

Reaction to the Abolitionists

GUIDING QUESTION *Who opposed the abolition of slavery?*

Abolitionists stirred strong reactions. Most white Southerners believed abolition threatened their way of life, which required enslaved labor.

Even in the North, only a few white people supported abolition. Many white Northerners worried that freed African Americans would never blend into American society. Others feared that abolitionists could begin a war between the North and South.

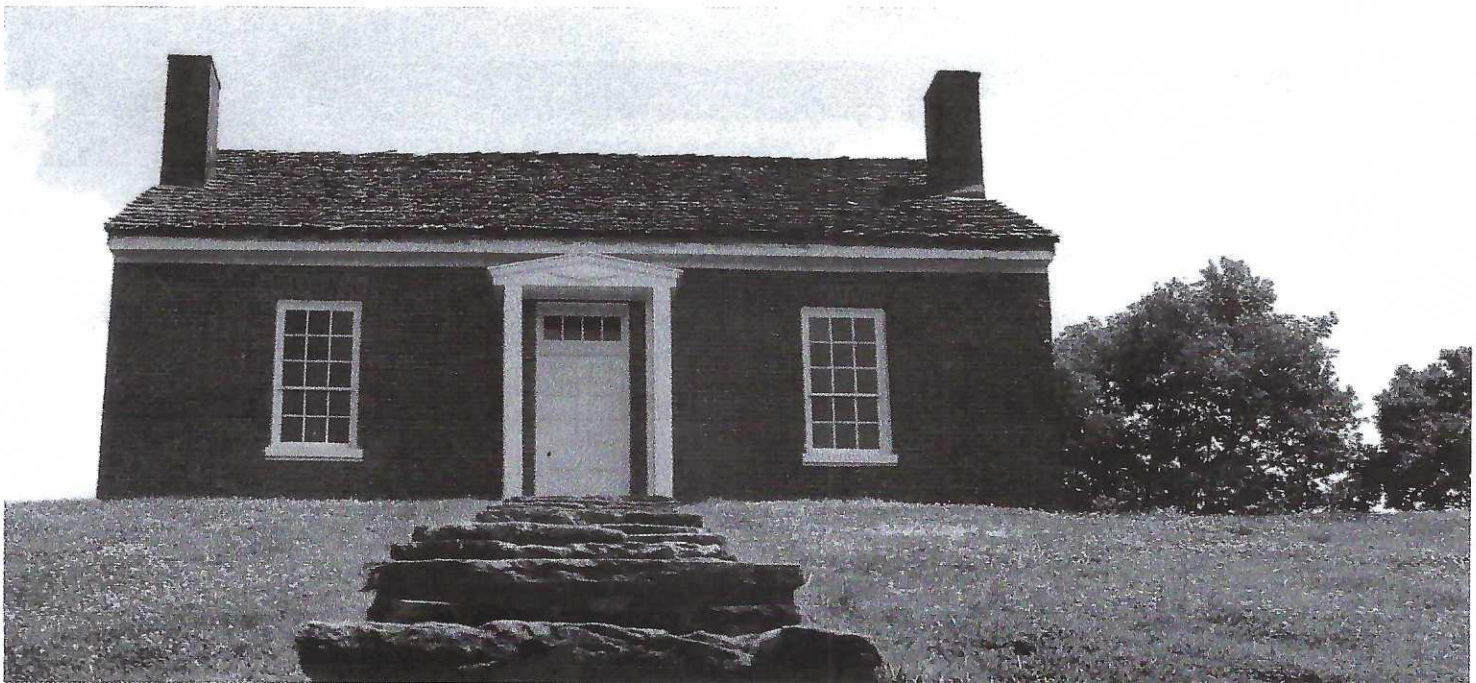
Opposition to abolitionism sometimes led to violence. In Philadelphia a bloody race riot followed the burning of an antislavery group's headquarters. Police had to jail William Lloyd Garrison to protect him from a Boston mob.

Elijah Lovejoy in Illinois was not so lucky. Angry whites invaded his antislavery newspaper offices and wrecked his presses three times. Three times Lovejoy installed new presses. The fourth time the mob attacked, it set fire to the building. When Lovejoy came out of the blazing building, someone shot and killed him.

The White South Reacts

White Southerners fought abolitionism with arguments in defense of slavery. They claimed that slavery was necessary to the Southern economy and had allowed Southern whites to reach a high level of culture. As anti-abolitionist Senator James Henry Hammond said in an 1858 speech to Congress: "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. . . . Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement."

The John Rankin House, located along the Ohio River, was a station stop on the Underground Railroad. The Reverend John Rankin, along with his wife and children, assisted hundreds escaping from slavery.



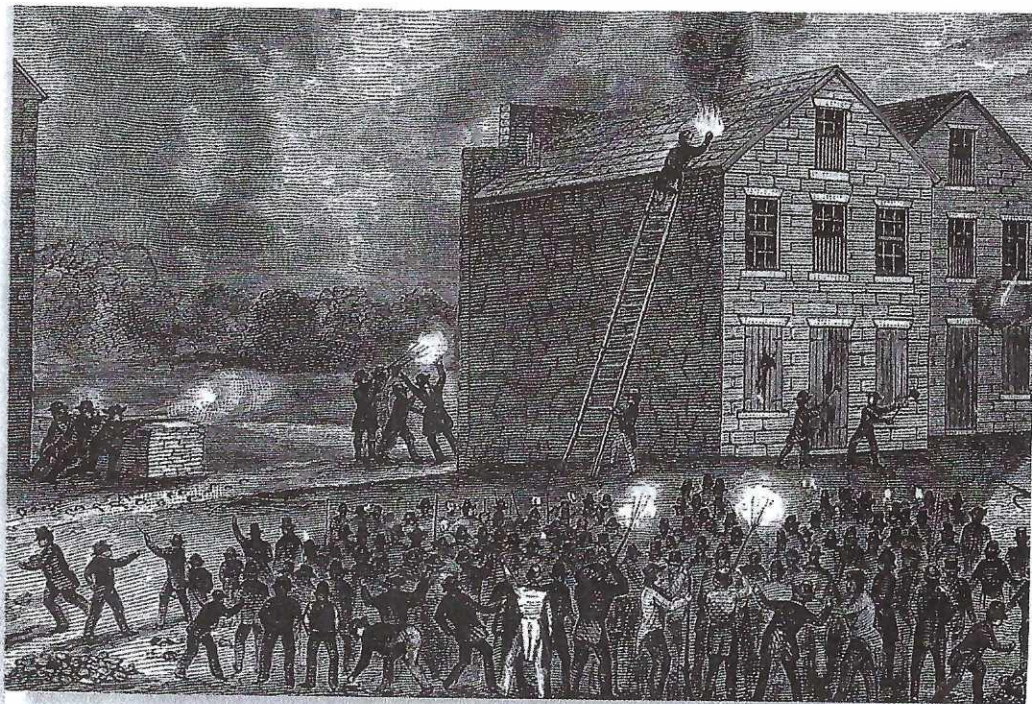
In 1837 a mob attacked and killed newspaper editor Elijah Lovejoy.

► **CRITICAL THINKING**

Explaining Why did anti-abolitionists attack Elijah Lovejoy?

Academic Vocabulary

medical relating to medicine and help given to people who are sick or injured



White Southerners also argued that they treated enslaved people well. They claimed that Northern workers were worse off than enslaved workers because they worked in factories for long hours at low wages. Also, Northern workers had to pay for their own goods and services from their small earnings, while enslaved African Americans received food, clothing, and **medical** care.

Other defenses of slavery were based on racism. Many whites believed that African Americans were better off under white care than on their own.

The conflict between pro-slavery and antislavery groups continued to mount. At the same time, a new women's rights movement was growing.

✓ **PROGRESS CHECK**

Identifying Points of View How did many Southerners defend the institution of slavery?

LESSON 2 REVIEW



Review Vocabulary

1. Use the term *abolitionist* in a sentence about the mid-1800s.

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Identifying Points of View** What concern about ending slavery did the American Colonization Society seek to address?
3. **Discussing** How did African Americans help the abolitionist movement gain strength?

4. **Comparing and Contrasting** How did Northerners and Southerners view abolition differently?

5. **NARRATIVE** Take the role of a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Write an explanation for why you are willing to help African Americans escape from slavery to freedom.