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Charlotte Forten:

Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist, 1854-1856

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Kristen Hillaire Glasgow

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Charlotte Forten:

Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist, 1854-1856

by

Kristen Hillaire Glasgow

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Brenda Stevenson, Chair

In 1854, Charlotte Forten, a free teenager of color from Philadelphia, was sent by her family to Salem, Massachusetts. She was fifteen years old. Charlotte was relocated to obtain an education worthy of the teenager's socio-elite background. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law had a tremendous impact on her family in the City of Brotherly Love. Even though they were well-known and affluent citizens and abolitionists, the law's passage took a heavy toll on all people of color in the North including rising racial tensions, mob attacks, and the acute possibility of kidnap. *Charlotte Forten: Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist* is an intellectual biography that spans her teenage years from 1854-1856. Scholarship has maintained that Charlotte was sent to Salem solely as a result of few educational opportunities in Philadelphia. Reexamining the diary she kept as a teenager in Salem reveals that there was more to the story. Her family's extensive ties to the Underground Railroad, anti-slavery endeavors, and lack of male guardianship for her in Philadelphia also factored in to the

family's decision to send her to Salem. It was not just the pursuit of a better education, but also for personal protection.

Once in Salem, Charlotte lived with famous abolitionist Charles Lenox Remond and his new wife, Amy Matilda Remond. Both were actively involved in New England anti-slavery and were aligned with the ideology of William Lloyd Garrison's fiery brand of abolition. Charlotte began her education as a student, becoming the first to integrate the Higginson Grammar School, as well as having started her training as a Garrisonian abolitionist. She began keeping a diary at the exact moment that Boston was bearing witness to the capture, trial, and conviction of former fugitives because of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. This planted the seed in the teenager, and she grew to become a radical abolitionist in Salem, all the while documenting in real time what she witnessed and experienced. There do not appear to be any other surviving documents by a free teenager of color during the antebellum period who extensively recorded the national politics and the impending crisis over slavery. Charlotte declared in her diary, "I crave anti-slavery food continually!" and when she was not pursuing a higher education, she dedicated the majority of her time to anti-slavery causes, events, fairs, meetings, lectures, and sermons.

The dissertation of Kristen Hillaire Glasgow is approved.

Brenda Stevenson, Committee Chair

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University of California, Los Angeles

2019

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VITA

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*Thy chosen Queen, O champion of Truth,
Should be th' acknowledged sovereign of all;
Her first commands should fire the heart of youth
And graver age list heedful to her call.*

-Charlotte Forten, 1855

Introduction

Charlotte Forten: Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist is an intellectual biography that reexamines the private journals of Charlotte Forten when she lived in Salem, Massachusetts from 1854-1856. *Coming of Age* seeks to show how her time spent as a free teenager of color in New England was critical to becoming a radical abolitionist who adhered to William Lloyd Garrison's fiery brand of anti-slavery activism.¹ The majority of historical scholarship on Charlotte's biography has focused on her famous family from Philadelphia, as well the time spent during the Civil War in the South Carolina Sea Islands. However, her experiences in Salem as a budding scholar and abolitionist from age fifteen to eighteen years old is essential in understanding how and why she would later voluntarily go to the South and teach those formerly enslaved during the war.

Throughout Charlotte's teen years in Salem, she kept a detailed diary, and the pages reveal accounts of anti-slavery events, meetings, lectures, celebrations, debates, fairs, conventions, and fugitive escapes and trials. The diary also reveals the famous abolitionists, politicians, authors, and orators whom she greatly admired and called friends. In addition, her writing shows in frank and painful prose the growing political tension between the North and South and "the Impending

¹ The ideology of Garrisonian abolition is explored in Chapters I and II.

Crisis” over slavery.² This included personal subjection to humiliating acts of prejudice by her white classmates. Charlotte’s diary is, therefore, a significant and unique primary source penned by a free teenager of color in the North who came of age in the era of emancipation. There does not appear to be any similar surviving documents unless written by former fugitives from the South or white females regardless of age or geography.³

In historical and literary scholarship, there has been ample and rich work about former fugitives who had gone on to achieve extraordinary recognition and acclaim as poets and abolitionists. This exemplary list includes William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, Phyllis Wheatley, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet E. Wilson, and Harriet Tubman. There has also been extensive research and writing on female abolitionists of color in Philadelphia, including Charlotte’s paternal grandmother and talented aunts. Yet what appears to be ripe for further exploration is the time period in which Charlotte was keeping her journal from 1854-1856. Her detailed writing exposes a far-reaching network of abolitionists of color from Philadelphia to Boston to Salem who were actively fighting on the front lines of Garrisonian abolition. Charlotte’s journal provides a critical bridge from the scholarship on female abolitionists of color from during the 1820s-1840s and the efforts made during and after the Civil War.⁴

The historical narrative that Charlotte relocated to Salem to gain an education unavailable to her in Philadelphia has been constant in the scholarship on her life and work. This information

² More will be discussed on the “the Impending Crisis” throughout the dissertation. The phrase was interchangeable with “the Crisis” and the “the Fearful Crisis,” and it described building tension and dread about possible Union dissolution or war after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

³ The topic of former fugitive slave narratives will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

⁴ For more on the significant work produced about female abolitionists of color in Philadelphia, Boston, and Salem during the 1820s-1840s, as well as during the Civil War, see the Bibliography for an extensive list. In brief, the scholarship of Dorothy Porter, Brenda E. Stevenson, Erica Armstrong Dunbar, Martha S. Jones, Gary B. Nash, Emma Lapsansky-Werner, Julie Winch, Kathryn Kish-Sklar, and Shirley J. Yee.

began with William Wells Brown, a contemporary of hers, as well as a close family friend.⁵ Brown was a former fugitive who gained his freedom and education while in Europe. He included Charlotte in his 1863 published work, *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*; She was twenty-five years old. He claimed, “In the autumn of 1854 a young colored lady of seventeen summers, unable to obtain admission into the schools of her native city on account of her complexion, was removed to Salem, Massachusetts.”⁶ However, Brown was incorrect in the timing of Charlotte’s relocation, because she began her journal in May 1854, not in autumn. In addition, she was not seventeen but fifteen years old. Although her age and relocation do not necessarily undermine the rest of Brown’s story, it does suggest that factual information was not his main objective. Therefore, the strength of Brown’s story and why Charlotte relocated must be reexamined.

Brown’s biographical account of Charlotte and her move to Salem was more than likely crafted for dramatic effect as opposed to being rooted in accuracy. After all, by 1863, he was an internationally recognized dramatist and novelist, and his motivation to pen biographies of significant people of color might have been to educate the general public about the contributions made to American society. He did not mention Charlotte’s elite socio-economic status or her familial connections to abolition. The biographical depiction instead followed the literary arc used by former fugitives who had written their stories, including Brown. He used an overarching narrative of how Charlotte fled prejudicial adversity and segregation in Philadelphia to become a talented intellectual in Salem. Even though Charlotte had been born free and not enslaved, Brown illustrated

⁵ William Wells Brown was a family friend of the Fortens, and lived in Salem at the same time as Charlotte. More will be discussed on Brown and his family throughout the dissertation.

⁶ *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (Boston: James Redpath, Publisher, 1863), 199.

her plight similarly to the fugitive slave tale to illustrate that people of color were not intellectually inferior if given equal access to higher education.

Also missing from Brown's biographical narrative was that Charlotte was sent to Salem as a teenager because of the political havoc being wrecked on the nation as a result of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Brown was writing at the height of the Civil War in 1863 and therefore without future knowledge of the outcome, he would not have wanted to include sensitive information about Charlotte's relocation. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law had a tremendous impact on her family, and even though they were well-known, socially affluent, and famous abolitionists, the law's passage took a heavy toll on all people of color in the North that included rising racial tensions, mob attacks, and the acute possibility of kidnap.

Charlotte and her family were also at risk because of their direct ties to the Underground Railroad (UGRR) and political activism as abolitionists. This more than likely resulted in Brown's selective biographical description of Charlotte in 1863. However, since Brown's publication, historical scholarship has maintained that Charlotte was sent to Salem solely because she was prohibited from gaining a proper education in Philadelphia. *Coming of Age* seeks to broaden the scope of this narrative to show that other social, political, and economic issues factored in to the decision to relocate, including the family's declining wealth as a result of prejudicial acts by white citizens, the lack of paternal guidance in Philadelphia since her father and new family had moved to the country, little access to an education worthy of her social status, and the very real dangers of living as a free young girl of color in the aftermath of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

To be sure, Charlotte Forten was unique as a socio-elite teenager of color growing up in Philadelphia. Most free teenagers of color during the mid-nineteenth century did not experience the same privileges. Yet Charlotte did not take advantage of her status or her family's fame. They had instilled in her that being of a certain rank in society meant a responsibility to pursue a higher

education so as educate and emancipate others.⁷ Throughout the pages of the diary she documented how her school studies intertwined with an abolitionist's curriculum. This included how she and others fought to undo *de facto* Jim Crow policies, the significant abolitionists holidays celebrated throughout the year, and the intellectual and laborious activities undertaken for abolition. Were it not for her elite status, a superior education, and the legacy of her abolitionist family, she might not have had the knowledge, time, or opportunity to keep a diary. Furthermore, her elite status might have provided the excuse not to engage in radical abolition. Instead, Charlotte chose to be in the middle of the political action even at great personal risk.

In a remarkable coincidence, there is another surviving journal written by a white teenager in Massachusetts during the same few years as Charlotte. Her name was S. Elizabeth Dusenbury, and she too was a teenager coming of age during “the Impending Crisis.” In Ruth K. McGaha’s dissertation on Elizabeth’s journal, she argues that it should be read “like a window on the nineteenth century human experiences just as reading the diaries of the women on the overland trail.”⁸ Elizabeth recorded similar activities as Charlotte, including reading, sewing, and other chores, as well as school studies. Yet Elizabeth’s daily experiences were in accordance with the dominant white society that viewed females as homemakers, wives, mothers, and teachers whereas Charlotte was writing as an oppressed free teenager of color fighting to overcome racial barriers and eradicate slavery.⁹

⁷ A fuller examination of the Forten family, their legacy, and personal biographies will be presented in Chapter I.

⁸ Ruth K. McGaha, “The Journals of S. Elizabeth Dusenbury, 1852-1857: Portrait of a Teacher’s Development” (PhD diss, Iowa State University, 1990), 2.

⁹ The topic of white female representation in the national psyche is outside the purview of this dissertation. There has been ample literary and scholarly output on the status and education of white women throughout the nineteenth century, and this template was not applicable or available to most women of color during the same time period. However, more on the influence of white educators who educated children of color, including Prudence Crandall in 1832, will be discussed throughout the dissertation. McGaha, *Dusenbury*, 6.

Many primary sources written by white women throughout the nineteenth century have survived and been preserved, while Charlotte's diary is one of the few surviving documents by a free woman (teenager) of color that shows the activism and everyday lives of free female abolitionists of color.¹⁰ Few—if any—lengthy biographical primary sources on free women of color of any age have been found unless looking at the antebellum female Friendship Albums of which only four survive.¹¹ Moreover, Friendship Albums were typically filled with sonnets, poetry, drawings, and personal notes, even if laced with anti-slavery sentiment. In contrast, Charlotte's diary provides a firsthand account for more than three years about the life of a budding intellectual and radical teenage abolitionist.

Throughout *Coming of Age*, the socio-political marker, “free person of color” is used because it was how the Forten family identified. Charlotte's grandfather, James Forten, Sr., had several pen names he used for published tracts in anti-slavery papers, and one included, “A Gentleman of Color.”¹² Some of Charlotte's friends, such as William C. Nell, used “colored” interchangeably with “person of color,” but for Charlotte, there was a class distinction. In one revealing journal entry she relayed a conversation had with her uncle-in-law and abolitionist, Robert Purvis, in which she wrote, “[H]ad a long talk with him today about the colored people and their wicked folly. It is really deplorable. They do nothing themselves, yet continually abuse their only friends. I am perfectly sick of them.”¹³ She did not elaborate further, but her feelings are clear. This outlook stemmed from her

¹⁰ The abolitionists promoted the stories of former fugitives, including Harriet Jacobs and Harriet Tubman, so as to shed light on the atrocities of slavery. However, the abolitionists did not publish biographical accounts of free people of color from the North. It was not until William C. Nell published *Colored Patriots* in 1856 that free and formerly enslaved peoples of color were highlighted together for the patriot contributions they gave to America. More of this will be discussed in Chapter III.

¹¹ One of the four female Friendship Albums was kept by Charlotte's Salem house-hostess, Amy Matilda Cassey, and entries in it are from abolitionists known to Charlotte and her family. More on the importance of female Friendship Albums will be examined throughout this dissertation, most especially in Chapter IV.

¹² Julie Winch, *Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹³ *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, ed. Brenda E. Stevenson, Oxford University Press, 1988, 231-232.

elite status but also as a Garrisonian abolitionist. She viewed those who participated in “wicked folly” as affirming the prejudiced perspective that people of color were intellectually and socially inferior to white people.

Coming of Age intentionally uses “diary” and “journal” interchangeably, because Charlotte used both, albeit only a handful of times. She did not start each day’s entry with any type of literary salutation, but typically included the day of the week, the month, and the date. During her later years in South Carolina, she called her journal “Ami,” French for friend. She did not provide a reason for the linguistic shift except perhaps it was because French was her preferred foreign language to speak, translate, and write.¹⁴ However, as a teenager in Salem, she only used the words “diary” and “journal,” even though she had already begun to study the language by the point.

Each chapter in *Coming of Age* spans the entirety of one year she wrote in her diary. The caveat being Chapter 1, “Fame and Forten,” which provides the historical background and context for Charlotte’s relocation to Salem, Massachusetts in 1854. Chapter 1 also provides the Forten family’s biographies, their well-known activism in Philadelphia, as well as the individual relationships with Charlotte. Charlotte’s early life in Philadelphia is also examined, even though she did not keep a diary while she grew up as a child in Philadelphia or the countryside. The remaining three chapters examine her diary writing in Salem throughout the years 1854-1856.

In Chapter II, “Salem was the Spark, 1854” Charlotte started to keep a diary. She was fifteen years old. Even though she stated on the opening page that her intention was record remonstrances of her time in Salem with friends and school time for future remonstrances, she began at the exact

¹⁴ Charlotte began studying French with a private tutor at the age of twenty. In her journal, she wrote, “Tuesday, September 8 (1857). A most delightful evening –our first French lesson. M.[onsieur] J.[erome] is a pleasant teacher. We had a nice time. I love *la belle Francais* (*The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, ed. Brenda E. Stevenson, Oxford University Press, 1988, 256).” She had studied the language as a student, but wanted to learn it better so as to read and translate her favorite authors and books, including Madame de Staël’s popular book, *Corinne ou L’Italie* (Ibid, 269).”

moment that Anthony Burns, a former fugitive living in Boston, was arrested and put on trial. The impact of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was felt throughout the nation, including in Boston and Salem. Boston especially was no longer seen as a safe haven for fugitives, and many were forced to flee further North or to Canada. Chapter II examines the moment to moment actions taken by Garrisonian abolitionists to help Burns and others, including how they raised monies for anti-slavery causes, the political dynamics of abolitionist gatherings, meetings, and celebrations, and the extensive network of black and white abolitionists in Salem, Boston, Worcester, and Lynn, Massachusetts.

Chapter III, “From Student to Scholar, 1855,” highlights Charlotte’s intellectual growth throughout the year. She finished her time as a student at Higginson Grammar School and was accepted into the Salem Normal School. The Normal School opened its doors in 1854, the year that Charlotte arrived in Salem. This provides another reason to select Salem as the destination for higher education, since the school was integrated and teaching was Charlotte’s ultimate objective. Upon graduation for the Normal School, she received a position as an instructor at Epes Grammar School. Chapter III explores Charlotte’s unwavering dedication to her studies and how she blended homework with abolition. As a student, scholar, and teacher of color in Salem, she was the personification of overcoming racial barriers.

Chapter IV, “The Fearful Crisis, 1856,” shows how Charlotte dedicated the majority of her time to abolition as the threat of war had started to look real. This included that she officially joined the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society soon after her eighteenth birthday - even though she had unofficially participated since she was fifteen years old. She wrote copious accounts of the Society’s political and social activism, ongoing debates about slavery, personal experiences with being the target of racial prejudice, as well as her maturation from a young, willful but naive teenager to a young lady of great intellectual talent and political acuity. This chapter also shows the private lives of

abolitionists of color, including Charlotte's interactions with her close female friends and housemates, especially Amy Matilda Remond.

Coming of Age includes four Appendices that document Charlotte's extensive literary, intellectual, and cultural pursuits done for school or leisure. Appendix I provides the three surviving poems written by Charlotte when she was a student at both Higginson and the Normal School; Appendix II is a compilation of the extensive books and poetry that she read. Often times, Charlotte did not specifically refer to the author, book or poem in her diary, but instead provided only a brief line in quotation marks without citation. Through careful research, Appendix II provides the authors and their works during her time in Salem; Appendix III lists the magazines and periodicals Charlotte mentioned having read; and Appendix IX lists the school lessons she recorded while attending Higginson Grammar School and the Salem Normal School, as well as outside intellectual pursuits.

Charlotte Forten: Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist, 1854-1856 argues that Charlotte's time in Salem was pivotal to the cultivation of her fierce devotion to Garrisonian abolition. This period as a student and young anti-slavery activist has largely been overshadowed in historical scholarship by her later years spent in South Carolina's Sea Islands as a teacher. Yet the two time periods should not be detached, since it was her time in Salem as a teenager surrounded by radical abolitionists that led to her decision to relocate to the South in the middle of the Civil War. Her diary writings in Salem, therefore, reveal the personal and political life of a free teenager of color coming of age in the era of emancipation, as well as her astute awareness to preserve a historical record of the daily actions undertaken by Garrisonian abolitionists who sought to end slavery and racial oppression.

Chapter I: Fame and Forten

The acquisition of learning may be converted to higher uses than such as are purely literary.
– Hannah More (1799)

By the time Charlotte Louise Bridges Forten was born on August 17, 1837, her place in the elite black society of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was firmly established. Her family name was recognized nationally and internationally as a leading voice in the struggle for freedom. Charlotte had grown up surrounded by extended familial and friendly ties that organized a transatlantic political network to end slavery and fight for human rights. As the only surviving child of Robert Bridges Forten and Mary Virginia Woods Forten, Charlotte's experience as a free young girl of color was unique in the antebellum North. Her paternal great-grandfather had been born a slave, but the next four generations of Fortens, starting with her grandfather and grandmother James and Charlotte, Sr., were free, educated, well-off, and thriving in the city of Brotherly Love.¹⁵ As a fifth-generation Forten, Charlotte was born into a cloistered and privileged life.

At the age of three, Charlotte lost her mother. The family rallied behind the child to comfort the loss as well as to contribute to her upbringing. Looking after little Charlotte, the family's main objective was to provide a superior education and raise her to be a radical abolitionist.¹⁶ To understand Charlotte's young life, her family's historical background and political activism must first be contextualized. Since this dissertation is an intellectual biography on the teenage years of Charlotte Forten in Salem during the years 1854-1856, this chapter will focus exclusively on the

¹⁵ Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard University Press, 1988); Brenda Stevenson, ed., *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Julie Winch, *Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (Oxford: University Press, 2002) and *Between Slavery and Freedom: Free People of Color in America from Settlement to the Civil War* (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

¹⁶ Stevenson, *Journals*.

family members and close family friends she wrote about in her diary. This is to provide a foundational understanding of the family dynasty she grew up around, including her privileged position in society as a free person of color. It will also illustrate how and why Charlotte left Philadelphia at the age of fifteen to pursue an education in Salem that was not available to her in Pennsylvania.

The patriarch of the family was James Forten (1766-1842), born in Philadelphia. By the time of Charlotte's birth in 1837, Forten had long been a successful business owner in sail-making. He had spent his youth fighting in the American Revolution as a ship boy.¹⁷ Even though he was underage, his mother agreed to sign the paperwork so he could join in overturning British tyrannical rule for American freedom.¹⁸ After the war, Forten turned down a government pension, because he felt it was his duty as an American patriot.¹⁹ He subsequently apprenticed in Philadelphia for a white sailmaker, Robert Bridges, who was impressed with his talents and professional acumen. In 1798, at the age of thirty-two, James Forten purchased Bridge's company. He also devised and patented a mechanism to better grip the sails, and as a result of this innovation became a financial success. As historian Erica Armstrong Dunbar writes, "The success of the Forten family was no small accomplishment. Not only had they placed themselves amongst the wealthiest of Philadelphians...they also helped to create the beginnings of the black elite."²⁰

James Forten's alliances with white and black patrons and businessmen allowed him to become a respected and trusted voice in the local community. He was seen as an exemplary figure for the next generation of abolitionists of color to emulate. One example is found in a book written

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (Yale University, 2008), 83.

in 1841 by friend and peer, Joseph Willson, in *The Elite of Our People*. Willson detailed Philadelphia's cadre of elite families of color who he knew firsthand, including the Fortens. In one excerpt, Willson described the *Demosthenian Shield*, a paper started by young free men of color in the city. The *Shield* included a regular feature on "Sketches of Eminent Colored Men in Philadelphia," and in the first edition, "the venerable patriot, James Forten" was the distinguished subject.²¹

Charlotte was only four-and-a-half years old when her grandfather, James Forten, died. She wrote about him twice during her tenure in Salem, but more out of reverence for the well-known friends he interacted with, such as Harriet Martineau and John Greenleaf Whittier, as opposed to any personal recollections she remembered having with him directly. Upon Forten's death, his monetary fortune had greatly dwindled, but his stellar reputation in the Philadelphia community had remained intact. His funeral was well-attended, and as historian Julie Winch observed:

Behind the hearse walked the family of the deceased, his servants, his apprentices, his journeymen, and his closest friends. Behind them walked hundreds of ordinary citizens. Several thousand more stood in the streets and on the sidewalks to watch the solemn procession pass by.²²

Whether little Charlotte was a part of the family who walked behind the hearse is not known.

However, she would have been aware of what was happening due to the mourning family members around her, especially with the loss of her mother and the subsequent death of her grandfather.

Even though Charlotte did not have many years with her grandfather, she did have a long and very close relationship with her grandmother Charlotte Vandine Forten (1785-1884). Charlotte, Sr. had come from a prestigious family of color who used their social status to uplift the poor and aid in abolition. Her marriage to James Forten allowed the rare opportunity to raise their children in

²¹ Ibid. The *Demosthenian Shield* was to be published every Tuesday, and subscriptions cost \$1 a year. There do not appear to be any surviving copies. Willson, fn. 103, Winch, 160.

²² Winch, 3.

luxury and privilege. This was atypical for the majority of free people of color in the early nineteenth century. As Dunbar writes of Charlotte, Sr., “Unlike most African American women who struggled to reach elite status by the middle of the nineteenth century, [she] did not have to work outside the home” and concluded that Charlotte Forten was “one of the first literate ladies of the black community in Philadelphia.”²³ In addition, just like her husband, she was revered and respected by both the black and white citizens of the city.²⁴

Charlotte wrote often in her diary about her grandmother while in Salem. The entries speak to the love and devotion she felt for her namesake, as well as her admiration of character. In Charlotte’s first year in Salem, 1854, she wrote after a long day of school work that she was feeling lonely. As a way to cheer herself up, she added. “And now to guard effectually against ‘the blues’ I will write to my dear grandmother, who is blessed with a most cheerful disposition.”²⁵ Charlotte’s affection for her grandmother never wavered, and since her grandfather was no longer there as a counterpart, Charlotte looked to her grandmother as the head of the Forten household.

One particularly long diary entry recalled fond memories Charlotte had of her grandmother and family during the holidays. It was the first time she was away from her immediate and extended family in Philadelphia and Bucks County, and had only recently turned seventeen years old. She poignantly wrote on Christmas about the holiday bringing to mind both sad and happy feelings of her home and family, including how much she missed them. “The busy preparations for the grand dinner, the display of Christmas gifts, the pleasant salutations – I think of them all, and cannot help wishing I could make one of the happy group assembled there.”²⁶ In addition to the poignant

²³ Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*, 83.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 99.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

description, her writing also reveals specific details about how her family spent the holidays behind closed doors. This is significant because her childhood memory offers one of the few—if not only—primary sources of the private moments of in Forten household at Christmas.

Charlotte's Christmas Day diary entry continued with fond recollections of those she loved. She imagined that their "Busy hands [were] wreathing the Christmas tree...and merry voices [were] blending around the cheerful fire."²⁷ However, like the radical female abolitionist she was raised to be, she concluded her account by recognizing her privilege and how it must be put to use for the greater good, most especially those enslaved who were without the freedom to celebrate Christmas with family. With fierce determination, she wrote, "A great work lies before us to alleviate their condition, to make their lives brighter and happier that they, too, may enjoy this and every other gladsome season."²⁸ Even on a major holiday, Charlotte had been taught that her personal comforts and joys were never to supersede abolition and remembering the souls of those enslaved.

James and Charlotte, Sr. had raised their children as active abolitionists and provided a superior education that integrated Classical and Romantic literature, histories, anti-slavery fiction, and political tracts into the ideological underpinning of Garrisonian abolition. The Fortens were staunch supporters and close friends of William Lloyd Garrison, including having funded his anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, from its launch in 1831 until James's death in 1842.²⁹ The majority of their surviving eight children also made significant contributions to the elevation of free people of color and as abolitionists fighting to eradicate slavery throughout their lives.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid, 117.

²⁸ Ibid, 117-118.

²⁹ It is unclear if Charlotte, Sr. continued to contribute money to *The Liberator* after her husband's death.

³⁰ One of their children, also named Charlotte (1808-1814), died at the age of five from "Dropsy," Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 220.

The eldest child of James and Charlotte, Sr. was Margaretta (1806-1875), and Charlotte was very close with her paternal aunt. Margaretta never married and therefore lived in the Forten family home with her mother Charlotte, Sr. Margaretta was a dedicated abolitionist in Philadelphia, including being a founding member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery in 1833. She was also a published poet, but her true talent was as a teacher. She became both a school instructor and a tutor in Philadelphia. Even though school records in Philadelphia (or the surrounding areas) of Charlotte's early education as a child do not survive, Margaretta more than likely educated her niece – whether formally or informally.³¹

While Charlotte lived in Salem she often wrote about letters received from Margaretta. These letters included suggestions of further literary reading to be done when not doing school work. The readings included a range of material from newly released Romantic literature, anti-slavery fiction, and abolitionists newspapers. In one journal entry, Charlotte wrote, “On my return from school, found a letter awaiting me from Aunt Margaretta; it was so unexpected, and made me very happy. It was so kind, so cheering that it seemed almost like hearing the gentle affectionate voice of my dear aunt.”³² There are many instances throughout Charlotte's journals that reflect the close relationship she had with her aunt. In addition to her grandmother, Margaretta was the other consistent maternal figure for Charlotte.

The next child of James and Charlotte, Sr. was Harriet Forten (1810-1875). Charlotte was also close with Harriet, however, unlike Margaretta, Harriet was married and had started having children at the same time of Charlotte's birth. Harriet was a dedicated abolitionist and intellectual and had married another radical abolitionist, Robert Purvis (1810-1898). Purvis had originated from

³¹ Stevenson, *Journals*.

³² July 26, 1854. *Ibid*, 90-91.

South Carolina and grew up with great wealth. His white father was a highly successful broker of cotton, and his wife, Harriet Purdah, was a formerly enslaved woman of color.³³ The two Purvis songs, Robert and Joseph (1812-1857) were sent to live in Philadelphia in their youth so they could attain a formal education unavailable to them in the South. According to historian Brenda E. Stevenson, it was after Robert's arrival to Philadelphia that he became an active member of the Garrisonian anti-slavery movement and the UGRR. His activism extended to other political operations that appealed to the inequitable conditions of free people of color.³⁴

Together Robert and Harriet Forten Purvis were a formidable power couple of color in the abolitionist world of Philadelphia. Like her grandmother and sister, Margaretta, Harriet was a member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, and had also been published as a poet. Moreover, in August, 1837 (the month and year of Charlotte's birth), Robert had started a Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, which was modeled after the committee started by David Ruggles in New York.³⁵ The Vigilance Committee aided in fugitive escapes, participated in the UGRR, and financially supported anti-slavery endeavors. Less than six months later a female auxiliary of the Vigilance Committee was started, and Harriet participated in it. As historian Margaret Hope Bacon wrote, "This [female auxiliary] group immediately set to work raising money, holding a West Indian Emancipation Day public meeting, and a December Fair."³⁶ Harriet took her role seriously as a

³³ Ibid, 570.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ For more on the Margaret Hope Bacon, *But One Race: The Life of Robert Purvis* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2007), 78-79.

³⁶ The West Indian Emancipation Day is in reference to what the New England abolitionists called the "First of August." It was a celebration of the 1834 British emancipation of the West Indies. For more on the First of August, see Chapters II, III, and IV. Bacon, *But One Race*, 79. In 1834, four years before the female auxiliary of the Vigilant Committee in Philadelphia was formed, the Boston-based Weston sisters (Maria Weston, and Ann) started an annual "New England Christmas Boston Bazaar." This was a year-long endeavor to raise monies and collect goods for abolition to sell during Christmas. The reference to the "December Fair" was Philadelphia's complimentary version to the Boston Bazaar. The Weston sisters, close friends of the Forten daughters and other Philadelphia elite families of color, like the Casseys, will be discussed in in Chapters II, III, and IV because Charlotte Forten worked tirelessly for the Bazaar as a part of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society when she lived in New England.

female Forten abolitionist. It was only because she had five young children that her time spent in anti-slavery duties had diminished. Even still, she continued to participate whenever she had the opportunity, including attending annual anti-slavery meetings and events in Pennsylvania as well as Massachusetts.

While Charlotte was a teenager in Salem, Harriet, Robert, and their children were living in Byberry, Pennsylvania. However, the intellectual influence of her aunt remained strong even if distance kept them apart. Harriet's literary predilection mirrored the same literary tastes, genres, and interests as Charlotte.³⁷ Julie Winch argued that "[Harriet's] early education had instilled in [her] a great love of literature. She read whatever came her way – antislavery works, religious literature, contemporary novels, and works of literary criticism."³⁸ Charlotte also read whatever was available to her, including those works admired by her Aunt Harriet. Like Margaretta, Harriet was instrumental in shaping her young niece's literary preferences, as well as serving as a model of how to be a dedicated servant to the anti-slavery cause.³⁹

In addition to Harriet's penchant for literature and learning, Winch described Harriet as having a "talent for reading aloud," as well as the ability to "sustain her part in an argument."⁴⁰ Harriet's gift for reading aloud can be imagined in one passage Charlotte wrote about her aunt in 1857, and although it is outside the purview of the dissertation, it is exemplary of their private interacts. The two were at home together, and Charlotte wrote that she had worked on a shall while her aunt read Byron to her.⁴¹ After Byron, the two ladies had a spirited exchange about the true

³⁷ See the writings of Winch, Dunbar, Lapsansky-Werner, Stevenson, and edited works. *The Abolitionist Sisterhood*: Yellen and Van Horn, and *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*: Sklar and Stewart et al.

³⁸ Winch, *Elite of Our People*, 261.

³⁹ I discuss Harriet's influence on Charlotte's activism in further depth in Chapter II.

⁴⁰ Willson, *Elite of Our People*/Winch: *fn.* 118. For a comprehensive list of the books Charlotte read, see Appendix I.

⁴¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 300.

identity of Shakespeare's plays. Charlotte noted, "Aunt H.[arriet]... pretends that she agrees with Miss Bacon... I *know* Shakespeare wrote it, and *he* only wrote those immortal plays. To look at that noble unrivalled head alone, would convince me of that."⁴² This exchange illustrates the intellectual talents of two privileged free females of color, albeit of different generations, while also getting a glimpse into how their personal conversations reflected their scholarly and leisurely interests.

Charlotte and Harriet's friendly discussion over "Miss Bacon" versus Shakespeare also provides a fascinating insight into a contemporary debate about the origins of Shakespeare's plays.⁴³ "Miss Bacon" was Delia Salter Bacon (1811-1857), a well-known British author of the same generation as Harriet. On January 1, 1857, Bacon's, *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* was published. In it she argued that the plays "usually attributed to Shakespeare" should be questioned based upon evidence outlined in the book. The book's Introduction was written by American author and Salem resident, Nathaniel Hawthorne.⁴⁴ In this context, however, it shows that Charlotte and her aunt discussed "Miss Bacon" and the questionable authorship of Shakespeare's plays contemporaneously. In the Forten tradition, the two ladies kept up with the latest transatlantic intellectual debates.

Charlotte's father, Robert Bridges Forten (1813-1864) was the first male child of James and Charlotte, Sr. Forten. Born in Philadelphia, he came of age in a family that had already accumulated wealth and respect among members of the community. Despite their elite socio-economic status, the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ It is interesting to note that in 1841 – when Charlotte was three years old, the Gilbert Lyceum in Philadelphia was formed by her aunt Harriet, her husband Robert Purvis, Joseph and Amy Matilda Cassey, et al. It was the first literary and scientific society that not only was composed of people of color, but also the first to include both sexes in their membership. Winch writes, "The persons who composed the meeting...gave it a 'local habitation and a name' [citing *Midsummer Night's Dream*/Shakespeare], were eleven in number (Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 117)." As the meaning behind "local habitation and a name" was a line drawn from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Charlotte clearly did not realize the depth of her aunt's knowledge of Shakespeare's plays.

⁴⁴ As I discuss in great depth in Chapter II, Charlotte was a great admirer of Hawthorne's work. Hawthorne was also celebrated by abolitionists, most especially in New England. Bacon's work had been published the same year Charlotte and Aunt Harriet discussed "Miss Bacon" and Shakespeare's writings.

Fortens could not send their children to schools worthy of their station because of the color of their skin. It was imperative for James and Charlotte, Sr. that their children received the best education possible to prepare them for a life in a nominally free society in the North. Equally as important, they wanted to educate their children as abolitionists to prepare them to become public servants to uplift people of color less fortunate than themselves. The Fortens tried to make sure that their offspring would reach great intellectual heights so as to continue in the fight against oppression and slavery.⁴⁵ The Forten's wishes had exceeded their expectations with most of their children, but Robert, their first son, was unanimously seen as the brightest of the Forten children.

One example of Robert's unmistakable genius was when he constructed a nine-foot telescope in his early youth that was subsequently exhibited at Philadelphia's Franklin Institute.⁴⁶ In addition to science, his talents in math, poetry, and oration were recognized by local residents.⁴⁷ A contemporary and confidante of the Forten family, Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, a free man of color, wrote about Robert's extraordinary intellect and talents, including that in addition to constructing the nine-foot telescope, Robert also "ground his own lenses and set them himself."⁴⁸ Robert was already fulfilling the hopes and aspirations had by James and Charlotte, Sr. for their first born son.

After the death of Robert's wife—and Charlotte's mother—he channeled his grief by continuing his work for the Philadelphia Vigilant Committee, as well as pursuing intellectual

⁴⁵ Brenda E. Stevenson, "Considering the War from Home and the Front: Charlotte Forten's Civil War Diary Entries," in *Civil War Writing: New Perspectives on Iconic Texts*, eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Stephen Cushman (Louisiana State University Press, 2019), 177. For more on Robert Forten, see Stevenson, *Journals*, Winch, *Gentlemen of Color*.

⁴⁶ Stevenson, *Civil War Writing*, 177.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*; see also Stevenson, *Journals*.

⁴⁸ Payne wrote this passage in 1835. Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Tennessee: Publishing House of the A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1888), 46. The Introduction of Payne's book was written by Reverend Francis J. Grimké, A.M., D.D., who, at the time of writing it in 1888, was married to Charlotte Forten Grimké.

endeavors. Bishop Payne had started a seminary for African-American youth, and asked Robert “to deliver lectures on Astronomy, and give the pupils telescopic views of the heavens.”⁴⁹ Payne even solicited an original song from Robert for the children to sing at the start of each school day. Robert obliged, and called it, “Morning Song.”⁵⁰

Robert’s interest in astronomy clearly had been passed on to Charlotte. In one of her earliest diary entries shortly after she arrived in Salem, she wrote, “I was much disappointed in not seeing the eclipse, which, it was expected to be the most entire [*sic*] that has taken place for years.” Her disappointment was because of the terrible weather including rain and clouds. Despite the gloomy weather she still made an effort, “spending half the afternoon on the roof of that house in eager expectation,” but ultimately never caught a glimpse of the eclipse.⁵¹

Charlotte’s interest in the eclipse may have also been because her father had come to Salem and Boston in 1854 to attend the annual New England Anti-Slavery Convention and the trial of former fugitive Anthony Burns.⁵² The eclipse occurred at the same time as the two events. She did not record any private moments of affection shared with her father, so that her attempts at viewing the momentous eclipse was a way to share something meaningful and personal with her father other than politics. This theme of being disappointed in her father’s emotional absence would continue throughout her time in Salem.

Charlotte’s Aunt Sarah (1814-1884) was the fifth child born to James and Charlotte, Sr. Forten. Sarah was considered the most talented of the Forten daughters, and was an internationally-recognized poet and leading female voice for abolition. This was quite a remarkable nod to her

⁴⁹ Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 321.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 61.

⁵² This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II.

intellectual gifts considering her older sisters, Margaretta and Harriett, were also recognized in the transatlantic world of abolition. Sarah's poetry brought her much acclaim and attention, including numerous publications in anti-slavery newspapers such as *The Liberator*.⁵³ In addition to her poetry, she was an active member of the female Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society along with her sisters and mother. Yet by the time of Charlotte's birth in August, 1837, Sarah had married Joseph Purvis, brother of Robert Purvis, and had small children of their own. Unlike Robert, Joseph did not reach the same levels of economic success as his brother, and therefore was unable to provide Sarah the comforts she had known growing up as a Forten. This included being able to spend her time devoted to anti-slavery endeavors.

During Charlotte's stay in Salem from 1854-1856, she mentioned only one of her uncles, William Forten (1823-1909). It was in a passage that read, "I will...send a 'message of rebuke' to that eccentric bachelor – Uncle W.[illiam] for his indifference to our injunctions concerning the important Circular."⁵⁴ It is unclear what the important Circular was or why she would correlate it to him being an indifferent and eccentric bachelor, yet the brief lines reveal a fondness for her uncle. Since she was sending a message of rebuke, this likely meant that one of her aunts from home had provided this family gossip to her as opposed to having seen him in person. It also revealing that she could tease him about his personal characteristics and social choices without fear of punishment because of her gender.

In another diary entry, Charlotte wrote about her Uncle William as it pertained to her school studies. While she was studying at the Higginson Grammar School in Salem, she noted having read

⁵³ Sarah Forten's poetry and politics are discussed in more depth in Chapters II, III. Also see Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 121; Also Dunbar, *Fragile Freedom*, 105. Sarah Forten's poetry and politics are discussed in more depth in Chapters II and III.

⁵⁴ September, 10, 1854. Stevenson, *Journals*, 99.

Walter Scott's poem, *Lady of the Lake*,⁵⁵ as a part of the curriculum. "Mr. [Richard] Edwards⁵⁶ reads it so splendidly that it seems more beautiful to me than ever. I never read it without thinking of home and Uncle W.[illiam]."⁵⁷ Sir Walter Scott was a beloved figure to the Garrisonian abolitionists, and his writing was seen as a model for how Romantic poetry could be connected to American abolition as a way to overturn tyrannical practices, like slavery and oppressive laws. It is no wonder that the Forten household would have been familiar with Scott's writings, since he was a key literary figure read, analyzed, and championed by those sympathetic to anti-slavery. Charlotte's fond connection between the poem, their home, and her uncle underscores this notion.⁵⁸

In 1835, Robert Forten married Charlotte's mother, Mary Virginia Wood (1816-1840). Like his own mother, his new bride came from a privileged and politically-engaged family. Even before their marriage, Mary was unanimously and fondly described as having a "sweet disposition...intelligent mind...and clear judgement."⁵⁹ Contemporaries portrayed her as having been beautiful and light-skinned, and Robert was reportedly quite in love with her.⁶⁰ Their first child was Charlotte, who was born on August, 1837. Only three years later, Mary had contracted tuberculosis and was faced with impending death. Bishop Payne advised her throughout this time,

⁵⁵ Frederick Douglass' wrote that white abolitionists (who were unnamed) helped him to come up with the surname of Lord James of Douglass from Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. See also David W. Blight, [Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom](#) (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

⁵⁶ Richard Edwards was Charlotte's instructor at Higginson Grammar School in Salem. He will be discussed in more depth in Chapters II, III, and IV.

⁵⁷ May 23, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 96.

⁵⁸ Even though this is outside the purview of the dissertation, it is interesting to note what happened to William Forten, at least in public life. Historian Julie Winch writes that during the Civil War, "[w]hen it became obvious that Philadelphia's Democratic mayor was doing more for African Americans than his Republican challenger, [Robert] Purvis urged black voters to support him – and was roundly condemned by many black leaders. After that experience he left political infighting to his brother-in-law William Forten, a powerful figure in the state's Republican machine, and gave his time and energy to reform." Winch, *Elite of Our People*, fn. 166.

⁵⁹ Cite Payne/Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 321.

⁶⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 15. Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 278-279.

and she turned her attention to the Bible and sought repentance.⁶¹ The devastating news about Mary was compounded by the sudden death of their second child, Gerrit Smith Forten, who had died a few days short of his first birthday, and only eight weeks prior to Mary's fatal diagnosis.⁶²

In an attempt to make sense of his son's death and wife's fate, Robert painfully wrote, "[T]here are few who need more of christian [*sic*] fortitude than I, for my afflictions seem to multiply upon me."⁶³ He concluded with, "The severe illness of my affectionate wife tells me that the same hand which has removed my child must very soon lead her to the enjoyment of that eternal peace which passeth all understanding."⁶⁴ Mary Virginia Forten passed away on July 8, 1840, just five weeks before Charlotte's fourth birthday.⁶⁵ Soon thereafter, Robert and his small daughter tried to leave the painful past behind them, and moved back to the Forten family home on 92 Lombard Street.⁶⁶

Despite the fact that Charlotte had not even reached her fourth birthday when her mother died, she recalled fond memories in her diary. Since Charlotte had been so young, the memories were likely images that had been recounted by family members as opposed to direct recollections. Regardless, she recorded one memory in her diary on Easter that included the joyful celebration of the "feast of eggs...singing, the incense, and the grand tones of the organ." She sadly reflected, "Beloved mother! I long to see thee again; thee and ...the darling brother, all the loved ones who have gone before."⁶⁷ She ended the entry with feelings of selfishness and guilt since many people did

⁶¹ Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 321.

⁶² He died of "cerebral irritation." Ibid, 320.

⁶³ Cite, Robert Forten/Source, Winch, 321.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Stevenson, *Civil War Writing*, 175; Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 321.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 210-211.

not have the luxury to be able to recall fond memories of family and home life, especially those enslaved. Yet longing for a mother's love would haunt her throughout her teen years, including persistent feelings of loneliness and a tendency to turn to maternal figures to fill the void. Her father's emotional and physical absence only compounded her sense of isolation during her teen years in Salem.

As a result of the wealth James Forten, Sr. had amassed through his business endeavors, he and Charlotte, Sr. Forten were able to provide an excellent education for their children.⁶⁸ This included tutors at home as well as a private school started and funded by James and Charlotte, Sr. and their neighbors, Robert and Grace Douglass. The school was intended to furnish a superior education not available to them in the Philadelphia public schools.⁶⁹ In addition, the Fortens were able to provide a privileged and cloistered life far from the realities that most free families of color experienced in Philadelphia and the North in general.⁷⁰ As historian Gary B. Nash has established, by 1837 (the year of Charlotte's birth), "A large majority of black Philadelphians could not...achieve artisanal or proprietorial status. As in previous decades, they labored alongside immigrant Irish and native-born whites, who likewise were struggling to subsist."⁷¹ The Fortens were both extraordinary and unique in their accumulation of wealth and status as free people of color in Philadelphia. This extended into their political achievements for abolition.

The refuge in a cloistered home afforded by their wealth and elite status allowed the Fortens a respite after being so publicly visible as leading community members and abolitionists. Their fame

⁶⁸ For more on the Forten children's education see Dunbar, *Fragile Freedom*, Lapsansky-Werner, *Forten-Purvis Women*, Stevenson, *Journals of Charlotte Forten and Civil War Writing*, and Winch, *Gentleman of Color*.

⁶⁹ Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 116.

⁷⁰ For more on the condition of free people of color during the antebellum period, see Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (The University of Chicago Press, 1961); Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 252.

⁷¹ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 252.

made them targets of white mob attacks and physical threats to their home and persons, which surely led to the need to insulate and safeguard themselves. In a letter written by Sarah Forten to Angelina Grimké,⁷² the home on Lombard Street was described as a safe haven from the prejudices of the outside world. She explained, “[We] never travel far from home and seldom go into public places unless quite sure that admission is free to all; therefore, we meet with none of those mortifications which might otherwise ensue.”⁷³ The Fortens were fortunate to have the means to afford a home that could act as a fortress to essentially ward off prejudice. The downside to the safety it provided was that they were often confined behind its walls.

By the time of Charlotte’s birth in 1837, the Forten fortune that James had accumulated had dwindled as a result of racial tensions rising in the city. James Forten, Sr. was preparing to retire, and his sons, James, Jr., and Robert (Charlotte’s father), had been brought into the business - a move that included a formal name change to James Forten & Sons.⁷⁴ The brothers were taking over their father’s business at a politically volatile time as they faced mounting prejudice as people of color.⁷⁵ James Forten, Sr. had been mentored by white men who recognized his talents, and subsequently had interacted with white businessmen who were willing to work with him. Yet upon his retirement, his sons were facing an entirely new era of racial oppression and demoralizing prejudice.⁷⁶

In a contemporary account of James Forten, Sr.’s great disappointment about the treatment of his sons, it read in part, “[N]ot long before his death (in 1842), he had been especially mortified,

⁷² Angelina Grimké and her sister, Sarah, were the daughters of a slaveholding father of great wealth in the South. They rejected the practice of slavery, and left their home and family to move to Philadelphia and become devout abolitionists. The sisters became close with the Fortens after being introduced to them by abolitionists, James and Lucretia Mott. Mott was also one of the leading females spearheading women’s rights during this same time period.

⁷³ Willson, Winch, *Elite of Our People*, fn. 35, 130.

⁷⁴ Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 314.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

because...his sons had been refused a hearing at a public meeting where they wished to speak on some subject connected with trade.”⁷⁷ James, Jr. and Robert were not only facing a backlash in their business efforts, they and other Philadelphian free people of color were also the victims of increased mob attacks and segregationist practices, including in education and public facilities. The Forten sons would never attain the same level of business success or social status in Philadelphia the way their father had; a fact that resulted in longstanding and justifiable feelings of bitterness and resentment.

In addition to the shifts in racial tensions and the deleterious effects on the family’s business, Robert and James, Jr. were at odds over professional betrayal and in-fighting. The result was that James Forten & Sons declared bankruptcy and the two brothers were out of business together. In addition to Robert having lost his first-born son, his wife, and the subsequent death of his father, he also watched his father’s business flatline as his brother fled the city to New York. This left Robert to deal with the new monetary challenges without any help or support. After struggling as a single father with a small daughter since 1840, Robert remarried in 1845.⁷⁸ He had been introduced to Mary Hanscome of South Carolina by his sister, Harriet, and his brother-in-law, Robert Purvis. Both Mary and Robert had originated from South Carolina, and, like Robert, she was the child of a white slaveholder father and an enslaved mother, and who had been educated and fiscally provided for on par to her half-white siblings.⁷⁹

By the end of 1842, Charlotte’s uncle-in-law and aunt, Robert and Harriet, had moved their children out to Byberry, Pennsylvania to escape the constant threats and attacks at their home. It

⁷⁷ Ibid, 315 fn. 6

⁷⁸ Presbyterian Historical Society; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1907*; Book Title: *1788 – 1885*; Lineages, Inc., comp. *Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1788-1885: Neshaminy Presbyterian Church* [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000.

⁷⁹ For more detail on the friendship between the Purvis and Hanscome families see Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 344.

was after this time that Robert Forten moved his wife Mary, their two small children, Wendell Phillips and Edmund Quincy Forten, and pre-teen, Charlotte, to Bucks County. They moved for the same reasons as Robert and Harriet. Although the exact date is unknown, the 1850 Census shows the Robert Forten household in the country nearby the Purvises. In 1850, Charlotte was on the cusp of turning thirteen years old. Mary was busy raising their two small children in the country and Robert was still operating the Philadelphia underground railroad while also trying to secure income to support his family. In addition to the other prejudices he and his family faced, segregation in the Philadelphia schools and the outskirts were increasingly on the rise, and access to an education worthy of a Forten was unavailable to Charlotte.

Robert Forten's decision to relocate his daughter further North to New England was most likely a reaction to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Even though the Fortens were free, it had a tremendous impact on them as well as friends and fellow abolitionists in Boston and Salem. As historian David M. Potter argued, "To appreciate the full impact of [the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law], one must recognize that it was far more than a law to overtake slaves in the act of running away. It was also a device to recover slaves who had run away in the past."⁸⁰ Equally as terrifying, the measure left free people of color vulnerable to possible misidentification as fugitives or kidnapping.⁸¹ All of these factors affected Charlotte and her family, and factored into the decision to move her to Salem.

Prior to Charlotte's move to Salem in 1854, there is little-to-no direct evidence of her biographical background or why her family chose to send her away. Even if schooling options in Bucks County were slim, her choices in Philadelphia held more promise. For example, Amelie Bogle (1810-1867), a woman of color, had started a private school in 1841 for African-American children

⁸⁰ Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 131.

⁸¹ Ibid.

in the city, and was still in operation in 1856.⁸² This was within the time frame of Charlotte having moved to Salem. In addition, Bishop Payne noted that, “Some time in 1853 a white woman...opened a school in Philadelphia for the education of colored children. As now, so was it then. The white person who opened such a school, unless employed by the State authorities, was sure to be ostracized. She therefore found her associations among the parents who employed her.”⁸³ Even if not ideal, sending Charlotte to this school would have at least kept her close to her Aunt Margarette and her grandmother.

There were other educational options for Charlotte in Philadelphia during the mid-1850s. William Still, co-manager with Robert Purvis on the UGRR, wrote that Charles Lewis Reason (a free man of a color and an instructor) arrived in the city to teach at the Institute for Colored Youth. Payne wrote that Reason dramatically increased enrollment.⁸⁴ These few examples show that it does not appear that Philadelphia was suffering from a lack of educational access for children of color, especially given Charlotte’s social status.

What is equally curious as to why Robert moved Charlotte to Salem and not Philadelphia is that Charlotte’s Aunt Margaretta was running a private school for children of color in Philadelphia during the same time. It is therefore surprising that with Margaretta’s exceptional intelligence and extensive teaching background that her niece would not have been formerly educated by her. It may be because the real danger was that it was unsafe for a free female teenager of color to reside in Philadelphia with only her grandmother and aunt as guardians. Moreover, almost immediately after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was passed, Philadelphia became one of the main cities for Southern

⁸² Willson/Winch, *Elite of Our People*, fn. 119.

⁸³ Payne, *Seventy Years*, 90.

⁸⁴ William Still, *Underground Railroad*, 10/of 330.

infiltrators to reclaim former fugitives or kidnapping free people of color, which put the city—and most especially the city’s people of color—into a panic.⁸⁵

There is no definitive evidence as to the reason for Charlotte’s relocation to Salem in 1854—only clues. However, what is known is that she went to live with family friends Amy Matilda and Charles Lenox Remond. The Remonds had known Charlotte and her family for many years, and agreed to let her come live with them to attend Higginson Grammar School.⁸⁶ Amy Matilda had lived in Philadelphia with her first husband, Joseph Cassey, and their children, Sarah and Henry, before his death in 1848. The couple had been friends with Charlotte’s family and extended family for years. Like the Forten women, Amy Matilda was a steadfast abolitionist and an active member of the anti-slavery community in Philadelphia before she relocated to Salem in 1852 to remarry.⁸⁷ Amy Matilda’s two children, Sarah and Henry Cassey, lived in the Remond household as well, and Charlotte considered them both like the siblings she did not have, since they were close in age. Charles Lenox Remond was a well-known and celebrated lecturer on the anti-slavery circuit, and was considered the most famous black abolitionist before Frederick Douglass’s ascent on the political stage.

In addition to Amy Matilda and Charles Lenox Remond opening their home to the fifteen-year-old girl, Charlotte was also surrounded by a vast network of Boston and Salem abolitionists who rallied behind her arrival to New England. These people included other members of the Remond family, such as Sarah Parker Remond, the first female abolitionist of color to lecture on the anti-slavery circuit nationally and internationally, and her sister, Caroline Remond Putnam, another

⁸⁵ The other main cities included Detroit, Harrisburg, and New York. Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 133.

⁸⁶ Room and board for Charlotte was provided to the Remonds by her father. More on this will be discussed in Chapters II, II, and IV.

⁸⁷ Stevenson, *Civil War Writing*, 178.

formidable abolitionist. Other people Charlotte interacted with in Salem were Boston native and long-time family friend William C. Nell.⁸⁸ Charlotte's familiarity and interactions with the Remonds and friends would likely have slightly softened any homesickness she felt upon her relocation.

Charlotte moved from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts some time in 1854. She was coming of age as a young, free teenager of color, and began her time in Salem steeped in the abolitionist politics of William Lloyd Garrison and his vast network of Garrisonian followers. Charlotte too was devoted to Garrison, and the move to Salem sparked a political and intellectual awakening in her. James and Charlotte, Sr. Forten had started the family dynasty on the principle of pursuing higher education and intellectual uplift to overcome and, ultimately, overturn racial injustice. Their children had fulfilled expectations even if increasing racial tensions prevented them from taking full advantage of their talents as adults. Charlotte was the first grandchild of James and Charlotte, Sr., and was the first niece to pick up the mantle as an abolitionist from her father, aunts, and uncles. She carried a huge burden as a result of her family's fame, but just as her aunts had learned from British reformer Hannah More, she knew that "[t]he acquisition of learning may be converted to higher uses than such as are purely literary."⁸⁹ Charlotte was about to come in to her own as a radical teenage abolitionist and gifted intellectual who fought against tyranny, oppression, and slavery.

⁸⁸ Their biographies will be discussed in Chapters II, III, and IV.

⁸⁹ Hannah More, *Stricture On the Modern System of Female Education, With a View Of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune*, In Two Volumes. Vol. I (Originally published in Bath, England in 1799; Published by Samuel West, Salem, Massachusetts, 1809; 13-14 from the Salem publication).

Chapter II: 1854 Salem was the Spark

I believe in resistance to tyrants, and would fight for liberty until death.
- Charlotte Forten, age sixteen, 1854

Charlotte Forten started to keep a diary in May 1854. She was fifteen and a half – almost sixteen years old, and was living in Salem, Massachusetts. She stayed as a guest in the home of Charles Lenox and Amy Matilda Remond so as to obtain a higher education unavailable to her in Pennsylvania. Charlotte dedicated her diary and explained the reasons for starting it. “A wish to record the passing events of my life,” and added, “which, even if quite unimportant to others, naturally possess great interest to myself, and of which it will be pleasant to have some remembrance.”⁹⁰ She also wanted to use her spare time away from school and homework as productively as possible so as to be able to “recalling the memories of other days and much-loved friends.”⁹¹

The final line of Charlotte’s the inscription concluded that she wished to gauge and judge her school studies in Salem. the growth and improvement of my mind from year to year.”⁹² This reflected the Fortens’ longstanding belief in the importance of personal knowledge as the gateway to uplifting others. Moreover, Charlotte was entering the Higginson Grammar School, which also might have prompted her to start recording the time as a new student. She was in Salem to fulfill her family’s wishes that she obtain a superior education that was unavailable to her in Philadelphia or the outlying countryside. She was eager and ready to devote her full time to her studies, and when not

⁹⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 58.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

studying, she was equally as enthusiastic to participate in anti-slavery affairs in both Salem and Boston.

What is curiously missing from Charlotte's inscription was the passing events of her life were daily-spent associating with some of the most famous black and white Garrisonian abolitionists in New England during the 1850s leading up to the Civil War. It was at the height of the political chaos and horrors of Southern slavery and the United States government's complicity through complicit legislation like the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and the subsequent Nebraska Bill. Northern compromise was rejected by Garrisonian abolitionists, including teenage Charlotte.⁹³

Her first journal entry after the inscription was on Wednesday, May 24, 1854. In what initially appears to be a typical day for a teenage girl, she wrote:

After dinner practiced a music lesson, did some sewing, and then took a pleasant walk by the water.... On my way home, I stopped by Mrs. [Caroline] Putnam's and commenced reading 'Hard Times,' a new story by [Charles] Dickens.... Saw some agreeable friends, [Jonathan] Buffum and his family from Lynn, prepared tea, and spent the evening in writing.⁹⁴

Charlotte's entry might be overlooked for its mundanity. Yet careful reading reveals that these seemingly ordinary acts were more often politically-motivated. Almost everything Charlotte wrote in her diary, even the commonplace and school work, was in some way connected to being a Garrisonian abolitionist.

For Charlotte, practicing the piano, sewing, reading, preparing tea and socializing with like-minded friends were all exercises in being educated as a proper young lady and a budding abolitionist. For example, practicing the piano not only showed her elite socio-economic status, it also enabled her to participate in the anti-slavery songs that accompanied every abolitionist event,

⁹³ The Forten family had long stood by and financially supported William Lloyd Garrison and his anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator* (1831-1865). For more on the Forten alliance with Garrison, see Chapter I.

⁹⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 59.

fair, lecture, celebration, and home gathering.⁹⁵ Sewing was not only an act of domestic labor, it was also an act of political resistance. Clothing was provided to escaped fugitives for disguise and/or comfort and was also a source of revenue when sold at anti-slavery fairs.⁹⁶ Reading Charles Dickens was not only a leisurely pursuit of the well-educated, it was also a way for her to engage with authors who were sympathetic to American abolition. Charlotte taking tea with the Buffums was not just participating in polite society. The family had traveled from Lynn to attend the 1854 New England Anti-Slavery Convention that starting the same day she started to keep a diary.⁹⁷ Therefore, the timing of Charlotte's first journal entry on May 24, 1854 suggests that she wanted to do more than just document pleasant memories and school work while in Salem.

The 1854 New England Anti-Slavery Convention was being held in Boston and happened to coincide in the same few days that former fugitive Anthony Burns had been arrested and jailed in the city. Anthony Burns had been residing in Boston for a few months since his escape. Charlotte's dear friend and mentor, William C. Nell (1816-1874)⁹⁸ of Boston, had helped Burns escape from capture just two weeks prior. Unfortunately, Burns ignored Nell and was taken into custody by the police.⁹⁹ Charlotte would have known about the arrest and upcoming trial, since her Salem housemates and friends had joined other abolitionists in Boston to aid Burns.

⁹⁵ Vicki L. Eaklor, *American Antislavery Songs*, Introduction.

⁹⁶ This will be discussed more in depth throughout the chapter.

⁹⁷ The convention was held at the Melodeon in Boston.

⁹⁸ William Cooper Nell was a free man of color who grew up and lived in Boston. His father, William G. Nell, had been a founder of the Massachusetts General Colored Association in the 1820s. Like his father, William C. Nell, was a radical abolitionist whose activism included integrated the Boston public school system in 1854, managing the Boston Vigilance Committee, which included aiding fugitives on their escape, and penning the first African-American history book, *The Colored Patriots*, published in its entirety in 1855. More on Nell will be discussed throughout the dissertation, since he acted as a type of older brother/mentor to young Charlotte, especially when it came to her political activism. For more on Nell's biography, see William Cooper Nell: Selected Writings, 1832-1874 ed. by Dorothy Porter Wesley and Constance Porter Uzelac (Baltimore: Black Class Press, 2002); Stevenson, *Journals*, xlv.

⁹⁹ The letter reads, "I have stolen this (my first) opportunity of escape from the Boston Fugitive Slave excitement to finish up some long deferred [*sic*] business in New York. The past two weeks have been crowded with events

In addition to William C. Nell and Charlotte's other New England friends, her father, Robert Forten, and her Aunt Harriet had arrived from Pennsylvania for the anti-slavery convention and the Burns trial. It is therefore an uncanny coincidence that Charlotte—who had already been residing in Salem—suddenly decided to keep a diary. Along with memorializing her friends and school studies, she also wanted to document the personal and political impact the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and subsequent local and national legislations enacted had on New England's abolitionists and former fugitives. This included herself.

The timely occurrence of Burns' arrest and trial only added to the overall excitement of the annual New England Anti-Slavery convention. The arrest was a major topic of discussion. There had been other former fugitives, including William and Ellen Craft, Shadrach, and Thomas Sims, whose freedom had been threatened by the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.¹⁰⁰ However, Boston and Salem abolitionists had already worked out a successful scheme to implement should a kidnapper come to the city. There was an immediate action plan to distract the kidnapper by surrounding his place of lodging, make his whereabouts known to citizens of the city, and hide the former fugitive until the kidnapper was forced or shamed to leave. The Burns arrest and trial shattered the model that had

unparalleled in the anti-slavery history of the Nation; a whole volume I could fill with their narration... I knew Anthony Burns soon after his arrival here and procured him a situation in Northampton. He broke his promise however, and soon was in [the] hands of the kidnapper. I need not tell you that from the first to the last I was up and doing and almost wore myself out. *William Cooper Nell: Nineteenth-Century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist. Selected Writings, 1832-1874*, ed. by Dorothy Porter & Constance Porter Uzelak, (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2002), 384 (ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). For more on Anthony Burns see R.J.M. Blackett, *The Captive's Quest for Freedom: Fugitive Slaves, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, and the Politics of Slavery* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

¹⁰⁰ By early October 1850, Theodore Parker and his Vigilance Committee of Boston, were successfully able to smuggle to safety William and Ellen Craft, soon after word got out that their former Macon master was out to reclaim them (Ibid, 133). Only four months later, a group of abolitionists of color were able to held another fugitive, Shadrach, escape to Canada. However, in the spring of 1851, their tactics of smuggling out fugitives to safety had been undermined by cooperation between the federal authorities and the local Boston law enforcement. Thomas Sims was returned to his master. It was not until May, 1854 that Anthony Burns became the next target of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. (Ibid, 133-134.)

for so long been successful.¹⁰¹ Charlotte may have sensed that this was a political turning point for abolitionists as well as for the country.

Charlotte's second journal entry in documented the unjust kidnapping of Anthony Burns and the opening day of the annual New England Anti-Slavery Convention. On Thursday, May 25, Charlotte penned, "Did not intend to write this evening, but have just heard of something that is worth recording..."¹⁰² She expressed fear and outrage over Burns' having been jailed and wrote that the incident "[M]ust ever rouse in the mind of every true friend of liberty and humanity, feelings of the deepest indignation and sorrow."¹⁰³ It was a dark day for abolitionists in Boston and Salem, and the teenager's writing provides a vivid account of the impact it had on the city as well its people. She made a point to write that Burns was not the first fugitive to be put in jail, adding, "Another fugitive from bondage has been arrested...like a criminal in the streets of her capital..."¹⁰⁴ This indicates that Charlotte was keenly aware of the brief history and havoc of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law in Boston.

Even though Charlotte did not mention the other fugitive by name, she was more than likely referring to Thomas Sims. He had been seized and sent back to slavery after losing a court case in Boston in 1851.¹⁰⁵ Like Burns, the Boston and Salem abolitionists had been critical in trying to help him escape, including William C. Nell.¹⁰⁶ Anthony Burns' arrest therefore only elevated the tension and panic for the abolitionists, because it was becoming clear that the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law posed a real and ever-present threat to the colored citizens of the city, whether former fugitives or

¹⁰¹ Blackett writes, "In Boston—a city from which it boasted that no fugitive had ever been returned—violation was opened and organized led by Theodore Parker and other members of the city's elite (Ibid)."

¹⁰² Stevenson, *Journals*, 60.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Blackett, *Captive's Quest*. Unlike Thomas Sims, William and Ellen Craft fled to England for their safety before they were kidnapped. Blackett, *Captive's Quest*, 396-400.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 414-415.

born free.¹⁰⁷ During this period, posters appeared on the streets of Boston warning citizens of color to be aware of the kidnapper and the complicit police. The warning was necessary, because the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law enabled pro-slavery sympathizers to track down those had who escaped from slavery, and to trick and lure free people of color into bondage.

Charlotte's writing about the chaotic and dangerous atmosphere in Boston during the Burns trial was quite descriptive for a teenager. She wrote about how "a double police force" was necessary and that "the military [stood] in readiness; and all this is done to prevent a man, whom God has created in his own image, from regaining that freedom with which, he, in common with every other human being, is endowed."¹⁰⁸ The disgust she felt for the police and military was equal to her embarrassment for the city's public and political downfall. She concluded with, "I can only hope and pray...that Boston will not again disgrace herself by sending him back to a bondage worse than death...."¹⁰⁹ Charlotte's assessment of the arrest shows how attuned she was to the politics she witnessed firsthand.

From the start of keeping a diary, Charlotte often included or incorporated the poetry of her favorite American and European abolitionists, especially after trying days. This was a way to soothe her anguish and powerlessness over racial prejudice and injustice. For example, in response to Burns' arrest, she concluded her entry with William Cowper's *Poem: Against Slavery*. She transcribed the poem in its entirety.¹¹⁰ In addition to admiring the words, the act of writing them out was a form

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 20-27.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ From Charlotte's journal: "The weather is gloomy and my feelings correspond with it, how applicable now are the words of the immortal Cowper – 'My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled;
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood, is severed as the flax.

of comfort and solidarity, as well as to a way to align the pain of slavery to the poetry of Romanticism. Romantic thinkers and writers sought to overturn tyranny and oppression and coalesce in a world of beauty and peace. Throughout the pages of Charlotte's journal, she often commented on how poets and authors were seen as moral compasses to guide her during difficult and trying times. Their literary companionship offered intellectual refuge for Charlotte when the real world was not so welcoming or inclusive.¹¹¹

Still on May 24, Charlotte described a conversation she had with the Higginson School instructor and principal, Mary Shepard. Mary was a young white woman who championed Charlotte throughout her time in Salem. Charlotte considered Mary a close friend and trusted confidante, as well as a scholarly mentor. The two ladies discussed the topic of slavery, and much to Charlotte's great relief, she learned that Mary thoroughly rejected it.¹¹² Charlotte noted that Mary "...does not agree with me in thinking that the churches and ministers are generally supporters of the infamous system; I believe it firmly."¹¹³ Charlotte's notation illustrates the defiant and radical attitude toward what Garrisonian abolitionists called, "American Christianity." This thinking included her family, who firmly rejected a religion that condoned or justified slavery in scripture. It is significant that

He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own; and having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause.

Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey." Stevenson, *Journals*, 60. Cowper's poem is titled, *Poem: Against Slavery*, from *The Poetical Works of William Cowper, The Inner Temple, Esq.* Vol. II (Philadelphia: Printed for Benjamin Johnson, Jacob Johnson, and Robert Johnson, 1806). Abolitionists consistently cited and printed anti-slavery poetry in the columns of their papers, tracts, and sheet music. In 1868, Samuel J. May, published his personal accounts and reflections on the importance of poetry to the abolitionists. In a section titled, "John G. Whittier and the Antislavery Poets," he wrote, "The columns of *The Liberator*, from the beginning, were every week enriched by gems in verse.... No sentiment inspires men to such exalted strains as the love of liberty...." Samuel J. May, *Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1869), 260-262.

¹¹² Stevenson, *Journals*, 60-61.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Charlotte wanted to record her position on the churches and ministers, and that she used it as a barometer to gauge a person's true devotion to abolition.

Continuing in the same passage, Charlotte elaborated on her firm stance regarding American Christianity and wrote, "Mr. [Albert] Barnes, one of the most prominent of the Philadelphia clergy, who does not profess to be an abolitionist, has declared his belief that 'the American church is a bulwark of slavery.'"¹¹⁴ She concluded with, "Words cannot express all that I feel; all that is felt by the friends of Freedom, when thinking of this great obstacle to the removal of slavery from our land. Alas! that it should be so."¹¹⁵ Charlotte noted that even though Barnes was not an abolitionist, even he could see the unholy alliance between slavery in the South and the American churches and clergy in the North. Moreover, citing Barnes—a Philadelphia clergyman—to validate her opinion shows that the contemptuous feelings for the American churches and clergy originated from her childhood in Pennsylvania and not after she had relocated to Massachusetts.

The roots of Charlotte's disdain for the American church and clergy are found in formative years growing up in Philadelphia and outside Bucks County. Even though direct evidence from Robert Forten does not survive, Charlotte's Uncle-in-Law, Robert Purvis, and her Aunt Harriet publicly documented their position on religion both personally and publicly. Margaret Hope Bacon, in her biography of Robert Purvis, argues that Charlotte's mother, Mary Woods Forten, was extremely pious and encouraged those in her family to seek the comfort of religion. In 1840, in her obituary in *The Colored American*,¹¹⁶ it quoted the dying woman as having said, "You are moral and

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ The concept of how abolitionists viewed and interpreted Christian Freedom can be found throughout anti-slavery literature and newspapers. One example titled, "John G. Whittier and the Antislavery Poets," asserts that "[t]he columns of *The Liberator*, from the beginning, were every week enriched by gems in verse.... No sentiment inspires men to such exalted strains as the love of liberty.... Mrs. [Maria Weston] Chapman gathered into a volume the effusions of the above-named, together with those of kindred spirits in other lands and other times. The volume was entitled, 'Songs of the Free and Hymns of Christian Freedom.'" May, *Recollections*, 260-262.

good but you need religion, you need the grace of God. O seek it!"¹¹⁷ Bacon suggests that Mary was most likely talking to Purvis, because he had recently broken his long-standing ties with the St. Thomas Church in Philadelphia.¹¹⁸ Previously, St. Thomas was where Robert Purvis and Harriet Forten had married, and was also where James Forten, Charlotte, Sr., and their children, including Charlotte's father and mother, had all attended.¹¹⁹

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was having a galvanizing effect on the free community of color, especially in Philadelphia. This was legislation passed in 1816 to forcibly remove free people of color "back to Africa." James Forten, Sr., Charlotte's grandfather, had been a leading pioneer in organizing annual Negro Conventions to address the impending impact of the ACS on black citizens.¹²⁰ The ACS became a political rallying-cry for American abolitionists – both black and white – to confront and protest pro-slavery actions and legislations. Like Charlotte's grandfather, Robert Purvis was a vocal advocate against the ACS, as well as the looming local and state legislations intended to undermine black enfranchisement, taxes, and access to public institutions. Bacon writes that "After the episode in which the vestry of St. Thomas prohibited Purvis from mentioning the colonization movement (i.e., the ACS) or the antislavery movement in a speech to be given in the church, Robert and Harriet relinquished their pew, claiming that the church was pro-slavery!"¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *The Colored American*, August 29, 1840.

¹¹⁸ Margaret Hope Bacon, *But One Race: The Life of Robert Purvis* (State University Press, 2007), 89. It is interesting to note that Bacon asserts that Mary was pious, yet it may have been because she had sought the spiritual guidance of Bishop Daniel Payne upon learning that she had contracted tuberculosis, which occurred at the same time the Fortens and Purvises were rejecting the Philadelphia pews. For more on Charlotte's mother, Mary Virginia Woods Forten, see Chapter 1.

¹¹⁹ Bacon, 89; Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 342.

¹²⁰ Nash, *Forging Freedom*; Winch, *Gentleman of Color*.

¹²¹ Note that the exclamation point is Bacon's. The author cites an article written by Frederick Douglass for the *North Star* in 1848. He asserted that Robert Purvis had decided that he was no longer an Episcopalian, and claimed that three black churches in Philadelphia were unavailable for lectures on anti-slavery. One of the churches was St. Thomas

Robert Purvis had come to see his own interpretation of Christianity vis-à-vis Garrisonian principles, which was an allegiance to “the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and Christianity in action.”¹²² Action being the operative word, in that active measures were tantamount to the success of abolitionist tactics and methods. These active measures included the underground railroad, protests, boycotts, raising funds, writing political tracts and papers, attending gatherings, and putting personal safety at risk. Bacon asserts that “In leaving St. Thomas’ Church...Purvis was taking part in the movement launched by William Lloyd Garrison for abolitionists to separate themselves or ‘to come out’ from any church or political body that had slaveholders as members.”¹²³ Called “Come-outers,” they purposefully disavowed themselves from conservative churches and Quaker meetings that stayed silent against slavery or would not allow church members to speak out against it.¹²⁴

African Episcopal Church. Douglass believed that its complacent clergy, William Douglass... was afraid of the potential for mob violence should the church become too radicalized. Bacon’s inclusion of Frederick Douglass’s article is important, even though it was written in 1848. It showed that in the eight years since Purvis and Harriet had relinquished their pew, Purvis’s self-exile from St. Thomas and the Episcopalian faith remained throughout this period. Douglass included a letter that Purvis had written to the *North Star*, stating that “he had received ten dollars for relinquishing his right and title to a certain pew in St. Thomas African Episcopal church (which he had subscribed to in 1830), because he now regarded the church as pro-slavery. Instead he would give his ten dollars to the ‘suffering slave.’” *North Star*, October 6 and 13, 1848); Bacon, 106-107.

¹²² Ibid, 90.

¹²³ Ibid, 107

¹²⁴ Ibid. Other examples of the abolitionists’ interpretation of American Christianity: Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, a free man of color and a close friend of the Fortens and Purvises, wrote in 1835, “When a man from Georgia declared himself a Christian and a slave-holder, Mr. [Lewis?] Tappan replied, ‘You are no Christian; you are a man-stealer. No Christian can make a slave of another.’” Bishop Alexander Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Nashville: AME Sunday School Union, 1888; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1968), 45; In a speech given by Wendell Phillips before the Massachusetts Antislavery Society at the Melodeon in Boston on January 27, 1853, he said that, “In nothing have the Abolitionists shown more sagacity or more thorough knowledge of their countrymen than in the course they have pursued in relation to the Church. None but a New Englander can appreciate the power which church organizations wield over all who share the blood of the Puritans. The influence of each sect over its own members is overwhelming, often shutting out, or controlling, all other influences.... In such a land, the Abolitionists early saw, that, for a moral question like theirs, only two paths lay open: to work through the Church, -- that failing, to join battle with it... Since then we have been convinced that, to come out from the Church, to hold her up as the bulwark of slavery, and to make her shortcomings the main burden of our appeals to the religious sentiment of the community, was our first duty and best policy....” Wendell Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1872), 122.

It is significant that the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) allied with the position of the Come-outers, because its members included the Forten and Purvis women, as well as Amy Matilda Cassey Remond. The PFASS declared its position on true Christianity—or Christian Freedom—as “no union with political or ecclesiastical organizations that had union with slaveholders.”¹²⁵ This declaration further included that the society would reject *any* person—regardless of political affiliation, gender, or skin color—to participate in the selling of goods at the anti-slavery fair if they should affiliate with churches who stay silent on slavery.¹²⁶ Once Charlotte had moved to Salem and was living under the guidance of Amy Matilda Remond, these doctrines and principles remained intact.

There is no record of whether or not Charlotte’s father kept the family’s membership at St. Thomas in Philadelphia after Robert and Harriet Purvis rejected it. In addition, there is no record of whether or not the family joined a church when they moved to Bucks County. However, the Pennsylvania Presbyterian Church Records have Robert Forten’s and Mary Hanscome’s names in its registry when they married in 1845.¹²⁷ It is telling that the couple married in a Presbyterian Church, because it indicates that, like the Purvises, they too rejected the Episcopalian faith and St. Thomas.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ One example that Bacon gives is Thomas Cavender, a member of the political Liberty Committee. Ibid.

¹²⁷ Mary Hanscome married Robert after Charlotte’s mother passed away. Presbyterian Historical Society; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1907*; Book Title: *1788 – 1885*; Lineages, Inc., comp. *Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1788-1885: Neshaminy Presbyterian Church* [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000; See Chapter 1, 18-19 for more on Mary Hanscome.

¹²⁸ On January 8, 1885 a Quaker periodical printed a brief obituary of Charlotte, Sr. who had passed away at the age of one-hundred. The only information it provided was that she had been the widow of James Forten and that the funeral would be held at her late residence at 10:00 o’clock on the “2d inst.” Quaker Periodicals, Haverford College; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *The Journal*, Volumes: *1875 Jan - 1885 Apr (Vol 9 - 13)*. This is not to suggest that Charlotte, Sr. had become a Quaker, but it is worth noting in light of the religious shifts taken by the Forten and Purvis households, because she had been a member of St. Thomas for decades. Charlotte, Sr., like her late husband, had been instrumental in organizing venues in which to protest slavery and oppression. This included her forming female Anti-Slavery and Literary Societies. It also included her forming a private school with her husband and the Mapps Douglass family for all of their children to attend so as to gain a superior education not permitted to them as people of color. The acknowledgment in the Quaker journal may have been because of this association. Overall, as a dogmatic and staunch

Although it is only one bit of evidence, it implies that Robert Forten and his family turned away from conservative churches. Moreover, the lack of evidence about membership in any other local church records is also telling. Conversely, there is a plenitude of evidence about Robert Forten's participation in abolitionist politics and his work on the Vigilance Committee. Therefore, the absence of religious life on record suggests that he and his family may have also been Comeouters.¹²⁹

During the week of May 27 and the upcoming Burns trial and anti-slavery convention, wrote extensively in her diary about the scheduled and private events. "Read the "Anti-Slavery papers... and then went down to the depot to meet father."¹³⁰ Charlotte noted that he "regretted very much" not being able to attend the great meeting at Faneuil Hall," because he had not arrived in Boston on time.¹³¹ She wrote that her father and the others were very excited at the outcome of the trial, and ended with, "We scarcely dare to think of what may be the result; there seems to be nothing too bad for those Northern tools of slavery to do."¹³²

Charlotte's use of bitter language about "those Northern tools" was not only a radical statement for a teenage girl, it was also an audacious statement to put in writing. Anyone working, aiding, or abetting fugitives after the rise of the 1850 Slave Law could face fines, imprisonment, loss

abolitionist and matriarch of the Fortens, it would not be implausible to surmise that Charlotte, Sr. also rejected conservative Christianity as a form of protest along with her grown children and spouses.

¹²⁹ Another potential clue that Robert Forten and his family did not attend a formal church or a Quakers Meeting in Bucks County can be gleaned from Robert Purvis's situation in nearby Byberry. Margaret Hope Bacon writes that the Purvis's farm was across the street from a Society of Friends, so the presumption was that he and his family had attended it. However, Bacon shows how this speculation is inaccurate, since many Byberry Quakers resented Purvis's purchase of a land in their vicinity. Furthermore, he was "painfully aware that other blacks had been denied membership in the Religious Society of Friends" even though membership was officially open to people of color dating back to 1796. Bacon gives multiple examples of the prejudicial treatment Purvis and his family received by many of the Quakers in Byberry. Bacon, *But One Race*, 105-106.

¹³⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 61-62.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 62

of business, and possibly death. Even hardcore abolitionists, like her Uncle-in-Law, Robert Purvis, had destroyed their records for fear of the information getting in the wrong hands. However, guised as a teenager's diary, those coming to reclaim former fugitives would not have necessarily have checked it as a possible source. Regardless of the risk, Charlotte angrily composed the disdain she felt at the Northern tools whose laws, practices, and comprises showed them to be willing allies for the South to preserve the status quo of slavery.

Charlotte dedicated many lines in her diary about her political stance on the Burns affair. What is glaringly missing from the pages, however, is mention of her personal feelings about her father's arrival. This was more than likely the first time she had seen him since she had moved to Salem, so it is odd that any expressions of excitement are absent. She instead framed his entire visit as political. Furthermore, she failed to mention that her Aunt Harriet had also recently arrived for the convention and the trial, and that she had taken her niece to a Burns protest gathering.¹³³ Yet this is understandable, because as a Forten and as a free person of color writing about anti-slavery events, she would have known that these events were more important to record rather than a daughter's delight in seeing her father. The former was historically meaningful whereas the latter was too personal to document. Since there are many instances where she omitted feelings about a person or an event, it suggests she understood her writing might be consumed by others besides herself. This further illustrates that she kept a diary during this political period for a distinct purpose, which suggests she intended it as more than a personal document.

A reoccurring theme in Charlotte's journal writing becomes evident early on and sheds light on the weekly religious practices of Salem and Boston abolitionists—more specifically, Garrisonian abolitionists. This is seen in how Charlotte spent every Sunday throughout the year. Her Sundays

133 Janice Sumler-Lewis, "The Forten-Purvis Women of Philadelphia and the American Anti-Slavery Crusade," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982): 285.

bear witness to the way Garrisonian abolitionists worshipped the Sabbath. As historian and biographer, David W. Blight, asserts in *Frederick Douglass*, “Typical of many abolitionist gatherings, especially on a Sunday, Douglass [and others] spoke to an afternoon meeting as well as an even larger one in the courthouse in the evening. Because of the Garrisonians’ hostility to the clergy, as well as their persistent attacks on religious hypocrisy....”¹³⁴ Charlotte spent every Sunday attending the above-described lectures unless she was not feeling well or the weather prevented the event. Attending anti-slavery sermons on Sundays in lieu of hypocritical dogma spewed by the American churches was a doctrine of a true Garrisonian Christian.¹³⁵

In late May, 1854, Charlotte wrote that she awoke to do busy work and then hurriedly had gone to see Caroline Putnam, a Salem resident, friend, and ardent Garrisonian abolitionist.¹³⁶ The excitement of the Burns trial was underway. The teenager was asked to mind Mrs. Putnam’s store so that she could go to Boston to attend the Anti-Slavery Convention.¹³⁷ “I was very anxious to go,” Charlotte wrote, “and certainly will do so to-morrow; the arrest of the alleged fugitive will give additional interest at the meetings.”¹³⁸ It is interesting that she did not name Burns directly, but instead called him an “alleged fugitive.” She may have been referring to him in this way to

¹³⁴ David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2018), 102-103.

¹³⁵ Blight writes, “[Garrison] argued that the whole of American society, especially the North, needed a ‘moral revolution’ in values, a transformation from a nation of sin and infamy to the goal of human perfection. Garrison was a great organizer, an intrepid newspaper editor [i.e., *The Liberator*], and sometimes a magical performer. But he could also demand absolutist doctrines of his followers, as in the biblical injunction he fondly employed: ‘Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect (Ibid, 105).’ Blight cites Matthew 5:48 and to see James B. Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996), 88-91. (Blight, *Douglass*, 781.)

¹³⁶ Caroline Remond Putnam was the sister of Charles Lenox Remond and his sister, Sarah Parker Remond. She was the owner of a thriving hair salon in Salem, and was an active member of the Salem Anti-Slavery Society. For more on her connection to Charlotte, see Chapter I. Also see Stevenson, *Journals*, xlvii.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 63. On May 30, 1854, the New England Anti-Slavery Society began its annual convention at the Melodeon in Boston. *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 3, 1854.

¹³⁸ Stevenson, *Journals*, 63.

underscore how damaging the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was to all fugitives in Boston, and not necessarily anomalous to him.

Charlotte was quite anxious about what was happening in Boston, and wrote, “His trial is still going on and I can scarcely think of anything else.”¹³⁹ As was typical, she turned to another treasured Romantic poet for solace, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Charlotte wrote that she had “Read again to-day as most suitable to my feelings and to the times, “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point.”¹⁴⁰ She then dramatically described Browning’s poem and its effect on her, as well as its potential influence on others. Charlotte sought Romantic and anti-slavery poetry like a literary salve to heal her broken heart over the injustices of the era against people of color regardless of their status in society.

Charlotte concluded the day’s diary entry about the anti-slavery convention by reflecting on what she had experienced. “After a long conversation with my friends...on the all-absorbing subject, we separated for the night, and I went to bed, weary and sad.”¹⁴¹ She had grown up having seen and heard of the work of her family and other abolitionists on the UGRR, but witnessing the horrible events of Burn’s situation firsthand may have been new for the teenager. Her diary provides a

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Charlotte included multiple entries in her journals about the beauty of Browning’s poetry. Other examples include two entries later in the year: “Sunday, October 22, 1854 - Read some very beautiful poems of Mrs. Browning. The whole soul of the poetess is breathed forth in her writings. They seem like delicious music to reach the depths of our nature, to give us earnest, holy thoughts, and increase our love for the good and the beautiful;” Stevenson, *Journals*, 101-105. Also, “Sunday, November 5, 1854 -...Read some of Mrs. Browning’s beautiful poems, and Dr. Cheever’s lecture on Bunyan. They are earnestly, beautifully written. Sometimes I feel that their deep religious thought is beyond my comprehension. Yet I cannot but acknowledge its truth, and admire its beauty and fervor.” Ibid, 108-109. Browning was not only a British abolitionist sympathizer, she was also a contributor to the 1848 edition of *The Liberty Bell*, an annual literary gift book that was published to accompany the New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar each Christmas. *The Liberty Bell* contained contributions from a list of well-known transnational abolitionist authors and poets, and was a much-treasured gift item for abolitionists. See *The Liberty Bell* by friends of freedom, 1848. [v. 9] Boston, National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1848, viii, 292 pages. The Boston Bazaar was conceived and operated by the Weston sisters, Maria, Ann, and Hannah. More will be discussed on the Bazaar and *The Liberty Bell* at the end of each chapter. The fair and publication of the *Bell* occurred each Christmas time for more than two decades and was considered to be the main enterprise of the abolitionist cause in terms of its profit and transnational efforts. Ralph Thompson, “The Liberty Bell and Other Anti-Slavery Gift-Books,” *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March, 1934).

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

unique window in the private moments experienced in the aftermath of watching injustice in real time. If Charlotte's Salem and Boston friends of color wrote contemporaneous letters, notes, or journals about the Burns trial or the New England Anti-Slavery Convention, little evidence has survived.¹⁴² *The Liberator* and other anti-slavery newspapers covered the story in great depth, but a journal is rare. Therefore, Charlotte's writing appears to be the only surviving primary source by a free female abolitionist of color.

During the same week as the New England Anti-Slavery Convention and the Burns trial at the end of May, 1854, Charlotte visited Boston with her house-mate, Sarah Cassey. Sarah was the daughter of Amy Matilda Cassey Remond and Joseph Cassey and had grown up in Philadelphia near Charlotte's family.¹⁴³ The two teenage girls were similar in age and Charlotte viewed Sarah like a sister. Charlotte provided vivid detail about the atrocities she and Sarah had witnessed in Boston, writing, "Everything was much quieter—outwardly than we expected, but still much real indignation and excitement prevail."¹⁴⁴ She continued, "We walked past the Court-House, which is now lawlessly converted into a prison, and filled with soldiers, some of whom were looking from the windows, with an air of insolent authority...."¹⁴⁵ She described the soldiers' arrogance as having "made [her] blood boil...and...felt the strongest contempt for their cowardice and servility."¹⁴⁶

Charlotte's diary also described the speakers and speeches she and Sarah witnessed with great detail, including how the trial had infused the abolitionists with renewed dedication and

¹⁴² William C. Nell is one of the exceptions because he often wrote personal letters to his abolitionist friend, Amy Kirby Post (of Rochester, New York) about the interactions, dynamics, and goings on with the Boston and Salem abolitionists. Since Nell and Charlotte were friends, his letters have helped to substantiate many of Charlotte's journal entries, as well as to offer additional information that she chose not to record and vice versa.

¹⁴³ For more on the Casseys, see Chapter I.

¹⁴⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 63-64.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

urgency. The “Impending Crisis” was on the horizon. Charlotte noted how “The exciting intelligence which occasionally came in relation to the trial, added fresh zeal to the speakers, of whom Stephen Foster and his wife [Abigail Kelley] were the principal.”¹⁴⁷ Charlotte observed that Kelley’s address to the women in the room was elegantly persuasive because of how she used language to implore them “to urge their husbands and brothers to action and...give their aid on all occasions in our just and holy cause.”¹⁴⁸ Kelley’s words resonated with Charlotte and infused her own spirit with intentionality and purpose. If law and order was being usurped by slavery sympathizers in the North, the abolitionists saw truth and liberty as the moral antidote needed to triumph over it.

Charlotte ended the day’s entry with a hagiographic portrayal of Mr. and Mrs. William Lloyd Garrison. Charlotte had attended a dinner at their house after the meeting, which more than likely included her father and aunt. However, this was not noted. Charlotte depicted the evening in terms of the glowing nature of the Garrison’s, describing Mrs. Garrison as “[O]ne of the loveliest persons I have ever seen,” and added, “worthy of such a husband.”¹⁴⁹ Charlotte praised Garrison like an adoring fan. “At the table, I watched earnestly the expression of that noble face, as he spoke beautifully in support of the non-resistant principles to which he has kept firm....”¹⁵⁰ Charlotte’s idolization for his “noble face” was not only a compliment about his physical attributes, but also about his strong leadership on non-violence in the abolitionist movement. It had only been a week since a vicious mob had attacked him and others when Burns was arrested. Even though she did not

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 64. Abigail Foster Kelley (1811-1887) a well-known white abolitionist and women’s rights advocate. She was one of the first (white) female speakers on the anti-slavery lecture circuit, and was a Garrisonian abolitionist. Her husband, Stephen Symonds Foster (1809-1881), of Worcester, was also a leading Garrisonian abolitionist, and the two were considered a powerful political couple for the anti-slavery cause throughout New England.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

mention the attacks, surely it would have influenced her perspective on Garrison's honorable character.

In addition to Charlotte's admiration for Garrison's commitment to non-violence, she simultaneously admonished herself for not being as measured in nature. She reflected, "[Garrison's] is indeed the very highest Christian spirit, to which I cannot hope to reach, however, for I believe in resistance to tyrants, and would fight for liberty until death."¹⁵¹ Charlotte expressed a perception of failure as a true Garrisonian Christian might, because her instinct was to resist with physical violence instead of peace. She was not alone in this thinking. Many fellow abolitionists were also re-thinking their non-violent approach—most notably Stephen Foster and Charles Lenox Remond, both of whom had just spoken at the anti-slavery meeting she had attended.¹⁵²

Stephen Foster was subsequently quoted in *The Liberator* as having spoken at the convention and firmly rejected the position of non-violence in the aftermath of Burns. He was ready to take up arms if necessary in defense of any fugitive or free person of color in danger of being taken into slavery. Charles Lenox Remond wholeheartedly affirmed and supported Foster's position.¹⁵³ With

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² See fn. 67 for more on Foster.

¹⁵³ From *The Liberator*, June 1, 1854, notes from the New England Anti-Slavery Convention: "Stephen S. Foster, of Worcester, introduced the two following resolutions: -- Resolved, That the experiences of the last few days proves the necessity of a more thorough and efficient organization of the friends of freedom throughout this Commonwealth, and the New England States, for the special purpose of protecting our own citizens against the powerful band of kidnappers by whom the country is infested, and whose presence among us is imminently dangerous to the liberty and life of every honest, upright man. Resolved, That a Committee of five be appointed by the Chair, to meet a similar Committee that may be appointed by the Free Soil Convention now in session, to mature [*sic*] a plan for such organization, and report at a subsequent session of this Convention. . . . Stephen S. Foster further explained his own position in regard to the use of warlike weapons. Every man, he said, should fight against slavery with his own weapons, with those whose use he best understood, and in which he most trusted. He said that men in the country, (and he spoke especially of Worcester,) were ready to combine and organize against kidnapping, if those in the city were not; and they were men who might be depended upon, in any extremity. Mr. [Charles Lenox] Remond, of Salem, here rose to complain of the too frequent contrast of Boston and Worcester—city and country. So far as he knew, the abolitionists of Boston had been as ready to adopt every possible and practicable measure, as those in Worcester or elsewhere. Mr. R. referred to the fact that the banner of the Worcester Freedom Club had been taken from them by one of the Boston Police; and said that on its being restored to them, and again attempted to be seized, it was rescued by a colored man of Boston, and though broken in the struggle, was triumphantly held. Mr. Foster explained that he did not mean to contrast the places unfavorably; -- he spoke of Worcester, because it was his residence, and he knew whereof he affirmed. They had always protected their

high emotions and great anticipation of Burns' fate, Charlotte's diary entry about believing in resistance to tyrants and fighting for liberty until death may have been influenced by Foster and Remond's speeches. Garrison's non-violence was a lot to ask of a radical teenage abolitionist, even if Charlotte berated herself for believing she failed his expectations.

The following day was the Burns trial. Charlotte started the entry, "I am keeping store for Mrs. [Caroline] Putnam again. Miss [Sarah Parker] Remond is still in Boston, and Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond has gone also; father and Aunt Harriet are there."¹⁵⁴ Charlotte's next few lines were penned after hearing the news that the trial had concluded and deliberation was underway. "We are all in the greatest suspense; what will that decision be? Alas! that any one [*sic*] should have the power to decide the right of a fellow being to himself!"¹⁵⁵ In what would ultimately become a prescient statement, she added, "It is thought by many that he will be acquitted of the *great crime* of leaving a life of bondage, as the legal evidence is not thought sufficient to convict him,"¹⁵⁶ but added that it was "only too probable that they will sacrifice him to propitiate the South, since so many at the North dared oppose the passage of the infamous Nebraska Bill."¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Charlotte's prediction would prove to be accurate.

fugitive brethren. He wished a thorough organization, whose head should be in the city, and its body in the country." *The Liberator*, June 9, 1854.

¹⁵⁴ Sarah Parker Remond was the sister of Charles Lenox Remond and Caroline Remond Putnam. She was the first woman of color to tour the anti-slavery lecture circuit in both the United States and Europe, and was a radical abolitionist and ultimately became a physician in Italy. Dorothy B. Porter, "Sarah Parker Remond: Abolitionist and Physician," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July, 1935): 287-293; Ruth Bogin, "Sarah Parker Remond: Black Abolitionist from Salem," Essex Institute History Collections, Vol. 110 (April, 1974): 120-151; Sirpa Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad: Sarah Parker Remond in Cosmopolitan Europe* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2016). For more on the connection between Sarah Parker Remond and Charlotte Forten, see Chapter I. Note that this is the first mention of her Aunt Harriet. Stevenson, *Journals*, 64-65.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ "Great crime" was Charlotte's emphasis.

¹⁵⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 64-65. *The Liberator* published multiple editorials about the pending Nebraska Bill prior to its passage, which was viewed as a political bombshell potentially as devastating to the abolitionists as the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. One example in *The Liberator* was published on May 26, 1854. It read in part: "The Nebraska Bill Passed – Another Triumph of the Slave Power. The deed is done—the Slave Power is again victorious. On Monday, the U.S.

The last passage in Charlotte's diary after Burns trial had concluded was a poignant yet jarring description of the marriage between Helen Putnam and Jacob Gilliard that place in the evening.¹⁵⁸ It was in such stark contrast to the political events she had earlier described, but the fuller context of why she included it is evident. Charlotte wrote that "Mr. [Octavius Brooks] Frothingham¹⁵⁹ performed the ceremony, and in his prayer alluded touchingly to the events of this week...[and]...spoke in the most feeling manner about this case."¹⁶⁰ Charlotte's assessment of Mr. Frothingham was that his "sympathies are on the right side."¹⁶¹ She described the wedding as pleasant and that the bride looked lovely, and added, "we enjoyed ourselves as much as is possible in these exciting times, but it is impossible to be happy now."¹⁶² Even at a joyful occasion like a wedding, the plight of the fugitive and slavery in general remained front and center at the ceremony.¹⁶³

House of Representatives took up the Nebraska Bill, when, after several ineffectual attempts to defeat or delay it on the part of its opponents, Mr. Richardson, of Illinois, moved his substitute for the Bill, (being the same as the Senate Bill, with the exception of Mr. Clayton's amendment,) and moved the previous question. Great excitement followed, but the substitute was adopted.... And so, against the strongest popular remonstrances—against an unprecedented demonstration of religious sentiment—against the laws of God and the rights of universal man—in subversion of plighted faith, in utter disregard of the scorn of the world, and for purposes as diabolical as can be conceived of or consummated here on earth—the deed is accomplished. A thousand times accursed be the Union which has made this possible!" *The Liberator*, May 26, 1854.

¹⁵⁸ Helen Putnam was a member of the Putnam family of Salem—an abolitionist family of color. Helen was the sister of Joseph Putnam, who will later become a dear friend and mentor to Charlotte. Jacob Gilliard was originally from Baltimore and was a ship's barber. Stevenson, *Journals*, xliii.

¹⁵⁹ Octavius Brooks Frothingham was the minister for the First Church in Salem, which was Unitarian. It is unclear whether Frothingham married the couple in home or in the church.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid, 65

¹⁶³ Charlotte does not mention that her friend, William C. Nell, was also in attendance at the wedding. In a letter written to Amy Kirby Post on Wednesday, he finished with, "Did I tell you of being a groomman [*sic*] for Gilliard & Helen? I stood with Georgiana [Putnam]. The whole affair was most brilliant – She (Helen) has returned from New York – he has sailed for California...." Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 384; (ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). This is not to suggest that Nell was unfeeling about the fugitive's fate, but instead shows how his age and life experience offered a different perspective when dealing with atrocity and matrimony on the same day.

The following day in late May, 1854, news arrived that Anthony Burns had been convicted. It was the main topic of discussion at the National Anti-Slavery Convention.¹⁶⁴ “Our worst fears are realized,” she wrote in her diary, “and he has been sent back for a bondage worse, a thousand times worse than death.”¹⁶⁵ Charlotte had predicted Burns’ conviction, but was still thoroughly disappointed in the outcome. Charlotte scorned the people in Boston who aided in the removal of Burns back to the South, and called them all disgraceful. She wrote that the state of Massachusetts “again has she showed her submissions to the Slave Power; and Oh! with what deep sorrow do we think of what will doubtless be the fate of that poor man, when he is again consigned to the horrors of slavery.”¹⁶⁶

In the same passage, Charlotte commended those who had tried to stop Burns’ return from happening, and wrote, including her beloved William Lloyd Garrison. “Even an attempt at rescue was utterly impossible; the prisoner was completely surrounded by soldiers with bayonets fixed, a canon loaded, ready to be fired at the slightest sign.”¹⁶⁷ Charlotte was a witness to the atrocities of a free society in the North acquiescing to the South. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was in full force even in the city known as the “Cradle of Liberty.” Charlotte was horrified at the events unfolding around her, and more than likely was feeling a sense of vulnerability and fear of what would happen next for those enslaved, as well as those considered free.

In addition to the panic and uncertainty Charlotte expressed, she also lambasted the United States government and its soldiers for their weakness in not standing up to protect Burns. “With

¹⁶⁴ Charles Lenox Remond was one of the speakers, as well as Lucy Stone, a pioneer in the first wave of the American women’s rights movement. *The Liberator* described the scene as having “[s]ome very eloquent remarks next followed from Lucy Stone and Charles L. Remond, which we do not attempt to sketch, as they will be published in full from a phonographic report by Mr. Jas. M.W. Yerrinton.”¹⁶⁴ *The Liberator*, June 9, 1854.

