

ABSTRACT

ONE FAMILY, ONE FAITH, ONE PURPOSE: THE IMPACT OF THE BEECHERS ON THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The first half of the nineteenth century was a dynamic era in the United States. Americans were facing industrialization, urbanization, revivalism, and social reform. Social reform followed religious revival in an effort to ameliorate societal problems. The effort to abolish slavery became the centerpiece of the reform movement.

One American family, the Beecher family, was exceptional in its important and distinctive contributions to the abolitionist movement. Lyman Beecher influenced abolition through his “new theology” and through his adult children. Of his children, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher were the most well known. Stowe’s contribution to abolition was her antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Henry Ward Beecher preached noncompliance to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and against slavery in general. Many of Lyman Beecher’s other children were involved in varying degrees in the movement to abolish slavery. The individuals of the Beecher family uniquely advanced abolitionism through theology, philosophy, literature, and oratory.

Julia Kay Aydelotte
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