspirations of black Americans."³⁵ In Betty Fladeland's *Men and Brothers*, the author focuses on the relationship between British and American reformers in their respective campaigns to end slavery. While many abolitionist histories are concerned with the motivation and thought process behind abolitionist activity, Fladeland was predominantly concerned

³⁴ George Shepperson, 'Frederick Douglass and Scotland', *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Association for the Study of African American Life and History, 1953); Alisdair Pettinger, 'Send Back the Money: Douglass and the Free Church of Scotland', in *Liberating Sojourn*, ed. Rice and Crawford, pp. 31-55.; Nikki Brown, "'Send back the money!' Frederick Douglass's Anti-Slavery Speeches in Scotland and the Emergence of African American Internationalism', (Scotland's Transatlantic Relations Project Archive, 2004).

³⁵ Anthony J. Barker, Frederick Douglass and Black Abolitionism, *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (1993) p. 126

with what British and American abolitionists “were doing and of the connections between the activities of the two groups.” Like Fladeland’s work, this dissertation does touch on the abolitionist thought process, but its principle focus is the antislavery activities of black abolitionists within Scotland and the Scottish reaction to these activities.

The speeches, writings and correspondence of most abolitionists are relatively well documented, allowing for the possibility of detailing black abolitionism in Scotland and the response it generated from Scottish abolitionists. As Sinha points out, abolitionists left behind a “complicated historical archive”³⁶. Her statement is perhaps illustrated in the fact that the editors of *The Black Abolitionist Papers* identified roughly 14,000 primary sources relating to black abolitionism alone. Only ten percent of these sources were included in their five-volume series, one of which focuses exclusively on black abolitionist activity in Britain. While this is an invaluable source to any historian of abolition, material relating to Scotland comprises a small section of the volume. It has therefore been necessary to utilise a wide-range of resources, including newspaper archives, edited collections and also biographies of individual black abolitionists. Newspaper articles have been particularly important for the purpose of detailing the impact of and reaction to black abolitionists in Scotland beyond antislavery circles.

Chapter one explains the role of black and Scots abolitionists within the transatlantic movement. Despite the movement being in its early stages during the 1830s, numerous black abolitionists made their way to Scotland. James McCune Smith came for educational purposes whereas Nathaniel Paul came to raise funds for a settlement of

³⁶ Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause*, p. 5.

free blacks in Canada. Both men, however, made noteworthy contributions to Scots abolitionism and were appreciated by the Scots for their endeavours. Chapter two begins with an examination of the way in which black and Scots abolitionists responded to the abolitionist schisms of 1840-1841, which involved the fragmentation of the transatlantic antislavery movement into different groups based upon differing ideological and tactical preferences. The chapter then analyses the highly significant contribution of Frederick Douglass to Scottish antislavery in 1846. The final chapter examines the growth of “new” (non-Garrisonian) abolitionism in Scotland during the 1850s and the role black abolitionists played in this process. It concludes with an examination of how black abolitionists contributed to an upsurge of antislavery feeling in Scotland as the Northern and Southern states of America moved closer to Civil War.

Chapter One – 1833-1840:

Scottish Abolitionism:

Organised abolitionism on both sides of the Atlantic had its roots in the eighteenth century. The campaign to abolish the British transatlantic slave trade began in the 1780s, with the trade being officially outlawed in Britain in 1807 and America in 1808. Subsequently, British abolitionists turned their attention to bringing about the end of slavery itself in the British West Indies. Emancipation in the Caribbean was achieved by an act of parliament passed in August 1833, which took effect on August 1, 1834.¹ The legal abolition of both the trade and practice of slavery by Britain did not entirely solve the problem of either. As well as in America and other parts of the British Empire, slavery still existed in countries like Brazil and Cuba. British abolitionists continued to grapple with slavery and its related problems for decades following the 1833 act. In the immediate aftermath of abolition, British reformers followed the progress of emancipation in the West Indies and rallied against the delayed freeing of enslaved people there through the apprenticeship system. The 1833 act stipulated that former slaves serve a period of apprenticeship under their previous owners, but the system was repealed in 1838, four years after formal emancipation.²

The first issue of William Lloyd Garrison's radical abolitionist newspaper the *Liberator* on 1 January 1831 is often seen as the symbolic starting date of second wave

¹ For the historiography of and debates surrounding the British abolition of slavery see: Seymour Drescher, 'Antislavery Debates: Tides of Historiography in Slavery and Antislavery', *European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 131-148.

² See Temperley, *British Antislavery*, pp. 36-40.

abolitionism in the United States.³ Second wave abolitionism in America could be distinguished from the first by its radicalism, its objective of immediate (not gradual) emancipation, and also by the greater involvement of black and female abolitionists.⁴ Garrison's first tour of Britain in 1833 marked the beginning of a related movement in Britain to end American slavery.⁵ The relationship Garrison forged with the English reformer George Thompson proved to be a lasting and productive one. Towards the end of 1833 Thompson helped establish the two bodies through which much of the Scot's antislavery activity was channeled. These were the GES and the Edinburgh Emancipation Society (EES), which were the first societies in Britain to focus on slavery in America. The Scots believed that emancipation there would result in universal (i.e. worldwide) emancipation.⁶

Temperley suggests that the push for universal emancipation cannot be traced to a single person or group and was more of a generally shared course of action among supporters of the movement to end British imperial slavery.⁷ Both religious and secular motives prompted British abolitionists to advocate universal emancipation but historians have disagreed as to which was more significant. While eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment thinkers had disapproved of slavery in the abstract, this did not translate into organised antislavery activity. Rice suggests that the severance of Scotland's West Indian connections in 1833 resulted in increased Scottish enthusiasm

³ Ronald G. Walters, 'The Boundaries of Abolitionism' in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry & Michael Fellman, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1979), p. 4.

⁴ The first movement originated during the 1770s and was primarily led by conservative male Quakers based in the Southern US. See: Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, pp. 9-11.

⁵ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 16.

⁶ Rachel Jezierski, 'The Glasgow Emancipation Society and the American Antislavery Movement', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011), p.13; Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 28.

⁷ For Scottish involvement in the campaign to end British imperial slavery see: Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756-1838*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006),

for the universal abolition of slavery.⁸ However, Rice places even greater influence on Scots evangelism: “there would have been little Scottish concern about the sins of the South if Scots had not developed deep evangelical concerns over slavery.”⁹ In short, religious revivals in both Scotland and America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries helped foster abolitionism in each country.¹⁰ The Scots, like abolitionists elsewhere, understood slavery to be a sin and an enormous violation of evangelical Christian principles. Jezierski places less emphasis on the role of evangelicalism and suggests Scots who advocated universal emancipation were the inheritors of “a hybrid legacy of political reform and abolitionism, *tinged* with evangelical impulses.” [emphasis added]¹¹ Scots abolitionists admired the American political ideals of equality and liberty and were driven to an attack on American slavery, as they viewed it as an undeniable violation of these ideals.¹² Extending the ideals of equality and liberty to black Americans became an objective of abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic.¹³

Black Abolitionism:

Black abolitionism in America grew out of a tradition of black protest and resistance that can be traced to the eighteenth century.¹⁴ What emerged during the 1830s was an interracial movement dedicated to the immediate and unconditional abolition of

⁸ Scotland had close commercial ties to the West Indies and Scots could also be found owning and overseeing slave plantations in territories such as Jamaica – “Scots could only afford the luxury of unanimity over slavery because...their own commitment to plantation agriculture had been broken” - Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See Jezierski, ‘The Glasgow Emancipation Society’, pp. 48-49, for an overview of the significance of and relationship between revivalism in each country.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.68.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹³ Sinha, ‘Coming of Age’, p. 32.

¹⁴ See: Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, p. 18 and Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause*, p. 1 - which places black abolitionism in the same tradition as slave revolt and resistance.

American slavery.¹⁵ From the beginning, African Americans were central to the movement and played a vital role in defining its aims and pushing it forward.¹⁶ Gerald Sorin states that “isolating the motivation of the black abolitionist is a difficult if not impossible task” but suggests that the religious and educational credentials of leading black abolitionists may explain why they were so resolute and dedicated in their abolitionism.¹⁷ Sorin also accounts for the potential impact upon their abolitionism of the life experiences of blacks. Former slaves who came to occupy an important role in the movement had witnessed and been subject to the institution’s extreme violence, and even when free they continued to face systematic racial discrimination.¹⁸

During the 1800s lecture tours of Britain were something of a “rite of passage” for black abolitionists,¹⁹ who, like other American abolitionists were attracted to the “moral prestige” of a country that had strong abolitionist credentials.²⁰ Even before West Indian emancipation David Walker published his *Appeal...to the Colored Citizens of the World* in which he identified Britain as a key ally of black Americans in their struggle against slavery and prejudice.²¹ Many black abolitionists who visited Britain would have taken part in American celebrations of August 1 (the anniversary date of West Indian emancipation). This celebratory occasion could provide a platform from which black abolitionists could critique or praise British emancipation while simultaneously articulating an international abolitionist position. Addressing a free black crowd gathered in New York in 1836 to commemorate West Indian emancipation, Samuel

¹⁵ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, pp. 195-196.

