

## Appendix 4: Race, Slavery, Freedom

The following excerpts and newspaper accounts illustrate the complicated and sometimes contradictory attitudes of white northerners toward race and slavery in general and toward the struggle of John Randolph's former slaves in particular. The racism evident in many, if not all, of these passages will be found offensive by readers today. For more on the subject of race and racism in Ohio and in *Our Cousins*, see the general introduction to this edition.

### **'John Randolph's Slaves,' *Cincinnati Chronicle*, 1 July 1846.**

*Alderson drew on or quoted from this article in several letters, though she very sensibly chose to omit the comparison of the people to 'a drove of sheep coming to market.' As was common in the nineteenth-century periodical press, the article was reprinted, more or less as is, in various publications, including the Christian Register, the Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture, the Emancipator, and the Friend.*

Main Street, on Wednesday morning, presented a singular scene—one which never before occurred here and which may not occur again. In front of our office, and occupying the centre of the street for half a square, was a cloud of negroes—men, women and children—like a drove of sheep coming to market. They were dressed in coarse cottons. apparently comfortable in bodily circumstances. and walked along from the river to the canal. They were, in his life-time, the slaves of the celebrated John Randolph of Roanoke!

This extraordinary man remains extraordinary even in the transactions which follow his death. The word 'REMORSE,' written on a card, in his death scene, expresses fully the sentiment which often conflicted in his life-time with much of his singular conduct.

In one of these repentant moods he made a Will, liberating his slaves, and providing for their transportation and support in a free State. This WILL was contested almost as a matter of course—because the eccentricity of his conduct and the doubtful sanity of his mind made its legality questionable. The Will, however, after passing through a long course of litigation in the Virginia Courts, was at length established. Judge Lee, the Executor, then proceeded to make the most advantageous arrangements he could, to carry out the objects of the Will, and provide for

the comfort of the people. For this purpose, he last year visited Ohio; and after consulting with a number of intelligent gentlemen, fixed upon a spot in Mercer county for their abode.

Yesterday they arrived here, and this morning have resumed their journey. They are of all ages and conditions—from the infant upon the breast, to the old man tottering under the weight of time and infirmities. They numbered, we believe, 395, in all. Whether they were all present, we are not informed. They had their baggage wagons along,—and all in all, had a more comfortable appearance, by much, than have N. Carolina ‘Emigrants,’ who have been immortalized in the picture of our townsman, BEARD. The last one, was a stout, but old and bent over man, who walked with a cane. We thought of him as one, who, perhaps, had been reared with and played with the Orator of Charlotte, and who, when ‘Remorse’ played round his heart, had been remembered in the WILL OF JOHN RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE.