THE RISE OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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The enactment by the Pennsylvania legislature, on March 1, 1780, of a law providing for the gradual abolition of slavery within the commonwealth did not, as might be supposed, create any widespread and immediate sympathy among its citizenry for the cause later to be known as "abolitionism." It is true that a strong sentiment favorable to the oppressed Negro had by that time developed among the Quakers, living principally around Philadelphia, but they comprised only a minority of the state's population. Slavery had antedated the coming of William Penn, himself a slaveholder, and it was further developed by the early Quakers who had constituted, for some time after the founding of the colony, the chief slaveholding group. It is estimated that approximately four thousand slaves, out of the total ten

1 Based upon a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association at Lancaster on October 16, 1937. Dr. Brewster is administrative head and assistant professor of history and political science at the Fayette Center of The Pennsylvania State College. Ed.


thousand blacks living in the commonwealth, were being held in bondage at the time the gradual abolition law was passed.\(^4\)

The law of 1780 did not affect the status of those born to bondage before its enactment, but only provided that children of slaves born after that date should be free, although remaining as servants to their masters until twenty-eight years of age. Consequently, the institution of slavery, having already existed in the colony for more than a century, was prolonged well into the nineteenth century. This is a fact to be remembered when studying the rise of the antislavery movement. Although the United States Census lists no slaves for Pennsylvania after 1840, it is obvious that the institution existed, to a degree at least, for some time after that date. It is thought that at least one slave was still being held in 1860.\(^5\)

It might be expected that southwestern Pennsylvania would not serve as proper ground for the cultivation of slavery: it was settled over a century later than the eastern section, where slavery was soon to be on the wane;\(^6\) the economy of the area was typically frontier, with its lack of social caste and need for ostentatious display; and small farms with their diversified crops were not so well adapted to slave labor as were the southern plantations.\(^7\) Moreover, the dominant religion was pious Calvinism, with the minority adhering mostly to other middle class "persuasions," such as Methodism.\(^8\) Despite all this, slavery did gain a foothold in the region and remained longer there than anywhere else in the state.\(^9\) As late as 1821 there appeared the following advertisement in the Uniontown *Genius of Liberty*: "For Sale—A stout healthy young negro woman . . . she is between 17 and 18 years of age and has to serve until she arrive at twenty-eight. She is now confined in the Uniontown jail, for no other offence than that of running away from me . . .

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\(^4\) Turner, in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 36:130, 142 (1912).

\(^5\) The owner was said to have been James Clark, of Donegal Township, Lancaster County. Turner, in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 36:142 (1912).

\(^6\) "Slavery reached its peak in eastern Pennsylvania about 1770, although it increased in Western Pennsylvania after that time." Dunaway, *History of Pennsylvania*, 245.

\(^7\) Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783*, passim (Wellsburgh, Va., 1824).


and am now determined to sell her, not wishing to have any body about
my house that don't wish to live with me. Any person wishing to pur-
chase said girl will please to apply to the subscriber in Brownsville.\textsuperscript{10}

The fact that the area included in this study, comprising the present
Westmoreland, Washington, Fayette, and Greene counties, was
claimed by Virginia, until the boundary dispute was finally settled in
1785,\textsuperscript{11} served as encouragement to many Virginians and Marylanders
to occupy the region on the basis of Virginia land patents.\textsuperscript{12} Many, in-
cluding George Washington, brought their slaves with them, which
naturally helped to establish and prolong the institution. There is evi-
dence to show that after the passage of the gradual abolition law of 1780
many of the so-called "best families" moved into Kentucky and other
slave territory, rather than suffer the loss of their full slave property.\textsuperscript{13}
This southern influence was early shown in the first election of Wash-
ington County, which then included the area that is now Greene Coun-
ty. At this election, held in 1781, the Virginia partisans won a large ma-
ajority of the county offices.\textsuperscript{14}

The first federal census, that of 1790, reported for all the counties
comprising the southwestern tip of Pennsylvania a total slave population
of 675.\textsuperscript{15} This figure represented one slave to every twenty-four white

