

FREEDOM'S GRAND LAB: ABOLITION, RACE,
AND BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES IN RECENT
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Abstract: While often marginalized in Atlantic world studies of slavery and freedom, Pennsylvania's civil rights past has attracted a new round of scholarly scrutiny. Whether examining the rise of Atlantic abolitionism or documenting the longstanding struggles of African Americans to achieve freedom, justice and equality, historians have over the past fifteen years reimagined Pennsylvania as a most ramifying place. Indeed, building on the work of Gary Nash, Emma Jones Lapsansky, Jean Soderlund and others, scholars have reintegrated Pennsylvania into the Atlantic world. What happened in the colony and the state was potent—anything but hidebound in the world of slavery and freedom. This essay highlights some of the main historical trends.

Keywords: Mid-Atlantic region; Pennsylvania; abolition; slavery; Edward Raymond Turner; Harriet Tubman; civil rights; Philadelphia; free blacks; Quakers; voting rights; Martin Delany

*I*n 1910 a young professor authored a prize-winning work on slavery, abolition, and black freedom struggles in a seemingly unlikely place: Pennsylvania. The book from which that project emerged was soon published under the title *The Negro in Pennsylvania*.¹ An instant classic within radical and black history circles, the book made Edward Raymond Turner an

authority on the nation's earliest civil rights battles. Indeed, by showing that abolitionism and emancipation in Pennsylvania had a deep and ramifying history, he made clear that southern Reconstruction—a much debated topic when he wrote—was actually part of a broader black freedom struggle with deep roots above the Mason-Dixon line.

Though much has changed, we might still read Turner as a prophet who predicted the shape and contour of new histories of abolition, race, and black freedom struggles. For just as historians now realize that emancipation battles in the Quaker State reflected and refracted regional, national, and Atlantic world understandings of slavery and race, so too do they follow Turner in seeing the black struggle for justice itself as one of the key themes in Pennsylvania's past.² For more than three centuries now, Pennsylvania has been freedom's grand lab.

Reexamining Quaker Abolitionism

Early abolitionism remains a focal point of Pennsylvania historiography. As scholars have long known, from the late 1600s onward, the greater Philadelphia region became a Quaker stronghold. By the revolutionary era, the Society of Friends had mobilized a wide-ranging antislavery network in Anglo-American culture, claiming several abolitionist victories along the way. While slaveholders jeered this development, generations of abolitionists cheered it. Though he overplayed their impact, as Dee Andrews and Emma Lapsansky-Werner note, the great nineteenth-century British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson was among the first figures to hail Quakers as an antislavery vanguard.³

A new generation of scholars has revisited this claim. While highlighting Quaker accomplishments, historians now focus more than ever on the complexity of Friends' antislavery commitments. For some, Quakers still deserve a prominent place in the antislavery pantheon. As Geoffrey Plank and Brycchan Carey have reminded us, the Society of Friends began examining bondage soon after cohering as an institutional body in the 1650s.⁴ Friends' proximity to bondage, particularly in Barbados, where both Quaker missionaries and slaveholding businessmen settled, inspired early antislavery feeling. Settlement of William Penn's visionary colony with slavery spurred further, though still limited, antislavery querying. The most famous antislavery work of the era, the Germantown Protest

of 1688, sharply condemned slaveholding. But the audience was small: a regional Quaker meeting. And Friends themselves engaged in decades of debate before finally banning slave trading in the 1750s and then slavery itself in the 1770s. With this protracted antislavery history in mind, Plank and Carey warn historians not to engage in Quaker hero worship. Carey's own monograph makes a similar point: Quaker abolitionism, though laudable, was not inevitable.⁵

