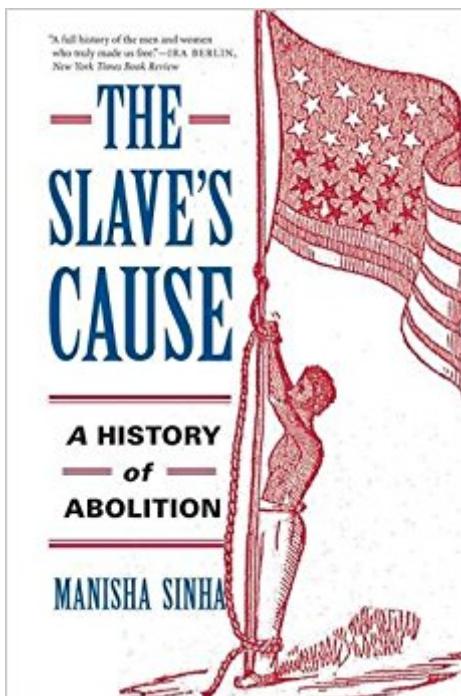


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# The Slave's Cause: A History Of Abolition



## Synopsis

A groundbreaking history of abolition that recovers the largely forgotten role of African Americans in the long march toward emancipation from the American Revolution through the Civil War. Received historical wisdom casts abolitionists as bourgeois, mostly white reformers burdened by racial paternalism and economic conservatism. Manisha Sinha overturns this image, broadening her scope beyond the antebellum period usually associated with abolitionism and recasting it as a radical social movement in which men and women, black and white, free and enslaved found common ground in causes ranging from feminism and utopian socialism to anti-imperialism and efforts to defend the rights of labor. Drawing on extensive archival research, including newly discovered letters and pamphlets, Sinha documents the influence of the Haitian Revolution and the centrality of slave resistance in shaping the ideology and tactics of abolition. This book is a comprehensive new history of the abolition movement in a transnational context. It illustrates how the abolitionist vision ultimately linked the slave's cause to the struggle to redefine American democracy and human rights across the globe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"It is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive history of the abolitionist movement. . . . [Sinha] has given us a full history of the men and women who truly made us free." —Ira Berlin, New York Times Book Review "Lucidly written, compellingly argued and based on exhaustive scholarship, *The Slave's Cause* captures the myriad aspects of this diverse and far-ranging movement and will deservedly take its place alongside the equally magisterial works of Ira Berlin on slavery and Eric

Foner on the Reconstruction Era. Ms. Sinha seems to have read just about everything ever written on the subject of antislavery, including diaries, broadsides, speeches and legal arguments by the famous and the obscure alike. It is a measure of her command of the material that even as she leads us through the deepest thickets of antebellum polemics she is rarely dull."Ã¢â€”Fergus Bordewich, *Wall Street Journal*"A powerfully unfamiliar look at the struggle to end slavery in the United States. . . . The Slave's Cause is as multifaceted as the movement it chronicles."Ã¢â€”Matthew Price, *Boston Globe*"This well-written and accessible book has many strengths, but Sinha's able deployment of so many sources makes it outstanding."Ã¢â€”Olivette Otele, *Times Higher Education*"A powerful, ambitious Ã¢â€” work of scholarship. The research is extraordinary. . . . Her prose is also careful and often elegant, her argument bold. . . . Sinha offers us a glimpse of a usable past: a diverse and inclusive story of abolitionism."Ã¢â€”Ari Kelman, *Times Literary Supplement*"Manisha Sinha's comprehensive and narrative-resetting new book gives readers their fullest and most readable account of America's battle against slavery."Ã¢â€”Steve Donoghue,Ã¢â€”*Christian Science Monitor*"[This] book, which traces the history of abolition from the 1600s to the 1860s, documents its international character and demonstrates the central role played by free and enslaved Blacks, is a valuable addition to our understanding of the role of race and racism in America."Ã¢â€”Glenn Altschuler, *Florida Courier*"[A] comprehensive survey of the abolitionist movement in Colonial and independent America. . . . Covers a great deal of ground well. . . . Wide-ranging and admirably ambitious."Ã¢â€”Kirkus Reviews"At once encyclopedic in narrative detail and broadly interpretive, squeezing new meaning from known figures and texts, and introducing readers to other, more obscure actors, many of them African Americans. . . . In her masterwork, *The Slave's Cause*, Manisha Sinha heroically rescues abolitionism from the condescension of historians."Ã¢â€”Bruce Laurie, *Massachusetts Review*"A stunning new history of abolitionism. . . . Placing abolitionism in its international context is just one of the great strengths of *The Slave's Cause*. . . . [Sinha] plugs abolitionism back into the history of anticapitalist protest."Ã¢â€”Adam Rothman, *The Atlantic*"[Sinha's] research is deep and wide-ranging, and she both reacquaints us with familiar historical figures and introduces us to those who may not be familiar. . . . In recent years the crucial roles of African-Americans in directing and sustaining the movement have been compellingly demonstrated. But no one has made the case as fully as has Sinha."Ã¢â€”Steven Hahn, *Chronicle of Higher Education*"[The] long history of the fight to end slavery is brilliantly told in historian Manisha Sinha's magisterial, *The Slave's Cause*."Ã¢â€”Erik J. Chaput, *Providence Journal*"This book will long be a must read for expert

