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‘A deep interest in your cause’: The inter-American sphere of black abolitionism and civil rights

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Abstract

This article argues that black men and women activists from the Caribbean and South America made key contributions to the US abolitionist, civil rights and women’s rights campaigns in the mid-nineteenth century. It does so by examining three case studies of Boston and New York-based activists from Brazil, Haiti and Jamaica. Using diverse primary sources from across the Americas, including court transcripts, abolitionist society minutes, and newspaper correspondence, it also demonstrates how these activists created unique inter-American dialogues on slavery, emancipation, segregation, racism, and gender between black communities in the Americas. In doing so, this article challenges current Anglo-American and North Atlantic biases in the historiography of transnational black abolitionism and civil rights, and instead shifts our attention to the inter-American sphere of black activism. Lastly, it also contributes to discussions around silence in the study of black activists during this period.

In October 1833, a black man took a steamboat captain to court for refusing to allow him and his sick wife to enter the whites-only cabins on a vessel travelling from New Bedford to Nantucket, Massachusetts. In the Boston Court of Common Pleas, the plaintiff's lawyers appealed to the jury to consider Captain Edward Barker's actions a 'violation of humanity'.¹ The case garnered local and national attention as a pivotal moment in early campaigns against racial discrimination and segregation. According to the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 'The court room was much crowded during the trial', and thousands of readers followed regular updates published in newspapers across the US Northeast.² The verdict must have shocked many of them. Judge Artemas Ward ruled that the plaintiff 'was to have no more or no less damages than he would have been entitled to if he had been a white man'.³ Aside from being one of the earliest lawsuits against segregation in Massachusetts and US history, the case was also remarkable because the plaintiff, Emiliano Felipe Benício Mundrucu, was from northeast Brazil.

Mundrucu v. Barker also carried global importance for Atlantic-wide campaigns against racial prejudice. Prominent politicians, lawyers, and anti-slavery activists rallied around Mundrucu who was represented by David Lee Child and US Senator for Massachusetts, Daniel Webster. British and US abolitionists, eager to point out the hypocrisies of the early US republic, took great interest in *Mundrucu v. Barker*. Child, a lawyer, journalist, and prominent abolitionist, used Mundrucu's story to denounce racism in the US as far worse than anywhere else in the Americas. Comparing racial discrimination across the hemisphere, Child claimed that 'In Spain and Portugal, and their colonies, and in Brazil, it scarcely exists at all.'⁴ Reporting on Mundrucu's story to the British press, renowned English abolitionist and author Edward Abdy condemned Boston's 'aristocracy of the skin'.⁵

In taking a stand against segregation, a black Brazilian immigrant had focused national and global attention on deep-seated racism in US society. It was an unusual and remarkable

moment in the country's early history. However, Mundrucu was not the only black activist from South America or the Caribbean to make important contributions in this regard. Following a deeper analysis of the *Mundrucu v. Barker* court case and its significance for the early US civil rights movement as well as Mundrucu's wider inter-American activism, this article then examines two other case studies. A second case study traces a black Saint Dominguan family's escape from the violence of the Haitian Revolution and later integration into Boston's activist community to demonstrate how black activists from the French Caribbean brought unique perspectives on revolution, emancipation, and gender roles to the US anti-slavery movement. This case study also discusses and confronts some of the challenges of archival silences, particularly as they relate to black Caribbean contributions to the US women's abolitionist movement. A third case study on two black US-Jamaican brothers who worked as New York newspaper correspondents from post-emancipation Jamaica in the 1840s illustrates the importance of black inter-American dialogues in shaping debates around slavery, freedom, racial discrimination, and emigration.

In Atlantic cities like Boston and New York, black activists from South America and the Caribbean acted as interlocutors between African Americans and other black communities in the Americas. They brought unique inter-American perspectives on race, resistance, slavery, segregation and gender to the US abolitionist and civil rights movements, and, in some cases, led the fight. These contributions remain largely unrecognised in transnational histories of abolitionism and black activism. Up until now, most of the literature on black transnational activism either focuses on the Age of Revolutions at the turn of the eighteenth century or black political and cultural studies in the early twentieth century.⁶ There are several exceptions, including Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard's *Freedom Papers* and more recently, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof's *Racial Migrations* – pioneering studies which place black men and women from the Caribbean alongside African American activists in the fight to end slavery

and racial discrimination across the hemisphere.⁷ For the most part, however, black activists from the Caribbean and South America remain marginal in histories of transnational abolitionism and civil rights campaigning in the mid-nineteenth century.

Transnational or Atlantic abolitionism is still largely synonymous with Anglo-American anti-slavery networks and the flow of ideas, discourses, and activists across the North Atlantic. Anti-slavery movements in slaveholding states such as Cuba and Brazil are peripheral to studies of Atlantic abolitionism, in part because they only emerged much later and were often gradualist in approach. Recognising the bias in the historiography, Isadora Moura Mota notes: 'If there is an overarching story about abolitionism, it is the narrative of Anglo-American anti-slavery unfolding within a global capitalist order in which Latin America as a whole is, at best, secondary.'⁸ In this paradigm, transnational black abolitionism is almost entirely equated with African American activists such as Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Sarah Parker Remond, and Ellen and William Craft, who, among others, campaigned in Britain against Southern slavery and racial discrimination in US society.⁹ By arguing that black activists from the Caribbean and South America made key contributions to campaigns against slavery, segregation, racism, and sexism in the US Northeast, and generated dialogues between black communities across the hemisphere, this article confronts Anglo-American and North Atlantic historiographical biases and instead shifts our focus to the inter-American sphere of abolitionism and civil rights. It also problematises current political discourses in the US, namely those pushed by American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS), which claim that black immigrant families do not share the same identity or struggle for civil rights as African Americans. Contrary to these nativist tendencies, this article will demonstrate that black immigrants have played a key role in shaping black community resistance in the US for over two centuries.

‘Unequaled by anything in his own country’¹⁰

Despite the national and international attention given to the case at the time, *Mundrucu v. Barker* has been entirely overlooked in histories of early anti-segregation movements, which generally cite 1841 as the beginning of formal resistance.¹¹ In September that year, Frederick Douglass twice refused to leave a Massachusetts train car reserved for white passengers and was forcibly removed. The incidents sparked lobbying campaigns and ultimately successful legislative efforts to force Massachusetts railroad companies to end segregation on their trains. Eight years earlier, *Mundrucu v. Barker* had set an important legal precedent against segregation in the state. Even though the case’s ruling was subsequently set aside on appeal, Mundrucu’s defiance and his personal story of mobility across geographies and racial lines in the Americas – widely commented on in the newspaper coverage – had given African American communities a sense of hope and possibility.