Still, Carey, Plank, and others see Quakers as critical because they consistently questioned slavery's problematic nature in Atlantic society. A new round of biographical portraits of celebrated Quaker abolitionists—and their allies—has bolstered this notion. For instance, David Waldstreicher reads Englishman Thomas Tryon as perhaps the missing link in early Quaker abolitionism. Though not a member of the Society of Friends, Tryon drew inspiration from Penn's visionary colonial experiment; his writings on war and antislavery also influenced a generation of Quakers to follow his dissenting ways.⁶ Similarly, both Plank and Thomas Slaughter resurrect John Woolman as a notable antislavery figure intent on overturning racial hierarchies. A New Jersey native, Woolman gained notoriety for his travels in and around Philadelphia, where he meditated on bondage's injustice in encounters with everyone from enslaved people to masters. Significantly, neither Plank nor Slaughter hails Woolman as a lone prophet; in fact, they both highlight Woolman's indebtedness to antislavery discussions within Quakerism. Yet like other great social reformers—from Gandhi to King—Woolman's genius was to imbue social dissent with a universalism that made others take notice. Little wonder that his journal has rarely been out of print since the American Revolutionary era!⁷

Woolman helped inspire perhaps the most famous Quaker reformer: Anthony Benezet. Like Tryon and Woolman, Benezet was marginalized for some years. But many (Anglo-American) scholars now see him as a global antislavery trendsetter. Maurice Jackson's fine biography set the tone for this reinterpretation, calling Benezet the "father of Atlantic abolition."⁸ According to Jackson, Benezet not only provided more searching critiques of the racial status quo than most reformers but touched all corners of Atlantic society to create his antislavery worldview. Benezet consulted enslaved people on the docks of Philadelphia, read French *philosophes*, mined slave traders' journals, and corresponded with Anglo-American reformers. For Jackson, Benezet clearly prefigured William Lloyd Garrison: he was a radical white

reformer who used the power of print to help synthesize a far-flung antislavery movement.

Jonathan Sassi also sees Benezet as a formidable Atlantic abolitionist. Hailing him as a “pivotal” part of the first trans-Atlantic abolitionist campaign, Sassi shows that Benezet was not merely an antislavery cleric but a key organizational leader of the nascent abolitionist movement. Benezet created a network of Quaker printers, Anglo-American politicians, and global writers who spread abolitionism into newspapers, legislatures, and schools. Emphasizing enslaved people’s political rights as well as spiritual equality, Benezet was the perfect figure to galvanize abolitionism in the Age of Revolution. With Benezet pulling the strings, Sassi comments, organized abolitionism took flight “as never before.”⁹

Other scholars remain skeptical. In his global survey of slavery and freedom, British historian Jeremy Black dedicates just a paragraph to Quaker antislavery. Similarly, Robin Blackburn sees Benezet as a representative of personal virtue and not a ramifying global emancipationist. Even David Brion Davis, who once lauded the Quaker Internationale, has downgraded Benezet-style protest, calling it rather feeble. Like others, Davis now sees enslaved protestors in Atlantic society—especially the heroic revolutionaries of St. Domingue—as the true spark behind Atlantic abolition.¹⁰

These critiques notwithstanding, it would be foolish to underestimate the power of Quaker abolitionism in and beyond Pennsylvania. In a world of wealth-making from black bodies, Quakers stood apart, heralding a new age of political as well as social reform that, as Edward Turner would put it, began “breaking up” slavery into pieces.¹¹

Race and Emancipation in the Mid-Atlantic Borderland

As Turner also recognized, Pennsylvania’s 1780 Gradual Abolition Act was the next big thing in American abolition. Though problematic on a number of fronts—the law liberated enslaved people born after March 1780 at the age of twenty-eight—it was the western world’s first abolition statute. Passing the law was no easy feat. Gary Nash and Jean Soderlund’s now-classic study, *Freedom by Degrees*, recounts Quaker State politicians’ ability to transcend lines of class, ethnicity, and religion to secure gradual emancipation.¹² By 1804 every northern state had a similar law or freedom statute, although the struggle to secure gradual abolitionism elsewhere was

halting and often incomplete.¹³ Nevertheless, Pennsylvania helped initiate the age of gradualism and in many ways remained the nation's first abolitionist republic.