¹⁶ Blacks “heavily influenced the abolitionist program of immediatism, anticolonization, and racial equality” - See: Sinha, ‘Coming of Age’, p. 26.

¹⁷ Gerald Sorin, *Abolitionism*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 103.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-04.

¹⁹ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, p. 340.

²⁰ Rice and Crawford, ‘Triumphant Exile’, p. 2.

²¹ Van Gosse, ‘“As a Nation, the English Are Our Friends”: The Emergence of African American Politics in the British Atlantic World, 1772-1861’, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4, (2008), p. 1003.

Cornish defiantly exclaimed: “We will fill every continent and island with the story of the WRONGS done to our brethren.”²² By the start of the Civil War in 1861 the British Isles had indeed been filled with stories of both Southern slavery and Northern prejudice. As envisaged by Cornish, black abolitionists led the way in this undertaking.

1830s:

The 1830s saw the development of a black abolitionist tour of Britain, a practice that “crystalized” in the following decades as increasing numbers of African Americans began crossing the Atlantic.²³ By no means did black abolitionist activity in Scotland begin in the 1830s; former slave Olaudah Equiano lived in Britain from the early 1780s onwards and regularly advocated the abolition of the slave trade. Equiano visited Scotland in 1792 to promote the publication of his life narrative and Iain Whyte credits James McCune Smith in 1836 as being the next black abolitionist to make a direct contribution to Scottish antislavery.²⁴ However, this accolade most likely belongs to Rev. Nathaniel Paul who first lectured in Scotland in 1833 shortly before the founding of the GES and EES.²⁵ Regardless, Smith’s involvement in Scottish antislavery dates to before 1836 and he arrived in Scotland in 1832 to matriculate at the University of Glasgow, where he stayed for five years, achieving three degrees. While in Glasgow, Smith became a founding member of the GES and was the only university student to sit on its committee.²⁶ Paul stayed abroad for a similar length of time as Smith but his

²² Quoted in Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause*, p. 340.

²³ Ripley, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

²⁴ Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery*, p. 7.

²⁵ See editor’s headnote – ‘Speech by Nathaniel Paul, Delivered at the Trades’ Hall, Glasgow, Scotland, 2 December 1834’ in *BAP*, p. 53.

²⁶ John Stauffer, ‘Introduction’, in *The Works of James McCune Smith: Black Intellectual and Abolitionist*, ed. John Stauffer, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. xxi.

purpose was collecting funds for the Wilberforce settlement for free blacks in Canada. While touring Scotland for a second time in 1834 Paul appeared alongside Smith on a platform assembled to hear Paul lecture on Southern slave trading, Northern prejudice and the importance of religion and education to free blacks. Paul attempted to validate the educational aims of the Wilberforce settlement by drawing the audience's attention to the case of Smith. The free blacks of the Wilberforce settlement would surely prosper if like Smith "they could be furnished with the means of instruction."²⁷ Paul's mission of raising funds for the Wilberforce settlement was ultimately a failure, given that the minister's salary and expenses exceeded the total amount of money he raised. Nevertheless, the abolitionist minister would have taken heart from the success of his antislavery work in general.

Leading members of the GES and EES were clearly grateful for the presence and work of both Smith and Paul at this early juncture in the American movement. Commenting on a series of lectures by Paul in Edinburgh the secretary of the EES claimed that he had never seen "the feeling of sympathy for the manner in which the free blacks in America are treated, so powerfully brought forth."²⁸ GES secretaries William Smeal and John Murray profusely thanked Smith for his efforts on behalf of the society, believing that they had the effect of "stimulating the abolition zeal of our population." The two men pointed out that while they did not believe in black inferiority, Smith had "made the doctrine less a matter of abstraction."²⁹ Through their antislavery endeavours in Scotland, black abolitionists repeatedly challenged and rebuked notions that they were in any way inferior to whites. Abolitionist Robert Purvis also visited Glasgow in 1834,

²⁷ 'Speech by Nathaniel Paul, Delivered at the Trades' Hall', in *BAP*, pp. 53-59.

²⁸ *The Liberator*, February 7, 1835, *FUR*.

²⁹ 'John Murray and William Smeal to James McCune Smith, 15 June 1837' in *BAP*, p. 69.

where he addressed the GES and its female auxiliary. The ladies' society thought that Purvis was "proof of the wickedness and absurdity of that prejudice which would limit moral worth, intelligence & the divine gifts, to any particular tinge of complexion."³⁰ These opinions are early examples of a theme that repeatedly appears in Scots' observations of black abolitionists. After Henry Highland Garnet visited Alloa in 1852, a local newspaper deemed him to be "the best possible refutation of the idea that the Negro belongs to an inferior grade in the creation."³¹ Former slaves like Garnet were particularly effective at exhibiting to Scottish audiences "both black potential and the destructiveness of the slave system."³²

Moses Roper became the first American fugitive slave to address a Scottish audience in 1838, although he may have first spoken in Scotland before that date. Roper stayed in Britain for nine years, where he lectured all over the country and even claimed to have addressed people who were wholly unaware of the existence of slavery in America.³³ Roper's travels took him from Dumfries to Inverness and hundreds of places in between, with his final lecture itinerary reading like a directory of Scotland's cities, towns and villages.³⁴ As one Edinburgh journalist pointed out, Roper was "able to address large meetings on the subject [about] which he has had so much bitter personal

³⁰ Quoted in Margaret Hope Bacon, *But One Race: The Life of Robert Purvis*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 46.

³¹ Quoted in Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 197.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³³ 'Moses Roper to The Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 9 May 1844' in *BAP*, p. 136.

³⁴ See appendix of: Moses Roper, *Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery: with an Appendix Containing a list of Places visited by the Author in Great Britain and Ireland and the British Isles; and other matter: Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South*, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/roper/roper.html>>, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), [accessed 12/02/2017].

knowledge.”³⁵ It was this “bitter personal knowledge” that made black abolitionists indispensable to the transatlantic movement – by drawing on personal experiences they enjoyed an unrivalled ability to raise awareness of and engender support for abolitionism. The shocking stories that slaves repeated throughout the country had strong emotive value and as Ripley points out: “A black American speaker – preferably a former slave – became an essential part of any respectable antislavery gathering in England, Scotland and Ireland.”³⁶ In Dundee, for example, a local newspaper editor attributed a large public turnout at a Douglass meeting to “the novelty of a slave addressing a Scottish audience.”³⁷ In 1851 the GES were able to attract a crowd of 3000 to one of their meetings, with the turnout being attributed to the presence of three fugitive slaves from America.³⁸ The antislavery work of fugitives in Scotland was not just confined to lecture halls either. Douglass, for example, lectured to crowds on Glasgow street corners; Francis Fedric addressed factory operatives in Dundee and William Wells Brown displayed an antislavery panorama for school children in Aberdeen.³⁹

Black abolitionists were also particularly effective at countering the arguments of the American Colonization Society (ACS). The ACS was founded in 1816 with the aim of gradual emancipation and then removal of both former slaves and free blacks through colonisation in Liberia, Africa. African Americans overwhelmingly opposed the goals of

³⁵ ‘Story of Moses Roper’, *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal*, No. 344, September, 1, 1838 (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1838), *Google Books*, <<https://goo.gl/yUfT27>> [accessed, 12/02/2017], p. 254.

³⁶ Ripley, ‘Introduction’, p. 10.

³⁷ See editors footnote, *The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery: An Address Delivered in Dundee, Scotland, on 30 January 1846*, in *FDP1.1*, p. 144.

³⁸ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 141.

³⁹ Whyte, ‘Send Back the Money!’, p. 82; Francis Fedric, *Autobiography of Francis Fedric, of Virginia: Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South*, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/frederick/frederick.html>>, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003), (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003), [accessed 12/02/2017]; p. 37; Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 125.

the ACS and anti-colonisation gave momentum to organised black abolitionism in its infancy.⁴⁰ Abolitionists took particular issue with the fact that the proposed scheme would have meant the involuntary expatriation of black Americans and the ACS also failed to condemn slavery in terms acceptable to unconditional abolitionists. Like American abolitionists, colonisationists repeatedly journeyed to Britain to raise funds and support for their cause. An early example is Elliot Cresson, an agent of the ACS who arrived in 1831. While Cresson quickly achieved success by gaining the endorsements of veteran British abolitionists William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, his efforts were undone by the work of Garrison, Thompson, Charles Stuart and Nathaniel Paul. Little scholarship has been carried out on the ACS in Scotland but they did attract some financial support; predominantly from the country's upper class conservatives, who tended to share the ACS's gradual stance on abolition.⁴¹ Financial support from this section of Scottish society helped the ACS establish the Liberian settlement 'Edina', named "in honour of the liberality of its [Edinburgh's] citizens...to the Colonization cause."⁴² Regardless, the ACS never gained substantial support in Scotland and the work of Paul and his abolitionist allies can be cited as a key reason why. Even members of the Edinburgh Ladies' Liberian Society, formed for the purpose of supporting the ACS, had doubts over the merits of their scheme and wrote to an American correspondent inquiring as to what free blacks thought about colonisation.⁴³ Paul's anti-colonisation efforts "set the stage for future black involvement and leadership in the transatlantic movement" and also helped demonstrate to British reformers that blacks could be key

⁴⁰ See: Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Jezierski, *The Glasgow Emancipation Society*, p. 21.

⁴² 'African Sketches', *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, Vol. XIV, No. 10, (Washington: Way & Gideon, 1838) *Google Books*, <<https://goo.gl/VIMP5w>>, [accessed 12/02/2017] p. 303.

⁴³ Copy of a Letter from Mrs. Sigourney, the celebrated American Poetess, to a Member of the Edinburgh Ladies' Liberian Society, dated Hartford, July 4th, 1833', *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 1, (Washington: James C. Dunn, 1833) p. 339.

actors in that movement.⁴⁴ Taking note of Paul's success, Cresson wrote to the ACS and unsuccessfully proposed that they send a black lecturer to Britain to regain support for their cause.⁴⁵

The 1830s, then, were a key and formative decade for black abolitionism in Britain. The activities of Paul and particularly Smith demonstrate that from its earliest days, black abolitionists had a presence within Scottish antislavery aimed at emancipation in America. These two abolitionists, as reflected in the response they generated from Scots, engendered sympathy and support for the cause of abolition in a unique manner. Moses Roper continued this work during his extensive travels and surely helped bring abolitionism to a wider audience in Scotland than any Scots abolitionist or organisation could hope to achieve.

⁴⁴ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 69 and p. 52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Chapter Two – 1840-1850:

Antislavery Disunity and African Americans as a “Third Force”:

By the end of the 1830s organised abolitionism in America had completely eclipsed British efforts. In 1838 the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) could claim 100,000 members and over 1000 auxiliary societies.¹ Due to these developments, Americans were now widely understood to be the ““real” abolitionists and it was in America that the “real” struggle was taking place.”² Nevertheless, British antislavery still had much to offer during and after the late 1830s. A particularly important development was the founding of the BFASS in 1839, which held worldwide abolition as its chief goal but was very much committed to the issue of slavery as it related to Britain. The BFASS were perhaps the only British society that developed a truly national apparatus during the mid-nineteenth century. This owed largely to the fact that the BFASS were based in London and could claim the vast majority of English antislavery societies as auxiliaries.³

For most of the 1830s abolitionists in Britain and America had been relatively unified in their antislavery approach. The years that followed 1839, however, were marked by dispute and schism in both countries. In 1840 the AASS split over a range of issues with the most prominent being political participation and the role of women within organised abolition. In brief, Garrison and his supporters were against the use of political means (including voting) to achieve abolition and supported mixed-sex abolition societies and the involvement of women at public forums and abolition

¹ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, p. 252.

² Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

meetings. Generally speaking, those who broke away from Garrison and the AASS did not share these views or at least the mixing of them with antislavery. Many were also discouraged by Garrison's staunch anti-clericalism, which often saw him labeled as an "infidel".⁴ Three different groups of abolitionists emerged following the split: Garrisonians, political and evangelical abolitionists. However, historians have warned against drawing sharp lines of distinction between these groups as there was considerable overlap between different brands of abolition and abolitionists often altered or completely changed their views after the splits of 1840 and 1841.⁵

Garrison and his supporters retained control of the AASS but an oppositional, politically orientated, and more conservative society was formed under the name American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS); based on and affiliated with the BFASS, who shared the AFASS's anti-Garrison stance. British abolitionists were largely unaware of the American abolitionist split until the BFASS organised World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in 1840 at Exeter Hall, London. The so called "woman question" which had contributed to the fracture of the American movement was now played out in Britain. Garrison's AASS sent over female delegates who, upon arrival, were informed that they were could not participate in the proceedings of the convention, meaning they had to observe from the gallery. In protest, Garrison, Charles Remond and other sympathisers joined them, thus marking the beginning of the American abolitionist dispute being replicated in Britain.

⁴ Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 208.

⁵ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, p. 261; Walters, 'The Boundaries of Abolitionism', p.17.

In Scotland, the American schism did not have an immediately evident effect on abolitionist's willingness to work with ideologically differing individuals and groups.⁶ It was not until 1841 that British abolitionists began to divide. In Scotland, numerous members of the GES and its female auxiliary resigned over the society's secretaries' continuing preference for Garrison. The EES also denounced Garrisonian abolitionism and adopted a "new" organisationist stance but its female auxiliary remained loyal to "old" organisation or Garrison abolitionism.⁷ Clearly not all Scots chose to endorse Garrison after the split, however, his brand of abolition found "disproportionate sympathy" in Scotland as compared with England.⁸ The fact that this was also the case in Ireland suggests that each country's geographical isolation from London (and therefore the BFASS) may have contributed to the independent course that abolitionists in each country decided to take after 1840.⁹ The early foundation of the Scots societies would have also contributed to their independent mindedness and partly explains their reluctance to align with a London based organisation. Throughout the 1840s, the Scots abolitionists, unlike their English counterparts, remained predominantly concerned with American slavery.¹⁰

While the schism served to weaken the abolition cause in America, Betty Fladeland suggests that in Britain the schism initially had a stimulating effect. This was due to the rigorous way in which each side vied for British support, keeping the issue of American

⁶ Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 211.

⁷ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, pp. 112-113. The Edinburgh female organisation remained considerably more active than its male counterpart.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53. Non-Garrisonian abolitionism found effective organisational form in Scotland during the 1850s, which is discussed in Chapter three.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

slavery before British audiences in the process.¹¹ Following the World Convention both “old” and “new” organisationists toured Scotland, sometimes appearing at the same gatherings. Among the old organisationists was Charles Remond, whose approach to the splits helped set a precedent for future black abolitionists touring Britain. Although Remond was allied to Garrison he recognised that ideological disputes would hinder the antislavery cause.¹² Remond sought to ignore ideological divisions “where possible and to bridge them where practical.”¹³ In part this approach would have been driven by a commitment to the foremost goal of “black advancement”.¹⁴ Black abolitionists were “less concerned about ideological purity” and more concerned with the highly personal tasks of advancing the cause of emancipation and combating race prejudice.¹⁵ As will be demonstrated, this approach to antislavery activism is a particularly significant contribution that black abolitionists made to Scottish antislavery.

1840s:

A small contingent of black abolitionists visited Scotland during the first half of the 1840s, the most noteworthy being the aforementioned Remond and former slave Moses Grandy. At Scottish antislavery meetings Grandy detailed his experience of slavery in America and made his newly published life narrative available for sale. The purpose of his tour was collect funds towards purchasing his family members out of slavery, just as he had purchased himself out of the institution. The specificity of Grandy’s aim and his status as a former slave made his fundraising mission particularly successful and

¹¹ Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*, 275.

¹² Ripley, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

¹³ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. x.

¹⁴ Sorin, *Abolitionism*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁵ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 13.

subsequent black abolitionists who came to Britain for fundraising purposes followed his lead.¹⁶ The ineffectiveness of fundraising for a general cause or organisation was realised by Remond in 1841 when J.A. Collins came to Britain in an attempt to solicit much needed funds and support for the post-schism AASS.¹⁷ Tensions resulting from the World Convention had somewhat died down after Garrison left Britain. However, Collins presence and confrontational approach was largely responsible for rekindling hostilities and prompted British abolitionists to side with either “old” or “new” organised abolition.¹⁸

Remond hesitantly agreed to accompany Collins on his fundraising mission but had no misgivings about parting with his co-worker when he felt their mission was becoming counterproductive. While Collins spent months in Scotland trying to secure support for Garrisonian abolitionism, Remond resumed his antislavery lecturing around Scotland and Ireland.¹⁹ Furthermore, Remond resolved to work with any group of British abolitionists regardless of which side they had taken in relation to the American splits.²⁰ This nonpartisan approach may have had the effect of refocusing British attention on the problem of American slavery rather than factional dispute. According to Blackett, African American abolitionists later became a “third force” within the transatlantic movement who worked across ideological boundaries to a greater degree than any other group of abolitionists.²¹ Even dedicated black Garrisonians like William Wells

¹⁶ Ripley, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

¹⁷ ‘Charles Lenox Remond to Richard Allen, 7 January 1841, in *BAP*, p. 85.

¹⁸ McDaniel, ‘Our Country is the World’, pp. 95-96; See also: Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, pp. 107-114 for an in depth discussion of Collins in Scotland.

¹⁹ William Edward Ward, ‘Charles Remond: Black Abolitionist, 1838-1873’, (Unpublished PhD thesis, Clark University, 1977) p. 81.

²⁰ Ripley, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

²¹ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 119.

