Still and quiet, he sat next to the warm fireplace awaiting his guest’s arrival, perhaps wondering what it was he would say to this young and now infamous woman. Tall, gaunt, prone to bouts of melancholy, and accused of being too slow on issues of reform, this man was the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. The year was 1862, and with the deaths of hundreds of thousands at the hands of a devastatingly fratricidal Civil War, Lincoln, whose presidency was plagued by the war’s outbreak, must have had absolutely no choice but suffer from a sense of responsibility on his part. Hitherto, Lincoln had tactfully taken a position of restoring the Union, while remaining vague on his position concerning the institution of slavery, much to the dismay of northern abolitionists. During the same year, in his letter to the staunch abolitionist and editor of the New York Tribune, Horace Greeley, Lincoln wrote him, “My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery” (“Letter to Horace Greeley” 442). However, this statement, while seemingly harsh to the modern listener, would not have offended his soon-to-arrive guest, and national celebrity who, although entirely against the institution of slavery, hoped to “… inspire voluntary
emancipation by compellingly demonstrating the evil and unchristian nature of slavery” (Baym et al. 766). This woman, the famous author of the 1852 novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was Harriet Beecher Stowe, and upon meeting the president, Lincoln approached her and “… is reported to have said, ‘So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war’” (“Biography … ”).

In the history leading up to the American Civil War, many changes were affecting both the North and Southern regions of the Nation. During this period “… occurred a humanitarian movement which … yields to none in its practical importance in the history of mankind” (Carlton 48). This was due to the shifting economic and social fabric that plagued the early, and eventual later half, of the 19th century, which caused great unrest throughout the working classes. In the North, especially “New England, the social and political center of gravity was shifting from commerce and the ministry to the developing manufacturing interests [which] … produced the humanitarian movement and made it a powerful factor in the history of the period” (49). It is essential for one to understand that the leaders of this movement came “… from the old New England stock … were the sons of ministers, farmers, or commercial men, and were usually men who had received a college training” (49). These individuals were, essentially, rebelling against the great factual inequalities that existed during this time, and especially the South’s dependence on the institution of slavery for their main cash crop: cotton. Viewing this rise of humanitarianism, and anti-slavery sentiment in the North, the South, attempting to strongly “… cover up the horrors of slavery … paraded sociological half-truths and ersatz history … [which] described slavery as a ‘benevolent system of tutelage by a superior race over an inferior race’” (Reynolds 18). The abolitionists, however, would not sit back and accept this false definition.
Utilized as a most influential weapon, American Literature would become one of the many indispensable tools in ushering national sentiment toward the American Abolition movement.

While it is essential to understand the northern rebellion against slavery, which had ultimately caused the Civil War, one must first try to understand the actual meaning of rebellion and the reasons it emerges throughout history. So, one must ask: *what is rebellion, and what makes a rebel?* According to his 1951 essay *The Rebel*, Albert Camus describes a rebel as, quite simply, A man who says no …. In other words, his ‘no’ affirms the existence of a borderline [and] …. In every act of rebellion, the man concerned experiences not only a feeling of revulsion at the infringement of his rights but also a complete and spontaneous loyalty to certain aspects of himself. Thus he implicitly brings into play a standard of values so far from being false that he is willing to preserve them at all costs. (19)

Clearly, this explanation suffices to explain certain characters like John Brown who, while at church and upon hearing of the disgusting murder of Elijah Lovejoy at the hands of a proslavery mob, “… suddenly rose, lifted his right hand, and said, ‘Here, before God, in the presence of all these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery!’” (Reynolds 64/65). However, men of action, like Brown, were only one, very small and infrequent aspect of the abolition movement, while others, once again, by way of the pen – rather than the sword – would prove that American Literature was one of the most essential weapons. The question is: *exactly how powerful was this literature?*