In challenging segregation in Massachusetts, Mundrucu had drawn on his experiences of race and discrimination in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. A captain in a *pardo* battalion in Recife, northeast Brazil, he had risen through the ranks of the city’s multi-racial military until a secessionist war in 1824 brought racial tensions to the fore.¹² Facing execution for allegedly praising Haiti’s leaders and ordering his battalion to attack whites in the city, he later fled to the black republic and then to Venezuela where he would offer his services to revolutionary republican causes. By the time he moved to Boston in 1828, he was already a seasoned revolutionary with unique perspectives on race, class and identity.¹³ He also brought a tradition of black resistance to the city. In Brazil, there was no *de jure* segregation and Mundrucu and other freeborn men of colour were recognised as citizens equal before the law and could vote and hold office or even high-ranking military positions. Yet racially-motivated *ad hominem* attacks against prominent *pardo* and free black military or political figures were

common. However, men like Mundrucu were knowledgeable of their constitutional rights and frequently used legal and political mechanisms to defend themselves.¹⁴

Mundrucu confronted racism from the moment he arrived in Boston. Prior to the steamboat incident, he had been forced to leave a boarding house, subjected to racial slander by a local newspaper editor, and one of his relatives had been refused passage in a stagecoach.¹⁵ After years of humiliation, *Mundrucu v. Barker* marked his fightback against racial discrimination in Massachusetts. In the months that transpired between the steamboat incident in November 1832 and the start of the trial in October 1833, Mundrucu had aligned himself with Boston's radical abolitionist and black rights groups and joined the recently-formed New England Anti-Slavery Society (NEASS).¹⁶ His case rested on proving that Barker had breached contractual obligations. Mundrucu's lawyers argued that when Barker had charged him the highest fare of two dollars passengers usually paid to travel in the two aft (or superior cabins), he had not mentioned that these cabins were for whites only.¹⁷ In statements to the court, Webster argued that 'It is a denial of civil rights and an affront to take the money and deny him these rights'.¹⁸

While the crux of Mundrucu's legal case rested on a breach of contract, he and his lawyers also wanted to expose the inhumanity of segregation practices. Segregation on public transport, though widespread, was not enshrined in Massachusetts law, and during the trial Child and Webster attempted to portray Barker as an inhumane enforcer of arbitrary rules.¹⁹ Focusing on Harriet Mundrucu's experience, they argued that the forward cabin – described by one witness as 'good enough for a work hand' but not paying passengers – was not suitable for a woman and child, not least because Harriet was unwell.²⁰ Unlike in the aft cabins, there were no berths and passengers had to sleep on mattresses on the floor and depend on one fireplace for warmth. Being November, it was in all likelihood bitterly cold in New England and one witness noted that 'It was extremely foggy and the wind was high'.²¹ In impassioned closing statements,

Webster told the jury that ‘No lady on God’s earth, no educated white person would have been subject to such treatment. The Mundrucus’ color was their only distinction.’²²

Barker’s lawyers countered by arguing that segregation on steamboats was common practice not just in Massachusetts but across the US Northeast. Several steamboat captains from New York and Rhode Island testified that it was standard regulation ‘not to admit mulattoes or persons of color into the ladies’ cabin or the gentlemen’s cabin’.²³ His lawyers also contested claims that the forward cabin was not suitably comfortable for black passengers. Barker’s third line of defence was a subtle reinforcement of racist social norms. Wanting to prove that Mundrucu usually only socialised with black people and therefore presumably knew his place in society, Barker’s lawyers asked witnesses to provide testimony on the Brazilian’s social circles. ‘Does not Mundrucu [only] associate with the Blacks?’, Barker’s lawyers asked one witness, who replied, ‘I never saw him with any person, but blacks.’²⁴

By gathering testimony on Mundrucu’s social circles, Barker’s lawyers wanted to reinforce the colour line dividing whites and non-whites. This was in part motivated by some ambiguity surrounding Mundrucu’s racial background, owing to his light complexion and foreignness. Reports in the press that he was ‘formerly a Major in the Brazilian service’ likely generated further confusion in a society where people of colour could not serve as soldiers.²⁵ Described as ‘a quadroon of Dutch and English descent’, Harriet’s light complexion added to the uncertainty and Barker’s lawyers wanted to categorically dispel any notion that the Mundrucus could pass as white.²⁶ ‘Is Mr. Mundrucu white or colored?’, they asked one witness, to which he responded, ‘Bright mulatto’.²⁷ Asked to ‘state the color of the plaintiff Mundrucu and his wife’, another witness responded, ‘I should think their color according to my recollection was that of the native Indians of this country.’²⁸

To someone from Brazil, where class generally took precedence over racial differences, attempts to define him and his wife by their skin colour were frustrating and demoralising. ‘It

must be very galling for a man who is fit for any society anywhere [...] to be insulted by the lowest blackguard, for no other reason than Nature gave him a brown complexion,' noted Abdy.²⁹ Although there are curiously no records on Mundrucu's cross-examination during the trial, witness accounts give us a sense of his frustration. According to one witness, when Barker told him that 'colored ladies are not admitted' in the aft cabin, Mundrucu quipped, 'My wife as white as you be.'³⁰ Another witness claimed that Mundrucu had actually said that Harriet was as white as Barker's mother.³¹ His frustrated response was likely a deft criticism of arbitrary racial boundaries in the US which he, in demanding to enter the aft cabin, refused to accept.

The trial was brief and the jury took just four hours to deliver a verdict, finding Barker guilty of a breach of contract and awarding Mundrucu \$125 in damages. The outcome immediately ruffled some feathers. In caustic remarks on the case's wider ramifications, the editor of the *Nantucket Inquirer* noted: 'After this verdict, it is presumed that the gentlemen of the jury can have no possible objection to the admission of ladies of color to the society of their wives and daughters in stages and steamboats.'³² However, Mundrucu's victory over segregation was short-lived. Barker's lawyers immediately appealed to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC), where in January 1834 the case was set aside on the basis that Mundrucu had not adequately proved that the captain explicitly agreed to accommodate him and his family in the aft cabins. The outcome of the appeal received mixed responses. 'This case will show in some measure the inconveniences experienced by persons with a black skin,' bemoaned the *Long Island Intelligencer*, a Brooklyn newspaper sympathetic to black rights.³³ On the other hand, the *New Bedford Gazette* described the SJC's decision as 'highly important to proprietors of steamboats and travellers', adding that, 'for however ardent the most philanthropic may be for the emancipation of our colored population, we very much question their willingness to eat at the same table, or occupy the same room with a colored companion.'³⁴

It was a crushing blow to Mundrucu, who, to make things worse, was ordered to pay Barker's legal expenses.³⁵ In the wake of the appeal, Mundrucu told Abdy that racial prejudice in the US was 'unequaled by anything in his own country'.³⁶ In Brazil, he had commanded a military battalion and in Haiti and Venezuela he had met with presidents and dignitaries, but in Massachusetts he could not even sit next to a white person on public transport. Mundrucu was not about to give up though and decided to appeal to the federal court system. Abdy urged him to make use of a treaty between the US and Brazil that gave Brazilians resident in the US equal treatment before the law.³⁷ Presumably, Abdy believed Mundrucu could overturn the SJC's verdict by arguing that he should have been subject to 'judicial intercourse on the same terms' as any white person in the US.³⁸ Mundrucu was favourable to the idea, and armed with new witness depositions and backed by international law, his lawyers were poised to take what would have been one of the most complex multi-jurisdictional cases against segregation in history to the country's highest courts. Ultimately though, *Mundrucu v. Barker* never made it to the federal courts and was dropped in late 1834 when Mundrucu decided to return to Brazil after being pardoned by his government for his involvement in the 1824 secessionist war. Nevertheless, Mundrucu's commitment to fighting racism and segregation in the US had established his activist credentials. Prior to leaving for Brazil, he was one of several activists – alongside William Lloyd Garrison, Samuel J. May, Amos Phelps, and other notable abolitionists – invited to a major anti-slavery convention in the state.³⁹

Mundrucu v. Barker and other incidents of racism in Massachusetts also profoundly reshaped his identity as a man of colour in Brazil where, upon returning, he demonstrated a wider awareness of racial discrimination across classes and increased zeal to fight against it. By 1837, just three years after arriving back in the country, Mundrucu had risen through the military ranks and was nominated to serve as commander of Recife's *Fortaleza do Brum*, then one of the city's primary military garrisons. However, several high-ranking local government

and military officials led a successful campaign to oppose his nomination, questioning his qualifications, education, and record of political dissent. In a letter published in a local newspaper, Mundrucu alleged that the real reason they opposed his nomination came down to ‘class and colour prejudices, which unfortunately reign in this province [of Pernambuco], more than anywhere else’. ‘Because of these prejudices’, he continued, ‘my detractors are unwilling to accept a *pardo* in a post of distinction; all they do is judge *pardos* and blacks who are very capable of dealing with times of crisis or danger.’⁴⁰

Even though Mundrucu did not mention his experiences of racism and segregation in the US in this letter, it is difficult to imagine how they could not have influenced his perspectives on racism and class when he returned to Brazil. In Massachusetts, he had experienced first-hand that race, not class, was the primary determinant of one’s place in US society. It cannot only be a coincidence then that when he called out racism in Recife’s military and political circles in 1837, class interests were less important – he defended both *pardos* and free blacks. *Mundrucu v. Barker* was as much a key moment in the early Northeast anti-segregation campaign as it was transformative for Mundrucu’s activism and his own identity as a black man in the Americas. His resistance to racial prejudice in the US and Brazil was symbiotic and when he returned with his family to Boston in 1841, he continued to fight against slavery, segregation, and for full citizenship rights for African Americans until his death in 1863.⁴¹ His transnational activism reflects the wider connections between black activist communities in the mid-nineteenth century Americas, and the potential that these networks had to motivate, inform and effect change.

‘A widow and native of Hayti’⁴²

In defying segregation and racism in the US, Mundrucu had not only counted on the support of prominent politicians and lawyers but also Boston’s wider black community. This included

other black foreigners such as the Pero family, Saint Dominguan refugees with whom Mundrucu held close personal and professional ties.⁴³ He had been briefly married to the family's oldest daughter, Anne Mary Pero, until her untimely death in a fire in 1830. Despite this tragedy, Mundrucu maintained a close relationship with the Peros who were active in abolitionism, black freemasonry, civil rights and the women's rights causes. In the late 1830s, the Peros' youngest daughter, Martha Anne, played an important part in defending women's roles within abolitionism at a time in which patriarchal and religious norms sought to contain female voices.⁴⁴

The Peros were a family of black abolitionists and activists that brought unique perspectives on race, revolution and women's roles in society from the French Caribbean to Boston. Martha's father, Jean Pierre Pero, mother Anne Marie Pero (*née* Flamant), and maternal grandmother Anne Catherine Flamant were among the estimated 15,000 Saint Dominguan – roughly two-thirds white and one-third non-white – who escaped or were taken as enslaved persons from the French colony to cities along the US East Coast in the early years of Haitian Revolution.⁴⁵ It is unclear where exactly in Saint Domingue the Peros and Flamants came from, but they likely fled the northern coastal city of Cap Français in June 1793 just before it fell to armed rebels. Philadelphia received more Saint Dominguan refugees than any other US city and appears to have been their first port of entry before they later moved to Boston.⁴⁶ Unlike many of the white French refugees in Philadelphia who could rely on existing commercial and family ties to the local French community for support, black Saint Dominguan refugees faced a far more precarious future in the city.⁴⁷

In the eyes of white Philadelphians, black Saint Dominguan refugees were a threat to the city and country's racial order. Many believed they would spread the contagion of slave insurrection to the US. Angry mobs prevented French vessels carrying enslaved persons from docking at the city's ports. Further north, reports of arson and fires in New York and Boston

were also blamed on black Saint Domingians.⁴⁸ Most white Americans did not understand the complex French racial and class categories that divided white colonists, enslaved people, free blacks (*affranchis*), and free people of colour (*gens de couleur libres*), or the different political interests and conflicts between these groups. Saint Domingian *gens de couleur libres* families like the Peros and Flamants, who had enjoyed economic and social privileges in French colonial society, were regarded as simply non-white and often treated worse than African Americans.⁴⁹

In this climate of hostility, the Pero family moved to Boston in early 1797 and sought support in the city's Catholic church circles and in Prince Hall freemasonry. Alongside the Peros and Flamants, there were several other black Saint Domingian families in the city's small Catholic community and most married into each other and opened businesses together. Though initially quite insular, black Saint Domingians quickly established connections to Boston's wider African American community. Soon after arriving, Jean Pierre imbedded himself in the city's black Freemason circles and became a close associate of Prince Hall.⁵⁰ His first-hand accounts of Saint Domingian society and the Haitian Revolution likely shaped black Bostonian opinions on slave insurrection and resistance in the Caribbean. In June 1797, Prince Hall told other black freemasons to draw inspiration from the Haitian Revolution and the genuine liberty that had begun to 'dawn in some of the West-Indian islands', and suggested that it would only be a matter of time before 'God would act for justice in New England too'.⁵¹ Second-generation Pero family members born in Boston built on their father's earlier involvement in black activism. The family's oldest son, John Baptiste, was also a Prince Hall freemason, and like Mundrucu, travelled to independent Haiti in the 1820s and joined the NEASS in the 1830s.⁵² He was also a close associate of David Walker and likely influenced the renowned black Bostonian abolitionist's praise for independent Haiti as 'the glory of the blacks and terror of tyrants'.⁵³ For her part, Martha's activism for women's equality within

abolitionism likely drew on her mother's influence and the distinct gender norms in colonial Saint Domingue.

Without records from Saint Domingue itself, it is almost impossible to know what occupations the Peros and Flamants previously had in French colonial society. However, the status of women in the French colonial economy was very different from the US. In cities such as Cap Français, free women of colour were highly independent and in some cases the most active participants in the economy. For instance, Dominique Rogers shows that free women of colour in Cap Français and Port-au-Prince made up 62 percent of free coloured notarial clients in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Aside from planters, these women held positions in broad economic segments, including the commercial, real estate, and services sectors.⁵⁵ In Cap Français, occupations such as shopkeeper and greengrocer were common among free women of colour as was innkeeper – a similar occupation later held by Anne Marie in Boston.⁵⁶ After Jean Pierre's death in 1807, Anne Marie managed several of the family businesses, including a large building in Boston's North Square which she rented out in the 1820s and 1830s. Described as 'a widow and native of Hayti', Anne Marie was also an independent household head and businesswoman in her own right.⁵⁷ She almost certainly imparted different perspectives on gender and women's societal roles from the French Caribbean to Martha who then brought them to Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFAS) debates on women's roles in abolitionism in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

Founded in 1833, the BFAS quickly grew from a modest charitable organisation into one of the country's largest and most radical women's abolitionist groups. It organised multi-state petition campaigns and women's conventions, sued Southerners for bringing slaves into Boston, and raised thousands of dollars for the abolitionist cause. However, by the late 1830s, its growing power was increasingly viewed as a threat to patriarchal and religious norms. In a staunchly conservative society, women were expected to be subservient homemakers, not

activists or public orators. To many clergymen and male abolitionists, some of whom had wives or sisters in the BFAS, the sight of women like Maria Weston Chapman giving public speeches against slavery was an affront to gender norms. Several radical male abolitionists, including Garrison, had been vociferous in their support for Chapman and women's equality in abolitionism. Wider societal debates about women's roles in activism had divided the BFAS's leadership which had split into two main factions, bringing the society's work to a standstill. The radical faction, led by Chapman and supported by Garrison, had grown increasingly critical of the clergy and attempts to contain women's voices in abolitionism.⁵⁸ Chapman had the support of most of the BFAS's black members, including Martha Pero. However, Chapman's radical feminist agenda had alienated many conservative white BFAS members who wanted to distance themselves from discussions surrounding gender equality in abolitionism. Members of the 'Boston F.A.S. do not think it right for them, as a body, [...] to engage in the discussion of the Women's Rights question', wrote an anonymous member of the conservative BFAS faction.⁵⁹ Seeing no way to overcome the ideological divide, conservative BFAS leaders abruptly voted to dissolve the society in October 1839. Not to be defeated, however, Chapman immediately revived a smaller version of the society, and in subsequent years, counted on the continued support of Martha and other radical feminist abolitionists.

In the absence of any of her letters or correspondence, Martha's involvement in abolitionism and the gender equality fight can only be gleaned from BFAS records, which are themselves limited and problematic. Her name first appears in voting records in 1839 when, in a clear demonstration of support for the radical faction's feminist aims, she voted for Chapman as BFAS president and voted against dissolving the society.⁶⁰ In March 1840, she was one of only three black women to participate in the BFAS's annual fundraising fair and this is the last record of her involvement in the society.⁶¹ Though her mark on the historical record is brief,

archival silences must not be misinterpreted as cursory involvement in activism but rather as a product of what Fuentes calls ‘power in the production of history.’⁶² Power imbalances in historical production were inherently unfavourable to Martha from the very beginning. Not only was she a woman, but she was also black and from an immigrant family. According to Debra Gold Hansen, ‘black opinions and preferences were generally unsolicited’ in BFAS debates and this might explain why the voices of Martha and other black women are largely absent in meeting notes and in letters written by the society’s white leaders.⁶³ Throughout the 1840s, black women’s voices in the wider abolitionist and women’s rights movements were further marginalised, as evidenced by the entire absence of black women at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention. However, it is hard to believe that black women in the BFAS and other women’s abolitionist societies, many of whom came from strong activist families, remained silent in society meetings, fundraisers, and other public events. Historians must read against the grain of archival accounts to fill out the silences and hear black women’s voices.

Much progress has been made by Hansen, Shirley Yee, Jean Fagan Yellin, and other historians in unsilencing African American women’s voices in both abolitionism and the suffragist movement, and in highlighting the different perspectives on racism and gender norms that they brought to these campaigns.⁶⁴ However, in addressing power imbalances in the archive and reinserting African American women into histories of female abolitionist societies, these historians have paradoxically ended up silencing other voices in what Michel-Rolph Trouillot termed ‘the interstices of the conflicts between previous interpreters’.⁶⁵ For one, the unique perspectives that Martha brought from the French Caribbean to the BFAS remain unrecognised between histories that either prioritise white women abolitionists or their African American counterparts. Her nuanced perspectives warrant further consideration. Martha participated in debates and cast key votes and was likely more involved in the BFAS, and for a longer period, than voting records and society minutes suggest. Though silenced, she was not

in fact silent. Her words may not have survived in the historical record but we know that she held strong convictions about women's roles in abolitionism: her votes and continued support for Chapman after 1839 attest to this. By giving volume to Martha's story and her family's transnational activism, this section has attempted to recover her voice and give value to the black Caribbean perspectives the Peros brought to Boston's anti-slavery campaigns.

