# Freedom's Journal: How the First Black Newspaper Elevated African American Voices in the Slavery Debate

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As a student journalist, I have long taken a deep interest in the media's role in influencing public opinion. While wars, famous politicians, and significant meetings often obtain special focus in history textbooks, what has always fascinated me is how words can change peoples' thoughts and actions. In modern-day society, the influence of words comes increasingly from social media and online news, but in the past, without access to such advanced technology, this type of communication arose primarily from newspapers. As a result, looking into newspapers and their impact on history felt like the natural choice for my project.

At first, the most famous newspaper-related event I could recall relating to debate or diplomacy was the case surrounding abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, which involved the murder and burning of Lovejoy and his printing press by a pro-slavery mob. Seeing the great lengths to which Lovejoy sought to defend his printing press, I knew there was a larger story I could pursue than this seemingly-isolated incident. Researching other newspapers during the antebellum era that also pertained to the slavery debate, I then stumbled upon *Freedom's Journal*. The diversity of *Freedom's Journal's* founders, the conflicts involving the American Colonization Society, and the newspapers' challenge against existing mainstream media's take on enslaved Black people instantly drew my interest. With a great aspect of the newspaper involving publishing pro-emancipation editorials or rebuttals against colonization, looking into how *Freedom's Journal* influenced the slave debate connected perfectly with the debate and diplomacy theme.

I conducted my research and created my project by first reading a broad overview of *Freedom's Journal's* history and the role of the press in the 1800s via tertiary sources, and then browsing through my U.S. history teacher's bookshelf to pinpoint important secondary or primary sources that gave good contextualization for the antebellum period and slavery at the time, such as Frederick Douglass's *North Star* and David Walker's Appeal. I then went searching

for past scholarly research on databases such as JSTOR, before flipping through primary online archives of the actual newspaper. As I went through this initial research process, I began identifying more narrow themes such as colonization and figures that seemed especially important to the newspaper's development within the slavery debate. Drawing from this wide range of sources, I then proceeded in creating notecards, developing an outline, and writing out the paper.

My final historical argument was that *Freedom's Journal* elevated Black voices in the slavery debate by creating an outlet in which African Americans could express their outrage and criticisms of slavery without the limitations of white-dominated newspapers of the era, particularly through the supporting of Black writers, advocating of emancipation societies, reporting on daily life, and coverage of internal conflicts regarding colonization. *Freedom's Journal* and its impact on the slavery debate is significant in history, not only because it helps us understand the thinking of many Black people during the Antebellum era, but also because it demonstrates the important role of newspapers in influencing public opinion on politically-charged debates.

"We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly ... Our brethren who are still in the iron fetters of bondage ... are our kindred by all the ties of nature; and though but little can be effected by us, still let our sympathies be poured forth, and our prayers in their behalf, ascend to Him who is able to succour them."

- Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm, Editors of *Freedom's Journal*, March 16, 1827<sup>1</sup>

Although the inception of a national, organized abolitionist movement in America is often attributed to the early 1830s with the founding of William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator* and the establishment of the American Anti-slavery society in 1833, the 1820s already laid the groundwork for increasing anti-slavery sentiment in the United States.<sup>2</sup> The Missouri Compromise of 1820, which permitted entrance of Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, revealed the growing sectional tensions between the north and the south. *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, an abolitionist paper published in Ohio by Benjamin Lundy, became the first newspaper with the sole purpose of denouncing the institution of slavery in 1821.<sup>3</sup> Around the same time, alternative solutions rose to prominence, with the American Colonization Society (ACS) encouraging free Black people to emigrate to Monrovia, Liberia.<sup>4</sup> However, while these organizations were primarily piloted by white Americans, a new, unprecedented wave of African American activism took shape in the same decade. Most notably, a group of free African Americans convened in New York City and established the first Black-run newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, on March 16, 1827.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), 1, https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.1/mode/2up

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "The Abolitionist Movement," History.com, https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/abolitionist-movement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Benjamin Lundy, "Abolition of Slavery No. 1," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, September 13, 1821, 1, https://archive.org/details/sim/genius-of-universal-emancipation 1821-09 1 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Newspapers Freedom's Journal," PBS,

http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news/newbios/newbios/nwsppr/freedom/freedom.html.

Led by senior editor Samuel E. Cornish and junior editor John B. Russwurm, the periodical sought for African Americans to "plead [their] own cause" to a public "deceived by misrepresentations." Despite its short lifespan, *Freedom's Journal* elevated Black voices in the slavery debate by creating an outlet in which African Americans could express their outrage and criticisms of slavery without the limitations of white-dominated newspapers of the era. Through the featuring of Black writers, advocating of emancipation societies, reporting on daily life, and coverage of internal conflicts regarding colonization, the newspaper enabled a traditionally marginalized population to influence the abolitionist movement.

### **Founding Circumstances**

A combination of newly available resources from the first Industrial Revolution, coupled with a racist-driven mainstream media, favorable journalistic environment, and desire to exercise the liberties promised by the Constitution, contributed to the founding of *Freedom's Journal*. Decades earlier, the Haitian Revolution in 1791 established an expectation of freedom and liberty that reverberated across the nation. A symbol of Black independence and ambition, the successful revolt of Black slaves against their French masters ingrained the same aspirations in the *Freedom's Journal* founders, who sought to raise their own voices on the subject of slavery and social status. While their predecessors were limited by a lack of resources, these northern African Americans found themselves in an era that saw increased opportunities for the establishment of newspapers not only because of the availability of cheaper paper, but also from the emergence of other disadvantaged communities' periodicals such as *The Cherokee Phoenix* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Freedom's Journal, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Jacqueline Bacon, "The History of Freedom's Journal: A Study in Empowerment and Community," *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 1 (2003): pp. 1-20, https://doi.org/10.2307/3559045, 2-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Charlton W. Yingling, "No One Who Reads the History of Hayti Can Doubt the Capacity of Colored Men: Racial Formation and Atlantic Rehabilitation in New York City's Early Black Press, 1827-1841," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11, no. 2 (2013): pp. 314-348, https://doi.org/10.1353/eam.2013.0014.

and *Journeyman Mechanic's Advocate*. <sup>9</sup> This formed a broader "journalistic climate" in which the editors of *Freedom's Journal* could operate under. <sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, one of the direct motivations for *Freedom's Journal's* founding can be attributed to a desire to counter dehumanizing attitudes directed at the African American population by the mainstream press at the time, as illustrated frequently by the remarks of Noah Mordecai, a Jewish editor in New York. Mordecai was known for his racist commentary towards people of color. He represented a microcosm of the antebellum press's role in sensationalizing reports of African American crime and caricaturing Black people unfavorably as to appear less sophisticated and civilized. This inferior depiction prompted a response from these free Black people in New York, who saw not only the need to voice their grievances, but actively respond to rhetoric that justified the society's unfair treatment of both enslaved and freed Black people. 12

### **Empowering Voices in the Slavery Debate**

Freedom's Journal better incorporated Black perspectives into the slavery discussion and countered dehumanizing portrayals of African Americans through a variety of initiatives: they published African American oriented editorial works, reached out to abolitionist communities abroad, and acknowledged daily life within Black communities via news reports and advertisements.<sup>13</sup> While certain articles within their issues directly targeted slave owners and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Timothy Helwig, "Black and White Print: Cross-Racial Strategies of Class Solidarity in *Mechanics' Free Press* and *Freedom's Journal*," *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 19, no. 2 (2009): pp. 117-135, https://doi.org/10.1353/amp.0.0028.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Bacon, "The History," 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Lawrence Fortenberry, "Freedom's Journal: The First Black Medium," *The Black Scholar* 6, no. 3 (1974): pp. 33-37, https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.1974.11431474.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Valerie Kasper, "The Resonance and Residue of the First African American Newspaper: How Freedom's Journal Created Space in the Early 19th Century" (PhD diss., University of Central Florida, 1995), 10-12, https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6798&context=etd.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), March 30, 1827,

https://americanantiquarian.org/earlyamericannewsmedia/exhibits/show/news-in-antebellum-america/item/93

immorality of their dealings, much of their influence on the slave debate came through indirect means.

Logistically, the newspaper's status as a weekly publication between 1827-1829 enabled a flexible and diverse amount of content to flow through its pages within the span of two years. In a thorough analysis by historian Jacqueline Bacon, the complete span of Freedom's Journal's content ranged from foreign and domestic news to advertisements, editorials, cultural events, and new slave societies; the majority of original content was written by African Americans themselves, even if white authors contributed occasionally. <sup>14</sup> Editorials, both written by regular contributors and reprinted from other publications who shared the same views, provided a valuable outlet for the Black editors to express their opinions about slavery. 15

For example, in the newspaper's June 22, 1827 issue, a reprinted editorial from the Alexandria Gazette titled "On the Political Tendency of Slavery in the United States" exposed slavery's detrimental effect on the ethical base of slaveholders' children. 16 The editors of Freedom's Journal deliberately decided to publish these arguments that characterized slaveholders as "despotic monarchs" and their children as people who "seldom walk in the path of virtue when they arrive at the age of manhood" in order to portray slavery as an institution not only bad for slaves, but also for slaveholders themselves. 17

In another lengthy rebuttal to a sermon presented by the ACS that depicted African Americans as "proverbially idle, ignorant and depraved," a Freedom's Journal writer wrote,

"With respect to the Rev. gentleman's estimation of the condition and character of the colored population of our town and cities, we can assure him that it is the most uncharitable and inaccurate we have ever seen."18

<sup>14</sup> Bacon, "The History," 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "An American Aristides on the History of Slavery (1827)," Accessible Archives, https://www.accessible-archives.com/2021/09/an-american-aristides-on-the-history-of-slavery-1827/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), 56, https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.1/mode/2up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Freedom's Journal, 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), 126, https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.1/mode/2up.

