

Voice of Liberty, Primary Source Document 1

Edmund Burke. *The Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq; on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775*. London, 1775. Pages 16–17.

In the second of his two “American” speeches, Burke continued to urge cooperation between Britain and the colonies. He advocated the abandonment of current and future taxation legislation and a return to the mild “whig” government of previous administrations.

“. . . This fierce spirit of Liberty is stronger in the English Colonies probably than in any other people of the earth. . . . They are therefore not only devoted to Liberty, but to Liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. . . . Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite¹ point, which by way of eminence² becomes the criterion³ of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country⁴ were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of Taxing. . . . The Colonies draw from you⁵ as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. . . .”

¹ favorite

² importance

³ decisive factor

⁴ Britain

⁵ Parliament

Voice of Liberty, Primary Source Document 2

Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. London, 1792. Pages iv–v and vii.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Man* brought her to the forefront of the literary scene. Once *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* was published, her husband, William Godwin, wrote in his *Memoirs* that "no female writer ever obtained so great a degree of celebrity throughout Europe (*Memoirs*, p. 73)." Although opinion of her teachings remained divided for many years, she is today considered to be among the most admired feminist intellectuals.

“It is then an affection for the whole human race that makes my pen dart rapidly along to support what I believe to be the cause of virtue: and the same motive leads me earnestly to wish to see woman placed in a station in which she would advance, instead of retarding, the progress of those glorious principles that give a substance to morality. . . . Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge. . . . And how can woman be expected to co-operate unless she know why she ought to be virtuous? unless freedom strengthen her reason till she comprehend her duty, and see in what manner it is connected with her real good? . . . ”

Voice of Liberty, Primary Source Document 3

Ottobah Cugoano. *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain*. London, 1787. Page 3 and 4.

Cugoano was one of the earliest known African British abolitionists. Brought to England in 1772 by his owner, Alexander Campbell, he eventually came to be employed by the court painter, an appointment that he would use to his advantage. His *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* first appeared as letters to London newspapers written with Olaudah Equiano. Around 1791, he wrote to his employer, asking to be sent to Nova Scotia to recruit settlers for a settlement in Sierra Leone; nothing is known of him after that.

“It is therefore manifest, that something else ought yet to be done; and what is required, is evidently the incumbent¹ duty of all men of enlightened understanding, and of every man that has any claim or affinity to the name of Christian, that the base treatment which the African Slaves undergo, ought to be abolished; and it is moreover evident, that the whole, or any part of that iniquitous² traffic of slavery, can no where, or in any degree, be admitted. . . . But the robbers of men, the kidnappers, ensnarers and slave-holders, who take away the common rights and privileges of others to support and enrich themselves, are universally those pitiful and detestable wretches . . . for ensnaring of others, and taking away their liberty by slavery and oppression is the worst kind of robberty. . . .”

¹ current

² wicked