\textsuperscript{10}Genius of Liberty (Uniontown), October 9, 1821.
\textsuperscript{13}Veech, \textit{Monongahela of Old}, 99. Colonel Israel Shreve, the purchaser of Wash-
ington's lands in Perry Township, Fayette County, wrote to his brother in New Jersey on December 26, 1789, "Land does not rise much in this place, owing to the great emigration down the river. It seems as if people were crazy to get afloat on the Ohio." Quoted in Franklin Ellis, ed., \textit{History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania}, 128n. (Philadelphia, 1882).
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Washington Reporter}, August 15, 1908, historical section, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{15}The validity of later census figures was questioned by Neville B. Craig, editor of the \textit{Pittsburgh Gazette}. After a careful estimate he said that in 1830 the state had only 90 slaves as compared with the official count of 386. See \textit{Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania}, 9:270-272 (April 28, 1832).
persons, a ratio nearly double that for eastern Pennsylvania in the same year. The number rapidly declined so that the institution was practically extinct by 1840, save for a few remaining children of slaves being held in servitude until twenty-eight years of age. In this connection it is interesting to note that in Washington County the reprehensible practice developed, until it was stopped by a Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in 1826, of holding to servitude the grandchildren of slaves under the act of 1780. A state senatorial investigating committee reported in 1833 that in addition to this, the practice had developed and was then continuing, particularly throughout the entire southwestern region bordering on Virginia, of bringing in considerable numbers of blacks who were emancipated on condition that they serve a certain number of years, usually seven.

Thus it may be seen that any movement in this area designed to promote the cause of freedom for the black man would have to overcome not only the natural inertia characteristic of any established society, but also the inherited prejudices of a community made tolerant of slavery through long years of acceptance. It is true that in the economy of southwestern Pennsylvania, slavery played a small part; but as a force in molding group thought concerning a problem later to become national in scope, its influence was great indeed.

In this region, as elsewhere in the North, the first evidence of any sentiment hostile to slavery is found in the aid given by occasional citizens to fugitive slaves from the South. Just when the practice arose in southwestern Pennsylvania cannot be definitely determined. The system of secret trails was loosely organized; its operation was extremely furtive because of the fugitive slave laws and hostile local public opinion; and it was conducted mainly by those not given to keeping, or at least making known, any records. The leading authority on the subject assigns the years 1815 to 1817 as the period when the first systematic

16 The records in the prothonotaries' offices in the various counties contain the original affidavits of ownership of such persons. A good discussion of slavery in this area is contained in Edward M. Burns, "Slavery in Western Pennsylvania," ante, 8:204 (October, 1925).

17 Speech of the Reverend A. Wylie at the organization meeting of the Western Abolition Society, Washington, Pa., January 26, 1824, in the Washington Reporter, February 9, 1824. The report of the committee is in Hazard's Register, 11:158 (March 9, 1833).
lines appeared in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. It was this loose organization for aiding fugitive slaves, existing in the North from Nebraska to Maine, which came to be known, perhaps after the introduction of the steam railway around 1830, as the Underground Railroad.\textsuperscript{18} Earle R. Forrest, the Washington County historian, maintains definitely that it is improper to apply the formal term “Underground Railroad” to the activities of the area until after the early fifties when John Brown came in to organize them. The latter made West Middletown, in Washington County, his headquarters, ostensibly for sheep-trading, and stimulated this sleepy village near the Virginia line into a hotbed of abolitionism.\textsuperscript{19} The writer was told by an old resident, who lived there during the Civil War, that nearly every home in the village had harbored fugitives at some time.\textsuperscript{20} Even the United Presbyterian Church was used upon occasion as a hideout.\textsuperscript{21}

As far as can be determined, at least two underground lines entered southwestern Pennsylvania. One of these crossed the Mason-Dixon line in southern Greene County, where it branched, one line going to Uniontown in Fayette County, and the other going by way of Leonardsville into Washington County.\textsuperscript{22} The other route entered the state from Cumberland, Maryland, going to Somerfield and thence to Uniontown. The trails branched at the latter point, one taking off to Brownsville and Washington, another to California, another to Indiana, and yet a fourth going directly to West Middletown, where a number of the trails converged.\textsuperscript{23} Greensburg, in Westmoreland County, also had a station, although just what its southern connections were is not clear.\textsuperscript{24}