Brown worked with “new” organisationists and attended meetings of the BFASS.²² This left black Garrisonian abolitionists open to criticism from their white counterparts, but as Blackett explains, the shortsightedness of the Garrisonians worked against them: “Fitting black visitors into the same rigid and simple categories of the abolitionist schism, they [Garrisonians] failed to capitalize on their [black abolitionists] traditional broad appeal.”²³ Despite the sometimes-myopic nature of Garrisonian abolitionism, black abolitionists rarely failed to capitalise on their own popularity and no visitor to Scotland highlights this as forcefully as Frederick Douglass.

Frederick Douglass and the Free Church of Scotland:

Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery in 1838 and began attending abolitionist meetings the following year.²⁴ During the early 1840s he became increasingly active as an abolitionist orator and by 1845 was such a refined and eloquent speaker that some began to doubt he had ever been enslaved. In response, Douglass penned his first autobiography in which he detailed his life in slavery and identified his legal owner. As a fugitive slave the publishing of his narrative put him at an even greater risk of recapture and a trip to Britain would safeguard his personal freedom.²⁵ Douglass, at the time a Garrisonian abolitionist, stayed in Britain for 19 months from 1845-47 and spent much of 1846 in Scotland pursuing a campaign against the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). In 1843 the evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland, led by Dr. Thomas Chalmers, separated from the established church in order to form the FCS. The split occurred over the principal of “non-intrusion” with the evangelicals rejecting the right of the state to

²² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁴ Barnes, Diane, *Frederick Douglass: Reformer and Statesman*, (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

interfere in matters of church administration, specifically the appointing of ministers.²⁶ As a newly established church with considerable expenses to meet the FCS initiated a campaign of fundraising in Scotland before turning its attention to the “ripe soil” of America from 1843-44.²⁷ The FCS fundraising commission furnished around £3000 from churches in the American South and while they saw the donations as “tokens of sympathy”, the abolitionists dubbed them “accursed gold.”²⁸

The first group to attack the FCS’s conduct was the GES at a public meeting in March 1844. The following month the AFASS wrote to the FCS warning them not to accept the funds of those complicit in the maintenance and prosecution of slavery.²⁹ Later that year the campaign by which Douglass achieved national prominence was initiated by the GES with the aid of Henry C. Wright, a controversial American Garrisonian who had been in Scotland since 1843.³⁰ Douglass was nothing short of a sensation in Scotland and large, often paying, audiences from Ayr to Aberdeen gathered to hear his antislavery lectures. As Douglass explained to the American abolitionist Francis Jackson: “Our rallying cry is “No union with Slaveholders and send back the bloodstained money.”³¹ The FCS position in relation to these demands was articulated

²⁶ Iain Whyte, ‘Send Back the Money!’ The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery, (Cambridge; James Clarke & Co, 2012) pp. 9-13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁸ ‘Draft of Letter to The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in The United States Of America, June 1846’, in *Church Pamphlets* (Edinburgh: Myles Macphail, 1844) p. 93.

The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery Substance of the Speeches Delivered in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, During May and June 1846, by George Thompson, Esq. and The Rev. Henry C. Wright, (Edinburgh: T. & W. M’Dowall, 1846) p. 69.

²⁹ ‘Letter from the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Commissioners of the Free Church of Scotland’, in *Church Pamphlets* (Edinburgh: Myles Macphail, 1844) pp. 1-7.

³⁰ Wright was a reformer in the broad sense and was not, like Douglass, exclusively concerned with antislavery work during his time in Scotland. At the peak of the FCS controversy he published a pamphlet critiquing observance of the Sabbath. Actions such as these frustrated Douglass and others and also provided the FCS with a way of critiquing the views of abolitionists in general. See Whyte, ‘Send Back the Money!’ pp. 84-88.

³¹ ‘Frederick Douglass to Francis Jackson, Dundee, Scotland, 29 January 1846’, in *FDP3.1*, p. 90.

by Drs. Chalmers, Cunningham and Candlish, the latter overseeing the publication of two FCS committee reports on American slavery and the issue of fellowship with Southern churches.³² Both reports opened with a strong condemnation of the practice of slavery which “in all forms is to be regarded as a system of oppression which cannot be defended.”³³ However, the FCS defended their decision not to send back the donations or sever ties with their Southern counterparts. Worst still in the abolitionist’s opinion was Chalmers’ attempt to distinguish “between the character of the system [slavery], and the character of the individuals whom circumstances have connected therewith.”³⁴ While the FCS was prepared to denounce the system of slavery as a sin, they were unprepared to denounce individual slave owners as sinful. Douglass saw this as an attempt to “denounce the robbery, but spare the robber”³⁵ and repeatedly alluded to Chalmers as “the artful dodger.”³⁶ Douglass unsurprisingly took issue with the FCS’s assertion that owning slaves should not automatically exempt a person from enjoying Christian privileges, a position that was the antithesis of what radical abolitionists had been arguing for years.³⁷

³² One in 1844, another in 1845.

³³ *Report On Slavery, Unanimously Adopted by The Commission Of The General Assembly of The Free Church Of Scotland In August 1844, and Transmitted to America*, (Edinburgh: Myles Macphail, 1844) p. 87.

³⁴ Quoted in Frederick Douglass, ‘The Free Church of Scotland Connection with the Slave Church: An Address Delivered In Arbroath, Scotland, on 12 February 1846’ in *FDP1.1*, p. 162.

³⁵ Douglass, ‘Slavery, the Free Church, and British Agitation Against Bondage: An Address Delivered in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England, On 3 August 1846’, *FDP1.1*, p. 316.

³⁶ Douglass, ‘The Free Church Of Scotland Connection with the Slave Church’ in *FDP1.1*, p. 162.

³⁷ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 129

**SLAVERY.
LADIES' MEETING.**

MR. FREDERICK DOUGLASS (a Self-liberated Slave,) will DELIVER an ADDRESS to the LADIES, on WEDNESDAY first, at one o'clock afternoon, **IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS,** on the Subject of SLAVERY in AMERICA. Glasgow, 14th Feb., 1846.

Illustration 2.1: An advert for a Douglass meeting in the *Glasgow Herald*, February 16, 1846, *British Newspaper Archive*, <www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, The British Library Board, [accessed 09/02/14] (hereafter cited as *BNA*)

The FCS was highly esteemed in American religious circles and their actions could have setback the emancipation cause, while also lending credibility to Southern slaveholders. The AFASS warned the church: "If he [the slaveholder] can purchase the silence of the successors of John Knox and Andrew Thompson, if he can number *them* among his allies, he may well think his victory is complete."³⁸ Douglass was also at pains to illustrate these points during his lectures. Across Scotland he produced and read from a copy of the proslavery *New Orleans Picayune* praising Dr. Chalmers for his refusal to sever ties with slaveholding churches. Douglass drew the audience's attention to an advert in the very same newspaper that called for the capture of two runaway slaves, demonstrating the nature of the forces that the FCS had aligned itself with.³⁹ Douglass hoped to mobilise his audiences in support of abolition by repeatedly asking them if the slavery apologising FCS represented the people of Scotland, typically being met with

³⁸ 'Letter from the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Commissioners of the Free Church of Scotland', p. 4.

³⁹ See: Douglass, 'The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery: An Address Delivered in Dundee, Scotland', on 30 January 1846', in *FDPI.1*, p. 154.

“cries of No! No!”⁴⁰ His call to action resonated beyond lecture halls and one contemporary observer provided a useful summary:

The Abolitionists have accordingly raised the war-cry of “Send back the Money.” It has been shouted, night after night, amidst cheers of assembled thousands; it has been transmitted in doggrel [sic] lines by itinerant ballad-singers throughout our towns and villages; it has been recorded in the newspaper columns by indignant editors; and chalked on vacant walls by the passing school-boy from the Tay to the Tweed.⁴¹

In April Douglass informed Garrison: “Scotland is in a blaze of antislavery agitation. The Free Church and slavery are the all-engrossing topics.”⁴² FCS minister Robert Burns considered the issue of the church’s relation to slavery settled following the publication of the two FCS committee reports and lamented: “agitators from abroad have come here and compelled us to open it [the issue of slavery] up.”⁴³ Another adherent of the FCS appeared to confirm Burns’ suspicions: “a runaway slave [Douglass] has completely unsettled the ‘dollar question’ and produced a greater effect on the public mind than the united wisdom of the Free Assembly.”⁴⁴

Douglass attended the General Assembly of the FCS in May 1846 where Dr. Candlish again condemned American slavery but reasserted the FCS’s commitment to

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴¹ ‘The Free Church and Slavery’, *MacPhail’s Edinburgh Ecclesiastical Journal and Literary Review*, Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: Myles MacPhail, 1846) *Google Books*, <<https://goo.gl/1za82r>>, [accessed on 12/02/2017], p. 415.

⁴² Frederick Douglass to William Lloyd Garrison, Glasgow, Scotland, 16 April 1846 in *FDP3.1*, p. 109.

⁴³ Douglass, ‘Charges And Defense of the Free Church: An Address Delivered In Dundee, Scotland, on 10 March 1846’, in *FDP1.1*, p. 181.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Blackett, Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 96.

maintaining intercourse with Southern clergymen.⁴⁵ Despite incessant agitation by abolitionists, the church did not alter their stance on the Southern donations or the fellowship issue. The reappearance of Douglass with Garrison in Scotland from September onwards did little to force a change of policy, and in the end, the intense way in which the abolitionists attacked the church probably did more to entrench their position rather than change it.⁴⁶ By mid-1847, with the exception of continued criticism from the GES and a small group of dissenting FCS ministers, opposition to the church on the slavery issue had essentially petered out.⁴⁷

Although the FCS did not give into abolitionist demands regarding the donations or their relationship with Southern Presbyterians, the 'Send Back the Money' (SBTM) campaign was not an unequivocal failure. Iain Whyte sees the campaign's greatest impact as being the way in which it raised public awareness of American slavery and he suggests "any tyrannical system is inevitably weakened by its exposure."⁴⁸ Though the long-term effects of the campaign may be difficult to discern, the contemporary impact of the campaign in Scotland cannot be overstated. However, it would be inaccurate to credit Douglass alone with the accomplishments of the SBTM campaign. The GES, for example, played a highly significant role by initiating and then directing much of the campaign against the church.⁴⁹ It was hardly a coincidence, however, that 1846 was the year in which the conduct of the FCS came under more intense scrutiny than ever before. Douglass's efforts would have undoubtedly "increased interest in abolition

⁴⁵ See Whyte, *'Send Back the Money!'*, pp. 88-93 for a summary of the 1846 General Assembly.

⁴⁶ Pettinger, "Send Back the Money", p. 49.

⁴⁷ The Free Church Anti-Slavery Society was formed in May 1846. By mid-1847 opposition to the FCS was "purely Scottish" in character. See Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 142; The GES did not play a public role in the SBTM campaign because their membership base was largely comprised of FCS ministers.

⁴⁸ Whyte, *'Send Back the Money!'*, p. 154.

⁴⁹ See: Jezierski, 'The Glasgow Emancipation Society', pp. 157-174, for a further outline of the GES's role.

where it already existed and created it where it did not.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the work of Douglass and his allies made it increasingly difficult for American ministers with proslavery leanings to be welcomed within Scottish society.⁵¹ Dr. Thomas Smyth, a minister in South Carolina with close ties to Dr. Chalmers, realised this when he visited Scotland. Douglass informed an American correspondent that Dr. Smyth “has been kept out of every pulpit here. I think I have been partly the means of it. He is terrible mad with me for it.”⁵² Smyth placed the blame not with abolitionists in general but with Douglass specifically. He also held Douglass responsible for the University of Glasgow’s decision to drop their plans to award him an honorary degree⁵³, illustrating further the level of antislavery feeling that Douglass was instrumental in creating during his trip.

Moreover, Douglass continued to follow the example set by Remond of refusing to become involved in antislavery disputes or sectarian squabbles. His mediating role appears even more significant considering competing groups of Scots abolitionists sometimes used the FCS controversy as a way of debating the correct position in relation to the American splits. This was further complicated by the use of the SBTM campaign by some voluntary church ministers to attack the FCS.⁵⁴ Having shown no previous interest in the abolition movement, it is likely that these ministers attacked on the church because of their disapproval of the FCS as a religious body rather than their ties to antislavery.⁵⁵ Douglass was not guilty of either of these actions and repeatedly felt the need to state that he was in no way attacking the formation of the FCS or its

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁵¹ Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 247.

⁵² ‘Frederick Douglass to William A. White, Edinburgh, Scotland, 30 July 1846’ in *FDP3.1*, p. 150.

For a summary of the turbulent relationship between Douglass and Smyth, see: Whyte, ‘*Send Back the Money!*’, pp. 110-115.

⁵³ Whyte, ‘*Send Back the Money!*’, p. 111.

⁵⁴ For an in depth discussion of the abolitionist debates and the involvement of voluntary ministers in the SBTM campaign see: Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, pp. 127-147.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

merits as a religious organisation.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he drew criticism from some Garrisonians for attending a meeting held by the anti-Garrison BFASS, stating afterwards his intention to “speak in any meeting when freedom of speech is allowed and where I may do anything towards exposing the bloody system of slavery.”⁵⁷ This course of action highlights how black abolitionists were becoming a “third force” within an unharmonious transatlantic movement that was in danger of become unproductive.⁵⁸ Betty Fladeland concludes:

Douglass’s presence in Britain definitely had a healing effect, and it seems possible that had Garrison not arrived, he might have been the agent to unify the squabbling factions. But Garrison’s mission revived the old antipathies.⁵⁹

Douglass left Britain in 1847 with a newfound sense of confidence and independence and it would not be unfair to suggest that the leading part he played in the SBTM campaign would have helped prepare him for his future role as a leading advocate of abolitionism. Furthermore, Douglass gained a considerable number of abolitionist allies, many of them Scots, whose donations helped him establish his *North Star* newspaper and whose financial help he would later come to rely on. That Douglass was especially popular in Scotland is evidenced by the fact that by 1850, his newspaper had 64 Scottish subscribers as compared with 18 English subscribers.⁶⁰ The year following Douglass’s departure from Britain marked the starting point of a six year period when more

⁵⁶ See: Douglass, *The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery: An Address Delivered in Dundee, Scotland, on 30 January 1846*, in *FDPI.1*, p. 145.

⁵⁷ Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, August 18, 1846, in *British and American Abolitionists*, ed. Clare Taylor, p. 277.

⁵⁸ See Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 119.

⁵⁹ Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*, p. 301.

⁶⁰ Robert Botsford, ‘Scotland and the Civil War’, (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1955) p. 20.

leading black abolitionists came to the country than ever before.⁶¹ However, his departure also marked the beginning of a period of inactivity for Scotland's leading abolitionist society, the GES. In large part this was due to debts they accrued in the prosecution of the campaign against the FCS. Significantly, the occasion for the reemergence of the society was the arrival in Glasgow of three fugitive slaves from America, William Wells Brown and William and Ellen Craft.

⁶¹ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 145.

Chapter Three – 1850-1861:

The Fugitive Slave Law and “New” Organised Abolition in Scotland:

The groundwork laid by abolitionists like Roper, Remond and Douglass ensured that black abolitionists visiting Scotland during the 1850s would continue to attract widespread attention and support. Furthermore, the majority of black abolitionists who came to the country during the early 1850s were fugitive slaves. Interest in hearing them lecture would have been piqued by the passage of the new Fugitive Slave Law (FSL) by America in September 1850. The law stipulated that fugitive slaves in the North could be recaptured, (without the right of habeas corpus) and sent back South. The law also made it illegal for US citizens to assist runaways and imposed a fine or imprisonment on anyone attempting to do so. Many fugitive slaves and free blacks in the North responded by leaving the country, with some sailing to Britain.

The FSL also tipped the antislavery struggle in America into a new phase, one in which the role of British abolitionists was downgraded. The law “brought the American conflict to a point of physical and political confrontation where the practical role of foreign sympathizers was more circumscribed than ever.”¹ Scots abolitionists recognised this fact at the time but were not discouraged from offering moral and financial support to their counterparts in America. As the Edinburgh Ladies’ New Anti-Slavery Association explained: “The Abolitionists of America can operate with far greater effect against the system [of slavery] than the people of this country; but

¹ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 154.

they...highly value the aid and countenance of Christian friends on this side the Atlantic.”²

Another key development of the 1850s was the “diversification” of the British antislavery movement.³ The movement became more diverse due to the increasing number of antislavery causes that were being promoted, largely by black abolitionists, within Britain. The activities of the black abolitionist ministers James W.C. Pennington and Henry Highland Garnet are illustrative of this diversification. Whilst in Scotland these abolitionists promoted the causes of the New York Vigilance Committee (NYVC) and the Free Produce Movement (FPM). The NYVC’s principal aim was to assist fugitive slaves in escaping to freedom and the main goal of the FPM was decreasing Britain’s heavy reliance on slave-grown cotton from the American South, replacing it with free-grown cotton sourced from British territories in India, Africa and the West Indies. It was hoped that reducing British demand for American cotton would also reduce the South’s demand for slaves. These causes found moderate success in Britain and attracted reasonable levels of financial support. Garnet’s labours, for example, led to the creation of 26 Free Produce associations in Britain and factories were established in London and Manchester for the purpose of distributing free-grown produce, such as clothing.⁴

The diversification of antislavery activity in Scotland was also closely linked to the growth of “new” organised abolitionism in the country. Again, black abolitionists were the main driving force behind this development. In June 1850 Pennington helped found the Glasgow New Association for the Abolition of Slavery (GNAAS) and its auxiliary, the

² ‘Report of the Edinburgh Ladies’ New Anti-Slavery Association for the years 1856 and 1857’, (Wilson Antislavery Collection: 1858) p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴ See: Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 121-122.

Glasgow Female Association for the Abolition of Slavery (GFAAS).⁵ The following year Garnet founded a “new” organised ladies society in Dundee.⁶ Acting as agents of these new Scottish societies, Garnet and Pennington conducted fundraising tours throughout Scotland between 1850 and 1852. Pennington was most active in Glasgow and Edinburgh but also lectured in Aberdeen and the Scottish Borders. He was eventually able to leave Scotland for America after contacts in Duns, Kelso and Berwick raised enough money to purchase his freedom from his legal owner. Garnet’s travels took him to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen where he lectured on free produce, the FSL, religion amongst slaves and his own experience of slavery. After hearing Garnet lecture, a Dundee observer felt “The cause of the oppressed negro race in the United States cannot commend itself more strongly to general sympathy than when eloquently and touchingly pled by one of themselves.”⁷

The growth of “new” organisation in Scotland and the promotion of more varied antislavery causes alarmed Garrisonians. Although he advocated Garrisonian abolitionism, William Wells Brown worried some Scottish Garrisonians with his promotion of the FPM and also by appearing at meetings with “new” organisationists Garnet and Pennington.⁸ Members of the GES thought that Brown’s actions would give the impression that Garrison supported the FPM, which he did not. Garrisonians claimed that the movement “distracted attention away from the true instrumentalities of abolitionism” and was akin to “keeping out the tide with a pitchfork.”⁹ More fundamentally, members of the GES equated the establishment of “new” organisations

⁵ ‘Speech by J.W.C. Pennington, Delivered at Merchants Hall, Glasgow, Scotland, 12 June 1850’, in *BAP*, pp. 185-189.

⁶ Blackett, *Building An Antislavery Wall*, p. 129.

⁷ *Dundee Courier*, November 26, 1851, *BNA*.

⁸ Blackett, *Building An Antislavery Wall*, pp. 122-123.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

and the support of causes such as the NYVC and FPM with a loss of support for Garrisonian abolition.¹⁰ Financially, these fears were justified as in 1853 the GFAAS donated £400 to the NYVC, a sum that was higher than the GES's total income for that year.¹¹

This situation was compounded by the visit of Julia Griffiths in 1856. Griffiths was a close associate of Frederick Douglass and had previously helped him edit and print his newspaper. Griffith's main objective was securing financial support for Douglass's indebted paper. Douglass himself was no longer an adherent of Garrisonian abolitionism and Griffiths' visit prompted the formation of the Edinburgh Ladies' New Anti-Slavery Association, an alternative to the Garrisonian ladies' auxiliary of the EES.¹² The majority of the funds they raised throughout their existence went to Douglass's newspaper and a vigilance committee he was involved with.¹³ Throughout the 1850s the GES continued to lose finance and support to "new" organisations,¹⁴ most of which went to black abolitionists and the causes or organisations they advocated.¹⁵ The creation of these societies allowed for the involvement in organised antislavery of Scots who did not want to be associated with Garrison, particularly his unorthodox religious views.¹⁶ Even Dr. Candlish of the FCS, a foremost defender of the church during the

¹⁰ Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, pp. 48-49.

¹¹ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 157.

¹² Janet Douglas, 'A Cherished Friendship: Julia Griffiths Crofts and Frederick Douglass', *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 269-270.

¹³ See: 'Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' New Anti-Slavery Association', p. 16.

¹⁴ See: Jezierski, 'The Glasgow Emancipation Society', p. 189.

¹⁵ The GNASS, for example, expended £1219 on antislavery causes during the 1850s, £969 of which went to organisations that black abolitionists had promoted in Scotland or to black abolitionists themselves. See: *Glasgow Herald*, March 24, 1859, *BNA*.

¹⁶ Edinburgh Garrisonian Jane Wigham complained in 1852 that the loss of support for Garrisonian antislavery in Scotland was due to Garrison's religious views and his decision to print articles which questioned the authority of the Scriptures in *The Liberator*; See 'Jane Wigham to Anne Warren Weston' in *British and American Abolitionists*, ed. Taylor, p. 391.

SBTM campaign, donated to Frederick Douglass's newspaper and opened his church for use by black abolitionists during the 1850s.¹⁷

Earlier attempts were made by Scottish Garrisonians to counteract the outgrowth of "new" organisation in Scotland. In 1850, for example, GES secretary William Smeal responded to the foundation of "new" Glasgow organisations by inviting the black Garrisonian William Wells Brown to Glasgow, who in turn invited the fugitive slave couple William and Ellen Craft to join him. The first Glasgow meeting arranged for them in January 1851 attracted an audience of 3000. The trio continued to attract large audiences thereafter, holding four public meetings in Glasgow's Trades' Hall before lecturing in the outlying towns of Hamilton, Gourock and Paisley.¹⁸ Smeal used the interest generated by the fugitives to denounce the formation of Glasgow "new" societies, but as Blackett explains: "those who attended [meetings] were more anxious to see and hear the fugitives than to promote the cause of the society."¹⁹ The Glasgow *Examiner*, detailing the first meeting of the fugitives, suggested there was "more feeling, more humour, more wit, [and] more argument" in the speeches of Brown and William Craft as compared with the Scots abolitionists who spoke on the night.²⁰

Wells Brown opened his speech by denouncing the fact that there was not a "rood of soil" in the US where fugitives could live without threat of re-enslavement. He thanked god that himself and the Crafts "were now on the soil that had seen the Bruces and

¹⁷ See: John Andrew Jackson, *The Experience of a Slave in North Carolina: Electronic Edition*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1996) p. 32; Daniel Ritchie, 'Antislavery Orthodox: Isaac Nelson and the Free Church of Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. XCIV, 1, No. 238, (2015), p. 89

¹⁸ *The Liberator*, February 7, 1851, *FUR*.

¹⁹ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 130 & 141.

²⁰ *The Liberator*, February 14, 1851. *FUR*.

Wallaces of former days.”²¹ William Craft followed Brown’s denunciation of the FSL by detailing the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his and Ellen’s recent escape from slavery. The Crafts escaped enslavement as Ellen’s light complexion allowed her to pose as a male plantation owner making his way North for medical treatment. William acted as Ellen’s slave and they successfully reached Boston, where they settled for roughly two years before being forced to leave for Britain following the passage of the FSL. Once this was recounted Ellen was usually invited to present herself to the audience, arousing further disapproval of Southern slavery. The fact that the institution could enslave what appeared to be a white female was particularly shocking to Scots observers. The *Dundee Courier* pointed out: “From her colour and contour of features no one would have thought that she had any African blood in her veins.”²² Brown and the Crafts continued to follow this lecture routine as they travelled to Aberdeen via Perth, Dundee and Montrose, detailing the iniquities of Southern slavery whilst denouncing the FSL and those who upheld it.²³ Brown later noted he had “visited few places where I found warmer friends, or felt myself more at home, than in Aberdeen.”²⁴ Despite spending a short amount of time in the city Brown and the Crafts had a busy lecture schedule, addressing up to three meetings per day. A local newspaper concluded:

Their visit to Aberdeen will be the means, we doubt not, of giving many a more vivid idea of the evils of slavery, and, also, of leading them more forcibly to realize the

²¹ *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, February 6, 1851, *Black Abolitionist Archives*, Doc. No. 11247, <http://research.udmercy.edu/find/special_collections/digital/baa/item.php?record_id=711&collection_code=baa>, [accessed 12/02/2017]

²² *Dundee Courier*, January 29, 1851, *BNA*; See Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, p. 98 for the wider British reaction to Ellen’s former enslavement.

²³ *The Liberator*, February 7, 1851, *FUR*; Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, pp. 124-125.

²⁴ William Wells Brown, *The American Fugitive in Europe: Sketches of Places and People Abroad: Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South*, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brown55/brown55.html>>, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000), [accessed 12/02/2017], p. 262.

enormous inconsistency and criminality of a professed land of liberty and Christianity holding three millions of intelligent and immortal beings in bondage.²⁵

The trio concluded their tour in the Scottish Borders, where a Kelso reporter summarised the effectiveness of the Crafts: “no antislavery address by the most eloquent advocate of the cause could more effectively stir up the indignation of a Christian audience than did their unvarnished story.”²⁶

 **GREAT ANTI-SLAVERY MEETING**
AND
LECTURES.
BELL STREET HALL.

A PUBLIC MEETING will be held, in Bell Street Hall, on the Evening of Wednesday first (this Evening), the 22d instant, to denounce the atrocious American Fugitive Slave Bill.

The Meeting will be attended by **WILLIAM WELLS BROWN, WILLIAM and HELEN CROFT**, the noted runaway slaves, and **Addresses** given on the subject of American Slavery by Messrs **BROWN, CROFT, and other friends.**

Chair to be taken at Eight o'clock precisely.

Collection at the Door to defray the expenses of the Deputation, which it is hoped will be liberal.

WM. W. BROWN will also deliver **Two LECTURES** (Illustrated by Panoramic Views on 2000 feet of canvas) on the Evenings of Thursday and Friday, the 23d and 24th instant, in same place and at the same hour.

Illustration 3.1: Advert for a meeting of Wells Brown and the Crafts in *Dundee Courier*, January 22, 1851,

BNA.

While they were highly effective orators, the black abolitionists travelling Scotland during the early 1850s did not solely rely on public speaking. During his travels with

²⁵ *Aberdeen Journal*, February 12, 1851, BNA. See also: Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, pp. 124-125.

²⁶ Quoted in Blackett, *Building and Antislavery Wall*, p. 125.

the Crafts, for example, Wells Brown displayed a hand painted panorama depicting twenty-four scenes based on his experience of and escape from American slavery. Henry “Box” Brown, so called because of his escape from slavery in a shipping box, brought a similar panorama to Scotland the year after Wells Brown. Little information is available on “Box” Brown’s time in Scotland but he did appear in Edinburgh during September 1852, finding enough public interest to display his panorama for six days a week, three weeks in a row.²⁷ During the early 1850s black abolitionists were by far the most effective advocates of abolitionism within Scotland. As Remond and Douglass had done in the 1840s, they came allied to a particular antislavery group but never failed to act independently when presented with a chance to speak out against American slavery.²⁸ Consequently, black abolitionists “attracted [an] increasing share of British support in the years before the Civil War.”²⁹

²⁷ *The Scotsman*, September 8, 1852; *Caledonian Mercury*, September 20, 1852, *BNA*.

²⁸ For example, Wells Brown promoting the FPM and appearing at meeting with “new” organisationists Pennington and Garnet.

²⁹ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p.141.

—
WATERLOO ROOMS, EDINBURGH.

—
GREAT SUCCESS!!
—

MR H. BOX BROWN, the American Fugitive Slave who Escaped from Bondage, Packed as Luggage in a Box, 3 ft. 1 in. long, 2 ft. wide, and 2 ft. 6 in. high; travelling a distance of 350 Miles—from Richmond, Virginia, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,—the Journey occupying 27 Hours, is now exhibiting his Great American PANORAMA of SLAVERY
EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK.

—
A GRAND FASHIONABLE MORNING EXHIBITION will take place on SATURDAY FIRST, September 25, 1852, at Two o'Clock, Doors open half-an-hour previous.

—
Doors open at half-past Seven; to commence at a quarter-past Eight o'Clock.

—
Reserved Seats, 2s.; Second Seats, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.

Illustration 3.2: A newspaper advert for Henry "Box" Brown's panorama in *Caledonian Mercury*,

September 20, 1852, *BNA*.

Harriet Beecher Stowe and Uncle Tom's Cabin:

Despite the interest in American slavery generated by the FSL and numerous black abolitionists touring Scotland in the early 1850s, the furore created by Harriet Beecher Stowe's antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (UTC) was unprecedented. After the publication of her book in 1852 and her visit to Scotland in 1853, Rice suggests that the country had more people "who could loosely be classified as abolitionists than before."³⁰ Stowe's book and "its sentimental, overly romantic style...[and] its pious overtones

³⁰ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p.187. See pp. 173-188 for a detailed overview of Stowe in Scotland.

were in exactly the right combination to appeal to the general public of the time.”³¹ Some abolitionists critiqued Stowe for advocating the colonisation of African Americans and also depicting her characters in highly racialised, stereotypical ways. Most, however, were grateful for the antislavery sentiment diffused by the book.³² Within months of publication UTC sold 20,000 copies in Glasgow alone and eventually sold over one million copies in Britain.³³

Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward visited Scotland shortly enough after the publication of UTC to capitalise on the interest it had generated. Indeed, the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada (ASSC) sent Ward to Britain because they became aware of the “intensified” antislavery feeling UTC had produced there.³⁴ Ward first arrived in Scotland during October 1853 and was immediately impressed with “How readily, and how generously, the Scottish people respond to the claims of the anti-slavery cause!” Noting: “Dr. Pennington found it so when he was there; so did Mr. Garnet; so did Frederick Douglass.”³⁵ His mission of raising £1200 for the ASSC, who assisted fugitive slaves in Canada, was accomplished in the short space of ten months.³⁶ Ward lectured extensively throughout Scotland³⁷ and often spoke about the duty of Scots to ensure that Scottish emigrants to America arrived in the country committed to the abolition of slavery and equality of blacks.³⁸ Ward was

³¹ Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*, p. 350-351.

³² Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, pp. 442-444.

³³ *Caledonian Mercury*, November 11, 1852, *BNA*.

³⁴ Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-slavery Labours in the United States, Canada, & England: Electronic Edition*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999) p. 227.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-337.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

³⁷ Ward gives a partial list of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dalkeith, Dunfermline, Dundee, Hamilton, Stewarton, Cumnock, Kirkcaldy, Falkirk, Stirling, Montrose, Rutherglen, Greenock, Rothesay, and Campbeltown, *Ibid.*, p. 338.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

unrelenting in his antislavery work and Wells Brown praised him as “the best colored minister that has yet visited this country [Britain].”³⁹

By the time Ward returned to Scotland in May 1855 he was described by one newspaper as “the celebrated coloured minister”, whose “popularity has been of rapid growth”.⁴⁰ Ward attributed the “prevalent, deep, earnest, and intelligent” antislavery feeling he encountered in Scotland to the fact that “the whole population, high and low, attends divine service, and they naturally enough acquire the habit of attending the Kirk on any subject for which it is open.”⁴¹ Ward used this to his advantage whilst carrying out antislavery work in Scotland. In Dundee, for example, he preached in three different churches on one Sabbath, his sermons always including condemnatory remarks on American slavery. A Monday meeting devoted to hearing Ward elaborate on American slavery usually followed his Sabbath sermons. Like Pennington and Garnet before him, Ward left Scotland with a host of new supporters who continued to fundraise for the organisation that he had advocated.⁴²

Black Abolitionism in Scotland and the Approach of Civil War:

Black abolitionists continued to play a key role within Scottish antislavery in the years leading up to the Civil War. In these years, “the energy going into the [Scottish] societies

³⁹ Quoted in: Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, p. 139.

⁴⁰ *Scottish Guardian*, May 18, 1855, *BNA*.

⁴¹ Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro*, p. 337.

⁴² After his first visit in 1853 Ward was employed as an agent of the Dundee antislavery society, after which most of their effort went into raising funds for the assistance of fugitive slaves. The Dundee society stated that they were not affiliated with either faction of the American movement and were chiefly concerned with assisting fugitive slaves through Ward and the ASSC, further highlighting how black abolitionists became a “third force” of the antislavery movement. See: *Dundee Courier*, January 10, 1855, *BNA*. For a summary of Glasgow donations to the ASSC see: *Glasgow Herald*, March 24, 1859, *BNA*.

was minimal except when there were important visitors from overseas.”⁴³ Amongst them were Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell, who came to promote voluntary black emigration to Africa and the cultivation of cotton there; John Andrew Jackson came to raise funds to buy his family out of slavery and Francis Fedric, who had recently escaped America after 50 years of enslavement, came seeking financial support so he could “establish [himself] in business.”⁴⁴ The second visit of Douglass to Scotland from January to March in 1860 aroused particular interest due to escalating political tension between the Northern and Southern states of America. John Brown’s raid on the US armory at Harpers Ferry was closely followed in the Scottish press and Douglass devoted much of his lecture time to detailing the incident and his own relationship with Brown.⁴⁵ Douglass’s defense of Brown’s actions displeased members of the GES and ladies’ EES, who still adhered to the Garrisonian principle of abolition by non-violent means.⁴⁶ Douglass had also abandoned the Garrisonian views that the Constitution was a proslavery document and that the best solution for abolition was the dissolution of the Union between the Northern and Southern states of the US.⁴⁷ He laboured to convince Scottish audiences that abolition could be achieved within the frameworks of the Union and the Constitution.⁴⁸

Although brief, Douglass’s visit proved productive once again for Scottish antislavery. In Falkirk, for example, Douglass’s presence saw the reactivation of an antislavery society

⁴³ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 188.

⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, February 20, 1861; Fedric went on to run a lodging house in Manchester, see: Dickerson, *Dark Victorians*, p. 67.

⁴⁵ Douglass’ past association with Brown made him a wanted man in the US following Harpers Ferry, prompting his second visit to Britain.

⁴⁶ Botsford, ‘Scotland and the American Civil War’, pp. 59-60.

⁴⁷ See: Frederick Douglass, ‘The Constitution of the United States: is it Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?’, (Wilson Antislavery Collection, 1860), pp. 1-16.

⁴⁸ For the debate which followed between Douglass and George Thompson, See: Botsford, ‘Scotland and the American Civil War’, pp. 65-78.

that had “been somewhat dormant for a considerable time”. After his visit the society collected what they deemed to be a “handsome sum” and forwarded it on to Douglass.⁴⁹ Even those of fewer means offered Douglass financial assistance for his antislavery work. At a meeting in the East End of Glasgow the chairman presented Douglass with ten shillings, which had been given to the chairman by a “humble washer-woman” with an admiration for Douglass. In receiving the donation Douglass promised “the first runaway slave who sought his protection in flying to Canada should receive it in full, with a proper explanation.”⁵⁰ Keeping up a busy lecture schedule which saw him travel the breadth of Scotland for a second time, Douglass reminded his audiences that their support was still very much needed in the campaign against American slavery and prejudice. He was disheartened by a notable growth in prejudice towards blacks in Britain since his last visit,⁵¹ but was pleased to observe “growing interest in the great question of slavery...in Scotland generally.”⁵² Robert Botsford claims Douglass’s second appearance in Scotland was “a chief contributing factor to the greatest upsurge of Abolitionist feeling...since West Indian Emancipation.”⁵³ Blackett echoes Botsford’s assessment but also credits Sarah Parker Remond with helping heighten British abolitionist sentiment on the eve of the Civil War.⁵⁴

Remond, a freeborn abolitionist from Massachusetts, initially came to Glasgow in September 1860 to observe a meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. She lectured in Scotland between October 1860 and January 1861,

⁴⁹ *Glasgow Herald*, February 18, 1860, *BNA*.

⁵⁰ *Scottish Banner*, March 31, 1860, *BNA*; Douglass assisted 10 fugitive slaves in the weeks following his return from Britain – see: Douglass, ‘To my British Anti-Slavery Friends’ in *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), p. 392.

⁵¹ See: Blackett, ‘Cracks in the Antislavery Wall: Frederick Douglass’s Second Visit to England (1859-60) and the Coming of the Civil War’, in *Liberating Sojourn*, ed. Rice and Crawford, pp. 191-192.

⁵² Douglass, ‘The Constitution of the United States’, p. 1.

⁵³ Botsford, *Scotland and the American Civil War*, p. 45.

⁵⁴ Blackett, ‘Cracks in the Antislavery Wall’, p. 203.

carrying on the black abolitionist practice of lecturing in small towns as well as big cities. Remond was popular in Dumfries and Hawick and was particularly well received in Edinburgh, where a crowd of 2000 turned out to hear her lecture.⁵⁵ Remond finished her lecture with an appeal to Scots to “use their moral influence against slavery, and in behalf of the cause of abolition in America.” Her final appeal was met with “enthusiastic cheering, which was prolonged for several minutes”⁵⁶ and a number of antislavery meetings were held in Edinburgh soon after Remond left to “roll on the ball that [she] had set a-moving.”⁵⁷ Similarly to McCune Smith in Glasgow during the 1830s, Remond’s presence had the effect of “stimulating the abolition zeal” of Edinburgh’s inhabitants.⁵⁸

During a decade when the part played by British abolitionists within the transatlantic movement became less significant, the role played by black abolitionists within Britain arguably became more significant. While African Americans continued in their role as abolition’s most effective advocates, they assumed a new role as organisers within Scottish antislavery. While the creation of “new” organisations in Scotland has been viewed as contributory to further dispute within the antislavery community,⁵⁹ it could be argued that the creation of these societies was a positive development as it resulted in an increase of antislavery activity within Scotland. Unifying the Scots abolitionists would have been a highly difficult task, and here, Fladeland’s comments on the abolitionist splits are instructive: “each group appeals to certain types of individuals; therefore, the wider the appeal, the greater the number who may be enlisted.”⁶⁰ It may

⁵⁵ ‘Sarah Remond in Scotland’, *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, February 1, 1861, *BNA*; Botsford, ‘Scotland and the American Civil War’, p. 104.

⁵⁶ *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, November 1, 1860, *BNA*.

⁵⁷ *Berwick Journal*, October 13, 1860, *BNA*.

⁵⁸ See footnote 29, p. 16.

⁵⁹ See: Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, pp. 151-158.

⁶⁰ Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*, p. 378.

be helpful to think about the establishment of “new” Scottish societies in these terms. By establishing alternative societies, black abolitionists drew people into the antislavery cause who may have otherwise been deterred by the approach of the “old” societies. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage organised abolitionism within Scotland during the 1850s without the black abolitionist contribution.

Conclusion:

Looking back from the twentieth-century W.E.B. Du Bois wondered what the abolition movement would have been without figures like Purvis, C.L Remond, Pennington, Highland Garnet, and Douglass – concluding: “they were the men that made American slavery impossible.”¹ Black abolitionists did indeed make American slavery impossible in the minds of many Scots, who were deeply moved by their testimonies and often compelled to offer their assistance. In supporting the work of black abolitionists by buying their narratives, donating to their organisations, hosting them in their halls and churches or, as in Pennington’s case, purchasing their freedom, Scots made an invaluable contribution towards supporting the cause of emancipation in America. Figures like Douglass and Ward commended Scots for their antislavery commitment, and during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln thought “Scotland was still sound on the question of slavery.”²

Botsford asserts that by the outbreak of war in America, Scottish public opinion towards slavery was “strongly hostile.”³ Furthermore, in the three years following the end of the American Civil War, Scottish freedmen’s societies collectively contributed over £10,000 towards assisting America’s freed slaves.⁴ Black abolitionists, it could be argued, played an important part in ensuring this was the case and their contribution to Scottish antislavery deserves close scrutiny by historians of Scots abolitionism. Black

¹ W.E.B. Du Bois, ‘The Talented Tenth’, *Black Thought and Culture*, <http://solomon.bltc.alexanderstreet.com/cgi-bin/asp/philo/bltc/getvolume.pl?S9689> [accessed 08/02/2017] (James Pott and Company, New York, NY, 1903) pp. 40-41.

² Quoted in Whyte, ‘*Send Back the Money!*’, p. 148.

³ Botsford, ‘Scotland and the American Civil War’, p.22.

⁴ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 193.

abolitionists raised and even created awareness of American slavery and rarely failed to win material and moral support for the abolitionist cause. Vanessa Dickerson effectively summaries: “nothing brought home the horrible fact of slavery, prejudice, and discrimination as forcefully as the physical person of the American black.”⁵ This was particularly true of the former slaves, who would have personalised what would have been an abstract issue for many Scots.⁶

This dissertation has by no means covered every black abolitionist who travelled to Scotland to expose American slavery. Work remains to be done in identifying more of the African Americans who came to Scotland in the nineteenth century, and the antislavery work they carried out whilst there. Nevertheless, recent advances in the historiography of black abolitionism make now a better time than ever to develop a comprehensive history of black abolitionism in Scotland. It could be suggested that the role played by African Americans within Scottish antislavery is more extensive, and possibly more significant, than previously realised. It would be a gross oversimplification to suggest that Scottish antislavery was entirely dependent on the presence or initiative of black abolitionists, although this was partially true of the 1850s. The Scots were the first in Britain to establish antislavery societies for the purpose of abolition in America and the GES were the first antislavery society to oppose the FCS’s fundraising activities in the American South. Without undervaluing the role played by Scots abolitionists within the transatlantic antislavery movement, this dissertation has attempted to contribute to the growing body of work which

⁵ Dickerson, *Dark Victorians*, p. 63.

⁶ Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 193.

emphasises the significance of the role played by African Americans in the struggle against American slavery.

An apparent contribution is the way in which black abolitionists regularly shunned factional dispute. Douglass's criticism that "Too often has the cause of the slave been compelled to give place to the cause of a society" could certainly be applied to Scottish antislavery.⁷ Scots abolitionists were unified insofar as they believed in the immediate and unconditional emancipation of America's slaves. However, both factions disagreed over the type of abolitionism that would be most effective in achieving emancipation and this often proved unproductive for winning antislavery support. Most black abolitionists who came to Scotland were more interested in promoting "the cause of the slave" rather than "the cause of a society". It could be suggested that by their presence and approach, black abolitionists may have occasionally refocused Scottish antislavery towards actual antislavery work rather than ideological disputes.⁸ It is tempting to suggest that the Scot's proclivity for ideological dispute made the black abolitionist presence in Scotland more vital than anywhere else, however this would require further research.

What also remains to be understood is the impact that black abolitionists had upon Scots who were not continuously involved with Scottish antislavery societies. Going by the numbers who turned out to hear black abolitionist lectures, it could be suggested that Scottish interest in abolitionism, particularly when advocated by African

⁷ Frederick Douglass, 'Mrs. Stowe's Visit to England, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, April 15, 1853, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*, <<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/african/afar03it.html>>, [accessed 10/02/2017]; See also Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists*, p. 114 - "a striking characteristic of the Scottish movement was its almost total lack of concern over antislavery unity."

⁸ Samuel Ringgold Ward's aforementioned relationship with the Dundee Anti-Slavery Society is a good example of this - see footnote 42, p. 45.

Americans, was widespread. It would be admittedly difficult to arrive at a clear picture of the black abolitionist impact beyond antislavery circles and newspaper columns, but evidently, black abolitionists travelled extensively throughout Scotland and their message would have reached thousands of people from varying backgrounds. William Meillar, a practically unknown Scots poet from Dalkeith, articulated in verse what many Scots would have undoubtedly thought when they came away from hearing black abolitionists speak:

Thou to the world giv'st proof what slave may be
If brother man would set his brother free.⁹

⁹ *Caledonian Mercury*, August 16, 1865, *BNA*. Meillar's poem was addressed to Douglass specifically and appears to have been written after Douglass' first visit to Scotland in 1846.

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