



Yale, Slavery and Abolition

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Preface – by Alfred L. Marder

In 1988, when several of us gathered to plan for the 150th Anniversary of the *Amistad* Revolt, we discussed the significance of the lessons of that historic event and the campaign that followed to free the *Amistad* captives. From the first days slavery appeared in our country, history records many attempts at freedom by slaves. Slavery was never passively accepted. The *Amistad* Revolt stood out because white Abolitionists realized it was their moral and historic responsibility to engage, jointly, in the struggle. We acknowledged we could build upon that history to combat racism today, in all its forms and manifestations. The mission of the Amistad Committee was established. We have attempted to walk that path faithfully.

Since those days, the conversation has broadened. The struggles against racism have become sharper. While some progress has been made, benefiting some, the economic gap between Blacks and Whites has grown. Even a basic democratic right as equal justice has become a battle cry at the hands of police and in the courts.

There is a growing militant movement against all vestiges of slavery. In the South, it is the Confederate flag, a symbol of slaveholders. The demand for collective reparations, for truth and reconciliation, is on the national agenda. Our position is clear; our country can never redeem itself without facing slavery, acknowledging the historic guilt. As a nation we must rise to the occasion to make amends to a people upon whose backs the country was fashioned. Then, and only then, can we truly move forward to eradicate the legacy of racism.

In light of this, we welcome the opportunity to publish this essay, “Yale, Slavery and Abolition”. The campaign to free the *Amistad* captives unfolded in New Haven. The original Amistad Committee that led that campaign in 1839, with support from Yale faculty and students, was from New Haven. The present Amistad Committee conducts its business in New Haven. Just as we support efforts to remove Confederate flags in the South and combat racial injustice wherever it exists, it is incumbent upon us to focus upon our own community. We would be remiss in carrying out our mission if we did less.

This essay is a scholarly work raising the fundamental question: How can buildings at Yale University, sitting in the heart of New Haven, carry the names of not only slaveholders but ardent advocates for slavery? Moreover, how could Yale choose these names, not during the time of slavery, but in the 1930s and 1960s, periods of great struggles in our land? Such an examination is essential if institutions, as well as (the) government, are to face up to their responsibilities. The essay is a contribution to the national debate, long overdue.

Dr. Ira Berlin, noted historian, wrote: “... Americans are again struggling with slavery, and in so doing, hope to vanquish slavery’s legacy: the burden of racism ... In turning to the past to understand the present, it has become evident that Americans will not be, in Lincoln’s words, forever free until they have mastered slavery as slavery once mastered them.”

Alfred L. Marder

President, The Amistad Committee, Inc.

August 1, 2001

Foreword – by Gerald Horne

The publication of this timely essay, “Yale, Slavery and Abolition,” should remind us that the past has not passed. The brutal enslavement of Africans may no longer take place upon these shores but the theory and philosophy of racism that undergirded this inhuman process of human bondage continues to persist. This sad legacy is manifested in disproportionate rates of incarceration, unemployment, life expectancy, infant mortality—and more—endured by those of African descent, not to mention others who have suffered the cruel indignity of white supremacy.

Indeed, a central task for scholars and people of good will in the 21st century will be to ascertain the present-day impact of the bloody history of this nation and, then, to make due, to repair, to make reparations. To be sure, Yale University is not alone in this category of being intertwined with one of the major crimes of the previous millennium—African slavery.

On the campus where I presently teach—the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill—there is a large and imposing statue honoring Confederate soldiers who fought to maintain this bestial institution. Such monuments are quite commonplace in the South and serve as a continuing insult to those from Yale, New Haven, and Connecticut, who died to preserve the Union.

On the other hand, as one of the leading institutions of higher education in the world, it is incumbent upon Yale to be a vanguard force, to serve as an example for other institutions struggling to come to grips with an unfortunate past. No doubt this essay will serve as a catalyst in assisting Yale in this process.

In seeking to repair the tragic legacy of slavery that this essay so brilliantly reveals, Yale should consider convening a conference of its peer institutions with the aim of ascertaining—*inter alia*—what corporations benefited from slavery and if holdings in these corporations are included in the university’s endowment. Minimally, Yale should use its shareholders’ rights to pressure these entities to make a good faith effort to compensate those whose lives were disfigured by the unjust enrichment that slavery represented.

This is one small step but, as this essay suggests, much more will have to be done if this nation ever is to embody the words of the old civil rights movement anthem and “overcome some day...”

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August, 2001

Acknowledgements – by the authors

The research and writing of this essay has from the start been a collective project.

Put three academics, trained in three different fields, together on a single project, and you will get five different approaches. We have nonetheless managed to work together, pooling our experience and our vision, driven by our shared commitment to making sure the truth sees the light of day. We may not all agree upon the phrasing of each sentence (academics never do), but we do all stand behind the results of this research.

Thanks go especially to the Federation of Hospital and University Employees. Our gratitude extends in particular to HERE Local 34 and GESO (the Graduate Employees and Students Organization), for encouraging people active in the unions to spend valuable time researching this topic. David Sanders, a Ph.D. candidate in Yale's history department and a GESO leader, helped usher this essay through to completion with invaluable comments and guidance.

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Thanks to Virginia Blaisdell for designing the website, www.yaleslavery.org; its accessibility promises to translate our findings into the realm of public history. A full copy of the essay can be found at this site, together with updates, corrections, and additions: Some material will appear on the website that does not appear in this essay.

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Introduction

A Yale tercentennial brochure, published in 2001, summarizes Yale's relation to slavery:

From James Hillhouse 1773, the leader of the anti-slavery movement in the First Federal Congress, to Josiah Willard Gibbs 1809, who befriended the captives of the *Amistad*, to John W. Blassingame '70 PhD, who edited Frederick Douglass's speeches, Yale graduates and faculty have had a long history of activism in the face of slavery and a modern history of scholarship about it. Today the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, located at Yale, is the first of its kind in the world.

Three figures—Hillhouse, Gibbs, and Blassingame—stand for Yale's "long history of activism in the face of slavery." It is true that these three Yale leaders stand in a tradition of strong opposition to slavery. But a story that begins and ends with them does not tell the full story of Yale's relationship to slavery.

This essay attempts to complete the picture: In the 1930s and 1960s, Yale chose to name most of its colleges after slave owners and pro-slavery leaders. In 1831, Yale leaders helped stop an effort to expand higher education for African-Americans in New Haven.

In opening the series of Tercentennial lectures, "Democratic Vistas," Anthony Kronman, Dean of Yale's Law School, tied together the histories of democracy and of Yale:

Yale has been shaped by, and has helped to shape, the democratic institutions of American life ... Yale is a distinctively American university whose past cannot be understood, or future surmised, apart from the unfolding drama of American democracy itself.

During the first half of Yale's history, from 1701 until the Civil War, the most significant obstacle to democracy was the institution of slavery. Today, it is hard to overestimate the role that Yale plays in establishing public awareness of, and response to, history. After 300 years, Yale has become one of the preeminent arbiters of truth—indeed, of *lux et veritas*—in our world today.

Yale's tercentennial literature urges the university community to avoid the "self-congratulatory" spirit that pervaded its bicentennial celebrations in 1901. Yale's 300th anniversary "should be used for serious scholarly reflection about the institution's progress in the past century" and "should include an element of self-assessment and not be simply self-congratulatory."¹

As members of the Yale community, we have researched and written this essay in that spirit. An opportunity now stands before all of us: Together, we can play an important role in the emerging national conversation about the continuing legacy of slavery inherited from a history that includes today's most prestigious institutions.

In the pages that follow, we examine in roughly chronological order the lives and deeds of ten men whose names are honored by one of Yale's colleges. Their abolitionist contemporaries appear along the way, to show the realistic alternatives.

Slavery and Colonial Yale

Slavery underpinned many facets of colonial New England, from the household to the field, from the legal system to religious education. Many were the slaves working in colonial houses as domestic servants, cooking, raising colonists' children, raising livestock, sowing and harvesting. Although large cotton slave plantations would not dominate the South until Eli Whitney (Yale 1792) invented the cotton gin at the turn of the century, the institution of slavery permeated New England as well as the South during colonial times.

Colonial Clergy

Yale was founded by colonial clergy.

Besides John Davenport, many of the ministers of the New Haven jurisdiction during this and the succeeding century were slave owners, as were deacons in their churches and other leading citizens.²

"One servant boy, £10" is included in the inventory in the will of John Davenport, New Haven's founder.³ Timothy Woodbridge, a founder of Yale College, owned "an Indian boy and some negro slaves."⁴ It is uncertain whether Abraham Pierson, Yale's rector from 1701-1707 and the minister of the Killingworth church, was also a slave owner.

The century's most famous American preacher and theologian, Jonathan Edwards the Divine, himself "owned several slaves: Joseph and Lee, a woman named Venus, purchased in 1731, and, listed in the inventory of his estate in 1758, a 'negro boy' named Titus."⁵

In a letter, Edwards wrote in his own defense, "If [the critics of slave owners] continue to cry out against those who keep Negro slaves," they would show themselves to be hypocrites, because they too benefited from the slave trade. "Let them also fully and thoroughly vindicate themselves and their own practice in partaking of negroes' slavery," he charged, "or confess that there is no hurt in partaking in it," otherwise "let 'em own that their objections are not conscientious."

Edwards had a point: There was no escaping the influence of slavery in colonial times. Not only did most prominent leaders have slaves, but most financial transactions depended at some point on slavery. Three of the financial endowments that allowed Yale to thrive in its early days depended upon slavery: Yale's first endowed professorship, Yale's first scholarship fund, and Yale's first endowed library fund.

The First Yale Endowed Professorship: Col. Philip Livingston

Philip Livingston endowed the first professorship at Yale College. The website of the Yale Office of Development describes this important gift:

Philip Livingston, Second Lord of Livingston Manor, New York, donated 28 pounds sterling to Yale in 1745 "as a small acknowledgement of the sense I have had for the favour and Education my sons have had there" ... The donation was used in 1756 by President Thomas Clap to establish the Livingstonian Professorship of Divinity, the first endowed professorship at Yale.⁶

Philip Livingston was a slave trader. He became the Second Lord of Livingston Manor after his father, Robert, died in 1728.⁷ Robert Livingston had made his fortune through trade, and one of his earliest investments had been, in 1690, his purchase of "a half-interest in the *Margriet*, a vessel that journeyed to Madagascar, Barbados, and Virginia to trade in slaves, sugar, and tobacco."⁸ When Robert died, Philip Livingston inherited six of the twelve slaves listed in his father's will.⁹

Philip Livingston became the heir not only of the Manor, but also of the family business:

The importation of slaves was an attractive sideline to Robert's son Philip and grandson Robert, Jr. Philip was a leading importer of slaves from Jamaica and Antigua during the 1730s. He was part owner of a number of vessels, some of which were owned in partnership with his sons ... In August 1733, Philip's sloop *Katherine* brought in fifty blacks from Jamaica, an unusually large shipment from that source.¹⁰

Philip's extensive trade with the West Indies led to his involvement in the African slave trade. In the 1730s and 1740s, he was one of New York's leading importers of slave labor from the sugar islands, and also one of few New Yorkers who imported slaves directly from Africa before the abolition of the Spanish

Asiento in 1748. In 1738, Philip bought a one-third share in a voyage to Guinea, where two hundred slaves were purchased and consigned to his son Peter Van Brugh Livingston and his partner in Jamaica. New York's direct trade with Africa grew significantly after 1748, and the Livingstons continued to be among the colony's leading Africa traders.¹¹

Philip Livingston was one of New York's most prominent slave traders:

Only two men, Nathaniel Marston and Philip Livingston, invested in as many as four slave ships ... Philip Livingston was a large importer from West Indian sources in the 1730s and 1740s, and after King George's War joined with his sons to invest in four African slavers ... Livingston, third ranking importer in the NORNY records, brought in 219 West Indian blacks. With his sons he owned shares in the slavers *Wolf*, *Rhode Island*, *Stork*, and *Sarah and Elizabeth* during the early 1750s.¹²

A letter from one of Philip Livingston's sons to Petrus DeWitt, a merchant on the Livingston Manor, describes one of these voyages: "We have, thank God, had the good fortune of having one of our Guinea sloops come in, tho after a long passage of 79 days in which time they bumped 37 slaves and since 3 more & 2 more likely to die, which is an accident not to be helped ... We have now about 80 well slaves, 44 ounces of Gold & goods of Elephant's tooth"¹³

Philip Livingston's generous donation to Yale College occurred at the height of his involvement in the slave trade. Hence, profits from the slave trade funded the endowment of Yale's first professorship.

In addition to naming the first endowed professor's chair after Livingston, Yale also named a prominent gateway in Branford College the "Livingston Gateway."

The First Yale Scholarship: Bishop George Berkeley

Bishop George Berkeley, in his brief stay in the New World between 1728 and 1731,¹⁴ not only bought 3-5 slaves, but explained to the colonists the merit of doing so:

It would be of advantage to their [slave masters'] affairs to have slaves who should 'obey in all things their masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as fearing God;' that gospel liberty consists with temporal servitude; and that their slaves would only become better slaves by being Christian.¹⁵

Berkeley practiced what he preached. After coming to the colonies, Berkeley bought a plantation in Newport, Rhode Island—the famous "Whitehall." On October 4, 1730, Berkeley purchased "a Negro man named Philip aged Fourteen years or thereabout." A few days later he purchased "a negro man named Edward aged twenty years or thereabouts." On June 11, 1731, "Dean Berkeley baptized three of his negroes, 'Philip, Anthony, and Agnes Berkeley'."¹⁶

When Berkeley returned to Europe in 1731, he donated the plantation to Yale.

Yale turned payments from the plantation into its first set of scholarships. At this time, the plantation likely continued being worked by slaves. Charles Handy leased Whitehall farm from Yale, and sent Yale payments that would fund scholarships.¹⁷ The Rhode Island census, in 1774, shows that the household of Charles Handy included: "Blacks: 4."¹⁸

It is likely that these four black people included in Handy's household were slaves. In his study of slavery in the 1774 Rhode Island census, Louis Masur explains:

Data derived from a census conducted by Rhode Island's General Assembly permits us to answer with certainty such questions as who held slaves, how many they owned, and what patterns of slaveholding emerged within the colony ... While we cannot ascertain the precise status of the blacks living in white households, corroborating evidence such as newspaper advertisements indicates that the vast majority of the black residents were held as slaves, apprentices, or in some other dependent relationship ... If anything, the Census of 1774 underrepresented the extent to which blacks lived in some kind of bonded relationship to white families.¹⁹

The density of slave owning white households in Newport county in 1774 was almost as high as the density of slave owning white households in the American South during the Civil War.²⁰ It would be normal for someone farming a Newport plantation to use slaves to work the land.²¹

Words etched into the floor of Berkeley College today explain:

After expenses, the income from the house and farm [Whitehall] was to support two students of the college chosen “without favor or affection” as the best at Latin and Greek after a public examination. The “Berkeley Premiums” as they came to be called, are still awarded in the Yale Classics Department.²²

The profits earned by leasing the Whitehall plantation after 1732 funded Yale’s first scholarships. The person leasing the plantation around the time of the 1774 census included four black people as members of his household, and most black people so listed were slaves.

Assuming slaves worked the old Berkeley plantation, then Yale’s own land was worked by slaves, and Yale’s first scholarship was funded for up to 50 years with money earned from slave labor.

Berkeley had not come to the colony primarily to run a plantation, however. Instead, he came to “establish a College or Seminary in Bermuda—known as the Summer Islands.” Berkeley described his plans in his 1725 “A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations and Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity by a College to be Erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda.”

While slavery was the institution that would Christianize black people in the New World, he proposed a different method towards similar ends for native North Americans. Imagining that Native Americans from the mainland would be the most effective missionaries to their own communities, he described how he would recruit new students. When possible, students would be recruited “by peaceable methods,” but he also proposed supplementing these recruits by “taking captive the children of our enemies.” For the success of his school, he suggested enrolling “only such savages as are under 10 years of age, before evil habits have taken a deep root.”²³

Bermuda was the perfect setting for his social experiment. “Young Americans, educated in an island at some distance from their own country, will more easily be kept under discipline till they have attained a complete education.” While on the continent, they “might find opportunities of running away to their countrymen,” the island prevented them from “returning to their brutal customs, before they were thoroughly imbued with good principles and habits.”²⁴

In 1999, after renovating Berkeley College, Yale engraved Berkeley’s story onto the floor of a public gathering space in the college. The engraving reads:

“Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way” George Berkeley, 1726

Berkeley wanted to establish “a College or Seminary” in Bermuda—known also as the Summer Islands.

This College, in the next year (1725), given the name of St. Paul’s College in the King’s Charter, was part of a great missionary effort . . .

In 1999, Yale celebrated Berkeley’s vision as a “great missionary effort.” This vision involved kidnapping 10-year-old Native American boys, sending them to a remote island for re-education, and then releasing them once they were ready to evangelize their former homeland. Berkeley’s efforts failed, but his vision is honored today at Yale.