By compiling the names of operators of the Underground Railroad, as

\textsuperscript{18} Wilbur H. Siebert, \textit{The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom}, 37, 45 (New York, 1899). A map showing the lines of travel is opposite p. 113.
\textsuperscript{19} According to a conversation with Earle Forrest at Washington, Pa., in 1937. See also his \textit{History of Washington County, Pennsylvania}, 1:424 (Chicago, 1926).
\textsuperscript{20} R. V. Clark, formerly sheriff of Washington County. This is corroborated by Forrest, \textit{Washington County}, 424.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Washington Reporter}, August 15, 1908, historical section, p. 1ff.
\textsuperscript{22} Andrew J. Waychoff, \textit{Local History as Published by the Democrat Messenger}, no. 56 ([Waynesburg], n.d.).
\textsuperscript{24} Siebert, \textit{Underground Railroad}, map, p. 113.
given by various investigators or as related to the writer by the older residents descended from early settlers, the conclusion is reached that approximately two dozen *bona fide* underground stations were in operation at various times in the four counties.\(^{25}\)

Contemporaneous with the extension of underground activities in southwestern Pennsylvania was the development of formal abolition and antislavery societies throughout the area. Because the operators of the Underground Railroad worked in secret, sometimes even without the knowledge of their own families,\(^{26}\) their activities gave little occasion for public expression of local opinion. But with the rise of abolition societies in the twenties, which deliberately sought publicity to further their campaigns, the subject of slavery became one for public judgment.

At this point, it might be well to explain that the term "abolitionist" was originally applied to those who desired to end slavery by orderly persuasion and education under the Constitution and the laws. The resulting movement displayed greatest strength before the early 1830's, when it was finally eclipsed by the more radical antislavery movement launched by William Lloyd Garrison. The adherents of this latter group were "impatient at the scant success of their fellow workers," and were willing to destroy slavery at any cost, "whether of law, of state rights, or of constitution."\(^{27}\) With the emergence of a public opinion hostile to this more violent form of opposition to slavery, the term "abolitionism" was applied to any and all efforts to aid the general cause. For this reason the term finally came to be considered one of especial opprobrium.\(^{28}\)

It was in Washington County that the first abolition society in southwestern Pennsylvania was formed. In late December, 1823, a notice appeared in the local newspapers calling upon citizens of the county and vicinity who were "favorable to the formation of a Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and for endeavoring to ameliorate [sic] the condition

\(^{25}\) Authorities consulted are Waychoff, Siebert, McFarland, and Forrest; residents interviewed in 1937 are Mrs. Madeline LeMoyne Reed and R. V. Clark, of Washington, Pa., and Mr. and Mrs. James Murdock of West Middletown. Mrs. Murdock is a descendant of Judge William McKeever, the famous abolitionist of the region.

\(^{26}\) Related to the author by Mrs. James Murdock in 1937.


of the African Race” to meet at the courthouse on January 26, 1824. At this meeting a constitution was submitted outlining the organization to be erected and naming it the “Western Abolition Society.” Nearly fifty persons joined. The Reverend Andrew Wylie, president of Washington College and an active force in local abolitionism, made the principal address. In it he enunciated the basic principles of the society as being: to ameliorate the lot of the free Negroes of Pennsylvania, to prevent them from being kidnapped and sold in slave states, and to carry into effect proper plans for opposing slavery in general.

Similar societies were organized at Centerville and West Middletown in Washington County, and at Brownsville and Bridgeport in Fayette. An announcement of the annual convention of the abolition societies of Washington and Fayette counties, in 1827, obviously indicates that such an organization existed at that time in the latter county, no doubt with headquarters in Uniontown. One society is known to have existed, also, in Westmoreland County. These organizations remained active until the close of the twenties, when notices of their activities ceased to appear, except occasionally, in the newspapers.

Interest, it appears, was then transferred to a new type of movement designed to help the blacks, namely, colonization in Africa. As far back as 1819 the Reverend Mr. Pinney, an agent of the American Colonization Society and a former governor of Liberia, came through the region on a speaking tour. In the fall of 1826 Washington County again led with the formation of a colonization society, the purpose of which

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39 Washington Examiner, December 27, 1823; Washington Reporter, December 29, 1823. The notice was printed in subsequent issues until the time of the meeting.

40 Washington Reporter, February 9, 1824. See also Washington Examiner, February 7, 1824.

31 A notice of a meeting of the Centerville society on February 11, 1826, is in the Washington Examiner for March 11; its resolutions were printed in the same paper on January 13, 1827. An account of the West Middletown society, formed in the summer of 1826, and an account of a meeting of the “Brownsville and Bridgeport Abolition Society,” held on August 19, 1826, are in the Examiner for July 1, 1826, and January 13, 1827, respectively.

41 Washington Examiner, May 26, 1827.

33 Greensburg Gazette, January 9, 1829.

34 Pinney spoke in Greensburg, Elizabeth, Webster, Rostraver Township, Robbstown, and other places near Pittsburgh. See Westmoreland Intelligencer (Greensburg), May 14, 1819.
was to stimulate interest in transporting the Negroes to Africa. A similar organization, the Westmoreland Colonization Society, was founded two years later in Greensburg. Typical of their vague but high-sounding principles is the statement of this society to the effect that its purpose was "to meliorate the condition and promote both the spiritual and temporal happiness of the people of color, by providing the means whereby they may arrive at that degree of personal and mental freedom to which an all-wise Providence has certainly destined them, and to rescue a race of immortal beings from a state of ignorance and degradation in which they have existed."

These early colonization societies, like their abolitionist cousins, soon fell into lethargy. By 1829 or 1830 they had become inactive and they remained so until revived in the middle thirties as a challenge to the newer and more radical antislavery societies then being formed as auxiliaries to William Lloyd Garrison’s nation-wide movement.

In the introduction of the radical antislavery movement to southwestern Pennsylvania, Washington County led once more with the formation of an antislavery society on July 15, 1834, only seven months after the founding of the American Antislavery Society in Philadelphia. Washington led not only this area but the entire western part of the state as well. No record of any such society in Allegheny County can be found until 1835, and in the other western counties they were not formed, if at all, until 1835 or later. The movement was started by the appearance, in May, 1834, of an agent of the American Antislavery Society from Philadelphia, who addressed "a very large and respectable" meeting of citizens at the courthouse in Washington. After explaining the views and purpose of his organization, he set forth at length

35 An announcement of the meeting for organizing the society, and an account of organization and statements of purpose are in the Washington Examiner for September 30 and October 14, 1826, respectively.
36 Greensburg Gazette, May 30, 1828. The society was organized on May 19.
37 Notice of the meeting appeared in the Washington Examiner, July 12, 1834.
38 Burns, ante, 8:209 (October, 1925). Antislavery societies were formed in Beaver, Mercer, and Venango counties in 1835, and in Erie County in 1836. The Westmoreland society was formed in 1836. No records of such societies in Greene or Fayette counties have been found.
39 The account in this paragraph of the Washington meetings is based on that in the Washington Examiner for May 24, 1834.
his opposition to the objectives of the American Colonization Society. It was agreed by those assembled to hold a meeting the following week to debate the question, "Which is the preferable plan, that of the Anti-Slavery, or the American Colonization Society, for the abolition of Slavery." At this subsequent meeting, which in some way was organized under the control of the pro-colonists, many speeches were given on both sides of the proposition, each limited to thirty minutes. "So great was the interest, excited by the discussion," the account states, "that, notwithstanding its extreme length, the attention of the audience did not seem to flag, but on the contrary to become more intense; and at the close the house was more crowded than it had been at any former period." At the termination of the debate an audience vote was taken which went overwhelmingly in favor of the colonization views. It was also decided to authorize the appointment of a committee of five to make immediate arrangements for reviving the colonization society of the county. Such were the views held by Washington County's representative citizens in 1834 concerning the two forms of abolitionism.

In accordance with the resolution adopted in behalf of reviving the colonization society, a meeting was held nine days later at which time a new constitution was adopted and a plan of action determined upon.\(^{40}\) Long appeals were addressed to the people throughout the summer and fall, in the columns of the local newspapers, requesting support; and several church congregations of the county responded to the plea with cash donations.\(^{41}\) Shortly after this reorganization took place, an auxiliary colonization society was formed by the Washington College students.\(^{42}\) The revival spread to West Middletown, where a society was established in 1838.\(^{43}\) During this revival, also, an organization was formed in Uniontown, on May 16, 1836; and in 1837 the Greensburg partisans of colonization reformed an auxiliary to the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, the object being "exclusively directed" to the colonization of free Negroes from the United States on the coast of Africa.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{40}\) *Washington Examiner*, June 7, 1834. The meeting was held on May 29.

\(^{41}\) *Washington Examiner*, September 27, October, 1834.

\(^{42}\) *Washington Examiner*, June 14, 1834.

\(^{43}\) *Our Country* (Washington, Pa.), July 11, 1838.

