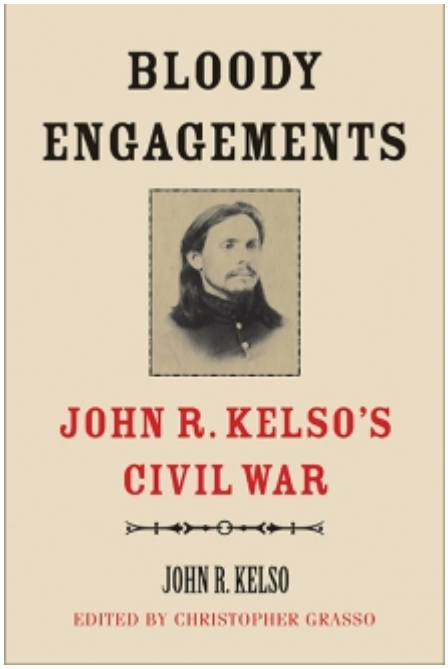
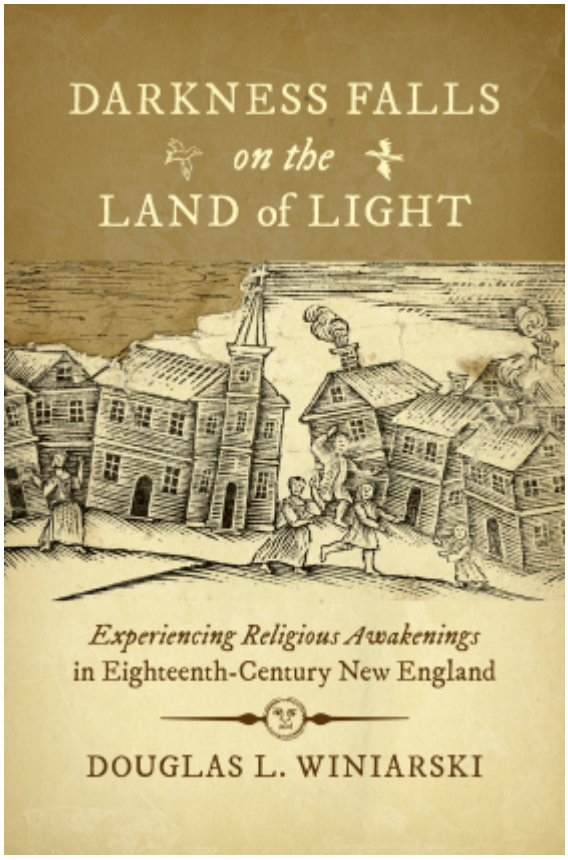
Bloody Engagements



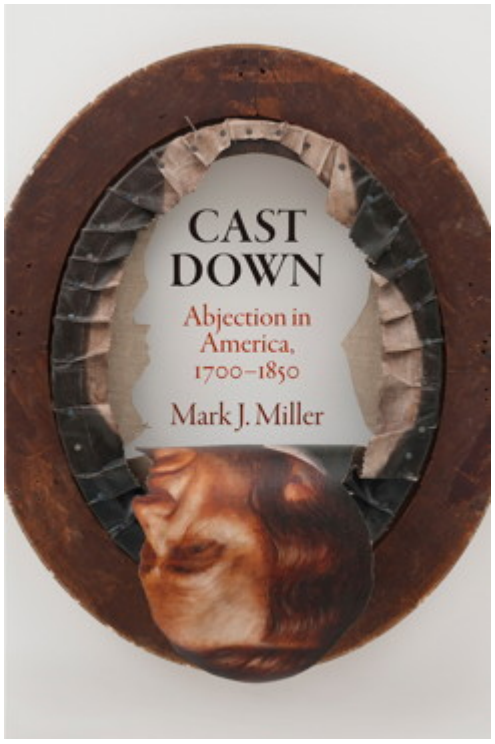
As Grasso explains in his introduction, Kelso became a “preacher and schoolteacher turned Civil War guerrilla fighter who subsequently became a congressman calling for the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, then later a public agnostic, a spiritualist lecturer, and eventually an anarchist.”

Fractious Piety: Revivalism and Disunion in Eighteenth-Century New England



Winiarski is primarily interested in the impact of the introduction of popular religion on New England. It will come as no surprise to scholars of the Great Awakening that he highlights the role that the 1740 arrival of Grand Itinerant George Whitefield played in unsetting an already religiously fractious New England.

Strong Abjections



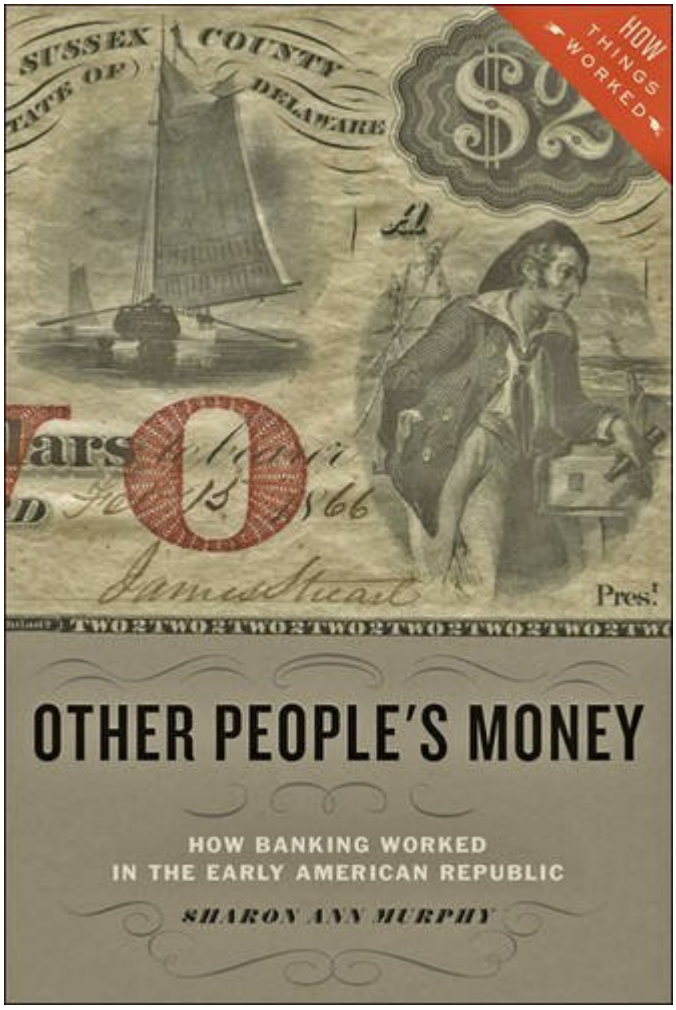
Miller’s book centers on the queerness of suffering, theorizing modes of abjection that destabilize and shift sexual and racial identifications.

Commemorative Headdress For Her Journey Beyond Heaven



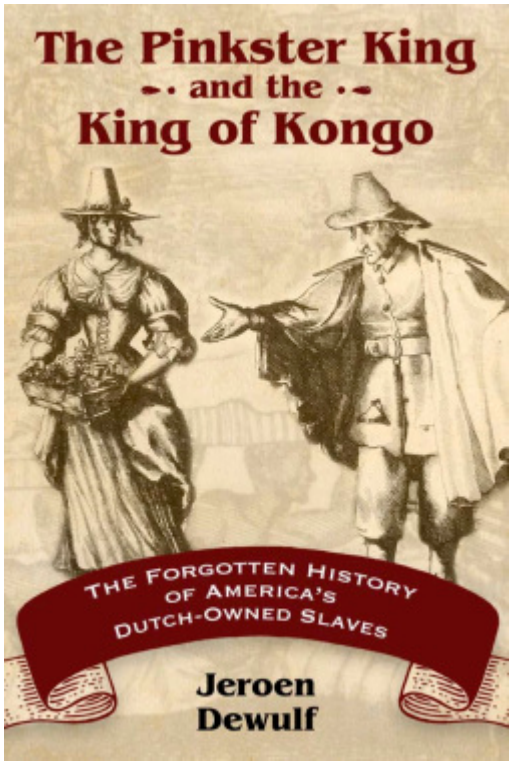
(October 1830)

A Handy Handbook for Financial Historians



Economic concepts are explored in this book, but without the intimidating formulas and regressions that would normally send students accustomed to a predominantly narrative-driven discipline running for the hills.