The First Yale Library Fund: Jared Eliot

The Rev. Jared Eliot of Killingworth (Yale 1706) was one of Yale’s earliest graduates. He became Abraham Pierson’s successor at the Killingworth church and also served as a member of the Yale Corporation for 33 years, from 1730-63. His fame spread after he published treatises on agricultural studies. Eliot was also a slave owner; slave labor was in part responsible for his agricultural success.

Rev. Doctor Jared Eliot had a Negro slave, named Kedar, and Kate, his wife. One Monday, on a Spring morning, he took them to a house and farm, two or three miles from the landing, in Killingworth, where he resided, and gave them provisions and tools, telling Kedar what work he should do. Next Monday, he rode over to the farm, to see them. He finding none of the work done, called Kedar to account.²⁵

After a long and successful career, Rev. Eliot died in 1763. His will “gave the first funds for the support of the College Library,” by creating a £10 foundation for buying books.²⁶ Slave labor contributed towards the financial foundation of the Yale library system.

Approaching the Revolution: Governor Jonathan Trumbull (1710-1785)

Trumbull was the governor of Connecticut before, during, and after the American Revolution. He graduated from Harvard in 1727. Through trade with the West Indies, Jonathan Trumbull turned the small business he inherited from his father into one of the most prosperous in Connecticut.

In 1736, the year before he married, Jonathan Trumbull purchased “Flora—a slave for life” with the aid of his father.²⁷ A few years later, Trumbull began a long career in the Colony’s General Assembly. Among his duties were to enforce the Colony’s Black Codes—laws applying only to people of color that circumscribed their freedom of movement and assembly. Trumbull adjudicated a case of “nightwalking” in 1758:

Jonathan Trumbull, His Majesty’s Assistant for the Colony of Connecticut, rules that Negroes Cato, Newport and Adam are to be publicly whipped on the naked body for nightwalking after nine in the evening without an order from their masters. Their owners are each fined 7s and costs.²⁸

Twenty stripes were typically inflicted on those circulating in the streets after nine p.m. with no pass from their masters.

Trumbull became the governor of the Connecticut colony in 1769. He was the only colonial governor to support American independence. Trumbull presided over Connecticut while slavery reached its peak, but also as it began to decline. As governor, he served *ex officio* on the Yale Corporation.

As the spirit of independence began to sweep the country, Governor Trumbull was increasingly confronted by the contradictions between the institution of slavery and the principles of democracy.²⁹ Governor Trumbull’s own son, John Trumbull, published a scathing satirical attack on slavery in *The Connecticut Journal and The New Haven Post-Boy* on July 6, 1770.

An eloquent attack on slavery during Trumbull’s governorship was aired by the “Hartford Negro Men” who wrote two long letters. The second letter arrived in Trumbull’s hands in 1780, as the state legislature debated a bill on gradual emancipation for the first time:

We are all of us of the same mind as we [were] when we asked this advantage of your honor last May[,] that our masters have no more [right] to make us serve than we have to make our masters to serve us. And we have [...] to wonder that our case has not been taking in consideration so far as to grant us our liberties.

Their petition for freedom addressed the Governor as an equal, and used Christian doctrine to guarantee their claim to equality:

Leave not a stumbling block before ye at the day of judgment ... pray, which had you rather: choose to let the Negroes go free or lose your soul at the day of judgment?

Now gentlemen, there is no lawyer, no temporal judge, but a spiritual lawyer and judge. ... Gentlemen, you’ll think of our humble petition when you come to ... your deathbed. Your conscience then will smite you to think how you have wronged us, poor natives of our dear country Africa. You think you keep us alive but it is the Almighty that keeps us alive and provides us sustenance.

Historian Ira Berlin describes this sort of activism on the part of black people:

Echoing the themes sounded by black petitioners prior to the revolution, slaves denounced the double standard that allowed white Americans to fight for freedom while denying that right to blacks. Indeed, slaves and free blacks not only employed the ideas of the Revolution but also its very language ... Success bred success. Black people who gained their freedom by legislative enactment, individual manumission and successful flight pressed all the harder for universal emancipation, demanding first the release of their families and friends, and then all black people still in bondage.³⁰

In 1779, Yale gave Trumbull an honorary degree. In 1784, Trumbull announced his retirement as governor a few months before the Connecticut legislature finally passed the “gradual emancipation” law, after discussing it actively for four years.

Trumbull was a hero of the American Revolution. During his tenure as governor he presided over Connecticut while slavery was most prevalent, but he also cleared the way for gradual emancipation within the newly freed state. In the 1930s, Yale named one of its residential colleges in his honor.³¹

Approaching the Revolution: Rev. Hopkins and Rev. Stiles

As the spirit of democracy began to spread throughout the colonies, moral support for slavery began to weaken. Although support for slavery remained the predominant view, many New England Quakers and even some of the Congregationalist clergy began to openly condemn slavery.

From the 1750s through the 1770s, two Yale graduates served as the ministers of the two competing Congregationalist churches in Newport, Rhode Island. Rev. Ezra Stiles, the future Yale president, ministered to the “Old Light” congregation. Rev. Samuel Hopkins ministered to the less conservative “New Light” congregation. The rivalry between these two Yale graduates was popularized in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *The Minister’s Wooing*, which describes them as theological opponents.³²

Both Stiles and Hopkins are commemorated by Yale buildings. Hopkins is remembered by one of eight dormitory wings at the Divinity School. Ezra Stiles’ name adorns a residential college.

Hopkins and Stiles had collaborated on a plan to send two black men to Africa to evangelize the continent. They secured two volunteers, Bristol Yamma (a slave) and John Quamine (a free black man), who agreed to undergo missionary training and go to Africa. Hopkins and Stiles penned a joint letter requesting support, in which they criticized, “the great inhumanity and cruelty of enslaving so many thousands of our fellow men every year.”³³ Their effort to send these two men to Africa never succeeded, but does interestingly foreshadow a movement that would later become popular with Yale’s own leadership.

Three years later, in 1776, Samuel Hopkins was an uncompromising abolitionist. He published the anti-slavery pamphlet, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, which was addressed directly “To the Honorable Members of the Continental Congress, Representatives of the Thirteen United American Colonies.”³⁴ Later, in 1784, Hopkins led the members of his church to vote to exclude all slaveholders from the congregation.³⁵

The same year, in 1776, Ezra Stiles still owned the slave that he had obtained directly through slave trading. In his biography, Edmund Morgan tells us:

Since [Stiles’] congregation included several merchants and sea captains, he occasionally had the opportunity to invest a little extra cash in one of their voyages ... His most significant investment of this kind was in 1756, before he married. In that year he put a hogshead of rum (106 gallons) aboard a ship commanded by Captain William Pinnegar and bound for Guinea on the coast of Africa. Captain Pinnegar brought him back a ten-year-old Negro boy, to whom he gave the name “Newport.”³⁶

Newport worked through maturity as Ezra Stiles’ slave until he was around 30 years old. At the same time that Stiles penned the joint letter with Hopkins condemning “the great inhumanity and cruelty” of slavery, he himself owned a slave whom he had obtained directly through trade and held for 20 years.

In 1778, the Yale Corporation selected the Rev. Ezra Stiles to be the next President of Yale. The move, and the new job, prompted many changes for Stiles, including Newport’s liberation. On June 9, 1778, Stiles wrote in his diary, “I freed or liberated my Negro Man Newport, about aged 30. Settled all my Affairs, & myself & seven children set out in two Carriages for New Haven.”³⁷ After eleven years in Africa and twenty as the slave of a Rhode Island preacher, Newport set out to make his living as a free man in colonial Rhode Island.

It must have been difficult for a free black man to make ends meet in Rhode Island. In December 1782, Newport arrived in New Haven. He asked Ezra Stiles for a job, and Stiles obliged, hiring him on the following terms:

This Evening arrived here my Man servant Newport and his Wife & Child, whom I have hired for seven years @ \$20 per annum. The Child Jacob two years old last Month and bound to me till age 24.³⁸

It appears that Stiles hired his former slave Newport as a servant on the condition that Newport’s two year old son, Jacob, would be bonded to and would serve Stiles until age 24.³⁹ Jacob joined another Native American child, Aaron, who served as Ezra Stiles’ indentured servant.⁴⁰ Newport himself remained Stiles’ paid servant until Stiles’ death in 1795.

Indentures such as this were common at the time. Ira Berlin explains:

Black people who exited slavery often found themselves living in circumstances that looked suspiciously

like the old bondage. Following the gradualist laws and conditional manumissions—which delayed freedom well until adulthood—many manumitters required their slaves to agree to long-term indentureships as part of the price of freedom, thereby reviving an older system of subordination and providing masters with a profitable exit from slave ownership. Even without prompting from their former owners, poverty forced many freed people to indenture themselves or their children to white householders.⁴¹

In 1790, Stiles agreed to serve as the first President of “The Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and for the relief of persons unlawfully holden in Bondage.” Over the next four years, the annual sermons preached before this society would become some of the most popular anti-slavery literature from this time period.⁴² By 1792, however, Ezra Stiles was no longer listed as an active part of the society.

The society’s mission was practical and straightforward: “to inforce [sic] the Statutes of Connecticut relative to the gradual abolition of slavery.”⁴³ This society did not advocate against slavery *per se*, but only against “unlawful” slavery, namely that which violated Connecticut’s recently passed “gradual emancipation” laws. While Stiles presided, a vote was passed in which the members of the society pledged:

To enroll the names, ages and possessors of such persons as have been borne since the 1st of March, 1784, and who by law will be entitled to their freedom at the age of 25 years [and] ... to enquire whether any persons are illegally holden in bondage—also whether the other laws of the State relative to the gradual abolition of slavery are duly observed.⁴⁴

Upon reading of this society and its initial proposals, one Connecticut minister wrote, “It does not appear that the Society is of much importance as it respects its influence in this State, as there is here scarcely a claim for exertions.”⁴⁵

Describing anti-slavery activity around this time, historian David Brion Davis observes “that in New Haven the organizational activity was weak and short-lived.”⁴⁶ James Essig describes contemporary anti-slavery activity in other states and concludes, “By comparison, Connecticut’s antislavery figures look like relaxed members of an exclusive club.”⁴⁷

Gradual Emancipation

Just after the revolutionary war ended, the institution of slavery in the North started to change. Slavery peaked in New Haven and in Connecticut during the 1780s. Describing New Haven in the year 1784, the historian Franklin Dexter explains that this was “the time when domestic slavery was general in New Haven ... the papers have occasional, not frequent advertisements for the sale of likely Negroes, or it may be a family of Negroes.”⁴⁸

In 1784, “gradual emancipation” was passed in Connecticut (and Rhode Island). This law was intended to slowly “phase out” slavery, and would become the primary mechanism of abolition throughout New England. In Connecticut, it worked like this: All slaves born on or after March 1, 1784, remained bonded while children, but were released upon reaching a certain age (first 25, later reduced to 21). All slaves born before 1784 remained slaves for life. This allowed slavery to slowly disappear.

The motivations behind “gradual emancipation” were complex. Keeping slaves had ceased to be cost-

Year	Slaves in Connecticut ⁴⁹
1755	4000
1774	6562
1790	2759
1800	951
1810	310
1820	97
1840	17
1850	0

effective as the slaves grew older, for a servant’s labor had become cheaper than the cost of caring for the servant throughout his or her lifetime.⁵⁰ However, most colonists did not view immediate emancipation as the right solution, for then either the slave owners would lose property that they had legally acquired, or the government would have to repay these owners for their lost property. Instead, “gradual emancipation” shifted the cost of freeing slaves onto the slaves themselves, who effectively worked their way out of slavery.

This new system did not free any current slaves, and it guaranteed twenty years of service from any child born of a slave. At the same time, the law did help encourage the full-scale elimination of slavery from Connecticut.

After 1784, chattel slavery in Connecticut slowly disappeared. In its place, bondage from birth until

age 21-25 became more common. This raises a question of terminology. Are children born into a bondage that expires after 25 years themselves “slaves”? Or are they more like white “indentured servants,” who often traded years of servitude in exchange for passage across the Atlantic or training in some trade?

Black people born into a bondage that expires at a certain age do not fit neatly into either the category “slave” or “indentured servant.” Their bondage was hereditary, mirroring “slavery.” Their bondage was temporary, mirroring “indentured servitude.”

Historian Joanne Melish suggests using the term “statutory slave” for those born to slaves after the gradual emancipation statutes were passed. She points out that, unlike white indentured servants, such black “statutory slaves” received nothing in return for their indenture. Furthermore:

Whites made no manifest effort to distinguish statutory slaves from slaves, because there was no effective difference in their treatment or employment. In fact, there is some evidence that some slaves’ children born after passage of the gradual emancipation statutes considered themselves slaves.⁵¹

It seems reasonable to adopt Melish’s vocabulary: “Slave” for a person considered a permanent piece of property; “Statutory slave” for one born immediately into a bondage that expires at a certain age. Both whites and blacks who contractually indenture themselves to a master shall be termed “indentured servants.”

We must recognize, however, that at this time in history there was a complex continuum, rather than a crystal clear distinction, between slave and free. Ira Berlin observes that the history of black chattel slavery blurred the differences between slavery and indentured servitude for African-Americans:

Although servitude, unlike slavery, was not hereditary, servants lived under the control of a master or mistress, and their rights to their labor could be sold or traded like other property. The more closely that indentured servitude became identified with black labor, the smaller the difference between the treatment of slave and servant ... The line between servitude and slavery was fine indeed for black indentured servants, particularly since white servants rarely served more than 7 years and rarely after the age of twenty-one.⁵²

Two Models of Leadership

In addition to its clerical graduates, Yale’s leadership has long held a place within the political establishment; nowhere was the conflict between slavery and America’s budding democracy more evident. Two Yale leaders offered two models of political leadership during this struggle:

- John C. Calhoun was one of the most politically influential graduates of Yale’s pre-Civil War years, serving as U.S. Vice President, a member of Congress, Secretary of War, Secretary of State and Senator. A proud slaveowner, his political influence enabled him not only to shelter the institution of slavery where it existed, but on occasion to expand it.
- James Hillhouse’s anti-slavery activism stands in stark contrast to Calhoun’s positions. As a member of Congress and Senator, Hillhouse sought to reduce the institution of slavery that Calhoun later tried to expand.

John C. Calhoun received the ultimate honor from Yale: the name of a residential college. His statue also adorns Harkness Tower, as one of only eight Yale “Worthies.”⁵³ The City of New Haven does not honor Calhoun in any way.

There is no Yale building named after James Hillhouse. The City of New Haven does remember him with “Hillhouse Avenue,” the street connecting Yale’s central and science campuses, and with “Hillhouse High School.” This high school used to stand between Broadway and the Tower Parkway, but in the 1950s Yale purchased this land from the city and razed the buildings to make space for two more residential colleges—Stiles College and Morse College—and the high school moved further out from town.

James Hillhouse (1754-1832)

James Hillhouse commanded the Governor’s Foot Guard in New Haven during the American Revolution, became active in early American politics, and served as Yale’s treasurer for fifty years.

Hillhouse created the Grove Street cemetery, lined New Haven's streets with the elm trees for which it would become famous, and helped bring about the Farmington-New Haven canal.

Hillhouse did not shy away from using his political strength to oppose slavery and to extend the democratic ideals of the early republic to all its members. According to a statement by The Amistad Committee and Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center:⁵⁴

One of Hillhouse's most important, but least-remembered roles, however, was that of the antislavery leader of the U. S. Congress in the early days of the republic.

As early as 1799, Senator Hillhouse served on a committee to investigate the ending of the slave trade, which he helped to pass at the earliest constitutionally-authorized moment. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, Hillhouse fought to bar the importation of slaves into the Louisiana Territory. "I consider slavery as a serious evil," he proclaimed, "and wish to check it wherever I have authority." Two of Hillhouse's amendments restricting slavery actually passed the Congress and were signed into law. Although the stiffest restrictions did not pass, the historian Don Fehrenbacher asserts that "the magnitude of [Hillhouse's] effort ought to be recognized." His amendments constituted, "the strongest antislavery restriction imposed on any portion of the Deep South between 1735 and 1865." Proslavery forces soon overwhelmed Hillhouse's restrictions, however, and the Louisiana Territory became the heartland of the cotton explosion, embedding slavery inextricably into the fabric of the nation.

Just as his service as Yale's treasurer spanned many years, so too did his anti-slavery activism:

During the Missouri controversy of 1819-21, he circulated an attack on the institution that was so blistering that his colleagues in Washington warned that it might incite Southern representatives to disunion.

James Hillhouse understood that the ideals of democracy were incompatible with the existence of slavery.

At the turn of the century, early revolutionary leaders and New England anti-slavery advocates, such as Hillhouse, hoped that democratic principles combined with slavery's growing unprofitability would cause it to gradually wither away in the South, just as it was doing in the North. The opposite occurred. Rather than follow the North's model of slavery's gradual disappearance, the use of slaves exploded throughout the South in the 1800s, spurred in part by the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney (Yale 1793). Southern plantations changed the face of American slavery.

John C. Calhoun (1782-1850)

John C. Calhoun moved from a plantation in South Carolina to a Yale dorm in November, 1802, where he studied under Timothy Dwight and Benjamin Silliman. His Yale tuition was paid from profits derived from slave labor. When he graduated, he won acclaim as one of the best students in the class of 1804.

After graduation Calhoun returned South to marry his cousin Floride and live the life of a slaveholder and statesman. Prior to his wedding, Calhoun had purchased an 800-acre plantation near Willington, South Carolina. Located on a bluff along the Savannah River, the plantation had a modest house, fertile land and "substantial barns and well-built slave quarters."⁵⁵

Calhoun had grown up in a South Carolinian family that talked about slave labor in much the same way as they did about corn, wheat and hogs.⁵⁶ The growth of the Calhoun family's estates coincided with the expansion of the world market for cotton. Calhoun thus gained both in wealth and might as the market for cotton expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Calhoun was not merely a farmer. He rose to hold a position preeminent among the politicians of his era. He was elected to Congress in 1811, a mere seven years after graduating from Yale. Appointed U.S. Secretary of War from 1817-1825, he was then elected U.S. Vice President, where he served two terms under two different presidents, until 1832. He then served as Senator from 1832-43, as U.S. Secretary of State from 1844-45, and went back into the Senate from 1845-1850. Calhoun occupied national political office in this country for almost 40 years. It is hard to overestimate his influence on the preservation of slavery in the U. S. during this tumultuous time.

Calhoun exercised his 40 years of national political leadership proud to be a Southern slave owner.

On Friday, February 19, 1847, he rose to speak in the U.S. Senate and declared:

I am a planter—a cotton planter. I am a Southern man and a slaveholder—a kind and a merciful one, I trust—and none the worse for being a slaveholder. I say, for one, I would rather meet any extremity upon earth than give up one inch of our equality—one inch of what belongs to us as members of this great republic!⁵⁷

What does one make of Calhoun's declaration that he "would rather meet any extremity upon earth than give up one inch of our equality"? For Calhoun, "equality" meant the rights of individual states to decide for themselves whether to permit or prevent slavery. For Calhoun, "equality" meant that the U.S. government had no right to outlaw slavery, and no right to recognize black people's universal human right to freedom. To prevent federal involvement, Calhoun states his preference for "any extremity upon earth," a statement that many of his colleagues would interpret as threatening: Do not meddle in our affairs, or there will be extreme consequences.

The fight to preserve slavery was fought as a battle for "States' rights," especially over the rights of newly admitted states to permit or prevent slavery. As Whig senators contested the admittance of any slave territory to the Union, Calhoun leapt into action. Of the senatorial triumvirate that decided many of the key questions of the day—Senators Calhoun, Clay, and Webster—Calhoun was often the most extreme, fiercely defending the rights of slaveholders to bring their property to the newly established territories and the right of slave states to belong to the Union.⁵⁸ For example, Calhoun objected successfully to the admission of Texas as a free state in the Union, on the grounds that Texas would become the home of runaways from slave states.⁵⁹

Calhoun also persuaded the U.S. Senate to ensure that slaves on foreign soil would be returned to their owners. Years later, he successfully lobbied Congress to limit black people's participation in the military. He argued that "it was wrong to bring those who have to sustain the honor and glory of the country down to a footing of the Negro race—to be degraded by being mingled and mixed up with that inferior race."⁶⁰

Calhoun defended slavery as the ideal political economy. He argued that capitalism without slavery leads to anarchy, and that slavery allows a stable capitalist economy to flourish. When labor is free, he argued, then labor conflicts with capital. When labor is not free, but is instead owned outright in the form of slavery, then the conflict disappears:

Where wages command labor, as in the non-slaveholding States, there necessarily takes place between labor and capital a conflict, which leads, in process of time, to disorder, anarchy, and revolution, if not counteracted by some appropriate and strong constitutional provision. Such is not the case in the slaveholding States. There labor and capital are identified. There the high profit of labor, but increases the means of the master to add to the comfort of his slaves, and hence in all conflicts which may occur in the other portions of the Union between labor and capital, the South will ever be found to take the conservative side.⁶¹

Despite the occurrence of individual and collective slave resistance, Calhoun maintained that capital and labor coexisted harmoniously in the South.

There were some at this time who believed that slavery was a necessary evil, acceptable only for political need or economic advantage. Calhoun was not among them. He fervently believed that slavery was a "good," and that its benefits extended to black people as well as to white:

Let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the races in the slaveholding states is an evil—far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition. We now believe it [slavery] a great blessing to both of the races—the European and African, which, by a mysterious Providence, have been brought together in the Southern Section of this Union. That one has greatly improved, and the other has not deteriorated; while in a political point of view, it has been the great stay of the Union and our free institutions, and one of the main sources of the unbounded prosperity of the whole.⁶²

For Calhoun, slavery posed no moral conflict.

Like Hillhouse, however, Calhoun did recognize a tension between the system of slavery and the Revolutionary ideals of democracy. Calhoun concluded that the ideal of universal equality was wrong-headed:

If our Union and system of government are doomed to perish, and we are to share the fate of so many great people who have gone before us, the historian ... will trace it to a proposition, which originated in a hypothetical truism, but which as now expressed and now understood is the most false and most dangerous of all political errors. The proposition to which I allude has become an axiom in the minds of a vast majority on both sides of the Atlantic, and is repeated daily from tongue to tongue as an established and incontrovertible truth; it is that "All men are born free and equal" ... As understood, there is not a word of truth in it ... It is utterly untrue.⁶³

In 1930, Yale University decided that one of its residential colleges should be named "Calhoun College," in honor of this man. When Yale University built Harkness Tower in the 1930s, Calhoun's statue was installed as one of the eight Yale graduate "Worthies" of honor. These decisions were controversial from the start.⁶⁴ In fact, in 1992, a group of undergraduates from Calhoun College protested the name of their college. Yale refused to consider renaming the college, but did hang a framed poster inside Calhoun College, acknowledging the controversy.

It is true that Yale's first two centuries boast no other U.S. Vice President or President.⁶⁵ However, honoring John Calhoun in the present raises a question: Does the fact of political power by itself merit honor?

Yale College after Dwight: Training National Leaders

John Calhoun had received his education at Yale College under the watchful tutelage of President Timothy Dwight, his "mentor."⁶⁶ Yale College had begun its long transformation from an institution training regional clergy to a nationally renowned institution of higher education. Dwight enlarged the faculty considerably, and increasingly began to attract students from the Southern states.⁶⁷ As the institution grew and its fame spread, Dwight took it down a conservative path.

The faculty Dwight appointed and the students he taught took leading roles in both local and national debates on slavery and racial equality in the decades leading up to the Civil War. As we will see, the outcome of these debates had tangible consequences in New Haven.

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817)

Timothy Dwight purchased a slave in 1788. A manuscript in Yale's collection of the Dwight family papers, dated 1788 and signed "Timothy Dwight," says:

This certifies that the conditions on which I bought Naomi, a negro woman formerly belonging to Deacon Daniel Andrews of Norfield, that she shall work for me and mine until she shall have refunded the money which I am to pay for her, at the rate of seven pounds sixteen shillings per year, and that she shall uniformly behave well, faithfully, and truly towards me and mine, and that she shall also be at the expense of the cloaths she wants during her service with me, and live with me and mine until she shall, at the same rate of hire, have discharged the expense arising from the same. In which case I voluntarily bind myself my heirs and my executors and my administrators, and I release her from all obligations to serve me (as I never intended her for a slave) any further time. In case she does not faithfully fulfill the above conditions, then this instrument is to be void and of none effect. Witness my hand this fourth of March, 1788, Signed in the presence of Maurice W. Dwight, A. Burr [Signed Timothy Dwight]⁶⁸

Dwight purchased Naomi in 1788, four years after Connecticut passed its gradual emancipation law. Because Naomi was born prior to 1784, however, she was not a "statutory slave" but a permanent slave, pending her master's decision to liberate her. Dwight's statement "I never intended her for a slave" means that he intended to allow her to buy her own freedom with her time of servitude. This is not a manumission document, however; Dwight owned Naomi as a slave and reserved the right to keep her if she failed to "behave well, faithfully, and truly toward me and mine."

We do not know the purchase price that Timothy Dwight paid for Naomi, nor do we know whether Naomi had successfully purchased her own freedom seven years later, when Dwight was inaugurated as the President of Yale College, in 1795.⁶⁹

We do know, however, that under Dwight's tenure as Yale's president, Yale produced more pro-slavery clergy than any other college in the nation. Historian Larry Tise did a study of prominent pro-slavery clergy, and where they were educated:

When proslavery clergymen are grouped according to the college from which they graduated, the influence of certain schools becomes readily apparent . . . The school with the largest number of [proslavery] graduates—one tenth of the total number attending college—was Yale University. . . . With more than twice as many proslavery graduates as Princeton and Harvard—two other major national universities with surprisingly large representations of their own—the severely skewed data cannot be considered coincidental. Yale made the most significant contribution to the ranks of proslavery clergymen. With graduating classes extending from 1799 to 1845, ten studied at Yale under the administration of the elder Timothy Dwight and all except three had completed their work by 1825.⁷⁰

For students today, it may seem odd to suggest that the president could play a role shaping the ideology of Yale's graduates. In Dwight's day, however, there were few faculty other than the president. Most of the teaching was done by "tutors," often appointed for only a year or two immediately after themselves graduating from Yale.

Yale's President remained the undisputed senior scholar. President Dwight in fact held the "Livingston Professorship of Divinity," at the time Yale's only endowed professorship.⁷¹ Dwight played a significant educational role in the students' development:

[Dwight] continued the tradition of teaching the seniors metaphysics and ethics (as well as some treatment of other subjects) and overseeing their disputations . . . Dwight was a persuasive teacher, and what he said moved many of his students deeply . . . [T]hese classes with the president were the freest period of discussion in their college lives, and the memory of them made a deep impression—particularly in the case of a man as personally awesome as Timothy Dwight.⁷²

One set of these disputations was recorded and published. In them, Dwight argues that: "The cause assigned for taxing the slaves in this country, never existed, and never will exist." A "slave tax" would have made slavery less profitable and less attractive. Dwight is clear that he does not think this should become a national issue, chiefly because nothing at all should be allowed to threaten the unity of the Union.

The evils of disunion would be so great, that nothing like an advantage which appears to be promised by it, is worthy of a moment's regard. Dissolution would involve so many calamities, that it would be childish to weigh it against a few questions of local interest, which are as nothing when put in contrast to it.⁷³

Such a dismissive attitude might seem to conflict with Dwight's passionate tirades elsewhere. For example, Dwight's epic poem *Greenfield Hill* includes a lament for the curse of slavery:

O thou chief curse, since curses here began;
 First guilt, first woe, first infamy of man;
 Thou spot of hell, deep smirch'd on human kind,
 The uncur'd gangrene of the reasoning mind;
 Alike in church, in state, in household all,
 Supreme memorial of the world's dread fall;
 O slavery! laurel of the Infernal mind,
 Proud Satan's triumph over lost mankind!⁷⁴

In the stanzas immediately following, however, Dwight makes clear that his target is slavery as it appears in Europe and the West Indies.⁷⁵ This section has been introduced in stark contrast to slavery as it appears in Connecticut, which Dwight describes thus:

But hark! what voice so gaily fills the wind?
 Of care oblivious, whose that laughing mind?
 'Tis yon poor black, who ceases now his song,
 And whistling, drives the cumbrous wain along.
 He never, dragg'd with groans, the galling chain;
 Nor hung, suspended, on th' infernal crane . . .
 But kindly fed, and clad, and treated, he
 Slides on thro' life, with more than common glee . . .
 Here law, from vengeful rage, the slave defends,
 And here the gospel peace on earth extends.

He toils, 'tis true, but shares his masters toil;
 With him, he feeds the herd, and trims the soil;
 Helps to sustain the house, with clothes and food,
 And takes his portion of the common good :
 Lost liberty his sole, peculiar ill,
 And fix'd submission to another's will.

Historian James Essig comments on the poem by saying: "Dwight emphasizes the cruelties and horror of West Indian slavery, almost as if he were trying to dwarf the magnitude of slavery in Connecticut ... Dwight attempted to fix the blame for the worst aspects of slavery on France or Great Britain."⁷⁶ The comments by Dwight's biographer, Silverman, are even more direct: "Dwight makes slavery, as a form of human brutality, a strictly European vice; in America, it exists as a 'peculiar ill', a form of social backwardness."⁷⁷

Dwight's other published remarks bear out these conclusions. Dwight attacks the slave trade but defends American and Southern slave owners. For example, in the midst of a condemnation of slave trading, we read:

The Southern Planter, who receives slaves from his parents by inheritance, certainly deserves no censure for holding them. He has no agency in procuring them: and the law does not permit him to set them free. If he treats them with humanity, and faithfully endeavors to Christianize them, he fulfills his duty, so long as his present situation continues.⁷⁸

In addition to defending the Southern American slave owner, Dwight even partially defends the original American slave traders:

Our parents and ancestors have brought their parents, or ancestors, in the course of a most iniquitous traffic, from their native country; and made them slaves. I have no doubt, that those, who were concerned in this infamous commerce, imagined themselves justified; and I am not disposed to load their memory either with imprecations or censures.⁷⁹

Dwight's apologetic stance toward American forms of slavery was compatible with his opinion of African-Americans. He viewed them with contempt. Dwight considered poor whites to be "entirely" different from the free blacks in New Haven:

The number of free blacks in the city of New Haven was, in the year 1800, 150. Their vices are of all the kinds, usually intended by the phrase "low vice" ... Many of them are thieves, liars, profane, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, quarrelsome, idle, and prodigal, the last in the extreme ... The difference between them, and the whites, who are the nearest to them in their circumstances, is entire. The whites are generally satisfied with being decent, with being dressed in such clothes, and living in such a manner, as they can afford: the blacks ... ape those who are above them, or rather people of fashion, in a manner sufficiently ridiculous.⁸⁰

Dwight became a strong presence within the city of New Haven. He did help to establish an elementary school for black people, "to teach negro children how to read the Bible."⁸¹ At the same time, "Dwight's presidency was the first to be marked by noticeable violence between town and gown."⁸²

When Dwight died in 1817, he had created a national institution. One of his chief legacies to Yale College was the generation of administrative leadership that he had put in place. Dwight's presidency was noteworthy because he expanded the size of the faculty by appointing three key professors: Benjamin Silliman, professor of chemistry and geology; James Luce Kingsley, professor of classical languages; and Jeremiah Day, professor of mathematics and future Yale president. "These three men, originally with Dwight, then largely alone, ran Yale for the first half of the nineteenth century."⁸³

Timothy Dwight's name would be chosen in the 1930s to adorn one of Yale's residential colleges.⁸⁴ So too would be the name of one of Dwight's appointees: Benjamin Silliman.

Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864)

Benjamin Silliman's mother, Mary, was the largest slave owner in Fairfield county.⁸⁵ When it came time for Benjamin and his brother to attend Yale College, she sold off two of their slaves to help finance their education, in 1795.⁸⁶ After graduation, Silliman returned to become the "overseer" of Holland

Hill, the family farm, which included a “negro house” and six adult slaves—Tego, Sue, Rose, Lowes, Peter, and old Job—together with their children.⁸⁷

In 1799, Silliman began teaching at Yale, while still living with his mother on the farm. Even though financial troubles were forcing the family to liquidate its slave-holdings, “they were all faced with the problem of the ‘Negro children’, those who were born at Holland Hill after the sale of slaves had been proscribed by legislation.”⁸⁸ This generation had been born as “statutory slaves.”⁸⁹

A few years later, Benjamin’s brother moved to Rhode Island, sparking a crisis: Cloe, one of their statutory slaves, objected to being taken out of state, and claimed that she belonged properly to Benjamin: “Iago, presumably Cloe’s husband [was] determined to prevent it if possible, and hopes to on the ground of its being contrary to the law to carry a black out of the State.”⁹⁰ Iago and Cloe appear to have won the day, for they stayed with Benjamin in Connecticut.