At the time, one of the many ways the ACS pushed for colonization, rather than integration into society, was to highlight the drawbacks that would occur if Black people were fully-integrated into American society. They used generalizations claiming Black people were uneducated, poor, and morally inferior, citing the sheer numbers of Black people in jail, in order to discourage radical abolition as the final answer to the slavery question. To counter these claims, *Freedom's Journal* enabled Black writers to respond in a timely and effective manner; for example, the author of the rebuttal utilized *Freedom's Journal's* broad reach to highlight the flaws within the ACS's analysis to readers, pointing out how a lack of education opportunities, poverty, and social barriers inevitably contributed to the inflated numbers of Black people in prison, not some innate, inferior moral base.<sup>19</sup>

As just one of the many opinion pieces *Freedom's Journal* published, the newspaper's editorial section forwarded both the African American community's overall stance against colonization as an alternative to integration, as well as the importance of freedom and education in creating a fully-integrated society.<sup>20</sup> On behalf of the African American writers who were previously limited by slavery apologists in mainstream media, *Freedom's Journal* equipped them with a platform where they could make their own voices heard in the slave debate. While editorial pieces directly incorporated the Black perspective into the debate, community news reports, educational outreach, and references to Black achievement provided indirect criticism on slavery by debunking one of the primary arguments many slaveholders used at the time to justify the enslavement of millions: African Americans were somehow subhuman.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Freedom's Journal, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> See Appendix C.

During the antebellum period, the mainstream press seldom included African

American-related news unless it was to report some heinous crime. <sup>22</sup> In doing so, they reduced
the Black community to criminals, which in turn justified slaveholders' ownership and treatment
of slaves. *Freedom's Journal* challenged that stance by revealing the diverse aspects of northern
Black life. <sup>23</sup> In multiple issues, such as the March 30, 1827 print version, the newspaper
published instances of marriages and deaths within the Black community, such as the following
excerpt: "MARRIED, By the Rev. Mr. Varick, Mr. William Patterson, to Miss Cynthia
Clarborne, of this city." <sup>24</sup> By recording these celebrations and tragedies of Black individuals, *Freedom's Journal* gave the entire community the dignity of acknowledgement, while also
portraying the undeniable human aspects of their society: marriage and death.

Additionally, the newspaper featured memoirs of admirable Black role models, such as the owner of a ship crew and son of a slave, Paul Cuffee, who was described as "very well skilled both in trade and navigation, as well as [known] to be of a very pious and moral character." In doing so, the newspaper counteracted many white assertions that Black people were less dignified, sophisticated, or somehow morally and physically inferior. To further restore their sense of self from the brutal attacks of the mainstream media, the newspaper posted a variety of notices about new schools, classes, or abolitionist societies. This enabled Black people to gain access to education and stay informed on current social and political topics. The sense of self topics and stay informed on current social and political topics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Wendell Bourne, "Power of the Printed Word: Freedom's Journal—The First Black Newspaper," *Black History Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (2006): 22, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24759592.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Bella Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," *The Journal of Negro History* 17, no. 3 (1932): pp. 241-286, https://doi.org/10.2307/2714274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Freedom's Journal, 170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Freedom's Journal, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "Negro Higher Education as Seen through the Antebellum Black Press," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 20 (1998): p. 36, https://doi.org/10.2307/2999216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Freedom's Journal, 112.

In depicting African Americans not only as normal humans going through marriage and deaths, but also as successful leaders and people capable of educating themselves, *Freedom's Journal* humanized African Americans in a debate where the opposing side sought solely to dehumanize them. Ultimately, the newspaper's unwavering drive for education, discussion, and the uplifting of Black voices made them both an effective platform for abolition and an irrefutable example of the Black community's collective humanity.

## **Russwurm and Internal Conflict**

While *Freedom's Journal* generally took an abolitionist stance, internal debate about colonization also became essential to the newspaper's narrative. When *Freedom's Journal* was originally founded, one of its broader purposes included opposing the colonization initiative hand-in-hand with slavery.<sup>28</sup> Yet this line quickly blurred as Russwurm, the newspaper's junior editor, gradually became convinced that African Americans would never achieve full equality in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Approximately half a year after *Freedom's Journal's* founding, conflict erupted between Russwurm and Cornish, the paper's senior editor, and Cornish resigned over disagreements with Russwurm's growing support for the ACS.<sup>30</sup>

Eventually, *Freedom's Journal* collapsed two years later in 1829 when Russwurm moved to Liberia in association with the ACS, effectively ending the newspaper's circulation.<sup>31</sup> To many who had worked at *Freedom's Journal*, including Cornish and abolitionist David Walker, Russwurm had betrayed his own people.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Freedom's Journal. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Philip S. Foner, "John Browne Russwurm, a Document," *The Journal of Negro History* 54, no. 4 (1969): pp. 393-395, https://doi.org/10.2307/2716732.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> "Newspapers Freedom's," PBS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), 400-408, accessed January 23, 2022, https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.2/page/n113/mode/2up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Foner, "John Browne Russwurm, a Document."

The falling out of the editors of *Freedom's Journal*, Russwurm's decision to move to Liberia, and *Freedom's Journal's* death may seem like a tragedy for the Black press, but it is significant in revealing how not all African Americans held the same stance in the slavery debate. While most opposed slavery and colonization vehemently, some saw colonization as the only way to achieve full equality. Despite the ACS being attributed as a primarily white-dominated, racist organization, a minority of Black people saw it as an ethical and viable answer to the slavery conflict considering the lack of opportunities and reform in the United States.<sup>33</sup> The strong desire for abolition and eventual equality in the United States was not shared by all. Therefore, Russwurm, Cornish, and Walker's disagreements at *Freedom's Journal* helped portray the idea that not all sides of the slavery debate were black and white, but interspered with gray; even when freedom and slavery were the two main sides of the debate, the conflict was much more nuanced, with smaller conflicts like the colonization question playing a great role within the debate's progression.

## **Short-Term Impact**

In spite of its internal hurdles, *Freedom's Journal* dramatically altered the slavery debate from the newspaper's founding up until the Civil War, spurring increased, international participation for the abolition cause and initiating a flurry of Black publications.<sup>34</sup> At its peak, *Freedom's Journal* circulated in a total of 11 states, forming a network between the north and south that united African Americans despite geographical limitations.<sup>35</sup> Besides expanding nationally, *Freedom's Journal* also created an international platform for the slavery discussion,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Bacon, "The History," 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Kasper, "The Resonance," 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Emma Stave, "Freedom's Journal: The First Step Towards a Collective Black Consciousness," *Leviathan: Interdisciplinary Journal in English*, 17-18,

https://www.google.com/url?q=https://tidsskrift.dk/lev/article/download/119255/167061/247412&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1642042403262764&usg=AOvVaw0LUWKcqEuiBtnW5Ge2-fZ8.

recruiting agents in Haiti, Canada, and England to spread the newspaper's anti-slavery message.<sup>36</sup>

Back home, *Freedom's Journal* fostered the growth of Black abolitionists and set a model for new, thriving African American antebellum newspapers. Walker, one of the previous critics of Russwurm and a radical abolitionist, gained foothold in the anti-slavery community by starting as an enthusiastic writer and Boston agent for *Freedom's Journal*.<sup>37</sup> From there, he continued his pursuits in abolition and eventually authored his famous anti-slavery pamphlet, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*.<sup>38</sup> Arguably, the existence of *Freedom's Journal* and its values brought about an era in which Black people could speak out for themselves, setting the stage for Walker's Appeal to gain prominence.<sup>39</sup> On a similar note, America saw the creation of more than two dozen independently Black-operated newspapers including Cornish's *The Colored American* and Frederick Douglass's *The North Star* in the aftermath of *Freedom's Journal*, many of which criticized slaveowners and advocated for the total abolition of slavery.<sup>40</sup> Thus, *Freedom's Journal* was the starting point for a continued stream of Black newspapers during the antebellum period that further amplified Black voices in the slavery discussion.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Bacon, "The History," 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Glenn M. McNair, "The Elijah Burritt Affair: David Walker's Appeal and Partisan Journalism in Antebellum Milledgeville," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (1999): 448, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40584109. <sup>38</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> David Walker, "From Appeal to the Coloured Citizens," in *American Protest Literature*, by Zoe Trodd (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 79-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Colored American (New York City, NY), March 4, 1837,

http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text6/coloredamerican.pdf; The North Star (Rochester, NY), December 3, 1847,

https://archive.org/details/sim frederick-douglass-paper 1847-12-03 1 1/page/n3/mode/2up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Fortenberry, "Freedom's Journal: The First Black Medium"; The Provincial Freeman (Windsor), March 1, 1857, http://ink.scholarsportal.info/viewer/cecil/focus/ink/newspapers/pf/reel1/001220-x0-y0-z1-r0-0-0?q=provincial%20f reeman.