In his book, *The Controversy Over the Distribution of Abolition Literature, 1830-1860*, W. Sherman Savage suffices to explain the fear, and impact, literature had on American southerners during the time, and how far the South was willing to go to simply silence it. Savage describes
how the “… papers which were distributed to the communities of the South brought great excitement in all sections [and how] it was felt to be necessary to find some way to control the matter” (27). This allows one to understand, first and foremost, that the South did not take this literature to be weak, or worthless; they knew what impact it could have on their institution. The author goes on to show one of the plans executed by the South in blocking this northern literature. Being that the “… papers could not circulate unless the postage was paid … every white man in the South refused to pay the postage … [and] the papers would be sent back” (27). In other words, if there was the slightest chance of abolition literature getting into the mail, than there was to be no mail sent at all. It is extremely important, however, for one to understand that, although Abolition literature was at its pinnacle during this time, and was unable to be silenced, it had existed in America for quite a while, though spontaneous and, one might say, intermittent.

In his book, *John Brown: Abolitionist*, David S. Reynolds gives insight into the origins of Abolition, the location from which it emerged, and the overwhelming impact it would ultimately have. Reynolds explains how “Abolition, such as it was, came in bits and spurts [and how] … The earliest anti-slavery writings voiced sentiments that John Brown would later act upon” (24). That being said, one of the first instances of American anti-slavery sentiment came from “The Calvinist judge Samuel Sewall in his 1700 pamphlet *The Selling of Joseph* [in which he] argued that slavery violated the Golden Rule” (24). This allows one to observe where the roots of American Abolition truly lay: once again, the hearth of New England, where individuals, from Roger Williams to Jonathan Edwards Jr., continuously fought for human rights. What is truly remarkable is that, though the world, especially North America, had been heavily influenced by events such as The Great Enlightenment, it was, for all intensive purposes, Christianity which impacted Abolition the most, proving that history is guided by the irrational, or better yet, a false
sense of rationality; faith. It is no surprise that “The South … regarded the North as a chaos of homegrown theories rooted in that Ur-source of subversiveness: New England Puritanism” (15); although, by the 19th century, most Protestants had split into less-strict denominations. The reason, however, for the Southern fears of New England Puritanism, lay in “… its powerful heritage of antinomianism: the breaking of human law in the name of God” (16). This fear was most certainly valid, for, in due time, the South would meet face-to-face with the “… lantern-jawed character named John Brown” (Catton 10).

In regards to journalistic efforts against slavery in the early 19th century, allow us to touch upon, perhaps, the most prominent abolitionist of the time, William Lloyd Garrison. Jane Swisshelm once wrote that, for Garrison, it was “… necessary to his existence that he should … work for the slave; and in his work he gratifies all the strongest instincts of his nature, more completely than even the grossest sensualist can gratify his, by unlimited indulgence” (Walters 178). In addition to mentioning his “work,” this explanation provides important insight into the strength and character of William Lloyd Garrison. Though many moderate abolitionists looked upon Garrison as overzealous, they could not deny his being one of the most prominent voices in the newly-emerging Abolitionist movement.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Garrison, like his contemporaries, was introduced to antislavery sentiments early on, and “In 1831 he established his own antislavery newspaper, The Liberator, which… became the most influential antislavery newspaper of the time” (Baym et al. 756). Though many, once again, viewed him “… as a wild-eyed, narrow minded and unreasonable fanatic …” (Ruchames 37), Garrison still shared many of their views concerning abolition, even the applications they believed should be utilized for gaining emancipation. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe, and virtually all of his contemporaries, Garrison “… advocated moral
persuasion over violence, [but also] condemned the Constitution as a proslavery document, rejected Union with slaveholders, and – most important – called for the immediate (not gradual) emancipation of the slaves” (Baym et al. 756). To put it simply, Garrison, while sharing most of the same abolitionist views with others, was much more extreme in his indignation, and damnation of slavery. His most powerful and important piece of abolition literature is titled “To the Public,” “… which appeared in the January 1, 1831, inaugural issue of the Liberator …” (756).

Garrison’s “To the Public,” begins by providing a reflection on the Nation’s state of affairs concerning the Abolition movement, while expounding with great strength his belief in immediate emancipation, and his indignation for proponents of the slavery institution. “Let Southern oppressors tremble – let their secret abettors tremble – let their Northern apologists tremble – let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble” (Garrison 346). With undisguised audacity, Garrison makes this vague threat to all who sympathize with the South, and the horrifying institution he so wished to destroy. Next, having called on religious institutions to assist in the cause, he drives his point home by referring not only to God, but to a piece of literature that rests, ‘til this very day, as a great source of American pride: The Declaration of Independence. “Assenting to the ‘self-evident truth … that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights – among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,’ I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population … I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice” (346). He wraps up his editorial with a dedication toward Abolitionism, in the form of a poem, to the mass audience that read his paper.
I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,
Thy brutalising sway -- till Afric's chains
Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land, --
Trampling Oppression and his iron rod:

*Such is the vow I take -- SO HELP ME GOD!* (346)

Another abolitionist, who Garrison “… hired … as a speaker in his Massachusetts Anti-
Slavery Society …” was the all-important writer, orator, and freed-slave, Frederick Douglass
(Baym et al. 921). Perhaps more than any other person, Douglass, due to the color of his skin, knew the power of racism that existed all throughout the United States, and often felt it personally. In Douglass’s speech, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” delivered “… on July 5, 1852, in Rochester, New York …” he asks the audience a series of questions, including: “What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national dependence?” (Douglass 988). Shortly after, having evoked the ‘Almighty,’ Douglass, pointing out his freedom, says, “Fellow-citizens, above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions, whose chains … are today rendered more intolerable by the jubilant shouts that reach them” (989). Brilliantly, Douglass displays the ever human side of the American slave, who many had previously considered mere chattel, by ascribing them with the human attribute of envy. Besides, what piece of furniture, what tool, or better yet, what animal, other than a human being, can feel such a painful human emotion? Though this description may have made some feel superior in light of another’s envy, it ultimately proved a most essential point: the slave was not a chattel, but rather a human being with genuine feeling; absolutely no different than anyone else. In other words, a slave has the same, equal capacities as any other, but is constrained to exercise them. Having
poured out his views on the audience, Douglass nearly finishes by saying that “There is not a nation on earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour” (991).

Above all, what these men did, along with the many news sources (such as, for obvious reasons, the *Liberator*, the *Dial* and the New York *Tribune*, etc.), was “… infuriated Southerner’s [and being] … That Nat Turner’s bloody slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia, occurred just months after Garrison began publishing the *Liberator* … Southern critics … called for the suppression of the newspaper and other antislavery publications” (Baym et. al 756). The journalists in the North, however, were extremely adamant to their opposition of slavery and held a remarkable amount of sway in public policy, especially in the North, where there was better education, a stronger economy, and ultimately, a much larger population of those enfranchised. The South, quite simply, did not have the voting strength (slaves, which made up the majority of the South’s population, were obviously disenfranchised) to match their Northern counterparts, making it much easier to pass, and apply, federal laws in the North, eventually causing the secession of the Confederacy. However, keeping this in mind, one must return to that which exalts and denies simultaneously: artistic creation. For this, one has only to look to the artists, and grandchildren, of the New England heritage.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the fireside poets, were rooted in New England, and unlike the Rationalist movement, or the strict Calvinism they were born into, these men believed in “… a pantheistic view of nature as imbued by God – a view indicative of the increasing influence of liberal Protestantism …” (476). Through the works of these gentleman, particularly Longfellow, many would view the emergence, or seeds, of the American Abolition movement. A wonderful example of these manifestations by way of poetry would be Longfellow’s poem, “The
Slave’s Dream,” in which he tells the story of an African King turned American slave. He begins the poem with a description of the slave lying “beside the un gathered rice / …

   His sickle in hand;
   His breast was bare, his matted hair
   Was buried in the sand.

Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,

   He saw his Native Land. (Longfellow 646)

Here, one gets an image of a slave, stifled by his occupation, yearning for a world he will never see again; a life no longer existent. Afterwards, Longfellow begins to paint the slave’s dream, in which the “lordly Niger flowed” and replaces the slave’s present reality of chains with a paradise of “palm-trees on the plain.” If one could not feel empathy with the slave (for all men dream of some alternate reality void of misery), Longfellow drives his point to the brink by introducing, perhaps, the most dear, and wished for possession of man: family; the recognition and reconciliation of those we love, and those who are bound to our blood.

   He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
   Among her children stand;
   They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
   They held him by the hand! (647)

   Not only does one get an image of a worn-out, dying slave, but a former African King who, like all men, no matter what the color of their skin may be, finds his true happiness in the company of his queen, and the warming embrace of his children. Besides, what man could deny these moments of happiness, or better yet, deny these moments of happiness to another based on a simple, physical difference? Leaving the reader with a characterization of slave as the universal
man, Longfellow, via empathy, drives the point of Abolition home in the last verse of this beautiful poem.

He did not feel the driver’s whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illuminated the land of sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away! (647)

Brilliantly, the poem ends by not only painting the image of a dead man being beaten (which has quite a morbid affect), but also of a slave with a “soul” – a place in Heaven – which only through death can be truly free.

Thomas Braga, in his article, “Castro Alves and the New England Abolitionist Poets,” also provides examples of abolition literature in pre-Civil War America, including many of the works by John Greenleaf Whittier, which will now be examined. In Whittier’s poem, “The Farewell,” the author depicts the suffering endured by a slave mother, having lost her children to bondage. However, in this poem “… the cosmic union of the child with the celestial infinite through death is absent in favor of a maternal resignation to a life of toil” (Braga 587/588). This allows one to understand the audience in which Whittier was attempting to reach: American mothers. It is no wonder that, in a time when infant mortality rates were sky-high, this poem would have an everlasting affect; an affect that would also cause Harriet Beecher Stowe to become an ardent abolitionist.

Starting the poem off, and repeating the lines “Gone, gone – sold and gone / To the rice-swamp dank and lone” at every verse, Whittier makes this mother’s sadness repetitive, and
concrete. Immediately after these lines, in the first verse, he adds to this sadness by showing the life in which the children are doomed to live:

Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings  
Where the noisome insect stings  
Where the fever demon strews…  
Where the sickly sunbeams glare  
Through the hot and misty air (Whittier 878)

By utilizing the theme of Nature, Whittier, in these lines, paints a picture of, for lack of better diction, a paradise lost. To add power to these words, Whittier invokes religion when his poem’s slave mother, having realized the futility of earthly hope in reuniting with her lost daughters, has no choice but to hang all her hopes upon God, or “… he, to whom alone / All their cruel wrongs are known” (878). However, Whittier, in regards to all the poem’s verses, furthers his point in the final four lines:

Gone, gone, -- sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia’s hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stole daughters! (878)

Whittier, Longfellow, and others writers during this period, not only introduced abolitionist literature to an otherwise racist nation, but also ushered in a set of beliefs, and morals, to a newly emerging group of writers. Hitherto, abolition literature was merely glanced over, or confined to a small group of Christian ministers which, for all intensive purposes, most certainly impacted these fireside poets, whether they embraced or renounced their original religious institutions. These literary voices, however, were still seldom in the world of American Literature prior to
their arrival. Interestingly enough, when Longfellow’s *Poems on Slavery* was first published, he “… was attacked in a number of reviews for bringing abolitionist politics into his poetry … [but] Whittier so admired the volume that he urged Longfellow to run for Congress” (Baym et al. 644). These gentlemen had impacted society greatly. If one is still on the fence concerning Longfellow’s impact, they have only to look at the fact that he “… developed close friendships with Hawthorne (whose early works he praised in print, thereby fostering this less well known writer’s career), the statesman Charles Sumner, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and many other notable northern intellectuals and political leaders” (644). Once again, however, the true value of these writers can not only be given to Abolition, but most important, the incorporation of their ideals into a newly emerging movement: Transcendentalism.