During this time, Benjamin Silliman and his family began leasing their statutory slaves to their neighbors, receiving regular payments. For example, in 1803, Annise, born in 1786, had four years of slavery left until she was legally emancipated at age 21; the Silliman brothers leased Annise’s final four years of labor for \$100. They were pleased to find someone to lease Annise, for she had apparently caused some trouble with her earlier masters.⁹¹

That same year, 1803, the Sillimans secured an even better deal regarding another one of their statutory slaves, Ely. Ely was 19, two years older than Annise. The Sillimans signed a contract leasing Ely to Hubbel for 7 more years. The contract stated: “We bound the boy till he should be 26.” At the time, statutory slaves were legally freed at the age of 21, but apparently Silliman managed to get a few extra years of slavery out of Ely. As Silliman’s biographer, Brown, puts it:

Legally, the boy should be freed upon reaching twenty-one, but in practice the law was apparently elastic on this point. Silliman was ready to free Ely at the age of 25, but brother William settled with Hubbel that he should own the service of the boy an extra year. [Benjamin] Silliman agreed without much hesitation.⁹²

That same year, 1803, the Sillimans were also earning money off of a third statutory slave, Job, who was 16 years old. It is unknown when he was freed, but we do know that in 1818, he remained “indigent and dependent upon the charity of the family.”⁹³

However, Benjamin Silliman was not a simple person. At his commencement, in 1798, Silliman “closed his commencement verse with a call for the universal emancipation of slaves.”⁹⁴ He then penned a long poem, entitled *The Negroe*, which chronicled the many abuses of slavery and the many evils of the slave trade. As Brown describes:

This put Benjamin in the awkward position of advocating the abolition of slavery while he continued to profit from a share of the wages that his own slaves earned under their indenture.⁹⁵

Eventually, Silliman’s statutory slaves grew up and received their legal freedom. At the same time, Silliman’s own opposition to slavery grew.

By the 1830s, Silliman had become an officer of the American Colonization Society, a group committed to sending black people to Africa. His view was notable in that he insisted that such colonization must remain voluntary, and that black people who wished to stay in America should be allowed to do so. (For more on colonization, see the section devoted to this topic, below.)

In 1832, Benjamin Silliman preached an impassioned sermon about slavery in Center Church on the Green, New Haven. Silliman seemed disconcerted by the Nat Turner slave insurrection, in which slaves had sustained a rebellion. His sermon began with an intense, almost paranoid harangue about the dangers of an impending slave insurrection. For this reason, he said, we must send black people to Africa, lest “virgins in their beauty and young men in their strength are involved in promiscuous butchery.”⁹⁶

Silliman argued in the same sermon that sending black people to Africa “tends to allay fears of insurrection, by promoting the removal of those who, with or without reason, excite apprehension” (p.186). He is also clear that it is pointless to “discuss the project of the entire and immediate abolition of slavery” (p.176), simply because this goal is impracticable.

Silliman also says, “Visionary attempts to elevate, suddenly, the free colored population ... should be anxiously avoided” (p.175). In fact, Silliman was preaching in response to an event that had occurred

the previous year: In 1831, efforts to establish a “Negro college” in New Haven had been squelched. Silliman describes the reaction thus:

If a measure [the well-known attempt to found an African College in New Haven] attempted, in this place, during the last year, was premature, or not happily named or ill-timed; it might perhaps had been better met, with a spirit of kindness and conciliation, although coupled with refusal.⁹⁷

In short, the proposed college might have been refused more nicely, had the effort been differently named or timed. Nevertheless, refused it rightly was, asserted Silliman. He supported the rejection of the “Negro college.” It is to this story that we now turn.

The “Negro College”

Simeon Jocelyn was the dogged force behind the efforts to establish a “Negro college” in New Haven. After attending Yale briefly in 1823, he went on to become the founding pastor of the African-American congregation that became Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church. Jocelyn joined forces with Arthur Tappan, who moved to New Haven in 1828. With the help of his brother Lewis, Arthur Tappan purchased land for the college in the southern part of New Haven and committed \$1000 seed money for a fundraising drive to build the college.⁹⁸

In June of 1831, these two white men from New Haven—Simeon Jocelyn and Arthur Tappan—joined William L. Garrison in Philadelphia at the annual Convention of the Free People of Colour.⁹⁹ They argued for the formation of an institute that would allow its students to “cultivate habits of industry and obtain a useful mechanical or agricultural profession, while pursuing classical studies.”¹⁰⁰ The college, “where our youth may be instructed in all the arts of civilized life,”¹⁰¹ required that “the Trustees of the contemplated Institution, shall a majority of them be coloured persons; the number proposed is seven, three white and four colored.”¹⁰² The vision of racial equality and self-improvement galvanized the entire convention, which approved Jocelyn’s proposal unanimously.

Simeon Jocelyn returned to New Haven buoyed by a vision of New Haven and Yale working together. He listed as a reason for choosing New Haven: “the literary and scientific character of New-Haven renders it a very desirable place for the location of the [Negro] College.”¹⁰³

Simeon Jocelyn was in for a rude awakening. He spoke of his vision on September 7, 1831, at his home church, the Center Church on the Green. Immediately, Mayor Dennis Kimberly (Yale 1812) called a town meeting for September 10 at City Hall, to vote on resolutions opposing the “Negro College.”

The Town Meeting: September 10, 1831

A note in that day’s paper announced the town meeting with the following commentary:

If it is necessary to have an African College in Connecticut, may the projectors of it, on mature consideration, conclude to locate it in the town of Cornwall . . . Cornwall possesses many advantages for such an institution, over other places; and it is not among the least of them, that the ladies of that town readily give themselves, better for worse, and worse for better, to the colored gentlemen. This and other considerations may have a strong tendency to draw the proposed College to that town. We hope, therefore, that our citizens will act with coolness on this subject.¹⁰⁴

The editor of the *New Haven Advertiser* recounts: “So great was the interest to hear the discussions, that, notwithstanding the excessive heat and almost irrespirable atmosphere of the room, the hall was crowded through the afternoon.” Lewis Tappan recalls, “The opposers of the measure rallied in strong force and were vociferous in opposition. Several of them belonged to the legal profession, and by their inflammatory speeches, added greatly to the excitement.”¹⁰⁵

Mayor Kimberly convened a committee to draft resolutions against the “Negro college.” This committee included thirteen people, ten of whom had a Yale degree. The group included Yale’s only Professor of Law, David Daggett, a once and future member of the Yale Corporation; Samuel Hitchcock, with Daggett, one of the founders of Yale’s law school; Judge Bristol, another former Yale Corporation member; Issac Townsend, who would later join Daggett and Hitchcock as a Yale law school professor; and Augustus Street, a significant donor after whom Yale named its first art building

and two endowed professorships.

The committee was in many ways a “who’s who” of the legal and political elite of New Haven and Yale. Of New Haven’s five active lawyers, four were on this committee (Daggett, Ingersoll, Smith, Kimberly)¹⁰⁶ as were three judges (Daggett, Bristol, Baldwin), the current mayor (Kimberly)¹⁰⁷, and the sitting representative to the U.S. Congress (Ingersoll).

Only four people are known to have spoken in opposition to the “Negro college” at the Town Meeting:¹⁰⁸

- **David Daggett** (Yale 1783) was at the time Yale’s only Professor of Law (though he collaborated with Samuel Hitchcock, below, at the New Haven Law School which eventually merged with Yale). In 1831 he was Associate Justice of Connecticut’s Superior Court, and the next year would be appointed Chief Justice of Connecticut’s Supreme Court. He served on the Yale Corporation three times (1803-04; 1809-13; and 1832-34) and served two terms as Mayor of New Haven (1828-1830).
- **I[ssac]. H. Townsend** (Yale 1822, MA 1825) took over the leadership of Yale’s Law School (1842-7), as Daggett and Hitchcock neared the end of their careers.
- **Nathan Smith** (Yale M.A. Hon 1808) was serving as prosecuting Attorney for New Haven County (1817-1835), and had been U.S. Attorney for Connecticut in 1828. He would be elected to the U.S. Senate in 1832.¹⁰⁹
- **R[alph]. I. Ingersoll** (Yale 1808) was New Haven’s Representative to the U.S. Congress, and had been New Haven’s mayor until a few months prior. A few years later, Ingersoll would represent the Spanish Crown in the *Amistad* affair.

In addition to these four people, the full committee of leaders drafting the resolutions against the “Negro college” included:

- **Dennis Kimberly** (Yale 1812) was Mayor of New Haven, and practiced law in New Haven.
- **S[amuel] J. Hitchcock** (Yale 1809) is considered one of the founders of the Yale Law School, together with David Daggett. In 1831 he was running New Haven’s private law school, which had affiliated with Yale and would later merge with Yale to become its Law School.
- **Augustus Street** (Yale 1812) was a wealthy New Haven merchant and a major Yale donor, after whom is named “Street Hall,” which stands today on the corner of Chapel & High Streets.
- **Judge [William] Bristol** (Yale 1798) was a federal judge of the District Court of Connecticut, a former member of the Yale Corporation (1818-1820), and a former New Haven Mayor.
- **Judge [Simeon] Baldwin** (Yale 1781) was a retired judge of the Connecticut Supreme Court. He had also served as U.S. Congressman (1803-1805), and as Mayor of New Haven (1826).
- **Dr. Punderson** (Yale 1804) practiced medicine in New Haven.
- **Jehiel Forbes, Samuel Wadsworth, and John Durrie** did not graduate from Yale, and were probably lawyers from the surrounding area.

This committee drafted two resolutions to be voted on at the September 10, 1831, Town Meeting. The first claimed that the existence of a “Negro college” would harm Yale College and the other area schools:

WHEREAS in the opinion of this meeting, Yale College, the institutions for the education of females, and the other schools, already existing in this city, are important to the community and the general interests of science, and as such have been deservedly patronized by the public, and the establishment of a College in the same place to educate the colored population is incompatible with the prosperity, if not the existence of the present institutions of learning, and will be destructive of the best interests of the city: ...

THEREFORE, RESOLVED—by the mayor, aldermen, common council and freemen of the city of New Haven, in city meeting assembled—that we will resist the establishment of the proposed College in this place, by every lawful means.¹¹⁰

The second resolution placed the “Negro college” incident in a national context, arguing against the abolition of slavery:

RESOLVED, ... that the propagation of sentiments favorable to the immediate emancipation of slaves in disregard of the civil institutions of the States in which they belong, and as auxiliary thereto the contemporaneous founding of Colleges for educating colored people, is unwarrantable and dangerous interference with the internal concerns of other States, and ought to be discouraged.¹¹¹

Taken together, these resolutions opposed opening a “Negro college” in New Haven because doing so would undermine Yale College and would threaten the stability of our nation.

A vote of 700 – 4 jointly approved these two resolutions, ending any hope of founding a “Negro college” in New Haven. Simeon Jocelyn stood almost alone against literally hundreds of his neighbors, all condemning the college. Only James Donaghe and Roger Sherman Baldwin (later the attorney for the *Amistad* captives) are known to have voted with him.¹¹² Neither Jocelyn nor Baldwin is honored today at Yale. David Daggett and Samuel Hitchcock are honored by two of the three symbols in the Yale Law School shield, which is reproduced today on business cards, letters and publications.

Reasons for Rejecting the “Negro College”

While minutes of the town meeting do not survive, there remain many newspaper editorials and articles, letters to the editor, and personal recollections that allow us to reconstruct the reason why the college was stopped. Almost all the newspaper reports of the meeting, whether favoring or opposing higher education for black people, suggest that the proposal was defeated with the protection of Yale College in mind.¹¹³ A day before the meeting, New Haven’s *Connecticut Journal* editorialized:

The location of a college of blacks here would be totally ruinous to the city ... whose certain effect will be to lower the town’s public morals—to drive from our city its female schools—its throngs of summer visitors—and to stop the vital stream of the city, the influx of young men to Yale College. (September 9, 1831)

The newspaper report describing the meeting concluded:

The citizens entertain a very strong hostility to the idea of a Negro college being thrust into contact with our venerable Yale. (Tuesday, September 13, 1831)

Connecticut’s *Middletown Gazette* concurred:

The support of Yale College, and the numerous female seminaries, depends in no inconsiderable degree, on the character of the inhabitants. Hitherto, New Haven has been distinguished ... But now, if the young ladies are to be elbowed at every corner by black collegians, and the students of Yale are to be met by them in all the pride of supposed equality, the interest of the city, identified as it is with the prosperity of the institutions, will suffer material injury. (October 4, 1831)

The *Boston Courier* identified Yale’s connections with the South as particularly important:

The real objection to the college appears to have been the apprehension of giving offense to the Southern patrons of Yale College. I wish this had been frankly avowed as the true and only ground of opposition. (September 20, 1831)

The second resolution at the Town Meeting suggests one reason why Yale’s connections with the South might have led to the rejection of the “Negro college”: Northern education for black people threatened the Southern slaveholding states, because educated northern black people might sow dissension among their Southern brethren. As the *Vermont Telegraph* scathingly described it:

The northern blacks must be bound to silence! Because slavery does not exist in Connecticut, therefore within the boundaries of Connecticut it must not be spoken against! ... Because neither Connecticut nor Congress has any control over the laws of South Carolina, therefore the free people of color at the north must be doomed to perpetual ignorance and degradation! Such is the logic by which founding of colleges for educating colored people is made out to be an interference with the internal concerns of other states. (September 27, 1831)

The current Senior Fellow of the Yale Corporation, Kurt Schmoke, called New Haven’s response to the “Negro college” “vicious and brutal,” in an article published in 1971, and he decried “the bitter racist feelings held by New Haveners, especially during the Negro college incident. Sins as well as virtues played a part in the history of New Haven.”¹¹⁴ In the 1830s, New Haven was racially polarized.

But New Haven cannot be understood apart from Yale. The responsibility for preventing the “Negro college” from opening its doors must be shared by all. Beyond the individual racism of those attending the town meeting on September 10, 1831, there were other motivations.

Yale, the South, and Colonization

As the U.S. was maturing, Yale was also growing into a university with national status:

Yale College by 1830 was the largest and foremost college in America . . . Sound conservative standards had been developed by President Timothy Dwight, an eminent representative of the status quo, and were defended by his successor, the quiet and retiring Jeremiah Day . . . Students of aristocratic background or aspiration were attracted to Yale from the entire country, the young men of the South coming North rather than going to England or France as in Revolutionary times.¹¹⁵

During John C. Calhoun's vice presidency of the United States from 1825-1832, Yale attracted many Southerners. In 1830, there were 69 Southerners enrolled at Yale, over four times as many as Harvard's 16 or Princeton's 17.¹¹⁶

During this time, there were also important economic and social connections between New Haven and the South, all of which fed the opposition to abolition:

Some of the citizens had profitable business connections with Southern planters, who were good customers for the locally made wagons and carriages. Some had pleasant social relations with Southern boys at Yale, with their sisters in New Haven schools, and with their families who came North to spend the summer on the shores of Long Island Sound. A larger number, perhaps, opposed anything that smacked of abolition for more deep-seated and more sinister reasons.¹¹⁷

In 1831, Yale may have felt vulnerable to controversy. The year before, it had kicked off its first endowment fundraising drive, upon the suggestion of "some spirited friends of the college in the South."¹¹⁸ Yale had reason to be hopeful: In 1825 the "alumni of the college residing in South Carolina" had given a significant donation of around \$800 to help fund Silliman's pet project to purchase a mineral cabinet for geological study.¹¹⁹ With fundraising agents throughout the South, Yale had reason not to "offend [its] Southern patrons."¹²⁰

If Yale was to maintain strong, positive relations with the South, but also retain its prominence in the North, then Yale would need to find some way to reconcile the growing civil tension surrounding the question of slavery. For university officials, this made it difficult to be either pro-slavery or anti-slavery. Many Yale officials found an answer in the movement known as "Colonization," or sending black people to Africa.

In the North, colonization was billed as a moderate anti-slavery approach: Slaves should be freed, but the difficulties posed by racial integration would be best avoided by sending freed slaves to Africa.

In the South, however, colonization was billed as a "neutral" option for dealing with the "problem" of the increasing black population in America. Some considered it anti-slavery; some did not. Even Henry Clay, himself a prominent Southern slave owner, supported colonization largely as a means of avoiding insurrections.¹²¹

The most prominent Yale officials supporting colonization were:

- **Jeremiah Day** Yale's President (1817-1846) and a Vice President of the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1831-1832, when the "Negro college" dispute occurred.¹²²
- **Benjamin Silliman** The first faculty scientist at Yale, from 1806-1864, and the co-founder in 1827, with Leonard Bacon, of the Connecticut Colonization Society.¹²³ His July 4, 1832 sermon, in which he supported the rejection of the "Negro college," was also a sermon about the importance of colonizing black people to Africa.
- **Leonard Bacon** The most important pro-colonization rhetorician and leader. He led the colonization movement in New Haven, was the minister at New Haven's Center Church from 1825-1866, and also served on the Yale Corporation from 1839-46 and 1864-81. In 1846 he was almost selected as the next Yale President, but was beaten out by Woolsey.
- **David Daggett** Yale's Kent Professor of Law, and a leader of the movement against the "Negro college," was also a prominent colonizationist.
- **Siméon Baldwin** Together with Daggett, a leader of the movement against the "Negro college," and a leader of the colonizationist movement.

In many ways, colonization was merely an ill-fated, inadequate response to an extreme evil. Its southern supporters were upset to discover the anti-slavery colonizationist literature from the North. Its

Northern supporters were upset to discover the uses to which southern slave owners put colonization, such as sending black leaders to Africa so as to retain a more docile slave force.

On the one hand, abolitionists often supported more education for African-Americans as a means to end racial prejudice. Simeon Jocelyn explained, after the “Negro college” had been stopped in New Haven:

If we ever expect to see the influence of prejudice decrease, and ourselves respected, it must be by the blessings of an enlightened education. It must be by being in possession of the classical knowledge which promotes genius, and causes man to soar up to those high intellectual enjoyments and acquirements, which places him in a situation, to shed upon a country and a people, that scientific grandeur which is imperishable by time, and drowns in oblivion’s cup their moral degradation. Those who think that our primary schools are capable of effecting this, are a century behind the age ... If we wish to be respected, we must build our moral character, on a base as broad and high as our nation itself.¹²⁴

On the other hand, colonizationists often opposed more education for free black people. New Haven’s *Religious Intelligencer* reported in July 1831, before the town meeting, that any attempt to raise the status of black people, “whether by founding colleges, or in any other way, [tended] to counteract and thwart the whole plan of colonization.”¹²⁵ Education helped to integrate free black people into American society. Integration made it less important, and more difficult, to send black people to Africa.¹²⁶

The fate of the “Negro college” in New Haven in 1831 cannot be understood apart from colonization. In 1827, Leonard Bacon and Simeon Jocelyn had originally worked together on a proposal for a seminary that would train free black people to go to Africa to evangelize the growing colonies of former American slaves. Bacon ceased being a partner in these efforts after Jocelyn’s vision changed, and he proposed a college open to all free African-Americans.

The demise of the proposed “Negro college” encouraged opposition to education for black people elsewhere. David Daggett, a colonizationist, condemned the “Negro college” and then, as Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, ruled in 1833 that, since free black people could not be U.S. citizens, the jury could prevent black people from being educated.¹²⁷ Then in 1835, Daggett undertook another town meeting linking states’ rights, pro-colonization and anti-abolitionism:

A citizen’s meeting held at the Statehouse on September 9, 1835, found Noah Webster, David Daggett, Simeon Baldwin, James Babcock and Minott Osborn helping to frame resolutions which condemned any interference by Congress with the treatment of slaves within any of the states, opposed the use of the mails for ‘transmission of incendiary information,’ proposed African colonization for ‘the free colored population,’ and ‘viewed with alarm the efforts of the abolitionists.’¹²⁸

Hence, it is not surprising that many African-Americans hated the American Colonization Society and everything it represented. In 1832, a chastened Philadelphia Convention of the Free People of Colour said:

The doctrines of [the American Colonization] Society ... should be regarded by every man of color in these United States, as an evil for magnitude, unexcelled, and whose doctrines aim at the entire extinction of the free colored population and the riviting of Slavery.¹²⁹

In 1834, the Philadelphia Convention continued its protests, saying of colonizationists:

They have resorted to every artifice to effect their purposes.
By exciting in the minds of the white community the fears of insurrection and amalgamation;
By petitioning state legislatures to grant us no favors;
By petitioning congress to aid in sending us away;
By using their influence to prevent the establishment of seminaries for our instruction in the higher branches of education.

Each of these “artifices” took place in Connecticut between 1831 and 1835. Perhaps this is why Tappan would say that the colonization society was “a device of Satan and owes its existence to the single motive to perpetuate slavery.”¹³⁰

Colonization was a moderate response to slavery. Those who could not abide moderation in the face

of slavery—especially free black people and abolitionists—could not abide colonization. Whatever we think of such moderation, however, one fact is clear: Colonizationist arguments were used against efforts to expand education for African-Americans, and were used against the establishment of the “Negro college” in New Haven.

The Impact of New Haven’s rejection of the “Negro College”

Many months of violence followed the New Haven town meeting. The day after the meeting, a mob of white people attacked Arthur Tappan’s house. In October, there were similar raids in New Liberia, a black community in New Haven.¹³¹

As for Simeon Jocelyn, “Jocelyn was forced to stop officiating at the African Church in 1834, and three years later, a mob attacked his residence.”¹³² Nevertheless, Jocelyn continued working for racial justice in New Haven, building a racially integrated neighborhood in what would later become “Trowbridge Square.” Simeon Jocelyn and his brother, Nathaniel, also served as “conductors” on the underground railroad, ferrying fugitive slaves north to safer areas.¹³³

New Haven’s *Connecticut Journal* printed statements from other cities that followed New Haven’s example and stopped the Philadelphia Convention’s attempt to establish schools or colleges.¹³⁴

The first college established for African-Americans in the U.S. was “Lincoln University,” established in Pennsylvania in 1854. For twenty-two years after New Haven stopped Jocelyn’s proposed “Negro college” from opening its doors, there remained no African-American institution of higher education.¹³⁵

Yale historian George Pierson notes, “No blacks attended Yale College as students, however, until after the Civil War when Edward Alexander Bouchet earned his B.A. with the class of 1874.”¹³⁶

Kurt Schmoke describes the efforts from 1834-38 of James Pennington, the first black pastor of New Haven’s Dixwell Avenue church, to get a Yale education so he could receive a ministerial license:

Yale refused to allow Pennington to enroll in the seminary and even prohibited him from withdrawing books from the library. They did, however, accede to his desire to audit courses, and for four years Reverend Pennington worked with these handicaps to attain the educational requirements for licensing as a Congregational minister.¹³⁷

James Pennington had escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1827. He headed north as a fugitive, and in 1831 was a delegate to the first annual “Convention of Free Coloured Persons,” the same convention that had approved Simeon Jocelyn’s vision of the “Negro college.” He later published his own life as a slave narrative—*The Fugitive Blacksmith*—and became one of America’s most renowned anti-slavery spokesmen.

His career as an abolitionist focused on education, about which he said, “There is one sin that slavery committed against me, which I can never forgive. It robbed me of my education; the injury is irreparable.”¹³⁸

Yale Students: Confederates and Abolitionists

The events of the 1830s had a strong impact on Yale students. While some became Confederates, others joined the abolitionist struggle.

For example, some of the Yale graduates to achieve distinction amongst the Confederacy included:

- **Judah P. Benjamin** (Yale 1828) future Confederate Secretary of War and Attorney General (referred to as the “brains of the Confederacy”). Benjamin was the highest-ranking person on either side of the U.S. Civil War to have attended Yale, though it is not clear whether he ever graduated.
- **Trusten Polk** (Yale 1831) future Governor of Missouri, then Senator just prior to the Civil War, and then an official within the Confederate government.
- **William Nathan Harrell Smith** (Yale 1834) future congressman for North Carolina, serving in all three Confederate congresses.
- **Richard Taylor** (Yale 1845) would become the son-in-law of Jefferson Davis, and would serve in the Confederate army.
- **Issac Monroe St. John** (Yale 1845) future Commissary General of the Confederacy.

- **Burton N. Harrison** (Yale 1859), future Secretary to Confederate President Davis.

Yale produced abolitionists as well. Two of them had been present at Yale during the “Negro college” incident.

The Yale class of 1833 included Charles Torrey, who became a minister, but later chose to abandon the ministry in favor of the abolitionist call:

In December 1841, he went to Washington as correspondent for several papers, and in January, 1842, suffered a brief detention in jail for attending as reporter a slaveholders’ convention in Annapolis.¹³⁹

This experience in jail apparently did not deter him:

About the first of May, 1844, he went to Baltimore, to make that his headquarters while assisting slaves in Maryland and Virginia escape to the North. On June 24 he was arrested in Baltimore, on the complaint of a Virginia slave-dealer, for aiding slaves to escape, and this was immediately followed by similar action on the part of a Maryland citizen.

He was again imprisoned, and convicted, this time with more dire consequences:

From his residence in Baltimore [he] assisted in the escape of nearly four hundred slaves. Detected, he was condemned to six years of hard labor. He died in prison in 1846 of pulmonary tuberculosis at the age of 33.¹⁴⁰

The Yale class of 1832 included Henry Clay’s nephew, Cassius Clay, who would live to be 93. Unlike his uncle, he fought against slavery. Unlike Torrey, he used politics rather than direct action. Living in Kentucky, great personal risk accompanied Clay’s advocacy:

[In 1845] he started in Lexington *The True American*, a paper favoring gradual emancipation. So violent were the threats against him that he fortified the office, but during his illness the press was seized and sent out of the State to Cincinnati. There he continued to print the paper every week, and distributed it throughout Kentucky ... In 1853 he bought a large tract of land in the Kentucky mountains with the intention of keeping it forever free from slavery, and on this land was afterward established Berea College.¹⁴¹

There is no building on the Yale campus that honors these Yale graduates.

The Amistad Affair

A few years after the “Negro college” incident, Simeon Jocelyn, Arthur Tappan, and Roger Sherman Baldwin found themselves back together again, advocating for racial justice. This time, however, these three did not face alone hundreds of hostile neighbors. During the *Amistad* trial, public sympathy for sending the captives back to Africa was kindled. The captives were freed.

Much has been written about the *Amistad* event—Steven Spielberg has produced a feature-length film, and a replica of the ship has been rebuilt and docked in New Haven. This is not the place for another telling of this famous and inspiring story. A few notes about Yale’s minor role in the *Amistad* incident should suffice.

The most prominent Yale faculty member to help the *Amistad* captives was:

- **Josiah W. Gibbs** A Philology Professor at Yale’s Theological department, Prof. Gibbs helped to translate the Mende language of the African captives, which allowed them to testify on their own behalf during the trial.

Two other Yale faculty—Rev. George Day and Rev. Leonard Bacon—helped to educate and evangelize the *Amistad* captives while they were in jail. No building on the Yale campus honors the Josiah Gibbs of *Amistad* fame.¹⁴² There is a “Bacon” wing of the Yale Divinity School.

The original lawyers on both sides of the *Amistad* case were all Yale graduates. The two lawyers who represented the Spanish Crown, arguing that the *Amistad* captives were slaves who had mutinously murdered their own owners, were:

- **Ralph Ingersoll** (Yale 1808) practiced law in New Haven and had also been active on the committee to draft the resolutions opposing the “Negro college.”
- **William Hungerford** (Yale 1809) practiced law in Hartford. Yale awarded him an honorary doctorate in law in 1856.

The lawyers who represented the *Amistad* captives, arguing for freedom, were:

- **Roger Sherman Baldwin** (Yale 1811) practiced law in New Haven, and had unsuccessfully supported the “Negro college.” He served on the Yale Corporation ex-officio while serving as State Senator (1838-39) and State Governor (1844-1846). Yale awarded him an honorary doctorate in law in 1845.
- **Seth P. Staples** (Yale 1797) practiced law in New York. Staples removed himself from the *Amistad* case along the way, forcing Baldwin to find a new partner in John Quincy Adams. Earlier, Staples founded a private law school in New Haven, which was handed off to Hitchcock when Staples moved to New York in 1824. This school later became the Yale Law School.
- **Theodore Sedgewick** (Yale 1765) practiced law in New York.

Once the *Amistad* case went before the U. S. Supreme Court, former U.S. President John Quincy Adams replaced Staples and Sedgewick as the captives’ representative. The *Amistad* captives won their freedom, and money was raised to send them back to Africa.

The commitment to colonization as a solution to slavery can help explain why the return of the *Amistad* captives to Africa garnered support, while the “Negro college” did not. Abolitionists supported the end of the slave trade. The more conservative colonizationists supported sending all black people to Africa.¹⁴³ In the case of the *Amistad*, the captives in question were *bona fide* Africans, rather than African-Americans. Hence, the *Amistad* rebellion suggested a solution that both abolitionists and colonizationists could support: Send the black captives back to Africa.

Seth Staples is commemorated, alongside David Daggett and Samuel Hitchcock, in the shield of the Yale Law School.

Dwight’s Continuing Influence: Taylor and Stuart

The influence of Timothy Dwight continued to be felt at Yale College during the 1840s and 1850s, especially in the theological field. Not only had Dwight presided over Yale while it produced more proslavery clergy than any other university, but he had tutored three prominent theologians, who themselves went on to train generations: Moses Stuart, Lyman Beecher, and Nathaniel W. Taylor.¹⁴⁴

The most influential of these three was Taylor, who presided over the creation of the Yale Divinity School and created what came to be known as “New Haven theology.” Taylor had been among those mentored most closely by Dwight: “Professor Taylor considered himself the spiritual and theological child of President Dwight.”¹⁴⁵ In 1822, the Yale Divinity School was created, and Nathaniel W. Taylor was appointed its first professor, to the “Dwight Professorship of Didactic Theology.”¹⁴⁶ He became “the central figure in the Seminary, in the minds of the students.”¹⁴⁷

One of Taylor’s official functions was to preside over the Divinity School’s “Rhetorical Society,” a debating group attended by the entire student body. An evening would be framed with a question. Two sides would debate it, the presiding officer (Nathaniel W. Taylor) would decide a winner. The students assembled would then vote for or against the presiding officer’s decision.

The following questions were debated. The opinion of the “President” is here always that of Nathaniel W. Taylor; the opinion of the “Society” is that of the students’ reaction. Through these debates, which occurred as late as 1853, less than a decade before the outbreak of the Civil War, Taylor shaped a generation of Yale students.¹⁴⁸

October 19, 1842

Does the greatest good of the greatest number justify the continuance of slavery at the South?

In view of his present knowledge the President [Taylor] was rather of the opinion that the greatest good of the greatest numbers justified the further continuance of the system. The Society ... declined voting on either side—and in compliance with a wish of the President to vote—voted that they did not know.

November 22, 1843

Does the greatest good of the greatest number justify the continuance of slavery at the South?

President—“Perhaps it may”; The Society did not vote.

December 6, 1848

Does the greatest good of the greatest number justify the continuance of slavery at the South?

President—Affirmative ... Society sustains him.

January 22, 1845

Is it right to assist a slave to run away?

President—negative; Society—negative.

October 15, 1851

Has Slavery in this country been, on the whole, an evil?

President, negative . . . but not confirmed by the Society, which seemed to be nearly equally divided in opinion. At a late hour (not far from half past 10pm) the Society adjourned.

October 27, 1852

Is the Fugitive Slave Law contrary to the Law of God?

President—negative; Society—negative.

January 12, 1853

Is Uncle Tom's Cabin a valid argument against Slavery?

Negative—President and Society.

The most surprising aspect of these debates is their date and their location. They were held inside Yale and were led by Nathaniel W. Taylor, who then presided over the Yale Divinity School and supported slavery into the 1850s. The majority of the students often (though not always) reaffirmed his support for slavery.

The Taylor debates were not the first time that Yale faculty led debates announcing an “official” position in support of slavery. As early as 1768, the following question was used for the final disputations for the M.A. degree:

An mancipia sub servitute perpetua retinere liceat?

Translation: Is one allowed to sell a person into slavery forever?

The correct answer to this question must have been “Yes,” for Ezra Stiles received a letter of objection, stating “I do not like it that they should publicly assert ye lawfulness of keeping slaves.”¹⁴⁹

Timothy Dwight also mentored Lyman Beecher—who became an active colonizationist¹⁵⁰—and Moses Stuart.¹⁵¹ Although Stuart had kept out of “political” disputes while serving as the minister of New Haven’s Center Church, as the nation polarized he decided to speak out. While serving as a Professor of Biblical Studies at Andover Seminary outside Boston, Stuart exerted a strong anti-abolitionist influence, prohibiting his students from attending an abolitionist lecture.¹⁵²

In 1850, Stuart published a pamphlet in defense of Daniel Webster’s famous pro-slavery compromise. The pamphlet, *Conscience and the Constitution*, included a detailed Scriptural defense of slavery:

There are thousands of masters and mistresses of exemplary Christian lives and conversation . . . [T]wo notable cases . . . serve to illustrate and justify my assertions. The celebrated and eminently pious John Newton, of London, was master of a slave ship that went to Africa, several times, under his command. He tells us that until the question was raised in England, by Wilberforce and others, he never once had a doubt in his mind of the lawfulness and propriety of the Guinea trade. To come nearer home, who does not know that the immortal Edwards—immortal as much for his great piety as for his intellectual powers—left behind him in manuscript an Essay on the Slave-trade (probably still extant) in which he defended the trade with all his ability.¹⁵³

Christ purposely and carefully abstained from meddling with those matters which belonged to the civil power. Slavery was one of these . . . He [Christ] doubtless felt that slavery might be made a very tolerable condition, nay, even a blessing to such as were shiftless and helpless, in case of kind and gentle master-ship.¹⁵⁴

The servant who does the wrong of withholding hearty and cheerful obedience shall be punished; for God will punish the wrongdoing slave, as well as the wrongdoing master.¹⁵⁵

Stuart's pamphlet closed with a call for "colonization," or ending slavery by sending black people to Africa. In this way, the problems of slavery could be eliminated without needing to challenge the South or the southern institution of slave holding.

Trained by Timothy Dwight, Moses Stuart and Nathaniel W. Taylor became public figures and educators who used their positions at Andover and Yale to further their pro-slavery ideologies as late as the 1850s, the decade just prior to the Civil War.

The 1856 Kansas Meeting

In 1856, just a few years before the Civil War, Yale professors Nathaniel Taylor and Benjamin Silliman came out against appeasing the South. The meeting was held in United Church on the Green, presided over by the Rev. Leonard Bacon. Henry Ward Beecher, a prominent abolitionist, was the featured speaker.