'I shall speak of the entire absence of prejudice here'⁶⁶

In the 1830s, Emiliano Mundrucu's Brazil and the Pero family's Haiti gave Boston's anti-slavery, civil rights and women's rights activists insights and warnings on revolution, emancipation, race relations, and gender roles from elsewhere in the Americas. To the city's abolitionists, Brazil and Haiti provided clear evidence of all that was wrong or could go wrong in the early US republic. Brazilian society served as a counterpoint to segregation and racial discrimination in the US Northeast, while Haiti provided different perspectives on women's roles in society and warned of violent insurrection if slavery was not abolished. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, the focus turned to the emancipation "experiment" in the British Caribbean. To back demands for immediate abolition in the US South, Northeast abolitionists looked for indisputable evidence from the British Caribbean that emancipation could be implemented peacefully and without precipitating economic ruin. Working as Jamaica-based correspondents for New York newspapers between 1840-1851, the black US-Jamaican brothers Henry and George Davison provided the unparalleled inter-American perspectives abolitionists needed. Henry wrote letters for the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the official newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), for over a decade, while George briefly corresponded for the black-owned *The Colored American* until it ceased publication in December 1841.

The Davisons are hardly new to histories of black abolitionism and resistance. George's arrest and trial in Cuba in 1837-1838 for possession and alleged distribution of abolitionist pamphlets and newspapers has been dealt with by numerous historians. Jane Landers, for example, uses George's case to illustrate growing repression of Cuba's increasingly cosmopolitan free black class.⁶⁷ Others have given cursory attention to George and Henry's transnational abolitionist connections amid the circulation of anti-slavery ideas in Cuba.⁶⁸ However, the full dimensions of the Davisons' inter-American abolitionism, and particularly their early activism in New York and correspondence from Jamaica, have yet to be explored. Historians have also overlooked or misinterpreted biographical details on the Davisons' background which are key to understanding their correspondence.

Among the few black correspondents reporting back from the British Caribbean in the 1840s, the Davisons' perspectives on post-emancipation society were particularly unique because of their own transnational background and transition from slavery to freedom.⁶⁹ Born to a white British enslaver-father and an enslaved Jamaican mulatto mother, the brothers had been enslaved in their youth before finding freedom as young black men in New York. Though sources on their early lives are limited, we know that George grew up enslaved on a Jamaican sugar plantation until he was taken along with his mother to Savannah, Georgia in 1819 at the age of nine.⁷⁰ Henry was born shortly after the family arrived in Savannah and grew up in urban slavery.⁷¹ They later escaped or were freed and moved to New York where George gained a reputation as a daring abolitionist instigator while Henry became a young and outspoken black community leader. As correspondents, the Davison brothers thus had an intimate understanding of slavery in the US South and in Jamaica and could also speak to the differences between free black society in New York and Kingston.

Their correspondence from Jamaica was also shaped by their activism in New York's black community. By the time Cuban authorities arrested George at the Matanzas docks in July

1837, the Davisons were already household names in New York's anti-slavery circles. Prior to moving to Cuba, George had been closely associated with several black New York abolitionists, including Theodore S. Wright.⁷² Barely 18 years old at the time, Henry was already a prominent and outspoken black activist in the city. A few months after his brother was released from a Havana jail in May 1838, Henry founded an all-black abolitionist society in New York and started to openly criticise many of the city's white abolitionists for being soft on slavery and racism.⁷³ Along with black colleagues such as David Ruggles, Henry had become alienated from the city's abolitionist leadership base. One of the most divisive issues was tacit support among some white abolitionists for the American Colonization Society (ACS). In an October 1838 op-ed, Henry attacked prominent white New York Presbyterian ministers, abolitionists and newspaper owners for their support of the ACS's 'satanical policy' and for upholding segregation in churches.⁷⁴ The Davisons' stern opposition to the ACS and other colonisation schemes continued from Jamaica where they consistently advised African American readers not to emigrate to the island.

Drawing on their experiences of enslavement and freedom in the US and their activism in New York, the Davisons provided readers with unparalleled transnational black insights on freedom, race relations, politics, economic opportunities, and colonisation schemes from post-emancipation Jamaica. Their correspondence was consistently didactical, generating unique black inter-American dialogues between black communities in Jamaica and the US. To African American readers of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* and *The Colored American*, their correspondence spoke of a post-slavery future full of opportunities and challenges for black people. For their black associates in Kingston, their stories of racial discrimination in New York and slavery in the US South were likely frequent reminders of the rights they had won and were fighting to keep. The Davisons were also agents in a wider information war waged by radical abolitionists. Pro-slavery apologists were bent on proving that emancipation had

been economically ruinous and that black people were inherently lazy and incapable of participating in the body politic. The Davisons' job was to counter this narrative and show that Jamaica could provide a blueprint for post-emancipation racial harmony and economic opportunity. For the most part they toed the line. However, in the early 1850s, Henry once again broken ranks with white abolitionists to provide frank assessments of post-emancipation Jamaica that prioritised black interests over political doctrine.

The Davisons' earliest correspondence focused on race relations in Jamaica and conveyed a sense of hope to African American communities from a post-slavery and unsegregated future. Having previously only lived as free black men in segregated US cities, it also reflected their own shock and surprise upon encountering Jamaica's largely class-based divisions. Celebrating 'the entire absence of prejudice here', Henry noted, 'To a colored person like myself, born in America (Georgia), these things must appear strange.'⁷⁵ Expressing relief to be 'in a free country, where there is no distinction on account of color', George noted, 'thank God I am not now liable to the same prejudiced and unchristian treatment as my brethren in the United States are liable to.'⁷⁶ Relocating to Jamaica was also a deeply personal experience for the Davisons who started to assert their transnational identity as both African Americans and black Jamaicans very early on. This identity allowed them to act as interlocutors between African American and black Jamaican communities.

In his first letter, George established a clear personal connection and professional commitment to both his Jamaican 'countrymen' and to African American community activism in New York, 'a deep interest in the cause in which you are engaged – a struggle for the natural and inalienable rights of American citizens.'⁷⁷ For his part, Henry remained committed to New York's African American community but also repeatedly expressed solidarity with his Jamaican 'countrymen' who were working hard to 'astonish the enemies of emancipation throughout the world'.⁷⁸ As interlocutors between African American and black Jamaican

communities, the Davison brothers attempted to explain and contextualise racism and segregation in the US. ‘Everybody wonders at the existence of such prejudice in the United States’, George wrote, adding, ‘I have been asked what is the cause of it. I really cannot account for it. It is not because Americans are more cruel than other nations, it is because they are ignorant of the character of the colored people’.⁷⁹ Henry had similar dialogues. ‘The principal topic of conversation was generally American slavery and prejudice’, he wrote in one of his earliest correspondences, adding, ‘The Americans were spoken of as the greatest hypocrites under the sun; professing to be the freest people on earth, and holding nearly three millions [sic] of people in the most abject slavery.’⁸⁰