The movement of Transcendentalism, led by Ralph Waldo Emerson, became ubiquitous throughout early 19th century New England, and its impact would shake the foundations of America. In the article, “An Analogue of Transcendentalism,” the author, John B. Wilson, explains the origins of the movement, and the ideals associated with it. While the Romantic Movement originated in revolutionary France, for America, Wilson explains, “‘The cradle and center of the movement was Harvard College’ [symbolizing] … ‘a glorification of consciousness and will,’ a rediscovery of soul, dethroned by rationalism” (459). This is a perfect explanation for an otherwise multi-faceted movement, in which many similar philosophies would emerge and become intertwined. Emerson, along with all the Transcendentalists, was especially impacted by the late author of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton. “In Milton, Emerson found his ideal champion of the moral sentiment, for Milton’s life was an epic poem, his character an exemplification of his philosophy” (461). Although the Transcendentalists shared beliefs and values with their European counterparts, due to the Missouri Compromise, and the Fugitive Slave Act, these New
England authors/philosophers would have no choice but to take a politically active role, and become the voices of moral sentiment, and obligation. This is especially true in regards to the friend, and sometimes foe, of Emerson, Henry David Thoreau.

In his 1849 essay, “Resistance to Civil Government” (also known as “Civil Disobedience”), Thoreau, while remaining vague on his association with Abolition, gives reasons of why he, personally, cannot accept the U.S. government.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government today? I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government which is the slave’s government also …. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves … I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. (Thoreau 831)

This quote suffices, with the utmost clarity, to show not only Thoreau’s anarchistic views toward government, but also his reasons for those views, which lay in his inherent disgust of slavery. Still, Thoreau does not only take aim at the government, but to those who legitimize it. He goes on to say that “There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them …” (832). Here, Thoreau attacks those who rely on a government to make their decisions, rather than rely on their own personal intuition, in which the Transcendentalists valued above all else. However, though Thoreau’s early writings would add steam to the engine of Abolition, “… his chief service to the cause of Abolition was in the effective championship of the slandered character of John Brown who led a bloody insurrection against slavery” (Ford 369). But first, before getting into Thoreau’s essay “A Plea for Captain
John Brown,” we must touch upon the reasons, previously mentioned, why men, North and South alike, were so complacent to the institution of slavery.

Returning to the book, *John Brown: Abolitionist*, the author takes a moment to describe the national mood regarding racial differences, and how powerful those differences actually were. While any dilettante would recognize the heavy occurrences of all racism throughout U.S. history, when concerning slaves, and all blacks for that matter, there can be only one over-arching thing to sum up the long line of complacent racism: the word, *nigger*. Reynolds shows how “The word ‘nigger’ had alarmingly wide currency … and was so widely accepted that even enlightened people – Whitman and Lincoln, for example – could use it” (116). Upon reading this, one cannot help but understand why many were impotent, to say the least, in regards to their views of abolition. Widely accepted, and even perhaps normal, this racism can be attributed to the science of “Phrenology [which] gave rise to the notion that people of different races had different head structures that denoted varying characteristics and capabilities” (117). This even allowed Lincoln to say that “There [was] a difference between the two [(blacks and whites) that] … will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality” (117).

Thanks, however, to the Christ-like image given to John Brown by the Transcendentalists, Lincoln, and others, would eventually have to adopt a more egalitarian and moral stance toward the American Abolition movement.

In the article, “Henry David Thoreau, Abolitionist,” Nick Aaron Ford explains Thoreau’s gradual inclusion into the abolition movement, and the power of Thoreau’s “A Plea for Captain John Brown.” Ford shows that Thoreau’s address, approximately two weeks after John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry, “… was first read at a meeting of citizens of Concord, October 30, 1859”
Once again, this proves the power of the Abolition movement rooted in Transcendental New England; there was the audience. As he stood facing the crowd reading this address,

[Thoreau] … declared that Brown’s raid was the best news America had ever had. … [which] quickened the feeble pulse of the North, he announced, and had infused more generous blood into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity ever could. Many a man who was lately contemplating suicide, he continued, has now something to live for.