and lay readers alike who want to truly understand the history of the nation's most important and revolutionary movement for radical social change." •Corey M. Brooks, Civil War Book Review"Rich and comprehensive." •Stephanie McCurry, Nation"[A] prodigious work of scholarship. . . . Manisha Sinha has cemented in place the last stone in the scholarly edifice of the past half century that has rehabilitated the abolitionists' reputation." •James M. McPherson, New York Review of Books"In emphasizing abolitionism's long historical trajectory, its international perspective, and its interracial character, Sinha situates her story firmly within the most up-to-date trends in historical writing; and with her extensive research and broad command of the era, she has produced a work of high originality and broad popular appeal." •Eric Foner, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*"A groundbreaking, brilliant book. The Slave's Cause should be required reading for every scholar in the humanities and social sciences who is concerned with the American condition. It's that important. No one does a better job describing how and why male and female, black and white abolitionists created the first civil rights movement." •John Stauffer, Harvard University"A marvelous book long needed! Manisha Sinha's *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* presents a revolutionary narrative that gives black activism long overdue acknowledgment. At the same time, Sinha erases needless color lines, revealing the comprehensive nature of abolitionism." •Nell Irvin Painter, author of *The History of White People*"Beginning with the actions and arguments of enslaved people, Manisha Sinha masterfully reconstructs the evolution of this international, interracial movement to rescue humanity from a predatory and expansionist unfree empire." •Craig Steven Wilder, author of *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*

Manisha Sinha is Draper Chair in American History at the University of Connecticut, and is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, among several others.

The content and accuracy of this book is astounding. While reading the preface I thought the book was going to be written entirely in an academic style. However, the author draws you in with her narrative writing style making this portion of our nations history very interesting. Even riveting at times. I haven't finished it yet but I am enjoying the journey.

This is my top read of 2016, and I consider Sinha's book the most important one to come out in

years. Like Alex de Tocqueville, she comes to this most important subject with little baggage, and with incredible detail and narrative style is able to place the long history of abolition into correction--an African American slave cause, with important, but lesser known black abolitionists like Rev. Hosea Easton, with "a little help from my friends," such as, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, etc...In an important article in HNN, Manisha Sinha makes an important comment: "In America, race always trumps [pun intended] class and gender." She shows how the Abolition movement established the 'game plan' for other contemporary causes (like suffrage), to future democratic and social movements, such as, the labor movement up to gay rights. So read this book, not just for the history, but for a deeper understanding that the need and cause of abolition has never gone away, and that if this deepest American psyche wound is ever to heal, we must continue to promote the cause of true African American equality.

Long, detailed, & complex book but full of excellent information. You have to admire her extreme effort in presenting the details. I don't think there is anything quite like it in the UGRR History World.

Sinha's book is an amazingly detailed book that discusses the history of abolition and covers all aspects of how the antislavery movement in the United States came to be, how it was established, how it evolved and changed in order to end slavery. The book is not only for students and scholars to read up on the history of abolition and slavery, but it is written in an approachable style so that anyone interested in the topic is able to dive into this crucial part of American history. I highly recommend it if you are interested in 19th century American history. You will learn so much!

This is a comprehensive and probably definitive book about the abolition movement's long but ultimately successful effort to end slavery. Dr. Sinha has done a remarkable job here in detailing the widespread efforts to end slavery. It is impossible to read this book and persist in thinking that slavery was seen as normal and morally right, even where it existed. The book may be too dense for some readers, and seems pegged at a graduate level history student, but it is well worth the effort. Dr. Sinha also sets the record straight about the abolition movement being driven largely, though not exclusively by black men and women. The movement was not about black soldiers being directed by white leaders. Abolition wasn't Garrison's idea, and it certainly wasn't Lincoln's. Another achievement of this book is making a record of a protest movement, which it occurred to me in reading this, must be significantly harder than tracing the history of a nation state. This is a remarkable

and unique book.

A dense but essential history of the abolition movement which demonstrates the depth and breadth of this movement. A useful corrective to those who have said that slavery was "generally accepted" in the antebellum period, and that current critiques of slavery are "imposing contemporary standards" on an earlier period of history. Many many people in that time knew the immorality of slavery, its cruelty and oppression...even those who enslaved others...like Jefferson, who acknowledged this even while inflicting cruelty and oppression on the children he fathered...Massively researched and powerful.

The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition by Manisha Sinha published by Yale University Press (2016) is a book that many of us have been awaiting for years. This is a marvelous history of the Abolitionist Movement from the 1600s to the Civil War. It places African Americans at the center of the movement, both as activists and thinkers. Immigrant contributions to the movement receive very good treatment, and the efforts of the German abolitionists are rescued from obscurity. My one problem with the book is Sinha's presentation of the white native-born abolitionists as supporters of immigrant rights. In fact, many immigrants were suspicious of the New England abolitionists, sometimes with good reason. The political abolitionists grouped around the Liberty Party endorsed the Nativist proposition that naturalized immigrants be prevented from voting for years after they became citizens. This would have effectively disenfranchised most immigrants and destroyed the power of immigrant communities. Should we be surprised that even anti-slavery immigrants were uncomfortable with the intolerance of some abolition leaders?

Many years ago, when I was a graduate student in history and index cards were the preferred means of record-keeping, certain books were criticized for sounding like the shuffling of those cards. This is such a book. Though voluminous in its research and comprehensive in its coverage, and not specifically badly-written, Sinha's book is a laborious read. Virtually every paragraph contains a new topic, and with each topic come x number of names. It may be a research tool, but it is a bore. One critic thought it was a film 20 minutes too long; that is kind.

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