Aside from their inter-American insights on racial prejudice, George and Henry’s correspondence also conveyed lessons, opportunities and warnings about black economic and political life in early post-emancipation society. They travelled across the island, speaking to formerly-enslaved workers, white planters, and black political figures, and relayed their opinions to US readers. Based on these conversations, they countered claims in the pro-slavery press that “lazy” and uncooperative formerly-enslaved workers were behind Jamaica’s declining economic productivity, and instead blamed recalcitrant white planters for offering paltry wages and failing to invest in new agricultural technology.⁸¹ Warning against any emigration scheme to the island, George argued that ‘common laborers cannot live here, wages [are] only 50 cents per day’, and defended formerly-enslaved workers’ rights to spurn plantation work to ‘do better at something else’ like subsistence farming.⁸² Though economic opportunities were hard to come by, the Davison brothers conveyed a sense of hope to African American communities about political representation and participation in post-slavery society. In January 1841, George wrote: ‘I will not attempt to tell you of all the colored men holding office, that would be impossible; they share in the offices equally with the whites.’⁸³ Readers of Henry’s early letters must have been equally surprised to read that, ‘In all the parishes, the

colored and black men have some office, and very often the highest in the gift of the people.’⁸⁴ Within a decade, however, multi-racial political participation in post-emancipation Jamaica, and the example it set for US society, was under threat. Henry’s later correspondence provided readers with an honest appraisal of the situation.

Tensions between Jamaica’s white planter class, a politically aspirational free coloured class, and the free black masses worsened throughout the 1840s. The island’s planter class used multiple strategies to reassert its control over black labour and contain black political participation. It introduced oppressive labour and vagrancy laws aimed at restricting the spatial mobility of recently emancipated workers and stricter property qualifications for voting and holding office to reduce black political representation.⁸⁵ In his last two letters, sent in March and April 1851, Henry conveyed the sense of despair among black Jamaicans and lamented that ‘The Aristocratic powers (late Slaveocracy) are again rampant in the Island, threatening to strangle the new-born liberties of the late emancipated people’.⁸⁶ According to Henry, Jamaica was no longer an example to be followed. ‘I now deem it a proper time to speak out’, he wrote, warning African Americans not to ‘run away with the idea, that in coming here their situations will be bettered’.⁸⁷ Though Jamaica was ‘different in every respect from America as right is from wrong’, he wrote, ‘the worst in every respect exists here.’⁸⁸ He spoke from experience, having ended up ‘in the very depths of poverty’ and dependent on donations to help him and his family return to the US.⁸⁹ Henry wanted African Americans to not make the same mistake but senior white abolitionists tried to silence his opinions.

Henry’s opinions put him at odds with the AASS which, following the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, had started to support emigration schemes to the island. Only a decade earlier, the organisation had condemned Jamaica emigration plans as outgrowths of the ACS, warning that they were underpinned by the same racist assumptions about where African Americans ultimately belonged. Now, however, with the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act once again revealing

lawmakers' commitment to perpetuating slavery and racism, the AASS reversed its stance: emigration to Jamaica was the best opportunity African Americans would have to fulfil their manifest destiny of freedom and social, religious, and economic advancement.⁹⁰ Henry did not agree and remained steadfast in his opposition to emigration as he continued to prioritise black interests. This posed a problem for the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* editors who, fearing that Henry's letters were undermining Jamaica emigration plans, dismissed his warnings: 'Our confidence, however, notwithstanding, the gloomy picture drawn by our correspondent, remains undiminished, that the British West Indies is the best home for the colored man who chooses to leave this country'.⁹¹ In the end, very few African Americans were persuaded to move to Jamaica. Despite attempts to silence their opinions, the Davisons' correspondence and Henry's personal story of economic failure had helped steer black opinion against emigration.

Conclusion

Escaping slavery, political persecution or revolutionary violence, black activists from South America and the Caribbean gravitated towards the Northeast US abolitionist and civil rights movements in the mid-nineteenth century. They brought unique black inter-American perspectives to campaigns against slavery, segregation, racism, and gender discrimination in Boston, New York, and elsewhere. In some cases, they took the lead in challenging racial injustice. They also generated inter-American dialogues between black communities across the hemisphere, using their experiences of enslavement, racial injustice and/or freedom to offer insights, lessons, and warnings. Their contributions to fighting slavery and racial discrimination challenge us to reassess existing histories of transnational abolitionism and black activism. It is no easy task, owing to the paucity of sources, existing North Atlantic biases, historical gaps and silences, and the methodological challenges of piecing together multi-lingual narratives across different geographies. It also involves unearthing and giving

volume to silenced histories while trying to understand how, why, and when this silencing occurred in the first place.

White contemporaries had tried to silence the Davisons' warnings against black emigration to Jamaica, while Martha Pero's voice was silenced at multiple stages in the historical production process. On the other hand, Emiliano Mundrucu's contributions to US anti-segregation and abolitionist campaigns were only silenced much later by twentieth-century revisionists, for whom transnational black abolitionism and civil rights were synonymous with African American communities and leaders. Mundrucu's contemporaries and even subsequent generations of activists had recognised and celebrated his contributions to abolitionism and civil rights. In 1885, 22 years after his death, an Ohio newspaper remembered 'the once celebrated Gen. Emiliano F.B. Mundrucu, the Brazilian refuge[e], governor, and slave emancipator'.⁹² Later, to mark the 100-year anniversary of *Mundrucu v. Barker* in 1933, a Nantucket newspaper recalled 'the many well-known men waiting for a precedent to be struck' against segregation, and, at the centre of it all, 'Mundrucu, a mulatto, aware of the prejudice against his color, and knowing the importance of the question at stake.'⁹³

Mundrucu and other foreign black activists like the Pero family and the Davison brothers were well known to US abolitionist societies and civil rights campaigners who leveraged their transnational knowledge and experience. They were also not the only black activists from the Caribbean or South America in these activist communities. Others like Antero Barboza, a black Brazilian man who fought for black rights in New York and Liberia, remain largely unrecognised and merit further consideration. Historians need to re-examine the fundamental contributions that these men and women made to nation-building in the early US republic and to Atlantic-wide campaigns against slavery and racial discrimination. Their stories of resistance, collaboration and solidarity with African American activists and communities also

need to be urgently inserted into current US political debates as counters to nativist, nationalist, and anti-immigrant discourses.

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Notes

¹ ‘Items’, *Philadelphia Album and Ladies’ Literary Portfolio*, Feb 14, 1834; Edward S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, Vol. 1 (London, 1835), 139.