\(^{44}\) *Genius of Liberty* (Uniontown), May 25, 1836; *Westmoreland Intelligencer* (Greensburg), July 14, 1837.
The revival was, however, short-lived, and erelong these revivified colonization societies went the way of their predecessors into oblivion.

To return to the antislavery movement, it appears that the above-mentioned meeting in Washington during the summer of 1834, at which the debate over colonization versus antislavery had taken place, not only stirred the colonization forces into action but, by the same token, stimulated the exponents of antislavery into doing something as well. The notice that appeared in the local newspapers calling for a meeting to form an antislavery society, to be held on July 15, 1834, was signed by fifteen rather prominent citizens.45 One was Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne, a young man of thirty-five who was destined to become a national figure, was associated with Garrison himself in the antislavery crusade, and was thrice candidate for governor of Pennsylvania on the abolitionist ticket.46 Nothing can be found concerning the activities of the group during the following year, except that its members aided in forming a similar society at West Middletown.47

At the annual meeting of this society on July 4, 1835, however, an aggressive program was outlined. An address to the people was prepared by a committee and published in the local newspapers. It was declared: "Our object is the entire abolition of Slavery throughout the whole of the slave holding portion of the United States... We advocate the immediate emancipation of the slave."48

These were strong words and consequently it is not surprising to find the call for a public meeting issued soon thereafter by the opponents of antislavery, for the "purpose of expressing... disapprobation of the interference of those persons in Pennsylvania, and in other non-slave-holding states, called abolitionists, with the domestic and civil institutions of the south." At the meeting, convened on October 2 and présided

45 Washington Examiner, July 12, 1834. According to Alfred Creigh, History of Washington County from Its First Settlement to the Present Time, 362 ([Washington, Pa.], 1870), and Forrest, Washington County, 419, the society was formed on July 4; although Forrest, on p. 418, quotes the notice in the Examiner of July 12, calling for the organization meeting three days later.

46 An account of Dr. LeMoyne is in the Dictionary of American Biography, 1:163 (New York, 1933). He was a candidate in the elections of 1841, 1844, and 1847.

47 Washington Examiner, November 8, 1834.

over by Judge Baird, resolutions were submitted by a committee composed of some of the leading citizens, including a minister, and were unanimously adopted. One was to the effect that the attempt of citizens of one state to interfere with the civil institutions of another violated the spirit of the Constitution and the Union. Antislavery in southwestern Pennsylvania was having its first taste of public opposition, and ere long it was destined to taste more deeply of the bitter cup.

The above-mentioned colonization society formed at Uniontown in May, 1836, was organized by a large gathering of Fayette County citizens as a result of this general resurgence of interest in the slavery question. Nearly twenty persons joined at the first meeting. Dr. Daniel Sturgeon, four years later elected United States Senator from Pennsylvania, was made president. The "good feeling and harmony which prevailed" was interrupted by the appearance of an agent of the American Antislavery Society, the Reverend Samuel Gould, who requested permission to speak to the group. After due consideration, his request was refused by a unanimous vote, including that of all the ministers of Uniontown in attendance, and it was reported that the group as a whole had "no relish for abolition." The agent, however, was undaunted and announced that he would address the people the next day. In trying to find a place to hold his own meeting, he was denied the use of all the churches of Uniontown, which indicated that there was no sympathy from this quarter toward his radical ideas concerning the immediate abolition of human slavery. He finally obtained the use of the courthouse, and announced the meeting for four o'clock on May 17, 1836; he did this despite the warning "not to attempt to lecture in the face of an excited populace."

At the appointed hour a crowd gathered. As soon as Gould took his place an indignant cry was raised that he should not proceed. Amid the din, a gentleman came forward and called out in a loud voice for a vote on whether the speaker should continue. Only four or five voted affirmatively, but a thunderous "No! No!" was received in the negative. Determined to continue, the would-be speaker kept his seat. The uproar


50 *Genius of Liberty* (Uniontown), May 25, 1836. This is a good example of the juxtaposition of the terms "abolition" and "antislavery."
continued for nearly a quarter of an hour when someone in the crowd called out, "Tar and feathers"; whereupon the good man, apparently feeling that discretion was the better part of valor, got up and was escorted through the crowd and down the street, making a promise that he would leave town. In commenting upon the affair, the editor of the Uniontown newspaper, ironically called the Genius of Liberty, wrote: "We understand that our town is again to be set in commotion by another visit from this itinerating stirer up of sedition. If so, we think the civil authorities ought to interfere, or else hold him accountable for what ever may ensue."\(^1\)

Whether this particular "stirer up of sedition" ever returned cannot be determined, as the newspaper files for some time afterward are very incomplete. Apparently he or some other antislavery agent did come back early the next year, as there is a newspaper account of a "Great meeting of the People" held at the courthouse on March 8, 1837, to protest the "late movements of the immediate abolitionists." A committee of thirty-one members was appointed to draft resolutions. The list of names read like a "Who's Who" of Uniontown. The resolutions that were presented in due course, and unanimously accepted, stated that the "citizens of Fayette county in this meeting convened, consider the constitution of the United States as a sacred compact amongst the several states of the Union," and that there is no more justification for interference with the southern relationship of master and servant than with the growing of cotton.\(^2\) As far as can be determined, the antislavery forces were unsuccessful in establishing a unit in Uniontown.

Meanwhile the antislavery cause was meeting with strong opposition but better success in Washington. It will be recalled that the first antislavery society in western Pennsylvania was formed there on July 15, 1834, and that, beginning with the first annual meeting the following year, an aggressive program was enunciated. This precipitated, in turn, a public meeting which censured the activities of the society. Undaunted by this, the society continued its program. In the summer of 1836, a meeting was held in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Washington at which the Reverend Samuel Gould, who had been driven out of Uniontown a few weeks before, delivered the address of the evening.

\(^1\) Editorial, in Genius of Liberty (Uniontown), May 25, 1836.
\(^2\) Genius of Liberty (Uniontown), March 22, 1837.
Here, too, he had been warned not to speak, and, as was expected, a mob gathered outside the church. As the minister spoke, a bombardment of stones, eggs, and other missiles was rained upon the building, some of them crashing through the windows. At the close of the services a cordon was formed around him as an escort through the mob. The protecting ring was broken but he was rescued by a sympathizer, living on the street, who opened the door of his home and took him in. By leaving through another exit the crusader was able to arrive in safety at the home of Dr. LeMoyne.

Such turbulence, as might be expected, resulted in another public indignation meeting against the abolitionists. It was presided over by the chief burgess of Washington, John R. Griffith. After numerous speeches were heard, resolutions were drawn up and adopted again condemning in strong terms "the late violent and irregular consequences which have resulted from the attempts of certain Abolition Agents in intruding their opinions upon the public in this place." Those participating in the riot against the abolitionists, it is interesting to note, were also censured, upon the grounds that such demonstrations would only aid the cause. This action called forth a counter indignation meeting in near-by West Middletown, three days later, in which resolutions were passed condemning the action of the opponents of antislavery in Washington as well as their meeting.

The Washington abolitionists would not be deterred in their efforts and went ahead with plans for their annual meeting the following week. It was held on the premises of Dr. LeMoyne and was "one of the largest [assemblies] ever convened in the borough of Washington." The indomitable Reverend Samuel Gould again spoke. Violence had been threatened, so as a precaution one of Dr. LeMoyne's sons was placed in a strategic position on the second-story porch overlooking the garden.

53 The description is based on the account given the author by Mrs. Madeline LeMoyne Reed, the last surviving child of Dr. LeMoyne. Mrs. Reed was born in 1843 and resides in the famous old home on Maiden Street, Washington, built in 1812 and later used as an Underground Railroad station by Dr. LeMoyne. A picture of this house is in Charles M. Stote, The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania, 111 (New York, 1936). See also detailed accounts in Forrest, Washington County, 419.

54 Our Country (Washington, Pa.), June 30, 1836.

55 Our Country (Washington, Pa.), July 14, 1836. Dr. LeMoyne was elected president of the society.
in which the people were assembled, with a hive of bees ready to be tossed into their midst should they become unruly. Except for some heckling, however, nothing untoward occurred. This was the last evidence of violence toward the organization that has been found.

A few months prior to these stirring events in Uniontown and Washington, Gould had directed the organization in Greensburg of the "Westmoreland County Anti-Slavery Society." It was very conservative, calling only for Congress to abolish slavery where it had jurisdiction and to allow the various state legislatures to do it for themselves. "We expect," it was stated, "to accomplish the abolition of slavery by moral means; by appeals to the understandings and consciences of all slave holders." In response to a call issued for the formation of similar societies throughout Westmoreland County, such societies were established within the ensuing year at Mount Pleasant, Madisonville, and in two other towns, not named. With such mild sentiments for a platform, it is not surprising that evidence of violence toward these organizations cannot be found. The parent society, and its affiliates in the county, remained active until 1839 or 1840, when they, like the others of the region, ceased to be heard from.

