

## Abolition Overview

**Abolition-** a movement calling for the prohibition of slavery. Abolitionism started with The Enlightenment and became a large movement in several nations of the 19th century, such as the US North before the Civil War in the 1860s. The movement continues to this day in various parts of the world.

### **Abolitionism vs. Antislavery**

Antislavery was a belief system based on the understanding that slavery was wrong. To be an abolitionist meant that you held antislavery views AND worked to end slavery. The early antislavery movement in the U.S. included early abolition societies, prominent from the 1780s to about 1812, which were present in almost every state.

### **Abolitionist**

The word "Abolitionist" had different meanings at different times in American history. Early state societies were formed to abolish slavery through legislative actions and personal manumission. The raised voices and actions of free and enslaved African Americans and white abolitionist allies and politicians continued to make slavery a national issue. William Lloyd Garrison began publishing the anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator* in 1831, which rose to national prominence as the leading antislavery publication in the United States. Beginning in the 1830s, large-scale emancipation became the goal of abolitionism.

Some abolitionists, or even marginal abolitionists such as President Abraham Lincoln, favored "colonization," the return of African-Americans to Africa or some other region outside the United States. Some African Americans supported emigration because they believed they would never receive justice in the United States. Others believed African Americans should remain in the United States to fight against slavery and for full legal rights as American citizens. Some whites saw colonization as a way of ridding the nation of imported Africans while others believed African American colonists could play a central role in Christianizing and "civilizing" Africa.

Anti-slavery did not necessarily translate to pro-African American or even pro-equality sentiment. White abolitionists had often come to abolitionism through benevolence and saw slavery as part of a larger human reform movement. African Americans, meanwhile, saw the fight for the end of slavery as the first priority. Increasingly, free African Americans had their own meetings and supported newspapers published by African Americans, such as *The North Star*, published by Frederick Douglass and the *Colored American* by Samuel Cornish.