

## Background Notes

One of the most vehement voices in the anti-abolitionist debate was the newspaper the *Cincinnati Post and Anti-Abolitionist*. Centered in a city known for its strong abolitionism and a major stop on the Underground Railroad, the *Post* published correspondences, small news stories, and editorials from throughout the country. It also regularly listed the names of abolitionists living and working in Cincinnati, along with their occupations and addresses. At the end of each list, the paper said “This list will be continued with new additions from week to week until perfected. Our friends in the South will know what use to make of it!” The editor was L. Greely Curtiss and a subscription was two dollars per year. The following letter by S. Trott of Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia was dated March 28, 1842, and published on the front page of the April 16, 1842, edition of the *Post*.

## Transcription of Primary Source

For nothing better can I consider the present abolition rage. Not that I would consider the simple idea of extending liberty to the slaves, fanaticism, when and where it can be done consistently with the general good – But what are the prominent features of abolitionism? They are no other than the avowed determination to force the freedom of the slaves, regardless of the injury hereby inflicted on them, in opposition to the providence of God, to the constitutional compact by which the states have been confederated, and to the good of society....

But let us briefly review some of these positions. –

1st. Abolitionist, whether successful or not, is injurious to the slaves. It scatters discontent, and therefore unhappiness among them in their present state; it increases their insubordination, and thus subjects them to severer usage: should it free them from bondage, it would at the same time free their masters from the care of providing for them, and leave them an improvident class unprovided for, to suffer in rags and starvation, or under crime and its effects.

2nd. The scheme is in opposition to the providence of God. It requires but little acquaintance with the blacks as a people, to be convinced that by nature, they are fitted

for greater usefulness, and the enjoyment of more comfort, in a state of bondage than in a state of freedom. In this state the providence of God had placed them among us, before we became a nation, and the same providence which brought us into existence as a nation, and gave us the most perfect and favorable form of government on earth, left them in their bondage, with the masters control over them guaranteed by the Constitution. Until, therefore, God by his providence deprives us of our happy form of government, or disposes the slave States to engage in the work of emancipation, these abolitionists are fighting against the indications of providence.

3rd. Abolitionist is injurious to society at large, because it seeks to remove the slaves, without benefiting them, from a state of subjection in which they are useful producers, and to throw them loose, to squander their time in idleness, and to live by stealth upon the labors of others.

## Curator Notes

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