² Republished in ‘Law Matters’, *Niles Weekly Register*, Nov 30, 1833, 219.

³ Editorial, *New Bedford Mercury* (Massachusetts), Oct 25, 1833; ‘Slavery in America’, *Leeds Times*, Nov 14, 1835.

⁴ David Lee Child, *The Despotism of Freedom: A Speech at the First Anniversary of the New England Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Boston Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Association, 1833), 8.

⁵ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence*, 133, 138.

⁶ See for example, David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet (eds.), *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Imaobong Denis Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

⁷ Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, *Racial Migrations: New York City and the Revolutionary Politics of the Spanish Caribbean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

⁸ Isadora Moura Mota, ‘Other Geographies of Struggle: Afro-Brazilians and the American Civil War’, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100 (2020): 40.

⁹ See, among many others, Richard J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Fionnghuala Sweeney, *Frederick Douglass and the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence*, 133, 138.

¹¹ August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Along the Color Line: Explorations in the Black Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976).

¹² In Brazil, the term “pardo” was used interchangeably with “moreno” (“brown”) to describe someone of multiracial origins (African, white and/or indigenous) who usually had a lighter skin complexion than a “negro” or “preto” (“black”).

¹³ Lloyd Belton, ‘Emiliano F.B. Mundrucu: Inter-American revolutionary and abolitionist (1791-1863)’, *Atlantic Studies* 15 (2018): 62-82.

¹⁴ Various prominent *pardo* figures in Brazil defended themselves against racially-motivated accusations aimed at blocking their upward social mobility. See, for example, Joaquim Cândido Soares de Meirelles, *Explicação da Intriga Feita Pelo Cirurgião Formado José da Silva ao Doutor Joaquim Cândido Soares de Meirelles* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de Gueffier, 1831).

¹⁵ Child, *Despotism of Freedom*, 8; Lydia M.F. Child, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (Boston: Allen & Ticknor, 1833), 220; Abdy, *Journal of a Residence*, 138-9.

¹⁶ *The Abolitionist or Record of the New England Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1833), 15.

- ¹⁷ At the time, steamboats usually had two aft cabins: one for “ladies”, the other for “gentlemen”.
- ¹⁸ Supreme Judicial Court (SJC), ‘Webster cross-examination’, Court Dockets, Mundrucu v. Barker, Massachusetts State Archives (MSA).
- ¹⁹ Idem, ‘Deposition of Ariel Coffin’.
- ²⁰ Idem, ‘Deposition of William Grant’.
- ²¹ Idem, ‘Deposition of Jared Coffin’.
- ²² Idem, Miscellaneous documents.
- ²³ Idem, ‘Deposition of William Comtach’.
- ²⁴ Idem, ‘Deposition of Ariel Coffin’.
- ²⁵ Editorial, *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington D.C.), Oct 22, 1833.
- ²⁶ ‘The Colored Race’, *The Boston Globe*, Oct 2, 1883, 5.
- ²⁷ SJC, ‘Deposition of Archibald L. Clark’, Court Dockets, Mundrucu v. Barker, MSA.
- ²⁸ Idem, ‘Deposition of Jared Coffin’.
- ²⁹ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence*, 139.
- ³⁰ SJC, ‘Deposition of Thomas Lewis’, Court Dockets, Mundrucu v. Barker, MSA.
- ³¹ Idem, ‘Deposition of Jared Coffin’.
- ³² ‘Law case’, *Nantucket Inquirer*, Oct 19, 1833.
- ³³ Republished in ‘Items’, *Philadelphia Album and Ladies Literary Portfolio*, Feb 15, 1834.
- ³⁴ Republished in ‘Important decision’, *Baltimore Patriot*, Feb 4, 1834.
- ³⁵ U.S. District Court of Massachusetts, ‘Bankruptcy Case of E.F.B. Mundrucu’, Bankruptcy Act of 1841 Case Files, Record Group 21, Annex A & B, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- ³⁶ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence*, 133, 138.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 139-140.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.
- ³⁹ ‘Anti-Slavery Convention’, *Essex Gazette* (Haverhill, MA), June 21, 1834.
- ⁴⁰ ‘Publicação do Major Filipe Benício Mundurucu sobre sua vida militar e os episódios de 1824’, *Diário de Pernambuco* (Recife), Feb 20, 1837.
- ⁴¹ See Belton, ‘Emiliano F.B. Mundrucu’.
- ⁴² ‘Distressing Event’, *Commercial Advertiser* (New York), March 10, 1830.
- ⁴³ “Pero” also appears in other archival documents as “Perault” and “Perot”.
- ⁴⁴ There is some uncertainty as to how exactly Martha fits into the Pero family. Grover and Da Silva have suggested that she may have been John Baptiste’s wife. See Kathryn Grover and Janine V. da Silva, *Historic Resource Study: Boston African American National Historic Site* (Washington D.C: National Park Service, 2002). There is no definitive evidence to prove or disprove this. A Boston directory which lists “Pero, Martha A. widow of John B” would appear to support their hypothesis. See *The Boston Directory, 1848-49* (Boston: James French, 1849), p. 38. However, there is no marriage record for Martha and John Baptiste. In fact, an 1848 marriage record for “John B. Pero, hairdresser” – almost certainly John Baptiste’s son – lists “Margaret” and not “Martha” as his mother. See ‘John B. Pero and Julia Depaux Marriage, 28 Dec 1848’, Massachusetts Town and Vital Records 1620-1988, Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts <www.ancestry.com>. As the aforementioned record shows, there were multiple “Pero” families from Saint Domingue living in Boston at the time, and many were likely relatives of Jean Pierre. See also Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1900, Holy Cross (Boston) Baptisms, vol. 2 (1810-1823), p. 53. This makes the task of identifying Martha’s background even more difficult. My hypothesis that Martha was the youngest daughter of Jean Pierre and Anne Marie is based on circumstantial evidence. This includes a baptism

record for her sister Anne Mary's child that lists Martha as a witness. See Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1900, Holy Cross (Boston) Baptisms, vol. 4 (1831-1838), p. 58. Further, an unmarried "Martha Anne Perot" is also listed in early Boston Catholic Church records. See Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1900, Holy Cross (Boston), Various, vol. 2 (1810-1823), p. 352. Even if Grover and Da Silva are correct, Martha still probably came from one of Boston's other black Saint Dominguan exile families given the tightknit nature of this community.

⁴⁵ See Gerald Horne, *Confronting Black Jacobins: The United States, the Haitian Revolution, and the Origins of the Dominican Republic* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2015).