This praising of John Brown shows how extreme Thoreau’s abolitionist views had become during the lead up to the Civil War. He goes on to paint “… Brown as a man of rare common sense, Transcendentalist above all, and a man of ideals and principals” (370). Here one finds John Brown’s link to Transcendentalism, and the author who glorified him. Among other literary figures of the time, “… Melville, Whitman, Whittier … to name a few [also] wrote eloquently about Brown” (Reynolds 10). Their literature, however, was not the only thing that linked many writers to John Brown.

In addition to receiving praise from merely every Transcendentalist writer, those who funded Brown’s activities, including the Harper’s ferry raid, “… later known as the Secret Six, had strong links to Transcendentalism, … [and] were devout followers of the Concord philosophy” (215). Also, in regards to Brown’s associates, was the Canadian, Dr. Alexander Milton Ross who, having previously opposed slavery, “… had devoted himself to its destruction in 1852 after reading Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (257). The reason these glorifiers and funders of Brown are so essential, is because of their affect on the U.S. government. Shortly after the raid on Harper’s Ferry, and the glorification of Brown, “Senator Andrew Johnson of Tennessee …
announced, ‘I want these modern fanatics who have adopted John Brown as their Christ and their cross, to see what their Christ is … nothing more than a murderer, a robber, a thief, and a traitor” (402). However, though there is an obvious impact, what would America have been like if not for the glorification of John Brown?

Despite the fact that the South had embarked upon silencing all northern abolitionist literature in the years prior to the activities of John Brown, the glorification of him would have a terrifying effect on the South. Most important, The Transcendentalist’s glorification of Brown’s “… raid did unnerve the South while leading the Republican Party to choose the moderate Lincoln at its 1860 convention in order to restore calm and insure victory for the antislavery side” (439). This suffices to explain the impact of American Literature on the growing rebellion in the North, and the political tumult it caused for most all leaders in the U.S. government. One must ask: would Abraham Lincoln have been President if not for the glorification of John Brown by the Transcendentalists? This question is, perhaps, the exact reason for Lincoln’s lukewarm approach to the issue of slavery. However, even if it was the reason, there was another important factor that Lincoln, and the nation, could not avoid: the massive impact of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

Daughter of the Calvinist minister, Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, to a family that would eventually outnumber thirteen children, some of whom would also have a lasting legacy in American history (Baym et al. 764). Throughout her early life, Stowe was encouraged, along with all of her siblings, to educate themselves in most every subject, including the family’s Calvinist faith, which suffices to provide a base for her emerging abolitionist views. Still, though she opposed the institution of slavery, it would take a most powerful personal loss for her to become unwilling to accept it, and to gain the will to
attack it. This great personal blow came in 1849 with “The death of her baby boy Samuel, who
succumbed to cholera … [which] infused her writing with sympathy for people who were
helpless in the face of great personal loss” (765). Here one is reminded of Whittier’s slave
mother, not only representing a brilliant poetic touchstone, but for mothers like Stowe, a sad
reality. Though she did not have a model for slave life on the plantation, the death of Samuel had
“… forged an emotional link with the oppressed that was to push *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* far beyond
the standard abolitionist tract” (765).

The 1852 New York Times article, “American Slavery: English Opinion of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Evils of Slavery--Method of its Removal--Dangers of Agitation--Colonization, &c.,” provides the incredible impact Stowe’s novel produced in America and England, in addition to literary criticism on the novel itself. In the article, one learns how, at the time, “Twenty thousand copies of this book, according to its title-page, [were] circulating among the American people, but three times as many thousands [were] … issued from the American press since the title page was written” (6). Considering the novel had been published in the exact same year as this article, one has no choice but to recognize its ubiquitous impact, and in how short of time that impact was realized. In addition, the article states that “According to the Boston *Traveller* … [Stowe] received … ‘$10,300 as her copyright premium on three month’s sales of the work … [perhaps] the largest sum of money ever received by any author…from the sale of a single work in so short a period of time’” (6). But, in what some may call a peculiar reversal, Stowe’s hope for voluntary emancipation may have been thwarted by the work itself. The article adds that, while the novel aims “… to abolish slavery, its effect will be to render slavery more difficult than ever of
abolishment …. It will keep ill-blood at boiling point, and irritate instead of pacifying those
whose proceedings Mrs. Stowe is anxious to influence on behalf of humanity” (6). In other
words, if Stowe wished to be the Christian woman that would encourage voluntary emancipation, she ultimately became the woman that, through her writing, would bring the nation inevitably closer to civil war.

