

African americans: a concise history by darlene clark hine

[History](#)



The Declaration of Independence that proclaimed that all humans were equal in the new nation, became a motivation for the Black people to claim their equality (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 80). The Black leaders started to point out that the principles of the new nation were “ incompatible with slavery” (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 81). This response showed that Black people were gradually absorbing the enlightenment values and they saw the War and independence of the nation as the way ahead to attain equality and freedom (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 77-95).

2. In 1775, the first anti-slavery association was formed in the North with Benjamin Franklin as its president (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 101). Such societies spread across the nation soon and all of them together formed a loose network as well, the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 101). In the Upper-South, on the other hand, “ manumission, self-purchase and freedom suits” resulted in the formation of the early free Black communities (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 103). Free Black communities gradually emerged in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Newport, Richmond, Norfolk, New York, etc. (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 107). The earliest Black institutions were mutual aid societies providing charitable support to Black people, among which Free African Society and black Freemasons stood out (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 107). Then the Black churches and schools evolved (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 110-115).

3. As early as from “ mid-1600s”, there were a few African American slave

owners in America (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 128). Most of them had become slave owners “ to protect their families from sale and disruption” (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 128). Sometimes to protect a relative from forced migration, a Black man with money would buy his freedom (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 128). These instances show the solidarity the Black people felt for their suffering brothers and sisters. There were also a few black slave owners who owned slaves for “ financial reasons” (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 128). These slave owners were not very different from the White slave owners (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 128-140).

4. Black women made great contributions to the early abolitionist movement (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 180). The United States of that era was highly patriarchal (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 180). Women were not allowed to act in political, professional or economic realms and were expected to keep themselves to “ domestic” roles alone (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 180). Women like Charlotte Forten and Maria W. Stewart started the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 180). A similar organization was formed in Massachusetts also (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 180). These women were intellectual elites but there was also a parallel movement developing among both Black and White lower-class women who were “ practical abolitionists” (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 182). Many such women put at risk, even their lives, to hide fugitive slaves and to buy freedom for “ themselves and their loved ones” (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 182).

5. In the North, the Black slaves numbered around four million and the White

people were a divided camp, one group advocating the abolition of slavery and the other supporting slavery (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 210). The opposition of the Southerners to spreading of slavery to the Western parts as part of the Western expansion was purely economic and also based on nativistic sentiments (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 211-213). Those who supported slavery had a strong belief that Black people were genetically not capable of being equal to White people and that they were meant to become slaves (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 212). This kind of racism was prevalent. The novel, *Uncle Toms Cabin*, written by a White woman, Harriett Beecher Stowe, had a great impact on the mindset of the White people and helped develop an anti-slavery sentiment (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 219). The issue of fugitive slaves and the cruel laws made to put them back into slavery also evoked negative sentiments in the minds of the White people towards slavery (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 221).

6. Many Black people fought for the South because they realized that the future freedom of Black people could materialize only in a new nation with more democratic principles (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 235). Lincoln was offering colonization of Central America as a solution for Black people to find a place of their own but understanding the injustice involved in this proposal, the Black people rejected it (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 238). Once emancipation proclamation was pronounced and Black people were allowed to join Union army, it was the turn of the White officers and national leaders to be surprised by the bravery that Blacks showed in the war (Hine, Hine and Harrold, 245). On the other