The Origins of Pinkster: An African American Celebration in North America's Dutch Communities



Dewulf is right to address the important West Central African influences on North American celebrations such as Pinkster. West Central Africans played an important role in many American slave communities, as several scholars have shown in recent years.

“To what complexion are we come at last?”

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Performing the Temple of Liberty

Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760–1850



Jenna M. Gibbs

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Jenna M. Gibbs, *Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760-1850.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. 328 pp., $55.

Jenna Gibbs's *Performing the Temple of Liberty* begins with a fanciful invitation to the reader to accompany her on a "stroll along the Thames River," past the scene of slaves being led to ships that will transport them for sale overseas, towards taverns and coffeehouses where Londoners might have been discussing the Haymarket Theatre's current production of Colman's *Inkle and Yarico*. She juxtaposes these two images—shackled black bodies *en route* to the Americas with a play featuring white bodies in blackface debating the moral evils of slavery—to offer a point of entry into her larger subject: a comparative study of performance culture and abolitionism in London and Philadelphia during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

Over the past twenty years, theater scholars have argued for the importance of performance culture in shaping political thought in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic world. For example, Jeffrey H. Richards's 1991 study, *Theatre Enough*, explores the metaphor of politics in America's revolutionary ideology. Additionally, scholars such as Peter Reed, Daphne Brooks, Gay Gibson Cima, Lisa Merrill, Douglas Jones, John Frick, Amy Hughes, Marvin McAllister, W.T. Lhamon Jr., Tracy Davis, Sandra Gustafson, Sarah Meer, and Shane White (among others) have paid careful attention to the ways in which transatlantic performance culture engaged with issues of race, and particularly questions of liberty and slavery.

Gibbs's seven-chapter study (divided into three parts with an introduction and a conclusion) shifts back and forth between London and Philadelphia as two poles of antislavery activity in the Atlantic world. In chapters one, two, and three, she explores the origins of what she labels "oral blackface," or a "new genre of racial ridicule, with [a] free exchange between theatrical, print, visual, and civic culture" (49). She examines the ways in which the dialogue of popular blackface characters such as Mungo (from Charles Dibdin's popular play *The Padlock*) infiltrated rhetorical and visual practices beyond the playhouse—whether in political cartoons or even costumes worn to fancy-dress balls (65). She suggests that even as Mungo and some of his counterparts (like Harlequin Negro) were adopted by antislavery activists, they also provided fodder for those who opposed abolition by offering infantilized or clownish representations of black characters. As Gibbs, Brooks, Reed, Nathans, and others have noted, depictions of African or African American characters were often co-opted by groups with diametrically opposed goals and invoked to demonstrate that slavery was inherently evil *or* that it protected those too simple to fend for themselves.

Depictions of African or African American characters were often co-opted by

groups with diametrically opposed goals and invoked to demonstrate that slavery was inherently evil or that it protected those too simple to fend for themselves.

This paradox of representation lay at the heart of much antislavery performance culture in the Atlantic world. Communities of activists on both sides of the Atlantic sought a resolution to this seemingly inescapable contradiction by building grandiose visions of a return to Africa as a solution for British and American slavery and the repatriation of stolen African peoples, as well as a natural site for both territorial and evangelical expansion. In chapter three, Gibbs mentions William Dunlap's adaptation of George Colman's *The Africans, or War, Love, and Duty* as an example of a transatlantic drama that draws on a wider lexicon of sermons, histories, and other representations of Africa circulating in British culture. And while Colman and Dunlap (who was a secretary of New York's Manumission Society) both championed the antislavery cause, Gibbs argues that each did so while both implicitly and explicitly "trumpeting white cultural superiority" (101).

Chapters four and five examine the rapid increase and expansion in the performance of urban blackface—connected to the proliferation of print and theatrical circulation in the wake of the War of 1812. Urbanization and early industrialization in the U.S. widened the racial spectacle(s) on display for British theater-goers in America, as they encountered new incarnations of familiar black characters. As Gibbs notes, "The urban picaresque and proto-variety vaudeville genres were … used to critique slavery even as their characters disparaged black freedom" (117). As theater scholars Nathans, Frick, Hughes, Meer, Jones, and Merrill have noted, part of the challenge of publicly critiquing African slavery onstage was that both British and American audiences had a long history of violent protest against unpopular ideas—protests that periodically resulted in the destruction of performance spaces or even bodily harm to the actors and orchestra members. Thus even the most passionately abolitionist managers, performers, and playwrights often framed their messages in more palatable or unthreatening forms.