¹⁶⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 65-66.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

what scorn must that government be regarded which cowardly assembles thousands of soldiers to satisfy the demands of slaveholders,” she asked rhetorically, “to deprive of his freedom a man, created in God’s own image, whose sole offence is the color of his skin!”¹⁶⁸ It is significant that Charlotte was not asking this as a question but was stating it as truth. Otherwise she would have included a question mark along with the exclamation point at the end of the sentence. Moreover, for the first time in her diary, she referred to her own country as “that government,” implying that she was staunchly allied with Garrisonian abolitionists calling for the Union to dissolve over “The Impending Crisis” of slavery.

Charlotte concluded the day’s diary by highlighting the inconsistencies between America’s proclamation of freedom versus the lived reality:

[S]oldiers are to shoot down American citizens without mercy; and this by express orders of a government which proudly boasts of being the freest in the world...this on the very soil where the Revolution of 1776 began...where thousands of brave men fought and died in opposing British tyranny which was nothing compared with the American oppression of today.¹⁶⁹

Charlotte underscored the American paradox, because the reference to the Revolution of 1776 and the brave men who fought for the Revolution was personal. Her grandfather, James Forten, Sr., had fought as a teenager in the Revolutionary War.¹⁷⁰ Charlotte understood the duplicity of the American creed, because she and her family experienced it firsthand. What had her grandfather fought for if not for freedom and liberty for all? Charlotte’s realization that the ideals of the Revolution were only attainable to white Americans was a cruel reality to come to terms with. This was especially so after her grandfather had fought so hard for the country’s independence from tyrannical rule.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Winch, *Gentlemen of Color*, 28-36. For more on James Forten, Sr., see Chapter I.

The Burns conviction was devastating news for the Garrisonian abolitionists. *The Liberator* included accounts of the mob attacks led by William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Parker, and others against those taking Burns back to the South.¹⁷¹ Consistent with the anti-slavery newspaper's long-standing tradition, it published both sides (i.e., anti-slavery and pro-slavery) of the same story. Not surprisingly, each complained that the other had intentionally misrepresented the narrative—the opposition calling abolitionists murderers and the abolitionists defending their atypical violent actions to protect Burns.¹⁷²

In the last portion of Charlotte's entry on the day of Burns' relocation - a week before *The Liberator's* accounts of the event, she ended with an addendum. "In looking over my diary, I did not mention that there was...an attempt made to rescue him, but although it failed, all honor should be given to those who bravely made the attempt."¹⁷³ Her last lines read, "I can write no more. A cloud seems hanging over me, over all our persecuted race, which nothing can dispel."¹⁷⁴ Charlotte's addendum is important, because, in addition to the tribute made to those who attempted to free Burns, it also shows that she was contemporaneously re-reading her journal for historical accuracy and details. She wanted to preserve a truthful version of the accounts should others not write it down or preserve it correctly, including the anti-slavery newspapers.

Charlotte's feelings of outrage for the government's acquiescence to the pro-slavery power continued to mount after the trial's outcome. She began by describing the beautiful spring weather, but immediately pivoted to the fury she felt. "How strange it is that in a world so beautiful, there can be so much wickedness, on this delightful day, while many are enjoying themselves in their happy

¹⁷¹ *The Liberator*, June 9, 1854.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 66.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

homes, not poor Burns only, but millions besides are suffering in chains.”¹⁷⁵ Since she was writing on the Sabbath, Charlotte questioned what the clergymen were saying about the conviction. “How many Christian ministers to-day will mention him? ... How many will speak from the pulpit against the cruel outrage on humanity which has just been committed, or against the many, even worse ones, which are committed in this country every day?”¹⁷⁶ She already knew the answer, “Too well do we know that there are but very few...”¹⁷⁷

The Burns case had a profound impact on Charlotte. After his conviction, her diary writings tended to vacillate between pointing out the hypocrisy of the American church and the government and the importance of her own school studies to uplift her race. Being well-educated was expected of a female Forten. The motivation was premised on uplifting the self in order to uplift others. It was during this period of writing that Charlotte wrote frequently about her desire for an excellent education as well as wanting to be a writer. She wanted to prove that people of color were not inherently intellectually inferior, as was claimed to justify and perpetuate white supremacy. Attaining a high-level of education would exemplify how much could be accomplished despite prejudicial and political barriers that tried to prevent it.

Charlotte’s shift in understanding her role as a free teenager of color and a radical abolitionist is reflected in a diary passage in June. She was on school vacation and was greatly disappointed to not be able to enjoy the time off because of the recent political events of Burns’ conviction. In describing her feelings about going back to school, she wrote, “[I] will be much saddened at recent events, yet they shall be a fresh incentive to a more earnest study, to aid me in fitting myself for laboring a holy cause, for enabling me to do much towards changing the condition

¹⁷⁵ June 4, 1854. Stevenson, *Journals*, 66-67.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

of my oppressed and suffering people.”¹⁷⁸ Her use of “holy cause” as the paradigm of anti-slavery is a direct quotation of William Lloyd Garrison. From this point forward in Charlotte’s journal – at least during her tenure in Salem as either a student or teacher – she consistently reminded herself that her personal sorrows, hurts, or selfish desires were not as important to what was expected of her publicly as a radical abolitionist fighting the holy cause.¹⁷⁹

In light of the trial’s disappointing outcome, Charlotte expressed concern over her father’s desire to move to New England. “I fear he has not now a very favorable opinion of Massachusetts; still I hope they will come.”¹⁸⁰ The next portion provides a significant clue as to why her family may have sent a fifteen-and-a-half-year-old free teenager of color to Salem by herself. She wrote, “I do not wish to have my long-cherished plan of our having together a pleasant New England home defeated.”¹⁸¹ It is more than likely that Charlotte’s father, step-mother, and step-siblings had intended to move to New England to join up with Charlotte. She probably was sent ahead to start the school year, and was only supposed to be temporarily alone in Salem.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ This portion of the passage went on to read, “Would that those with whom I shall recite to-morrow could sympathize with me in this; would that they could look upon all God’s creatures without respect to color, feeling that it is character alone which makes the true man or woman! I earnestly hope that the time will come that they will feel thus.” Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 69.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² William C. Nell had also witnessed the Burns case and acknowledged its larger significance for abolitionists moving forward. In a personal letter written to Amy Kirby Post, a white abolitionist, about the Burns trial, Nell described the outcome: “I have stolen this (my first) opportunity of escape from the Boston Fugitive Slave excitement to finish up some long deferred business in New York. The past two weeks have been crowded with events unparalleled in the anti-[slavery] history of the Nation; a whole volume I could fill with their narration... I knew Anthony Burns soon after his arrival here and procured him a situation in Northampton [but] he broke his promise, however, and soon was in [the] hands of the kidnapper. I need not tell you that from the first to the last I was up and doing and almost wore myself out and this morning sent the last on my list[,] 2 women and a child to Canada; some of these cases have been very interesting...” Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 384.

In June and throughout the remainder of 1854, Charlotte documented the prolific amount of sewing she and other female abolitionists were doing on almost a daily basis. Even though sewing was something women did routinely, the repetitive journal entries suggest there might be more to it than solely domestic work. Charlotte did not often include household duties in her entries unless it was somehow within the context of abolition or because of its novelty. What becomes evident is that she and other female abolitionists in Salem were sewing items for the annual New England National Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Boston during Christmas. The Bazaar was one of the largest and most widely-attended anti-slavery events that dated back to 1834. Its founders were the Weston sisters, Maria, Ann, and Hannah, who had known the Fortens, Purvises, and Remonds for decades.¹⁸³ Equally as significant, Charlotte's house-hostess, Amy Matilda Remond, was one of the Bazaar's committee members.¹⁸⁴ The Westons and Amy Matilda had known each other since she had resided in Philadelphia and was married to Joseph Cassey.¹⁸⁵

It is important to note that even though Amy Matilda Remond's name can be found printed in *The Liberator* along with the other (white) female Bazaar committee members of 1854, scholars have excluded her from the narrative. Female abolitionists of color have only been seen as attendees or producers of the goods sold at the Bazaar. For example, Lee Chambers-Schiller argues in her essay on the Boston Bazaar that, "In communities such as Salem..., with large populations and active abolitionist groups, separate black fairs were held with goods sent from elsewhere. Some

¹⁸³ More on the Weston sisters will be discussed at the end of this Chapter when Charlotte first attends the Christmas Bazaar.

¹⁸⁴ The advertisement for the Anti-Slavery National (Boston) Bazaar included its committee members: Anne Warren Weston, Mary May, Anne Greene Phillips, Eliza Lee Follen, Henrietta Sargent, Sarah Shaw Russell, Louisa Loring, Helen E. Garrison, Lydia D. Parker, Frances May Robbins, E.C. Von Arnim, and Amy M. Remond. *The Liberator*, December 15, 1854.

¹⁸⁵ To be sure, Charlotte was more than likely sewing clothing for herself as well, but there are too many recorded instances throughout her journal in 1854 where she referenced sewing as being part of a society, group, sewing bee, or anti-slavery circle. This will be shown throughout this dissertation.

white managers required blacks to purchase their leftovers.”¹⁸⁶ This analysis is problematic because it presumes that abolitionists of color were only making items while white managers were organizing the fairs. Moreover, the analysis of “separate black fairs” omits that in places like Salem (and Boston), black abolitionists were closely aligned with their white allies. Charlotte never mentioned a “separate black fair” while living in Salem. Lacking in scholarship is a more wholistic approach to the significance of the annual Bazaar and the contributions made by female committee members of color.

In addition to Amy Matilda’s membership on the Bazaar committee, she was also a member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society (SFASS), which had been founded in 1834. Amy Matilda had joined in 1852 after moving to Salem upon her marriage to Charles Lenox Remond. She and her sisters-in-law, Sarah Parker Remond and Caroline Remond Putnam, as well as other Salem abolitionists of color, were members. The SFASS was integrated, and had three main objectives for its organization: 1.) to make and distribute clothing items for escaped fugitives in the area, 2.) organize a sewing school for young girls of color, 3.) support the annual Bazaar by donating hand-made items, clothing, and raising funds throughout the year, 4.) aid fugitives on the underground railroad to Canada, and 5.) provide pecuniary and public support of William Lloyd Garrison’s, *The Liberator* by purchasing ten copies per week to distribute to potential sympathizers of abolition.¹⁸⁷

The sewing circle was seen as an important facet of the Garrisonian anti-slavery movement because it not only provided a space for women to gather to labor for the holy cause, it was also an

¹⁸⁶ Chambers-Schiller, “A Good Work among the People: The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair,” in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America*, eds. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 256.

¹⁸⁷ Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society Collection, MSS 34, Congregational Library and Archives, Boston, Mass. <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series3/SFASS>

opportunity to circulate political petitions and tracts.¹⁸⁸ The daily sewing Charlotte engaged in—whether alone, with friends, or at these sewing circles, was to make clothing and accoutrements to raise money for the Bazaar.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, sewing was a far more radical activity than merely a routine chore performed in the home. Like her grandmother, mother, aunts, and other female abolitionists before her, Charlotte’s sewing fulfilled a significant aspect of her overall obligation as a female abolitionist.¹⁹⁰

Participating in sewing circles to aid fugitives and raise money for the abolitionist cause was not a new activity for Charlotte. She had grown up seeing her grandmother, aunts, and female friends perform this type of anti-slavery work. This is why she did not describe it as a new task—unlike, for example, learning to weave hair, which she found to be an awkward task, or the playful teasing she got for attempting to bake a pie. Instead, sewing was a task much more familiar to her—otherwise she would have recorded its novelty. As historian Todd S. Gernes argues about early female abolitionists of color, including Charlotte’s Aunt Sarah, “Emblematic goods were not merely

¹⁸⁸ Chambers-Schiller, “A Good Work,” 254.

¹⁸⁹ *Report of the Twentieth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar* (Boston: J.B. Yerrinton & Son, Printers, 1854); Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (University of Tennessee Press, 1992); Emma Lapsansky, “Feminism, Freedom, and Community: Charlotte Forten and Women Activists in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, January 1989.

¹⁹⁰ Joseph Willson, “*The Elite of Our People: Sketches of Black Upper-Class Life in Antebellum Philadelphia* (1841)” ed. Julie Winch (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Charlotte would have been five years old at the time of Willson’s accounts of his friends and peers, including the Forten family. Willson, wrote, “Mutual Relief Societies are numerous. There are a larger number of these than of any other description, in the colored community.... There are also one of more others, strictly devoted to objects of out-doors benevolence. The last mentioned are chiefly composed of females.” Winch, *Elite of Our People*, 84. Winch’s footnote reads, “The women had a Dorcas Society to supply clothing to the needy. Founded in 1830, it had seventy-two members by 1838.” Ibid, 122. More than likely Charlotte’s grandmother and aunts participated in the Dorcas Society, even if supplying goods from their home if not active members of the particular organization. Winch elaborates, “One goal of the organization was to provide poor black children with clothing and shoes so they could attend school. Willson wisely did not refer to another kind of “out-doors benevolence” sponsored by the women in the community, the collecting of money and clothing for fugitive slaves.” Ibid. Just as Willson knew to write in a coded language in 1841 when the underground railroad was actively helping fugitives escape, Charlotte, too, would know to write cryptically about her sewing should the journal be read by a pro-slavery sympathizer. She could not trust that her private words might fall in to the wrong hands. Therefore, documenting the daily task of sewing without further explanation might have been a way to preserve the larger history without the threat of exposure.

circulated among true believers but were distributed widely to further the abolitionist cause.

Antislavery women organized themselves into sewing circles and sold the fruits of their labor at fundraising fairs.”¹⁹¹ Sewing for political purposes was not a new concept or chore for Charlotte.

Gernes cites an early letter written in 1836 (the year before Charlotte’s birth), by Angelina E. Grimké, a close friend and confidante of the Forten family. It described sewing for female abolitionists as, “[T]elling the story of the colored man’s wrongs, praying for his deliverance, and presenting his kneeling image, constantly before the public eye on bags and needle-work, card-racks and pen-wipers, pin-cushions &c.”¹⁹² Charlotte’s sewing in 1854 therefore was a continuation of the established activity undertaken by female abolitionists, including members of her own family. It was another aspect of the “action” that Robert Purvis had described in the Garrisonian abolitionists’ interpretation of how to be a true Christian.

Sewing was a politically important task, but Charlotte considered it intellectually boring. As she sewed she often put to memory the poetry and literary lines of her favorite authors to keep her mind entertained. “In the evening read *Moll Pitcher* for some time.¹⁹³ – Then did some sewing; while I was sewing, tried to commit the above lines and some others to memory, but found it not very easy to do; my eyes and thoughts would wander to the beautiful poem, and the work was forgotten....”¹⁹⁴ Charlotte clearly preferred mental stimulation over physical labor, and often the former took precedence. Or at least it took precedence in her diary. Once Christmas and the Bazaar were closer

¹⁹¹ Todd S. Gernes, “Poetic Justice: Sarah Forten, Eliza Earle, and the Paradox of Intellectual Property,” *The New England Quarterly*, (June, 1998): 236-237.

¹⁹² Ibid. The last portion reads, “Even the children of the North are inscribing on their handiwork, ‘May the points of our needles prick the slaveholder’s conscience.’” Angelina E. Grimké, *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, 23.

¹⁹³ *Moll Pitcher* was by John Greenleaf Whittier. More on Whittier will be discussed throughout the dissertation. See Appendix II for the authors and books Charlotte read.

¹⁹⁴ In another example of Charlotte’s intellectual boredom with sewing, the next day (June 24th), she recorded that “After school, read in the ‘History of England.’ – Then did some sewing, while Sarah read aloud Mr. [Charles Lenox] Remond’s speech in the Convention, which I like very much.” Stevenson, *Journals*, 76-77.

in date, however, the majority of Charlotte's diary entries mentioned sewing, showing how important it was for the Bazaar, as well as how dedicated she was to abolition.

In July, Charlotte described having attended an anti-slavery meeting nearby in Danvers. She wrote that, "Mr. [Andrew] Foss spoke eloquently, and with that warmth and sincerity which evidently comes from the heart...rejoiced that the people at the North were beginning to feel that slavery is no longer confined to the black man alone, but that they too must wear the yoke; and they are becoming roused on the subject at last."¹⁹⁵ In Charlotte's closing of her diary that day, she transcribed a conversation with Sarah Parker Remond after the Danvers meeting and described how the two wanted an anti-slavery in the neighborhood every Sunday that was as well attended. . "We were wishing that we could have an anti-slavery meeting in the neighborhood every Sunday," she noted, "and as well attended as this was."¹⁹⁶

Soon after Charlotte's return from the Danvers anti-slavery meeting, the next five days was filled with the continuous sewing she undertook. This was in addition to school and homework. The increase in Charlotte's sewing did not ease up until the start of the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar at the end of December. The sewing that she and the other ladies of Salem produced would be publicly acknowledged in *The Liberator* after the closing of the fair in January of the following year.¹⁹⁷

In addition to the increase in Charlotte's sewing, her attempts at anti-slavery writing also was recorded throughout the summer months of 1854. However, when she described her attempts at poetry, it was often accompanied with feelings of crippling doubt and painful insecurity. Her

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 77.

¹⁹⁶ July 23, 1854. Ibid, 77-78.

¹⁹⁷ The January 1855 edition of *The Liberator* as well as Charlotte's contributions to the fair will be discussed in more detail in Chapters II, III, and IV.

insecurities may have been because she was a typical teenager filled hormones and angst. However, it was also most likely because of the burden she had to live up to as the next generation of Forten females, including the prolific intellectual talents of her aunts.¹⁹⁸ This burden was undergirded by public and private accolades and tributes from William Lloyd Garrison, as well as John Greenleaf Whittier who had written a poem called, “To the Daughters of James Forten,” about their literary gifts.¹⁹⁹

Charlotte’s feelings of unworthiness were often debilitating and manifested as headaches, illnesses, and bouts of depression.²⁰⁰ She understood the importance of writing and intellectualism as a way to contribute to the abolitionist cause, yet it weighed on her in both mind and spirit. Her Aunt Sarah had been internationally known as a talented poet and writer, and had been published multiple times in anti-slavery papers, including *The Liberator*. Todd S. Gernes asserts that “Many of [Sarah] Forten’s poems, ‘The Grave of the Slave’ among them, are verbal equivalents of antislavery emblems, which depicted African slaves, half naked, kneeling in supplication.”²⁰¹ In addition, her lines was set to music by bandleader, Frank Johnson, a free man of color, and sung at anti-slavery gatherings.²⁰² Charlotte was the same age that Sarah was when she had achieved so much public recognition and support. This must have added to immense pressure to the younger Forten.

¹⁹⁸ For more on the Forten family, including Charlotte’s aunts, see Chapter 1. Also see Winch, *Elite of Our People*; Gernes, “Poetic Justice,” 235. Accessed online: Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366504> Accessed: 20-07-2015 20:21 UTC; Stevenson, *Journals*, xliiii; Mrs. N.F. Mossell, in *The Work of the Afro-American Woman*, 2d. ed. (Philadelphia: Geo. S. Ferguson Co., 1908); Winch, *A Gentleman of Color*; Lapsansky, *The Forten-Purvis Women*.

¹⁹⁹ Winch, *A Gentleman of Color*, 273.

²⁰⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*; Professor Brenda Stevenson, in-person conversations during office hours, 2017-2018.

²⁰¹ Gernes, “Poetic Justice,” 236.

²⁰² Erica Armstrong Dunbar, “Writing for True Womanhood: African-American Women’s Writings and the Anti-Slavery Struggle,” in *Women’s Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*, edited by Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart (Yale University Press, 2007), 305.

Yet as a teen, the burden of fulfilling her role and the fear of being unworthy was a terrible hardship for Charlotte to bear. One example of her feelings of literary inferiority can be seen when she expressed frustration with herself as compared to her school instructor, Mary Shepard. “After school, stayed with Miss Shepard, who was writing some sentiments for a fair. I wondered how she could write them so easily and rapidly; they were all excellent, and one so very amusing that I wish I dared insert it here.”²⁰³ Charlotte confessed to having tried “in vain” to invoke the muse of songwriting but was left uninspired to create anything of merit. Or at least in her mind. This type of self-effacing response about her talents as compared to others was thematic throughout her teen years. As the granddaughter and daughter of the famous Forten family, the intense public scrutiny was probably overwhelming.

As Charlotte worked to pen anti-slavery poetry and sew, the Fourth of July was soon approaching. The celebration caused her much dismay because of the duplicitous nature of a Constitution that promised freedom while keeping people enslaved. The holiday happened to fall on the Sabbath, and appropriately cited the third verse of the last chapter of Hebrews, “Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.”²⁰⁴ She reflected on its meaning and concluded, “All honor for the noble few who do feel for the suffering bondman as *bound with him*, and act accordingly!”²⁰⁵ By citing the Bible on the Fourth of July, Charlotte linked the hypocrisy of the national holiday to the sermons given by the American clergy, who misguided their flock to support the pro-slavery South.

Charlotte’s journal entry on the Fourth of July began with a description of the weather as “intensely hot,” and how she awoke with a distressing headache because of “the noise of cannons,

²⁰³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 70.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 81.

²⁰⁵ All italics are Charlotte’s. *Ibid*, 81.

guns, pistols, and every imaginable kind of firearms which the patriotic fired during the night.”²⁰⁶

Even though Charlotte did not leave the house as a result of lack of sleep and a debilitating headache, she still managed to read Maria Edgeworth’s *Helen*. More than likely she used her physical discomfort as an excuse to not leave the house so as to avoid the hypocritical spectacle of the national holiday or be subjected to personal humiliation over racial prejudice.

Like Charlotte often did, she selected an author to read during difficult moments in her young adult life. Maria Edgeworth was a popular British reformer and had written about the importance of female education and uplift. The name of Edgeworth’s main character, “Helen,” may have been an homage to another English writer, Helen Maria Williams, who, according to historian Margaret Jacobs, had written a letter during the French Revolution and asked whether Parliament was going to end the slave trade.²⁰⁷ Charlotte’s selection of reading Edgeworth’s *Helen* on the Fourth of July would have been a profound and appropriate storyline since freedom was being celebrated by some while others were in bondage. It would have given the teenager comfort that countries like France and England had abolished slavery even as America had not yet done the same.²⁰⁸

As Charlotte stayed at home on the Fourth of July, her house-mates and friends were attending a mass gathering to celebrate the abolitionists’ version of the Fourth of July. It was held at Framingham, Massachusetts, and was a public rejection of the underlying principles of the American Fourth of July. Even though Charlotte did not attend, it is odd that there was no mention of it,

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Margaret C. Jacobs, *The Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 67.

²⁰⁸ It is also worth pointing out that one of the first African-American Female Literary Societies in Philadelphia was called the Edgeworth Society and it was founded before 1837. This was exactly the same time and place the Forten women were organizing and participating in literary uplift and abolition. Dorothy B. Porter, “The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1828-1846,” *The Journal of Negro Education*: 557; See also: Winch, *Elite of Our People*; Willson, “Letters to the Literary Ladies;” Edgeworth, “Belinda.” When Charlotte was in Salem, no local chapter of the Edgeworth Society was recorded.

especially since Charles Lenox Remond was one of the keynote speakers.²⁰⁹ In addition, it was the first Fourth of July meeting following the Burns trial, conviction, and removal back to bondage. Many of those who witnessed and participated in the violent events in Boston were also attending the gathering in Framingham. Moreover, anti-slavery newspaper advertisements were linking the two events together as an urgent reason to attend.²¹⁰ Therefore it is surprising that she failed to include any reference to it in her diary.

During the summer months, Charlotte's journal reflected her growth as a student, as well as her literary preferences for those aligned with abolition. For example, Charlotte had visited with her instructor, Mary Shepard, who was becoming one of her most trusted and loyal friends. "We talked of many things, and I felt pleased and happy as I always do in the society of my beloved teacher."²¹¹ Their friendship was based on a shared love of reading and writing, as well as other intellectual pursuits. In one entry, she wrote, "Miss Shepard read several exquisite poems written by the sister of Mrs. Hemans; they are full of deep, tender feeling...for the loss of her beloved and highly gifted sister."²¹² The "sister of Mrs. Hemans" whom Charlotte referred to was Harriet Brown.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ The advertisement read in part: "The Fourth of July... As if to glory in their shame, and wantonly to outrage heaven and earth, the City Authorities of Boston, -- fresh from the kidnapping of Anthony Burns, -- have made the most extensive preparations to celebrate the Fourth of July with all the pomp and circumstance of a hollow, many-stealing patriotism, ending with a costly display of fireworks in the evening, in which bitter mockeries as 'America is free,' and 'statues of Liberty and Justice (!) are to be emblazoned in fiery forms and types, for the admiration of a people in vassalage to Southern slave-hunters and slave-drivers!'" Ibid.

²¹¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 83.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Not much is known about Harriet Brown, but her sister, Felicia Hemans, was a popular British poet, who, among other topics, wrote about Dante. In addition, Hemans' poetry was cited in many anti-slavery literature, including on the opening page of the 1842 *Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*. For literary background information on Felicia Hemans see Dennis Looney, *Freedom Readers: The African American Reception of Dante Alighieri and the Divine Comedy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2011); Jackson Toynbee Paget, *Dante in English Literature: From Chaucer to Cary (c. 1380-1844)*, Vol. II. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909); *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Aida Audeh and Nick Havely (Oxford, 2012). In addition, Hemans is known to have penned the lyrics for at least one antislavery song titled, "I Dream of All Things Free!" Vicki L. Eaklor, *American Antislavery Songs: A Collection and Analysis* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 266.

Charlotte's recognition of Hemans' sister, Brown, and the sadness the poem evoked about her early death, showed the familiarity with Hemans' life and work. Like the other poets and authors whom Charlotte admired, Brown and Hemans were amongst the selected and approved literati of the Garrisonian abolitionists. Romantic authors and poets were ideologically akin, because each sought to overcome tyrannical rule and practices for freedom and equal rights.

Charlotte wrote about having been privy to reading a few pages of Mary Shepard's journal. Shepard had evidently traveled to Europe, because, without context, Charlotte enthusiastically wrote:

Oh! England my heart yearns towards thee as to a loved and loving friend! I long to behold thee, to dwell in one of thy quiet homes, far from the scenes of my early childhood; far from the land, my native land – where I am hated and oppressed because God has given me a *dark skin*.²¹⁴

Like other Garrisonian abolitionists of color, Charlotte viewed England as the true land of liberty and freedom in comparison to the United States. She bemoaned her second-class status simply because of her skin color, and rhetorically asked, "How did this cruel, this absurd prejudice ever exist? When I think of it a feeling of indignation rises in my soul too deep for utterance."²¹⁵

Charlotte concluded the diary entry with, "This evening I have been thinking of it very much. When, Oh! when will these dark clouds clear away? When will the glorious light of Liberty and Justice appear? The prospect seems very gloomy. But I will try not to despond."²¹⁶ She did not elaborate on the reason for her transition from Shepard's time in England to resenting America for denying equal participation and access to all its citizens. It may be because she had longed to travel, viewing Europe as a world in which she could fully interact with society and be recognized as equal.

²¹⁴ Charlotte wrote this on July 17, 1854. Stevenson, *Journals*, 87.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Since Charlotte was unable to travel, her intellectual pursuits and curiosity leaned toward travel books, histories of other countries and their peoples, as well as learning foreign languages. As she continued to document her sewing activity during this period, she also included her assessments of the reading material she consumed. For example, she described an evening sewing with Sarah Cassey Smith, who had gotten married and left the Remond household by this point. Sarah read aloud Harriet Beecher Stowe's newly published book, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*.²¹⁷ Charlotte commented that she found the account "extremely interesting...[and] the trials of a sea voyage...very amusing."²¹⁸ She added "Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond thought it ought to banish entirely all my romantic ideas, as she calls them, of the delights of going to sea, but she was mistaken; I do not think anything could accomplish that."²¹⁹ Charlotte's desire to see the world and experience something other than American prejudice remained a dream of hers even if it was never realized. Therefore, books and pictures about foreign places and people became important reading for her.

Over the summer, Charlotte confessed for the first time that she wanted to lecture on the anti-slavery circuit. More than likely, she was inspired by her much-admired friend, Sarah Parker Remond, who was the first female American abolitionist of color to speak publicly on the subject of slavery, and travelled locally, nationally, and internationally.²²⁰ She was also the sister of Charles Lenox Remond, and had followed in his political footsteps to protest against American prejudice and enslavement. Charlotte's desire to be an anti-slavery lecturer was revealed when she admitted reading her own composition to strangers was "a trying task." She added, "If I were to tell Mrs.

²¹⁷ Charlotte does not mention which volume of Stowe's *Sunny Memories* that Sarah read. There were two volumes published after the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. Stevenson, *Journals*, 90.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad*.

[Amy Matilda] R.[emond] this, I know she would ask how I could expect to become what I often say I should like to be—an Anti-Slavery lecturer....²²¹ Even though she only mentioned it only once in her diary, she stated that she often said she wanted to be an anti-slavery lecturer. It seems that this wish to become an anti-slavery speaker had been on her mind for a while.

Charlotte considered Amy Matilda and Sarah Parker Remond extended family. She admired the two women greatly, and wrote often of her affection for them in her diary. Since Charlotte had lost her mother at such a young age, Amy Matilda became a very important and much-loved maternal figure for her.²²² Charlotte was coming of age as a young lady in Salem, and Amy Matilda was likely helping her learn about womanhood and other matters. Amy Matilda had also known Charlotte's mother and could share stories with the visiting teenager that provided information as well as comfort. Sarah Parker Remond was also incredibly important to Charlotte. In addition to the political admiration she had for Sarah, Charlotte also saw her as an older sister and valued friend. Both Amy Matilda and Sarah Parker Remond had tremendous influence on Charlotte, and were instrumental in shaping her political ideas and activism as a teenager.²²³

Reading literature outside of school was also instructional in shaping Charlotte's young mind and intellectual growth. Throughout the summer months in 1854, she read Hannah More, a British author and reformer who was popular in Europe and the United States in the early-to-mid nineteenth century.²²⁴ The importance of More to the Forten women cannot be overstated. As Julie Winch's research shows, James Forten's daughters "[R]ead extensively, devouring novels, poetry,

²²¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 91-92.

²²² Professor Brenda Stevenson, in-person conversations during office hours, 2017-2018.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Hannah More, *Stricture On the Modern System of Female Education, With a View Of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune*, In Two Volumes. Vol. I (Originally published in Bath, England in 1799; Published by Samuel West, Salem, Massachusetts, 1809; 13-14 from the Salem publication).

theological works, and histories and [t]hey studied advice books such as Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Education with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune*, and reflected in their writings on what they had read."²²⁵ Charlotte's aunt, Sarah, had even written *An Appeal to Women* about Southern slavery and how it was inextricably tied to the bigotry free people faced in the North based upon More's literary instructions. Sarah's writing and sentiment underscored More's advice that females of a higher rank should influence society for the greater good. Charlotte grew up seeing Hannah More's books in the Forten household, and was more than likely encouraged by her grandmother and aunts to read the author at the appropriate age.

One of the most important holidays the Garrisonian abolitionists celebrated was the "First of August." and it was titled as such.²²⁶ The date recognized Britain's emancipation of the West Indies in 1834 and thereafter was considered a template for American abolitionists to follow. For American abolitionists, Britain's 1834 emancipation by decree stood in sharp contrast to the Haitian Revolution in 1792, whose violence was viewed unfavorably by non-violent abolitionists. Garrisonian abolitionists did not see Haiti as a worthy political paradigm to emulate. In contrast, the First of August had been recognized and celebrated since the first year of liberation. After that, abolitionists decided that formal petitioning and legal action superseded physical rebellion.²²⁷

Charlotte attended the First of August celebration in Abington with Charles Lenox Remond and Amy Matilda and others from Salem and Boston.²²⁸ She chronicled in great detail her

²²⁵ Winch, *Gentleman of Color*, 117; More, *Stricture On the Modern System of Female Education*, 113-14.

²²⁶ The "First of August" was how the abolitionists referred to and memorialized it.

²²⁷ It is interesting to note that the patriarch of the Remond family, John Remond, had originated from the West Indies. He was the son of an enslaved West Indian woman and a Jewish plantation owner. See Dorothy Burnett Porter, "The Remonds of Salem, Massachusetts: A Nineteenth-Century Family Revisited." This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Society held in Worcester on October 16, 1985. In addition to John Remond, other abolitionists of color in Salem and as well as throughout the North had originated from the West Indies, so it may be that part of the reason for the political embrace of the First of August by the abolitionists was because of this constituency.

²²⁸ Charlotte wrote, "This morning I went with Mr. and Mrs. R.[emond] to the celebration at Abingdon. The weather was delightful, and a very large number of persons was assembled in the beautiful grove." Charlotte did not initially

experiences after the long but magnificent day. “The joy that we feel at an event so just and so glorious is greatly saddened by thoughts of the bitter and cruel oppression, which still exists in our own land so proudly claiming to be ‘the land of the free.’”²²⁹ She continued by pointing out the difference between England and America, and found the latter coming up tragically short. She asked, “[H]ow very distant seems the day, when she will follow the example of ‘the mother country,’ and liberate her millions of suffering slaves!”²³⁰ Unlike those who had fought for independence from England and subsequently sought to build an American nation distinct from it, Charlotte and other abolitionists saw the England as a shining example of political success and how it might be achieved in the United States.

Charlotte expressed her conflict with celebrating the First of August while others were shackled and held against their will. However, in the next portion of her diary entry, she exuded a sincere happiness and peace at the successful celebration. “The sadness that I had felt was almost entirely dissipated by the hopeful feelings expressed by the principal speakers...and still more pleasant...that it was for a cause so holy that they had assembled then and there.”²³¹ Charlotte enjoyed the long day sitting in nature and listening to the eloquent speeches made in behalf of those

include Sarah Cassey as a part of the Abington group, but added later in the entry, “Sarah and I had a sail in one of those charming little row-boats which are my particular favorite. It was very delightful to me to feel that I was so near the water; and I could not resist the temptation to cool my hands in the sparkling waves.” Stevenson, *Journals*, 92-93.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Charlotte only mentioned a few of the many speakers at the celebration, but like the rest of her written descriptions, she detailed those few with great admiration: “Mr. Garrison, Wendell Phillips and many other distinguished friends of freedom were present and spoke eloquently.” Ibid. In keeping with the First of August’s theme and agenda, Charlotte recorded that “Mr. Garrison gave an interesting account of the rise and progress of the anti-slavery movement in Great Britain.” She continued, “I had not seen Mr. [Thomas Wentworth] Higginson before. He is very fine looking, and has one of the deepest, richest voices that I have ever heard. I was much pleased with Mr. [John] M’Cluer, a genial, warm-hearted Scotchman who was arrested in Boston during the trial of Burns. He has a broad, Scotch accent which I was particularly delighted to hear as I have been reading very much about Scotland lately.” Ibid.

enslaved. She noted that “every sentiment . . .met a warm response to my heart.”²³² For Charlotte and the other abolitionists who attended the First of August in 1854, it had been a rejuvenating experience both personally and politically.²³³

As the late summer continued, one book that had a great impact on Charlotte was Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *House of Seven Gables*. She had been a longtime admirer of his work, and had read multiple times *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Unpardonable Sin*, and *Twice Told Tales*.²³⁴ Her interest in *The House of Seven Gables* was not only because of her admiration for the author, but also because the story line took place in Salem and was based on an existing mansion she would have surely seen. This must have been incredibly exciting for the teenager to be living in the town in which one of her beloved authors had written a tale of intrigue and mystery.²³⁵

Once Charlotte commenced reading *The House of Seven Gables*, it elicited many long and thoughtful diary entries. She wrote about the story’s narrative of living in a Christian land without moral integrity and how to come to reconcile this duality.²³⁶ This extended to her own conflicts of how to live a noble life as a true Christian. “[H]ow can I hope to be worthy of His love while I still cherish the feeling towards my enemies, this unforgiving spirit?,”²³⁷ she asked. Living a true

²³² Ibid.

²³³ In a personal letter written to Amy Kirby Post on August 2nd, Nell shed additional light on how those in attendance spent their time at Abingdon: “Yesterday I did enjoy Louisa Jacobs’ company at Abingdon. *The Liberator* will tell you the very interesting occasion. Everything contributed to render this First [of] August a triumphant event.” Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 387; (ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). As an aside, Louisa Jacobs was friends with William C. Nell, and it was his encouragement that led to her agree to pen “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.” Many personal letters written by Nell to Amy Kirby Post document his efforts, including looking for financial backers. Eventually Harriet Beecher Stowe would finance the book, as well as write its Introduction. Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid, 84.

²³⁵ *The House of Seven Gables* was published in 1851.

²³⁶ Ibid, 95.

²³⁷ Ibid.

Christian life was something that perplexed and haunted the teenager, because this was not the first time she mentioned her own perceived failures in attempting to be a moral and noble person.

Charlotte's writing about the *House of Seven Gables* and questioning herself as a true Christian is but one of many examples of how she connected literature to religious faith. Charlotte would begin with a critical analysis of the writing and plot, which was then followed by deep reflection about her own spiritual integrity. This can be seen most expressly in the final passage about the Hawthorne's *Seven Gables* in which she wrote. "How *can* I be a Christian when so many in common with myself, for no crime suffer so cruelly, so unjustly? Yet I still long to resemble Him that is really good and useful in Life."²³⁸ The pattern of reading provocative material, interpreting it, and then making it about her own moral worth is found throughout her diary.

In mid-August, 1854, Charlotte wrote in her journal for the first time about Spiritualism. Spiritualists believed that communication with the dead and the spirit world was not only possible it was accessible through a clairvoyant.²³⁹ More than likely, Charlotte was introduced to Spiritualism by William C. Nell, who was a devoted adherent of the metaphysical religion.²⁴⁰ Many of Charlotte's other abolitionist friends and associates, including William Lloyd Garrison, were experimenting with Spiritualism.²⁴¹ There is extensive scholarship about white abolitionists, authors, and poets who were

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (Yale University Press, 2007). Ann Deborah Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Indiana University Press, Second Edition, 2001).

²⁴⁰ This is not to say that other people may have encouraged Charlotte to try it or that she had read about it in the anti-slavery papers.

²⁴¹ One example is a letter that William C. Nell wrote to Amy Kirby Post from Boston on October 17, 1854. This was only eight weeks after Charlotte's entry about her talk with him on Spiritualism. Nell's letter read in part: "Mr. Garrison has lately had some rare Spiritual experience -- communications from N.P. Rogers as he told me similar to those in Isaac Post's Book." Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 396-397; (ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). It may or may not have been a coincidence that Garrison was seeking out Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, who was not only a late friend, but who had died eight years prior on October 16, 1846. Nell's letter is written in the same month and around the same day. It should be noted that Amy Kirby Post and Isaac Post were abolitionists from Rochester, New York, who were staunch promoters and advocates of, including giving up Quakerism for a full-throated embrace of the metaphysical religion.

Spiritualists during the mid-late 1850s.²⁴² Scholarly work has also been devoted to Spiritualism and women's rights during this same period.²⁴³ However, there does not appear to be anything written about black abolitionists and Spiritualism. This is probably because of the scant primary sources that have survived. However, the few that have survived, like Charlotte's diary and William C. Nell's letters, provide critical insight into the private lives of abolitionists of color and their alternative religious pursuits during the antebellum period.

The first time Charlotte mentioned Spiritualism in her journal was on August 16 - the day before her seventeenth birthday.²⁴⁴ Charlotte was not convinced about Spiritualism but was very curious about it. "This evening I had a conversation with Mr. [William C.] N.[ell] about the 'spiritual rappings.' - He is a firm believer in their 'spiritual' origin. He spoke of the different manner in which... 'spirits' manifested their presence, - some...touching the mediums, others...*shaking* them... I told him that...I required a very 'thorough shaking' to make me a believer. Yet I must not presume to say that I entirely disbelieve that which the wisest cannot understand."²⁴⁵ This was Charlotte's only journal entry about Spiritualism in 1854. However, it was evidently intriguing enough to record

From Braude's *Radical Spirits*, she writes that by 1853, "...Amy and Isaac posted...had already withdrawn from the Society of Friends in search of greater freedom of conscience in political issues." Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 64. It was through the Posts that William C. Nell met the Spiritualists, the Fox sisters, and "became an avid convert." Ibid, 29.

²⁴² For example, see Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit*.

²⁴³ For example, see Braude, *Radical Spirits*.

²⁴⁴ In one of the first journal entries written by Charlotte on June 8, 1854, she wrote, "As I sat writing in the afternoon, I said to Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond, 'I wish I had the power, said to be possessed by clairvoyants of knowing what others are doing in distant places. I should like to know what they are doing at home at this moment,' she did not think it would always be a pleasure to possess this knowledge (Stevenson, *Journals*, 69)." Spiritualists saw professional clairvoyants as the optimal way to communicate with the dead. However, it was possible for a novice to become a clairvoyant with a lot of training. It is important to point out that Charlotte, who during this time was two months shy of turning seventeen, may have read about the well-known Spiritualist medium, Cora L.V. Hatch. During the 1850s, seventeen-year-old Hatch enchanted audiences throughout the country as a trance speaker. (Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 76.) *The Liberator* often printed articles debating Spiritualism, including many who viewed it as fraudulent. Charlotte more than likely knew of Hatch, and may have even attended once of her performances. This may have been why Charlotte, at the same age, would have been taken by this phenomenon.

²⁴⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 69.

Nell's information. Furthermore, it is timely that they were having a conversation the day before her birthday (August 17), because it is plausible that she mentioned missing her late mother and that he suggested trying Spiritualism to contact her. Many Spiritualists believed that specific dates of importance would magnify the success of reaching the desired person on the other side.²⁴⁶

The next day, Charlotte memorialized her seventeenth birthday in her diary. She assessed her growth as a person and as a student. Her findings, however, did not give her much encouragement. "How much I feel to-day my own utter insignificance! It is true the years of my life are but few. But have I improved them as I should have done? No! I feel grieved and ashamed...how very little I know of what I should know of what is really good and useful."²⁴⁷ However, she resolved to do better for the next year, and wrote, "May this knowledge of my *want* of knowledge be to me a fresh incentive to more earnest, thoughtful action; more preserving – study!"²⁴⁸ Charlotte equated her moral value to an attainment of a higher education, because each offered outlets for personal uplift and public advocacy.²⁴⁹

In early September, Charlotte recorded for the first time about an incident that had befallen her friends regarding racial prejudice and segregation. This was four months after she began her diary. She wrote with unmistakable fury. "I have suffered much to-day, -- my friends Mrs. [Jane] P.[utnam] and her daughters were refused admission to the Museum, after having tickets given them, solely on account of their complexion."²⁵⁰ Charlotte was outraged that her friends had been insulted

²⁴⁶ Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit*.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 96.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Charlotte's seventeenth birthday was not spent entirely in self-flagellating scorn. She ended the day's passage with, "Helen S.[hearman] and Ada [Putnam] and her sisters, spent the evening with us; and I had the pleasure of doing a wonderful thing – persuading Mrs. [Amy Matilda] R.[emond] to play and sing for us, which she did very sweetly." Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Tuesday, September 5, 1854, Stevenson, *Journals*, 98. For more on segregated museums and how the Forten family dealt with the mortification of racial prejudice, see Chapter 1.

with vile language, as well as that they had been subject to such horrible public humiliation. She called the abusers, “contemptible creatures” and “miserable doughfaces,” and argued that they did not deserve the name of men. She ended the day’s entry by stating, “I will not attempt to write more.”²⁵¹ The horrific experience of her friends had devastated her, but it had also reaffirmed her position as an ardent and radical abolitionist.

Even though Charlotte did not mention it in her writing, free abolitionists of color were starting to challenge *de facto* segregationist policies in public places. In particular, Sarah Parker Remond, Caroline Remond Putnam (whom Charlotte cited in the diary entry about the museum incident), and William C. Nell. The three had purchased tickets to see the opera, *Don Pascale*, at the Howard Athenaeum in Boston.²⁵² Before the start of the performance, they had been forcefully ejected from the theatre after refusing to leave their seats. The seats were for white patrons only, regardless that they had rightfully purchased the tickets and no specificity of racial segregation was noted.²⁵³ The manager offered them seats in the reporters’ section, which was outside the purview of the white theatre-goers, or they could sit in the section reserved for people of color. The three declined and instead remained in their seats with the promise that “they would leave upon the first intimation of dissatisfaction among the audience.”²⁵⁴ This offer was refused and a police officer was told to remove them. According to *The Liberator*, “They would not yield their rights,” to which the officer “caught hold of Miss [Sarah Parker] Remond, pushed her about eight feet, and attempted to

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Located in Boston, Massachusetts.

²⁵³ The tickets also did not state that the theatre was segregated.

²⁵⁴ *The Liberator*, June 10.

push her down the stairs, and after some effort succeeded, tearing her dress and injuring her shoulder.”²⁵⁵

Charlotte would have surely known about this event. It not only involved three close friends, it had also been publicized in anti-slavery newspapers as an example of a defiant public act against *de facto* segregation.²⁵⁶ One clue that may point to Charlotte’s knowledge of the opera house was how she described the subsequent Putnam incident in her journal. She wrote, “After having tickets given them...[m]y friends...were refused admission to the Museum.”²⁵⁷ This strongly suggests that she knew of the prior event with Parker Remond, Putnam, and Nell, since she included that the tickets had been rightfully given to them. Although the first incident had been done with intentionality to show and defy segregation, the second occurrence appears to have happened without premeditation.²⁵⁸ Despite this difference, Charlotte’s angry response to the Putnams prejudicial treatment was understandable.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. Sarah Parker Remond and Caroline Remond Putnam subsequently filed a criminal complaint against the Opera agent and the police officer for physical assault and unfair ejection from the theatre after having purchased a ticket at full price. Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 341(ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). The main legal argument being that there was no information on the ticket or at the theatre which stipulated the segregation of patrons based on the color of their skin. This is the ultimate argument with which the judge sided. In the end, the defendants were fined—the agent \$1.00 with costs and the officer \$1.00 with no costs.²⁵⁵ It is not known whether or not Sarah Parker Remond was challenging public segregation as free person of color, but it is interesting to note the judge commented that “[I]t is...proved (whether important or not,) that the complainant went to the opera, with the honest expectation of occupying a seat, as she had done at similar exhibitions, and not with the intentions of testing her rights, or of getting up a case.” *The Liberator*, June 10, 1853; Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad*. Sarah Parker Remond’s claim was the first case of its kind in Boston and would set the stage for future acts of resistance against a Jim Crow society. There is little doubt that Charlotte would have known about this case, let alone the experience at the Franklin Exhibit in Philadelphia, and would therefore have only intensified her growing anger and resentment at being treated like second-class citizens.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 98.

²⁵⁸ Scholars have suggested that Sarah Parker Remond, et. al. had not purchased the opera house tickets to defy early segregationist practices. However, a personal letter written by William C. Nell, the third member of the ejected party at the opera house, suggests that their actions may have been done with strategic intention. Nell wrote in May 1853 that “Caroline Putnam, Sarah P. Remond and myself were ejected from Madam [Henriette] Sontag’s opera at the Howard Athenaeum recently. They [i.e. Caroline and Sarah] brought an action and gained the case. We attended the operas afterward in as good a shape as any body [sic] Next week’s *Liberator* will give some facts, the details of 2 or 3 days in court &c. Witnesses, Public excitement &c. The triumph all rich and this will be a fruitful topic when we meet...” Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 341(ALS; NRU, Isaac and Amy Post Papers). The underlined words are Nell’s, and he used the word “triumph” which implies that it had been premeditated. Moreover, he described the incident in a condensed

Although evidence does not survive of Charlotte's knowledge about the opera house confrontation in Boston, another prior incident suggests that she did. In 1853 (the year before Charlotte moved to Salem), Robert Purvis, her uncle-in-law, published a letter he had written to a (white) friend. It was printed in *The Liberator* on November 5, which was only five months after the occurrence at the Boston opera house. In the letter, Purvis mentioned that people had been ejected from the Franklin Exhibition in Philadelphia on account of the color of their skin, including "the Misses Remond and Wood, and my son, at the Franklin Exhibition...."²⁵⁹ The "Misses Remond" in reference are Sarah Parker Remond and Caroline Remond (Putnam). As for the name of a Miss Wood, this person's identity is unknown. However, she may have been Charlotte's maternal aunt whose name was Annie Woods (Webb). Perhaps the omission of the 's' in Wood was a typographical error since it had originally been a hand-written letter.

Purvis also mentioned that his son had been a part of the shameful incident.²⁶⁰ Purvis was married to Charlotte's aunt, Harriet, and therefore their son was Charlotte's cousin.²⁶¹ The unlikelihood that these people—who all knew Charlotte—did not convey this horrific news seems highly unlikely, especially since the Remond sisters were featured players in both events. Moreover,

way, suggesting that his abolitionist friend in Rochester was already aware of the new strategies being taken by abolitionists of color. *The Liberator*, December 16, 1853. For the biographical information on Annie Woods (Webb) see Stevenson, *Journals*, xlix.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Purvis does not mention his son by name. However, the 1850 U.S. Census shows Robert and Harriet Purvis living in Byberry, Pennsylvania and having four sons: William (17), Charles (9), Henry (6), and Grenville (4). Since the incident at the Franklin Exhibition in Philadelphia occurred three years later, all of them would have been age-appropriate to attend the museum. Source Citation Year: 1850; Census Place: *Byberry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*; Roll: *M432_824*; Page: *124A*; Image: *254*.

²⁶¹ It is not known which son Purvis was referring to in his letter. The 1850 U.S. Census shows Robert and Harriet Purvis as living in Byberry, Pennsylvania and having four sons: William (17), Charles (9), Henry (6), and Grenville (4). Since the incident at the Franklin Exhibition in Philadelphia occurred three years later, all of them would have been age-appropriate to attend the museum. Source Citation Year: 1850; Census Place: *Byberry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*; Roll: *M432_824*; Page: *124A*; Image: *254*. Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; *The Liberator*, December 16, 1853; for biographical information on Annie Woods (Webb) see Stevenson, *Journals*, xlix.

since the date of Charlotte's move to Salem is not known, she may have even been in Philadelphia contemporaneously when the incident occurred. The rising incidences of free people of color being rejected or ejected from public spaces was not new for Charlotte or her family and friends. What was new, however, was that Charlotte was now recording the same occurrences in Salem. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was not only terrorizing fugitives, it was effecting the treatment of free people of color in non-slave states.

As the fall season was underway, Charlotte wrote about a conversation she and other abolitionists had in the privacy of Mrs. [Jane] Putnam's home.²⁶² These intimate gatherings included reciting and reading original poetry and discussing the unfolding political events around anti-slavery. Charlotte wrote that she had "[s]pent the evening at Mrs. Putnam's...[and] had quite a spirited discussion on Mr. [Charles] Sumner and his party. – One or two recited poetry. Mrs. P[utnam] wishes each of us to learn something to recite when we meet again."²⁶³ The gathering at Mrs. Putnam's was an informal version of what female abolitionists did in the Literary and Anti-Slavery Societies, including in Salem. The Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1854 did not record any formal meetings that took place in September, but that does not mean that informal gatherings did not occur.²⁶⁴

Three days later, Charlotte recorded that Mrs. Jane Putnam's request had been honored, and they again gathered at her house for intellectual pursuits.²⁶⁵ "We read and recited poetry. – Some of

²⁶² Jane Putnam was a part of the Old Society of Salem abolitionists of color, and was a member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. She was also the mother-in-law of Caroline Remond Putnam.

²⁶³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 100.

²⁶⁴ Cite the Salem Female Anti-Slavery notes from 1854.

²⁶⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 100.

Willis' 'Sacred Poems'...are very beautiful."²⁶⁶ Charlotte ended her diary with, "We vainly tried to persuade Addie [Putnam] to read or recite. She played some very beautiful sacred tunes for us, [and] her devotion to music conquers even her extreme unwillingness to make any display."²⁶⁷ For Charlotte, like any devout abolitionist, the playing of music in the spirit of the anti-slavery cause was equally as important as reading, writing, or reciting a poem about the holy cause.

Another diary entry revealed a painful reality of the private conversations female abolitionists of color were having during the mid-1850s. This time it centered teaching their children about societal prejudice, the dangers of being kidnapped, as well as the reality that children were enslaved in the South. It was a way to inoculate and safeguard their offspring from the harsh realities and danger of living in a country that professed freedom while tolerating slavery. Charlotte recalled the scene she witnessed. "I was much interested in a conversation between Mrs. [Jane] P.[utnam] and her grandson – little Eddie, about slavery and prejudice."²⁶⁸ Charlotte noted, "I saw how hard she struggled to repress those deep, bitter emotions, ...and to speak calmly to the child who listened with eager interest."²⁶⁹ Even though the subject matter was grave, Eddie's intelligence and observations for a child so young was impressive to Charlotte,²⁷⁰ and the moment clearly moved her enough to write it down for posterity.²⁷¹

²⁶⁶ Charlotte is referring to Nathaniel Parker Willis, another abolitionist whom she admired. In addition, this reading further suggests that the gathering at Mrs. Putnam's was indeed anti-slavery in theme.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Charlotte's exact words were, "He is uncommonly intelligent and observing for one so young." Ibid

²⁷¹ The painful reality that free people of color had to educate their children about American prejudice and slavery had long been in discussion amid abolitionists circles. In 1836, two years after Maria Weston Chapman and her two sisters launched the annual National Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar, Chapman edited a volume titled, *Songs of the Free, and Hymns of Christian Freedom*. Chapman penned the following Hymn titled, "The Colored Mother of New England to her Infant." "*Songs of the Free, and Hymns of Christian Freedom*," ed. by Maria Weston Chapman (Boston: Isaac Knapp, Washington Street, 1836), 195.

In late September, Charlotte received news from her father that threw the teenager's life into turmoil. He had summoned her immediate return home to Pennsylvania. She did not record the reason behind his abrupt decision, but it was something not expected and most certainly unwanted. She loved her family, but expressed great consternation at the turn of events. "I cannot bear to think of leaving Salem now that I have just begun to learn. Most earnestly do I wish to possess what is most invaluable, -- a thorough education."²⁷² Even though the news from home had been disheartening, she resolved to take immediate action. She concluded, "I will...use every argument to induce father to permit me to remain a little longer. -- I feel as if I *cannot* go now. Oh! I do hope that father will consent to my staying."²⁷³ Her firm resolve would not be without dread while waiting for his reply, but she had made up her mind. She wanted to stay in Salem.²⁷⁴

Charlotte's devotion to her studies was as important to her as abolition. Going back to Pennsylvania most likely meant forfeiting any chance of a superior education otherwise she would not have fretted about the decision with such consternation. Like sewing, writing anti-slavery poems, attending lectures, and keeping a journal, Charlotte's studies had become another act of resistance against prejudice and oppression. This is evident when she received the joyous news that her father had agreed to let her stay in Salem. She wrote, "I am determined that...he shall never have cause to regret it. I will spare no effort to become what he desires...[and]... prepare myself well for the responsible duties of a teacher, and to live for the good that I can do my oppressed and suffering

²⁷² The first portion of the passage reads, "Wednesday, September 27, 1854 - Have just received a letter from father, which contains a very unexpected summons. -- I must return home next month. -- It would give me much pleasure to see the loved ones there...." Stevenson, *Journals*, 101-102.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Charlotte's journal entries included: "Saturday, September 30, 1854 - My dear, kind teacher has written to father; I cannot but hope that *her* letter will have some effect. -- My friends are very unwilling to have me go; they all sympathize with me in my desire to acquire all the knowledge that I possibly can;" "Sunday, October 1, 1854 ... My anxiety to know what father's decision will be, almost prevents my thinking of anything else." Stevenson, *Journals*, 102.

fellow-creatures.”²⁷⁵ Charlotte had convinced her father to let her stay in Salem, and she was going to show him that he would not regret the decision.

In mid-October, 1854, Charlotte wrote that she had attended a concert performed by the “Luca Family.”²⁷⁶ The Lucas were a free family of color who had originated from New York. According to contemporary writer, James Monroe Trotter, the Lucas gained notoriety in 1853. “The event that most prominently heralded their names before the public was their first appearance at the May anniversary of the Antislavery Society, held in...New York. Over five thousand persons were present.”²⁷⁷ Upon seeing the Luca Family, Charlotte wrote in her diary that “[t]he youngest of the brothers, a boy of sixteen, as pianist is really wonderful. I regretted that they had not a larger audience, which they well deserved.”²⁷⁸ She ended with, “They are staying with us.”²⁷⁹ This brief notation is remarkable for was omitted: The Luca family was often not permitted to stay in public facilities or housing. Trotter wrote that “[w]hile travelling, [they] suffered greatly from the effects of a cruel caste spirit...being often debarred from hotels and often denied decent accommodation in public conveyances.”²⁸⁰ The Remonds and Charlotte were evidently hosting the Lucas while they were on tour in the Boston.

²⁷⁵ Charlotte’s journal entry was on October 25, 1854. Ibid, 105.

²⁷⁶ October 14, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 104.

²⁷⁷ The Luca troupe was a quartet and “Simeon Luca sang first tenor, Alexander, second tenor, Cleveland soprano, and John sang bass (or baritone if desired). Instrumentally...Simeon on first violin, Alexander second violin, John violoncello (or double bass if required), and Cleveland on the piano-forte.”²⁷⁷ Charlotte’s reference to the talented young pianist was Cleveland or “Cleve” as he was called. Cleve and Charlotte were only a year apart in age, and yet both had already made considerable contributions to the anti-slavery cause. James Monroe Trotter, *Music and Some Highly Musical People* (No publisher, 1881), 74-75.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 104.

²⁸⁰ Trotter, *Music*, 76.

William C. Nell had written for *The Liberator* the previous month about a concert the Luca Family had given in Boston, and noted, “As their stay is limited in this city, we hope a hall will be secured in a central locality, and their efforts be rewarded by a thronged assembly, disposed to appreciate the musical genius of the Luca Family, who, if they were other than colored Americans, would soon win their way to triumphant success.”²⁸¹ What Nell was signaling to the reader was that since the Luca family could not find lodgings in Boston, he hoped a more suitable location closer to Salem would be appreciated. Had it not been for Charlotte recording that the Luca family was staying with them, Nell’s summary may have been overlooked or misinterpreted in historical scholarship or context.

Three days after Charlotte wrote that the Luca family was staying with them, she again noted that “The ‘Luca Family’ are with us...so that we have delightful music continually.”²⁸² She remarked on the young pianist, Cleve, and wrote that “He has composed a very beautiful schottish.”²⁸³ She added that they “...were trying to find a name for it, when Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond proposed that it should be called the ‘Liberty Schottish,’ and dedicated to Mr. Garrison.”²⁸⁴ This was suggestion was immediately agreed upon by all, and it may be one of the few if not only American anti-slavery schottish’s composed and titled by a free woman of color. Charlotte’s diary entry provides a candid and remarkable exchange between free abolitionists of color that might not otherwise have been known. Moreover, her writing shows the anti-slavery networking and support between abolitionists of color across the North.

²⁸¹ *The Liberator*, September 18, 1854.

²⁸² October 19, 1854. Stevenson, *Journals*, 104-105.

²⁸³ A Schottisch was a partnered country dance that grew in popularity in the United States after 1848.

²⁸⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 104-105.

In early November, 1854, Charlotte wrote about the oratory and writing talents of Charles Lenox Remond.²⁸⁵ Although Charlotte did not provide much detail, she wrote that the lecture was in the evening at Lyceum Hall.²⁸⁶ She praised his work as excellent and “on the never-failing topic which to us is all -important... - [T]he existence of the terrible sin of slavery in our land.”²⁸⁷ It was typical for Charlotte to include a line or anecdote from a lecture she attended so as to remember it at a later date, however, this time she did not. It is a glaring omission, but may be because she had heard his words prior to the lecture. As a resident of his household, she may not have needed to commit his words to memory in the same way as other lecturers she knew less familiarly. Nevertheless, his performance was evidently so powerful that she made note of it.

Even though Charlotte did not record Remond’s “excellent” lecture, *The Liberator* did publish a lengthy summary and description of it. Written by William C. Nell, it reported on Remond’s speech and the overall anti-slavery climate since the impact of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Nell stated that Remond “spoke with more energy and not without vehemence, which gave greater effect to strong language.”²⁸⁸ Remond expressed that “the evil of slavery was not confined to the States where it exists...but that it had a reflex influence upon the free States and the people of the North” as well.²⁸⁹ Remond’s primary argument was that slavery permeated social, political, and economic boundaries throughout the country and argued that the political complicity of the North was sycophantic to the pro-slavery South. He further argued that as a result of the 1850 Fugitive

²⁸⁵ For more on the biography of Charles Lenox Remond, see Chapter I.

²⁸⁶ Sunday, November 5, 1854. Ibid, 108-109.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ *The Liberator*, October 27, 1854.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

Slave Law, it had become even more unsafe for black people throughout the United States regardless of status or geography.

In Remond's concluding remarks, he underscored the alliance between the silent North and the sinful South by citing Anthony Burns. Remond contended that "The circumstances of the rendition of Burns...were detailed to prove that even in Massachusetts the will of the Slave-owner was superior to the law..."²⁹⁰ Even though Charlotte did not directly quote Remond's "excellent" speech, his blistering rhetoric and astute political arguments clearly had had an impact on the teenager to have jotted down her praise of him.

In late November, Charlotte wrote in her diary about a new novel, *Ida May: A Story of All Things Actual and Possible* by Mary Langdon.²⁹¹ The story was about a young white girl who had been kidnapped from her wealthy family and taken into slavery. The anti-slavery novel was selling in large quantities throughout the North.²⁹² Its popularity was in part because of the realities of some Northern white children who were being kidnapped and sold into slavery as "mulattos."²⁹³ Charlotte wrote that the story was "extremely interesting," but that it did not compare with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. She added, "Still it shows plainly the evils of slavery, and may do much good. I read it with pleasure, as I do everything which is written in opposition to this iniquitous

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Mary Langdon was a pseudonym for the American author. Her real name was Mary Hayden Green Pike. *Ida May* was published in 1854.

²⁹² In one edition, *The Liberator* had advertisement *Ida May* as having "11,500 copies ordered in 3 days. IDA MAY has thus far proved to be the most successful of modern books. The publishers are using all their means to keep up with the demand; but the orders on Friday, the 24th, had reached to the number of one thousand more than the entire edition published on the Wednesday previous..." In the same edition, another advertisement read, "This story of Southern Life is destined to produce an impression upon the nation wonderful, far-reaching, and permanent. As a Novel, merely, it equals in interest. The most brilliant Fictions of modern times. But it is chiefly in relation to the institution of American Slavery that the book will awaken the deepest interest." *The Liberator*, December 8, 1854.

²⁹³ For more on the kidnapping of white children, see Chapter 1, 22. See also Julie Winch, "Philadelphia and the Other Underground Railroad" in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1987).

system.”²⁹⁴ For Charlotte, reading anti-slavery literature was something done for personal enrichment and a commitment to abolition. She was also keenly aware of an anti-slavery novel’s potential to sway those not yet converted to abolition.

In the same diary entry, Charlotte recorded that she had attended a lecture and had “listened to one of the most eloquent and radical anti-slavery lectures that I have ever heard.”²⁹⁵ It had been given by Reverend Charles Hodges of Watertown whom Charlotte considered “one of the few ministers who dare speak and act as freemen, obeying the Higher Law, and scorning all lower laws which are opposed to Justice and Humanity.”²⁹⁶ Her diary entry was written on a Sunday, which underscores her contempt for the blasphemous hypocrisy of employing American Christianity to justify bondage. She even included Hodges’ argument on the evils of slavery and lauded his proficiency on the topic.²⁹⁷

On Thanksgiving Day, 1854, Charlotte noted that, “Our usually quiet city is in quite a commotion this week.” This was her first time in Salem for the holiday and she noted the differences from Pennsylvania. “The preparations which we make at home for Christmas are made here for Thanksgiving,” and added, “It is the time for ‘glad meetings round the social hearth,’ reunions of families and friends who may have been separated during the year. It is a pleasant custom, though often doubtless bringing sad as well as happy remembrances....”²⁹⁸ Charlotte’s

²⁹⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 113. In addition, William C. Nell wrote a personal letter to Amy Kirby Post about *Ida May*, and what he hoped for the book’s influence on the readers. He wrote, “I feel sure you will all read *Ida May*. I had an advance opportunity of doing so, and it will appeal to a class of American minds in a different way from *Uncle Tom* but both books have a great mission to fulfill....” Porter, *Nell*, 402-409. Nell’s frequent visits to Salem included bringing Charlotte anti-slavery literature and newspapers to the Remond household, so as to keep her apprised of the current political events. Since the anti-slavery novel was selling out in such high volume, he may have been the one to secure a copy for her.

²⁹⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 113.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Stevenson, *Journals*, 114.

acknowledgment that the holiday's rituals might evoke unhappy feelings for some people was quite a mature statement for a teenager. Her own losses, most especially in her family, were probably the reason behind such a mature and somber insight.

Charlotte concluded Thanksgiving Day by documenting her activities spent at home. William C. Nell and William Wells Brown had joined them, and they read Byron, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, heard Brown's "entertaining accounts of some of his old world [*sic*] experiences."²⁹⁹ Charlotte had spent her first Thanksgiving away from her family, but was surrounded by dear friends, good conversation, and cherished literature. Charlotte's documentation is another rare glimpse into the lives of black abolitionists in their leisure time on Thanksgiving. Her diary is also significant because it reveals how the holiday was celebrated differently in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, including its importance and rituals.

The annual New England Anti-Slavery Christmas Bazaar in Boston was only two weeks away. Charlotte and other Salem female abolitionists continued their prolific sewing. In one diary entry, she noted, "[I]n the afternoon went to a sewing party, or 'bee' as the New Englanders call it. – Such parties possess not the slightest attraction for me, unless they are for the anti-slavery fair. Then I always feel it both a duty and a pleasure to go."³⁰⁰ This is a significant confession because it shows how important sewing was for the anti-slavery cause. It is also another example of the importance of Charlotte's writing, because she documented the linguistic origins of the sewing "bee" as something distinctly emanating from New England.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. William Wells Brown was a contemporary of Charles Lenox Remond and William C. Nell. He was an internationally-recognized abolitionist of color who had escaped bondage from the South and secured his freedom in England. It was there that he was educated, and upon his return to the United States, he wrote novels and plays, and was a staple on the anti-slavery lecture circuit. See Stevenson, *Journals*, xli. It is also important to note that William Wells Brown had escaped bondage as a fugitive by putting himself in a box and shipped to Philadelphia. It is more than likely that Brown was aided in the escape by Charlotte's father and others, who were active members of the Philadelphia Vigilant Committee, formerly the Vigilance Committee, founded by her uncle-in-law, Robert Purvis.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 114-115.

The Bazaar was not only a time and place for Garrisonian abolitionists to commune, it was also an opportunity to appeal to non-abolitionist visitors who might become sympathetic to the cause. Charlotte wrote about how an anti-slavery lecture given by Lucy Stone might be influential to someone not yet enlightened.³⁰¹ “I saw many among her large and attentive audience who had probably never attended an anti-slavery lecture before. I hope her touching appeal may not have been made in vain – that they may think rightly on this subject.”³⁰² Charlotte hoped that the sentiments spoken by Stone would attract newcomers. Her diary writing also reveals that anti-slavery gatherings were not exclusive to abolitionists but were also produced with the unconverted in mind.³⁰³ Furthermore, it is interesting that Charlotte did not mention that 1854 was the first year that female speakers were allowed to take the stage at the Bazaar. Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown,³⁰⁴ whom Charlotte had also documented in her diary throughout her time in Salem, were both featured speakers.

On Christmas Day Charlotte wrote that it was the first holiday away from family in Philadelphia. For a seventeen-year-old this must have been a lonely time. She poignantly reflected on

³⁰¹ Lucy Stone (1818-1893) was born in Massachusetts and was an active Garrisonian abolitionist, an early women’s rights advocate, and, later, a Suffragist. From a reprint of the *Norristown Olive Branch* on Lucy Stone it read, “Miss Lucy may be ranked among the most efficient popular orators of this age. She is singularly fitted for her mission: let her go on bravely, for she is destined to revolutionize public sentiment on this subject.” *The Liberator*, December 8, 1854.

³⁰² Ibid, 116-117. It is worth noting that in 1836, Charlotte’s uncle, James Forten, Jr., addressed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, in which her aunts and grandmother were members. In his opening remarks he said, “Ladies, I verily believe that the time is fast approaching when thought, feeling and action, the three principal elements of public opinion will be so revolutionized as to turn the scale in your favour...” James Forten, Jr. addressing the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1836. Charlotte’s inclusion of the idea, “from noble thoughts spring noble words and deeds” as well as underscoring “thoughts, words, and deeds” harkens back to her uncle and may have been the family’s worldview.

³⁰³ Lee Chambers-Schiller, “A Good Work Among the People: The Political Culture of the Boston Antislavery Fair,” *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America*, eds. Jean Fagan Yellin and John V. Van Horne, (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1994), 260.

³⁰⁴ Antionette Brown (1824-1921) was the first female American Protestant minister to be ordained. She often spoke at anti-slavery meetings and lectures, as well as supporting women’s rights.

her memories as a child as way to connect with them, even if only in diary form.³⁰⁵ However, as was typical of Charlotte, she acknowledged her status as a free person in stark contrast to those who did not. “The suffering poor, the oppressed and the down-trodden of the earth, their hearts are sad today. For them the bright Christmas sun shines in vain.... A great work lies before us to alleviate their condition...”³⁰⁶ Like the other holidays celebrated by Garrisonian abolitionists throughout the year, the joyous occasion was undergirded by the pity and sadness for the poor fugitives and those still enslaved.

In the last few lines penned in her diary on Christmas Day, she described having gone to the Bazaar. She went with Sarah Cassey Smith and detailed what they had seen.³⁰⁷ Her writing is invaluable because it provides a window into the Bazaar’s activities not found in the advertisements of *The Liberator* or other anti-slavery papers or letters. Even the Bazaar’s annual summaries and minutes do not provide the personal accounts and details that Charlotte’s diary writings provide. For example, she described the details of the Christmas halls decorated with pine and ornaments, the people they encountered, and the items being sold. There does not appear any other primary source written by a free female of color who documented the annual Bazaar in such great detail.

Charlotte’s final diary entry for 1854 was on the last day of the year. It was a Sunday, and as had become custom on that day, Charlotte reflected about her growth as a young student and budding abolitionist. She was no longer a determined but naïve teenager. Upon personal consideration of her intellectual growth, she wrote, “[A]lthough separated from many of my dearest

³⁰⁵ Charlotte goes in to great detail about the Christmas’s spent in Philadelphia, and this is included in the biography on her grandmother, Charlotte Forten, Sr., in Chapter 1.

³⁰⁶ Stevenson, *Journals*, 117-118.

³⁰⁷ The full passage read, “Sarah [Cassey Smith] and I went to Boston to the Anti-Slavery Fair, in which I was somewhat disappointed, as many of the most beautiful articles had been sold, and they had but very few books, mostly French and German. The rooms were tastefully decorated with evergreens and looked quite Christmas-like. In the evening returned to the fair, and saw Mr. [Wendell] Phillips for a few moments.” Ibid.

friends, this year has been...a very happy one. Happy, because the field of knowledge, for the first time has seemed wide open to me; because I have studied here, and, I trust, learned more than during any other year of my life.”³⁰⁸ The importance of an education to Charlotte was paramount to her as well as her family, and she had spent the remainder of the year dedicated to studies and aspirations of becoming a teacher.

Charlotte also acknowledged how immature she had been prior to living in Salem. “I have been taught how very little I really know, and, with the knowledge of my ignorance, I feel an earnest desire to become very much wiser.... Very great sources of happiness have been the frequent opportunities I have had of seeing and listening to the great pioneer of the anti-slavery cause, (i.e., William Lloyd Garrison) and those who have been with him its earliest, truest friends and most eloquent advocates.”³⁰⁹ Salem was the spark Charlotte needed for the opportunity to obtain an excellent education and the abolitionists who helped train her for moral combat in the holy cause.

Charlotte had started her diary in mid-May 1854 just as the arrest of Anthony Burns in Boston had galvanized the Garrisonian abolitionists. They recognized that the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law had undermined successful efforts in helping fugitives escape North and that Boston was no longer the cradle of liberty. Throughout the pages of her diary in the first year, she documented firsthand accounts of anti-slavery events, friendships and political alliances, popular anti-slavery literature and authors, and the daily-lives of free female abolitionists of color and their extensive

³⁰⁸ “Sunday, December 31, 1854 - The last day of the old year. I can scarcely realize that I have spent the whole of it away from home. Yet, although separated from many of my dearest friends, this year has been to me a very happy one. Happy, because the field of knowledge, for the first time has seemed widely open to me; because I have studied here, and, I trust, learned more than during any other year of my life. I have been taught how very little I really know, and, with the knowledge of my ignorance, I feel an earnest desire to become very much wiser.... Very great sources of happiness have been the frequent opportunities I have had of seeing and listening to the great pioneer of the anti-slavery cause, and those who have been with him its earliest, truest friends and most eloquent advocates.” Stevenson, *Journals*, 117-118.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

labor performed for the anti-slavery cause. Charlotte's second year in Salem would focus on similar themes of intense scholarship and abolition, as well as bearing witness to the Union on the brink of dissolution with the "Impending Crisis" looming across the land.

Chapter III: From Student to Scholar, 1855

My studies are my truest friends.
- Charlotte Forten, age seventeen

Throughout Charlotte's first year in Salem, she documented her intellectual pursuits and interests in great depth, including her extensive reading repertoire of anti-slavery literature and newspapers, historical works, and Romantic poetry and fiction.³¹⁰ She recorded interactions with famous abolitionists, as well as what she was witnessed as a young woman coming of age under the political impact of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.³¹¹ In 1855, Charlotte went from being a student to coming into her own as a scholar. She was also coming into her own as a radical Garrisonian abolitionist and anti-slavery poet. Education and emancipation were political and moral bookends for Charlotte and both received equal attention. However, this year her studies took precedent over her physical labors for anti-slavery as she strove to finish her formal education.

In 1855, at the age of seventeen, Charlotte was preparing to graduate from Higginson Grammar School and apply to the Salem Normal School to become a teacher. Her desire to be an educator was incorporated into an abolitionist's worldview as well as her family's aspirations.³¹² Throughout the year, Charlotte's intellectualism, literary voice, and critical analytical skills were

³¹⁰ See Appendix II for the authors and books read by Charlotte.

³¹¹ In 1854, Charlotte mentioned sewing at least twenty times in her journal, often on a daily and multi-daily occurrence. In 1855, however, she mentioned it only a handful of times. One entry read, "Saturday, January 13, ...Sewed very industriously all the afternoon and evening. —We had music and singing. Afterwards Sarah [Cassey Smith] read aloud and Henry amused us with enigmas and conundrums, which employed the Yankee faculty of 'Guessing'." Stevenson, *Journals*, 122. This description of sewing industriously and done so in a group appears to be for something other than a weekly chore. Moreover, her inclusion of music and singing implies that the sewing was being done to for escaped fugitives and/or upcoming anti-slavery fairs. Even though the Boston Bazaar had recently concluded, it was not the only anti-slavery fair that sold items to raise money for the cause. These types of fairs occurred throughout the year.

³¹² Brenda E. Stevenson, "Considering the War from Home and The Front: Charlotte Forten's Civil War Diary Entries," in *Civil War Writing: New Perspectives on Iconic Texts*, eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Stephen Cushman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2019), 174-175.

taking shape. For the insightful and curious teenager, nothing she read, wrote, or physically did was detached from anti-slavery intent even if it was a part of Higginson's school curriculum (e.g., grammar, math, and science). Even those subjects were correlated to the holy cause of anti-slavery, especially since the fields of study were off-limits to people of color, including her father.

By mid-January, 1855, Charlotte spent the majority of her time at school and studying at home. She was in the final months of finishing her time as a grammar student and getting ready to graduate. Some of her lessons included arithmetic, philosophy, history, etymology, composition writing, physical science, and geography.³¹³ In one diary entry she noted that she had begun to study "The Second Book of History"³¹⁴ for school while also having started to read the poet, William Wordsworth.³¹⁵ Her inclusion of Wordsworth suggests that she was also digging into English Literature, since he and Samuel Taylor Coleridge were credited with having ushered in the Romantic period in England with their co-publication in 1798 titled *Lyrical Ballads*.³¹⁶ Abolitionists often incorporated Romantic literature into their anti-slavery syllabus, because of a shared ideology of overturning tyranny, slavery, and inequity for all human rights.³¹⁷

Charlotte's school and leisure readings also intersected with abolitionist rhetoric with her reading of Thomas Babington Macauley. Macauley was a popular British historian and politician

³¹³ Charlotte mentioned studying philosophy in December of 1854, so it may be why she did not reference it again a few weeks later in mid-January of 1855. If Charlotte studied other subjects in 1855, she did not make note of it. See Appendix IV for Charlotte's school studies.

³¹⁴ It is unclear if Charlotte is referring to James Macauley or Jacob Abbott, both of whom were popular authors of History. See Appendix II for the authors and books Charlotte read.

³¹⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 122.

³¹⁶ *British Romanticism and Italian Literature: Translating, Reviewing, Rewriting*, eds. Luran Bandiera and Diego Saglia (London University, 2005).

³¹⁷ Debbie Lee, *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

during her teenage years.³¹⁸ His history books were mentioned in her diary throughout 1855, and with few exceptions, she usually wrote only that she had “read Macauley,” without providing specificity of the title or her analysis of the work. However, in mid-April, Charlotte wrote in great detail about a particular Macauley poem that she had heard in school. Her instructor read them Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and she wrote that “[It] is one of the most spirited and beautiful poems” she had ever heard.³¹⁹ She continued, “[Its] subject was the brave Horatius who alone sustained the attack of the whole Etruscan army while his friends cut down the bridge across the Tiber which led to Rome.”³²⁰ Her diary entry ended without further elaboration or interpretation, but clearly it moved her enough to record the story line.

It is curious timing for Charlotte to have recorded the specificity of Macauley’s *Lays of Ancient Rome* and Horatio’s bravery. Although she was studying Macauley in school, *The Liberator* had concurrently printed a poem from the same book titled *The Battle-Field*.³²¹ She did not reference the specific poem read to her in class, but the newspaper’s selection was from the same (long) poem. *The Liberator* opened with, “How fine a contrast has Macauley drawn, in these lines from his ‘Lays of Ancient Rome,’ between the corn-fields as they are, and the battle-field as it was!”³²² Regardless of which passage Charlotte recorded in her journal, Macauley’s *Lay of Ancient Rome* had meaning to her

³¹⁸ Macauley was a British historian and a political Whig. He wrote a series of books on the History of England, but died from a sudden heart attack in 1859, so that the full publication of his work went unfinished.

³¹⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 133.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *The Liberator*, January 5, 1855. Charlotte’s reference to Horatio was the first portion of *Lays of Ancient Rome*, “Horatius: A Lay Made About the Year of the City,” whereas *The Battle-Field* was from the second portion, “The Battle of the Lake Regillus: A Lay Sung at the Feast of Castor and Pollux on the Ides of Quintilis,” part III. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, (Boston and Cambridge: James Munroe and Company, 1847). The Horatio poem described a hero fleeing his enemies and helping others to join him; the poem printed in *The Liberator* was about the Romans battle against their enemies and the ultimate victory in war. The subject matters would have been appealing literary rallying cries for abolitionists.

³²² *Ibid.*

as well as to other Garrisonian abolitionists. For her, it was more than likely the bravery of Horatio, and for *The Liberator* it was the victorious outcome on the battlefield. Like Horatio and the Ancient Romans fighting on the battlefield, the abolitionists were battling the slave power, and Charlotte clearly understood the historical and political parallels.

As Charlotte documented her school studies and extracurricular literary and anti-slavery readings, one brief but significant diary passage sheds light on her grandfather's patriotic actions that has previously been overlooked in historical scholarship. "Finished reading Whittier's 'Literary Recreations', which I liked very much."³²³ Charlotte greatly admired the poetry John Greenleaf Whittier, as well as his support of abolition. In addition, Whittier had known her family dating back decades by the time of her writing in 1855, therefore her abridged comment about his recent work is startling in its descriptive scarcity. One reason may be that she feared coming off as boastful or a braggart since Whittier's work featured a glowing account of grandfather, James Forten, Sr.

Whittier's *Literary Recreations and Miscellanies* was first published in May of 1854 and was a collection of historical events, biographies, and personal reflections.³²⁴ The edited work was not poetic in nature, but instead were stories written for newspapers that Whittier had been aligned with, including *The Liberator*.³²⁵ It is curious timing that Charlotte first started to keep a diary in the same year as the publication of Whittier's *Literary Recreations* in 1854. At first glance, Whittier's published book and Charlotte's private diary share little in common. However, what she omitted from the

³²³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 122.

³²⁴ John Greenleaf Whittier, *Literary Recreations and Miscellanies* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854). The book is 429 pages long, so Charlotte may have started it in 1854, because she stated only that she had "finished" it.

³²⁵ In his "Prefatory Note," Whittier wrote in the third person. "Most of the pieces...[were] [p]lanned at widely different periods, in every variety of mood and circumstance.... [and]...satisfied that it will at least find favor in the quarter where favor will be most grateful and desirable – the hearts of his personal friends." Ibid, 3-5.

1855 diary entry about having finished his book was that it included an entire chapter devoted to “The Black Men in the Revolution and the War of 1812.”³²⁶

Whittier’s chapter on the patriotism of black men highlighted her grandfather, as well as his Philadelphia colleagues, Bishop Richard Allen, and Absalom Jones.³²⁷ There was a reference to Forten’s patriotic service in the Revolutionary War, as well as his loyal efforts as a civilian in the War of 1812. Historical scholarship has long known of Forten’s heroism in the first war against Britain,³²⁸ however, there does not appear to be anything written about his activities during the second war. More than likely this is because his actions in the War of 1812 were done surreptitiously and not as a member of the army.³²⁹ Whittier’s writing on Forten’s activities in the War of 1812 appears to be the only time this information has been recorded. Had it not been for Charlotte’s brief line about

³²⁶ It is interesting to note that only four months prior to Whittier’s publication of *Literary Remonstrances*, the Philadelphia General Society of the War of 1812 had been reconstituted in January to provide aid and camaraderie for veterans. Although the historical record does not state this explicitly, more than likely the Society was for white veterans only. Jefferson M. Moak, “Our History,” General Society of the War of 1812, <https://gswar1812.org/our-history/>. This may be why Whittier felt compelled to include a chapter about the forgotten patriotic men of color. At one point he made his objective clear and questioned “whether the whites enjoyed a monopoly of patriotism at that time.” Whittier, *Literary Recreations*, 188. It was also during 1854-1856 that William C. Nell had written and published his historical account of James Forten and other brave Americans in *Colored Patriots*. Nell’s book will be discussed in more depth in Chapter IV.

³²⁷ Bishop Richard Allen and Absalom Jones founded the first African American Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Whittier’s full quotation reads, “Let us now look forward thirty or forty years, to the last war with Great Britain [i.e., The War of 1812].... On the capture of Washington by the British forces, it was judged expedient to fortify, without delay, the principal towns and cities exposed to similar attacks. The vigilance committee of Philadelphia waited upon three of the principal colored citizens, viz., James Forten, Bishop Allen, and Absalom Jones, soliciting the aid of the people of color in erecting suitable defences [*sic*] for the city.”

³²⁸ Whittier wrote about James Forten and his actions in the Revolutionary War: “The late James Forten, of Philadelphia, well known as a colored man of wealth, intelligence, and philanthropy, enlisted in the American navy [*sic*] under Captain Decatur, of the Royal Louis, was taken prisoner during his second cruise, and, with nineteen other colored men, confined on board the horrible Jersey prison ship. All the vessels in the American service at that period were partly manned by blacks. The old citizens of Philadelphia to this day remember the fact, that, when the troops of the north marched through the city, one or more colored companies were attached to nearly all the regiments.” Whittier, *Literary Recreations*, 188. For more on James Forten’s life and service to the country as well as Bishop Richard Allen and Absalom Jones see Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard University Press, 1988); See also Winch, *Gentleman of Color*.

³²⁹ The rest of Whittier’s testimony stated that, “Accordingly, twenty-five hundred colored men assembled in the state-house yard, and from thence marched to Gray’s Ferry, where they labored for two days almost without intermission. Their labors were so faithful and efficient that a vote of thanks was tendered them by the committee. A battalion of colored troops was at the same time organized in the city under an office of the United States army; and they were on the point of marching to the frontier when peace was proclaimed.” Whittier, *Literary Recreations*, 191-192.

Whittier's *Literary Recreations* and it being "very good," this piece of historical knowledge may have been lost.

Whittier's recollections reveal further information previously unknown about James Forten, Sr. He operated a "vigilance committee" as part of his aid during the War of 1812. Whittier's testimony about Forten contributing to the War of 1812 may provide evidence to push back the 1837 origins of Philadelphia's Vigilant Association by at least two decades.³³⁰ Whittier had stated the book was a compilation of different writings throughout various times, so James Forten, Sr. may have shared his war-time activities in a private conversation. Charlotte's comment about liking Whittier's book very much appears to affirm his claims, because she did not refute his information.

Charlotte's adoration of Whittier cannot be overstated. He had a long and close relationship with the Forten family beginning with her grandfather, and had memorialized the talents of her aunts Harriet, Sarah, and Margaretta, in a private letter that was subsequently published in the anti-slavery papers.³³¹ Once in Salem, Charlotte was in closer geographical proximity to him. In addition, Mary Shepard was friendly with the poet and his sister, Elizabeth. Charlotte wrote that Mary had read to her "some exquisite lines, 'Canst Thou not Watch One Hour?' They are so very beautiful that I would not forget them...."³³² She added, "[Mary and I] think that Whittier must have written them...for I can enjoy good and beautiful things so much more when I know that those who write them are themselves *good*, and devoted to the Right."³³³ It is unclear if Whittier borrowed the lines from the Bible or if Charlotte and Mary were incorrect in their assessment of the author's identity.³³⁴

³³⁰ There does not appear to be any public or private records of James Forten's contributions to the city of Philadelphia during the War of 1812. For more on the origins of the Vigilant Association and subsequent Vigilance Committee, see Chapters I, II, and III.

³³¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 124.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

For Charlotte it would not have mattered, because she saw in Whittier a master poet who conveyed spiritual concepts and language about the heartache and beauty of the lived experience.³³⁵

As Charlotte continued her studies, there is one particular diary entry that shows the intellectual intersection of education and abolition. She had “studied a geographical description of France,”³³⁶ and noted, “I cannot even think of those beautiful, distant lands without a longing so earnest to behold them as makes the thought almost a painful one.”³³⁷ She continued, “I wish that I could cast away some of these day-dreams – forget these vain hopes of the Future, which...too often prevent me from engaging earnestly...in the actual labor of the Present.”³³⁸ For Charlotte, even doing homework was intertwined with the personal and political aspects of being a free person of color. Charlotte’s diary entries throughout the year often showed the dichotomy of school studies with the realities of the political upheaval wreaking havoc around her and the country. In addition, there were many instances where she expressed her longing to travel outside the country, as so many

³³⁴ The Bible passage reads in part, “Say to thy heart, “What! did I come hither to think of my worldly business, of persons, places, news or vanity, or of any thing but heaven, be it ever so good? ‘Canst thou not watch one hour?’” Chapter XV, Hebrews, 4:0.

³³⁵ Samuel J. May, Jr. wrote about the significance of American poets and authors in helping spread the word about antislavery. Most especially, May cited Whittier: “But of all our American poets, John, G. Whittier has from first to last done most for the abolition of slavery. All my antislavery brethren, I doubt not, will unite with me to crown him our laureate. From 1832 to the close of our dreadful war in 1865[,] his harp of liberty was never hung up. Not an important occasion escaped him. Every significant incident drew from his heart some pertinent and often very impressive or rousing verses. His name appears in the first volume of *The Liberator*, with high commendations of his poetry and his character. As early as 1831 he was attracted to Mr. [William Lloyd] Garrison by sympathy with his avowed purpose to abolish slavery. Their acquaintance soon ripened into a heartfelt friendship.... [Whittier] joined the first antislavery society and became an active official. Notwithstanding his dislike of public speaking, he sometimes lectured at that early day, when so few were found willing to avow and advocate the right of the enslaved to immediate liberation from bondage without the condition of removal to Liberia [i.e. the American Colonization Society]. Mr. Whittier attended the convention at Philadelphia in December, 1833, that formed the American Antislavery Society. He was one of the secretaries of that body, and a member, with Mr. Garrison, of the committee appointed to prepared the ‘Declaration of our Sentiments and Purposes.’ Although, as I have elsewhere stated, Mr. Garrison wrote almost every sentence of that admirable document just as it now stands, yet I will remember the intense interest with which Mr. Whittier scrutinized it, and how heartily he indorsed [sic] it.” Samuel J. May, *Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co.), 263-265.

³³⁶ Stevenson, *Journals*, 124.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

of her friends and family of color had been able to do. Charlotte desperately wanted to travel and experience other places and peoples, because it was one way to escape the oppression and slavery in America.

As was typical for Charlotte, her initial lament and self-pity over not being able to travel was subsequently dismissed as indulgent. She rallied herself for the hard work ahead even if it was daunting and potentially futile. “There is so much to be done...[and] this feeling often oppresses and saddens me, and almost unconsciously I seek relief in the indulges of those delightful dreams of days to come when great good shall be accomplished, and the glorious principles of Justice, Liberty and Truth everywhere triumphant.”³³⁹ Everything she studied or wrote circled back to the plight of the enslaved and fighting for equal rights, including a grammar school lesson on the geography of France.

Charlotte’s school time at Higginson did not always offer a reprieve from the harsh reality of racial prejudice in antebellum America, even in New England. Unlike the previous year where she wrote about the prejudice her friends had faced at a Salem museum, this year she was the one to experience it. She described her time spent at school and how the white students acted like they accepted her in class, but then ignored her in public. She wrote, “I have met girls in the schoolroom – they have been thoroughly kind and cordial to me – perhaps the next day met them in the street – they feared to recognize me.”³⁴⁰ In the first year Charlotte kept a diary, she had written about hoping to convert some of her classmates to abolition. A year later, however, she was no longer willing to tolerate duplicitous prejudice, and stopped pretending to be friendly with them after their cruel treatment.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Saturday, January 27, 1855. Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

Charlotte's transition from being hopeful and eager that she could convince the other students about the virtues of abolition to becoming disillusioned and resentful is painfully evident in her diary entries. The shameful treatment by her classmates was painful enough, but she also knew that the experience was nothing new or out of the ordinary. "These are but trifles, certainly to the great, public wrongs which we as a people are obliged to endure. But to those who experience them, these apparent trifles are most wearing and discouraging." The sting of rejection must have been unbearable, because she observed, "[E]ven to the child's mind they reveal volumes of deceit and heartlessness, and early teach a lesson of suspicion and distrust."³⁴² At the age of seventeen, Charlotte was already hardening to the bitter realities of American prejudice.

As Charlotte continued the diary entry about the students' unfair treatment and the toll it took on her, she grew more outraged with every sentence. She stated for the first time in her diary an emerging distrust of white people regardless of their sincerity. "Oh! it is hard to go through life meeting contempt with contempt, hatred with hatred, and fearing, with too good reason to love and trust hardly any one [*sic*] whose skin is white, however lovable, attractive and congenial in seeming."³⁴³ Rejection based solely on skin color was something Charlotte could not emotionally or intellectually fathom. She angrily concluded, "In the bitter, passionate feeling of my soul again and again there raises the question, 'When, oh! when shall this cease?' 'Is there no help?' 'How long oh! how long must we continue to suffer – to endure?'"³⁴⁴ No matter how many books Charlotte read or how much she studied, she was coming to terms that she was cast as a second-class citizen before any recognition of her intellectual accomplishments. After this experience with her classmates, Charlotte's literary voice—at least in her diary writing—became more somber and resolute.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

It was the last few months of Charlotte's time at Higginson Grammar School, and she was busily studying for the end of the term and final exams. It was an intense period of non-stop homework, and since the majority of time was spent immersed in scholarly preparation, her diary writing was abbreviated. The few details she did provide during this time was about readying the schoolhouse for test taking or preparing for a class dinner party that evening.³⁴⁵ Other than these few tidbits of information, her diary was scant with information and details while finishing up her time at Higginson.

After the exam process had begun, Charlotte wrote in her diary about the in-class work and the written portion. "The dreaded examination day is over at last, and we feel very much relieved. The school-room was densely crowded.... Everything passed off pleasantly, and everybody seemed very much delighted."³⁴⁶ She added, "I am extremely tired, but our dear teacher must be more so. I can scarcely bear to think how very soon I shall have to leave her [i.e., Mary Shepard]. To me no one can every supply her place."³⁴⁷ For Charlotte, the hardest part about leaving Higginson was certainly not her classmates or the rigorous final preparation, it was saying goodbye to her instructor, friend, and ally, Mary Shepard.

A few days after the first round of exams, Charlotte wrote that the private examination had concluded and that writing portion was all day and quite exhausting.³⁴⁸ She did not reflect on her performance on the exams, but instead poignantly wrote, "Left the kind care of my beloved teacher. I feel that I owe her very much more than I can ever repay...."³⁴⁹ Even though Charlotte did not

³⁴⁵ Charlotte wrote, "The day before examination, and a very busy day it is. The old-school room has been undergoing a thorough process of renovation, and looks really very bright and respectable. We had quite a dinner-party at the school-house, with Miss [Mary] Shepard for the presiding genius, and a merry, delightful party it was." February 14, 1855. Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 127-128.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ February 27, 1855. Ibid, 128-129.

document the results of her examinations, she graduated from Higginson with “decided éclat,”³⁵⁰ including having composed a poem titled, *A Parting Hymn*. It was chosen as best in class and was honored at graduation.³⁵¹ The modest teenager did not record that her poetry had been selected. The only clue in her journal is one line that read, “Copied a composition...on ‘winter’.”³⁵² It is unclear if this was the seeds of her final winning poem, but the first line of *A Parting Hymn* begins with, “When Winter’s royal robes of white from hill and vale are gone.”³⁵³

A Parting Hymn is another example of Charlotte’s blend of intellectualism and abolitionism.

The final words of the poem read:

May those, whose holy task it is,
To guide impulsive youth,
Fail not to cherish in their souls
A reverence for the truth;
For teachings which the lips impart
Must have their source within the heart.
May all who suffer share their love—The poor and the oppressed.
So shall the blessing of our God
Upon the labors rest.
And may we meet again where all
Are blest and freed from every thrall.³⁵⁴

Even as a student, Charlotte kept those in bondage and subjugated in the fore of her mind as the parting sentiment for the graduating class at Higginson. Moreover, whether the poem was read or sung, the audience was made up of a mixed audience who did not all necessarily adhere to abolition. Charlotte was the first student of color to integrate and graduate from Salem’s Higginson

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, xxxiii.

³⁵¹ The graduation ceremony at Higginson took place on February 12, 1856. Ibid.

³⁵² January 13, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 122.

³⁵³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 568.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. See Appendix I for the entire poem.

Grammar School. Like her Aunt Sarah before her, Charlotte's winning poem used Hannah More's advice of using socio-economic privilege to promote anti-slavery.

Charlotte had more than exceeded the expectations of her father, family, and abolitionist community. She had arrived in Salem to finish her time as a grammar student, and she graduated as a shining example of what equal access to a good education plus hard work could produce. She was looking ahead to becoming a teacher, so at the same moment that she was graduating from Higginson, she was also taking the entrance exam and was admitted to the Salem Normal School.³⁵⁵ She presumed her father would readily agree to this decision, since being an educator was something that had been expected of her as a female Forten. Teaching was one of the few professional paths available for women regardless of skin color during the mid-nineteenth century, and Charlotte did not hesitate to enroll in the vocational school for further educational advancement and to gain her independence with a profession that provided an income.³⁵⁶

Within a week of being admitted into the Normal School, however, Charlotte received alarming news from her father. She wrote, "[T]o my great surprise, received a letter summoning me home."³⁵⁷ She was very disappointed, and felt "...deeply grieved...[and]...it seems harder than ever to leave now that I have just entered upon a course of study which I so earnestly hoped would thoroughly qualify me for the duties of a teacher."³⁵⁸ It was not only the duties of being a teacher, Charlotte also commented on her instructors and how much they inspired her intellectual pursuits. She wrote, "The few days I have spent at the Normal School have been very pleasant although I have felt a little strange and lonely. But the teachers are kind, and the teaching so thorough and

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 130.

³⁵⁶ Conversations with Brenda Stevenson, Office hours, 2017-2018.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Friday, March 16, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 131.

earnest that it increased the love of knowledge and the desire to acquire it.”³⁵⁹ The letter from her father had thrown her life into turmoil, because she had been given a glimpse of life as a scholar and teacher and it suddenly might be taken away from her.

The next portion of Charlotte’s diary entry suggests that the summons home was for pecuniary reasons. It appears her father was either unwilling or unable to provide for his only daughter to remain in Salem.³⁶⁰ After Charlotte shared the upsetting news with Mary Shepard, she wrote that her friend “declared that I must *not go*...made me a very kind offer, which I do not think can be accepted with the little hope I now possess of being able to repay it.”³⁶¹ It is clear that Mary wanted to help Charlotte out with money or room and board, but it is unclear as to what it would entail. Even though Mary’s offer was not accepted, the gesture seemed to renew Charlotte with determination to remain in Salem. “I cannot but regret that I must go now, feeling as I do that a year longer at school would be of great benefit to me.”³⁶² Her mind was made up. She was going to pursue every avenue of opportunity before giving in to her father’s summons.

The next day after receiving the letter, Charlotte wrote that Mr. Richard Edwards³⁶³ could secure a position for her as a teacher if she finished the Normal School. She added that “He wishes me to write my father and assure him of this.”³⁶⁴ Her resolve to stay and attend the Normal School did not waver, but she also did not write in her diary for another three days. When she did resume writing, she expressed the intensity of her new school curriculum commingled with the distraction

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ For more on the Forten wealth, see Chapter 1.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Edwards, like Mary Shepard, was a teacher and strong supporter of Charlotte’s when she first attended Higginson and then at the Normal School.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

of awaiting her father's decision.³⁶⁵ The overwhelming dread she expressed in her diary was the potential fate of her entire future. Charlotte understood that going home to the country in Pennsylvania meant losing out on a rare opportunity to become an educator, and would be relegated to a life with few options as a woman and as a woman of color.

One week later, Charlotte received the news she had longed to hear. Her father gave his consent for her to remain in Salem and continue at the Normal School. She was both elated and relieved. Charlotte's path to becoming a teacher was once again on solid ground. She did not record much of her studies at the Normal School, but did find Logic to be challenging yet interesting, and thoroughly enjoyed the study of words. In one passage about Logic, she expressed self-doubt about her intellectual capabilities, and admonished herself for not easily understanding it. "Puzzled my head over a syllogism, which I suspect, any one less stupid could understand it instantly."³⁶⁶ On the contrary, her newfound fascination with word origins kept her happily preoccupied long after the lesson had concluded. She wrote, "Remained a long while after school to find the derivation of some words. I find far more beauty in the study of words than I had ever imagined to."³⁶⁷ Even though some of the lessons proved to be difficult, Charlotte was elated that she got to remain at the Normal School.

Charlotte was coming into her own as an intellectual as she was training to be a teacher, but she was deeply disappointed and hurt in not making many friends. She wrote, "More and more pleasant becomes my Normal School life. Yet I have made but very few acquaintances, and cannot but feel that among all my school companions there is not a single one who gives me her full and

³⁶⁵ Charlotte wrote, "Have found it almost impossible to concentrate my mind upon my studies which, though difficult would be interesting to me, were it [not] for the anxious troubled thoughts which *will* intrude, and will continue to do so, I suppose, until I received the decisive reply, which I long for and yet dread." Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 132-133.

entire sympathy.”³⁶⁸ She ended with, “My studies are my truest friends.”³⁶⁹ Just as Charlotte had done since starting a diary, she reflected on how her studies, the authors she admired, and the anti-slavery literature she read all assuaged her feelings of loneliness and isolation in a prejudiced world. The ideas and the words offered a type of literary companionship and bond for her when so many other social and cultural exchanges were off limits because of her skin color. This included even within the confines of the Normal School where she could find comfort in her studies while at the same time being shunned by her classmates.

Unlike Charlotte’s final exams at Higginson, she did not mention how she prepared for the end of her first term at the Normal School. She simply and dramatically wrote, “July 16. *Examination Day. No further comment is needed.*”³⁷⁰ To emphasize just how difficult the exam had been, she underscored those words as opposed to the date of the journal entry. The details of the day were something unlikely to forget otherwise she would have made some kind of annotation. Once the day-long examination was finished, she spent the next few days, “breathing freely,” wrapping up the last days at school, and bidding farewell to her fellow scholars until September.³⁷¹ She had finished the first term at the Normal School, and appears to have left for the summer vacation in good spirits.

However, the start of the school year in mid-September 1855 was not as positive for Charlotte. On the first day, she commented on the longing she still had to be included amongst her peers but instead racial bigotry prevailed. She cited only one student who might be sympathetic to

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 133-134.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ July 16, 1855. Ibid, 136.

³⁷¹ Charlotte wrote, “July 17, I breathe freely—our trial is over; and happy are we to escape from the hot, crowded school-room—for it has been densely crowded all day. This evening the scholars had a pleasant meeting in the school house and the last farewells were said....” Ibid, 136-137.

abolition or treat her as an equal. Charlotte's strong literary voice was beginning to emerge, but so was her activism, including the use of fiery and damning rhetoric to describe the helpless feeling of suffering under the weight of intolerance. "To-day school commenced.... There is one young girl and only... who I believe thoroughly and heartily appreciates anti-slavery, *radical* anti-slavery and has no prejudice against color."³⁷² The emphasis on "radical" to describe abolition fell squarely in line with Garrisonian abolitionists, and Charlotte was a dutiful soldier.

In the same diary entry documenting her return to school, Charlotte pondered about the psychological toll on all American people of color, no matter where they were born. "I wonder that every colored person is not a misanthrope. We have everything to make us hate mankind."³⁷³ What is heartbreaking about this claim is that, unlike her earlier passages throughout 1854, she started to become jaded. For example, in a journal entry written in late 1854, she recorded having taken a long walk with Sarah Parker Remond, who was a few years older. Charlotte wrote, "We spoke of perfect sincerity and candor,"³⁷⁴ and added that Sarah thought herself to be "a very little inclined to misanthropy."³⁷⁵ Charlotte's noted, "I think so; and feel the importance of guarding against this feeling..." Sadly, only ten months later, in 1855, Charlotte, too, was using the word misanthrope to describe herself and wondered why every person of color did not identify the same way.

Even though Charlotte was becoming more cynical about ever overturning racial prejudice and slavery, she was still steadfast in her devotion to abolition. After venting her righteous anger about the treatment by her schoolmates, she concluded with stoic determination, and stated

³⁷² Stevenson, *Journals*, 139-140.

³⁷³ She ended this portion of the entry with, "Others give me the most distant recognition possible. I, of course, acknowledge no such recognition, and they soon cease entirely." Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 115.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

“Conscience answers it is wrong, it is ignoble to despair...,”³⁷⁶ and, then, as she often did, she turned to the faith of the Garrisonian abolitionists’ Christian Freedom to uplift her depleted soul:

[L]et us labor earnestly and faithfully to acquire knowledge, to break down the barriers of prejudice and oppression. Let us take courage, never ceasing to work, - hoping and believing that if not for us, for another generation there is a better, brighter day in store, when slavery and prejudice shall vanish before the glorious light of Liberty and Truth....³⁷⁷

This passage is incredibly insightful and sad for a teenager, including the recognition that she might not live to see the emancipation of those enslaved or equality for those nominally free, including herself. Equally as powerful was her determination in the face of such personal adversity. She was fiercely brave and selfless to forge ahead with her commitment to abolition despite the potential futility and failure.

Soon thereafter, Charlotte officially joined the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. She joined along with a white female classmate, Sarah Brown.³⁷⁸ Brown was the one sympathetic white friend she had made at the Normal School. This means that the Society was integrated, just as the Salem schools Charlotte attended. She did not include the exact date she joined or which Society, but did write that it had occurred in September. It is timely that she joined the Society soon after turning eighteen years old. There is no evidence of the Society having an age restriction, but it is more than coincidental given that she had already been fully engaged, active, and absorbed in all aspects of anti-slavery affairs upon her arrival to New England.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ No relation to William Wells Brown. From *The Liberator's* accounts, it was the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, because an advertisement showed the same upcoming lectures that Charlotte attended.

Charlotte also did not record her reason for joining the Society. She merely stated having done it. What she did record, however, was the hope as well as the concern for her white classmate, Sarah.³⁷⁹ She hoped the girl would be a truly devoted abolitionist while also being concerned that this devotion would cause her physical or personal harm. “I can only hope and pray that she will be true, and courageous enough to meet the opposition which every friend of freedom must encounter.”³⁸⁰ Charlotte’s prayers for Sarah to sustain the onslaught of opposition by Southern sympathizers and Northern allies was a major component of what abolitionists had to endure. Her anxiety about whether or not Sarah could handle the burden of identifying as an abolitionist reveals her own strength in the face of potential ridicule, shunning, or violence. In addition, it is striking that a teenager of color would be troubled over a white teenager’s emotional capabilities to handle the duress of being an abolitionist.

Even though Charlotte spent the majority of her time in school and studying throughout 1855, she also carved out time to compose and publish an anti-slavery poem in *The Liberator*. This was in addition to *A Parting Hymn* that she had written for graduation at Higginson Grammar School. The published poem was dedicated to William Lloyd Garrison, and signed only with her initials, C.L.F. Her Aunt Margaretta inquired as to whether or not she was the mysterious author. Charlotte wrote in her diary, “If ever I write doggerel again I shall be careful not to sign my own initials.”³⁸¹ For the teenager to have thought her initials would prevent her aunt (or any other member of her family or close friends) from recognizing it was her speaks mainly to her naivete. In addition, the use of “doggerel” to describe her poem not only shows her youthful insecurity, but

³⁸⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 141.

³⁸¹ Charlotte wrote, “Aunt Margaretta...writes and asks if I wrote the lines to ‘W.L.G.’ in the Liberator [*sic*].” The initials are those of William Lloyd Garrison. Ibid.

also because she was following in the footsteps of her Aunt Sarah, who had been internationally recognized an anti-slavery poet.

William C. Nell was one of the main contributors to *The Liberator* during the time Charlotte's poem to Garrison was published. Therefore, he more than likely encouraged and helped her to submit it for publication. In a personal letter written to Amy Kirby Post, a (white) abolitionist, Nell wrote "...Garrison's recent Liberator sonnet – *My Chosen Queen* was originally written in Mrs. Chas. Remond's [i.e. Amy Matilda's] Album; the response to W.L.G. by C.L.F., was by Miss Forten, a young Lady...now at Salem in the Normal School; she is the niece of Robert Purvis."³⁸² Nell's inclusion of her familial ties underscores the importance of Charlotte's presence in the anti-slavery circuit, as well as her status as an elite abolitionist of color. Equally as significant, Charlotte had been living with the Remonds when she penned the poem, and evidently read Amy Matilda's Friendship Album for poetic inspiration. These interpersonal connections were the origins of her poetry to Garrison. Both he and Nell would have welcomed the opportunity to publish a poem written by the next generation of talented female Fortens.

Besides Charlotte's writing for *The Liberator* and intensive studies, she also was a voracious reader of anti-slavery literature and newspapers. The main genre she consumed in 1855 was the emerging category of the American anti-slavery novel. In early January, Charlotte wrote in her diary, "After school read 'The Hour and the Man' to Miss [Mary] Shepard."³⁸³ This one sentence might be overlooked as potentially a school assignment or leisurely reading. However, Harriet Martineau, the author of this early anti-slavery novel, was considered a significant figure for Garrisonian

³⁸² Porter, *Nell*, 411-42.

³⁸³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 121.

abolitionists.³⁸⁴ *The Hour and the Man* was based on the life and legend of Toussaint L'Ouverture and was seen as Martineau's most famous and influential writing.³⁸⁵ Martineau's work and activism was greatly admired by the Forten family going back to her grandfather, James Forten, Sr. Martineau had gifted him a first edition of the book with a personal inscription.³⁸⁶ Even though Charlotte was only three-years-old when it was originally published in 1840, it she would have seen the signed copy in her grandparents' library while growing up.³⁸⁷

By the time of Charlotte's teen years in Salem, Harriet Martineau had long worked and written for American anti-slavery.³⁸⁸ Martineau penned other anti-slavery stories and tracts, including *The Martyr Age of the United States*, which chronicled the abolitionist movement in New England from its beginning until its publication in 1839.³⁸⁹ She also wrote at least one anti-slavery hymn titled, "Now's the Day and Now's the Hour."³⁹⁰ The premise linked her novel, *The Hour and the Man*, and L'Ouverture's character to the immediacy and urgency of "the Crisis" in the United States after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Martineau's hymn was not necessarily advocating for a revolt, since she aligned with the Garrisonian stance of non-violence. However, she was reaffirming

³⁸⁴ Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was a British abolitionist and author. She was closely aligned with the American abolitionists, including the Fortens and the Purvises, and was a contributor to the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar.

³⁸⁵ John Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013).

³⁸⁶ The inscribed edition has not been located.

³⁸⁷ Even though the date is outside the purview of this dissertation, Charlotte wrote in her diary in 1857 about wanting to see again the signed copy of *The Hour and the Man* by Martineau to her grandfather.

³⁸⁸ See Matteson, *Margaret Fuller*, regarding the tremendous influence Harriet Martineau had on New England abolitionist women.

³⁸⁹ Harriet Martineau, *The Martyr Age of the United States* (Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Co., 1839).

³⁹⁰ Martineau's lyrics to "Now's the Day and Now's the Hour" was put to the tune, "Scots What Hae?" Eaklor, *American Antislavery Songs*, 247-248.

that there had been successful efforts in the past to overturn tyrannical practices and to not lose hope in the face of such extreme political adversity and physical danger.

In addition to the works Martineau produced, she also wrote personal letters of reference for escaped fugitives fleeing America after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.³⁹¹ Letters were written for William and Ellen Craft of Boston to leave for London instead of risk being captured and returned to the South.³⁹² Martineau also wrote references for abolitionists of color, like Charlotte's close friend, Sarah Parker Remond, when she traveled to Europe to lecture on American slavery.³⁹³ Furthermore, Martineau solicited items and funds in London for the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar and contributed poetry to its accompanying annual literary gift book, *The Liberty Bell*.³⁹⁴ Therefore, it seems more than coincidental that Charlotte read *The Hour and the Man* to Mary Shepard only days after the close of the Christmas Bazaar. Martineau's presence at the fair would have been omnipresent.

It is also notable that Charlotte wrote about Martineau's book on the same day that *The Liberator* printed an account on the importance of the anti-slavery novel for its political influence and as a way to keep abolition funded. Even though Charlotte was already well-versed in abolitionist literature it cannot be overlooked that she chose to read *The Hour and the Man* on the same day the paper cited the significance of the burgeoning American genre of the anti-slavery novel after the success of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1852.³⁹⁵ Charlotte knew that

³⁹¹ Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad*, 80.

³⁹² For more on William and Ellen Craft, see Chapter II.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Harriet Martineau penned a piece called "Pity the Slave" in the 1844 publication of *The Liberty Bell* for the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar. *The Liberty Bell* by Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1844), 182-187.

³⁹⁵ *The Liberator*, January 5, 1855.

Martineau was one of the forerunners of the anti-slavery novel, and her writing and others had shown how fiction could influence ambivalent readers. *The Liberator's* omission of *The Hour and the Man* in the brief historical list of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Ida May*, *Clotel*, and *Twelve Years a Slave* may have prompted the shared reading and conversation between Charlotte and Mary Shepard about the longer historical trajectory of the anti-slavery novel.

The article in *The Liberator* focused primarily on the political effect and financial revenue for abolitionists. Dating back to the early 1850s, the genre of the American anti-slavery novel was proving to be big business.³⁹⁶ Like hymns and poetry, the anti-slavery novel was added to the public relations repertoire to promote anti-slavery sentiment. “The wise man who long ago said, that if he could make the ballads of a nation, he cared little who made its laws, would in our day certainly have so far modified his paradox as to have substituted novels for ballads.” The article stated that a novel’s potential for mass influence was greater than songs, because fictional prose was “stronger and subtler,” and could therefore be propagated to a far-reaching audience without those opposed to abolition suspecting its agenda.³⁹⁷ The anti-slavery novel was seen as the most diverse, inclusive, and effective form of propaganda the abolitionists had formulated.³⁹⁸ It was not only a successful literary tool in garnering support, it was also funding the Garrisonian abolition enterprise.

The anti-slavery novels were advertised for sale in bold letters in *The Liberator*, but the books were also sold by abolitionists on the lecture circuit. For example, William C. Nell wrote to a friend that “Charles Remond has sold *Lucy Stone* and now has *Ida May* and *Clotel*. The past week [i.e., March

³⁹⁶ *The Liberator* advertised anti-slavery novels in its paper every week, and each time included the amount of income the books had generated.

³⁹⁷ *The Liberator*, June 5, 1855.

³⁹⁸ The paragraph concluded, “The intense interest with which the skilful [sic] novelist invests his work, its adaptation to the tastes and understanding of all classes of society, and of almost every grade of intellect, thus giving it a vast, and in the most successful instances a universal circulation, renders it a truly potent engine for moving the feelings or moulding [sic] the opinions of the people...” Ibid.

11, 1855] has been prolific with anti-slavery interest – The Loring Legislation – Return of Anthony Burns – arrival of the *Little White Slave*, *Ida May* and also of Solomon Northrup, who I introduced to Theodore Parker...yesterday to Wendell Phillips.”³⁹⁹ Selling anti-slavery novels at public lectures and events was another way to finance and promote abolition. It was also a way to get information into the homes of Americans under the guise of fictional reading for leisure.⁴⁰⁰

For Charlotte, anti-slavery novels and literature had surrounded the Forten household long before it had become a popular American genre and a lucrative business for abolitionists. The Forten library collection included transatlantic literature from Classical to Romantic that dated back to when Charlotte’s father, aunts, and uncles had been reared and educated. Charlotte devoured the words and sentiments of sympathizing authors and orators in America and across the Atlantic. The rise of the lucrative American anti-slavery novel became the complement to earlier anti-slavery literature she had read, and was expected to keep up with current publications like any educated abolitionist would. This knowledge would have also given her the expertise in judging the sophistication or effectiveness of the work being produced.

The popularity of the Northern-published anti-slavery novel started to be circulated in the Southern states. The attendees of the 1855 annual New England Anti-Slavery Convention, including Charlotte, heard about this and discussed it in great detail. As a result of the tightening grip of the pro-slavery power after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, newspapers and anti-slavery novels sold in the

³⁹⁹ The italics are Nell’s. Porter, *William Cooper Nell*, 409. Written from Boston on March 11, 1855. *Lucy Stone* was written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the subject of the woman question; *Ida May* written by Mary Langdon a.k.a. Mary Hayden Pike in 1854; *Clotel* written by William Wells Brown in 1853, and Solomon Northrup who had published his story, *Twelve Years a Slave*, in 1853.

⁴⁰⁰ In a speech titled, “The Philosophy of the Abolition Movement,” Wendell Phillips wrote how the use of American literature can be uniquely channeled to aid in emancipation. “So far from the antislavery cause having lacked a manly and able discussion, I think it will be acknowledged hereafter that this discussion has been one of the noblest contributions to a literature really American... At last we have stirred a question thoroughly American; the subject has been looked at from a point of view entirely American; and it is of such deep interest, that it has called out all the intellectual strength of the nation. For once, the nation speaks its own thoughts, in its own language, and the tone is all its own...” Wendell Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1872).

South were being altered to exclude abolition from the pages. The South was literally rewriting or removing the stories so as to maintain the agenda of slavery. In an attempt to undo these inaccurate revisions, Edmund Quincy, a white abolitionist and another attendee of the convention, was quoted as having said, “[S]end a copy of the Remonstrance to each of the leading religious newspapers in the country, and to request its publication therein; and to make further efforts to secure its publication in Southern journals.”⁴⁰¹ After an open debate at the convention, the Resolution was unanimously approved.

Even though Quincy’s Resolution was accepted, the Remonstrance letter that was sent does not appear to have influenced any of the intended audience. The lack of response by the Southern religious leaders led to a political rejuvenation of the Garrisonian abolitionists. It motivated the group to greater lengths of protest and it did not deter their unflinching activism. Charlotte was amongst those political activists at the convention. She listened to those fiery speeches about the atrocities being wrought across the country, including the corruption of anti-slavery literature. She was motivated by Quincy’s and others’ words to reject the country that her grandfather had fought so bravely to defend. Instead, she was actively participating in a radical anti-slavery movement that wanted the Union dissolved over slavery.

Just as Edmund Quincy had spoken at the convention about sending a letter to the religious newspapers of the South, another leading white abolitionist, Samuel May, Jr., took to the floor and described in detail what Southern leaders and politicians were doing to alter anti-slavery novels. *The Liberator* reported that May “illustrated the corrupting influences of that Union on Northern minds by the books emanating from Northern presses, adapted to Southern markets and views.”⁴⁰² He was quoted as having said that “he had just heard, with astonishment and sorrow, that from the last

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

edition of the American First Class Book,⁴⁰³ -- a work familiarly known to many of the audience, and compiled by our friend, now present, Rev. John Pierpont, --*the anti-slavery pieces had been omitted!*”⁴⁰⁴ With utter contempt, May said that the pieces omitted were of William Cowper’s well-known lines, “I would not have a slave to till my ground.”⁴⁰⁵ May maintained that he did not know who had been responsible for removing these portions, but was disappointed and outraged at the decision.

Not only was the Southern press intentionally changing or omitting anti-slavery books, they were also editing the poetry of those sympathetic to the cause. This would have been an abomination to any Garrisonian abolitionist hearing this news, especially while attending the National Anti-Slavery Convention. In particular, it would have been a cruel and hurtful blow to Charlotte, because she considered the authors and poets who aligned themselves with abolition as key to her intellectual life as a scholar and activist, including Cowper. Charlotte had quoted Cowper in the first two few pages of commencing her diary in 1855 after Anthony Burns had been arrested in Boston. His poetry helped to comfort her under times of severe political and social duress.

As Charlotte continued her studies and activism, she also continued to build a community of friends and allies. This included attending local anti-slavery lectures and personal interactions with fellow abolitionists of color. Even though the majority of the year was spent immersed in school work, she was still able to devote her free time to these important interactions. This not only provided a network of friends outside of school, it also broadened her political and intellectual awareness of the contemporaneous events. She was becoming quite the astute observer of people’s

⁴⁰³ *American First-Class Book: Or Exercises in Reading and Recitation* was published in 1854. Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ *The Liberator*, January 5, 1855.

⁴⁰⁵ The piece continued May’s list including, “[A] piece by Montgomery, rebuking professed Christians who participate in Slavery, and an Extract from Daniel Webster’s Plymouth Oration in 1822, condemnatory of the Slave Trade. By whose authority these were omitted, Mr. May did not know; but he had seldom heard of any thing [*sic*] which caused him more regret. *The Liberator*, June 5, 1855.

motives and agenda, and was no longer willing to compromise on her values and convictions as a radical abolitionist.

One lecture she attended in 1855 was given by a man identified only as “Mr. Clark” and the topic was on Haiti (Hayti). Her assessment of Clark’s lecture was quite shrewd and perceptive. “The lecturer spoke eloquently of the Haytians, from whom he had received much kindness; and paid a well-deserved tribute to the brave and unfortunate Toussaint. I was beginning to think him an earnest friend of freedom, when he proved to be a colonizationist and then a very decided and unpleasant ‘change came o’er the spirit of my dream.”⁴⁰⁶ She astutely recognized that the lecturer was using pro-colonizationist language (i.e., the American Colonization Society) that cited biblical passages as a way to rationalize the “Back to Africa” movement.⁴⁰⁷

Charlotte’s detection of Clark’s true nature as a colonizationist was remarkably perceptive for a seventeen-year-old. Her family had denounced the American Colonization Society (ACS) and anybody affiliated or sympathetic to it for over two decades by the time she wrote in her diary about Clark’s lecture. In addition, the ACS was still being legislated or enforced during Charlotte’s time in New England, and the underlying prejudice and possible forced removal to Africa was not only familiar to her, it remained an existential threat to free people of color throughout the United States. For example, only two years prior to Clark’s lecture on Haiti, an announcement was reprinted in *The Liberator* and read, “Colonization in Virginia.—A bill has passed both branches of the Virginia Legislature, setting apart about \$42,000, to be applied to removing free persons of color from Virginia to Liberia. A portion of the amount to be raised is to be derived from an annual tax of \$1 each upon every free male person of color in the State, between the ages of twenty-one and fifty-five

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ For more on the American Colonization Society (1816-1865) see Chapter 1.

years....”⁴⁰⁸ Not only did the legislation pass to forcibly relocate free citizens of the United States against their will, the law required that the majority of the funding would come from those being displaced.⁴⁰⁹

Even though Charlotte’s family had long been steadfast against colonization, Clark’s lecture and intentions would not have been obvious at first. Clark had already been known in the Boston area for his expertise on Haiti the year leading up to Charlotte hearing him talk. *The Liberator* referred to him as “Mr. B.C. Clark,” and stated that Clark, “whose ‘Plea for Hayti’... has prepared and published ‘Remarks Upon United States Intervention in Hayti....’”⁴¹⁰ The advertisement continued, “Mr. Clark is a Boston merchant, whose knowledge of Hayti qualifies him to speak on this question. This pamphlet deserves to be circulated throughout the country.”⁴¹¹ Considering that this was published by Garrison, who allied with free people of color against the ACS, it is strange if not ironic that he allowed this opinion in his paper without refutation. Nevertheless, Charlotte’s rejection of Clark shows her sharp political instincts on the subject matter, and what a deeply analytical thinker she was even at such a young age.

It is also significant that she used the phrase in her journal, “change came o’er the spirit of my dream” to capture her disappointment over the Mr. Clark’s political stance. Charlotte was

⁴⁰⁸ *The Liberator*, May 6, 1853. The announcement of the “Colonization in Virginia” was first printed in the *Spirit of Jefferson* newspaper on April 19, 1853. *Spirit of Jefferson*. (Charles Town, Va. [W. Va.]), 19 April 1853. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026788/1853-04-19/ed-1/seq-3/>.

⁴⁰⁹ The remaining portion of the funds to enforce the bill was “\$30,000 from the State Treasury, and the balance from the tax on seals attached to registers of freedom.” Ibid. It is unclear what “seals attached to registers of freedom” means.

⁴¹⁰ *The Liberator*, April 1, 1853.

⁴¹¹ The closing line of the statement read, “It shows Mr. Commissioner Walsh’s diplomatic operations in Hayti in their proper character.” It was reprinted from the *Commonwealth*. Ibid. In addition to B.C. Clark being a merchant, the Boston City Directory cited him as also having been a treasurer for the Pearson Cordage Co. There does not appear to be any information on the company or if there was any political affiliation with the American Colonization Society. Ancestry.com. *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

quoting Byron's *The Dream*⁴¹²— a popular poem among abolitionists during the 1830s through the 1850s.⁴¹³ “A change came o’er the spirit of my dream” begins the III-VIII stanzas of the poem, and therefore its repetition shows the importance of the line.⁴¹⁴ Byron contemplates the true nature of the soul no matter how much one might pretend to act moral. Charlotte’s inclusion of his line after revealing her displeasure in the lecturer’s pro-colonization position was a fitting response for an abolitionist. Charlotte more than likely had put this poem to memory not only because of its sentiment, but also because the words soothed her own soul in times of personal and political deceitfulness.⁴¹⁵

Byron’s line is also quite an extraordinary inclusion in her journal entry because it had additional literary meaning. The line, “Change came o’er the spirit of my dream” was also used in the title of the eleventh chapter of Frederick Douglass’s autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Douglass’s book was published in 1855, the same year Charlotte was quoting the line in her journal. Moreover, at the same time, one edition of *The Liberator* published a brief announcement about a republication of Byron’s *Prisoner of Chillon*.⁴¹⁶ Clearly Byron’s popularity with the abolitionist audience remained unwavering, including in Douglass’s own writing. *Prisoner of Chillon* told of the arc beginning from an uneducated prisoner (or fugitive) who became a free, educated man. More than likely Charlotte was aware of both Byron’s authorship and Douglass’s appropriation of it. Her inclusion of the line therefore adds additional meaning to Clark’s discourse and support about the forcible relocation of free people of color.

⁴¹² First published in July 1816 as *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Lord Byron, *The Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems* (London: No publisher given, 1817).

⁴¹⁵ *The Liberator*, March 16, 1855.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

In addition to Charlotte's steadfast devotion to William Lloyd Garrison, another white abolitionist who had a tremendous influence on her was the Reverend Theodore Parker.⁴¹⁷ She had gone to see him lecture for the first, but was already very familiar with his work. She recorded that she had "long wished very much to see and hear this remarkable man," and that her "pleasant anticipations were fully realized."⁴¹⁸ She described in great detail his talk on "The Anglo-Saxon Race," and that "[h]e gave an extremely interesting and instructive sketch of their origin and peculiar traits of character."⁴¹⁹ She summarized his argument that Anglo-Saxons are superior in "the sciences and in what is *practical* in life" they are "inferior to other races in imagination, love and appreciation of the beautiful and true moral worth."⁴²⁰ Charlotte added that Parker viewed the Anglo-Saxon race as having an "aggressive spirit which prompted them to make war upon and exterminate other races...[and] described them as too selfish to be fond of *equality*."⁴²¹ Charlotte's unusually lengthy journal entry after hearing Parker for the first time illustrates that she was deeply moved and enlightened by his talk.

Only the next day, Charlotte again went to hear Theodore Parker talk.⁴²² This time, she wrote, "The lecture...was even more interesting than the other."⁴²³ The subject matter was on the

⁴¹⁷ Parker had been raised in Lexington, Massachusetts and was a renowned scholar and clergyman for the Unitarian Church. Stevenson, *Journals*, xlv.

⁴¹⁸ January 30, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 125.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ Charlotte concluded the journal entry with, "One of their greatest failings is a lack of conscientiousness—they are downright before men but not upright before God. This somewhat exemplified by pauperism in England and slavery in America. Every eighth man in England is a pauper; everything eighth man in American is *worse* than a pauper—he does not own the hands with which he works—the feet upon which he stands. Every eighth woman in America does not own herself nor the child upon her bosom." *Ibid.*

⁴²² January 31, 1855.

⁴²³ Wednesday, January 31, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 125-126.

“character, condition and prospects of America” and added that “Both this evening and last when he spoke of slavery it seemed to me as if I could *feel* the half suppressed [*sic*] sensation which it occasioned. It is *some* encouragement that nearly all the finest orators are now anti-slavery.”⁴²⁴ It is not surprising that Charlotte perceived the finest orators as being anti-slavery, because she was partial to their sentiments. However, it is also significant that she made note of the best orators being anti-slavery, because it showed that she was aware that their speeches and writings were having a profound impact on swaying public sentiment against slavery.

Like Charlotte’s great admiration for Theodore Parker, she also wrote about seeing James Russell Lowell for the first time. Lowell was a New England Romantic poet and friend of abolition, but was not necessarily fighting on the frontlines with the Garrisonians. His poetry was his activism. Charlotte recorded that he had given a lecture on “English Poetry,” and wrote with adoration, “I have always admired him as one of the great Poets of Humanity.”⁴²⁵ Abolitionist Samuel J. May, Jr. reflected on Lowell, and wrote, “[Russell] was never...a member of the Antislavery Society. He was seldom seen at our meetings. But his muse rendered us essential services...and committed him fully to the cause of freedom-- the cause of our enslaved countrymen.”⁴²⁶ Charlotte’s reference to Lowell being one of the great poets of humanity was because of his alliance and sympathy for the noble efforts of abolitionists.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Wednesday, March 7, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 129.

⁴²⁶ May, *Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict*, 262.

⁴²⁷ Samuel May also cited some of Lowell’s most popular poems with abolitionists, including, “The Present Crisis,” “On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington,” “Lines to William L. Garrison,” and stanzas sung at the annual First of August celebrations. Even though the poems pre-dated the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, his poetry were still as applicable as when they had been composed in the 1840s. Lowell was also a contributor to the literary gift book, *The Liberty Bell*, published for the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar. Ibid. Lowell was also a contributor to the literary gift book, *The Liberty Bell*, published for the annual New England Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar in 1843.

Another literary figure who Charlotte documented having seen was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson was already considered one of America's premier author, and was also an advocate for abolition.⁴²⁸ Her diary provides a rare look at the response to Emerson as he rose in fame, especially from the vantage point of a young and free budding scholar of color. The particular lecture Charlotte attended was not on anti-slavery but instead focused on France. "I had felt quite eager to hear the gifted man, who Wendell Phillips says, is thought in England to stand at the head of American literature."⁴²⁹ For Charlotte, reading authors who align with abolition was paramount—let alone that Emerson had been given Phillips' approval. This only further added weight to Emerson's talents. Charlotte concluded with, "He is a fine lecturer, and a very peculiar-looking man."⁴³⁰ This is a remarkable account of someone having been able to see and assess Emerson, including his physical looks, at the time he was emerging as a major American literary figure.

In addition to having witnessed famous literary figures in person, Charlotte also attended talks by well-known politicians, including Charles Sumner. She was very familiar with Sumner's writings and speeches, but had never heard him speak. In one diary entry she wrote, "He said many excellent things, but I cannot agree with very many of his views – particularly with his reverence for the Constitution and the Union. I believe, though greatly mistaken, he yet has a warm, true heart, and certainly he is an elegant and eloquent orator."⁴³¹ She added, "Though very different from, and inferior to Mr. Phillips, in my opinion."⁴³² Her political acuity allowed her to critique Sumner's sentiments while still recognizing his noble heart and talent. In addition, she stood firm and resolute

⁴²⁸ Like so many other abolitionists, Emerson was also a contributor to the annual literary gift book sold at the Boston Bazaar, *The Liberty Bell*.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ November 1, 1855. Ibid, 143.

⁴³² Ibid.

as a Garrisonian abolitionist even in the face of a famous (male) politician by declaring her position on the hypocrisy of the Constitution and the Union and her preference to Wendell Phillips.

In addition to Charlotte seeing famous figures firsthand, she was also attending anti-slavery meetings with well-known abolitionists of color. The people included those who had been born free and those who had been born enslaved. Charlotte's diary entries throughout 1855 provide a startlingly rich amount of information showing the interpersonal dynamics, everyday exchanges, and abolitionist affairs of those in Salem and Boston. This includes her house-host and hostess, the Remonds, William Wells Brown, and William C. Nell.

In one a short passage in her diary, Charlotte noted that she had gone to an anti-slavery meeting in Danversport.⁴³³ "This evening took a delightful ride by moonlight with Mr. [Charles Lenox] R.[emond] and Miss [Sarah Parker] Remond and Mr. [William Wells] Brown – Attended a meeting which was addressed by Mr. B.[rown]." It is important to point out that when Charlotte penned names in her journal, she did not include the first or last names, but only the initials. When she did include the full spelling of the name it was either because of formality (i.e., respect of elders) or because of the person not being as familiar. Her use of initials with the Remonds and Brown shows the intimacy and familiarity she had with these people. She did not worry about forgetting their identities at a later time. The passage is also significant because it gives a real-life account – including scenic details, of abolitionists of color leading the charge against slavery. Equally as significant, these abolitionists of color included the Remonds who had all been born free, and William Wells Brown who had not been as fortunate and was born into slavery. Yet now they were together as comrades for the holy cause.

⁴³³ Monday, January 29, 1855. Ibid, 125. The advertisement for the meeting stated that, "Wm. Wells Brown, an Agent of the *American Anti-Slavery Society*, will hold meetings in Danversport, Monday, January 29, Danvers, Tuesday, January 30, Kingston, Thursday, February 1 [and] February 2, Feltonville, Sunday, February 4...." *The Liberator*, January 26, 1855.

Another example of Charlotte's association with well-known abolitionists - both black and white- was when she, Charles Lenox Remond, and others bumped into the Hutchinson family while traveling on the roads. The Hutchinsons were famous white American abolitionists singers and songwriters. Their roots were in New Hampshire—the 'Ole Granite State,' which was also the name of one of their most popular anti-slavery songs.⁴³⁴ Charlotte wrote, "This afternoon had a sleigh ride.... We met the Hutchinsons who seemed heartily glad to see Mr. [Charles Lenox] Remond.⁴³⁵ They have promised to visit Salem again...I admire those warm-hearted minstrels of the 'Ole Granite State.'"⁴³⁶ Charlotte's reference to their origins was more than likely a double entendre so as to acknowledge the roots as well as their famous song. In addition, their recognition of Charles Lenox Remond would have been because they had all traveled together for anti-slavery events, conventions, and other political gatherings throughout New England. Since Charlotte hoped to see them again, it suggests that she had already made their acquaintance.

Charlotte was also documenting the private lives of abolitionists of color in Salem and Boston. In addition to attending meetings, it appears she may have recorded in her diary at least one instance of aiding fugitives to escape to freedom. The number of fugitives being captured, jailed in Boston, and then sent back to the South was increasing after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. For example, two articles in same edition of *The Liberator* referenced the kidnapping of fugitives in the headlines.⁴³⁷ Both articles described in great detail a highly-organized and well-

⁴³⁴ Eaklor, *American Antislavery Songs*, 283.

⁴³⁵ It is interesting to note that Charles Lenox Remond was the only close friend of Charlotte's whom she vacillated between referring to as Mr. R. and Mr. Remond.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, 127.

⁴³⁷ The first article in *The Liberator* titled, "Connection of the Curtises with the Recent Cases of Kidnapping in Boston," documented how the (Curtis) family gave legal counsel to slave-hunters and employers beginning in 1834. After detailing this history, the article continued with, "After Mr. [Daniel] Webster had made his speech of March 7, 1850, pledging himself and his State to the support of the Fugitive Slave Bill, then before Congress, 'to the fullest extent,' Thomas B. Curtis, with the help of others, got up a letter to Mr. Webster, dated March 25, 1850, signed, it is said by 987 persons,

connected group of politicians and lawyers who were helping slave-hunters and their employers kidnap and return those who had escaped. Equally as significant is that both articles emphasized that fugitives must immediately act to get out of harm's way, since staying in Boston was no longer a safe or viable option—even with the help and support of an established abolitionist network already in place.

Charlotte's diary entry hinted at the urgency and intensity felt by free and formerly enslaved persons after the rise of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. By 1855, it was tearing at the soul of the North, including in Boston. As a way to combat this, Garrisonian abolitionists were shepherding fugitives to neighboring small towns or at least attempting to do so. This included layovers for longer periods

who say, '...We desire...to express to you our entire concurrence in the sentiments of your speech'.... In May, 1854, Edward G. Loring (who was a step-brother to the Curtises) issued a warrant for the seizure of Mr. Burns; decided the case before he heard it, having advised the counsel not to oppose his rendition, for he would probably be sent back; and finally delivered him over to eternal bondage. But in the case, Mr. Loring, who has not Curtis blood in his veins, did not wish to steal a man; and proposed to throw up his commission rather than do such a deed; but he consulted his step-brother, Charles P. Curtis, who persuaded him it would be dishonorable to decline the office of kidnapping imposed upon him as a United States Commissioner by the Fugitive Slave bill. Benjamin R. Curtis, it is said, aided Mr. Loring in forming the 'opinion' by which he attempted to justify the 'extradition' of Mr. Burns; that is to say, the giving him up as a slave without any trial of his right to liberty, merely on a presumptive case established by his claimant." The article concluded, "Thus it appears that some of the Curtis family have been active in all the cases of slave-hunting which have occurred in Massachusetts, since the passage of the Fugitive Slave bill, and in one at least which occurred previously; that they were intensely active in efforts to support that bill, to procure its passage, and to carry it into execution...not to mention what was done secretly, to at least of that family had a directly personal agency." It is signed, "Your obedient servant, A Citizen of Boston, January 2, 1855." *The Liberator*, January 19, 1855.

The second article that appeared in *The Liberator* read in part, "Another Slave Case in Boston! Jackson, the alleged fugitive, came to Boston some six or eight weeks since. Prior to that time, he was employed on a coasting vessel running between Virginia and Georgia...On Tuesday evening, as Jackson was returning homewards from his work, he was accosted by a white man, who, from the description given answers very well for a noted slave-catcher of this city, and asked if his name was not Jackson. He replied that it was none of his business what his name was. The interrogator then asked Jackson where he lived, to which he evasively replied, 'in Cambridgeport.' The parties then separated. Yesterday morning...[a] posse of officers...went to a hair-dressing saloon...where it was thought Jackson might be, and represented that they had 'papers' for him. The proprietor, however, was in a state of happy ignorance. Yesterday forenoon, a note was left at the place of a business of a prominent colored citizen, saying that if he knew a man named John Jackson, he should advise him to place himself at once in a situation of safety, as the hounds were in town from Georgia. The duty was promptly performed, and assurance given Jackson that if he chose to remain in the city, he should not lack arms or friends to assist in the preservation of his liberty. If he remained, however, he must make up his mind to see blood flow, even to death possibly. If he decided otherwise, then he should be conveyed out of the city as quickly as possible. With a knowledge of the fate of poor [Thomas] Sims and [Anthony] Burns, and the inability of a few friends to withstand the power of the United States government, he said he would leave the city. Accordingly, he was taken in charge of, and in a short time was leaving, in company of good friends, as rapidly as steam would allow...." Ibid. (The article was reprinted in *The Liberator* from the *Boston Evening Telegraph*.) Ibid.

of time so as to steer the slave-hunters off track.⁴³⁸ Only a few weeks after *The Liberator's* coverage of fugitives in Boston being hunted for recapture, Charlotte included a mysterious reference to unexpected guests showing up. "On my return home found a 'surprise party' assembled there. Finished the evening very pleasantly with music, singing and conversation."⁴³⁹ Charlotte's reference to a surprise party signals some semblance of secrecy. William C. Nell and Charles Lenox Remond had worked together tirelessly for years to aid fleeing fugitives, including hiding people in Remond's home in Salem. In addition, the members of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, including Sarah Parker, Caroline, and Amy Matilda Remond and Charlotte, also aided in fugitive escapes.

Charlotte would not have revealed the true make-up of the "surprise party" had it been composed of abolitionists and fugitives. Not only was abolitionist rhetoric and literature considered dangerous, outing those who were aiding fugitives would be equally as dangerous. Yet there appears to be corroborating evidence to suggest that indeed her use of "surprise party" was code for helping and hiding fugitives. In an anti-slavery tract published by the American Anti-Slavery Society on the history of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and its victims, it noted that, "A warrant was issued in Boston, on January 10, 1855...for the arrest of John Jackson, as a fugitive from service and labor in Georgia. Mr. Jackson...was nowhere to be found."⁴⁴⁰ This warrant and Charlotte's writing about the

⁴³⁸ William C. Nell ran the Anti-Slavery office in Boston, which included his participation in the Underground Railroad. Nell's work is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is significant that he advertised placing fugitives into the homes or employment of abolitionists or friends almost weekly in *The Liberator*. One example that is pertinent to Charlotte Forten, however, was a private letter Nell wrote in 1855 about a recent illness and how he was nursed back to health by his friends in Salem. He also discussed his work with aiding fugitives there. "Wendell Phillips, Esq, Chas. Lenox Remond, and Joseph Putnam were my company...I almost thought it a privilege to be sick if *such* a Trio of Visitors could *thus* meet in my Sanctum.... I wish I could tell you my experience in the Fugitive Slave department since the excitement...but there will not be room for me to commence all the talk I would have with you while at Salem; both families [have] done their best for my comfort and at Mrs. Putnam's Herself and her Daughters all rivalled each other in their contributions of Kind offices [*sic*] while my valued friend Joe and his wife [Caroline] were always putting their Heads together for...my happiness..." Nell was using a pun for the Putnams, because Joseph and Caroline were hairdressers and owned a salon. He went on to write, "Charles Lenox Remond soon expects to commence Housekeeping with his amiable Bride [Amy Matilda]. Every one admires Her." Porter, *Nell*, 410.

⁴³⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 123-124.

⁴⁴⁰ *The Fugitive Slave Law and Its Victims* (New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1861), 43.

“surprise party” was only fourteen days apart. Therefore, it is plausible that these two accounts are the same, and that the “surprise party” she referred to included her close Boston and Salem friends to help John Jackson escape to his freedom.

Charlotte also wrote down personal exchanges not as serious as aiding fugitive. It was her birthday and she had spent it with her Salem friends. This included William Wells Brown and his daughter Josephine, who was the same age as Charlotte.⁴⁴¹ “August 17, 1855 - My eighteenth birthday. Spent the afternoon and evening very pleasantly at Mrs. Putnam’s. Miss [Josephine] Brown was there. I think I shall like her.”⁴⁴² Charlotte’s matter-of-fact and short synopsis of her birthday could be read as maturity. She had been away from home and family for over two and a half years, and was no longer a wide-eyed teenage girl but a young lady on the cusp of womanhood. She may have been thinking of the family she left behind and the loneliness that accompanied it. This would include her father, step-mother, and half-siblings, whom she barely mentioned throughout the year of 1855.

In the same birthday passage, however, her somber tone transitioned to a more judgmental one when she described the father-daughter relationship between Brown and Josephine. “Her father’s fondness for her is rather too demonstrative. . . . I enjoy talking with her about her European life. She is pleasant and communicative, and though coming lastly from England, has, I think, lived in France too much to acquire a great deal of that reserve which characterized the manners of the English.”⁴⁴³ Charlotte’s comment regarding Brown’s affections for his daughter is notable, especially since she wrote it on her birthday. Not having the attention of her own father must have been

⁴⁴¹ Josephine Brown was the daughter of William Wells Brown.

⁴⁴² Stevenson, *Journals*, 138.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

difficult and painful, especially as a motherless child. She needed the love and attention of a father, and yet he was not present in her daily life or available to her even from afar.

One of the few if only mentions of her father in 1855 was in September. Charlotte wrote in her diary, “Rec’d [*sic*] a long letter from Aunt M.[argaretta].... Father intends removing to Canada. I am glad, particularly on the children’s account.”⁴⁴⁴ Charlotte had gotten the momentous news of her father’s move via her aunt. He did not even let his daughter know firsthand that he was leaving the country. In addition, he evidently did not extend the invitation to his only daughter, since she did not mention joining them as an option. Her only optimistic comment was the hope that the situation would be good for young step-siblings. This showed her compassion for them without having to confess her own feelings of being left out. With this in mind, how could Charlotte not have felt envious of Josephine’s close relationship with her father?

The other notable aspect of Charlotte’s birthday passage was her snide quip about Josephine’s French affectations. Not only does this provide a rare insight into a private conversation between young ladies of color in the mid-1850s, it also provides a lens on class distinctions within the black abolitionist community. William Wells Brown had been a former fugitive who had gained his freedom while in London.⁴⁴⁵ This was also where Brown gained an education and began a lucrative and successful career as an abolitionist, lecturer, writer, and dramatist. Like her father, Josephine too had been educated in Europe. Conversely, Charlotte was born into a free elite family of color who were well educated and financially comfortable. In addition, the Fortens greatly admired and emulated the reserved nature of female British reformers as opposed to less-restrained

⁴⁴⁴ September 8, 1855. Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ London was also where Brown gained an education and began a lucrative and successful career as an abolitionist, lecturer, writer, and dramatist. Once back in America, his success continued. It should be noted that at the time of Charlotte’s writing, Brown was bringing in a lot of money with his dramatic readings, books, and lectures. Conversely, Charlotte’s father was not doing as well financially. This may have further added to Charlotte’s rebuff of Josephine’s behavior, because it was a way of saying that money cannot buy taste or class. Stevenson, *Journals*.

characteristics of those in France. Therefore, when Charlotte remarked on Josephine's manners as more akin to ladies in France than those in England, it was a subtle jab at their different upbringings and stations in life. This not only reveals a snobby side to Charlotte as any typical privilege teenage girl might, but it also exposes a very real and candid moment of the personal exchanges between two teenagers of color.⁴⁴⁶

It had been one year since Charlotte began keeping a diary and the annual New England Anti-Slavery Convention was again being held in Boston.⁴⁴⁷ Unlike the year before when Anthony Burns had been jailed and tried, in 1855 he was one of the guest speakers. The convention also billed Charles Lenox Remond and William Wells Brown. Remond was vice president of the convention, so more than likely Charlotte was fully apprised of the convention's schedule, including the speakers and topical agenda. The convention was a three-day long event, but Charlotte did not write about it in her diary on the first day. On the second day, however, she and Ellen Putnam Gilliard went to Boston and attended the morning session of the anti-slavery convention. For reasons not stated, they were unable to stay for very long.

⁴⁴⁶ It also noteworthy that at the time of Charlotte's writing about Josephine, William Wells Brown was bringing in a substantial amount of money from his dramatic readings, books, and lectures. Even though Charlotte was raised in a socio-economically elite household, by the time she left for Salem, her father had been struggling financially. This may have added to Charlotte's rebuff of Josephine's French mannerisms as snobbish way of saying that money could not necessarily buy taste and class.

⁴⁴⁷ The announcement for the New England Anti-Slavery Convention appeared in *The Liberator*: "The Annual Meeting...will be held in Boston, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, May 29th, 30th, and 31st, commencing at 10 o'clock, A.M. It usually surpasses, in interest and spirit, every other anti-slavery gathering in the country, and is characterised [*sic*] by the strongest utterance, the freest discussion, and the most stirring eloquence. The cause of the enslaved calls for an attendance, at this crisis, unprecedented in numbers. Every State in New England should be well represented. The friends of immediate emancipation, in all parts of the country, however widely they may differ in their methods for the overthrow of slavery, are most cordially invited to be present, and to participate in its deliberations. Among the speakers will be Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Edmund Quincy, Charles L. Remond, Charles C. Burleigh, Stephen S. and Abby K. Foster, Andrew T. Foss, Wm. Wells, Brown, T. W. Higginson, and Samuel J. May of Syracuse. The Convention will be held at the MELODEON." *The Liberator*, May 25, 1855.

In the short time Charlotte did attend the morning session, she noted that “[Wendell] Phillips introduced Anthony Burns in the most beautiful manner.”⁴⁴⁸ She returned to the meetings in the evening, and noted, “Mr. [Thomas Wentworth] Higginson⁴⁴⁹ gave a very interesting lecture; he is a particular favorite of mine,” and added, “Mrs. Ernestine Rose⁴⁵⁰ spoke well but too long.”⁴⁵¹ Charlotte’s account is not only important because it provides a personal response to an anti-slavery gathering not found in other sources, like newspapers, but also because of the collection of speakers. They were all coalescing together without gender, racial divide, or distinction. It was not unusual for Charlotte to hear female abolitionists who also advocated for women’s rights. The two political agendas were morally and ideologically interconnected, and Charlotte’s descriptions of the male and female speakers without commentary or reaction underscores this.

Charlotte did not mention what she thought of Anthony Burns nor did she summarize any of the resolutions made at the convention. A week later, however, *The Liberator*, devoted the entire paper to the convention, including printing the speeches, resolutions, and events. As Charlotte had stated, Phillips had introduced Burns.⁴⁵² Although she did not mention what Phillips said, the paper recorded him as having “referred to the Anti-Slavery Convention held a year since in this place; to that week when Anthony Burns was in the court-house, a prisoner—a victim of the Fugitive Slave

⁴⁴⁸ Wednesday, May 30, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 135.

⁴⁴⁹ “Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Prominent abolitionist, minister, and writer from Cambridge, as well as commanding office of the First South Carolina Volunteers during the Civil War.” Stevenson, *Journals*, xlv.

⁴⁵⁰ Ernestine Rose was a well-known European abolitionist and women’s rights advocate, and was a contemporary of such well-known American women as Susan B. Anthony. She was invited to speak at both anti-slavery and women’s rights conventions.

⁴⁵¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 135.

⁴⁵² *The Liberator* wrote in part, “The Convention re-assembled in the Melodeon, at 10am [Wednesday, May 30th]: Wendell Phillips, President of the Convention...referred to the Anti-Slavery Convention held a year since in this place; to that week when Anthony Burns was in the court-house, a prisoner – a victim of the Fugitive Slave Law. During that week, no one of us could get sight of the imprisoned man, earnestly as we sought it. But thought we could not, a year ago, see him in his court-house prison, I have now...the pleasure of introducing to you Anthony Burns, on this platform, a FREEMAN.” *The Liberator*, June 5, 1855.