Nathaniel W. Taylor stood up at a public meeting and opposed the possible expansion of slavery into Kansas, saying, "We have conceded enough and long enough . . . I went for the compromise of 1850. On this spot I made a speech for compromise, and in the same circumstances would make it again . . . We can trust compromises and plighted faith no further. Enough of concession . . . Sir, if worst comes to worst, I could lay off the garments of my profession and put on a soldier's coat in the cause of freedom."¹⁵⁶ (Taylor died in 1858.)

At this meeting, Taylor was joined by Benjamin Silliman.

Silliman came to see that the time for compromise and moderation was past: "Never before . . . have I addressed a public assembly upon a political question. . . . But gentlemen, a real crisis has now come over us, and now for the first time, I tremble for my country . . . I have many friends in the South whom I respect. I love my country—my whole country! But I love more that *principle*, dearer to our fathers than their country, dearer to them than their lives—*Liberty*."¹⁵⁷ Later, Silliman stepped out again by pressing President Buchanan on his views on slavery, and forced Buchanan to admit his pro-slavery views, in an exchange of letters in the late 1850s.

The atmosphere on Yale's campus was changing as the South's decision to secede neared.

A similar change was beginning to occur in New York City. These changes pushed one of the individuals most honored by Yale today—Samuel F. B. Morse—in the opposite direction, leading him into an uncompromising defense of slavery and attack on abolitionists.

Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872)

After graduating from Yale in 1810, Samuel F. B. Morse became an artist and went to live on a plantation with his South Carolinian patrons. He became well known, however, not as an artist but as an inventor. He invented the telegraph in the 1830s, an invention that spread throughout the world within his lifetime, accompanied by both wealth and fame.

Samuel F. B. Morse was much more than an inventor. In 1835, he launched a bid to become the mayor of New York City on the "Nativist" ticket, a growing anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic movement of the time. His published views at the time opposed "outside agitation" that questioned the appropriateness of slavery in the South.¹⁵⁸ Although he lost his bid for mayor, thirty years later, in the midst of the U.S. Civil War, his views appear only to have become stronger.

By the mid-1860s, Morse had become a nationally known Northern activist who supported slavery as a positive good that should be extended throughout the country. He published pro-slavery tracts in which he describes slavery as beautiful and as a source of salvation:¹⁵⁹

Are there not in this relation [of master to slave], when faithfully carried out according to Divine directions, some of the most beautiful examples of domestic happiness and contentment that this fallen world knows? Protection and judicious guidance and careful provision on the one part; cheerful obedience, affection and confidence on the other.¹⁶⁰

Christianity has been most successfully propagated among a barbarous race, when they have been enslaved to a Christian race. Slavery to them has been Salvation, and Freedom, ruin.¹⁶¹

Samuel F. B. Morse defended the institution of slavery without compromise as part of God's ordained plan that must not be opposed or even criticized:

Slavery or the servile relation is proved to be one of the indispensable regulators of the social system, divinely ordained for the discipline of the human race in this world, and that it is in perfect harmony ... with the great declared object of the Savior's mission to earth.¹⁶²

My creed on the subject of slavery is short. Slavery *per se* is not sin. It is a social condition ordained from the beginning of the world for the wisest purposes, benevolent and disciplinary, by Divine Wisdom. The mere holding of slaves, therefore, is a condition having *per se* nothing of moral character in it, any more than the being a parent, or employer, or ruler.¹⁶³

Samuel F. B. Morse did not stop simply with a defense of slavery as desirable. He argued that it is sinful to oppose slavery, and he recommended that churches excommunicate anyone who commits the sacrilege of promoting the abolition of slavery:

Conscience in this matter has moved some Christians quite as strongly to view *Abolitionism* as a sin of the deepest dye, as it has other Christian minds to view Slavery as a sin . . . Who is to decide in a conflict of consciences? If the Bible is to be the umpire, as I hold it to be, then it is the Abolitionist that is denounced as worthy of excommunication; it is the Abolitionist from whom we are commanded to withdraw ourselves, while not a syllable of reproof do I find in the sacred volume administered to those who maintain, in the spirit of the gospel, the relation of *Masters and Slaves*.¹⁶⁴

If the servile relation is an essential and indispensable divinely arranged part of the Social System, is not the attempt to blot it out altogether by force in any community, under the plea that it is a sin, an evil, a wrong, or an outrage to humanity, or indeed in any other place, sacrilegious?¹⁶⁵

Morse went even further. Not only is slavery a divine institution, and not only is the attempt to abolish slavery a sacrilegious and sinful endeavor, but all of the blame for any and every problem arising from slavery can be laid squarely at the feet of the abolitionist:

When the relation of Master & Slave is left to its natural workings under the regulations divinely established, and unobstructed by outside fanatic busybodyism, the result, on the enslaved and on society at large, is salutary and benevolent. When resisted, as it is by the abolitionism of the day, we have only to look around us to see the horrible fruits, in every frightful, and disorganizing, and bloody shape.¹⁶⁶

Morse was elected president of two pro-slavery organizations. The American Society for the Promotion of National Unity officially "thanked God that four million beings, incapable of self-care, were entrusted to Southerners." After Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, they founded, with Morse as first president, the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge. The Society's inception was publicly attacked.¹⁶⁷

Morse authored one of this society's first publications, in which he launched an attack on President Lincoln:

Fanaticism rules the hour. The fanatic is on the throne. I use the term fanatic in no loose sense. Fanaticism is a frenzy, a madness ... a spirit of the pit, clothing itself in our day in the garb of an angel of light, the better to deceive the minds of the unthinking and the simple.¹⁶⁸

Samuel Morse's commitment to slavery led him ultimately to denounce democracy. He disparaged the Declaration of Independence as a "mixture of truths, qualified truths, and fallacious maxims,"¹⁶⁹ and he understood the "abolition Baal" as an outgrowth of the French revolution, which he describes as "poisonous seeds sown for long years by a proud, God-defying infidelity in France."¹⁷⁰ For Morse, too much democracy was poison.

In 1962, Yale University named its newest residential college after Samuel F. B. Morse. At this time, the Civil Rights movement was picking up steam: Martin Luther King Jr. had led the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955-1956. The march on Washington was just one year away (1963), which would be followed by passage of the Civil Rights Act the next year (1964). In this context, Yale created "Morse College."

This honor was in addition to another honor: Being one of only eight people whose statue adorns

Harkness Tower, as one of Yale's "Worthies." The eight "Worthies" include Elihu Yale, Jonathan Edwards, Nathan Hale, Noah Webster, James Fenimore Cooper, John C. Calhoun, Samuel F. B. Morse, and Eli Whitney. Only three of these "Worthies" have residential colleges named after them—Jonathan Edwards, John C. Calhoun, and Samuel F. B. Morse—and all three either owned slaves or published defenses of slavery.

The honor to Morse continues today. Together with John C. Calhoun, Samuel F. B. Morse is lauded by the special tercentennial issue of the *Yale Alumni Magazine* for being among the top graduates from Yale's entire 300-year tradition. The article does mention that "in 1836, [Morse] even tried politics, but lost the mayoral race in New York (on the Nativist ticket)." It mentions neither his pro-slavery publications, nor his leadership of pro-slavery societies almost thirty years later, during the Civil War.

Conclusion

As part of the celebration of Yale's 275th birthday (and the national bicentennial), the office of the Yale secretary published in 1976 a brief history of Yale, in which Yale historian George Pierson noted:

During the early slave controversy New Haven and the Yale Faculty seem to have maintained a conservative stance: in 1831 abolitionist efforts to establish a Negro college met effective resistance.¹⁷¹

The preceding pages have intertwined two stories: one beginning in 1701; the other, in the 1930s. The first story revisits the first one hundred and fifty years of Yale's history, the years before domestic slavery was banned in Connecticut. We examined how the university benefited from slavery, how its leaders and graduates alternately defended or attacked slavery, and how the institution's course affected the lives of African-Americans in New Haven and Connecticut.

The second story considered the ways this history is remembered today, focusing on the building and naming of the residential colleges built in the 1930s and the 1960s. The residential colleges are prominent in the daily life of the University. As soon as they arrive at Yale, all undergraduates are assigned to a College, where they eat, sleep, study, and socialize for much of their time here. As alumni, one's college name is almost as important as the name "Yale."

The essay concludes that, while a number of Yale graduates committed themselves to the abolition of slavery and the expansion of rights for African-Americans, Yale's buildings often bear the names of those who did not.

Slavery existed for 200 years in Connecticut. Colonists rarely questioned their reliance on slave labor. Because slaveholding was especially common among prominent local leaders, slaves became a symbol of status as well as economic assets in the eighteenth century. Only as the revolution approached did resistance to slavery grow. Connecticut African-Americans demanded that the General Assembly grant their rights and repeatedly drew attention to the inconsistency between the revolutionary ideal of universal equality and the institution of slavery. A growing number of white colonists raised their voices in opposition to slavery, among them several Yale graduates.

Samuel Hopkins, who graduated from Yale in 1741, became a Congregationalist pastor in Newport, Rhode Island, a center of New England's slave trade. Once a slave owner himself, by 1776 he had become an uncompromising abolitionist. Stories like his fanned the hope of many early abolitionists that one of the first acts of their new nation would be to ban slavery. James Hillhouse, who graduated from Yale in 1773, participated in a congressional committee to investigate the abolition of the slave trade in 1799. When it became clear that the goal of emancipation would require a protracted struggle, he sought to prevent the expansion of slavery in Louisiana and to limit the political power of slavery's supporters.

In Connecticut, African Americans' demands for immediate and unconditional emancipation were not realized until 1848. Instead, the State of Connecticut passed an act of Gradual Emancipation in its first session that ruled that the children born to enslaved parents after March 1, 1784, would be manumitted upon reaching the age of 25. In the face of these cautious encouragements, African-Americans and their allies continued to organize. They sent petitions to the General Assembly and to local governments demanding the right to vote; they built schools; they organized churches. In New Haven, Simeon Jocelyn, a white pupil of Yale professor Nathaniel Taylor, became the first pastor of the Congregational church for African Americans in the 1820s. Using this church as a foundation, Jocelyn and his congregants organized a comprehensive Sunday school in the 1820s and an elementary school in the 1830s. The most visionary project to come out of the church, however, was a plan for a "Negro college" in New Haven, which would have become the first institution of higher education serving African Americans in the country.

Jocelyn expected some opposition to the plan, but he had underestimated its scope. In a matter of days after he outlined his ideas in a public lecture, Mayor Dennis Kimberly (Yale 1812) called a town meeting. A committee of thirteen presented a resolution to oppose the college by "every legal means." It was a formidable group, a 'who's who' of the legal and political elite of New Haven and Yale. It included Yale's only professor of Law, David Daggett, a once and future member of the Yale Corporation; Samuel Hitchcock, with Daggett, one of the founders of Yale's law school; Judge Bristol,

another former Corporation member; and Isaac Townsend, who would later join Daggett and Hitchcock as a Yale law school professor. The opposition was overwhelming, and Jocelyn's dream of a "Negro college" flourishing alongside Yale ended with a 700 – 4 vote against it.

One of the three individuals supporting Jocelyn at the town meeting was Roger Sherman Baldwin, a Yale graduate and a New Haven lawyer. They would meet again at the end of the very difficult decade that followed—in which Jocelyn's house was wrecked by a mob, Jocelyn was forced to stop officiating at the Congregational church, and the contingent leading the campaign against the "Negro college" passed other resolutions condemning abolitionism in Connecticut. This time, they found themselves working together to help free the *Amistad* captives. The captives were a group of West Africans who had been kidnapped and sold into slavery in Cuba, had mutinied, and gained control of their vessel. In their attempt to return to Africa, they were re-captured and jailed in New Haven in 1839. Jocelyn and Baldwin were instrumental in securing first local, then national support for the captives. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, where former U.S. president John Quincy Adams won their freedom. The *Amistad* affair cast a spotlight onto the horrors of the slave trade at a critical moment and struck a damaging blow to the pro-slavery cause.

These tumultuous years at Yale produced three influential anti-slavery agitators. James Pennington, an escaped slave from Maryland, had attended the Philadelphia convention at which Jocelyn unveiled his proposed "Negro college." He attended Yale classes (although Yale refused to allow him to enroll or to use the library), and went on to be one of Connecticut's strongest advocates against slavery and for education. Cassius Clay (Yale 1832) heard William Garrison speak in New Haven in favor of the Negro College and the abolition of slavery. Clay recalls the speech as a turning point in his life; he became an advocate of gradual emancipation in Kentucky, founded a pro-emancipation newspaper and purchased a large tract of land to remain free soil. The following year's Yale class included Charles Torrey (Yale 1833), who ten years later headed to Baltimore to establish a station on the underground railway. He assisted in the escape of nearly four hundred slaves before he was arrested. Sentenced to six years of hard labor, he died of tuberculosis at the age of 33 in a Baltimore prison.

The victories of Yale's abolitionists are not commemorated by the names of campus buildings—only Samuel Hopkins has a wing of a Divinity School building named after him. This is all the more surprising when we consider that ten residential colleges, built in the 1930s or later, are named after historical figures who achieved prominence before the Civil War.

The men Yale chose to honor in the names of its colleges were prominent politicians, scientists and clergy. They shaped the course of history of Connecticut and the United States in a variety of ways. On the pressing issue of slavery, however, they had much in common. Some tolerated the institution of slavery; others actively defended it. Taken together, nine of the ten men after whom colleges are named either owned slaves or published pro-slavery views (See Appendix 1).

Of the six colonial leaders honored with the name of a residential college, five are known to have owned slaves. This should not surprise us, since most prominent colonial leaders owned slaves at that time. But, like most colonial institutions, Yale College itself benefited financially from the institution of slavery. We have looked closely at the following endowments:

- Yale's first endowed professorship,
- Yale's first endowed scholarship,
- Yale's first endowed library fund.

However, as the anti-slavery movement gained momentum in the years following the revolution and a number of abolitionists arose from the ranks of Yale graduates, it is surprising to find that the leaders honored by Yale continue to be people who owned slaves or supported slavery.

- Under Timothy Dwight, himself once a slave owner, Yale College graduated twice as many pro-slavery clergy as its peer institutions did. Dwight is honored today by both Timothy Dwight College and Dwight Hall.
- Two of Dwight's most famous graduates—John C. Calhoun and Samuel F. B. Morse—became strong public defenders of slavery. Both Calhoun and Morse are honored today with the name of a residential college.

- One of Dwight's chief theological heirs—Nathaniel W. Taylor—taught at Yale and, as late as the 1850s, supported pro-slavery conclusions during student disputations.

Yale's historical relationship to the institution of slavery is a complicated one. Where members of the Yale community have joined in the struggle against slavery, their contributions should be celebrated. At the same time, we must acknowledge the degree to which this same institution and community has been complicit in the institution of slavery.

This process of critical inquiry and self-examination is what universities should be all about. In researching and writing this essay, we intend to provide a model of what it means to struggle with our past to build a better future.

Appendices, Bibliography and Notes

Appendix 1
Table of Namesakes of Yale Residential Colleges

Name	Public Positions Re: Slavery	Yale Honors	New Haven Honors
John Davenport (1597-1669) Founder of New Haven	Slave Owner	Davenport College	Davenport Ave
Abraham Pierson (1645-1707) First Rector of Yale	Unknown	Pierson College	None
Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) Preacher, theologian	Slave Owner	Jonathan Edwards College	None
George Berkeley (1685-1753) Famous philosopher	Slave Owner. Donated a slave-worked Rhode Island plantation, the profits from which endowed the first Yale Scholarship. Publishes and preaches in favor of slavery. Tries but fails to establish college in Bermuda, for which he advocates kidnapping Native American children.	Berkeley College	None
Jonathan Trumbull (1710-1785) Connecticut Governor	Slave Owner. Presided over Connecticut while slavery at its peak, but also during its decline.	Trumbull College	None
Ezra Stiles (1727-1795) President of Yale	Slave Owner. Late in life joins society that enforces gradual emancipation law.	Stiles College	None
Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) President of Yale	Slave Owner. Defends American slavery, but attacks slave trade and slavery in Britain and West Indies. During his tenure, Yale graduates more pro-slavery clergy than any other college.	Timothy Dwight College†; Dwight Hall†	Dwight Street; Dwight School; Dwight Neighborhood
Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864) Scientist & Yale Faculty	"Statutory Slave" Owner.* Later a colonizationist. Supported 1831 rejection of "Negro college" in New Haven	Silliman College; Silliman statue	None
John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) U.S. Vice President	Slave Owner, and plantation master. Uses 40 years of national political power to advocate preservation and expansion of States' rights, and slavery, throughout the nation.	Calhoun College	None
Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872) Inventor of the Telegraph	Publishes that slavery is a positive good, ordained by God and the Bible. Abolitionists should be excommunicated. Attacks Lincoln and Declaration of Independence.	Morse College	None

* In 1784, "gradual emancipation" became law in Connecticut. Children of slaves born after this date are born into a bondage that expires at age 25, later age 21. Melish terms this "statutory slavery." See "Gradual Emancipation" section.