Concerning Greene County, of which little has been said, nothing can be learned of the existence of any appreciable abolition sentiment. A fire in 1916 destroyed the only newspaper file of the local papers extant, so that reliance must be placed solely on the memories of the older residents. The consensus seems to be that, because of the proximity of the county to Virginia, the sympathies of the people remained strongly pro-slavery, even throughout the Civil War. The writer was informed that an active unit of the Knights of the Golden Circle existed there to dis-

56 This account was given the author by Mrs. Madeline LeMoyne Reed in 1937.
57 Westmoreland Intelligencer (Greensburg), March 4, 1836. The meeting was held on February 25. As late as August, 1838, the Westmoreland society resolved at its quarterly meeting, "We hold that Congress has no more right to abolish Slavery in the Southern States, than in the French Islands. Of course we desire no national legislation on the subject... We hold that Slavery can only lawfully be abolished by the Legislatures of the several States, and that the exercise of any other than moral influence to induce such abolition is unconstitutional." Westmoreland Intelligencer (Greensburg), August 31, 1838.
58 Westmoreland Intelligencer (Greensburg), July 22, November 11, 1836. In the March 3, 1837, issue, mention is made of four societies at the quarterly meeting.
courage the northern prosecution of the war; anyone suspected of abolition sentiment might have his haystacks burned and his windows stoned, even by his own relatives; and in some instances the county officials were so strongly proslavery that they would do nothing toward apprehending or prosecuting those perpetrating the depredations. As indicated early in this article, there were perhaps two or three Underground Railroad stations in the county, but beyond this, apparently, no type of antislavery organization existed.

The existence of the numerous abolition, colonization, and antislavery societies previously discussed, and the emergence of occasional public demonstrations against their activities, must not give the false impression that the people of southwestern Pennsylvania were deeply concerned with the Negro question; quite the contrary was true. There was a minority group of abolitionists, and a much larger group of adherents of the status quo willing to do battle for it when challenged; but by and large the masses of the citizenry during the period were content to live their lives and let well enough alone. In fact, had it not been for a small but active group of abolitionists in the borough of Washington and in West Middletown, the story of the antislavery movement in southwestern Pennsylvania would indeed be brief. The newspapers rarely had any editorial comment to make, as they were occupied with politics, foreign affairs, and “melancholy accidents.” Judging from news space and editorial attention received, such affairs as temperance, Antimasonry, workingmen’s rights, and the plight of the suffering Greeks were of much greater interest. The Washington Society for the Detection of Horse Thieves received much more newspaper space than did the abolition societies.

59 Information acquired in 1937 from Judge A. H. Sayres and others of Waynesburg. See also Washington Reporter, August 15, 1908, historical section, passim.

60 In the Washington Examiner, September 26, 1835, the editor printed a long article submitted by the antislavery forces, but he voiced his disapproval of the “sentiments and scheme of the Immediate Abolitionists.” Temperance received attention after 1830, and Antimasonry between 1827 and 1840. A report of a meeting to consider workingmen’s rights and resolutions drafted at Uniontown are in the Genius of Liberty for August 22, 1831. On February 17, 1827, a public meeting, reported in the Washington Examiner for that date, was held in the Washington courthouse to obtain aid for the “suffering Greeks.” Meetings were later held for the same purpose in West Middletown and Hillsborough. Washington Examiner, March 10, 1827.
Even the churches, as institutions, paid little attention to the great question until the closing days before the Civil War. The presbyterial records of Redstone and of Washington, comprising the greater part of the area, make no mention of slavery, although resolutions may frequently be found opposing horse-racing, Sabbath desecration, and non-Christian amusements such as “balls, dances, routs, [and] theatrical exhibitions.” One of the first Presbyterian ministers of the area, the Reverend James Finley, held eight slaves, according to the registry, under the law of March 1, 1780; and four Westmoreland County ministers likewise reported holding bondsmen. It has been said that some of the pious residents of this latter county who would not “shave a beard, on the Sabbath day, for a cow,” nevertheless saw no harm in holding slaves. There had been some influential Quakers in the region in early times, but they soon died out, and practically none remained by the Civil War period.

Despite this institutional conservatism, some of the ministers, particularly the Presbyterian ministers of Washington, were aggressive leaders in all phases of the antislavery movement. After 1820 it was they, in the latter place, who called the meetings, offered the use of their churches, and served as officers in the groups out of which societies were formed. This likewise was the case in Westmoreland County. Not all ministers in Washington, however, were supporters of antislavery, as indicated by the fact that Dr. LeMoyne heard the minister at the First Presbyterian Church of that borough denounce the movement, causing the young crusader to leave the church, never again to return. As previously related, the ministers of Uniontown appeared unanimous in their opposition to the radical phase of the movement.

61 See Presbytery of Redstone, Minutes. . . September 19, 1781, to December, 1831 (Cincinnati, 1878); History of the Presbytery of Washington (Philadelphia, 1889), in which it is stated in a footnote on p. 27 that “on the subject of negro slavery, nothing is found in the Presbyterial records.”
62 Synod of 1817, quoted in History of the Presbytery of Washington, 28.
63 Veech, Monongahela of Old, 99; Burns, ante, 8:204 (October, 1925).
64 Hugh H. Brackenridge, Modern Chivalry, 1:184 (3 vols. in 1—Philadelphia, 1808).
65 “Quaker Records of Western Pennsylvania, Redstone, and Wheatland Minutes” (compiled in 1936), in the Public Library of Uniontown.
66 Related to the author in 1937 by Mrs. Madeline LeMoyne Reed.
This survey has shown that the reaction of southwestern Pennsylvania to the slavery question followed much the same pattern and time cycle as that of the state. The fact that slavery survived there longer than elsewhere in the commonwealth no doubt made the citizenry more acquiescent to it; but their reactions were none the less typical.

In a word, opposition to slavery first developed in a furtive way, around 1820, among a very small minority who aided fugitive slaves seeking escape to freedom in Canada. This movement, at first loose and informal, became within the next twenty-five years a part of the regular Underground Railroad system. With the formation of the first abolition society in Washington, early in 1824, the formal protest against slavery in southwestern Pennsylvania was launched. The movement, which was mild in sentiment and vague in plan, spread rapidly throughout the area during the ensuing years. This original abolition sentiment was soon directed into colonization channels by the formation of societies pledged to a scheme of returning the blacks to Africa. This brand of abolitionism, although appearing practical in that it proposed a definite “solution” to the vexing problem, proved to be as vague and impractical as that of the original abolition societies. The colonization groups soon became inactive, only to be revived by the threat of immediate action on the part of the antislavery societies, which were first organized in the area during 1834. The latter, organized as a part of William Lloyd Garrison's campaign, were considered radical because the immediate and unqualified freedom of the slaves was advocated. It was then that the first display of violence against the movement was shown. As long as the advocates of human rights for the Negro confined their efforts to the realm of high-sounding phrases and pious platitudes, toleration and even active support from the citizenry were forthcoming. But from the very first, the antislavery advocates faced open violence in many places. The formation of antislavery societies constituted the last phase of organizational effort, and by the close of the thirties the cause seemed to have spent itself. Thereafter, a slowly developing tolerance for aggressive abolitionism can be discerned, which became more pronounced after

67 An excellent summary of this broader movement is in Turner, The Negro in Pennsylvania.
1850 when national events, such as the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the Dred Scott Decision, aroused the North in general to the importance of the slavery question to national union and economy.\textsuperscript{68}

Thus did a people react, despite their tradition of frontier independence and democratic principles of equalitarianism, to the rising struggle for human freedom. About their heads were gathering the clouds of an impending storm destined, because of its far-reaching economic and political complications, to wreck the established institution of slavery in which they had been so ready to acquiesce. When the call finally came to make the supreme sacrifice, in order to preserve the Union, they rallied enthusiastically to the cause, little realizing the broad implications of the struggle. Here again the inertia of the \textit{status quo} was finally overcome by the imperceptible pressure of a social imperative.

\textsuperscript{68} Even as late as 1852, however, the Democrats, in a big rally at Uniontown, resolved, "That the American democracy...has always opposed abolitionism and fanaticism." On another occasion abolitionism was referred to as "Niggerism and Fanaticism." \textit{Genius of Liberty} (Uniontown), July 1, June 24, 1852.