Law.”⁴⁵³ The paper described Burns as coming forward to the crowd “amidst much applause, and...he rejoiced to be for the first time in his life in an Anti-Slavery Convention.”⁴⁵⁴ The paper quoted Burns as thanking “all who had felt for him and had helped him,” and that his comments were emotional applause from the audience.⁴⁵⁵ Charlotte was in the crowd and was more than likely one of the people effusively rejoicing at his fortunate fate.⁴⁵⁶

Charlotte recorded the last day of the convention and briefly mentioned one important topic in particular as having piqued her interest. “Several very interesting speeches were made...in an animated discussion on the Constitution...between Mr. [William Lloyd] Garrison, Mr. [John] Pierpont, Mr. [Charles] Burleigh and others.”⁴⁵⁷ Even though she did not elaborate on the “animated discussion on the Constitution,” it evidently was memorable enough for her to include it in her diary. *The Liberator* wrote about Reverend John Pierpont⁴⁵⁸ —one of those mentioned by Charlotte, as having said, “...No obligation rests upon any body [*sic*] in the country to obey the [1850] Fugitive Slave Law, or any other law for slavery, -- whether the Constitution provides for it or not.”⁴⁵⁹ He

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ The abolitionists in Boston (and most likely Salem) raised money to purchase Burns’ freedom. The owner refused, citing that he wanted more money, and eventually sold Burns to another owner. The abolitionists offered the second owner the money to purchase Burns’ freedom, and the (second) owner agreed. See *The Liberator*, June 5, 1855; also Blackett, *The Captive’s Quest*.

⁴⁵⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 135-136.

⁴⁵⁸ John Pierpont was also the author of the book, *American First-Class Book: Or Exercises in Reading and Recitation*, which was published in 1854, and had subsequently been altered in the hands of Southern printers and Northern sympathizers to profit from sales in the South.

⁴⁵⁹ The remainder of John Pierpont’s words concluded with: “This...was a well-established maxim of common law.... [F]or the utility of the so-called Fugitive Slave clause in the Constitution, on the ground, 1st, of grammatical construction of the language; 2d, of its being a contract without any consideration; and 3d, of its immorality.” *The Liberator*, January 5, 1855. Stephen S. Foster, a white abolitionist from Worcester, Massachusetts, who was one of the few to advocate taking up arms to prevent slave-hunters from capturing and returning fugitives back to slavery (most Garrisonian abolitionists were non-violent), said at the convention’s second day of meetings that “[h]e did not wish the [1850] Fugitive Slave Law repealed; his reason being, that the existence of that law, and the attempts (successful or otherwise) to enforce it, were

argued that the document “[was] essentially wrong and wicked, and therefore invalid, dead, ‘nothing in the world.’”⁴⁶⁰

After Pierpont argued that the Constitution condoned slavery and therefore was sinful, William Lloyd Garrison publicly resolved that, “The American Union is the supremacy of the bowie knife, the revolver, and the slave-driver’s lash, and lynch law, over freedom of speech, of the press, of conscience.... ‘No Union with Slaveholders, religiously or politically!’”⁴⁶¹ The tension building between Garrisonian abolitionists and those who were pro-slavery (whether North or South) was mounting. Charlotte was in the midst of it all, recording this important historical moment that allows insight into how abolitionists were responding and reacting to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law in real time. This session at the anti-slavery convention also seems to have cemented her stance on the complicity of Constitution and the Union with slavery. The Garrisonian abolitionists did not compromise with the sins of slavery or those who protected it.

Charlotte concluded her three-day diary entries about the anti-slavery convention by paying homage to the magnificent mind of Wendell Phillips, as well as her disappointment in Theodore Parker. “The Hall was crowded; and while Wendell Phillips was speaking, I gazed on the hundreds of earnest faces, and thought that those glowing words so full of eloquence and truth could not be lost upon all of those to whom they were address.”⁴⁶² Her contemporaneous account of the admiration for Phillips and the fierce hope she felt in watching the audience captivated by his words

producing an effect against the institution of slavery, and all its upholders and apologists, far greater than could be produced in any other way.” Ibid. See Chapter I for more on Foster’s stance on non-violence.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. There is no mention of what Charles C. Burleigh said at the convention that inspired Charlotte to include him in the trio of abolitionists whose speeches she liked, and there is only a brief mention in *The Liberator* that read, “Charles C. Burleigh replied briefly, but very ably, to Mr. Pierpont’s argument on the Constitution.” *The Liberator* goes on to add that Burleigh’s speech – and the speeches of all the speakers, would be forthcoming in a “phonographic report” that would provide “a full sketch of their remarks.” Ibid.

⁴⁶² Thursday, May 31, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 135-136.

is an important historical contribution. It provides a fuller understanding of the impact the speakers were having on their audiences. Newspaper accounts provided logistics and speeches, as well as propaganda. But barely if any emotional responses from those in the audience. Charlotte's writing shows that the speeches at the convention were not just for those already devotedly aligned with anti-slavery, but also for those not yet converted.⁴⁶³

Another example of an important anti-slavery event that Charlotte attended in 1855 was in Reading, Massachusetts. Her commentary was brief and only mentioned the "delightful ride" and that "Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips spoke very beautifully."⁴⁶⁴ The quick entry downplays the significance of the gathering, as well as for its purpose. *The Liberator* advertised "A special meeting of the Middlesex Country Anti-Slavery Society...and it is hoped that thereby this new and commodious consent, dedicated to Freedom, Humanity, and practical Religion."⁴⁶⁵ The "commodious consent" was a newly erected building called Liberty Hall that would be used exclusively for the assemblage of abolitionists to hold meetings, celebrations, and fairs.⁴⁶⁶ Although Charlotte cited Garrison and Phillips as having spoken beautifully, she did not mention that there were other featured speakers, including, Charles Lenox Remond. It may be that she had already heard Remond's speech—whether

⁴⁶³ *The Liberator*, June 5, 1855. Wendell Phillips' closing remarks read, "[H]e addressed the Convention in a very eloquent and thrilling speech, which was enthusiastically applauded." It is unclear why Charlotte was disappointed in Theodore Parker's speech, as she had previously written about him in complimentary terms. The only mention of Parker's speech from *The Liberator* read, "Theodore Parker made some humourous [*sic*] and effective remarks, respecting Mayor Smith and Governor Gardner and recapitulated and extolled the various acts of the Legislature for the protection of personal liberty, the removal of Judge Loring, &c. &c." Ibid. Since Charlotte was steeped in anti-slavery politics, it is not clear why this topic would have not been a disappointment, most especially the removal of Judge Loring. Loring had presided over Anthony Burns' case, and was entrenched in pro-slavery friends, family, and associates engaged in returning fugitives.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 138.

⁴⁶⁵ *The Liberator*, August 3, 1855.

⁴⁶⁶ William C. Nell wrote the personal letter to Amy Kirby Post from Liberty Grove, mailed from Greenwood Station, South Reading, Massachusetts on August 12, 1855 at 9am: "Esteemed Friend, My Second Sunday's vacation from Music Hall has enabled my attendance here to day [*sic*] from whence a party will proceed to Reading 3 miles distant to dedicate Liberty Hall as did as was the Grove here two weeks since to the Cause of Humanity. Garrison, Phillips and J.N. Buffum will come up from Lynn, Charles Remond and a delegation also from Salem; Wm. W. Brown and Youngest Daughter Josephine came out with me." Porter, *Nell*, 419.

at a previous anti-slavery meeting or in the privacy of their shared home. Still, the reason behind Charlotte's brief diary entry remains curiously silent.

However, one source that sheds more light on the formal gathering was a letter written by William C. Nell. Writing to abolitionist, Amy Kirby Post. He noted that in addition to the delightful weather, the "audiences [were] large and intelligent and enthusiastic - Garrison, Phillips and Remond in No. 1 condition."⁴⁶⁷ Nell went on to write that his "Friends hospitable and Fraternal – Remond had seven with him including two visitors from Philadelphia."⁴⁶⁸ He ended the letter with, "Reading was the first place that furnished Mr. Garrison with credentials on his first mission to England...and...was where he delivered his first antislavery lecture."⁴⁶⁹ Charlotte's omission of the historical importance about the dedication ceremony at Liberty Hall is unusual for her, especially since it held such symbolic meaning for her beloved Garrison.

William C. Nell's letter also stated that "the Hutchinson Brothers and their wives were...present; their *Songs of Freedom* I need not tell you were very inspiring."⁴⁷⁰ Charlotte had written in her diary of her appreciation and admiration for the Hutchinson family, and therefore it is another curious omission about the momentous anti-slavery event. She was not in school at the time, so her

⁴⁶⁷ Most likely the seven people with Charles Lenox Remond were his wife, Amy Matilda, her daughter and son, Sarah and Henry, Charlotte, and the two visitors from Philadelphia were Margaretta and a mysterious "E." Margaretta had traveled with someone Charlotte simply referred to as "E." This meant she was familiar with the person, and it also meant that the person was of a lower status or caliber, because she did not include "Miss" or "Mrs." as she always did in her journals. The 1850 Census in Philadelphia showed two possible females on record living in the Forten household who it might have been: Elizabeth Reed aged eighteen and Elizabeth Magee aged twelve. Both were identified as "Mulatto," but did not have any other marker such as occupation or mental status. More than likely both were domestic servants and may have even been former fugitives. Charlotte's familiarity with "E." and being happy to see her suggests that it was more than likely one of the two females mentioned in the Census. In addition, Aunt Margaretta would have needed a traveling companion to accompany her on the long journey to Salem. Year: 1850; Census Place: Philadelphia New Market Ward, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Roll: M432_817; Page: 384B; Image: 362 From Ancestry.com. For more on the Forten household aiding and harboring former fugitives, see *Winch, Gentleman of Color*.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

schedule was not conflicted. Conversely, at other times when she was extremely busy, she would include a brief line about not being able attend. It is also a significant omission because Liberty Hall was designated solely for abolitionist meetings, and therefore would not be subject to rejection or cancellation by hostile or complicit owners or churches should they feel uncomfortable with anti-slavery rhetoric. Therefore, Charlotte's abridged version of a very meaningful day is quite surprising in its paucity.

In contrast to the limited writing about Liberty Hall, Charlotte documented in detail the twentieth anniversary of the mob attack on William Lloyd Garrison and the female abolitionists who gathered to protect him. Although she did not attend the celebration, she elaborated in her diary about the history and significance behind the anniversary. As a result, her personal remembrances offer a rare window into the importance the event held for Garrisonian abolitionists as opposed to solely being derived from newspaper accounts or biographies about the men who witnessed the mob attack. Charlotte memorialized the day and described Garrison as having been dragged through the streets with a rope tied around his neck, and that a heroic "little band of noble-hearted women" locked arms to usher "the dauntless Pioneer" to safety.⁴⁷¹ Charlotte ended the entry with, "[E]ven his bitter enemies are forced, despite themselves, to respect his self-sacrificing unfaltering devotion to Liberty and Truth."⁴⁷²

Charlotte's detailed account of the mob attack is filled with palpable emotions as if she had been a witness on the scene. Yet she had not been born when the mob attack occurred in 1835. Furthermore, she did not record whether or not she attended the anniversary in 1854—the first year of her keeping a diary. The mob attack survived by Garrison - and the women who locked arms to carry him to safety - had become an annual gathering and marker for Boston and Salem abolitionists.

⁴⁷¹ October 21, 1855. Stevenson, *Journals*, 141-142.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

Even though Charlotte was unable to attend the celebration in Boston, she composed a heartfelt message of solidarity in her diary. “Dear, honored, friends, I cannot be with you in your gathering to-day, but the light of your loved countenances, - the tones of your eloquent voices fall upon my grateful heart.”⁴⁷³ If not in body, Charlotte was certainly there in spirit.

The reason for Charlotte’s absence from Garrison’s anniversary gathering was because she had to attend the first course at the Female Anti-Slavery Society in Salem.⁴⁷⁴ She was torn between the two meetings, and was conflicted at missing Garrison’s event. However, she took solace in the anti-slavery course she attended. “This evening my necessary absence from the meeting in Boston, upon which my thoughts have dwelt all day, was somewhat compensated for by listening to an excellent and very interesting lecture from Rev. S. Johnson of Lynn. *The first of our course.*”⁴⁷⁵ Charlotte would not have missed out on her first anti-slavery course as a member of the Society, and her having underscored the line “the first of our course” showed that she forewent the Boston meeting to attend the Society in Salem.

In the same diary entry, Charlotte wrote that she had attended another lecture sponsored by the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. It was a lecture on slavery presented by Reverend Antoinette Brown. Charlotte was not particularly impressed citing that Brown’s delivery was “too passive,” and added, “and although she said some excellent things it was plain to be seen that she did not know as much on the subject as that of Woman’s Rights.”⁴⁷⁶ Charlotte’s critical analysis about the lecture and

⁴⁷³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 141-142.

⁴⁷⁴ The October 19 edition of *The Liberator* printed the upcoming anti-slavery lectures, including Johnson’s. It stated that “The Annual Course of Lectures before the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society will commence on Sunday Evening, 21st inst. at The Lyceum. The Introductory course will be delivered by Rev. Samuel Johnson, of Salem....Season Tickets may be obtained at the Bookstore of John M. Ives & Co. at 50 cents each. Single Tickets at the door 10 cents.” *The Liberator*, October 19, 1855.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

its delivery given by the (white) Reverend Antoinette Brown is illustrative of the social boundaries being tested within the larger gender paradigm of abolition. Charlotte did not comment on Brown's transgression of gender norms, but instead was able to make a clear distinction between her tolerable lecture on anti-slavery versus a sound knowledge on women's right.

Just as Charlotte had done in her first year in Salem, she celebrated or recognized the major abolitionist holidays again throughout the year in 1855. This included the Fourth of July, the First of August, and the Christmas Boston Bazaar.⁴⁷⁷ In addition, she briefly mentioned another holiday—a State holiday—that she and friend William C. Nell appear to have intentionally rejected or at least ignored. On April 5, Charlotte began her diary entry with the brief line: “Fast Day, and we have no school.”⁴⁷⁸ Without further clarification to the reference, she added that “[William C.] Nell spent the afternoon and evening with us. Read very interesting sketches of Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, and Dana, from ‘Homes of American Authors.’ This evening finished M’Leod’s ‘Life of Scott’ . . .”⁴⁷⁹ Charlotte’s failure to elaborate on the local holiday further substantiates the notion that she was already residing in Salem by at least April of 1854, otherwise she would have documented its meaning to remember it.

William C. Nell was a Boston resident, including having been born and raised in the city. Fast Day, or as it was sometimes called, State Fast, was mainly celebrated in New England, especially Boston. It was supposed to be a pious day of fasting and prayer, but really an excuse to take the day off and celebrate.⁴⁸⁰ Nell’s retreat to Salem appears to have been intentional, especially since Boston was inundated with visitors. An article from *The Liberator* mockingly described Fast Day and its

⁴⁷⁷ For more on the origins of abolitionist holidays, see Chapter II.

⁴⁷⁸ Stevenson, *Journals*, 133.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *The Liberator*, May 6, 1853. The original article was dated April 6, 1853.

festivities, as well as those in attendance. It cited the chasm of hypocrisy for a state and its citizens to supposedly fast and pray, while at the same time complying with the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and aiding the pro-slavery South in returning fugitives.⁴⁸¹ Charlotte's reference to Fast Day adds another layer of defiance and protest by Garrisonian abolitionists, because they rejected a State holiday that came to represent the hypocritical argument of American slavery and subjugation paired with Christian piety. Charlotte and Nell rejected the holiday, and instead shared anti-slavery and Romantic literature and immersed themselves in intellectual uplift.

Just as Charlotte had done the previous year, she wrote in her diary on the Fourth of July. She again expressed the contempt she felt about the national celebration. "The *patriots*, poor fools were celebrating the anniversary of the vaunted *independence*. Strange that they cannot feel their own degradation – the weight of the chains which they have imposed upon themselves."⁴⁸² However, unlike the previous year, she documented the regret she felt at not being able to attend the celebration in Framingham. She wrote, "All our household save Sarah and myself have gone to the Framingham celebration, and we have locked up the house and are spending the day with our pleasant friends in Carltonville...."⁴⁸³ Charlotte did not directly state her reason for the absence nor did she mention that Charles Lenox Remond was a featured speaker for the fourth year in a row. It may be that since Sarah's husband had died only the week before,⁴⁸⁴ Charlotte chose to stay behind with her grieving friend. Charlotte wrote that the poor girl had suffered greatly for someone so

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Stevenson, *Journals*, 136.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ May 25, 1855.

young and was deeply concerned about her, but did not specifically state that this was the reason for staying behind.⁴⁸⁵

Less than a month later, New England abolitionists were gearing up to celebrate the annual First of August in Abington Grove.⁴⁸⁶ The celebration marked the twenty-first anniversary since Britain had emancipated the West Indies in 1834. Charlotte briefly wrote in her diary about the day's events, including brief mention of the guest speakers, their "eloquent speeches," and that her aunt, Margaretta, had traveled from Philadelphia to attend the celebration.⁴⁸⁷ Yet Charlotte again failed to mention that one of the speakers was Charles Lenox Remond. *The Liberator* printed Remond's speech in its entirety, and commented that "His remarks were very appropriate, and received with much applause."⁴⁸⁸ She may have already read it or heard it practiced at home, so his words did not have to be recorded, but her omission is still noteworthy since it was so well received.

Charlotte's final line in her diary about the First of August celebration was brief yet succinct, "We had a pleasant sail on the beautiful pond attached to the Grove; and passed altogether a delightful day."⁴⁸⁹ *The Liberator* was more generous in the details and not only transcribed the speeches, but also included the breadth of the day's schedule. Like any typical abolitionist gathering—whether formal or informal, celebratory or serious, indoor or outdoor, the template for the gathering never wavered. Garrisonian abolitionists' meetings began with an anti-slavery hymn,

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, 134-135.

⁴⁸⁶ See Chapter 1 for more on the First of August.

⁴⁸⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 137.

⁴⁸⁸ Remond's overarching thesis was that slavery was a national problem versus a geographic or sectional problem. He stressed that the anti-slavery movement should be a concern to white and black people because both were affected by its practices. Remond was quoted as saying that "slavery oppressed both alike...aiding the whites to secure their own freedom, and to establish a principle that should make all men free, without regard to locality or complexion." *The Liberator*, August 10, 1855.

⁴⁸⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 137.

followed with announcements and speeches, another hymn, a long recess for lunch, a punctual reassembly with a final hymn, and concluded with more speeches. In addition, the minutes, notes, and sketches of these gatherings were subsequently produced or reprinted in *The Liberator*.

The 1855 account of the celebration in *The Liberator* described the lengthy recess for lunch as “most agreeably spent...groups gathered under the trees and along the borders of the surrounding water to take their *pic-nic* repast, while others sought refreshment at the various tents and booths on the outskirts of the Grove.”⁴⁹⁰ There was also a band that played while “the various boats...were continually gliding from side to side of the sparkling lake, (which almost encircles the Grove).”⁴⁹¹ These vivid scenes of communal celebration in *The Liberator* are in contrast to Charlotte’s brevity of words. Her recap is even more surprising after reading the closing lines of the paper’s description of the day. It described the boats being navigated by the younger members of the party, calling them, “Youth at the prow...and Pleasure at the helm’.”⁴⁹² Since Charlotte was a teenager, she more than likely participated in the sailing or at least enjoyed watching others have fun. Conversely, she may have been unable to join in the antics and was disappointed. Either way, her brevity of details about such an important abolitionist holiday as the First of August is a glaring omission from her diary.

As 1855 was coming to an end, Garrisonian abolitionists were finalizing their year-long preparation for the annual New England Anti-Slavery Christmas Boston Bazaar. Unlike last year where Charlotte’s diary was filled with the extensive sewing and other physical labors she performed

⁴⁹⁰ *The Liberator*, August 10, 1855.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² The quotation, “Youth at the prow...and Pleasure at the helm” is the title of an oil painting by British Romantic painter, William Etty. The painting was done in 1832 and had multiple titles, “Youth at the Prow, Pleasure at the Helm” “Youth and Pleasure, and “Fair Laughs.” It was quite successful when it showed in London, but was never exhibited in the United States. It is plausible that Garrison had viewed the painting while in London attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840. Since Garrison, the editor and main author of *The Liberator*, cited a British Romantic painter to represent the First of August (a holiday to celebrate West Indies’ emancipation by the British) would have been an intentional and clever homage to the country and its people. *The Liberator*, August 10, 1855.

for the Bazaar, this year's diary writing did not mention any anticipation or excitement. However, she did provide one entry about a speech given by Samuel May, Jr. at the Bazaar and remarked that "It was one of the best lectures I have ever heard," and added, "I thanked him with my whole heart for the beautiful and well-deserved tribute which he paid Mr. Garrison, who is so very greatly underappreciated and misrepresented."⁴⁹³ May had compared Garrison to "the fountain of the Black Forest of Germany, where the mighty Danube – the great 'anti-slavery stream' has its source..."⁴⁹⁴ Charlotte was grateful for May's depiction of her idol, and evidently not only understood the literary and anti-slavery reference she wholeheartedly agreed with it.

Just a few days later, Charlotte wrote on Christmas Day. It was the second year away from her family at the holidays. The Bazaar was still operating at full capacity and Amy Matilda Remond was one of the committee members for two years in a row,⁴⁹⁵ but Charlotte did not mention any of this, but instead recorded her feelings of sadness and loneliness. In the evening, she went with a friend to hear Ralph Waldo Emerson speak on "Beauty." She did not mention the content but was overall "pleased with his lecture."⁴⁹⁶ Like the rest of the Garrisonian abolitionist holidays during 1855, Charlotte was either notably absent or only briefly documented the events when she was able to attend. It remains unknown as to why Charlotte did not attend the Bazaar and instead stayed in Salem on Christmas Day, especially when her household had all traveled together to attend.

⁴⁹³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 146-147.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ *The Liberator* listed Amy Matilda Remond as one of the organizers in the August 31st edition of the paper. *The Liberator*, August 31, 1855. The committee members of the Boston Bazaar were listed as: Anne Warren Weston [interesting her names appears at the top, over Maria Weston Chapman], Mary May, Ann Greene Phillips, Louisa Loring, Eliza Lee Follen, Sarah Shaw Russell, Maria Weston Chapman, Frances Mary Robbins, Sarah H. Southwick, Mary Willey, Abby Francis, Anna Shaw Greene, Amy M. Remond, Mary Gray Chapman, Elizabeth Gay, Henrietta Sargent, Sarah R. May, Caroline Weston, Susan C. Cabot, Mary H. Jackson, Sarah Blake Shaw, Lydia D. Parker, Eliza F. Eddy, Evelina A.S. Smith, Ann Rebecca Bramhall, Elizabeth Von Arnim, August King;" See also the last edition of *The Liberator*, where it transcribed Charles Lenox Remond's speech given at an anti-slavery lecture at the Boston Bazaar. *The Liberator*, December 28, 1855.

⁴⁹⁶ Stevenson, *Journals*, 147.

In Charlotte's last diary entry for the year of 1855, she finally mentioned the Bazaar and Amy Matilda's participation in it. To be sure, the entry was brief and did not provide many details. However, the information does provide another rare glimpse into the private interactions with black and white female Garrisonian abolitionists. Charlotte wrote in her diary that on the previous day, "...Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond...has been attending the Boston Bazaar, [and] came home and brought with her Miss [Lucretia] Mott of Albany, who is a very agreeable person."⁴⁹⁷ Although Charlotte does not go in to any other detail about the visit, it is still important because it shows the exchanges between female abolitionists (black and white) who worked in solidarity for the success of the annual Christmas Bazaar and for the anti-slavery cause.⁴⁹⁸

Charlotte had spent the entirety of 1855 devoted to studying and to abolition. Her school studies included having graduated as the first student of color from Higginson Grammar School and then becoming the first scholar of color to be admitted, attend, and graduate from the Salem Normal School. In addition, she continued to attend anti-slavery meetings, holidays, and lectures, as well as joining the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. When Charlotte first began to keep a diary in 1854, she wrote that part of the literary exercise "will doubtless enable me to judge correctly of the growth and improvement of my mind from year to year."⁴⁹⁹ By the end of 1855, she had done just that. Charlotte could trace the remarkable journey from a precocious student to an intellectual scholar.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ There is no evidence to prove the deeper connection of Lucretia Mott and Amy Matilda Remond, but both women originated from New York; Mott's family from Albany and Remond's (née Williams') family lived in New York City. (Amy Matilda moved to Philadelphia to marry Joseph Cassey. This is where Amy Matilda met the Fortens, including young Charlotte.) Amy Matilda's family, like Charlotte's family, had long been steeped in the abolitionist cause, and therefore the friendship between Mott and Remond may have gone back many years.

⁴⁹⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 58.

Chapter IV: 1856 The Fearful Crisis

"I crave anti-slavery food continually"
Charlotte Forten, age eighteen

In 1855, Charlotte had gone from the first student of color to integrate Higginson Grammar School in Salem to being the first scholar of color to integrate the Salem Normal School. Upon graduation, she secured a teaching position at Salem's Epes Grammar School, becoming the first faculty member of color. Unlike the previous year in which she was spent an exhaustive amount of time and energy studying for her examinations, this year the majority of her time was spent wholeheartedly and radically committed to abolition. This is most especially the case post-graduation and once teaching had commenced. Like she had done in her first year keeping a diary in 1854, this year was filled with abolitionist events. She attended formal and informal anti-slavery meetings, celebrations, conventions, at the same time continuing to build interracial abolitionist alliances, friendships, and ties. Charlotte was also starting to be publicly recognized as a poet and rising star in the anti-slavery community. She was coming of age and was ready to join the ranks as a radical abolitionist.

Even though Charlotte had finished the majority of her time at Higginson Grammar School in late 1855, the graduation ceremony took place on February 12, 1856. This was when her poem, *A Parting Hymn*, was either recited or sung.⁵⁰⁰ She did not mention any particulars about the ceremony except to say, "The exercises of the graduating class...on this afternoon were very interesting."⁵⁰¹ Charlotte was already enrolled in the Normal School by the time she graduated from Higginson, and

⁵⁰⁰ For more on *A Parting Hymn* see Chapter III.

⁵⁰¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 149.

was preparing to finish up her first term as a teacher-in-training with only one term left before graduation.

In one passage soon after the Normal School's second term recommenced, she wrote, "Had a very interesting lesson in the 'School and Schoolmaster.'⁵⁰² I should be glad that we have it were it not for my dread of the essays which we shall be obliged to write."⁵⁰³ It is unclear what *The School and Schoolmaster* was intended for, but it appears to be a State examination that Salem teachers were required to take before being able to educate children. This is because she added, "If I could only write on different subjects it would be pleasant; but to write them on school teaching, will, I fear be very tedious, despite my real interest in that subject."⁵⁰⁴ Her response to the exams and the "dread" she felt was typical for Charlotte, but it was also illustrative of her true intellectual interests and disinterests and what motivated her mind and spirit. She appears to have felt constricted or bored by the assignment even while proclaiming her interest in teaching.

Charlotte wrote about her final weeks at the Normal School and the final examinations. This included nominations for the graduation ceremony. She wrote, "To-day we had our election for those who are to write our poem, valedictory, and dissertation."⁵⁰⁵ Without further elaboration or detail, she added, "Miss [Sarah C.] Pitman was chosen to write the dissertation; Lizzie Church the valedictory and my unworthy self to write poem."⁵⁰⁶ The constant feelings of unworthiness led her to initially decline the nomination, "[B]ut," she added, "every one insists upon my doing it; so I suppose I must make the attempt. But it is a formidable undertaking for me, and one which, I

⁵⁰² "April 14, 1642 Massachusetts Passes First Education Law," massmoments, <https://www.massmoments.org/moment-details/massachusetts-passes-first-education-law.html>.

⁵⁰³ Stevenson, *Journals*, 153.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

greatly fear, is quite beyond my powers.”⁵⁰⁷ Charlotte’s diary included a long record of almost crippling insecurity about her capabilities and talents, and since this was such a momentous occasion, it was probably overwhelming for her.

Charlotte wrote about struggle with the poem. She was quite anxious, and confessed at one point, “That troublesome poem which has yet to be commenced. Oh! that I could become suddenly inspired and write as only great poets can write. Or that I might write a beautiful poem of two hundred lines in my sleep as Coleridge did. Alas! in vain are all such longings. I must depend upon *myself* alone. And what can that self produce? Nothing, nothing but *doggere!*”⁵⁰⁸ She was overcome with self-doubt and berated herself for her supposed literary shortcomings.

Charlotte’s dread over writing the poem may have also been because of the recognition she had already received for her scholastic achievements at Higginson Grammar School and the Normal School. William C. Nell was especially key in putting Charlotte’s name out to the public, including selecting her to be a part of a consortium of up-and-coming scholars of color in an addendum to his recently published history book on notable American patriots and citizens.⁵⁰⁹ At Higginson’s graduation ceremony, her poem was cited as best in class, and at the Normal School’s semi-annual exam, another of her poems was highlighted. Both of these occasions made her the first student of color to be given these honors. Now she had been chosen by her (white) classmates and instructors to again pen the graduating poem at the Normal School ceremony. All of these factors may have played in to Charlotte’s feelings of self-doubt and dismay, including a fear of failing to live up to the same reception of her previous works.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ May, 11, 1855. Ibid, 156.

⁵⁰⁹ William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with the Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which is Added a Brief survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Published by Robert F. Wallcut, 1855).

William C. Nell's book, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons* was published in late 1855, and was widely lauded by anti-slavery and many liberal papers.⁵¹⁰ It was the first book ever published in the United States by a free man of color on the topic, and it included biographies of American patriotic figures who had been forgotten, overlooked, or intentionally written out of the historical record because of race. Nell's history spanned from the American Revolution, the War of 1812, up until the time he was writing. Even though the book took many forms, including being first published as a pamphlet in 1851, by 1855 it had been published in book form, and Nell had added a section on the contemporaneous people of color who were also uniquely contributing to American society. Charlotte was one of the students he featured.

William C. Nell had pursued getting the *Colored Patriots* published soon after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. He recognized the importance of threading a historical narrative for the public to disprove the notion that American patriots and patriotism were exclusive to those with

⁵¹⁰ Some of *The Colored Patriots*' reviews in *The Liberator* were collected under the heading, "Commendatory Notices." The article opened with a review by the *Salem Register*: "This neat volume of nearly 400 pages is a very curious and interesting book, not only as regards the character of its contents, but as being the production of a young colored man, a native of and educated in Boston. It purports to be an effort to stem the tide of prejudice against the colored race, and to show that they are fit for something higher than the menial drudgery to which they are generally doomed...." *The Zion's Herald* commented that, "The effect of its circulation will be to elevate the colored man in the estimation of his white brother, and to kindle in the breast of many a colored youth a consciousness of power to be a man in the fullest sense, notwithstanding the many hinderances in his path...." The *Boston Atlas* called Nell's book "...[A] contribution creditable to its author's heart, and does no discredit to his intellectual accomplishments." The most detailed review was by the *Boston Transcript* which not only broke down the book's contents, it also included the Massachusetts names featured in the volume. *The New Bedford Standard* called for its readers to buy the book, "...and learn that patriotism, courage, and talents are not confined to peculiar races, or complexion." Other reviews were from the *A.S. Standard* (i.e. *The Anti-Slavery Standard*), *Hartford Republican*, *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, the *Rochester Democrat*, the *Boston Evening Telegraph*, and the *Worcester Spy*. Finally, from a Southern state, a review by the *Kentucky Weekly News* summarized the general consensus of the reviews when it stated, "The compiler of this work, a colored man, seems to have spared no labor in seeking out evidence of the faithfulness with which his people have borne their part, in the perilous periods of our history. He has ransacked Colonial, State and National records, and has succeeded in arraying quite a mass of testimony the subject.... The colored race have [*sic*] been generally considered by their enemies, and sometimes by their friends, as deficient in energy and courage. Their virtues have been supposed to be principally negatives ones. This little collection of interesting incidents, made by a colored man, will redeem the race from this misconception, and show how much injustice there may often be in a generally admitted idea...." All quotations from *The Liberator*, January 11, 1856.

white skin. The book's initial literary incarnation was in the form of a tract, and Wendell Phillips had written the introduction as a way to summarize Nell's broader intention. Phillips wrote:

In April 1851, Thomas Sims,⁵¹¹ a fugitive slave from Georgia, was returned to bondage from the city of Boston, and on Friday, June 2d, 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive from Virginia, was dragged back to slavery, -- both marching over the very ground that Attucks trod.⁵¹²

By connecting Crispus Attucks, the first casualty of the American Revolutionary War—and a black man—to former fugitives Sims and Burns, who had been targeted because of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, Nell was portraying both the valorous and the victims being left out of the historical record as the young country sought to build a national identity.

Nell's subject matter for the book was a particularly astute tactic to employ by a free man of color having been born and reared in Boston. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was tearing apart individual lives, families, and communities of color whether free or enslaved.⁵¹³ By 1855, the law continued to influence the nation's politics at the state, local, and federal levels, and no American was out of its divisive clutches.⁵¹⁴ Nell recognized a critical moment in which to record document the patriotic actions of free people of color.

In 1855, Harriet Beecher Stowe agreed to fund the publication in book form. This time, she penned the introduction, which underscored the intentionality and cruelty of having patriots of color be ignored. Stowe wrote:

⁵¹¹ For more on Thomas Sims, see Chapter II.

⁵¹² Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 6.

⁵¹³ Nell began soliciting interest in *Colored Patriots* by early 1852, in which he wrote personal letters to Wendell Phillips et al to fund the book's publishing costs and its promotion. By late 1855, Nell had finally succeeded in getting his book published in full-length form with the help of his abolitionist friends in Boston, including Wendell Phillips and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Phillips had written the Introduction for the pamphlet-form publication in 1852, and Stowe had written the Introduction for the book form in 1855. Stowe was also the main financial contributor.

⁵¹⁴ For more the national impact of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law see Blackett, *The Captive's Quest*; David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: American Before the Civil War, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976, 2011); Sinha, *The Slave's Clause*.

It was not for their own land they fought, not even for a land which had adopted them, but for a land which had enslaved them, and whose laws, even in freedom, oftener oppressed than protected. Bravery, under such circumstances, has a peculiar beauty and merit.⁵¹⁵

By linking the American Revolution to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Stowe and Nell were giving historical proof of the loyalty and heroism performed by these men despite not being considered equal or free citizens.

It is likely more than coincidence that both Nell and John Greenleaf Whittier felt the need to correct the historical record about American patriots of color in and around the same time period in the early-to-mid 1850s.⁵¹⁶ It is easy to deduce that the two authors were responding to the increasingly prejudiced landscape in the North as a result of the political crisis of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Nell and Whittier were attempting to intellectually combat the increasing erasure and silencing of men of color and their patriotism to show that they were equally as valorous—if not more so—than their white male counterparts.

It is important to point out that free people of color in New England were rarely if ever published by the Garrisonian abolitionists unless they were former fugitives such as Harriet Jacobs, William Wells Brown, and Frederick Douglass. White abolitionists viewed the fugitive slave story as the literary bookend to the anti-slavery novel, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁵¹⁷ Yet the published works of free men and women of color—at least in Boston and Salem—were not published in book form. Instead their literary contributions appeared in *The Liberator* and other anti-slavery papers as poetry, recollections and reprinted speeches at conventions, fairs, and gatherings, political commentary, as

⁵¹⁵ William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with the Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which is Added a Brief survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Published by Robert F. Wallcut, 1855), xiii.

⁵¹⁶ For more on Whittier's publication and chapter on American patriots of color in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, see Chapter III.

⁵¹⁷ For more on the rise of the anti-slavery novel after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law see Chapter III.

well as local business advertisements. Yet personal narratives or fictional work were not published. For example, the autobiographies of Charles Lenox Remond and William C. Nell were never solicited by white abolitionists to be published and integrated into the literary propaganda sold on the anti-slavery circuit and bookstores. This was the case despite the fact that Remond was one of the most famous anti-slavery orators of the time. Therefore, Nell's publication is not only the nation's first history book on American patriots of color, he also appears to be the first free author of color to be published.

In the 1855 edition of Nell's *Colored Patriots*, he included a brief survey that outlined "The Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans." He described a few influential young students, including Charlotte, who were emerging in the public spotlight. He viewed these students as beacons of hope and pride for people of color in America and abolition writ large. In his introductory lines to the addendum, he wrote:

The following encouraging items have been recently gleaned from the field of improvement of colored people. A diploma has been awarded to a colored girl in Portsmouth, N.H., and also to a young colored lad at one of the Boston public schools, which he (the only colored boy in the school) had secured access but a few months previous.⁵¹⁸

Nell's inclusion of the accomplishments of the talented students underscored this notion that with equal access to schools and other public institutions, the intellectual capacities of students of color was on par with white students.

Nell's description of Charlotte and her academic successes stated that, "At the semi-annual examination of the State Normal School, in Salem, a hymn was sung, the production of Miss C.L. Forten, a young colored pupil."⁵¹⁹ Nell underscored Charlotte's scholarly accomplishment of the

⁵¹⁸ Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 367-369.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

hymn as well as her attendance at the State Normal School in Salem as a young student of color. Both were firsts in Salem. Charlotte was not only the first female of color to attend the Normal School, she therefore was also the first to have a hymn sung at the semi-annual examination.

The words to the hymn do not appear to survive, but given her anti-slavery theme in the Higginson poem as well as the poem for the Normal School graduation in 1856, it was more than likely a similar sentiment. Had it not been for Nell, the Normal School hymn that Charlotte penned for the semi-annual exam may have been lost, since she did not record it nor does it appear to have been published. In addition, since the hymn has not been found, it is unclear whether or not Charlotte composed original music or borrowed a standard tune (which was common) to accompany the lyrics.

It is also significant to point out that Nell's description of Charlotte did not include gender, but instead referred to her as "a young colored pupil." This is important because it is yet another example that, for abolitionists of color, skin color often superseded gender. Charlotte's sex would not have been what was impressive to black abolitionists. Instead it was her intellectual acumen and scholarly achievements that were celebrated, because she had transgressed the political and legal barriers attempting to prevent her from obtaining a superior education. This limitation was imposed on all children of color, and therefore did not distinguish between male and female. The use of "pupil" was also a powerful literary image in which to dismantle the premise of intellectual inferiority held by many in the dominant white society.

Charlotte's silence in her journal about Nell's publication is not only remarkable because of her personal connection to it and the author, but also because of the other cast of characters that included many of her immediate family, relatives, and friends. Even if she had selectively withheld her own name out of modesty, *Colored Patriots* is filled with observations, quotations, and sketches by many people in her life, both in Salem and in Philadelphia. Figures such as her grandfather, James

Forten, Sr., her aunt Sarah, her uncle-in-law, Robert Purvis, her house-host, Charles Lenox Remond were documented. Multi-generational achievements by free people of color who also happened to be related or familiar to Charlotte. Equally as momentous was Nell's contributions as the first man of color to pen a history book on American patriots of color. Therefore, the absence of any mention of it in her journal is quite extraordinary, given her intense interest on history and abolition.

Charlotte may have excluded any mention of Nell's book, because she was simultaneously attempting to compose the graduation poem for the Normal School. Not only did she feel the pressure of having to write another successful poem, her work would be seen in a wider spotlight, and therefore the possibility of failure would be done in public. A subpar poem also would have disappointed many people she wanted to please, most especially her family and abolitionist friends. Charlotte may have even wondered if she was had been selected amongst the scholars to write the graduating hymn because of Nell's writings on her achievements. Undoubtedly, all of this must have been a tremendous burden for a teenager to carry, let alone a free teenager of color whose work was going to be held to a higher standard by her white teachers, scholars, and community. It sheds light on potentially a few reasons why she struggled with writing the hymn and having difficult being inspired and creative, let alone not commenting on Nell's publication.

In addition to the pressure Charlotte was feeling over the graduating poem, she was also worried over how she would be able to monetarily afford to return to the Normal School for the and final term. She met with Richard Edwards, her school instructor and mentor, about her pecuniary situation. At first, she was vague in her reasoning behind not being able to return to the school, but he finally coaxed the truth of out of her:

Mr. Edwards ...spoke very kindly to me, far more than I deserve, and he urged me to come back next term. When I very earnestly assured him that it was quite impossible, he asked me why in such a manner that I could not avoid telling him frankly. He said he would see if something could not be done. I said nothing, but I know too well that nothing can be done. Indeed though I very much wish to spend another term here, I desire nothing so much as some employment which shall enable

me to pay my debts. – I hope I shall be fortunate enough to obtain some situation as a teacher.⁵²⁰

Even though Charlotte came from an elite family of color that had once amassed great wealth, by the time of her teen years in Salem, the Forten's had lost most of their money. Charlotte's father was reliant upon his wife for their financial well-being, and he was either unable or unwilling to monetarily support Charlotte.⁵²¹

Even though Charlotte never directly expressed any disappointment in her father's inability or unwillingness to support her time and education in Salem, she made a reference to it when observing how infrequently she had heard from him once he relocated to Canada. She wrote, "Still no news.... I have heard from father but once since he removed thither. Only one letter during this long winter! It worries and grieves me."⁵²² In addition to the emotional toll she was experiencing, his absence also meant that her precarious money situation fell on her shoulders, because she added, "And not this alone, but my indebtedness to Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond, and many other things. All my day dreams of independence and usefulness, seems to have been dissipated one by one. And harder and sterner become the realities of life."⁵²³ At the youthful age of eighteen years old, Charlotte was already having to confront the painful truth that she was alone in a town and a country without the guidance of a father or any type of monetary support.

⁵²⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 153-154.

⁵²¹ For more on the Forten wealth, as well as Charlotte's father, Robert, see Chapter I.

⁵²² Stevenson, *Journals*, 153-154.

⁵²³ The reason that Charlotte would have been indebted to Amy Matilda Remond instead of Charles Lenox Remond, is because the Amy Matilda had been a wealthy widow prior to her marriage to Remond. In contrast, Remond did not have money even though he had great fame and respect. Therefore, Charlotte would have been financially beholden to Amy Matilda for room and board. Stevenson, *Journals*, 150.

The concern Charlotte expressed about needing to secure employment is seen in another journal entry written within the same time period in mid-May. After having attended the Pillsbury Festival with her uncle-in-law, Robert Purvis, Jane Putnam, and a “Miss L.R.”⁵²⁴ The Pillsbury Festival was an anti-slavery celebratory gathering to hear speeches and commingle with fellow abolitionists. Charlotte recorded the “happiness” of the day’s events, including new persons she had met. This included meeting “Mrs. Chase of R.[hode] I.[sland]” for the first time in person. Charlotte had written to Mrs. Chase about “the situation of governess.”⁵²⁵ Evidently Charlotte was not offered the position, because she wrote, “[Mrs. Chase’s] reply was a very kind letter. I love her for it.” Although the letter has not been found, Charlotte’s warm response suggests it was amiable and supportive albeit without the desired outcome of employment.

After having reached out to her instructor, Mr. Edwards, and abolitionist ally, Mrs. Chase, almost a month passed before any type of response. Finally, she got word from Edwards who had called her into his office without explanation. Charlotte was perplexed and concerned about his summons, and wrote that upon seeing him, his face was “full of such great mystery, that I at once commenced reviewing my past conduct and wondering what terrible misdeed I, a very ‘model of deportment’ had committed within the precincts of our Normal School.”⁵²⁶ Edwards more than likely saw the fear and trepidation on her face, because he immediately dispelled the mystery. Charlotte had received a teaching offer from the Epes Grammar School in Salem to begin the next day. Charlotte was ecstatic, writing, “Wonderful indeed it is! I know it is principally through the exertions of my kind teacher, but he will not acknowledge it.—I thank him with all my heart.”⁵²⁷ She

⁵²⁴ More than likely she was a member of the extended Remond family, but it is unclear her exact identity.

⁵²⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 154.

⁵²⁶ Charlotte may have put the expression “model of deportment” in parentheses because it had previously been used to describe her as a student. *Ibid*, 157.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*.

concluded the journal with, “Again and again, I ask myself—‘Can it be true?’ It seems impossible.” Like she had done as a student at Higginson and the Normal School, she was the first person of color to integrate the school as a teacher. She started her position the next day, even though her final examinations and graduation at the Normal School were still a week away.

Graduation day from the Salem Normal School had arrived. Charlotte provided many details about the last of her examinations as well as the ceremony. The afternoon started with being examined in *School and Schoolmaster*, the book she had previously mentioned teaching and her dislike of the written assignment.⁵²⁸ Once the essays had been read, she wrote, “Miss [Sarah C.] Pitman’s D.[issertation], my poor poem, and Lizzie’s V.[aledictory], which is a beautiful production: charming as dear Lizzie’s self.”⁵²⁹ As was typical for Charlotte, she had yet again discounted and diminished her writing and instead focused on someone else’s talents. The examination and the recited works by the three scholars had been successful, because she wrote, “Crowds of people were there. Our diplomas were awarded. I was lucky enough to get one.”⁵³⁰ Even though she downplayed the monumental achievement of graduating with a degree to teach, she was also the first female of color to graduate from the Normal School in Salem. Her abolitionists friends and supporters must have been beaming with pride, even if she did not allow herself to.

After the ceremony had concluded, she and the other scholars and teachers spent the evening at the school house. She wrote, “It was one of the pleasantest meetings we ever had.”⁵³¹ With this acknowledgement, she recognized that her time as a student had ended, and wrote, “And

⁵²⁸ See page 2 for more on the *School and Schoolmaster*.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 160.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

now I realize that my school days are indeed over. And many sad regrets I feel that it is indeed so. The days of my N.[ew] England school life, though spent far from home and early friends, have still been among the happiest of my life.”⁵³² She praised her instructors for their efforts and the gratitude she felt for the educational opportunities, writing, “I have been fortunate enough to receive the instruction of the best and kindest teachers,” and added, “[T]he few friends I have made are warm and true.”⁵³³ Even though Charlotte did not write about her graduation from Higginson or her reflections about it, it is clear that her time at the Normal School was something she wanted to remember at a later date, including that it had been an exceptional experience overall.

Once Charlotte had paid homage to her school time, teachers, and friends, she concluded graduation day with her time spent in Massachusetts and the stellar abolitionists who resided there. She ended with:

New England! I love to tread thy soil,-- trod by the few noble spirits, --Garrison, Phillips, and others, -- the truest and noblest in the land; to breathe the pure of thy hills which is breathed by them; to gaze upon the grand old rocks, ‘lashed by the fury of the ocean wave,’ upon they granite hills, thy noble trees, and winding, sparkling streams to all of which a greater charm is added by the thought that they the good and gifted ones, have gazed upon them also.⁵³⁴

Education and abolition were yet again inextricably tied together for Charlotte. Her graduation day culminated with scholarly achievements and the recognition that supportive abolitionists had, in part, aided in her being able to achieve her goals and aspirations.

Charlotte had recorded in her journal that “crowds of people” had attended the graduation ceremony. One of those people was apparently Dr. Henry Wheatland, because he subsequently

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid, 160-161.

⁵³⁴ Ibid, 161.

wanted to have it published.⁵³⁵ Even though she had dismissed it as merely “my poor, poem” Wheatland thought otherwise. She wrote in her journal, “At Dr. Wheatland’s request took him that poor, miserable poem. I wish he would not have it published. It is *not worth* it. I think this will be my last attempts at poetizing. I am heartily ashamed of it.”⁵³⁶ It is unclear what Dr. Wheatland’s intention was for the poem other than to have it published. Charlotte’s poem was simply titled, *Poem for Normal School Graduation*, but it was anything but simple, poor, or miserable. The theme centered on teachers’ bearing the responsibility of intellectual uplift and nurturing, because the occupation played a lofty role in being able to undo evil, hate, and ignorance. For example, one passage from her poem reads:

Teach it hatred of oppression,
Truest love of God and man,
Thus our high and holy calling,
May accomplish His great plan.⁵³⁷

Charlotte understood that knowledge could not only elevate a person, it had the potential to eradicate oppression and slavery. Clearly, Dr. Wheatland also recognized the powerful words having been penned by the first scholar and teacher of color in Salem.

Charlotte had spent the majority of the first half of 1856 immersed in her studies. Once she graduated, she settled in to her new role at Epes Grammar School. She did not take to teaching as much as she had taken to being a student, because within the first few days, she wrote, “I find the

⁵³⁵ The publication is unknown. Dr. Henry Wheatland was a founding member of the Essex County Natural History Society, and when it merged with the Essex Historical Society, Wheatland was also a member. It became the Essex Institute in 1848. He served as the Essex Institute’s Secretary and Treasurer from 1848 until 1868, at which time he was elected President. Phillips Library Digital Collections. “Henry Wheatland Papers.” <http://phillipslibrarycollections.pem.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15928coll1/id/1166/rec/14>.

⁵³⁶ This would not be the last poem or essay Charlotte wrote, but her response to being publicly recognized for her talents was typical for the insecure teenager. Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, 569. For the entire poem see Appendix I.

children rather boisterous and unmanageable...” and “...I find the teacher’s life not nearly as pleasant as a scholar’s.”⁵³⁸ Yet, as was common for Charlotte, after bemoaning the situation, she rallied herself to be more optimistic, and added, “But I do not despair. Oh! no! I have faith. Ever shall my motto be, ‘Labor omnia vincit.’”⁵³⁹ Labor omnia vincit means “work conquers all” and was written by Virgil in *Georgics*.⁵⁴⁰ Charlotte had been studying Latin, which she liked “better than anything else,” and had mentioned “[longing] to master ‘Virgil’s lay’...”⁵⁴¹ Charlotte was using Latin to she had learned at Higginson, then at the Normal School, and then to refocus her own laboring duties as a teacher at Epes.