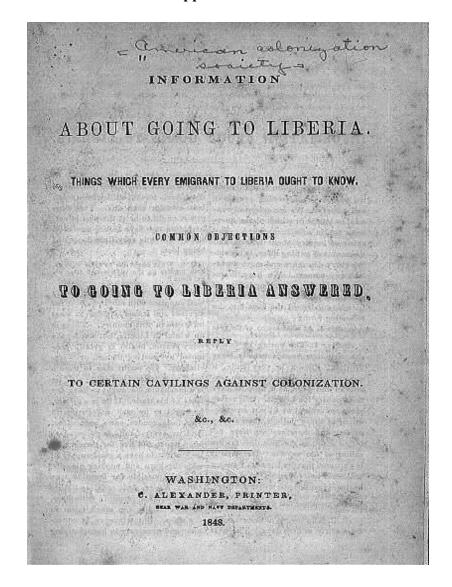
## **Legacy and Overall Significance**

Freedom's Journal set the precedent for a diverse set of ideas: it created the expectation of newspapers as a public forum for debate, helped serve as a medium for an African American-driven abolitionist movement, and showcased the power of reading, writing, and reporting in empowering a marginalized community. Whereas many newspapers previously utilized their pages to express one predominant opinion or idea, Freedom's Journal persistantly published different voices on debates like slavery, even if they contradicted the newspaper's own stance; their persistance foreshadowed the ideas of ethical and honest reporting still strived for in the modern journalism industry.<sup>42</sup>

Ultimately, the newspaper's lasting legacy resides in the continuation of Black voices in history and the role of the press in driving debates. When *Freedom's Journal* first operated between 1827-1829, it uplifted the voices of African Americans in the slave debate by providing a platform where they could stand in solidarity behind ideals of emancipation and equality, despite society's relentless suppression. It was the first medium that united Black people together through writing, helping further unify and organize a collective opposition to slavery that would not have existed to the same degree without the newspaper. By utilizing both charged editorials and indirect attacks on the immorality of slavery, the newspaper enabled the Black community to provide effective commentary on the slavery debate and influence the growth of abolition. The power of words in influencing debates continues to be of utmost importance today. With the press and mass media playing a powerful role in influencing public opinion on controversial current issues, it remains more important than ever to strive for the ideals that *Freedom's Journal* established: ones of collective empowerment and fair, truthful reporting.

<sup>42</sup> Bacon, "The History," 9.

### Appendix A



The goal of the American Colonization Society (ACS) was to encourage the emigration of African Americans to Liberia. In the pamphlet above, the ACS provided a detailed overview of the living conditions of the colony, including climate, health conditions, education, and belongings needed for those emigrating. Staunchly opposed by *Freedom's Journal* editor Samuel Cornish, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist David Walker, and other anti-slavery advocates, conflicting opinions surrounding the ACS became one of the big internal debates during *Freedom's Journal's* operations.

*Information About Going to Liberia*. American Colonization Society, 1848. https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/007-b.html.

### Appendix B



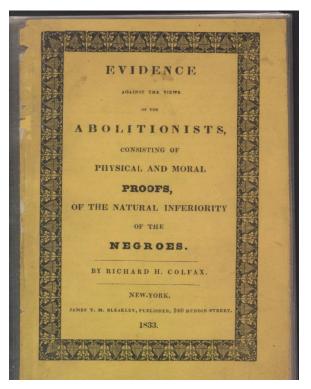
# FOR THE FREEDOM'S JOURNAL. COLONIZATION SOCIETY. No. 11.

Having briefly, by plain and correct reasoning, pointed out the erroneous and fallacious views of the Colonization Society, in reference to any thing of a beneficial nature, likely to result to the slaves from its operations; and that a contrary effect will unavoidably follow, the separation of their brethren, neighbours and friends, the free blacks: I will endeavour to show what I conscientiously believe to be true, that if the plans of this institution are carried on to any material extent, a deep and extended injury will be inflicted on the future prospects and happiness of the free coloured population of this country; which every good man must earnestly deprecate; and further, that the principles and doctrine on which its policy is founded, are directly at variance with that justice and charity, so emmently due this interesting portion of the community from their former and present oppr ssors, the whites.

Freedom's Journal often published editorials that directly challenged the American Colonization Society's efforts. The following excerpt, published in the October 12, 1827 issue, provides a clear example of the newspaper's overall anti-colonization sentiment. The authors assert that the ACS is a threat to the future prosperity of African Americans and an inadequate solution to the slavery debate.

Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY). https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.1/mode/2up.

### Appendix C

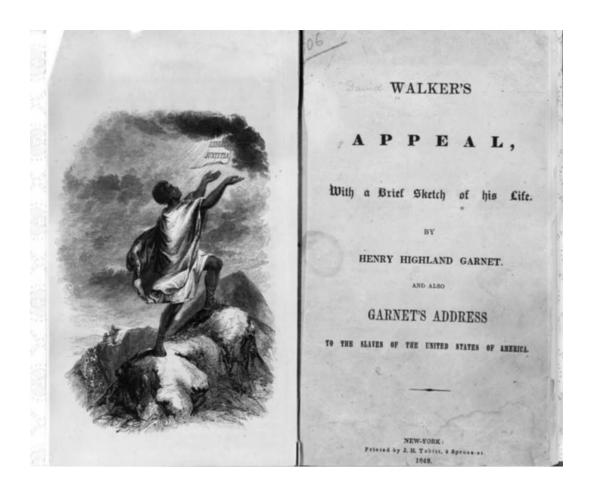




Methods of dehumanization were common ways slaveholders justified pro-slavery arguments in the slave debate. On the left, Richard H Colfax's 1833 "Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists" analyzed both physical and moral traits of African Americans in order to "prove" that they were an inferior race and thus deserved to be enslaved. On the right, the 1830 cartoon "Hot Corn" by David Claypoole Johnston paints African Americans in an undesirable light, racistly caricaturing certain facial features and depicting an unflattering dialect.

- (Left) Colfax, Richard H. Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists: Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes. Library of Congress, 1833. https://www.loc.gov/item/11006103/.
- (Right) Johnston, David Claypoole. "Hot Corn." Cartoon. The Library Company of Philadelphia. https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A65157.

### Appendix D



Abolitionist David Walker first developed his voice and wrote about his anti-slavery ideas in *Freedom's Journal*. Later after the newspaper ended, his pamphlet, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, was shipped to the slaves in the south along with its radical ideas of revolution. Immediately afterward, various states began taking measures to counter the effects of the pamphlet, including making laws that forbid educating slaves to read and write, as well as communication between northern and southern Blacks. The above is a reprinted version of Walker's Appeal in 1848.

Walker, David. *Walker's Appeal*. Library of Congress, 1848. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3c05530/.

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"An American Aristides on the History of Slavery (1827)." Accessible Archives. Last modified September 27, 2021. Accessed January 12, 2022.

https://www.accessible-archives.com/2021/09/an-american-aristides-on-the-history-of-slavery-1827/.

This was a letter written to the editor that was published in *Freedom's Journal* that scathingly criticized slave owners, their morality, and their contradiction with ideals of the founding of America, written by an anonymous source of the pseudonym Aristides. It gave me insight on what people during the time, most likely either an abolitionist or a Black man, thought of slavery and what their arguments were against the practice.

Colfax, Richard H. *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists: Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes*. Library of Congress, 1833. https://www.loc.gov/item/11006103/.

This was a pamphlet written by Richard H. Colfax in 1833 that argued why African Americans were inferior and abolitionists were incorrect. As a primary source, it showed me how the opposing side of *Freedom's Journal*, namely pro-slavery advocates, argued their stance.

Colored American (New York City, NY), March 4, 1837.

http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text6/coloredamerican.pdf. This was a pdf of the articles of *Colored American*, a newspaper published with the purpose of denouncing slavery between 1837-1842. Founded by *Freedom's Journal* co-founder Samuel Cornish alongside Philip Alexander Bell and Charles Bennett Ray, it was one of the many African American-run newspapers that sprung up during the antebellum period after *Freedom's Journal*. It not only helped me better understand *Freedom Journal's* impact and unique precedent on later publications, but also allowed me to evaluate how the Black community's opinions on slavery shifted from the late 1820s to the early 1840s.

Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY), March 30, 1827. Accessed January 18, 2022. https://americanantiquarian.org/earlyamericannewsmedia/exhibits/show/news-in-antebell um-america/item/93.

This was a primary source, specifically a website with a pdf of the March 30, 1827 issue of *Freedom's Journal* preserved online. Because this was a clear, digitized, legible copy of the newspaper, it not only gave me a better idea of the exact format of the newspaper but also enabled me to read the exact words of various topics the newspaper addressed, ranging from issues related to slavery, education, and temperance to other typical content of newspapers such as human-interest profiles, poetry, and local news.

Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY).

https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.1/mode/2up.

This is a primary source, which contains a digitized version of Volume 1 of *Freedom's Journal* that is both higher quality than earlier ones cited and contains more of the paper's issues. It specifically spans the inception of the paper on March 16, 1827 until March 21, 182 gave me both an opportunity to look at the broad format of the newspaper, as well as read about the editorials they wrote in regards to slavery throughout the span of 1827-1828.

# Freedom's Journal (New York City, NY).

https://archive.org/details/FreedomsJournalVol.2/page/n113/mode/2up.

This is a primary source, and a continuation of Volume 1, which contains the first half of the issues from *Freedom's Journal*. This second half of issues spans from April 4, 1828 all the way until the newspaper's end on March 28, 1829. The length of this source enabled me to see how the newspaper shifted after the departure of Cornish, and specifically, how Russwurm ran the paper until its ending. It also gave me the opportunity to analyze the possible changing sentiments from abolition to colonization, given the reference information on Russwurm's eventual move to Liberia.

Information About Going to Liberia. American Colonization Society, 1848.

https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/007-b.html.

This pamphlet displayed the American Colonization Society's goals of sending African Americans to Liberia. It gave me a better understanding of how the ACS encouraged people to emigrate as an alternative to more radical forms of abolition and integration.

- Johnston, David Claypoole. "Hot Corn." Cartoon. The Library Company of Philadelphia. https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A65157.

  This was a cartoon drawn in 1830 showing two white men and a Black waiter, who is portrayed unflatteringly with exaggerated facial features and speech. It gave me a deeper sense of how racist attitudes during the time affected differing people's views on slavery.
- Lundy, Benjamin. "Abolition of Slavery No. 1." *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, September 13, 1821. https://archive.org/details/sim\_genius-of-universal-emancipation\_1821-09\_1\_3. This was a primary source website that provided access to the original text of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* in digital format. This newspaper was part of a broader rise of abolitionist sentiment in the 1820s, and helped me contextualize *Freedom's Journal* within a rising anti-slavery cause.
- The North Star (Rochester, NY), December 3, 1847.

https://archive.org/details/sim\_frederick-douglass-paper\_1847-12-03\_1\_1/page/n3/mode/2up.

This website contained a digitized version of Frederick Douglass's famous anti-slavery newspaper, *The North Star.* As one of the many anti-slavery newspapers published in the aftermath of *Freedom's Journal*, it helped me better contextualize and understand the abolitionist movement from the perspective of a well-respected figure like Douglass.

The Provincial Freeman (Windsor), March 1, 1857.

http://ink.scholarsportal.info/viewer/cecil/focus/ink/newspapers/pf/reel1/001220-x0-y0-z 1-r0-0-0?q=provincial%20freeman.

This was a website consisting of digitized pages of *The Provincial Freeman*, a newspaper founded and published during a surge of Black-run newspapers in the 1850s by Mary Ann Shadd Cary, an American-born free Black woman who moved to Canada due to the dangers of the Fugitive Slave Act. She played a major role in advocating for action, rather than mere rhetoric, in the abolitionist movement, partaking in activities such as the aiding of escaped slaves in the Underground Railroad, growing anti-slavery conventions in the United States, and the publishing of this newspaper. Her unique vocal role as an African American woman publisher provided important context regarding the diversity of the abolitionist movement after *Freedom's Journal* ceased publication, thus deepening my understanding of the roles women played within the cause.

Walker, David. "From Appeal to the Coloured Citizens." In *American Protest Literature*, by Zoe Trodd. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.

This book contained excerpts from David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens, a radical pamphlet urging Blacks to resist slavery. It helped me see the thought process of Walker, a writer of *Freedom's Journal*, in regards to his stance on slavery.

------. *Walker's Appeal*. Library of Congress, 1848. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3c05530/.

This pamphlet, published approximately two decades after David Walker's Appeal first came out, contained a visual interpretation of his pamphlet's ideas as well as the writing itself. The visual component enabled me to better understand how people at the time interpreted his work, as well as its long-lasting reach.

### **Secondary Sources**

Bacon, Jacqueline. "The History of Freedom's Journal: A Study in Empowerment and Community." *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 1 (2003): 1–20. https://doi.org/10.2307/3559045.

This was a secondary source that focused on researching a more complete and accurate history of *Freedom's Journal* than what was available prior, and how the newspaper empowered the Black community during the antebellum period. It helped me in understanding a big picture of the newspaper's founding, impact, and the various different topics it addressed throughout the years. It also gave a more complete understanding of how and why the newspaper eventually fell apart.

Bourne, Wendell. "Power of the Printed Word: Freedom's Journal—The First Black Newspaper." *Black History Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (2006): 21–26. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24759592. This is a series of excerpts that the authors compiled from *Freedom's Journal* that reflected the anti-slavery arguments and other content of the newspaper. It is from a Journal that publishes peer-reviewed information about African American history and how it could be used in a classroom setting, and gave me an understanding of what aspects of *Freedom's Journal* certain scholars thought was important to highlight to

- students studying the newspaper, as well as what the thought processes behind the writers of the newspaper.
- Foner, Philip S. "John Browne Russwurm, a Document." *The Journal of Negro History* 54, no. 4 (1969): 393–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/2716732.
  - This was a secondary source that looked into the history behind John Brown Russwurm, one of the co-editor-in-chiefs of *Freedom's Journal*. From this I gained a better understanding of his upbringing, involvement in the newspaper, and what incentivized him to lean towards colonization rather than assimilation, one of the topics that resulted in the departure of his co-editor Samuel B. Cornish.
- Fortenberry, Lawrence. "Freedom's Journal: The First Black Medium." *The Black Scholar* 6, no. 3 (1974): 33–37. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41066347.

  This was a secondary source that detailed the background behind the founding of *Freedom's Journal* and how it was the starting point for Black publications. Besides learning about the circumstances surrounding its inception, I also learned how other white publishers like Mordecai Noah prompted free northern Blacks to respond with this

newspaper.

- Gross, Bella. "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All." *The Journal of Negro History* 17, no. 3 (1932): 241–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/2714274.

  This was a secondary source that describes how *Freedom's Journal* began what the author calls a Negro Renaissance in the 1800s, and how it was both a paper about abolition and one about human morals. It gave me more insight on how abolition played hand-in-hand with the development of Black identity.
- Helwig, Timothy. "Black and White Print: Cross-Racial Strategies of Class Solidarity in 'Mechanics' Free Press' and 'Freedom's Journal." *American Periodicals* 19, no. 2 (2009): 117–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025157.

  This was a secondary source that showed how the Black press and the labor press often supported each other. From it I learned how both kinds of papers advocated for cross-racial relations and spoke out against nativism, which impacted both Blacks and immigrants.
- Kasper, Valerie. "The Resonance and Residue of the First African American Newspaper: How Freedom's Journal Created Space in the Early 19th Century." PhD diss., University of Central Florida, 1995. Accessed January 4, 2022. https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6798&context=etd. This was a secondary source that looked into how Freedom's Journal fought against the white-washed stereotypes in mainstream media. It gave me a deeper understanding of the ways in which Black writers asserted their community's own humanity and culture.
- McNair, Glenn M. "The Elijah Burritt Affair: David Walker's Appeal and Partisan Journalism in Antebellum Milledgeville." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (1999): 448–78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40584109.

  This was a secondary source that detailed the effect of David Walker's appeal on Elijah

Burritt, another newspaper editor who allegedly distributed Walker's pamphlets. David

Walker was also a writer for *Freedom's Journal*, so this paper helped me understand the broader impacts of Black writing and press, as well as the overall sentiment of slavery and some white people's responses to anti-slavery sentiment.

- "Negro Higher Education as Seen Through the Antebellum Black Press." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 20 (1998): 36–38. https://doi.org/10.2307/2999216.

  This was a secondary source in which researchers used digital humanities methods to search for references of college and higher education within African American newspapers prior to the civil war. Using this, they compiled excerpts from newspapers that addressed reactions to Black people in American colleges. This gave me insight into how the broader public reacted to educated African Americans during the antebellum period, as well as what content related to education these newspapers decided to publish.
- "Newspapers Freedom's Journal." PBS. Accessed January 4, 2022.

  http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news\_bios/newbios/nwsppr/freedom/freedom.html.

  This article from PBS analyzed how *Freedom's Journal* impacted the community and spawned additional newspapers during the antebellum period, while also providing essential general information about the newspaper. I used it to obtain a better idea of the newspaper's timeline, including the background and people behind its operations.
- Stave, Emma. "Freedom's Journal: The First Step Towards a Collective Black Consciousness." *Leviathan: Interdisciplinary Journal in English*. https://www.google.com/url?q=https://tidsskrift.dk/lev/article/download/119255/167061/247412&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1642042403262764&usg=AOvVaw0LUWKcqEuiBtn W5Ge2-fZ8.

This was a secondary source written for the Aarhus's journal and covered how *Freedom's Journal* created a unified black consciousness. It gave me a broader view of how the anti-slavery debate fit into the journal's other objectives, as well as how women played a role in the newspaper.

- "The Abolitionist Movement." Last modified November 29, 2019. Accessed February 13, 2022. https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/abolitionist-movement.

  This webpage details the important events and people of the abolitionist movement, specifically analyzing events believed to have been essential to the movement and how it officially gained national prominence in the U.S. during the 1830s. It helped me contextualize Freedom's Journal's founding in the big picture.
- Yingling, Charlton W. "No One Who Reads the History of Hayti Can Doubt the Capacity of Colored Men: Racial Formation and Atlantic Rehabilitation in New York City's Early Black Press, 1827—1841." *Early American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013): 314–48. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23547664.

This was a secondary source that looked specifically at the connections between two Black newspapers, *The Colored American* and *Freedom's Journal*, and the way they analyzed and interacted with the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution. It gave me an understanding of what events the antebellum Black press covered to further their argument for abolition.