Furthermore, here one locates the ultimate impact of American abolitionist literature. Not only did these abolitionists arouse Northern sentiment but they also infuriated the South. One must ask: *is there any surprise that the South became resentful to the North?* In truth, the South had little choice in becoming resentful; the justification of slavery as a benevolent system was a necessity. Relying heavily on slave labor, the South knew that emancipation meant economical collapse, and would force them to rely upon a commanding Northern economy. Still, though many of their differences could have been compromised through legislation, slavery “…was the issue that could not be compromised, the issue that made men so angry they did not want to compromise…the one cause without which the war would not have taken place” (Catton 6). Moreover, the compromises that were sought politically, in which the government felt a need to calm Southern resentment, only aroused resentment in the North. The most influential legislative compromise, and most arousing, was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which brought Northern “… calls for violent resistance to the law” (Reynolds 121). It was during this tumult that Stowe “… brought out her novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin,* which … won many converts to the antislavery position in the North, and by contrast, aroused intense new resentment in the South” (Catton 8). Put simply, the stage had been set, and, from that point onward, there would be no turning back.

Aside from the many distinguished abolitionists, of whom the impact was ubiquitous, one must give recognition to those who have been relegated to a status of historical obscurity. One of these forgotten voices was the Quaker and abolitionist, John Woolman, whose writings need not be undermined by an apparent anonymity. In fact, Woolman’s most notable work, *Some
Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes (1754) was “… up until Uncle Tom’s Cabin, probably the most important antislavery work in existence” (Torres 17). Through his religious appeals, Woolman became highly influential throughout the Northeast; feeling the pressure brought on by Woolman’s opposition, “… New Jersey established a high tariff in 1769 on slave imports [and] …. In 1776 the annual meeting of Quakers in Philadelphia finally disowned those members who refused to free their slaves” (Imbarrato). At this juncture, one is reminded of two very important elements: once again, the importance of religion in creating the hearth from which abolition would spread, and the local progress that was needed to enhance the flame. Though nearly forgotten, those whose voices lay hidden confirm that even the weakest seed may produce a most sturdy set of roots, capable of both sustenance and growth.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on. (Howe 573)

An alternate version of the song “John Brown’s Body,” these lyrics, found in Julia Ward Howe’s “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” could be heard echoing throughout many divisions of the Union Army while marching south to fight the Confederacy. As the war continued to spill blood and gloom across the nation, Lincoln would soon have no choice but follow in the views set forth by the abolitionists, and with surprising vigor. Not only did Lincoln issue the Emancipation Proclamation, but “… his Second Inaugural Address, in which he declared that a sternly judgmental God might make the war last ‘until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another with the sword,’ coupled antislavery passion with Calvinistic images in a matter strikingly reminiscent of many of [John] Brown’s pronouncements” (Reynolds 12). By
causing such resentment, sentiment, and an overall tumult throughout the United States, our American abolitionists proved, with unrelenting passion, to steer the nation toward inevitable war. Furthermore, not only does one find, in these voices, the seeds of emancipation, but awareness that around every bend, this great cause of freedom lies fluttering on the grate, awaiting those who cannot help but enhance the necessary flames of equality. Just as the abolitionists were called upon to correct the wrongs of the past, allow one to refer to them for a model of diligence, and inflexible moral solidarity needed to fight the recurring evils, for another time will present itself, when we all shall be called to battle for the rights of others, guided “…by the better angels of our nature” (Lincoln, “We Are Not Enemies …” 16).
Works Cited