It appears Virgil’s words resonated with Charlotte, because she no longer complained about her life as a teacher after the initial transition from scholar to teacher. Instead she noted that many of her students were thoughtful, interesting, and kind; others, she expressed with concern, needed more attention. In addition to Virgil, she had evidently taken her own advice from the Normal School poem about the higher calling of teaching, because she ended her diary with, “May I be granted the strength to do my duty in the great field of labor upon which I’ve entered.”⁵⁴² After her commitment to her new occupation had been cemented, Charlotte devoted herself almost entirely to abolition for the remainder of the year.

Just as Charlotte had done from the beginning of keeping a diary, she continued to build community, close friends, network, and make political alliances that were all undergirded by radical abolition. She was coming of age, and it appears as if she was becoming more of an integral

⁵³⁸ Ibid. 158.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Book 1, Line 145-6.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, 155.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

participant of the Garrisonian abolitionists and anti-slavery events instead of being a devoted youngster devoted to the cause. One example of this can be seen when she wrote, “This evening our beloved Mr. [William Lloyd] Garrison and his wife arrived. – Most gladly did we welcome them. The Remonds and Putnams spent the evening with us, and we had a delightful time. Mr. Garrison was very genial as he always is, and sang delightfully (pg. 148).”⁵⁴³ Even though it is evident that Charlotte greatly admired the Garrisons, her former hagiographic tendencies about he and his wife was giving way to a more mature reflection about the evening’s exchange of pleasantries.

Yet the very next day, she wrote with her more familiar teenage expression of enthusiasm in seeing her favorite abolitionists in person. After attending an anti-slavery meeting, she wrote, “This has been one of the happiest days of my life. More and more do I love and admire that great and good man [i.e. Garrison]. His wife is a lovely woman; it is indeed delightful to see so happy and noble a couple.”⁵⁴⁴ Charlotte’s definition of it being the happiest day of her life underscores her dedication and admiration of abolitionists, and the joy it brought her to be able to listen and converse with her intellectual and moral heroes.

In another portion of the same entry, Charlotte described Garrison’s speech as having been “one of the best lectures I ever heard him deliver,” and added, “...[a]lways interesting to me, [but] to-night he was unusually entertaining.”⁵⁴⁵ Her reference to Garrison being unusually entertaining more than likely referred to his more typical fiery recitation style of intensity and urgency. She even included an example of his uncommon bonhomie:

Just before the lecture, Mr. Innis⁵⁴⁶ announced the fact of Mr. [Nathaniel] Banks’ election, which was received with tumultuous applause. Mr. G.[arrison] spoke

⁵⁴³ February 2, 1856. Stevenson, *Journals*, 148.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, 148-149.

⁵⁴⁶ The identity of Mr. Innis is unknown.

beautifully of the ‘*Banks* of Massachusetts impeding the onward progress of the waves of the southern despotism.’⁵⁴⁷

Even though Charlotte did not state it, the reason why she found Garrison’s lecture so amusing was likely because he had used the politician’s last name in a pun. This was why she underscored it. Nathaniel Banks⁵⁴⁸ and had been elected a congressman and a governor of the State.⁵⁴⁹ The day before Garrison’s speech,⁵⁵⁰ Banks had been elected speaker of the House of Representatives.⁵⁵¹ His election was cheered by abolitionists because he criticized the Missouri Compromise repeal as well as the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.⁵⁵² Garrison’s imagery of Banks thwarting the “waves of southern despotism” played on the image of a built up land mass such as banks that blocked undesirable waters from seeping in to the terrain.⁵⁵³

Charlotte had written about Garrison’s entertaining speech on the election of Nathaniel Banks in early January, 1856. However, by that October, the abolitionists had turned against the politician, because he had compromised more with the institution of slavery than he had condemned it. Charlotte’s political upbringing as a radical Garrisonian abolitionist would have led her to turn away from anyone willing to overlook or negotiate with those advocating slavery, including the U.S. Constitution and the Union.⁵⁵⁴ This position was in stark contrast to other abolitionists outside New

⁵⁴⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 148-149.

⁵⁴⁸ Nathaniel Banks was born in Massachusetts in 1816 and died in 1894. *Ibid*, 569.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵⁰ February 2, 1856.

⁵⁵¹ The Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854. Stevenson, *Journals*, 569.

⁵⁵² *Ibid*.

⁵⁵³ For more on Garrisonians’ switch from Banks being a friend to a foe, see, “Speech of Hon. Nathaniel P. Banks” in *The Liberator*, October 3, 1856.

⁵⁵⁴ This was on *The Liberator’s* masthead.

England, including Frederick Douglass, who came to view the Constitution as an anti-slavery document to be used as a legal mechanism to undo the practice of slavery. This ideological split meant there had to be an allegiance to one perspective and the rejection of the other. Charlotte firmly stood in Garrison's army and never wavered in her support of his tactics.

One incident Charlotte documented shows her adherence to Garrison's ideology. The evening had been spent at her former teacher and friend, Richard Edwards, along with other former scholars from the Normal School. She wrote, "We had a very pleasant evening. Talked anti-slavery most of the time."⁵⁵⁵ She added, "Had a long talk with Mr. Clark whom accompanied me home."⁵⁵⁶ She recreated the substance of their conversation, writing, "He is a 'Liberty Party' man, and I vainly tried to persuade him that all political action was wrong. I like to hear him talk. He is so earnest and such a close reasoner. – Stood talking outside the gate until after eleven."⁵⁵⁷ It is interesting that Charlotte, a teenager, would have interacted with a member of the Liberty Party in 1856, since many had abandoned it for the Free Soil Party by 1848 and subsequently became Republicans by 1854.⁵⁵⁸ He may have been a lot older, which was why she was patient with listening to him instead of shunning him immediately. Regardless, her attempts at political persuasion showed her partiality and beliefs as being truly devoted to radical Garrison ideals.

In addition to attending anti-slavery gatherings and engaging in ideological differences in abolition, Charlotte continued to read contemporaneous books on anti-slavery and biographies of

⁵⁵⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 159-160.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. The identity of Mr. Clark is unknown, but she was evidently familiar enough with him to not include his first name or even an initial.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, 1995); David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: America Before the Civil War, 1848-1861*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976).

those who were friends of the cause. This included the biographical account of well-known women's rights advocate, abolitionist, journalist, transcendentalist, teacher, and reformer, Margaret Fuller. Fuller was born in 1810 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was the first American female journalist to report from Europe, including having met and worked with Giuseppe Mazzini.⁵⁵⁹ Subsequently, she wrote for Ralph Waldo Emerson's *The Dial*, a magazine on transcendentalism.⁵⁶⁰ Fuller tragically passed away in 1850, when she, her husband, Giovanni Angelo Ossoli, an Italian revolutionary who supported Mazzini, and their two-year-old child, were traveling back to the states from Europe.⁵⁶¹ The ship capsized and the three ultimately drowned, even though they and the others passengers were in eyesight of land and the rescuers.⁵⁶² In late December, 1855, Fuller's collection of writings was posthumously published and received acclamatory praise and recognition.⁵⁶³

Charlotte's review of Fuller's writing was equally as approving, most especially the subject matter. In her journal she wrote, "I have been reading Margaret Fuller's 'Woman in the 19th Century,' and liked it much. I am a warm admirer of the noble-hearted writer. She says so much

⁵⁵⁹ Mazzini was a political advocate who fought for Italy's independence. It is interesting to note that after Fuller met Mazzini, she introduced him to Garrison, and the two corresponded for decades. In addition, Sarah Parker Remond worked with Mazzini while she was in Italy, including helping shape the political rhetoric for Italian independence similar to the rhetoric of American abolitionists. For more on Mazzini's connection with American abolitionists, see: Enrico Dal Lago, *William Lloyd Garrison and Giuseppe Mazzini: Abolition, Democracy, and Radical Reform* (Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Sinha, Salenius, *An Abolitionist Abroad*; Sibyl Ventress. Brownlee, "Out of the Abundance of the Heart: Sarah Ann Parker Remond's Quest for Freedom," Ph.D. diss, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1997.

⁵⁶⁰ John Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller: A Biography* (W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2012).

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ *The Liberator* advertised Fuller's book as follows: "Sensation Books! THIS country has produced two genius SENSATION BOOKS, both written by *Females*—UNCLE TOM'S CABIN [written by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1852], and THE LAMPLIGHTER [written by Maria Susanna Cummins in 1854]. A third is soon to be added to the list entitled WOMAN In [*sic*] the Nineteenth Century by the late Margaret Fuller Ossoli. Edited from her unpublished manuscripts, by her brother, Rev. A.B. Fuller, and Hon. Horace Greeley. A work which will take its rank among the loftiest productions of the human mind, from the pen of one of the most wonderful women the world has yet seen...It is a book which will make its mark on society." *The Liberator*, May 11, 1855.

about Goethe's⁵⁶⁴ writings that I felt more than ever anxious to read them, and have...commenced his 'Wilhelm Meister,' translated by [Thomas] Carlyle; but I am rather disappointed in it. Wilhelm seems to me to be so deficient in strength of character."⁵⁶⁵ Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish writer, thinker, philosophy, and satirist. He was not a part of the reading curriculum for abolitionists because he was not sympathetic to the cause. This may be one reason Charlotte discounted his translation.

Charlotte's dismissal of his work was premature, since she could not compare it to Goethe's original writings in German. Unlike Carlyle, Goethe was greatly admired by abolitionists. Fuller had written of his writing, "[I]t is Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Wandering Years⁵⁶⁶ that I would especially refer, as these volumes contain the sum of the Sage's observations during a long life, as to what Man should do, under present circumstances, to obtain mastery over outward, through an initiation into inward life, and severe discipline of faculty."⁵⁶⁷ The sentiment of mastering outside chaos by disciplining the mind was something that would have resonated with Charlotte, because it reflected an outlook she often employed when the world around her was uncontrollable.

Fuller goes on to describe Wilhelm's respect and admiration of women—not as objects, but as equal opportunists for self-reliance and the ability to alter one's path in life. Goethe was a part of the German philosophers responsible for the adherence to transcendentalism, which is why Margaret Fuller was attracted to his work, since men and women were seen as equals within the movement. In the section on "Goethe's Daughters," Fuller described his philosophy on critical contributions to culture and the equal value of the sexes. This can be seen in Fuller's line, "Goethe,

⁵⁶⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was a German writer, poet, and politician.

⁵⁶⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 154.

⁵⁶⁶ These were chapter titles.

⁵⁶⁷ Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1855), 127.

proceeding on his own track, elevating the human being, in the most imperfect states of society, by continual efforts at self-culture, takes as good care of women as of men.”⁵⁶⁸ These outlook would have resonated with Fuller as well as Charlotte, because even though Goethe was not writing on transcendentalism or abolition, his words were fittingly apropos to promote equal rights for women and the eradication of slavery.

Even though Charlotte had discounted Carlyle’s English translation of Goethe, she went on to write of having a “presentiment” of liking the second volume better.⁵⁶⁹ However, she added the caveat, “I know...that these works lose very much of their beauty by translation. Oh, when shall I be able to read them in the original. I do most earnestly desire to; and I *will* if I live a few years longer. I am determined!”⁵⁷⁰ Add in: “‘Hyperion’ is beautiful, -- truly ‘*poetic prose*.’ The writer’s constant and familiar mention of German authors, of which I know so very little, is rather provoking. But I am determined that I *will*, some time, be glad to read those noble works in their own rich and beautiful language.”⁵⁷¹

Charlotte’s great interest in Fuller’s analysis of Goethe’s writings show that even though she was no longer a student in school, she continued her intellectual pursuits, including learning new languages, to read the original writings of the authors she admired. What is noteworthy is why she added in the final line of hoping to live a few years longer. Even though she did suffer from a fragile health, she was not considered a risk for death. She also had not complained of feeling ill, which she often did in her diary. Was she referring to Margaret Fuller’s untimely death at such a young age?

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, 125.

⁵⁶⁹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 154.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid, 165.

Was she referring to her own imminent danger of being a person of color during the impending crisis? Her dramatic final line about hoping to live a while longer remains an intriguing mystery.

Charlotte took great pride and pleasure in reading anti-slavery tracts, literature, and biographies, and kept current with the recent publications. In addition, she was careful to document what she had read, even if only in or two lines.⁵⁷² Therefore, what is glaringly absent from Charlotte's large reading repertoire was the writing or speeches of Frederick Douglass. Not only was Douglass the most famous abolitionist in America during Charlotte's tenure in Salem, her friends, including William Lloyd Garrison and Maria Weston Chapman, had aided in securing his freedom and his education in London. Moreover, Robert Purvis, Charlotte's uncle-in-law, Charles Lenox Remond and William C. Nell had been close friends with him, including that Remond and Douglass had traveled on the anti-slavery circuit to give lectures in the same billing. It is therefore striking that Charlotte did not mention Douglass one time in the first three years of living in Salem.

The only time Charlotte did mention Frederick Douglass was in 1857 after she had gone back to Pennsylvania to live in Byberry with her Aunt Harriet and Robert Purvis to tutor their children. Although the timeframe is outside the purview of this dissertation, one passage in Charlotte's diary sheds light on why she may not have ever mentioned Douglass. She had written that her Uncle William "read...some of F.[rederick] Douglass' best speeches;⁵⁷³ --very fine they were. I wish the man had a *heart* worthy of so great, so gifted a mind."⁵⁷⁴ The mention of his unworthy

⁵⁷² See Appendix II for the authors and books that Charlotte read.

⁵⁷³ It is unclear which speeches of Douglass that Charlotte's Uncle William read to her, but Douglass had given a speech on the Dred Scott outcome only a few months earlier in May, 1857. He had also given a well-received speech at the New York celebration of the First of August, but this was after Charlotte's journal entry. Frederick Douglass, *Two Speeches by Frederick Douglass; One on West India Emancipation Delivered at the Canandaigua, August 4th, and the other one on the Dred Scott Decision, Delivered in New York on the Occasion of the Anniversary of the American Abolition Society, May, 1857* (New York: C.P. Dewey, Printer, American Office, 1857-1859).

⁵⁷⁴ Sunday, July 26, 1857. Stevenson, *Journals*, 240.

heart was more than likely a reference to the ideological split Douglass and Garrison had over the best and most effective ways to eradicate slavery and whether or not the U.S. Constitution was pro or anti-slavery.

In addition, there were other reasons for Charlotte not to like Douglass, including a rift he had with Purvis, Remond and Nell. The origins of this split are often linked to Douglass's white female editor for the *North Star*, Julia Griffith Crofts, whom he was rumored to be having an affair.⁵⁷⁵ In addition, New England abolitionists of color were fiercely loyal to William Lloyd Garrison so the ideological split over the Constitution was another factor. However, what is often overlooked or not fully pursued in scholarship is how and why this once close circle of friends of color ended so bitterly—including public jabs on everything from lecture material to dressing attire. Douglass and Nell were the main people documenting their demise including in the press, and both men utilized their anti-slavery papers (i.e., *North Star* and *The Liberator*) to enflame and exacerbate the feud. In one striking example Douglass denounced Nell, Purvis, and Remond “as my bitterest enemies, and the *practical* enemies of the colored people.”⁵⁷⁶ Douglass claimed that Nell convinced his Boston friends not to fund his paper because he showed ‘ingratitude and unkindness’ toward Garrison.

Six days later, Nell rebutted Douglass's accusations. It was in an open published letter and read in part: “Mr. Douglass: In your paper...you have grossly misrepresented my sayings and doings at the meeting recently. I, therefore, ask you to publish the following communication,” to which Nell cited the erroneous exchanges that Douglass claimed had happened at the meeting. He claimed,

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume IV: The United States, 1847-1858*, eds C. Peter Ripley et al (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Douglass' quotations cited John Blassingame, *Frederick Douglass Papers*, 2:440-50.

“You put words into my mouth which I never used. . . .”⁵⁷⁷ After this, Nell confronted Douglass on what he had said about him, Purvis, and Remond, “As to your holding me up as a practical enemy of the colored people, my pen smiles at the idea. When are you going to commence the task of proving your assertion. I heed not your innuendos nor your comments; I can wait the decision of an impartial community. But your readers should know what I said and did on that occasion. . . .”⁵⁷⁸ Nell’s stinging rebuke was about being misrepresented in words and in character. These types of exchanges are exemplary of the public sparring these men did after their friendship dissolved without repair.

In addition to the personal exchanges between Douglass and Nell being publicized in their prospective papers, the rift between Douglass and Remond was also published by Nell. In this case, it was about the *Anti-Slavery Meeting at Syracuse and Rochester* originally seen in the *Syracuse Standard*, in which both Remond and Douglass had given lectures.⁵⁷⁹ Nell’s account of Remond’s speech reads in part:

[He] dissented from the statement that prejudice against color did not exist in Syracuse and Rochester, and asked if colored men were yet in the jury box – if business relations existed between white and colored men on terms of equality – if there were not yet exclusive colored schools in Rochester, &c. ‘I was walking to-day in Syracuse,’ said [Remond], ‘with two friends, a man and woman, and we met a well-dressed white man – *white creature*. He turned the direction of three white men, and said – “Can you stand that? That woman cares more for that damned nigger than for that white man.” That is Americanism. I stand in Syracuse, a place proverbial for its anti-slavery sentiment; and yet, walking on one of your sidewalks, trying to behave myself as well as any one, I was, in that creature’s mind, but a “damned nigger,” after all!’

⁵⁷⁷ *The Liberator*, September 2, 1853. Nell’s original letter was dated August 13, 1853, and was addressing Douglass about his August 12th publication.

⁵⁷⁸ *The Liberator*, September 2, 1853.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid*, October 24, 1854.

Nell went on to cite the *Standard* which included the line, “Mr. Remond is somewhat foppish in his dress and manner, and, in our opinion, that is the cause of many of the insults he receives, while Douglass..[et al]...pass through the streets without any particular notice....”⁵⁸⁰ Douglass was living in Rochester, and therefore the *Standard’s* bias for him was understandable. Yet it is evident that Douglass and Remond’s bitter feelings toward each other were no longer only in the political arena but had transcended into personal insults, just as with Nell. Douglass had even reprinted the line in his paper and stated, “[P]oor Remond foolishly affirmed his belief to be that it was the black man’s color which was the cause of prejudice.”⁵⁸¹ Remond was known to be a bit of a dandy in his dress, and therefore calling out his foppish clothing as the reason for the prejudicial treatment was both petty and unkind. Charlotte would not have liked how Douglass treated her abolitionist friends and family, especially in public. Therefore, the absence of his name or writings during her time in Salem is not only understandable given the background and context, it also shows her sincere loyalty to Garrisonian abolition.⁵⁸²

As Charlotte had witnessed throughout her time in Salem, New England abolitionists were again in preparation for what they considered the three most important annual anti-slavery holidays: The Fourth of July, the First of August, and the Anti-Slavery Boston Bazaar at Christmas.⁵⁸³ Even though Charlotte did not attend the abolitionists’ Fourth of July in 1854 and 1855, this year she was anticipatory of attending the gathering in Framingham. However, the gathering was clouded by Amy

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Porter, *Nell*, 397-398.

⁵⁸² Charlotte did not mention Frederick Douglass in her journals again until 1885. It was Christmas Day in Florida, and she wrote, “A year ago today we were in Washington [D.C.]. I remember we dined with Mr. Fred.[rick] Douglass at his beautiful home.” Stevenson, *Journals*, 522. She did not mention anything else about the man or the visit. The next and last mention was also in Florida in 1885, and she wrote, “Arbor Day – Attending the exercises of the Stanton School, which consisted of Recitations, singing, addresses, and finally planting trees in the school-yard, which were named for various distinguished persons—Mr. [Frederick] Douglass...and others.” Ibid, 528. Again, there was no further elaboration on her thoughts or feelings of the famous man.

⁵⁸³ For more on the three abolitionist holidays, see Chapter II.

Matilda's being unwell, including that the illness prevented her from going to the celebration.

Charlotte commented about how "truly sorry" she was to have not Amy Matilda in attendance. For Charlotte, Amy Matilda was the closest person to a mother she had experienced, especially having come to live at her home at the age of fifteen and thereafter for the next three years.

Amy Matilda and Charlotte's relationship had dated back to Philadelphia. They both were part of elite families of color, as well as anti-slavery activists. Amy Matilda was the same generation as Charlotte's aunts and mother, including that these women were close friends and neighbors. Like Charlotte's aunts, Amy Matilda also followed Hannah More's advice on using one's privileged station in life to overturn injustices. Amy Matilda's father, the well-known abolitionist and clergyman from New York, Reverend Peter Williams, Jr. had arranged the marriage between his only daughter and Joseph Cassey of Philadelphia. Cassey was older but quite wealthy, and he too was an active participant of the Philadelphia anti-slavery society of black abolitionists. Upon his death in 1848, he left his younger bride his entire estate. After a couple years, Amy Matilda agreed to marry Charles Lenox Remond in 1850 and subsequently relocated to Salem with her two children, Henry and Sarah Cassey.⁵⁸⁴ It is unclear when the Amy Matilda and her children moved to Salem, but the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society does not have a record of her name until April 12, 1853.⁵⁸⁵

The generation of female abolitionists of color that came before Charlotte included Amy Matilda and her aunts. They demonstrated their activism against slavery and racial oppression vis-à-vis organizing formal Literary and Anti-Slavery Societies.⁵⁸⁶ They also kept Friendship Albums—or

⁵⁸⁴ Charles Lenox Remond and Amy Matilda Cassey were married on September 15, 1850 in Lower Dublin, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the All Saints Church. Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records*; Reel: 58.

⁵⁸⁵ Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society Collection, MSS 34, Congregational Library and Archives, Boston, Mass. <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/neh/series3/SFASS>.

⁵⁸⁶ Dorothy B. Porter, "The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1828-1846," *The Journal of Negro Education* 5, no. 4 (October 1936): 555-576.

as they called it “a collection of original and selected poems” to illustrate one’s affection for close friends.⁵⁸⁷ Amy Matilda’s album documented the network of abolitionists (both male and female) of Garrisonians who frequented the homes of the socially elite families of color in Philadelphia, Boston, and Salem.⁵⁸⁸ These names included Charlotte’s aunt and mother, Margaretta and Mary Forten, family friend, Sarah Mapps Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Reverent Bishop Daniel Payne,⁵⁸⁹ and Lucy Stone. Even Frederick Douglass had signed Amy Matilda’s album in 1850 prior to the permanent schism between he and her husband.

Although historical scholarship has recognized Amy Matilda’s Friendship Album as having abolitionist contributors, it has largely failed to recognize that the entirety of its pages is a collection of Garrisonian abolitionist rhetoric and propaganda. This includes the contributions of art work, since the medium was understood to be another form of signaling allegiance to abolition and to the Christian Freedom they espoused to counter an American Christianity that sanctioned slavery.⁵⁹⁰ For example, both Sarah Mapps Douglass and Margaretta Forten drew flora and fauna. With intentionality, they each selected the flowers and insects that symbolized the ideology of Romanticism that the intellectually elite were exploring during this period.⁵⁹¹ Romanticism was also an ideology that undergirded Transatlantic anti-slavery sentiment, which saw the practice as barbaric

⁵⁸⁷ Amy Matilda Remond described it as “Original and Selected Poetry, Etc.” in her Friendship Album.

⁵⁸⁸ Amy Matilda Cassey Remond’s Friendship Album is one of only three that have survived. She began keeping it in 1834 in Philadelphia, while still married to Joseph Cassey. The other two surviving Friendship Albums belonged to the Dickerson sisters, Marina and Mary Anne, who were also elite women of color and abolitionists in Philadelphia. Cite: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

⁵⁸⁹ For more on Rev. Daniel Payne, see Chapters I, II.

⁵⁹⁰ For more on the abolitionists’ Christian Freedom, see Chapter II.

⁵⁹¹ Nicholas Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

and tyrannical.⁵⁹² Amy Matilda's album is therefore a critical historical document that encapsulates the private lives and feelings of abolitionists.

For Charlotte, however, Amy Matilda's album was like a collection of friends and family who were either no longer alive or not living nearby. In this way, Amy Matilda's influence was not only a maternal one, it was also informational for Charlotte. Its pages introduced her to some of the most influential abolitionists (both black and white) of the period, as well as to intellectually prepare Charlotte for her debut as the next generation of abolitionists of color. In a way, her diary was the teenage version of the Friendship Album. Paired together the two sources help to expose the interpersonal dynamics of the Garrisonian women of color devoted to anti-slavery and overturning oppression.

The intersection of Amy Matilda's mothering and mentoring was in order to ensure that Charlotte was cultivated into a suitable elite young lady and an abolitionist. Prior to Amy Matilda taking ill before the Fourth of July, the two spent time at home and in public dedicated to anti-slavery causes. For example, Amy Matilda was a committee member of the Boston Bazaar and the Salem Anti-Slavery Society, while Charlotte helped prepare items for the Bazaar and had joined this Society soon after her eighteenth birthday.⁵⁹³ Their relationship was transitioning as Charlotte was coming of age. Amy Matilda was still a mother figure and role model, but the two were also getting closer as friends as well as anti-slavery comrades.

In one example, Charlotte wrote in her diary about an anti-slavery lecture that she and Amy Matilda had attended. Charlotte said that it was "very good,"⁵⁹⁴ but did not provide any further

⁵⁹² For more on the ideology of Romanticism and abolition see: Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). For more on Romantic symbolism in art and poetry see: Nicholas Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹³ See Chapter III.

⁵⁹⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 1856, 148. The lecture was given by Charles Hodges.

information on it. However, in a revealing and candid moment, Charlotte added, “For the first time Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond was obliged to introduce the lecturer; it was a great trial to her, but she did it well ne’ertheless....”⁵⁹⁵ This was the first and only time Charlotte mentioned Amy Matilda having spoken in front of an audience, as well as being uncomfortable doing so. This is significant because Amy Matilda was well-known in the anti-slavery community as an active member who donated her time, energy, and money to the cause. Her shyness to speak publicly might be that she preferred to do perform her duties behind the scenes. This perhaps points to the shifts seen between her generation and the next generation, including Sarah Parker Remond, Caroline Putnam, and, after this, Charlotte Forten. The former generation was more conservative and reserved in their political activism while the latter generation was more publicly proactive. It was also Charlotte’s generation who was coming of age under the era of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

Another example of the intersection between Charlotte and Amy Matilda’s personal and political lives can be seen in a Sunday evening gathering that two hosted in their home. The guests included Helen Gilliard and Amy Matilda’s daughter, Sarah Cassey Smith. Charlotte wrote that they “had quite the fiery mock debate on slavery, by way of practicing,”⁵⁹⁶ and next added, “Read ‘Paradise Lost,’⁵⁹⁷ and Trench ‘On the Study of Words,’⁵⁹⁸ which is a charming as well as instructive little book.”⁵⁹⁹ It is unclear if reading Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Trench’s instructional work on words was a part of the anti-slavery curriculum Amy Matilda and Charlotte had in mind for their gathering.

⁵⁹⁵ Sunday, January 27, 1856. Stevenson, *Journals*, 148.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 150.

⁵⁹⁷ John Milton was another beloved author by the Garrisonian abolitionists. See Appendix II for the authors and books that Charlotte read.

⁵⁹⁸ Note that Charlotte’s journal reads, “French” instead of “Trench.” The author of *On the Study of Words* was Richard Chenevix Trench, and it was published by New York’s Redfield Publishers in 1856, so Charlotte was reading a recent publication. See Appendix II.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 150.

Did Charlotte mean that the group of women read together after the fiery mock debate? Or did Charlotte do this alone after the evening had ended? Regardless, the two lines are tangential because of the staunch antislavery worldview. The former line documented that women of color engaged in mock debates in preparation to speak out intelligently against the atrocities of American slavery and oppression, while the subsequent line showed that the chosen and preferred literature was anti-slavery in sentiment and intellectual uplift.

Amy Matilda and Charlotte had spent the first six months of 1856 engaged in political activities together, and the annual abolitionists' Fourth of July in Framingham was no exception. However, this happened to be when Amy Matilda's healthy started to decline, the day before the celebration, Charlotte had started to take note of it . Even though Amy Matilda was too unwell to join the festivities, Charlotte and others, including Sarah Parker Remond, went anyway. Charlotte remarked that the day had started off with clear weather but that by the time they reached Boston, the "the rain poured in torrents."⁶⁰⁰ Despite this, the party went to Framingham and attended an indoor meeting that she described as "very interesting," but did not express why. Afterward, the weather dampened the outdoor portion of the celebration, so they made their way back to Boston. Charlotte concluded with, "Some of the party regretted coming but we three did not, and agreed that we had a pleasant time despite the storm."⁶⁰¹ This had been Charlotte's first Fourth of July experience in New England, and the day did not disappoint even with the bad weather.

After the Fourth of July, however, the majority of Charlotte's diary entries centered on Amy Matilda's declining health. In the weeks leading up to the next abolitionist holiday, the First of August, the eighteen-year-old young lady could focus on little else other than her increasing concern

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, 159.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

about her much-loved Amy Matilda. In one passage, Charlotte wrote, “My dear Mrs. R.[emond] does not seem to improve. I fear she gets worst. This terribly oppressive heat is very unfavorable to her.”⁶⁰² The next day, Amy Matilda’s mother, Sarah Williams, had arrived from New York to see and care for her only daughter.⁶⁰³ Charlotte was relieved and wrote, “I am so glad to have her here. How patient our dear invalid is! Oh I would gladly suffer pain myself to relieve one so beloved, from suffering. I do wish I was able to do more for her.”⁶⁰⁴ In only a few short weeks, Amy Matilda had gone from a healthy and vibrant woman to being on the brink of death.

A week later, in late July, Charlotte was beside herself in watching Amy Matilda’s physical demise. The weather was exceptionally hot which only added to the discomfort and misery. Charlotte sadly wrote, “Our beloved patient grows worst. She cannot endure this terribly oppressive heat. Oh! how much these weeks of illness have changed her. As I gaze upon her, lying on her bed of suffering, I can scarcely realize that it is indeed she, who a few, short months ago, seemed in such perfect health and spirits. Dear, dear friend, I earnestly, fondly hope that she will recover.”⁶⁰⁵

The terrible reality for Charlotte was sinking in, even as she tried to convince herself of the possibility that Amy Matilda would make a full recovery. Three days later, on the First of August, one of the most important Garrisonian abolitionist holidays of the year, Charlotte wrote that she had “[i]ntended to go to the Celebration, and from thence to Bridgewater with Miss [Lucy] Kingman.” However, added that, “. . .our dear Mrs. R.[emond] is so much worst that none of us can leave. I very much fear that she will not be spared to us. But I cannot think of it. God grant that it

⁶⁰² Ibid, 159-160.

⁶⁰³ Amy’s father, Reverend Peter Williams, Jr. had passed away in 1840.

⁶⁰⁴ Stevenson, Journals, 160.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, 161.

may not be so!”⁶⁰⁶ This was the first time Charlotte had missed the First of August’s celebration since living in Salem, but she was too devoted to Amy Matilda to leave her side.

Coincidentally, the First of August in 1856 happened to fall on a Friday, which was the day *The Liberator* was published. In the issue, William C. Nell had written an article titled, “An Interesting Record.”⁶⁰⁷ In the piece, Nell described some of the more exemplary students of color in the New England area, including eighteen-year-old, Charlotte. It read in part:

The poet’s corner of *The Liberator* has been several times graced with contributions from the muse of a colored lady, Miss Charlotte L. Forten, who but just graduated from the Normal School at Salem. The *Register*, of that city, in summing up the exercises awards her the following merited tribute. The poem ‘so skillfully written and gracefully delivered was the production of one of that oft-times proscribed one – “guilty of a skin not colored like our own.” She presented, in her own mental endowments and propriety of demeanor, an honorable vindication of the claims of her race to the rights of mental culture and the privileges of humanity.”⁶⁰⁸

Nell proudly stated that, “As a confirmation of the above, Miss Forten has received an appointment as assistant teacher in a public school [i.e. Epes Grammar School] in that city. Truly, a heart-cheering token to the friends of progress.”⁶⁰⁹ It was not coincidental that Nell wrote an article about the achievements of free people of color to be published on the anniversary of Britain’s emancipation of the West Indies.

Charlotte’s intellectual accomplishments were being recognized as tangible proof to disprove the bigoted rhetoric that people of color were inferior to their white counterparts. Nell described the hard work and dedication to her studies resulting in her being a “token to the friends of progress.”

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ *The Liberator*, August 1, 1856.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

In addition, Charlotte's efforts were good for the public relations wing of Garrisonian abolition, because she was exemplary of what equal access to an education could yield. Equally as important it might sway public opinion against the practice of slavery and overturn prejudicial ideations held by those in the North opposing civil rights. For Nell, Charlotte's achievements were critically important to the wholistic notion of abolition: To emancipate those enslaved and to uplift those who are free with education. Knowledge, it was argued, could not be taken away even if one's livelihood, personhood, or even freedom could.

Nell's article on the First of August highlighted Charlotte's outstanding achievements. He even did so by comparing her to other students of color who had achieved their own successes. "Central College, at McGrawville, has had three colored professors," he wrote, "but this is the first instance in Massachusetts where a colored teacher has held such a position, except in an exclusive colored school."⁶¹⁰ It is important to underscore what Charlotte had achieved in her young life: A free female of color in antebellum New England had been the first to graduate from Higginson Grammar School, first to attend the Salem Normal School and graduate with honors, and gain employment at the integrated Epes Grammar School as an instructor. One of these milestones would have been remarkable, let alone the totality of them.

Charlotte's achievements as a scholar were also remarkable considering that only two decades before, Prudence Crandall—a white women of Connecticut, had opened a "High School for young colored Ladies and Misses."⁶¹¹ The project was widely supported and funded by New

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. It is unclear who the "colored teacher" was or which "exclusive colored school" Nell referenced.

⁶¹¹ *The Liberator*, March 2, 1833. It should be noted that even though Crandall's school was based in New Haven, Connecticut, "[S]he had prospects for at least twenty black students from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Providence." Philip S. Foner, "Prudence Crandall," in *Three Who Dared: Prudence Crandall, Margaret Douglass, Myrtilla Miner—Champions of Antebellum*, edited by Philip S. Foner and Josephine F. Pacheco (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), 5-54. The quote is from page 11. Charlotte's aunts would have been too old for Crandall's school when founded in 1831, and Charlotte was not born until 1837. However, it is more than likely that the Fortens and other socio-economically elite families of color in Philadelphia at least know of some of the students attending the pilot school.

England abolitionists, but the project failed in short time because of the prevailing bigotry in the region.⁶¹² Many white people in New Haven feared that “the school was...a part of an abolitionist plot to further the amalgamation of the races.”⁶¹³ Once the doors opened, the schoolhouse, students, and Crandall were violently threatened, fires were set to the school, dead cats were hurled over the fences, and the incessant verbal and political attacks in the papers and in person finally forced Crandall to shut her doors by late 1833.⁶¹⁴ Two decades later, Charlotte Forten was a shining example of what access to public schools in New England could engender. Charlotte was walking down the path that had been laid for her by the previous generation and she did not let them down.

William C. Nell was of that previous generation, which was why he was publicly celebrating and commenting on Charlotte’s remarkable achievements in *The Liberator*, most notably on the First of August. Only a few years back, at the same time Charlotte was relocating from Philadelphia to Salem to attend school, Nell had launched an initiative to integrate Boston schools with the Equal School Rights Reform. This paradigm had already been implemented in Salem, which was why Charlotte was able to attend its schools. Thanks in large part to the activist efforts of the Remond family, who had fought to desegregate the schools after Sarah Parker Remond and Caroline Remond

⁶¹² Crandall’s school was originally designed to be integrated, but in 1833, after much public consternation and rejection, she informed the white students that “they were dismissed to make room for black boarding students” only. Ibid.

⁶¹³ Ibid, 13.

⁶¹⁴ Crandall had even been arrested after flouting the “Black Laws” put in place to prevent her from teaching students of color from other Northern regions. Foner writes, “Crandall’s counsel argued that the ‘Black Law’ was unconstitutional, insisting that free blacks were citizens and thus enjoyed in Connecticut every essential right of citizenship, including the right of free movement and education that the white citizens enjoyed.” Ibid, 29. The jury was unable to conclude whether or not to convict Crandall, and so the case was dismissed. The New England abolitionists, including Garrison, saw this as a victory since Crandall’s only “crime” was to educate females of color. The Garrisonian abolitionists had used Crandall’s story to illustrate the prejudice and oppression put upon people of color, including young females seeking an education. Crandall became an iconic martyr for abolitionists, including in Europe. Although the Crandall case is outside the purview of this dissertation, the legal tactics employed by both the prosecution and the defense was about citizenship and citizen’s rights and who had rightful access to it. Therefore, Crandall’s case should be included into the scholarship of legal history as a substantive precursor to *Dred Scott* in 1857. Many of the same arguments were used, and it is hard to not read the Crandall case without seeing the uncanny connections. The major difference being that Crandall’s students of color were born free and residing in the North while Dred and Harriet Scott had been born enslaved.

(Putnam) had been kicked out and denied a formal education solely because of her skin color.⁶¹⁵

Charlotte was able to fulfill the dream of an education that had been denied her dear friends and mentors only fifteen years earlier.

Nell's proposal for an Equal School Rights Reform for the students in Boston had been realized by late 1854-early 1855.⁶¹⁶ This was why he concluded his First of August article on Charlotte by adding, "The Equal School Rights Reform is indeed winning golden triumphs, even at the early day."⁶¹⁷ Charlotte had not only benefitted from the activism of the Remonds to have equal access to her own education, she was the living embodiment and a testament to what successful school integration for students of color could manifest. Moreover, it appears that after Charlotte's arrival in Salem to pursue her own studies, she tangentially petitioned in Salem for Nell's Boston Reform. Out of 1,469 names signed on the petitions, Salem residents garnered 114 signatures. Nell noted that it was "a success achieved by the joint labors of the wife of Charles Lenox Remond [i.e. Amy Matilda], Mrs. George Putnam [i.e. Jane Clark]...and Miss Charlotte L. Forten, pupil in the Normal School."⁶¹⁸ This is highly significant because it shows that, like the Remonds and Nell, she too petitioned for the next generation of students to have equal access to an education in Boston, all while being the beneficiary of the previous generation's efforts in Salem.

⁶¹⁵ For more on how the Remond family was able to integrate the Salem schools see Dorothy Burnett Porter, "The Remonds of Salem, Massachusetts: A Nineteenth-Century Family Revisited," 281-282, For citation purposes, all it states is, "This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Society held in Worcester [Massachusetts] on October 16, 1985. Note I cite this in Chapter II as well, 53.

⁶¹⁶ See Porter, *Nell*, 437 and *The Liberator*, December 28, 1855.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.* "Those petitions were promptly responded to by the Legislature. In the House, the bill was ordered to a third reading with an affirmative shout, not more than half a dozen voting audibly in opposition. The Senate as readily cooperated, and the Governor placed his sign manual [*sic*] [signature] to the bill, April 28 [1855]." *Triumph of Equal School Rights in Boston. Proceedings of the Presentation Meeting held in Boston, December 17, 1855; Including Addresses by John T. Hilton, Wm. C. Nell, Charles W. Slack, Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Charles Lenox Remond* (Boston: Published by R.F. Wallcut, 21 Cornhill, 1856), 4-11; *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 5 January 1856, 16(33): 1, 1-5.

The joint efforts of Charlotte and Amy Matilda was not new for the two ladies who had both come from Philadelphia. Petitioning was one of the few legal forms of political protest for women regardless of skin color. Historian Erica Armstrong Dunbar argues that “Antislavery societies granted black women the first opportunity to participate in this early form of political writing, and during the early 1830s the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society sent several petitions both to the state legislature and to Congress demanding the termination of slavery.”⁶¹⁹ Charlotte’s grandmother, aunts, Margaretta, Harriet, and Sarah, as well as family friend, Amy Matilda were all founding members of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, and therefore would have been active contributors to the politics of emancipation early on even before Charlotte’s birth in 1837. Petitioning, like sewing, was another facet to the arsenal of female abolitionists of color and how they could contribute their time and labor to the cause.⁶²⁰

Charlotte did not mention anything about her political and intellectual achievements, including Nell’s article in *The Liberator* on the First of August. It would have been uncharacteristic of her to have boasted, but more importantly, she continued to be wholeheartedly distracted with Amy Matilda’s illness and decline. This extended to her brief diary writing during this period, because after the First of August, her next entry was five days later. Charlotte was beside herself in grief, writing, “Our dear invalid does not get better. Oh! this a sad vacation to me. Every moment that I can spare I devote to her. All that love and care can do is done for her. I fear in vain. Still is *some* hope; as the physician says she is not really worse to-day. At one time he gave her up entirely. I do

⁶¹⁹ Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom*, 105.

⁶²⁰ Dunbar writes, “As male leaders within the African American communities of Philadelphia established a history of political activism through petition signing and society building, their wives, daughters, and sisters followed suit with the construction of their own organizations.” Dunbar, *Fragile Freedom*, 78. However, it should not be overlooked that even though the political activism and society building may have been labeled as “male” and “female” many of the crowds and speakers at these gatherings included men and women together. The strict division of gender roles was not necessarily applicable with the premise and ideology of true abolition and equality, at least not to the Garrisonian abolitionists that included the Fortens and the Remonds.

not think he does now.”⁶²¹ It appeared that momentarily, the doctor was correct, because only two days later, Charlotte wrote, “Mrs. R.[emond] does seem a little better to-day; and, feeling weary and worn, I consented to go with Miss [Mary] Shepard and a few friends to Marblehead Beach....”⁶²²

Yet it was only two days after Charlotte ventured out with her friends that she wrote, “Our beloved friend is again very much worse. Oh! this suspense is dreadful! But I fear it will soon be over. Dr. G.⁶²³ now gives us no encouragement.”⁶²⁴ This was on August 10th, and another five days elapsed in her journal writing. What was omitted during these days was that Amy Matilda’s birthday was on August 14. She was forty-seven years old. Amy Matilda died a few hours later in the early morning of August 15. Charlotte wrote in palpable anguish, “All is over! this morning between four and five, the dearly loved one passed away from us, to join the dwellers in the ‘Silent Land.’ The nurse and I sat up with her during the night. – ‘We watched her breathing through the night, Her breathing soft and low; As in the breast the wave of life; Kept heaving to and fro.’ She is gone! Peacefully, with a murmur she passed away. The loveliest of women, the best and kindest of friends to me, -- *her* place will never, never be filled.”⁶²⁵ Charlotte was quoting Thomas Hood’s poem called the *Death-bed*. Hood, like so many other poets, was considered a part of the abolitionists’ literary canon, and therefore his words would have been comforting to the teenager who had just lost the only woman she loved like a mother.

⁶²¹ Stevenson, *Journals*, 161-162.

⁶²² The other two friends were Lizzie Church and Miss Hawthorne. It is unclear if this is Nathaniel’s daughter, Una, or a sibling of Hawthorne’s. Una would have been twelve or thirteen at the time of Charlotte’s writing.

⁶²³ The full name has not been located, but Charlotte evidently knew him well enough to not have to include his identity.

⁶²⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 162.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid*, 162-163.

The following day, on August 16, Charlotte wrote only one line, “The funeral takes place today.”⁶²⁶ However, the next day she was much more expressive about the funeral. Even sadder, August 17 happened to be her nineteenth birthday, and she summarized it as, “[T]he saddest I have ever known.”⁶²⁷ She went on to describe the funeral and wrote, “Yesterday the remains of our dear friend were laid in the grave. Mr. and Mrs. Garrison, Mr. Phillips and many other friends who knew and loved her well were present. Truly might it be said of her, ‘None knew her but to love her, None named her but to praise.’ I do not think there is in the world a more amiable or lovable person....”⁶²⁸ Garrison and Phillips had known Amy Matilda for over two decades since her time in Philadelphia when she was married to Joseph Cassey. Garrison’s *Sonnet (Original)* and *The Abolition Cause (Original)* are the first few pieces of poetry in Amy Matilda’s Friendship Album dated Philadelphia, April 18, 1833. Phillips wrote, *An Enigma*, in her Friendship Album but was not dated.⁶²⁹ Charlotte was not only grieving the loss of Amy Matilda, she bore witness to those mourning her as well.

The following Friday after the funeral, Garrison’s *The Liberator* printed a heartfelt tribute to Amy Matilda Remond.⁶³⁰ The obituary was given more space in content and prominence than other typical obituaries in the paper. Usually the notices were brief and printed off to the right side of the paper on the last page. Hers was in the middle of the third page surrounded by anti-slavery lectures reprinted and the annual New England Boston Bazaar that she had been a committee member. The

⁶²⁶ Ibid, 163.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ I have been unable to locate the author of this memorial verse. Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Phillips’ writing focused on an intellectual puzzle that he noted even Sir Walter Scott – another abolitionist icon – had been unable to solve.

⁶³⁰ *The Liberator*, August 22, 1856.

obituary described her holistically, “As daughter, wife, mother, she was all that love and affection could develop in mortal form...[and]...[a]s a friend, her attachment was warm and enduring.”⁶³¹ It continued to highlight Amy Matilda’s “very presence as a benediction...and...the magnetism of her spirit inspired and controlled all who made her acquaintance.”⁶³² It is evident that she was greatly admired and loved as a true noble women, mother, wife, and friend.

What is striking is the next portion of the obituary, and how it transitioned from personal praise to her tireless activism for the anti-slavery cause. It reads, “At the earliest period of the Anti-Slavery movement, she espoused it with zeal and devotion, and never forgot its claims nor misapprehended the true issue of the hour.”⁶³³ This type of public acknowledgement is extraordinary given that it was crediting a free woman of color for her long-standing dedication to abolition since the beginning of the Garrisonian era of activism. Moreover, *The Liberator* pointed out that Amy Matilda was “[p]ersonally identified with an oppressed and proscribed portion of the American people...[yet] she soared far above the meanness of an irrational prejudice, and did much for its extirpation by the benignity of her temper, the goodness of her heart, and the loveliness and dignity of her person.”⁶³⁴ The final line summarized her impact on the anti-slavery community when it stated, “Her transition will be deeply lamented by a wide circle as no ordinary loss.”⁶³⁵

In a diary passage only a few weeks later, Charlotte was still struggling with the loss of Amy Matilda, as well as the political realities of racial prejudice permeating the country. She was also

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Ibid. A poem followed the obituary. It was written by Scottish-born, James Montgomery (1771-1854), and was originally titled, *The Grave*.⁶³⁵ The first stanza begins with “There is a Calm for those who Weep,” which had been later turned into a hymn. Montgomery had been fully opposed to slavery, and therefore was yet another literary figure the Garrisonian abolitionists admired. He may have even been a particular favorite poet of Amy Matilda Remond.

gearing up to start teaching again. Her writing began by first bidding farewell to summer by quoting the abolitionist poet, Felicia Hemans.⁶³⁶ Charlotte then wrote:

This has been a sad, sad vacation for me. Often I think there is nothing worth living for. Nothing! Those whom we love best die and leave us. We are a poor, oppressed people, with very many trials, and very few friends. The Past, the Present, the Future are alike dark and dreary for us. I know it is not right to feel thus. But I *cannot* help it always; though my own heart tells me that there is much to live for. That the more deeply we suffer, the nobler and holier is the work of life that lies before us! Oh! for strength; strength to bear the suffering, to do the work bravely, unfalteringly!⁶³⁷

Charlotte turned nineteen-years-old while grieving Amy Matilda Remond. At the same time, Charlotte was coming of age as a free young lady of color while the country was bitterly torn over slavery. The woman she needed the most, her mentor and “mother,” was no longer around for comfort and guidance.

In another sad passage that showed Charlotte’s grief, it reads, “Our house is *very* lonely now, without the dearly loved mother and friend. *She* is indeed happy. We grieve for *ourselves* alone. –No one can every supply her place to us, --Never!”⁶³⁸ The death of Amy Matilda was devastating to Charlotte. She had already lost her mother when only three years old. At the age of fifteen she was sent from her home to live in Philadelphia while her father relocated to Canada. He had barely been in touch since his departure, which left her with hurt feelings but also financial burdens. It had been Amy Matilda who had not only taken Charlotte in to her home but ended up financially supporting her as well.⁶³⁹ She was able to fill the emotional and pecuniary void that Charlotte’s father had

⁶³⁶ Ibid. Hemans’ poem was titled, *The Parting of Summer*, and the line Charlotte wrote was, “Glad Summer—fare thee well!” For more on Felicia Hemans, see Chapter II; Appendix II for the authors and books that Charlotte read.

⁶³⁷ September 1, 1856. Ibid, 163-164.

⁶³⁸ Stevenson, *Journals*, 163.

⁶³⁹ In a passage from February 21, 1855, Charlotte wrote, “Still no news from Canada. I have heard from father but once since he removed thither. Only one letter during the long winter! It worries me and grieves me. And not this alone, but my indebtedness to Mrs. [Amy Matilda] Remond, and many other things...” Ibid, 150.

created. She was also able to fill and fulfill the main objectives of Charlotte's parents: To raise their daughter with a superior education and a radical adherence to abolition. As a result, Amy Matilda was able to instill in the young girl a serious dedication to anti-slavery causes and how to perform the many political duties with dignity, grace, and tenacity.

As Charlotte continued to mourn the loss of Amy Matilda, she resumed her activism in the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society and the preparations for the annual New England Christmas Boston Bazaar. Amy Matilda had been the Society's Vice President, and her duties included organizing sewing bees to produce clothing for the Christmas Boston Bazaar. In addition, Amy Matilda was also a committee member of the female-organized and run Boston Bazaar. Charlotte did not make a note of either one of the roles Amy Matilda held, but it is more than likely that Charlotte unofficially picked up the preparational responsibilities for both the Society's activities and lectures, as well as helping out with the Bazaar.⁶⁴⁰ Charlotte was stepping into the political shoes of her mentor, and she was not going to disappoint her or the anti-slavery cause.