And while black characters continued to be played by white actors in blackface (and often *British* actors in blackface, most notably in the case of Charles Mathews, which Gibbs discusses in chapter five), more and more United States-inflected representations of African American characters were emerging in the Atlantic circuit. As United States-based characters began to populate the theatrical, visual, and literary landscape, they underscored the "British critique of American democracy,"—a theme Britons had invoked since the Revolutionary War when Americans tried to justify their own battle for liberty alongside the continuation of chattel slavery (176).

Chapter six/part three begins with a fascinating consideration of how British cosmopolitanism combined with the "full-blown scientific racism embedded in the

mockery of black slavery" to highlight "a dialogue between the burlesque and the utopian" (178). Gibbs argues that far from existing as inherent opposites, "blackface minstrelsy and revolutionary utopianism did not merely take the stage side by side; rather blackface minstrels became *part* of the performance of revolutionary utopianism" (179). The turmoil of the 1830s spawned a number of "coded figure[s] of contested meanings" on London and Philadelphia stages, from the heroic Spartacus to the clownish Jim Crow (205). For Gibbs, as for other scholars of theater history, the slave revolts of the 1830s offer a pivotal moment to reexamine the relationship between the representation of slavery and blackness in white Atlantic culture, as well as a renewed investigation of black agency. For example, Gibbs analyzes Robert Montgomery Bird's familiar 1831 play, *The Gladiator* (a tragedy that the author acknowledged offered a natural association with the Nat Turner uprising), and considers it alongside Bird's lesser-known novel *Sheppard Lee* (1836), which also traces the history of an uprising—this time one set in the South, rather than ancient Thrace and Rome. The juxtaposition underscores the ways in which Bird tempered his message to suit the medium of performance (as well as the personality of star actor Edwin Forrest, for whom the play was written).

Chapter seven and the conclusion examine the consequences of decades of building "radical agitation and sociopolitical unrest" (212). In this chapter, Gibbs pays particular attention to George Dibdin Pitt's *Toussaint L'Ouverture, or The Black Spartacus* and novelist George Lippard's *Washington and his Generals; or, Legends of the Revolution*. Both call for a "radical and racially inclusive social and economic regeneration" through the black heroes in their works (214). Including Lippard in this chapter is a particularly intriguing choice given his reputation for writing works that hit close to home among his fellow Philadelphians. The theatrical adaptation of his *Monks of Monk Hall* was reportedly so scathing and scandalous that it had to be pulled from the stage before its opening. As Gibbs notes, both Pitt's *Toussaint L'Ouverture* and Lippard's *Washington and his Generals* address the challenge of the growing white underclass (a theme scholar Peter Reed has explored as well). Gibbs also probes British audiences' interest in the American-born black performer Ira Aldridge. Britons appreciated the ways in which Aldridge combined familiar tropes of minstrel performance with antislavery themes (224). As theater scholar Bernth Lindfors has observed, it was not until Aldridge "escaped" the Atlantic circuit and began performing elsewhere in Europe (most notably Prussia and Austria) that he began to be known as a classical actor.

In her conclusion Gibbs turns (perhaps not surprisingly) to the work that galvanized and transformed the performance of race and slavery in the Atlantic world: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe's controversial novel was rapidly adapted for the stage in a bewildering array of genres, from the minstrel burlesque to tragedy, and produced a proliferation of images, pamphlets, and objects (such as china figurines of Uncle Tom and Little Eva) for audience consumption on both sides of the Atlantic. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* demonstrated the inability of Atlantic performance culture to contain or control images of blackness or slavery, a point further underscored by Gibbs's astute use of the image "Our