Scholars still underscore the significance of Quaker State abolition. My own work has emphasized the national importance of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS), whose members lobbied for the 1780 abolition act and then tried to export it nationally.¹⁴ In this manner, the PAS helped define organized abolitionism's first wave by carrying antislavery out of hidebound religious bodies (such as Quakerism and Methodism) and into the broader legal and political realm. As Paul Polgar has recently pointed out, both the PAS and the New York Manumission Society (NYMS) offered a "progressive" agenda of race reform that pushed white activists to overcome racism even as they battled bondage in the North.¹⁵ The PAS and the NYMS had international designs, too. By building a trans-Atlantic network stretching from France to the Caribbean, as J. R. Oldfield and Caleb McDaniel have shown, the PAS sought to make abolitionism itself a hallmark of both global modernity and humanitarian cosmopolitanism.¹⁶ Even in the hardheaded realm of diplomacy, Pennsylvania abolitionism offered a light of hope. According to Ronald Angelo Johnson, Philadelphia's emancipation experiment and committed band of race reformers inspired federal politicians (based in the City of Brotherly Love) to form the first cross-racial diplomatic alliance between US officials and envoys from revolutionary St. Domingue.¹⁷ Though it was eventually repudiated by Thomas Jefferson's administration, this alliance offered Americans a model for diplomatic negotiations with Haiti during the Civil War.

And so it went into the antebellum era: black and white reformers struggled mightily to make Pennsylvania a herald of freedom. Ira Brown was one of the first historians to trace Pennsylvania antislavery into this later period, paying attention to immediatists in the mid-Atlantic even when most historians remained focused on the gradualists. Recently, more historians have begun to follow his path. In major new studies, both Eric Foner and Ezra Greenspan highlight the Quaker State's enduring significance in the grand American antislavery struggle. While Foner's book on the Underground Railroad ostensibly focuses on New York, Pennsylvanians nearly steal the show, as black and white reformers in the southeastern part of the Quaker State coalesce into a powerful antislavery network that funneled thousands of enslaved people to freedom. Greenspan's massive biography of fugitive slave and celebrated black author William Wells Brown returns several times to

Pennsylvania, where Brown felt eternally at home. In one pivotal scene from the 1840s, Brown learns that William and Ellen Craft—the famous fugitive couple from Georgia—were being sheltered by Quakers in Bucks County. After lecturing in Philadelphia, Brown hurries to meet them. “Brown’s most intimate new friendship,” Greenspan writes, “came as a result of geographical serendipity” in Pennsylvania!¹⁸

Antislavery women remained among the most steadfast activists in antebellum Pennsylvania. Carol Faulkner’s excellent biography of Lucretia Mott argued that, much like Benezet, this key reformer had been overlooked by generations of academic scholars. Yet Mott was far from a quiet Quaker who happily stood on the side of the antislavery struggle. Rather, she was the foremost female abolitionist in the United States. Mott was among the first white Philadelphians to support immediate abolitionism, among the first to support Free Produce (which disavowed slave-derived goods), and among the most vibrant supporters of the Philadelphia underground (which aided fugitive slaves). In her public life, no less than in her theology, Faulkner concludes, Mott was an American heretic who sought to rout racial injustice.¹⁹

Mott’s heroic example loomed large during the Civil War era. Across the state, women became essential rank-and-file reformers, staffing almost every level of the antislavery movement. In Pittsburgh Jane Grey Swisshelm rose to prominence as a writer and organizer; in Philadelphia Anna Dickinson became a well-known lecturer. Indeed, as Matthew Gallman observes, Dickinson was perhaps the most important supporter of Lincolnian emancipation in the early 1860s and a valued stump speaker for the embattled Republican Party. Drawing on a tradition of fearless antislavery women, she held firm and won many friends of freedom.²⁰

No group of Pennsylvania race reformers proved more dynamic than African American women. As Erica Armstrong Dunbar has carefully detailed, free black women’s activism encompassed everything from neighborhood struggles for equality to formal political protest against slavery and racism. Even within reform circles, black women helped expand the struggle for justice. Margueritta Forten and Sarah Mapps Douglass were perhaps the most visible part of a black female front that supported the nation’s first integrated women’s abolitionist group (the Philadelphia Female Antislavery Society), helped spawn a wave of uplift organizations, and instilled in families a deep sense of racial pride. Though black women were the demographic majority of African Americans in antebellum Philadelphia, they remain vastly understudied, as elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic region. Yet it is clear that their

collective actions in and beyond the formal abolitionist movement shaped notions of race and justice in Pennsylvania for generations to come.²¹

Clearly, recent scholarly work has deepened our understanding of abolitionism within the Quaker State. But another trend has found historians re-examining race and emancipation through a regional lens. Pennsylvania remained an abolitionist center not only because it was the first American polity to legally ban bondage but because it served as a perennial middle ground between slavery and freedom. Located at the heart of Mid-Atlantic society, Pennsylvania abutted the nation's most populous slave states in the early national period: Virginia and Maryland (Delaware had a smaller slave population but never embraced emancipation either). The Mid-Atlantic also saw free black populations swell far beyond anything seen in New England or the emerging Midwest. Indeed, by the 1830s Baltimore and Philadelphia were black meccas and New York City was not far behind. Well before the Civil War, then, the Mid-Atlantic, generally, and Philadelphia in particular, became the staging ground for what the twentieth-century sociologist Gunnar Myrdal would famously refer to as "The American Dilemma": the conflicted fate of racial justice in an avowedly egalitarian society.

In this way, scholars have reframed Pennsylvania's antislavery standing: no longer is it viewed as a leading light of northern abolition; rather, the state is now often seen as part of an antislavery borderland where racial attitudes were constantly in flux. As Emily Clark has shown, Pennsylvania helped expand racialized conceptions of gender in the Revolutionary Atlantic world.²² Though her story begins in the Caribbean and ends in New Orleans, Clark notes that Pennsylvania helped unleash white fears about mixed-race women in American culture. In 1807–8, factions of antiblack Democratic–Republicans deployed vicious stereotypes of unruly mixed-race women in Philadelphia, hoping that this would scare voters into opposing Federal tickets. Clark calls this episode part of Pennsylvania's forgotten racial past, where the state's economic and philanthropic ties to fleeing slaveholders from St. Domingue (not to mention nearby Chesapeake masters) mingled uncomfortably with homegrown fears of emancipation and black equality. But the racial backlash in Pennsylvania was potent. Indeed, while Clark's tale moves on to the American Southwest, where images of mixed-race women took on perhaps their most recognizable form in lurid tales of the "tragic mulatta," she notes that Philadelphia had already established a rude rendering of race in American literary and political culture.

Other scholars agree that Philadelphia remained a staging ground for white Americans' conflicted understandings of race. Both Heather Nathans and Jenna Gibbs point scholars' attention to the Philadelphia theatre, where early national playwrights, actors, and audiences consistently battled over how to depict abolitionism, blackness, and people of color. Even reformers succumbed to the ravages of race debate.²³ As James Alexander Dun has shown, abolitionists initially depicted Pennsylvania as a potential reform nirvana for its path-breaking gradual abolition act. Yet such perfectionist visions soon fell apart on the altar of race. With the revolution in St. Domingue raging, and many Americans unsure about black freedom, American abolitionists and their allies retreated from their formerly grandiose visions of building a philanthropolis—an abolitionist heaven—in Philadelphia.²⁴

As these studies indicate, many scholars see Pennsylvania as regressing toward the racial mean of neighboring Mid-Atlantic states—areas where free African Americans were constantly under attack. Take Maryland, for instance, the origination point for a large contingent of black Pennsylvanians. Here, the combination of black activism, masters' guilt, and proto-capitalist economic developments created a wave of private manumissions that undermined Maryland bondage. By the 1830s, there were ten times as many free people of color in Baltimore as slaves. In Annapolis, too, as Jessica Millward illustrates, black freedom flowered thanks to the struggles of newly empowered black women.²⁵ Yet black freedom was always challenged by fierce anti-emancipation sentiment. As Seth Rockman trenchantly notes, race became a “salient feature of [Maryland] politics” during the antebellum era, with many white Baltimoreans agreeing that freedom itself remained a “zero-sum game”: the more liberty blacks gained, the less freedom whites enjoyed.²⁶ But Maryland was not alone in this regard. As Nic Wood notes, Pennsylvania's decision to eliminate black suffrage in 1837 flowed from Quaker State politicians' desire to appeal to anti-abolitionist whites in the South as well as North.²⁷

According to Andrew Diemer, black activists in Pennsylvania and Maryland tried to overcome these hurdles by engaging in a variety of new political activities, including appeals to white citizens that underscored their “American” roots.²⁸ Yet they could not outrun racism. Across the Mid-Atlantic region, white colonization societies rose to prominence in the 1820s and 1830s, with adherents often (if not always) claiming that American society must remain the province of white citizens. While, as Eric Burin has pointed out, the Pennsylvania variant tried to accent abolitionism over

race hatred, colonization nevertheless became a potent vehicle of antiblack rhetoric throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.²⁹ As Beverly Tomek has movingly shown, the horrible burning of Pennsylvania Hall in May 1838 flowed from the race-baiting rhetoric of colonizationists and anti-abolitionists in Jacksonian Philadelphia. Yet for decades, city authorities actually blamed abolitionists for fomenting the riot, refusing to let free blacks or abolitionists speak at other public events in Philadelphia, including the Sanitary Fair of 1864 and the Centennial Exposition of 1876. Tellingly, Pennsylvania Hall was never rebuilt. In some ways, it still burns in the city's mind.³⁰

On the eastern side of Pennsylvania, New Jersey was continually haunted by racial concerns. As James J. Gigantino illustrates, New Jersey was long divided on matters of race and slavery, with eastern settlements allowing bondage to prosper while western settlements (where Quakers resided) registered increasing opposition to the institution. These divisions extended into the new nation. Many state leaders opposed abolitionism not merely because they feared its economic impact but because black freedom itself might undermine the polity. Even after it passed a gradual abolition law in 1804, New Jersey was far from a haven of freedom. In the Civil War era, New Jersey voted twice against Lincoln and many white voters openly sided with slaveholders. And the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Gigantino concludes, fomented new rounds of racial fears among whites. Sadly, African Americans would not enjoy civic equality or suffrage rights until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. But again, New Jersey was not alone in deferring democracy: Pennsylvania would not revive black suffrage either until 1870.³¹

African American Freedom Struggles

Just as recent scholars have highlighted the gaps in both Pennsylvania abolitionism and Mid-Atlantic race reform, so too have they underscored the myriad ways that African American reformers sought to revitalize the black freedom struggle. No sooner was emancipation made a political reality at the close of the eighteenth century than African Americans in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and a host of other Mid-Atlantic locales rolled out a series of community building initiatives aimed at mainstream civil rights reform.³² Building on the seminal work of Gary Nash, Emma Lapsansky, and others, scholars have provided a new round of studies on black abolitionists,

ranging from Richard Allen and James Forten in the early national period to Robert Purvis and James McNeal Turner in the Civil War era.³³

Yet many historians have eschewed the idea that there was either a unified black community or an all-encompassing black leadership class. Rather, scholars now see the Mid-Atlantic black community as variegated, with individuals constantly moving in and out of antislavery and civil rights networks. Indeed, we now have telling portraits not only of community builders but also community dissenters. On the ideological front, black emigrationists have been reintegrated into the world of black reform. Robert Levine's seminal studies of black nationalist Martin Delany, who was born free in western Virginia but eventually settled in Pittsburgh, reveal the way that alternative strategies of race reform took shape in the Quaker State and the region.³⁴ At the nexus point of the trans-western migrations that brought tens of thousands of whites to Middle America, the booming frontier town inspired Delany and his mentor Lewis Woodson to imagine black resettlement—and autonomy from whites—as the key to racial justice. For Delany, a separate black nation would fulfill the biblical prescription of African redemption while also creating a model of black manhood that repaid the injustices of bondage. As Beverly Tomek notes, so committed was he to emigration that Delany even worked with white missionaries and colonizationists to drum up support for a black exodus to Africa.³⁵

While some took exception to Delany's rhetoric, other emigrationists agreed that black destinies lay outside of the United States. Indeed, dating to the late eighteenth century, there had always been a significant strain of emigrationist thinking within black abolitionism. Defined as a voluntary movement controlled by people of color, emigration was in many ways the opposite of colonization (especially when emigrationists argued that blacks could return to the United States if they desired). As Jane Rhodes has illustrated, Delaware's Mary Ann Shadd Cary became a leading advocate of this brand of struggle. Cary hailed from a notable black family originally dedicated to race reform within the United States, and she was no stranger to Philadelphia's black community. But frustrated by Mid-Atlantic racism, Cary eventually resettled in British Canada, where slavery had been banned and fugitive slave communities appeared in the antebellum era. She published the *Provincial Freeman* in the 1850s and wrote a seminal emigrationist pamphlet to boot.³⁶ Repudiating Delany's exclusionist rhetoric, Cary noted that women as well as men would become heralds of racial uplift outside of the United States.

A subset of black activists within the United States also embraced what Steven Hahn has termed "paramilitary" protest to combat racial violence.

For Hahn, the saga of William Parker illustrates the grim reality facing many people of color in Pennsylvania's conflicted heartland of freedom. An escaped slave from Maryland who settled in southeastern Pennsylvania, Parker headed a local vigilance group aimed at protecting black communities from the "terrorist raids" of slaveholders. On one key occasion, a defiant Parker literally fought back, killing one Maryland master before fleeing to Canada. In Hahn's eyes, Parker's refusal to countenance the normative boundaries of the black freedom struggle made him a grassroots hero. Drawing inspiration from Caribbean maroon society, which retained a modicum of autonomy by attacking white imperial authority, Parker exemplified mass black culture's aim to redefine the freedom struggle on its own terms.³⁷

Other black freedom fighters pushed the boundaries of legality and antislavery propriety—which often dictated nonviolent action—to achieve liberty. Though not a revolutionary, Philadelphia's William Still constantly challenged fugitive slave renditions. As Elizabeth Varon has shown, Still was creative and savvy in equal measure, utilizing a whole bag of tricks to keep freedom seekers out of harm's way. He was an exemplar of the "practical" black abolitionist who appeared again and again in the Mid-Atlantic anti-slavery borderland. Before Still, there was Robert Purvis; before Purvis, there was New Yorker David Ruggles, whose exploits helped liberate hundreds of fugitives (including a man named Frederick Douglass).³⁸ Like those figures, Still moved seamlessly from underground activity to political protest, challenging streetcar segregation and disfranchisement during the 1860s.

Of course, no race rebel remains more famous than Harriet Tubman. The subject of several biographies, Tubman has become an icon to scholars looking for North American links to a black revolutionary tradition stretching back to Africa.³⁹ After escaping bondage in 1849, Tubman famously returned to the Mid-Atlantic borderland several times (often passing through Philadelphia) to help others find freedom. Some abolitionists celebrated Tubman's bravery and no less a figure than John Brown referred to her as "General Tubman"; unsurprisingly, as Celeste-Marie Bernier argues, Tubman became a hero to later generations of African Americans for her martial—rather than peaceful—commitment to ending bondage.⁴⁰

But again, Tubman's restive spirit was the proverbial tip of the iceberg. As Phillip Seitz has detailed, that enduring spirit of resistance could be found among long-forgotten freedom seekers such as Charity Castle. An enslaved woman shuttled between Maryland bondage and Philadelphia freedom, Castle staged a daring accident to ensure that she would remain

in abolitionist Pennsylvania beyond the six-month grace period allotted to visiting masters. Castle relied on members of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society to make legal arguments on her behalf. But Castle ultimately trusted no one, disappearing into anonymity soon after her health improved.⁴¹

Even when looking at the formal abolitionist struggle, scholars have spotlighted unheralded activists and novel antislavery strategies. Aston Gonzalez's work on graphic artist Robert Douglass nicely illuminates the way that some Pennsylvania activists merged art and politics to revitalize abolitionism. The freeborn Douglass crafted enduring images of antislavery reformers, including respectable portraits of white figures (such as William Lloyd Garrison) as well as new renderings of the black men and women battling for equality. Similarly, both Erica Ball and Mary Maillard illuminate the workings of black literary activists. With a relatively high literacy rate, black Philadelphians played a key role as antislavery correspondents, reporters, novelists, and poets. As Ball indicates, black writers used a wide array of literary styles to portray black freedom itself as the ideal representation of democracy.⁴² Maillard shows how Frank Webb used elements of his family history to create one of the earliest black literary critiques of race in his novel *The Garies and Their Friends*.⁴³ A dark romance, the story is really the tale of failed emancipation dreams in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Even in the Civil War era, we have learned about the heroic struggles of formerly unheralded black activists. Daniel Biddle and Murray Dubin's powerful biography of black activist Octavius Catto shows that African Americans remained a civil rights vanguard in the 1860s and 1870s.⁴⁴ A free-born man who hailed from a distinguished black family, Catto was yet another important African American reformer whose activist career in Philadelphia remained buried in plain sight. One of the leading voting rights activists of the age, Catto lost his life after being gunned down in a Philadelphia election of 1871. His killer was never convicted. But Catto can truly be said to have helped define the parameters of America's "dual Reconstruction"—namely, eradicating racial injustice in the North as well as the South.

New Directions

Where do we go from here? For one thing, scholars can never go back to a time when Pennsylvania played a marginal role in national and international debates over slavery, race, and black freedom. Whether it is new stories

(Pennsylvania's role in the second slavery) or new studies of key reformers (Quaker, African American, and female abolitionists), scholars must recognize the saliency of the colony and then state in America's longest running civil rights movement.

But there is always more to be done. We still need more studies of black and female reformers in Pennsylvania, and, indeed, in the Mid-Atlantic region. From unheralded African Americans like John Vashon and Lewis Woodson of Pittsburgh to the myriad women who ran the Philadelphia Female Antislavery Society, we cannot know enough about the grassroots reformers who made Pennsylvania abolitionism go. So, too, for women abolitionists in New York and New Jersey. We also need more work on slavery's demise and race relations in central and western Pennsylvania and in New Jersey and New York, both in the city and upstate. How did Pennsylvanians, and others, see slavery, race, and black freedom? Finally, we need more on Reconstruction Pennsylvania—and beyond. Hugh Davis, in his seminal book, *"We Will Be Satisfied with Nothing Less,"* lays the foundation for such work.⁴⁵ In what ways did the longstanding struggle for black freedom in the Quaker State and the Mid-Atlantic region, with all its variety, flow into modern civil rights movements? Only when we know the answers to these and myriad other questions can scholars truly claim to have lived up to the standard established a century ago by the great Edward Turner.

NOTES

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11. Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, 54, 64.
12. Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
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15. See Paul Polgar's PhD dissertation, soon to be a book, "The Standard Bearers of Liberty and Equality" (City University of New York, 2013), introduction.
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