One particular Sunday night lecture for the Society was of keen interest to Charlotte. It was given by Reverend Frank W. Appleton from Lowell who had been an invited guest since at least 1850.⁶⁴¹ Charlotte wrote that it was, "One of the best I ever listened to. He spoke particularly of disunion."⁶⁴² The contents of Appleton's speech have not been located, however, Charlotte's brief description of his speaking on disunion at least provides the outline of the topic. It was a topic that was furiously escalating and being promoted by Garrisonian abolitionists, and Charlotte would have

⁶⁴⁰ After Amy Matilda's passing, the Boston Bazaar continued to advertise in *The Liberator*, which included listing the names of the committee members. Her name was omitted, but no new name was added to the list.

⁶⁴¹ From 1851-1855 he was listed as being from Danvers. Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society Collection, MSS 34, Congregational Library and Archives, Boston, Mass. <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/neh/series3/SFASS>.

⁶⁴² Stevenson, *Journals*, 165.

been apprised of the latest political debates in *The Liberator* and from friends in both Salem and Boston.

In the same week that Frank Appleton gave his speech on disunion, *The Liberator* printed an article on the same subject. The paper's long-standing masthead had read, "No 'Covenant with Death'" in reference to the U.S. Constitution's legal complicity with slavery. However, in December 1856, it became a headline in the paper as well. It advertised a "State Disunion Convention" with the headline, "No 'Covenant With Death.'"⁶⁴³ It stated in part that "the people of Massachusetts are as convinced that the attempt to unite Liberty and Slavery, free institutions and slave institutions, in one compact, is a 'wild and guilty fantasy'; that the time has come for the North to dissolve the bands which connect her with the South, and which involve her in all the guilty of the slave system..."⁶⁴⁴ The Garrisonian abolitionists were attempting to galvanize the North to secede from the South.

The article further argued for disunion because of how the South viewed education. It stated that "The South is specially [*sic*] hostile to popular education universally, and is for making instruction subservient to the interests of slavery."⁶⁴⁵ *The Liberator* cited *The Richmond Enquirer* to underscore the point:

Every school and college in the South should teach that slave society is the common, natural, rightful, and normal state of society—that no other form of society is, in the general, right of expedient. No teacher should be employed in a private family or public school at the South, who is not ready to teach these doctrines.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ *The Liberator*, December 5, 1856.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

The Liberator countered this with, “The South, through its journals, is continually casting its slime upon the North, and especially new England, the glory of the world...”⁶⁴⁷ The lengthy article on the pros of disunion concluded its argument with, “Hurrah for ‘No Union with Slaveholders!’”⁶⁴⁸ What had once been a motto for the anti-slavery paper was now a featured headline.

It is interesting to note that in the long list of reasons for disunion, the one example not cited, albeit omnipresent, was what was happening in Kansas. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 allowed the people of each territory coming in to the Union a choice to be a free state or a slave state. This was seen as a compromise to quash tensions between the North and South, but it was reviled by Garrisonian abolitionists. By 1856, when the Disunion Conference was called, violence was unfolding in Bleeding Kansas. Even though the article did not address it, two lectures that Charlotte attended within the same week specifically addressed the unfolding politics of Kansas. One was given by Charles Lenox Remond and the other by [unknown first name] Dana.⁶⁴⁹ Both were speaking to the weekly Sunday Female Salem Anti-Slavery Society members, including Charlotte.

According to Charlotte, Charles Lenox Remond’s lecture was “very good,” and added, “I particularly liked what he said about Kansas.”⁶⁵⁰ Even though she did not quote Remond specifically, her summary reveals the overall thesis: “Everybody has so much sympathy for the sufferers there,” she wrote, “and so little for the poor slave, who for centuries has suffered tenfold worst miseries.” Sardonicly, she wrote, “Still I am glad that *something* has roused the people of the

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ It is unclear the first name and identity of Mr. Dana.

⁶⁵⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 166.

North at last.”⁶⁵¹ The Salem Anti-Slavery Records did not make note of Remond’s appearance or subject matter, but it clearly had an impact on Charlotte. In an interesting overlay of the personal and the political, only the day before Remond’s lecture, she had written in her diary that upon coming home, “Mr. R.[emond] whose gloomy countenance gives her a fit of the *blues* regularly...” and added, “And the *blues* are not the pleasantest companions in the world; particularly after one has been working hard all day, and wants to be cheered up.”⁶⁵² Clearly Remond was suffering the loss of his wife, Amy Matilda, but as a teenager, Charlotte may not have recognized this as a reason for his countenance. Even still, she was able to compliment his public talk while condemning his personal behavior.

A few days after Remond’s lecture, she attended another anti-slavery talk with Joseph Putnam.⁶⁵³ Joseph Putnam was the husband of Caroline Remond Putnam, and he had been traveling in California, Australia, and elsewhere for the first two years that Charlotte lived in Salem.⁶⁵⁴ Therefore she was newly getting to know him as a friend in Salem. Almost immediately, the two intellectually connected, and he became a great mentor, ally, and confidante to Charlotte. That evening, Putnam took her to hear Mr. Dana, who, she remarked “had taught me more about Kansas than I ever knew before. A very great political excitement prevails.”⁶⁵⁵ Like Remond’s lecture, Charlotte did not give more information about the talk or why she ended with, “a very great political excitement prevails.” Yet even though the specific words of Dana’s talk have not been located,

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ It is unclear whether or not the lecture was for the Society’s weekly Sunday lectures, since she did not give a specific date. However, it was more than likely not hosted by the Society but at another venue, because Remond’s lecture had been on Sunday, October 26, and this talk was still marked in the same month.

⁶⁵⁴ Porter, *Nell*.

⁶⁵⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 166.

Charlotte's accounts about Kansas clearly piqued her interest. To the Garrisonian abolitionists, including her, Kansas and the unfolding politics mirrored the widening chasm between anti-slavery and pro-slavery. It also being studied as a political testing ground about the fate of the country's future, including disunion.

In mid-November, Charlotte wrote in her journal that Sarah Parker Remond and her brother, Charles Lenox Remond were leaving to lecture on the anti-slavery circuit.⁶⁵⁶ This is a remarkable understatement given that Sarah Parker Remond would become the first free woman of color to speak publicly on anti-slavery throughout the U.S. and in Great Britain, and Charlotte knew this. It is also noteworthy that Charlotte did not express envy of Sarah's opportunities since she too had expressed wanting to be an anti-slavery lecturer. Charlotte's only additional comments included having spent the evening with Sarah Parker the night before she left, and wrote, "We shall miss her greatly. She is a very entertaining person."⁶⁵⁷ A few weeks later Charlotte wrote briefly in her diary, "Came home and wrote to Miss S.[arah] P.[arker] Remond, who has been successful..."⁶⁵⁸ There is no mention of abolition except for the brief statement of success. It may be that missing Sarah was surpassed by any political triumphs her friend had achieved. It had only been a few months since Amy Matilda passed, so Sarah's absence was probably more deeply felt.

Moments of despair over Amy Matilda's passing still clouded Charlotte's thoughts in her diary over the next few months. It was winter, and members of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, including Charlotte were busily sewing in preparation for the annual Christmas Boston Bazaar. In the weeks leading up to mid-December, which was the deadline to pack up and ship any

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid, 167. From Boston, William C. Nell wrote a letter to Jeremiah Burke Sanderson on December 17, 1856, "Charles L. Remond and his sister Sarah are lecturing in New York State and just now are on a visit to Rochester." Porter, *Nell*, 462; Rudolph Lapp Letters – personal correspondence to DPW.

⁶⁵⁷ Stevenson, *Journals*, 167.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid, 168.

items, goods, or foodstuffs to Boston, Charlotte documented sewing daily either alone or in the company of other female abolitionists. In addition to sewing copiously, the Society members also attended regular lectures and gathered informally to further the abolitionist cause.⁶⁵⁹

By the last two weeks of December, Garrisonian abolitionists were traveling to Boston to attend the Christmas Bazaar. The gathering was not only to purchase Christmas items in solidarity with abolition, it also was a platform for anti-slavery speakers to sway the general public. In one diary entry, Charlotte wrote in great detail and enthusiasm:

Have just returned from Parker Pillsbury's lecture. One of the best Anti-Slavery lectures I ever heard. While listening to him I could not help thinking of Luther of old. Indeed as it has been said of Luther, I believe, 'his words were half battles.' Glorious indeed they were – those battels for suffering humanity. They excited me to such a degree of enthusiasm, that I could have risen and thanked and blessed him for them, then and there. As [Philip] Sidney says of the Ballad of Chevy Chase, 'they stir the soul like the sound of the trumpet,' but to a higher, nobler impulse than that of *physical* resistance; to a stern *moral* resolve of sternest *moral* warfare against the terrible curse of our country and of the age. – Such a lecture renews one's strength; makes one feel equal to any labor, for the ennobling of mankind.⁶⁶⁰

Charlotte wrote this on a Sunday, the Sabbath, and yet she did not quote a passage from the Bible but cited instead the Ballad of Chevy Chase, written by Philip Sidney, who was another adored literary figure for Garrisonian abolitionists.⁶⁶¹

Two days before Christmas, Charlotte wrote in her diary about a friend who had attended the Bazaar. It was “a glowing account of the Fair.”⁶⁶² Charlotte was eager to see it for herself, and wrote, “If possible, I *will* go on Christmas.”⁶⁶³ It is unclear why she could not attend sooner, but her

⁶⁵⁹ Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society Collection, MSS 34, Congregational Library and Archives, Boston, Mass. <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series3/SFASS>.

⁶⁶⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 174.

⁶⁶¹ See Appendix II for the authors and books that Charlotte read.

⁶⁶² Stevenson, *Journals*, 174.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

wish to go on Christmas Day was realized. In her diary, she recorded what she had seen and whom she had met throughout the long day spent at the air:

Saw many beautiful things and many interesting people. Had the good fortune to be made known to three of the noblest and best of women; -- Mesdames [Maria W.] Chapman, [Elizabeth] Follen, and [Lydia Maria] Child, who were very kind and pleasant to me. Saw the most distinguished champions of our cause, Mr. [Wendell] Phillips' kind pressure of the hand and beaming smile. I shall not soon forget, not the cordial greetings of our dauntless pioneer [i.e. Garrison] and his lovely wife.... Mrs. [Lydia M.] Child smilingly told me that she visited our house once, -- when *I* must have been a 'wee toddling....' [T]his has been a most delightful day to me; and I am *very* sorry that I cannot accept the numerous invitations that I have received to remain here during the Fair.⁶⁶⁴

Charlotte had finally experienced the annual Boston Bazaar – the Fair – as an up and coming Garrisonian abolitionist and next generation of Forten ladies. She was introduced throughout the day to the highest ranks of well-known anti-slavery figures who greeted her with as much enthusiasm as she did them. She was a shining example of what equal access to education and anti-slavery endeavors could accomplish.

On December 31st, Charlotte bid farewell to “[t]he last day of the Old Year!”⁶⁶⁵ She reflected on the last twelve months and most especially the loss of her beloved Amy Matilda Remond. She poignantly wrote, “Many and sad have the changes since first we greeted thee, old friend! The year has gone! Gone, with its sorrows and its joys, -- Gone to join its brethren in the shadowy regions of the Past! Dear, dear friend, who has gone before us to the Spirit Land! – Oh! how sadly we say ‘farewell’ to the closing year... May I ever remember thy beautiful example.”⁶⁶⁶ Charlotte never fully

⁶⁶⁴ Stevenson, *Journals*, 174-175.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 176.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

recovered from the loss of Amy Matilda. It was one of the most painful heartbreaks of her young life.

As Charlotte continued her writing on the last day of the year, she asked herself, “Have I improved the past year as I might have done? Alas! I have not. – Too many hours have been spent in fruitless dreamings – and – golden anticipations of the Future. They are over now; and I commence the New Year a little wiser, I hope, from the experience of the Old.”⁶⁶⁷ She ended her diary entry of 1856 with, “Dear friends at home; -- I think of you to-night. You cannot hear me; but in my heart I wish you a happy *very* happy New Year; -- with earnest, longing hope that ere *it* passes away, I may be with you once again!”⁶⁶⁸ After Amy Matilda’s passing, Charlotte began to yearn more and more to return home to Philadelphia. She no longer had a home in Salem that centered on family life, including a family of active abolitionists.

Charlotte had been sent away from home at the age of fifteen-and-a-half to pursue an education worthy of a Forten that was unavailable to her in Philadelphia. In Salem, she was surrounded by a community of like-minded intellectuals and anti-slavery activists, and she had made her mark as one of the great hopes of her generation. She had realized her dreams just as racial tensions and prejudice were hitting a crescendo across the country. In her diary, she documented local and national political events, recorded public speeches by famous abolitionists, poets and writers, and illustrated the importance of Garrisonian abolitionist holidays. Charlotte started a diary to remember the passing events of her life. Equally as important, she left behind the daily experiences and emotions of a free teenager of color coming of age in the Era of Emancipation. Her writing provides a critical and unique primary source that widens the historical narrative of free

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

people of color grappling and coming to terms with the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and the build-up to the Civil War.

Conclusion

Charlotte Forten: Coming of Age as a Radical Teenage Abolitionist is an intellectual biography about Charlotte Forten after she left her home in Philadelphia to relocate to Salem. Her family's objective was for her to pursue an education and be trained as a radical Garrisonian abolitionist. The free teenager of color began to keep a diary once she had moved to Salem in 1854. Throughout Chapter I and Chapter II, *Coming of Age* shows why Charlotte began to keep a diary at a critical moment for the Garrisonian abolitionists in Boston and Salem. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was wreaking havoc locally and nationally, and New England was no exception. Charlotte recognized the historical moment and on the same day that former fugitive, Anthony, Burns, was arrested and jailed in Boston, she started to record what was occurring around her. Throughout her diary in 1854, her writing exposes the interior and professional lives of abolitionists, including abolitionists of color, and the efforts made to combat the consequences of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and subsequent compromises by the North.

Throughout Charlotte's diary writing in 1855, Chapter III cites examples of how the teenager was coming of age as a talented student and a blossoming intellectual. She kept up with her anti-slavery activities and activism, but the year was a pivotal time for Charlotte's growth as an intellectual and a poet. She was the first student of color to integrate and graduate from the Higginson Grammar School, as well as the first to integrate the Salem Normal School. Upon Charlotte's acceptance into the Normal School in late 1855, she was not only the first scholar of color to graduate, she also was the first person of color to secure a teaching job at Epes Grammar School. Each academic effort Charlotte made in Salem, she did so with high honors and public acclaim. Charlotte went from a shining student to an exceptional scholar, and was everything she and her family had hoped for her.

By 1856, Charlotte had finished her academic studies and was working at the integrated Epes Grammar School as a teacher. Chapter IV shows that she had resumed her anti-slavery activism and labors, including officially having joined the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society at the age of eighteen. Charlotte had found her voice and strength as a radical abolitionist, and can be seen throughout the pages of her diary, her poetry, and her political activism. It was also during this year that her much beloved house-hostess, Amy Matilda Remond, passed away, leaving Charlotte without any maternal figure for guidance. Charlotte never quite got over the loss of her dear friend and became more somber in mood and spirit. Yet, even in mourning, she never wavered in a fierce devotion to Garrisonian abolition, especially as the “Fearful Crisis” over slavery threatened the nation.

The diary entries during Charlotte’s teen years from fifteen to eighteen are a significant primary source for the narrative of free people of color during the mid-1850s. Unlike the published narratives by former fugitives whose stories provide ample historical evidence about life as an enslaved person in the South before gaining their freedom, Charlotte’s diary provides extensive evidence from the Northern perspective as a free person of color. This includes the irreparable damage done to people of color throughout America—especially after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law—which included forced relocations, family separations, kidnappings, prejudicial treatment, physical violence, psychological trauma, and sometimes death. Charlotte’s diary widens the historical lens in which to examine U.S. and African-American History in the emancipation era, most especially the radical politics of free abolitionists of color living in Salem and Boston who devoted their daily lives to eradicating slavery and uplifting those nominally free.

Epilogue: 1857-1862

The beginning of 1857 continued with Charlotte deeply grieving the loss of Amy Matilda Remond. She was on her own in Salem without a maternal figure, her father had relocated to Canada and then England, and Sarah Parker Remond had begun lecturing nationally and internationally on the anti-slavery circuit. Charlotte was nineteen years old, and had become acutely aware of the importance of close friends, how quickly life could change without pretext or warning, and how abolition was not only a political ideology but an intellectual and spiritual one too. As Charlotte had done for the previous three years, she continued to attend anti-slavery meetings, lectures, celebrations, and conventions, including the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the “Crispus Attacks Celebration” organized by William C. Nell. Charlotte also continued to celebrate the important abolitionist holidays and diligently labored year-long as a member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society.

By the time Charlotte finished her teen years, she had fully and wholeheartedly devoted herself to Garrisonian abolition, believing it the only route to eradicate the sinful practice of slavery. In one journal entry she wrote in part, “[R]ead my beloved ‘Liberator.’ L.[izzie] is quite provoked with me for my ‘hero worship;’ thinks it most absurd.”⁶⁶⁹ Her friend, Lizzie Church, also an abolitionist of color, did not have the same sentiments about William Lloyd Garrison. Charlotte, however, never wavered from her devotion to in him as an ally and as an anti-slavery pioneer.

It is significant that Charlotte never wrote in her journal about Dred Scott or the case of *Scott v. Sandford* in 1857 that resulted in the infamous *Dred Scott* decision by Judge Roger Taney.⁶⁷⁰ This is a

⁶⁶⁹ Friday, December 4, 1857. Stevenson, *Journals*, 270.

⁶⁷⁰ Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 14.

glaring omission given Charlotte's penchant for recording politically momentous occasions that altered the fate of people of color in America, whether free or enslaved. In addition, *The Liberator* covered the case in great detail, including one front page headline, "Decision in the Dred Scott Case," and the opening line read, "The Court has decided that negroes are not citizens."⁶⁷¹ Moreover, the same paper recounted that a "Spirited Meeting of the Colored Citizens of Philadelphia" had congregated in Israel Church, "[t]o consider the atrocious decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, and other outrages to which the colored people are subjected under the Constitution of the United States."⁶⁷² Charlotte was in Philadelphia when this meeting occurred. Moreover, her uncle-in-law, Robert Purvis, had spoken at the gathering, as had Charles Lenox Remond, who traveled from Salem. Yet she did not write anything about Dred Scott or the heated meeting in Philadelphia.

Charlotte's failure to mention the Dred Scott case is also striking because her close friend and mentor, William C. Nell, had written about it in private and in public. In a letter written to Wendell Phillips, he commented on the preparations for the annual "Crispus Attacks Celebration" in Boston, and the featured guests included, "John G. Whitter, Charlotte L. Forten, Frances E. Watkins and others will contribute in Poetry. Wendell Phillips, Mr. Garrison, C. Lenox Remond, Wm. Wells Brown and others by Speech; some colored artists are engaged in the emblematic devices; appropriate music is being selected. Various societies and orders among Colored People in the several cities and towns in various states of the Union are already anticipating being present in

⁶⁷¹ *The Liberator*, April 10, 1857.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*

whole or by Delegates and they think that the Dred Scott decision has invested the whole with a significance that should be made contributory to the rising antislavery sentiment of the North.⁶⁷³

Nell's summation that the Dred Scott decision would be the final tipping point for free people of color and for Garrisonian abolitionists underscores the importance of the Supreme Court decision. In addition, Charlotte had contributed original poetry and read it aloud to the audience. Still she never mentioned having penned a poem for the celebration of Dred Scott, despite having written about the Crispus Attacks celebration in general.

William C. Nell also wrote about Dred Scott in late August, 1857, this time for *The Liberator*. It was titled, "The Taney Hunt Against Colored Americans." Nell stated, "We hazard nothing by asserting...that ninety-nine percent of the outrages daily committed against freedom, including the indignities heaped upon the unoffending colored man in these United States, are directly or indirectly the work of those connected to the Administration party – and all, too, in the name of American Democracy."⁶⁷⁴ Nell argued that Judge Taney's decision proved that "colored men have not rights that white men are bound to respect, and is already acknowledge as the key-note to which these democratic hunters of men -- :

'Priest, warriors and statesmen, from Georgia to Maine,
Are mounting the saddle and grasping the rein;
Right merrily hunting the black man, whose sin
Is the curl of his hair and the hue of his skin."⁶⁷⁵

Instead of ending the piece with his own words, Nell chose Whittier's poem, *Hunters of Men* to illustrate his anger, disappointment, and outrage over Dred Scott. Given there was such a loud

⁶⁷³ William Cooper Nell: *Selected Writings, 1832-1874*, eds. Dorothy Porter Wesley and Contance Porter Uzelac (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2002), 489.

⁶⁷⁴ *The Liberator*, August 28, 1857.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

outcry by family and friends, her omission is curious given the gravity of what it portended for people of color.

By the end of 1857, Charlotte moved out of Charles Lenox Remond's home and took a room at the house of Mrs. Jane Putnam. It would have been improper for a young single lady to live with a widow, and both of Amy Matilda's children had left. Charlotte and Charles Lenox Remond had grown distant, which was likely because of the death of Amy Matilda Remond. The household was no longer the same and held painful memories. Charlotte's journal entry on the day she moved is exemplary of how much Amy Matilda's passing had changed the household dynamic. She reflected, "Packing, packing most busily all day. This eve. thoroughly tired bade the house good-bye.... Could not leave the house which has been my home ever since I have been in Salem, without regret—a little. Have thought much of *her* who was its guardian genius, without whom it seems so changed—so changed! Dear lost friend, *I shall never forget thee, --never!*"⁶⁷⁶

Even though Charlotte continued to grieve deeply over the passing of Amy Matilda Remond, she carried on dutifully with her anti-slavery labors. Toward the end of the year, she wrote a lengthy description about hearing a "splendid lecture on Toussaint [L'Ouverture] by our noble Mr. [Wendell] Phillips."⁶⁷⁷ Her assessment was that "[i]t was a glorious and well-deserved tribute to the 'First of the Blacks.' My enthusiastic enjoyment knew no bounds. What heightened it was that a large part of the audience was composed of people who would not go to an avowedly Anti-Slavery lecture."⁶⁷⁸ Charlotte was elated to hear Wendell's powerful recitation on Toussaint, as well as the influence it might have on an audience undecided on the issue of slavery.

⁶⁷⁶ December 12, 1857. Stevenson, *Journals*, 270-271.

⁶⁷⁷ December 16, 1857. *Ibid*, 271-272.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

Wendell Phillips' speech clearly had a significant impact on Charlotte. She wanted to record his words to show how the noble character of Toussaint and his followers were victorious over oppression. It was an analogous topic to "the Impending Crisis" that loomed over the nation in late 1857. Charlotte wrote:

In concluding, he [i.e., Phillips] said, as nearly as I can remember, 'I would compare Toussaint to Cromwell, but Cromwell shed much blood in clutching at a throne. Toussaint walked by natural gravitation into leadership of his people, without a crime. I would compare him to Napoleon, but Napoleon's whole career was *covered* with cheaterly. — 'This black chief *'never broke his word.'* I would compare him to Washington—but Washington held slaves. — 'This man's hands were clean. There are none worthy to compare him to, in purity of character...'"⁶⁷⁹

Charlotte was inspired by Phillips' historical accounts of Toussaint's purity of character, because the story provided an alternative narrative that only white men were heroic and honest. It also provided an alternative narrative to the false notion that people of color were thieves and untrustworthy. It is important to note that when Charlotte went to the South Carolina Sea Islands to educate those who had been formerly enslaved, Toussaint's valorous tales of victory were included in the school's curriculum.

Throughout the first half of 1858, Charlotte continued her intellectual pursuits and anti-slavery activism. Like the year before, she had written about the annual "Crispus Attacks Celebration" that William C. Nell had organized. Yet, like the year before, she did not mention that her writing had been incorporated into the evening's schedule. An advertisement of the event appeared in *The Liberator*, including noting that "[T]he following poetic offerings...Parody on 'Red, White and Blue' – written for the occasion by Miss Charlotte L. Forten, [sung by the Northern Vocalists – Elijah W. Smith, James Henry, James Titus, Benjamin Roberts, and Miss Amanda E. Scott. Mrs. Cordelia Howard DeGrasse, and the Misses Amanda E. Scott and Adelaide V. Putnam,

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

will alternate at the Piano.”⁶⁸⁰ Nell did not republish Charlotte’s *Parody*, and it has subsequently not been located. However, the literary choice of writing a parody on the colors of the American flag is clever, as well as a strong political rebuke on the hypocrisy of boasting of freedom while keeping others in bondage or oppressed.

Charlotte’s only reference to the “Crispus Attacks Celebration” was after the evening had concluded. She wrote about her cherished abolitionists and the unusual dancers:

For me the greatest attraction was hearing Phillips and Garrison once more.... There was a large crowd of finely dressed dancers, of whose movement, I was, for some time an amused spectator. But after I grew terribly tired and was glad to leave.⁶⁸¹

There was no mention of her parody or how it was received. As was typical for Charlotte, she often lamented about her perceived lack of talent as a writer, but she never bragged about it. Therefore, the absence of any mention is a clue the parody may have met her high standards. A piece in *The Liberator* after the event supports this assessment. It stated, “A parody on ‘The Red, White, and Blue,’ written for the occasion by Miss Charlotte L. Forten, was then sung, in fine style, by the ‘Northern Vocalists,’ ...which was loudly applauded.”⁶⁸²

By the middle of 1858, Charlotte grew increasingly unfulfilled with teaching. It no longer provided her the same satisfaction as being a scholar or an intellectual. She still enjoyed her students, but complained about the work. She contemplated resigning from her position at Epes Grammar

⁶⁸⁰ Also featured at the event was a poem, *Freedom’s Battle*, by Frances Ellen Watkins. Nell noted that it had been penned specifically for the event, and was “to be sung by the Misses Whitest, Miss Cooley, and Mr. John Grimes. *Colored American Heroes of 1776*. Sung by the Attuck’s [*sic*] Glee Club.” The rest of the advertisement reads as follows: “At the intervals, and for the remainder of the evening, music will be furnished by Bond’s Quadrille Band. Among the Relics, Emblems, Documents, and a few living mementoes of Revolutionary Historic interest, will be present the following: -- Powder Horn and Cup belonging to Crispus Attacks – Flag of Gov. Hancock, presented to Colored Soldiers – Mrs. Kay, daughter of the Ensign who received the above – Mrs. Eunice Ames, aged 92, pensioned widow of a colored Bunker Hill soldier -- Grandmother Boston, aged 105 years – Father Vassall, aged 88 – the whole promising an attractive and significant occasion. Tickets, 75 cents each... Doors open at 6 o’clock. The exercises will commence at 7 o’clock precisely.” *The Liberator*, February 26, 1858.

⁶⁸¹ March 5, 1858, Stevenson, *Journals*, 290.

⁶⁸² *The Liberator*, March 12, 1858.

School to return to Pennsylvania. Her Aunt Harriet and Uncle-in-Law, Robert Purvis, had invited Charlotte to live at their home in Byberry and tutor the younger children. Charlotte's former instructors, Mary Shepard and Richard Edwards were saddened, but reassured her that a standing offer to come back to Salem was guaranteed.⁶⁸³ This was the final factor in her decision to resign, and the next day a formal resignation letter was submitted. Charlotte concluded the day's journal entry with a sense of optimism and hope about the logistical and personal changes, and wrote, "Next week, for home, sweet home! A pleasant day for the first of spring."⁶⁸⁴

For the next year, Charlotte lived in Byberry with her extended family. She had left them at the age of fifteen and came of age away from their care and support. Returning home, she was twenty years old. Throughout the Byberry period, Charlotte filled her journals with vivid and descriptive scenes of the interiors of family life she had not experienced since childhood. She did not document as much of her political activism while in Byberry, but she did record a prolific amount of sewing as well as conversations with family members about the nation's fate of dissolution and possible war. In one example, Charlotte wrote, "In the afternoon Uncle T.[homas] read to us Mr. [Hinton Rowan] Helper's book 'The Impending Crisis.' It is *excellent*. One of the best arguments against slavery I've ever heard."⁶⁸⁵

The full title of Helper's book was, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It*, and it was published in 1857. Helper was a Southerner but was clearly anti-slavery, because the book's dedication read in part, "...To the Non-Slaveholding Whites of the South...Whether at Home or

⁶⁸³ Charlotte's journal entry reads in part, "Monday, March 1 (1858) - Had a very kind note from Miss S.[hepard], and one from Mr. [Richard] E.[dwards], in which he very kindly assures me that he will do all in his power to get me another situation when I shall want on. Now I shall certainly resign (Stevenson, *Journals*, 289)."

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁵ Stevenson, *Journals*, 302.

Abroad, this Work is Most Cordially by Their Sincere and Fellow-Citizen, the Author.”⁶⁸⁶ He argued that “economic aspects as regards the whites” was the most powerful argument to convince men to end slavery. He further suggested omitting religion or humanitarian arguments “except in a very slight degree,”⁶⁸⁷ because he saw it as futile when money was at stake. He commended the past efforts and noted that “Northern writers [had] done full and timely justice” in using Christianity to sway pro-slavery sympathizers, and added that “The genius of the North has also most ably and eloquently discussed the subject in the formal novels.”⁶⁸⁸ Even though Charlotte was a steadfast loyalist to anti-slavery fiction and poetry, it is significant that by the late 1850s and Helper’s “excellent” pecuniary argument, she had assessed that monetary reasoning was a better tactic than anti-slavery literature.⁶⁸⁹

By the end of 1859 and throughout 1860, Charlotte returned to Salem and resumed teaching. The country was accelerating toward a civil war. She did not write in her journal as much as in the past years, and even commented in the first journal entry of the year, “Can it be possible that so many months have elapsed since my pen last touched the pages, old friend!”⁶⁹⁰ She wrote about having read a history book and noted the importance of heroism and justice, just like she had about Phillips’ lecture on Toussaint:

I have been reading to-day [Thomas] Arnold’s ‘History of Rome.’ How it thrills one to know of those heroic deeds done ‘in the brave days of old.’ And how blessed it is that all the wealth of the ages can be ours, if we choose to grasp it! That we can live, not in this century, this corner of the world, alone, but in every century, and every age, and every clime! That we can listen to the words of orators, poets and sages; that

⁶⁸⁶ Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (New York: Burdick Brothers, 1857).

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Preface, 5.

⁶⁸⁸ Helper, who was from North Carolina, and “proud as any Southerner,” continued his praise and wrote, “Yankee wives have written the most popular anti-slavery literature of the day. Against this I have nothing to say. *Ibid*, v-vi.

⁶⁸⁹ It is also curious that Hinton’s book was published in June, yet Thomas read it to Charlotte in April. *The Liberator* does not appear to have a previous abridged version, but it is unclear how the Forten family got a copy of it.

⁶⁹⁰ Stevenson, *Journals*, 361-362.

we can enter into every conflict, share every joy, thrilled with every noble deed, known since the world began.⁶⁹¹

For Charlotte, the pursuit of knowledge and historical context was key in overcoming prejudicial barriers and beliefs. Equally as important, literature, sympathetic authors, noble abolitionists, sincere politicians, and valorous soldiers offered her an intellectual community to participate in where she otherwise was segregated and oppressed. She concluded the passage by reflecting on the importance of reading, “And hence are books to us a treasure and a blessing unspeakable. And they are double this when one is shut out from society as I am, and has not opportunities of studying those living, breathing, *human* books, which are, I doubt not, after all, the most profoundly interesting and useful study.”⁶⁹²

Charlotte acknowledged and reconciled her fate of not being allowed to enter into American society as an equal citizen and an intellectual. She wrote, “From that kind of pleasure, that kind of improvement I am barred; but, thank God! none can deprive me of the other kind.” Just as Charlotte had done throughout her time in Salem, she steeled herself and ended the day’s journal entry, “And I will strive to be resigned during the little while we have to stay here – and in that higher sphere do I now *know* the cruelty, the injustice of man ceases? *There* do Right, and Justice and Love abide.”⁶⁹³ As a radical Garrisonian abolitionist, Charlotte was prepared to continue to put herself on the front lines of abolition, because she felt in her heart that it was the only noble calling to pursue. This was her last journal entry until June 22, 1862.

By the time Charlotte resumed writing, she was twenty-five years old and readying herself to go to the South Carolina Sea Islands. She had volunteered to join the Philadelphia Port Royal Relief

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

Commission to educate a large group of formerly enslaved people and prepare them for Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. She was the only female teacher of color to be selected, and she remained there for over year.⁶⁹⁴ Charlotte's political and intellectual aspirations were realized in the Sea Islands. She had also fulfilled the hopes of her grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles. Her superior education and dedication to abolition was put into practice in the South. Yet it was her teen years in Salem that laid the foundation. Charlotte Forten had come of age as a radical teenage abolitionist during the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, "the Impending Crisis," and the era of emancipation.

⁶⁹⁴ Brenda E. Stevenson, "Considering the War from Home and the Front: Charlotte Forten's Civil War Diary Entries," in *Civil War Writing: New Perspectives on Iconic Texts*, eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Stephen Cushman (Louisiana State University Press, 2019), 171-199.

Appendix I:

Surviving Poems Written by Charlotte Forten

“To W.L.G. on Reading His ‘Chosen Queen’”

A loyal subject, thou, to that bright Queen,
To whom the homage of thy soul is paid;
Long to her cause devoted hast thou been,
And many a sacrifice for her hast been made.
Thy chosen Queen, O champion of Truth,
Should be th’ acknowledged sovereign of all;
Her first commands should fire the heart of youth
And graver age list heedful to her call.
With truer weapons than the blood-stained sward,
And teaches us that greater is the might
Of mortal warfare, noble though and word,
On thee shall rest the blessing of mankind,
As one who nobly dost the Right defend;
Than thee, they chosen Queen shall never find
A truer subject nor a firmer friend.

Written to William Lloyd Garrison and published in *The Liberator* on March 16, 1855. Charlotte was sixteen years old.

“A Parting Hymn”

When Winter’s royal robes of white
From hill and vale are gone
And the glad voices of the spring
Upon the air are borne,
Friends who have met with us before,
Within these walls shall meet no more.

Forth to a noble work they go:
O, may their hearts keep pure,
And hopeful zeal and strength be theirs
To labor and endure,
That they an earnest faith may prove
By words of truth and deeds of love.

May those, whose holy task it is,
To guide impulsive youth,
Fail not to cherish in their souls
A reverence for truth;

For teachings which the lips impart
Must have their source within the heart.
May all who suffer share their love—
The poor and the oppressed;
So shall the blessing of our God Upon the labors rest.
And may we meet again where all
Are blest and freed from every thrall.

This was the selected poem to be read at the graduation ceremony for Higginson Grammar School in 1855. She was sixteen years old. Published in William Wells Brown's *The Black Man*, 191.

“Poem for Normal School Graduation”

In the earnest path of duty,
With the high hopes and hearts sincere,
We, to useful lives aspiring,
Daily meet to labor here.

No vain dreams of earthly glory
Urge us onward to explore
Far-extending realms knowledge,
With their rich and varied store;

But, with hope of aiding others,
Gladly we perform our part;
Nor forget, the mind, while storing,
We must educate the heart, —

Teach it hatred of oppression,
Truest love of God and man
Thus our high and holy Calling,
May accomplish His great plan.

Not the great and gifted only
He appoints to do his will,
But each one, however lowly,
Has a mission to fulfill.

Know this, toil we unwearied,
With true hearts and purpose high; —
We would win a wreath immortal
Whose bright flowers ne'er fade and die.

This was the selected poem to be read at the graduation ceremony for the Salem Normal School in 1856. She was seventeen years old. Published in *The Liberator*, August 24, 1856.

Appendix II:

Authors and Books Read by Charlotte Forten

Jacob Abbott

History of Julius Caesar

History of Alfred the Great

Massacre at St. Bartholomew

Maria Abdy

The Origin of the Moss-Rose [poem]

Rev. [W.?] Adams

The Old Man's Home

Aesop's Fables

Grace Aguilar

The Days of Bruce

Akers, Elizabeth

Bringing Our Sheaves with Us [A poem read in the 'Standard.']

Louisa May Alcott

Hospital Sketches

Dante Alighieri

The Inferno

[Sir] Archibald Alison

History of Europe

Hans Christian Andersen

The Improvisatore

Thomas Arnold

Lectures on Modern History

History of Rome

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice

Delia Salter Bacon

The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded

Peter Bayne

Essays in Biography and Criticism

Glimpses of Recent British Art [essay]

The Modern Novel [essay]

Richard Baxter

Canst Thou not Watch One Hour

Gustave de Beaumont

Marie ou L'Esclavage Aux Etats Unis

Henry Ward Beecher

Life Thoughts

Eyes and Bars

The Bible

George Henry Baker

Calaynas

Charlotte Brontë [a.k.a. Currer Bell]

Jane Eyre

Villette

Shirley

Emily Brontë

Wuthering Heights

William Wells Brown

The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements

Harriet Browne

Martha [“Mattie”] Griffith Browne [see Margaret Fuller for cross-reference]

Autobiography of a Female Slave

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point

Casa Guidi Windows

Aurora Leigh

Lady Geraldine’s Courtship

The Sleep

Crowned and Wedded

Cooper’s Grave

Sonnets from the Portuguese

Last Poems

Robert Browning

By the Fireside
Paracelsus
Luria

William Cullen Bryant

Blue and Gold
The Battlefield

William Byrd

Lord Byron

Life of Lockhart
The Little White Lady
Prisoner of Chillon (also published as The Dream.)

Charles Bucke

Ruins of Ancient Cities

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Rienzi – Last of the Tribunes
Richilieu

Robert Burns

Julius Caesar

Commentaries

Thomas Carlyle

Hero Worship
Sartor Resartus
That Everlasting Yea

Thomas Campbell

Alice Carey

Pictures of Memory

Chamber's Encyclopaedia

Lecture on English Literature
Life and Works of Burns

Thomas Chatterton

Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales

Dr. George Cheever

Life of Bunyan

Lydia Maria Child

Memoir of Madame de Staël
Philothea
Letters from New York
Loo-Loo

Mary Cowden Clarke

World Noted Women

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Hymn to Mont-Blanc
Cristabel

James Fenimore Cooper

Water Witch

Abraham Cowley

William Cowper

The Poetical Works of William Cowper, The Inner Temple

The Iliad of Homer

Poem: Against Slavery

The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

Caroline Healey Dall

Lucretia and Margaret Davidson

[Lady] Dinah Maria Dinah Craik Mulock [a.k.a. Miss Mulock and/or Miss Craik]

John Halifax, Gentleman

Head of the Family

The Ogilivies

Life for a Life

[Helen?] Creamer

Mrs. [First name?] Crosland

Memorable Women

Alexander Crummell

Future of Africa

Allan Cunningham

Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects
Works and Life of Burns

George William Curtis

Prue and I
Nile Notes of a Hawadji

Madame D'Arbley

“Memoirs of Dr. Burney”

[Sir] Humphrey Davy

Thomas De Quincey

Literary Reminiscences
Confessions of an Opium Eater
Klosterheim

Charles Dickens

Hard Times
Little Dorrit
Barnaby Rudge
Cricket on the Hearth
Little Nell
The Old Curiosity Shop
Dombey and Son
Martin Chuzzlewit
A Christmas Carol
Pictures from Italy
Household Words (his literary magazine)
The Pickwick Papers (?)

Frederick Douglass

My Bondage and My Freedom

Alexandre Dumas

The Count of Monte Christo

Mary Lundie Duncan

Maria Edgeworth

Helen

George Eliot [a.k.a. Mary Ann Evans]

Adam Bede

Ralph Waldo Emerson

English Traits

Brahma

Emerson's Essays

Louis Fasquelle

A Course of the French Language

François Fénelon

Les Aventures de Télémaque [

Adam Ferguson

History of Rome

Baron Frederick de la Motte Fouqué

Undine

Sintram

Margaret Fuller

Women in the 19th Century

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell

North and South
Life of Charlotte Brontë

Henry Giles

Don Quixote: The Ideal of Knighthood

William Godwin

Memoir of Mary Wollstonecraft

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Wilhelm Meister (Translated by Thomas Carlyle)
Iphigenia in Tauris

Oliver Goldsmith

She Stoops to Conquer

Thomas Gray

Gray's Elegy

Samuel Griswold Goodrich

The Second Book of History

Hinton Rowan Halper

The Impending Crisis

Fitz-Greene Halleck

On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake

Gail Hamilton

General Sir E.B. Hamley

Lady Lee's Widowhood

Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Scarlet Letter

Tanglewood Tales

Unpardonable Sin

Twice Told Tales

The House of Seven Gables

Mosses from an Old Manse

[Sir] Arthur Helps

Friends in Council

Felicia Hemans

The Parting of Summer (poem)

Hesiod

Richard Hildreth

Memoirs of Archy Moore, or Archy Moore, the White Slave, or Memoirs of a Fugitive

Richard Henry Horne

Leigh Hunt [James Henry Leigh Hunt]

Josiah Gilbert Holland

Bitter Sweet

Oliver Wendell Holmes [Senior]

The Autocrat at the Breakfast-Table
Anis

Thomas Hood

The Pugsley Papers
The Death-bed

William Howitt

Homes and Haunts of the British Poets, Vol. I

Thomas Hughes

Victor Hugo

Les Misérables

William Henry Hurlbert

Gan Eden, Or Pictures from Cuba

Washington Irving

Tales of the Alhambra

Anna Brownell Jameson

The Characteristics of Women
Diary of Ennuyee
Beauties of the Court of Charles II

Julie Kavanagh

Madeline, a Tale of Auvergne

John Keats

Frances Anne [Fanny] Kemble

Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839

Charles Kingsley

Two Years Ago
Andromeda

Henry Kingsley

Ravenshoe

James Sheridan Knowles

Virginius

Charles Lamb

Rosamund Gray

Mary Langdon a.k.a. Mary Hayden Pike Green

Ida May: A Story of Things Actual and Possible

George Henry Lewes

Life of Goëthe

David Livingstone

Travels in Africa

John Gibson Lockhart

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

[Collection of poems]

Excelsior

Golden Legend

Hiawatha

Hyperion

The Mourning Veil

Santa Filomena

Arsenal at Springfield

Miles Standish

The Gold Mile Stone

Sandalphon

Two Angels

Thallata

The Day is Done

James Russell Lowell

Fable for Critics

Conversations on the Old Poets

Miscellaneous Poems [A collection of anti-slavery poetry]

Anne. C. Lynch

Thoughts in a Library (poem)

Thomas Babington Macaulay

History of England (3 Volumes)

Biographical Essays

Lays of Ancient Rome

Matilda Ann Mackarness

A Trap to Catch a Moonbeam

Sibert's World

Charles Mackay

James Macauley

Harriet Martineau

The Hour and the Man: An Historical Romance

Hugh Miller

Donald Grant Mitchell [a.k.a. Ik Marvel]

Fresh Gleanings, or a New Sheaf from the Old Fields of Continental Europe

John Milton

Paradise Lost

Lycidas

Mary Russell Mitford

Recollections of a Literary Life

M^rLoed

Life of Sir Walter Scott

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Turkish Embassy Letters [1763, but only published posthumously]

James Montgomery

Night [poem]

Thomas Moore

Life of Byron (Edinburgh Review)
Lalla Rookh: The Fire Worshippers

John Lothrop Motley

Rise of the Dutch Republic

Margaret Oliphant [a.k.a. Mrs. Oliphant]

Margaret Maitland
The Days of My Life
The Quiet Heart
Chronicles of Carlingford
Salem Chapel [Note that this is the third volume in the *Chronicles of Carlingford*. Also cross reference George Eliot: when this book was released it was so popular [that] it was believed to be the work of G. Eliot.]

[Blaise] Pascal

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (a.k.a. H. Trusta)

A Peep at Number Five, Or A Chapter in the Life of a City Pastor (1852)
Sunny Side
The Angel over the Right Shoulder

Kate E.R. Pickard

The Kidnapped and the Ransomed: Recollections of Peter Still and his Wife, 'Vina,' After Forty Years of Slavery

Plutarch

Life of Alexander
Plutarch's Lives
Lycircus

Robert Pollok

The Course of Time

Alexander Pope

The Rape of the Lock
The Iliad of Homer
Homer's Odyssey

William H. Prescott

Conquest [of Peru?]
Conquest of Mexico
Philip the Second

Adelaide Anne Proctor

A Woman's Question

Edmund Quincy

Wensley, A Story Without a Moral

Jean Racine

Phedre
Iphigenia in Tauris

Thomas Buchanan Read

Drifting

Charles Reade

Jack of All Trades
White Lies

Leitch Ritchie

The Wearyfoot Common

Jean Paul Richter

William Roberts

Memoires of Hannab More

Samuel Rogers

Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers, which is added Porsonianana

Charles Rollin

Ancient History

Christina Rossetti

Remember

Giovanni Ruffini

Doctor Antonio

[Sir] William Howard Russell

Mr. Russell on Bull Run

Xavier Boniface Saintine [a.k.a X.B. Saintine]

Picciola

Friedrich Schiller

The History of the Thirty Years War
Correspondence Between Schiller and Göethe

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Prometheus Bound

[Sir] Walter Scott

Tales of a Grandfather, 1st Vol.
Lady of the Lake
Lay of the Last Minstrel
Ivanhoe

William Shakespeare

Othello
Hamlet
King John
MacBeth
Merchant of Venice

Elizabeth Sheppard [a.k.a. E. Berger]

Charles Auchester

[Sir] Philip Sidney

A Defence of Poetry or An Apology for Poetry

Lydia Huntley Sigourney

Middle States: Niagara, River Niagara

Catherine Sinclair

Shetland and Shetlanders, or the Northern Circuit

E.D.E.N. (Emma) Southworth

Retribution”

Edmund Spenser

Faerie Queene

Madame de Staël (a.k.a. Anne Marie Louise Germaine Necker)

Corinne ou L'Italie

Ann S. Stephens

Fashion and Famine

Stevens

Travels in the East

Richard Henry Stoddard,

Mrs. E.B. Browning: Letters & Essays: With a Memoir

Mrs. R.H. Stoddard (Elizabeth Drew Barstow, wife of the poet)

November, a poem in the *Atlantic Monthly*

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Mayflower

The Minister's Wooing

Agnes Strickland

Lives of the Queens of England (12 Volumes, 1840-1848)

Thomas Noon Talfourd

Miscellanies

Jemima von Tautphoeus

Initials

Quits

At Odds

Bayard Taylor

Poems of the Orient

[Lord] Alfred Tennyson

Maud

The Miller's Daughter

Lady Clara Vere de Vere

Death of the Old Year

May Queen

Ring Out, Wild Bells

William Makepeace Thackeray

Benjamin Thorpe

Edward Trelawney

The Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron

Richard Chenevix Trench

On the Study of Words

John T. Trowbridge

Martin Merryvale, His X Mark

Neighbor Jackwood

Robert Turnbull

Genius of Scotland

Jones Very

Virgil

Georgics, Book 1

Susan Warner [published under the pseudonym Elizabeth Wetherell and Queechy]

Wide Wide World

The Hills of Shatemue by the author of *Querchy*. [Note: It should read “Queechy.”]

Say and Seal

Phillis Wheatley

Poems by Phillis Wheatley

Maria White [Lowell]

John Greenleaf Whittier

Moll Pitcher

Literary Recreations and Miscellanies

The Last Walk in Autumn

Questions of Life

Chapel of the Hermits

Songs of Labor

Maud Muller

Panorama”

Supernaturalism

Huskers

Corn song

Nathaniel Parker Willis

Sacred Poems

Theodore John Winthrop

John Brent

Edwin Brothercroft

Cecil Dreeme [Forten wrote “Cecil Breems”]

William Wordsworth

The White Doe of Rylstone

The suicide of Thomas Chatterton

Charlotte M. Yonge

The Heir of Redclyffe
Two Guardians

Appendix III:

Periodicals, Anti-Slavery Papers, and Newspapers Mentioned: [Anonymous anti-slavery papers/tracts not named]

The Atlantic Monthly

Boston Commonwealth

The Christian Register

The Eclectic

Edinburgh Review

Eliza Cook's Journal (in general)

☞ *Eliza Cook's Journal, Volume X, November 1853, to April 1854. Harper's Monthly*

Home Journals

Household Words

Independent Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine Liberator

The Living Age

London Times

National Anti-Slavery Standard [publication of the American Anti-Slavery Society]

The National Era

Observer

The Rocket, The Mechanics Magazine

Sharpe's London Magazine, a Journal of Entertainment and Instruction (for the general reader), November

The Spectator

The [Boston] Transcript

The Westminster Review

Appendix IV:

Charlotte's School Studies at Higginson Grammar School and the Salem Normal School

1854-1856:

Arithmetic
Latin
French
German
Geology
History
English Literature
Natural Philosophy
Philosophy
Geography
Physical Geography
Antiquities (topic for a composition)
Syllogism
Logic
Astronomy
Teaching
"School and Schoolmaster"

1857:

Poetry

1858:

Algebra

1858:

Botany
English History
"Learned a new and quite interesting system of chronology"

1859:

Hires a private French tutor

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<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4415>

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1840 United States Census, Philadelphia Cedar Ward, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Roll: 484; Page: 244; Family History Library Film: 0020554, "Robert and Mary Forten Household," Ancestry.com.

1840 United States Census, Warminster, Bucks, Pennsylvania, Roll: M432_759; Page: 123A; Image: 253, "James Forten Household," Ancestry.com.

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