† T. Dwight College and Dwight Hall are each named after both the Timothy Dwight named here and his grandson, Timothy Dwight, who became Yale's president in 1881.

Appendix 2
Table of Other Yale Leaders and their Honors

Name	Public Positions Re: Slavery	Yale Honors	New Haven Honors
Timothy Woodbridge	Slave Owner	Woodbridge Hall	None
Jared Eliot (Yale 1706)	Slave Owner. Donated first Yale library funds.	None	None
Philip Livingston	Slave Trader and slave owner. Donated money to endow Yale's first professorship.	Livingston Gateway	None
James Hillhouse (Yale 1773)	Anti-slavery leader in early U.S. Congress	None	Hillhouse Ave.; Hillhouse H.S.
Samuel Hopkins (Yale 1741)	Supported Immediate Emancipation	"Hopkins" YDS wing.	None
Moses Stuart (Yale 1799)	Published Scriptural defense of slavery	"Stuart" YDS wing	None
Nathaniel Taylor (Yale 1807)	Concluded Yale student disputations with pro-slavery decisions in 1840s and 1850s.	"Taylor" YDS wing	None
Leonard Bacon (Yale 1783)	Outspoken leader of Colonizationist movement, while pastor of Center Church and as member of Yale Corporation. Assisted <i>Amistad</i> captives.	"Bacon" YDS wing	None
Augustus Street (Yale 1812)	On committee to prevent "Negro college" in New Haven. Wealthy New Haven merchant, and significant Yale donor.	Street Hall	None
David Kimberly (Yale 1812)	As Mayor of New Haven, convenes Town Meeting to prevent "Negro college" from opening.	None	Kimberly Ave.
David Daggett (Yale 1783)	Leader of movement to prevent "Negro college" in New Haven. Yale professor, founder of Yale Law School, and Chief Justice of Connecticut Supreme Court.	Symbol in Law School Shield	Daggett St.
Samuel Hitchcock (Yale 1809)	On committee to prevent "Negro college" in New Haven. Founder of Yale Law School.	Symbol in Law School Shield	None
Seth Staples (Yale 1797)	Defender of <i>Amistad</i> captives. Founder of private law school that later merged with Yale.	Symbol in Law School Shield	None
Roger S. Baldwin (Yale 1811)	Advocate for "Negro college" in 1831. Abolitionist and defender of <i>Amistad</i> captives. CT Governor.	None	Baldwin Drive (now closed)
Simeon Jocelyn (Attended Yale briefly in 1822)	Advocate for "Negro college" in 1831. First pastor of Dixwell Congregational Church. Supported <i>Amistad</i> captives. Creator of "Trowbridge" neighborhood.	None	Jocelyn Square
Josiah W. Gibbs (Yale 1809)	Translated language of <i>Amistad</i> captives while a Yale Divinity School Professor of philology.	None	None
James Pennington (Refused admittance to Yale; audited classes)	Escaped slave from Maryland. First black pastor of Dixwell Congregational Church. Prominent abolitionist and advocate of education for blacks.	None	None
Cassius Clay (Yale 1832)	Prominent Southern abolitionist.	None	None
Charles Torrey (Yale 1834)	Quit ministry to buy farm for underground railroad. Helped 400 fugitive slaves escape. Caught, sentenced to hard labor & died in prison.	None	None

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Notes

- ¹ The Yale University Tercentennial, *A Progress Report*, 200:, 1-2.
- ² Mary Mitchell, "Slavery in Connecticut and especially New Haven," 1932: 294.
- ³ Leonard Bacon, *Historical Discourses*, (New Haven, 1839), 388. Davenport's slave ownership is also reported in William Fowler, "The Historical Status of the Negro in Connecticut," *Historical Magazine*, (January 1874), 13; and in Mitchell 1932: 294n2.
- ⁴ *Historical Catalogue of 1st Church of Hartford*, 182, 188; and Mitchell 1932: 288n1. See also Fowler 1874: 13.
- ⁵ Kenneth Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Series, 54:4 (October 1997) 825. Also, William Fowler reports that in 1759, Timothy Dwight and Timothy Edwards executed the will of Jonathan Edwards when they, for a total of £23, "sold, conveyed and in open market delivered two negro slaves, viz.: the one a negro man name Joseph, the other a negro woman named Sue, and is wife to the said Jo, which slaves were lately the proper goods of said Jonathan Edwards." A portion of the executors' report of Edwards' estate is reprinted in Fowler, 187): 16. Jonathan Edwards owned slaves until the day he died.
- ⁶ See http://www.yale.edu/development/gifts/capital_trad.html (June 21, 2001).
- ⁷ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk: The Livingstons of New York 1675-1790*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 65.
- ⁸ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 1992: 35-40.
- ⁹ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 1992: 63.
- ¹⁰ Roberta Singer, "The Livingstons as Slaveholders: The 'Peculiar Institution' on Livingston Manor and Clermont," in Richard T. Wiles, ed., *The Livingston Legacy: Three Centuries of American History*, (Annandale, NY: Bard College Office of Publications, 1987), 70.
- ¹¹ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 1992: 71-72. See also James G. Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700-1774," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 35 (1978) 375-394.
- ¹² James Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700-1774," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 35:2 (April 1978), 388-390, 389n42. See also Darold D. Wax, "A Philadelphia Surgeon on a Slaving Voyage to Africa, 1749-1751" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XCII (1968): 467.
- ¹³ Quoted in Roberta Singer, "The Livingstons as Slaveholders," 1987: 70.
- ¹⁴ Berkeley did not attend Yale, and never stepped foot onto its campus. Gaustad, 1979: 89.
- ¹⁵ Berkeley, *Proposal*, 347. See his sermon in Newport, preached October, 1729 (*Miscellaneous Works*, 381).
- ¹⁶ The bills of slave can be found in the British Museum (Ms. 39316). George C. Mason, *Annals of Trinity Church, 1698-1821*, 51. See also Edwin Gaustad, *George Berkeley in America*, 94n35.
- ¹⁷ The Berkeley Papers in the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University contain the original receipts that document Charles Handy sending rental moneys to Yale for his lease of Whitehall, the old Berkeley plantation, in 1772, 1773, and 1774.
- ¹⁸ Rhode Island General Assembly, *Census of the State of Rhode Island*, 1774: 16.
- ¹⁹ Louis Masur, "Slavery in 18th-century Rhode Island: Evidence from the Census of 1774," *Slavery and Abolition* 6:2 (1985), 139-140.
- ²⁰ In Newport county, about 22% of all white households owned slaves in 1774; in the 1860s, about 25% of white households in the American South owned slaves. See Masur 1985: 142.
- ²¹ For more about the conditions of slavery on Rhode Island plantations, see Rhett Jones, "Plantation Slavery in the Narragansett County of Rhode Island 1640-1790," *Plantation Society* 2 (1986) 157-170; and Robert K. Fitts, *Inventing New England's Slave Paradise: Master/Slave Relations in Eighteenth Century Narragansett, Rhode Island*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998).

- ²² Yale still owns Whitehall farm, though in 1972 it ceded title to the house. In 1762, Yale signed a 999-year lease for Whitehall farm. This lease changed hands many times, until in 1900 it came into the hands of the “Society of the Colonial Dames of Rhode Island,” who received the full title to the house in 1972. In the year 2761, the lease will expire and Yale will recover control of the property. See Edwin Gaustad, *George Berkeley in America*, 85n11.
- ²³ Berkeley, *Proposal*: 348.
- ²⁴ Berkeley, *Proposal*: 359.
- ²⁵ Fowler 1874: 83, 13. See also: Mitchell, 1932: 294, and Frederick Norton, “Negro Slavery in Connecticut,” *Connecticut Magazine*, vol. 5, 1899: 320.
- ²⁶ Robert French, *The Memorial Quadrangle* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1929), 413, see also 30-31. This fund is reputedly “still in existence.” See also Charles Biggs, *Jared Eliot: A Son of Guilford* (Christ Episcopal Church) 7; Herbert Thoms, *The Doctors Jared of Connecticut* (Hamden: Shoe String Press, 1958) 31.
- ²⁷ *Bill of sale or indenture made by Eliphalet Adams of New London, Conn to Joseph and Jonathan Trumbull of Lebanon, Conn. Whereby he sells his mulatto girl Flora, a slave for life.* May 12, 1736. Connecticut State Archives (MV 326 Ad15).
- ²⁸ Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., Papers, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, Connecticut.
- ²⁹ Reprinted in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 1977: 143-145.
- ³⁰ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 1998: 232.
- ³¹ “Trumbull Street” in New Haven commemorates Jonathan Trumbull’s widow. See Doris B. Townsend, *The Streets of New Haven*, 1998: 142.
- ³² Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing* (Hartford: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1978) 222, 277f. Originally printed by Derby and Jackson, New York, 1859.
- ³³ Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles, “To the Public” (August 31, 1773), reprinted in Bruns, *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 1977: 290-293.
- ³⁴ Samuel Hopkins, “A Dialogue on Slavery” (1776), reprinted in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 1977: 397-426.
- ³⁵ James Essig, *The Bonds of Wickedness*, (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1982), 66.
- ³⁶ Morgan 1962: 125. See Stiles’ *Journal of the first months at Newport* in *Gannett Almanacs*. A note in *Stiles’ Literary Diary* (SLD) confirms that this boy was “Bought for Dr. Stiles at Cape Mount on the coast of Guinea in 1757 (when supposed to be about 11 years old), in exchange for a hogshead of whiskey” (Stiles, *Literary Diary*, I: 521). Roland Bainton tells the story like this: “[Ezra Stiles’] awakening as to slavery came when a parishioner inquired whether Stiles would like to share in a slaving expedition on the coast of Guinea. He contributed a small keg of rum and was rewarded with a little blackamoor” (Bainton 1957: 144).
- ³⁷ Stiles’ *Literary Diary*, 2:272.
- ³⁸ Stiles’ *Literary Diary*, 3:51.
- ³⁹ The terms of Jacob’s bondage are repeated again later in the diary, on April 12, 1784: “Jacob, Newport’s boy, was three years old last November. Bound to me till age 24” (Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3:118).
- ⁴⁰ Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3:25. On June 11, 1782, Aaron was bonded to Stiles by his mother, and his bondage lasted “until the last day of May, 1795.” Ezra Stiles died on May 12, 1795.
- ⁴¹ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 1998: 238.
- ⁴² In its inaugural year, 1790, James Dana presented to the Society a sermon entitled “The African Slave Trade” that called for the abolition of slavery. In 1791, Jonathan Edwards Jr. preached the soon-to-be-famous sermon, “The Impolicy and Impropriety of the African Slave Trade.” In 1794, Theodore Dwight, the brother of soon-to-be-president Timothy Dwight, preached a powerful sermon that also called for the abolition of slavery.
- ⁴³ See *The Constitution of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and for the relief of persons unlawfully holden in Bondage* (Yale University, Beinecke Library, BrSides Ci 64a 1790).

- ⁴⁴ See *The Constitution* (Yale University, Beinecke Library, BrSides Ci 64a 1790).
- ⁴⁵ H. Channing to Simeon Baldwin, Nov. 22, 1790, Box 6, Baldwin Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. As quoted in James Essig, "Connecticut Ministers and Slavery," 27.
- ⁴⁶ David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1975), 218n6.
- ⁴⁷ James Essig, "Connecticut Ministers and Slavery," 43.
- ⁴⁸ F. B. Dexter, "New Haven in 1784," *The New Haven Colony Historical Society Papers* (Read Jan. 21, 1884), 130.
- ⁴⁹ Horatio T. Strother, *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*, 1962: 212 (appendix 3).
- ⁵⁰ See Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, "Philanthropy at Bargain Prices: Notes on the economics of gradual emancipation," *Journal of Legal Studies* 3 (1974), 377-401.
- ⁵¹ Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and 'Race' in New England, 1780-1860*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 88-89.
- ⁵² Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 1998: 238.
- ⁵³ Eight statues adorn Harkness Tower. J.C. Calhoun's is joined by S.F.B. Morse's and J. Edwards', among others.
- ⁵⁴ This statement is a summary of a forthcoming article about Hillhouse's anti-slavery activism, which will be published by the *Amistad Committee*, in collaboration with Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery.
- ⁵⁵ John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 33.
- ⁵⁶ In 1846, Calhoun oversaw his son's plantation and wrote a graphic report: "I rode over the whole, & saw every thing; & found things in about as good a condition, as might be expected under circumstances. The Negroes were all well, & looked well, except Susan, who had taken the chills & fever at Arthur Simkin. They were also very contented & spoke well of the overseer. The Mules & horses were in fair condition. The cattle very lean, ... The sheep looked well... The hogs,... The corn...." See John C. Calhoun, "To T[homas] G. Clemson, [Brussels] (Washington, 9th Dec[embe]r 1846), in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* (hereafter, PJCC), edited by Clyde N. Wilson and Shirley Bright Cook (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina, 1998), XXIV: 6-7.
- ⁵⁷ John C. Calhoun, "Speech and Resolution on the Restriction of Slavery from the Territories," in PJCC, XXIV, 169-176.
- ⁵⁸ See John C. Calhoun, "Speech and Resolution on the Restriction of Slavery from the Territories," in PJCC, XXIV, 169-176.
- ⁵⁹ David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 237.
- ⁶⁰ See *Congressional Globe*, 27 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 805-7; 27 Cong., 3 sess., p. 175. Cited in Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), 33.
- ⁶¹ See John C. Calhoun, "Speech on His Slavery Resolutions in Reply to James F. Simmons," in PJCC, XXIV, 190.
- ⁶² William S. Jenkins, *Pro-slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1935), 80.
- ⁶³ As quoted in Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, v. II (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1874), 37.
- ⁶⁴ Thomas G. Bergin, *Yale's Residential Colleges, The First 50 Years* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1983).
- ⁶⁵ In 1909, William Howard Taft, a Yale, became U.S. President.
- ⁶⁶ Brooks M. Kelly calls Dwight the "mentor" of John C. Calhoun. Kelly, 1974: 138.
- ⁶⁷ "[Under Dwight], Yale became an increasingly national institution; became, in fact, perhaps the most national of American colleges ... Yale attracted Southerners because her reputation reached there early" (Kelly, 1974: 138). See also Warner, *New Haven Negroes, 1940*: 2-3.
- ⁶⁸ This manuscript can be found in Yale's "Manuscripts and Archives," Dwight Family Papers (Group 187, series I, box 1, folder 1). The signature matches that of the Yale President, to whom this manuscript must belong. (Colonel Timothy Dwight, the father of the Dwight who would become president, died in 1779, before this manuscript.)

- ⁶⁹ In 1874 William Fowler wrote an article on slavery in Connecticut. He included some personal recollections from Yale. Fowler, who graduated from Yale during Dwight's tenure in 1812, reports: "President Dwight, on one occasion, in illustrating their good qualities, spoke of a negro woman, in his family, who was often consulted as to the management of his family concerns. Amused by this eulogy, some of my classmates laughed outright; when the Doctor broke out upon them: 'If I had thought, young gentlemen, that you would have as much good judgment and good sense as my servant woman has, I should have a higher opinion of you than I now have.' There was no more laughing" (Fowler, 1874: 83). It appears that some African-American servant, possibly Naomi, remained with the Dwight family at least until Fowler's time at Yale.
- ⁷⁰ Tise shows that during this period, Yale graduated 19 proslavery clergy. The next closest, South Carolina College, graduated 14. Princeton graduated 9, and Harvard, 7. Tise then names the most prominent proslavery Yale grads: "From Moses Stuart (1799) to Christopher E. Gadsden (1804), Gardiner Spring (1805), Calvin Colton (1812), Elisha Mitchell (1813), Theodore Clapp (1814), Joseph Clay Stiles (1814), Nathaniel S. Wheaton (1814), Jared Bell Waterbury (1822), and others, Yale's clerical proslavery graduates were as successful and distinguished as nonclerical alumni, Samuel F. B. Morse and John C. Calhoun" (Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America*, 1987: 141-142).
- ⁷¹ This is the professorship endowed by Col. Philip Livingston (see above). Only two Yale presidents held this chair: Naphtali Daggett (1755-1780) and Timothy Dwight (1795-1817).
- ⁷² Kelly, 1974: 118-119. Kelly himself "wonders how much the conservatism of Noah Porter Sr., John C. Calhoun, and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (to name a diverse few) was due to their mentor [Dwight]" (138).
- ⁷³ Timothy Dwight, *President Dwight's decisions of questions discussed by the senior class in Yale College, in 1813 and 1814*, (New York: Boston, Crocker & Brewster, 1833), 103.
- ⁷⁴ Timothy Dwight, *Greenfield Hill*, Part II, lines 253-260, page 38.
- ⁷⁵ Dwight, *Greenfield Hill*, Part II, lines 269-279, page 39
- ⁷⁶ James Essig, "Connecticut Ministers and Slavery 1790-1795," *Journal of American Studies*, 15:1 (1981), 32.
- ⁷⁷ Silverman, *Timothy Dwight*, 70. See also Larry Tice, *Proslavery*, 210.
- ⁷⁸ Timothy Dwight, *Remarks on Review of Inchiquin's Letter* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1815), 81 II n.1.81.
- ⁷⁹ Timothy Dwight, *The Charitable Blessed: A Sermon, preached in the First Church in New Haven, August 8, 1810* (n.p.: Sidney Press, 1810) 20-21.
- ⁸⁰ Timothy Dwight, *Statistical Account of the City of New Haven*, (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1811), 57-58.
- ⁸¹ Charles Cunningham, *Timothy Dwight 1752-1817: A Biography*, (New York: MacMillan, 1942), 336.
- ⁸² Kelly, 1974: 125.
- ⁸³ Kelly, 1974: 130. Dwight also fired Professor J. Meigs (mathematics) because he was too liberal.
- ⁸⁴ Timothy Dwight's grandson, another Timothy Dwight, was also appointed to the Yale presidency, in 1881. The college, and Dwight Hall, are both named after both Yale presidents.
- ⁸⁵ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 33.
- ⁸⁶ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 18. "A part of [Benjamin Silliman's] Yale education had been financed through the sale of slaves" (Brown, 33).
- ⁸⁷ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 36.
- ⁸⁸ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 55-56.
- ⁸⁹ For more on what Joanne Melish terms "statutory slaves," see the section on gradual emancipation, above.
- ⁹⁰ Quoted from a letter to Benjamin from Joseph. See Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 88.
- ⁹¹ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 56, 338n48.
- ⁹² Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 120.

- ⁹³ The need to support Job sparked anger and resentment in Benjamin's brother, Selleck, who referred to Job as a "negro sink" not worth "throwing [money] away" to support (Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 313).
- ⁹⁴ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 33.
- ⁹⁵ Brown, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1989: 119n
- ⁹⁶ *Some of the Causes of National Anxiety, an address delivered in the Centre Church in New Haven, July 4, 1832*, in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* vol.8, no. 6 (Aug 1832) 171.
- ⁹⁷ Benjamin Silliman, *Some of the Causes of National Anxiety*, 1832: 184-185.
- ⁹⁸ Simeon Jocelyn would later become the designer of the "Trowbridge Square" neighborhood, which still exists south of the Hill neighborhood. Floyd Shumway and R. Hegel, *New Haven: A Topographical History*, 1988: 29.
- ⁹⁹ Negro Convention Movement, 1831-1893: The first national organized self-help movement, advocating immediate abolition and equal rights. "The conventions consistently condemned the American Colonization Society's plan to exile emancipated blacks to Africa, and called for the recognition of the constitutional rights of free black people and the integration and assimilation of blacks into American society" (Gibson, 25-26).
- ¹⁰⁰ *Philadelphia Chronicle*, Sept. 5, 1831, "College for Colored Youth." In Kingsley Miscellaneous Pamphlets, vol. 26, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, Yale University.
- ¹⁰¹ Reprinted in *Constitution of the American Society of the Free Persons of Colour, for Improving their Condition in the United States*, Philadelphia, J.W. Allen, 1831, "June 6, Afternoon." In Yale Slavery Pamphlets vol. 86 Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, Yale University.
- ¹⁰² *Constitution of the American Society of Free Persons of Color for Improving their Condition* (1831). In Yale's Beinecke Library as "Yale Slavery Pamphlets #86," 9ff.
- ¹⁰³ *Constitution of the American Society of Free Persons of Color for Improving their Condition* (1831). In Yale's Beinecke Library as "Yale Slavery Pamphlets #86," 9ff.
- ¹⁰⁴ As quoted in William Fowler 1874: 151.
- ¹⁰⁵ Lewis Tappan, *The Life of Arthur Tappan*, (Arno: New York, 1970), 150.
- ¹⁰⁶ The fifth, Roger Sherman Baldwin (later of *Amistad* fame) spoke in favor of opening the "Negro college."
- ¹⁰⁷ The committee also included New Haven's four previous mayors (Baldwin, Bristol, Daggett, Ingersoll).
- ¹⁰⁸ "The resolutions [against the college] were proposed by a committee appointed to draft them, composed of the following gentlemen: Judges Bristol and Baldwin, Jehiel Forbes, S. J. Hitchcock, R. I. Ingersoll, Samuel Wadsworth, Dr. Punderson, A. R. Street, I. H. Townsend, and John Durrie, Esquires." Judge Daggett, Nathan Smith, R. I. Ingersoll, and I. H. Townsend officially spoke against establishing a "Negro college," (*College for Coloured Youth*, 1881: 3).
- ¹⁰⁹ This "Nathan Smith" has no known relation to the "Nathan Smith" who helped found the Yale Medical School, and who died in 1829, before the "Negro College" incident.
- ¹¹⁰ *College for Coloured Youth: An Account of the New-Haven City Meeting and Resolutions: With Recommendations of the College, and Strictures upon the Doings of New Haven*, (New York: Publ. By the Committee, 1831), 5. Kingsley Miscellaneous Pamphlets, vol. 26, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, Yale University. All the following references to newspaper articles are also reprinted in this source.
- ¹¹¹ The Town meeting resolutions are reprinted in *College for Coloured Youth* (see above).
- ¹¹² Lewis Tappan, *The Life of Arthur Tappan*, (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1970), 150.
- ¹¹³ The *Utica Elucidator*. "It was resolved that the establishment of the college would be incompatible with the interests of Yale College and the female schools of the city, and that it should be resisted by every lawful means."
- ¹¹⁴ Kurt Schmoke, "The Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church 1829-1896," *New Haven Colony Historical Society Journal* 20:1 (May 1971), 6, 19. Kurt Schmoke published this essay while a senior in Yale College. He is Senior Fellow of the Yale Corporation, until June, 2002.
- ¹¹⁵ Warner, *New Haven Negroes*, 1940: 2-3

- ¹¹⁶ “The numbers in 1830 reflect the effect of Calhoun’s status as a Yale graduate ... He is credited for having influenced the political history of the United States more than any other graduate in the first two centuries of Yale’s history.” See Garry Lacy Reeder, “Elms and Magnolias: Yale and the American South,” exhibition at Sterling Library (1996), <http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/elms/elms.htm>.
- ¹¹⁷ Horatio Strother, *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*, 1962: 113
- ¹¹⁸ Kelly, 1974: *Yale: A History*, 151.
- ¹¹⁹ James Herrick, 1851: *Catalogue of the principal deceased benefactors to the Academical department of Yale College*. “Yale University Office of Finance and Administration Records,” YRG 5, 1701-, 1940-1983 (bulk), Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Library, Yale University.
- ¹²⁰ As quoted in *College for Coloured Youth*, *Boston Courier*, September 20, 1831. Ironically, Yale never managed to collect large donations from the South. The nullification controversy was underway, and longtime friends of the College—even Calhoun—expressed their regrets. Nevertheless, even without significant donations from the South, Yale succeeded at its goal of raising a \$100,000 endowment. See Warner, *New Haven Negroes*, 1940: 2-3.
- ¹²¹ Annual report of the ACS, 1828-1837; See also William Jay, *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization and American Anti-Slavery Societies*. New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835. Benjamin Silliman also used the fear of insurrection as a basis to advocate sending black people to Africa. See *African Repository* 8:6 (August 1832) 171-172.
- ¹²² Jeremiah Day is the Vice President from Connecticut for the Society in 1831. See “The Fourteenth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society.” Georgetown: James Dunn, 1831, xxvi.
- ¹²³ Hugh Davis, *Leonard Bacon*, 1998: 56.
- ¹²⁴ *Minutes and Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Free People of Colour*, 1832.
- ¹²⁵ As quoted in Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961) 124. See also Jay, 1835, p. 26.
- ¹²⁶ Gibson writes, “During the antebellum period, education was one of the most important goals of free blacks of the North. Free blacks hoped that education would improve their economic and social standing in American society and break down the barriers of racism and discrimination ... Blacks were given very little encouragement to attain their educational goals. In most northern states, Negroes were excluded from public schools, even though they were taxed to support them. The idea of black and white children attending the same schools alarmed whites. Efforts to change whites’ predisposition frequently resulted in bitter and at times violent opposition.” See Robert A. Gibson, “A Deferred Dream: The Proposal for a Negro College in New Haven,” *Journal of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* 37:2, 24.
- ¹²⁷ When Prudence Crandall admitted a black student to her female academy in 1833, the citizens of Canterbury first warned her and withdrew their daughters from the school. Crandall reopened the school exclusively for black women. Canterbury then held a town meeting that crafted a bill stipulating that the selectmen of the town had to approve any out of state students of color seeking an education. The bill passed, and Crandall was arrested for violating it. Judge Daggett upheld her conviction. When, after two appeals, her conviction was overturned on a technicality, a mob destroyed her school and terrorized her students. See Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of our Anti-Slavery Conflict*, (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869).
- ¹²⁸ Rollin G. Osterweis. *Three centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953, 296
- ¹²⁹ *College for colored youth : an account of the New-Haven city meeting*, 1831.
- ¹³⁰ Early Fox, *The American Colonization Society 1817-1840*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1919), 140.
- ¹³¹ *College for colored youth : an account of the New-Haven city meeting*, 1831.
- ¹³² Osterweis, 289. See also Mary McQueeney, “Simeon Jocelyn, New Haven Reformer,” *Journal of the New Haven Colony Historical Society*, (19:3) 66
- ¹³³ Horatio Strother, *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut* 1962: 110.

- ¹³⁴ In 1835 the Philadelphia Convention reported few gains in higher education for blacks: “The committee to whom was referred the duty to ascertain how many manual labour schools are established in the U. States for the instruction of colored youths, beg leave to state, that as far as the committee have been able to learn, there is but one, which is located in the village of Peterborough, Madison County, NY, Founded by Gerritt Smith, Esq. The number of scholars is limited to 18; at present there are but nine: this school has been in operation one year” (*Convention minutes* 1835, 10).
- ¹³⁵ Oberlin College, established in 1833 in Ohio, did admit some African-American students on a selective basis. It remained, however, a predominantly white institution. See J. Band Roebuck and S. Marty Kumanderi, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Their Place in American Higher Education* (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 1993).
- ¹³⁶ Pierson 1976: 53-54.
- ¹³⁷ Schmoke 1971: 6.
- ¹³⁸ *Notable Black American Men*. Gale Research, 1998.
- ¹³⁹ Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College*. New York: H. Holt & Co., 1885-1912. Vol. V, page 249.
- ¹⁴⁰ Roland Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry* (1957), 155-156. See also Joseph C. Lovejoy, *Memoir of Rev. Charles T. Torrey*. Boston, J.P. Jewett, 1847: 364.
- ¹⁴¹ Yale University. *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College* (New Haven, 1903).
- ¹⁴² Gibbs Laboratory is named after the physicist Josiah Gibbs, who graduated from Yale in 1858, long after the *Amistad* event was over. The physicist Gibbs was the son of the philologist Gibbs.
- ¹⁴³ Shortly before John Quincy Adams argued the *Amistad* case before the U.S. Supreme Court, he spoke with Francis Scott Key, a national leader of the American Colonization Society. Key told him, “The best thing that could be done, was to make up a purse, and then pay for them, and then send them back to Africa.” Simeon E. Baldwin, *The Captives of the Amistad*, New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1886, 353; see also 363-4.
- ¹⁴⁴ Kelley, *Yale: A History*, 1974: 145.
- ¹⁴⁵ John T. Wayland. *The Theological Department in Yale College, 1822-1858*. New York, Garland Publishing, 1987: 82. Also: “In 1808, [N.W. Taylor] became a student of theology with President Dwight for 4 years, an unusually thorough and protracted course for that period. For two years, Taylor was a member of Dwight’s family, acting as his *amanuensis*, and writing down, at his dictation, most of the sermons which comprise his ‘theological system’ ” (Wayland 1987: 81).
- ¹⁴⁶ This was only Yale’s second endowed chair, in addition to the chair typically occupied by Yale’s president.
- ¹⁴⁷ Wayland, 1987: 79.
- ¹⁴⁸ Wayland, 1987: 298-300. See *Treasurer’s Book of the Rhetorical Society*, Book E.
- ¹⁴⁹ Letter from “Alison” on October 20, 1768. See Ezra Stiles, *Letters & papers of Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, 1778-1795*, Isabel M. Calder, ed. (New Haven: Yale University, 1933), 434.
- ¹⁵⁰ Beecher is most famous for the “Lane Rebellion,” a conflict between colonizationists and abolitionists in Cincinnati. Beecher “would not tolerate whites fraternizing with blacks, even in the line of religious duty, because it would inevitably lead to ‘promiscuity and mongrelization’.” See J. Earl Thompson Jr., “Lyman Beecher’s Long Road to Conservative Abolitionism,” *Church History*, 100. He viewed free blacks as “a permanently alien and unassimilable element of the population” (91) and as a “definite liability to the economic prosperity and social stability of white America” (95).
- ¹⁵¹ Kelley, 1974: 145
- ¹⁵² Roland Bainton 1957: 146.

- ¹⁵³ Moses Stuart, *Conscience and the Constitution*. Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1850, 33. If Stuart refers to the same draft letter on slavery that exists today, he overstates Edwards' position. Nevertheless, this remark helps to illuminate both Stuart and Edwards' role. Edwards, like both Dwight and Stuart, was a theological conservative, and his name and prominence would be used to defend the conservative position on slavery up through the Civil War. Other writers picked up this version of Edwards: "President Jonathan Edwards wrote a vindication of the slave trade. This I state on the authority of Professor Moses Stuart." Fowler, 1874: 17; Jonathan Edwards "not only owned slaves but wrote in vindication of the slave trade." Mitchell, 1932: 302.
- ¹⁵⁴ Stuart, 1850: 45-46.
- ¹⁵⁵ Stuart, 1850: 49.
- ¹⁵⁶ Roland Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry*, 1957: 157-158.
- ¹⁵⁷ Roland Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry*, 1957: 158.
- ¹⁵⁸ Morse wrote a 200-page book devoted almost exclusively to the evils of immigration generally and of Roman Catholics in particular: *Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States* (New York: 1835). Another booklet, written the same year, reveals a reason for his vehemence: Irish Roman Catholic agitators denounced the South and had "thrown a firebrand into the Slavery question;" *Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions of the United States Through Foreign Immigration* (New York: 1835), reprinted in New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969: 14.
- ¹⁵⁹ *The Constitution, Papers from the Society for the Diffusion of Public Knowledge*, S. F. B. Morse, President, New York: Offices of the Society, 1863; and S. F. B. Morse, *An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery in the social system, and its relation to the politics of the day* (New York, Papers from the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, no. 12, 1863) in *Slavery Pamphlets # 60*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- ¹⁶⁰ Morse, *Ethical Position of Slavery*, 1863: 13.
- ¹⁶¹ Morse, *Ethical Position of Slavery*, 1863: 16.
- ¹⁶² Morse, *Ethical Position of Slavery*, 1863:10.
- ¹⁶³ Samuel F.B. Morse, *Letters and Journals*, ed. E. L. Morse, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 2:331.
- ¹⁶⁴ Samuel F.B. Morse, *Letters and Journals*, ed. E. L. Morse, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 2:416
- ¹⁶⁵ Morse, *Ethical Position of Slavery*, 1863: 10
- ¹⁶⁶ Morse, *Ethical Position of Slavery*, 1863: 17
- ¹⁶⁷ Mabee, 1943: 346, 348-350
- ¹⁶⁸ Morse, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 1863, 2
- ¹⁶⁹ Morse, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 1863, 4
- ¹⁷⁰ Morse, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 1863, 3
- ¹⁷¹ George Pierson, *Yale: A Short History* (published by the Office of the Secretary, Yale University: 1976), 53.

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Slave owners did not voluntarily free their slaves, but many blacks took advantage of the declaration to leave their owners and join the Union Army to support those who had upheld their freedom. Nearly 200,000 black soldiers played an important role in the Civil War, with 16 eventually earning Medals of Honor, the nation's highest honor for valor. Nonetheless, Johnson attempted to follow Lincoln's plan for abolition and urged the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. Undoubtedly, both men had a hand in ending slavery but ultimately, victory on the battlefield was the true emancipator. You just finished Abolition of Slavery. Nice work! Previous Outline Next Outline. The families of slave owners and the people they enslaved gather for a "reunion" in Kentucky. Edward Rugemer is an Associate Professor of African American Studies & History at Yale who studies comparative slavery and abolition and antebellum U.S. history. We talk with Professor Rugemer about his new book, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World*, for which he was Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. 15 October at 13:34. Great interview with GLC Modern Slavery Working Group Facilitator Dr. Jessica Pliley. The article, "Yale, Slavery and Abolition," is being published by the Amistad Committee, which was founded 162 years ago to lead the effort to free the African slaves who landed on a ship in New Haven harbor after rebelling against their captors. It calls for Yale to acknowledge how it has benefited from the profits of slave trade, and to consider reparations to those whose ancestors suffered under slavery. "Universities are first and foremost supposed to stand up for the truth," said Antony Dugdale, a doctoral student in philosophy and one of the th