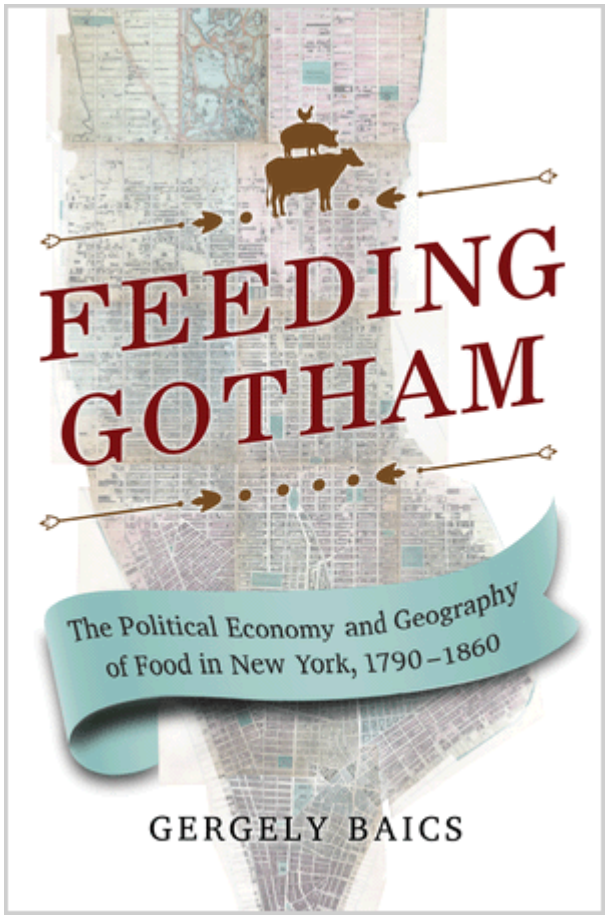
Goddess of Liberty" (1870), representing a range of female faces, including white, Irish, African, and Native American, and punctuated with the query, "What is she to be? To what complexion are we come at last?" (250). This image offers a nice counterpoint to Gibbs's invocation of the various "goddesses of liberty" or "Spirits of Columbia" that she cites throughout the text, tracing their trajectory alongside the young nation's discourse on race relations and the role of whites in uplifting enslaved African populations.

As a minor note, the study is peppered with some factual errors related to dates of performance, as well as occasional chronological confusion among the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources that Gibbs cites. Nevertheless, this is a well-written and comprehensive work that should help scholars of British and American history imagine how they might integrate an understanding of performance culture into an examination of race and slavery in the pre-Revolutionary and antebellum periods.

This article originally appeared in issue 15.3.5 (July, 2015).

Heather S. Nathans is the author of *Early American Theatre from the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson: Into the Hands of the People* (2003); *Slavery and Sentiment on the American Stage, 1787-1861: Lifting the Veil of Black* (2009); and *Hideous Characters and Beautiful Pagans: Performing Jewish Identity on the Antebellum American Stage* (under contract), as well as numerous other essays on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American theater. She is the president of the American Society for Theatre Research and the series editor for *Studies in Theatre History and Culture*with the University of Iowa Press. Nathans is professor and chair of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University.

Slaughterhouse Rules: The Deregulation of Food Markets in Antebellum New York



Baics's primary concern is to understand the benefits and costs of public markets and their deregulation for the living standards and material well-being of all of the city's inhabitants.

American Prophecies: African American News in the Antebellum Era

THE COLORED AMERICAN.

SAMUEL E. CORNISH, Editor. | *New-York, Saturday, March 4, 1837.* | PHILIP A. BELL, Proprietor.

VOL. I. | "RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION" | NO. 9.

THE

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Gen. Jackson and the Free People of Color.

HIS FIRST PROCLAMATION.

Head Quarters, Seventh Military District, Mobile, Sept. 21, 1814.

TO THE FREE COLORED INHABITANTS OF LOUISIANA.

Through a mistaken policy you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights, in which our country is engaged. This no longer shall exist.

As sons of Freedom, you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessings. As Americans, your country looks with confidence to her adopted children, for a valourous support, as a faithful return for the advantages enjoyed under her mild and equitable government. As fathers, husbands, and brothers, you are summoned to rally round the standard of the Eagle, to defend all that is dear in existence.

Your country, although calling for your exertions, does not wish you to engage in her cause without remunerating you for the services rendered. Your intelligent minds are not to be led away by false representations—your love of honor would cause you to despise the man who should attempt to deceive you. In the sincerity of a soldier, and the language of truth, I address you.

To every noble hearted freeman of color, volunteering to serve, during the present contest with Great Britain, and no longer, there will be paid the same bounty in money and lands, now received by the white soldiers of the United States, viz. one hundred and twenty-four dollars in money, and one hundred and sixty acres of land. The non-commissioned officers and privates will also be entitled to the same monthly pay and daily rations and clothes, furnished to any American soldier.

On enrolling yourselves in companies, the Major General commanding, will select officers for your government, from your white fellow-citizens. Your non-commissioned officers will be appointed from among yourselves.

Due regard will be paid to the feelings of freemen and soldiers. You will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisions or unjust sarcasm. As a distinct, independent battalion or regiment, pursuing the path of glory, you will, undivided, receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen.

To assure you of the sincerity of my intentions, and my anxiety to engage your invaluable services to our country, I have communicated my wishes to the Governor of Louisiana, who is fully informed as to the manner of enrolments, and will give you every necessary information on the subject of this address.

ANDREW JACKSON,
Major General Commanding.

General Jackson's

2d PROCLAMATION TO THE FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR.

Soldiers!—When on the banks of the Mobile, I called you to take up arms, inviting you to partake the perils and glory of your white fellow citizens, *I expected much from you*; for I was not ignorant that you possessed qualities most formidable to an invading enemy. I knew with what fortitude you could endure hunger and thirst, and all the fatigues of a campaign. *I knew well how you loved your native country*, and that you had, as well as ourselves, to defend what man held most dear—his parents, relatives, wife, children, and property. You have *done more than I expected*. In addition to the previous qualities I before knew you to possess, I found, moreover, among you, a noble enthusiasm which leads to the performance of great things.

Soldiers!—The President of the United States shall hear how praiseworthy was your conduct in the hour of danger, and the representatives of the American people will, I doubt not, give you the praise your exploits entitle you to. Your General anticipates them in applauding your noble ardour.

The enemy approaches, his vessels cover our lakes, our brave citizens are united, and all contention has ceased among them.—Their only dispute is, who shall win the prize of valor, or who the most glory, its noblest reward. By Order,

THOS. BUTLER, Aid de Camp.

ON THE RIGHT OF COLORED PEOPLE TO VOTE.

"For about forty-five years, from 1777, when the old Constitution, (drafted by JOHN JAY,) was formed to the adoption of New, in 1822, the free colored male inhabitants of this State, enjoyed the right of suffrage, subject to such restrictions and limitations only, as attached to the exercise of the same right by white male inhabitants. For the last fifteen years the exercise of this right has been denied to all colored male citizens, except those who own a freehold estate of $250 in value: a provision by which all but a mere fraction of the 44,000 colored people of this state have been disfranchised. The rights and privileges of other citizens have been enlarged, while our own, and those of our brethren have been abridged. Foreigners and aliens to the government and laws—strangers to our institutions are permitted to flock to this land, and in a few years are endowed with all the privileges of citizens; but we, *native* born Americans, the children of the soil, are most of us shut out."

[The following are extracts from speeches of some of our most distinguished men, in the Convention for amending the Constitution held in 1821, *resisting* the abridgement of the right of colored men to vote as enjoyed under the old Constitution. The extracts are taken from Carter and Stones Report of the Proceedings of that body, but have been arranged under appropriate heads.]

On the injustice of Disfranchising them.

PETER A. JAY said, when this Convention was first assembled, it was generally understood that the provisions would be made to *extend* the right of suffrage, and some were apprehensive that it might be extended to a degree which they could not approve. But, Sir, it was not expected that this right was in any instance to be restricted—much less was it anticipated, or desired that a single person should be disfranchised. Why, Sir, are men to be excluded from rights which they possess in common with their countrymen. What crime have they committed? Why are they who were born as free as ourselves, natives of the same country, and deriving from nature and our political institutions, the same rights and privileges which we have, now to be deprived of all their rights, and doomed to remain for ever as aliens among us.