⁴⁶ There is limited documentation on the Saint Dominguan refugees of colour who arrived in Philadelphia in the early 1790s. A "John Perot", who may have been Jean Pierre Pero, is listed in a January 1794 petition to raise money for schools for Cap Français refugee children. See 'To the public', *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan 1, 1794.

⁴⁷ Gary B. Nash, 'Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Dominguan in Philadelphia', *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 65 (1998): 44-73.

⁴⁸ John Lathrop, 'God our protector and refuge in danger and trouble. A discourse, delivered at the public lecture in Boston, on Thursday, March 16, 1797', <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;view=toc;idno=N24445.0001.001>>

⁴⁹ Although no French colonial records on the Pero or Flamant families have been identified, Jean Pierre was referred to as a 'yellow man' in the 1800 Boston census. His relative wealth also suggests that he was likely from the *gens de couleur libres* class. See 'Taking Records, 1800', Boston, MA, Ward 3, p. 8, Boston Public Library (BPL); 'John Pero', Court Probate Records, vol. 105, Record no. 22946 (1813), MSA.

⁵⁰ Prince Hall was listed as one of the executors of Jean Pierre Pero's estate.

⁵¹ 'A charge delivered to the African Lodge, June 24, 1797, at Menotomy, by the Right Worshipful Prince Hall', in *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, ed. Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 214.

⁵² *The Abolitionist: Or Record of the New England Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Garrison & Knapp, 1833), 192; 'Schooner Ann Eliza Jane', Sep 24, 1823, Registers of Vessels Arriving at the Port of New York from Foreign Ports, 1789-1919. Microfilm Publication M237, rolls 1-95, NARA.

⁵³ Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); David Walker, 'Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World', Sep 28, 1829 <<https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/summary.html>>

⁵⁴ Dominique Rogers, 'Les libres de couleur dans les capitales de Saint Domingue: Fortune, mentalités et integration à la fin de l'Ancien Régime (1776-1789)' (Phd diss., Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux III, 1999).

⁵⁵ Dominique Rogers and Stewart King, 'Housekeepers, Merchants, Rentières: Free Women of Color in the Port Cities of Colonial Saint Domingue, 1750-1790', in *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*, ed. Douglass Catteraal and Jodi Campbell (Boston: Brill, 2012), 357-398.

⁵⁶ Susan M. Socolow, 'Economic Roles of the Free Women of Color of Cap Français', in *More than Chattel: Black women and slavery in the Americas*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 279-297.

- ⁵⁷ ‘Distressing Event’, *Commercial Advertiser*, March 10, 1830. Although this newspaper article indicates that Anne Marie was from Haiti, a naturalization record from 1831 lists her birthplace as “Fort Royal, Island of Martinique”. She may have been born there before her family later moved to Saint Domingue. See ‘Naturalization Petition, Anne Mary Revenison, 3 June 1831’, Massachusetts, U.S. State and Federal Naturalization Records <www.ancestry.com>
- ⁵⁸ Debra Gold Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 24.
- ⁵⁹ ‘Proceedings of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, at its annual meeting’, *The Liberator* (Boston), Nov 15, 1839.
- ⁶⁰ ‘Memorandum’, MS A.9.2, vol. 16, no. 52, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society Collection, BPL.
- ⁶¹ ‘To the Friends of the Anti-Slavery Cause in Massachusetts’, *The Liberator*, March 27, 1840.
- ⁶² Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 5.
- ⁶³ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*, 10.
- ⁶⁴ Hansen, *Strained Sisterhood*; Shirley J. Yee, ‘Organising for Racial Justice: Black Women and the Dynamics of Race and Sex in Female Antislavery Societies, 1832-1860’, in *Black Women in America*, ed. Kim Marie Vaz (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1995), 38-53; Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne (eds.), *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).
- ⁶⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 28.
- ⁶⁶ ‘Letter from Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (New York), April 29, 1841.
- ⁶⁷ Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*.
- ⁶⁸ Eric A. Paul, ‘The circulation of transatlantic ideas and people in Cuban slave society, 1791-1844’ (PhD diss., University of California Davis, 2009).
- ⁶⁹ For some of the most recent research on US abolitionists and missionaries in post-emancipation Jamaica, see Gale L. Kenny, *Contentious Liberties: American Abolitionists in Post-Emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1866* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010).
- ⁷⁰ The postscript in a newspaper article states that ‘Mr. Davison was previously held as a slave in Georgia’. See ‘A Caution to Travellers in general’, *The Emancipator* (New York), Nov 16, 1837. His former enslaved status is also supported by colonial Jamaican records. See Office of Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission, St. Mary, Jamaica (1817), Tryall Estate, National Archives.
- ⁷¹ ‘Shiner gone home’, *Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa, CA), Feb 18, 1899.
- ⁷² George Davison confessed to knowing Wright. See Comisión Militar, legajo 17, número 1, folio 21, Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba.
- ⁷³ Editorial, *The Liberator*, June 29, 1838.
- ⁷⁴ ‘Ecclesiastical Juggling’, *The Liberator*, Oct 5, 1838.
- ⁷⁵ ‘Letter from Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 29, 1841.
- ⁷⁶ ‘Jamaica, West Indies’, *The Colored American*, March 6, 1841.
- ⁷⁷ ‘For the Colored American’, *The Colored American*, Oct 24, 1840.
- ⁷⁸ ‘Letters from Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Dec 21, 1843.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ ‘Letter from Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 29, 1841.

- ⁸¹ ‘West Indies’, *The Colored American*, April 24, 1841; ‘Working of Emancipation’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Sep 14, 1843.
- ⁸² ‘Jamaica, West Indies’, *The Colored American*, March 6, 1841; ‘West Indies’, *The Colored American*, April 24, 1841.
- ⁸³ ‘Jamaica, West Indies’, *The Colored American*, March 6, 1841.
- ⁸⁴ ‘Letter from Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 29, 1841.
- ⁸⁵ Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
- ⁸⁶ ‘Letter from Henry W. Davison’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, May 1, 1851.
- ⁸⁷ ‘Kingston, Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 24, 1851.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁰ Gale L. Kenny, ‘Manliness and Manifest Racial Destiny: Jamaica and African American Emigration in the 1850s’, *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (2012): 151-178.
- ⁹¹ ‘Kingston, Jamaica’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 24, 1851.
- ⁹² ‘Mrs. Harriet C. G. Mundrucu’, *Lima Daily Democratic Times* (Ohio), Feb 10, 1885.
- ⁹³ ‘Steamboat Company in Lawsuit – An Interesting Case’, *The Inquirer and Mirror* (Nantucket, MA), Oct 21, 1933.