CHANCELLOR KENT supported the motion of Mr. Jay—[viz. to strike out the word *white* from the limitation.] He was disposed, however, to annex such qualifications as should prevent them from coming in bodies from other States to vote at elections. *We did not come to this Convention* (said Chancellor Kent,) *to disfranchise any portion of the community, or take away their rights.*

ROBERT CLARKE, Esq. (from Deleware,) said, I am unwilling to retain the word "*white*," because its detention is repugnant to all the principles and notions of liberty to which we have heretofore professed to adhere, and to our declaration of independence. We hold these truths to be self evident—that all men are created equal, &c. The people of color are capable of giving their consent, and ever since the formation of the Government, they have constituted a portion of the people, from which your Legislature have derived their "just powers," and by retaining that word (*white*) you deprive a large and respectable number of the people of this State of privileges and rights which they have enjoyed in common with us, ever since the existence of the government, and to which they are justly entitled.

By retaining this word we violate the Constitution of the United States. There is a clause upon which it crowds very hard.—Free people of color are included in the number which regulates our representation in Congress, and I wish to know how persons can be represented when they are deprived of the privilege of voting for representatives. The Constitution says, "representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the different States, according to the inhabitants thereof, including *all* free persons," &c. All colors and complexions are here included. It is not free *white* persons. No, sir, our venerable fathers entertained too strong a sense of justice to countenance such an odious destinction.

Now, sir, taking this in consideration with the Declaration of Independence, I think you cannot exclude them without being guilty of palpable violation of every principle of justice. We are usurping to ourselves a power which we do not possess, and by so doing, deprive them of an inviolable right—a right which they have enjoyed since the formation of our government—the right of suffrage. And why do we this? Instead of visiting the *iniquities* of these people upon them and their children, we are visiting their *misfortunes* upon them and their posterity to the latest generation. Because we have done this people injustice by enslaving them, and rendering them degraded and miserable, is it right that we should go on and continue to deprive them of their most invaluable rights, and visit upon their children this deprivation. Is this just? Is it honest? Was it expected by our constituents?

ABRAHAM VAN VECHTEN, Esq. of Albany, observed, that the question before the Committee was of importance, and one on which he would be happy to see a unanmous vote. It had been said that the people looked for *an extension* of the right of suffrage, but he had not heard it suggested that any desired the *disfranchisement* of any class of electors.

The amendment reported by the select committee contemplated to depeive electors of color of a right which they had enjoyed since the adoption of the Constitution. He asked why this should be done? Those electors are free men, and have been recognized as citizens of the State for nearly half a century and have under the sanction of our constitution and laws duly acquired the legal qualifications as electors. Have they done any thing to forfeit the right of suffrage?—This has not been shown.

The absurdity of Prejudice as a ground of exclusion.

ABRAHAM VAN VECHTEN.—Do our prejudices against their color destroy their rights as citizens? Whence do those prejudices proceed? Are they founded in impartial reason, or in the benevolent principles of our Holy Religion—nay, are they indulged in cases where the services of men of color are desirable—do we not daily see them working side by by side with our white citizens on our farms, and our public highways? Is it more derogatory to a white citizen to stand side by side of a citizen of color in the ranks of the militia than in repairing a highway, or in laboring on a farm. Again, are not people of color permitted to participate in our most solemn religious exercises—to set down with us at the same table to commemorate the dying love of the Saviour of sinners. This will not be denied by any one who has been in the habit of attending those exercises and those religious solemnities; and what is the conclusion to which this fact directs us? Is it not that people of color are our fellow candidates for immortality, and that the same path to future happiness is appointed to them and to us—and that in the final judgment the artificial distinctions of color will not be regarded. How then can that distinction justify us in taking from them any of the common rights which every other free citizen enjoys.

Mr. V. concluded by repeating that he had understood, that it was expected by a considerable portion of the people of this State, that the right of suffrage would be *extended*, but he had *not* heard that it was expected or desired (except by some of the citizens of N. York) that any of the present Electors of this State should *be disfranchised*. He should, therefore, vote for striking out the word "*white*," in the amendment before the Committee, in order to preserve inviolate the present constitutional rights of all the electors.

The Exclusion unnecessary.

MR. JAY—This State, Mr. Chairman, has taken high ground against slavery, and all its degrading consequences and accompaniments. Adopt the amendment now proposed, (to insert the word *white* in the limitation) and you will hear a shout of triumph, and a hiss of scorn from the Southern part of the Union, which, I confess, will mortify me. I shall shrink at the sound, because I fear it will be deserved.

But it has been said that this measure is necessary to preserve the purity of your elections. I do not deny that necessity has no law. * * * * *

But where is the necessity in the present instance? The whole number of colored people in the State, whether free or in bondage, amounts to less than a 40th part of the whole population. When your numbers are to theirs as forty to one, do you still fear them? To assert this, would be to pay them a compliment, which I am sure you do not think they deserve. But then there are a great number, it is said, in the city of New-York. How many? Sir, even in that city the whites are to the blacks as ten to one, and even of the *tenth*, which is composed of the black population, how few are there that are entitled to vote? It has been said that their numbers are increasing. The very reverse is the fact. During the last ten years, in which the white population has advanced with astonishing rapidity, the colored population of the State has been stationary. Will you, then, without necessity, and merely to gratify an unreasonable prejudice, stain the Constitution you are about to form, with a provision equally odious and unjust, and in direct violation of the principles you profess.

Objections on the ground of the alleged Incapacity and Degradation of colored people considered.

MR. JAY said—But we are told that the people of color are incapable of exercising the right of suffrage. I may have misunderstood that gentleman, but I thought he meant to say, that they labored under a physical disability. It is true, that some philosophers have held that the intellect of a black man is naturally inferior to that of white one—but this idea has been so completly refuted—and is now so universally exploded, that I did not expect to have heard it in an assembly so enlightened as this, nor do I think it necessary to disprove it. That in general the people of color are inferior to the whites in knowledge and industry, I shall not deny.—You made them slaves, and nothing is more true than the ancient saying, "The day you make a man a slave, takes half his wrath away." But will you punish the children for your own crimes—for the injuries you have inflicted on the parents. Besides, sir, this state of things is fast passing away.—Schools have been opened for them—there has been discovered a thirst for instruction, and a progress in learning, seldom to be seen in other schools of the State.

MR. CLARKE, on this subject, observed—It is said these people are incapable of exercising the right of suffrage judiciously—that they will become the tools and engines of aristocracy. * * * * * This might be true to a certain extent; but, sir, they are not the only ones who abuse these privileges; and if this be a sufficient reason for depriving any of your citizens of their just rights, go and exclude also the many thousands of white fawning sycophants who look up to their more wealthy and ambitious neighbours for directions at the poles, as they do for bread.

But although most of this unfortunate class may be in this dependent state, both in body and mind, yet we ought to remember, that we are making our Constitution, not for a day nor for a year, but I hope for many generations, and there is a redeeming spirit in liberty, which I have no doubt will, eventually, raise these poor, abused, unfortunate people, from their *present* state to equal intelligence with their more fortunate and enlightened neighbours. Sir, there is a day fixed by law, when slavery must forever cease in this State. Have gentlemen, seriously reflected upon the consequences which may result from that event, when they are about to deprive them of every inducement to become respectable members of society, turning them out from the protection, and beyond the controul of their masters, and in the mean time ordering them to be fugitives, vagabonds and outcasts from society.

Insufficiency of the objection that people of color do not serve in the Militia.

MR. CLARKE in discussing this point said—We have been told that these people are not liable to do military duty, and that as they are not required to contribute to the protection of defence of the State, they are not entitled to an equal participation in the privileges of its citizens. But, Sir, whose fault is this? Have they ever refused to do military duty, when called on? It is haughtily asked, who will stand in the ranks shoulder to shoulder with a negro? I answer no one in time of peace—no one when your musters and trainings are looked upon as mere pastimes; no one when your militia will shoulder their muskets and march to their trainings with as much unconcern as they would go to a ball. But, sir, when the hour of danger approaches, your *white* militia are just as willing that men of color should be set up as a mark to be shot at, as to be set up themselves. In the war of the Revolution these people helped to fight your battles by land and by sea. Some of the

We talk with Benjamin Fagan about the first black newspapers in the United States, biblical inspiration for freedom, and the place African Americans sought in society.

Curating the Past That's Alive in Our Minds



My generation of historians and curators has worked hard to claim a space for critical history in our museums and historic sites and, at the same time, to make our storytelling emotionally compelling.