

Easton, Hosea(1798–1837) - Abolitionist, minister, lecturer, Abolitionist and minister, Chronology

Anoteworthy abolitionist, minister, and lecturer, Hosea Easton was a prominent black man from a New England family. Not widely known, Easton worked to ameliorate problems caused by racial prejudices, and the need for social reform. Though he was three generations removed from slavery, Easton understood the plight of people of color and the devastating effects slavery had on them. Consequently, he urged white Americans to do what was ethically, morally, and spiritually correct regarding their treatment of black people.

Easton opposed the racism and prejudice that erupted against people of color in northern cities in the 1820s and 1830s. His work disproves the simple idea that before the Civil War, the North was uniformly for equality while the South was for slavery. Easton described atrocities committed by northerners against black people and their communities, how mobs attacked people of color in church and as they traveled from place to place. He also described name-calling, vandalism, and the burning down of black homes, churches, and other buildings. Easton addressed white people to see black people as human beings and the way they poisoned the minds of their children and other races.

The surge of racial violence which Easton described occurred immediately after the Revolution. As black people in the North were gradually emancipated, they became educated, managed their own resources, and improved their financial circumstances. Black communities began to thrive. White Americans saw elite black communities as a threat. Such black achievers disproved the myths created about black people. In addition, whites saw this class of blacks as a threat to white political supremacy. Hosea Easton fought against this response. He could not reconcile the fact that people had fought together for the country's freedom, and yet they allowed race to divide them after freedom was won. Easton's own father, James, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Hosea Easton's family tree can be traced back to Africans and Narragansett Indians via the grandson of Nicholas Easton, one of the founders of Newport, Rhode Island, in 1639. According to R. Rice and James Brewer Stewart in *To Heal the Scourge of Prejudice: The Life and Writings of Hosea Easton*, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Eastons became Quakers, and they freed their slaves in the 1690s.

The black branch of the Easton family became members of the elite class of African American

developed in the years following the Revolutionary War. James Easton, Hosea's father, was an educated man who saw himself, his family, people of color, white Americans, and all other people from a worldwide view—a perspective that he passed on to the members of his family, especially his son, Hosea. James Easton believed all people to be equal; he taught his children this belief and demonstrated it in his own life.

Hosea Easton was first exposed to his father's stance against racism when he was about two years old. The church the Easton family attended erected a Negro gallery where all colored members of the congregation were to sit. Previously church members sat wherever they chose. James Easton refused to submit to this act of racism in the church sanctuary. He and his family continued to sit on the main floor of the church until they were literally forced out of the church. In a similar situation, at another church, Easton purchased a pew for his family from a white member who empathized with persons affected by a law relegating the colored members of the church to a segregated part of the church. When the James Eastons continued to occupy the pew against the wishes of church officials and members, the family returned on Sunday to find that the pew had been painted with tar. The undaunted James Easton, his wife and their seven children responded by returning the following Sunday with their own chairs. They continued until the Eastons were barred from the church.



Abolitionist and Minister

Hosea was groomed like his older brothers and sisters to be an abolitionist, and decided to pursue a ministry. His duties as minister complemented his commitment to abolitionism since the church was a major forum for the black protest movement. Easton saw his duties as multifaceted: not only was he a minister, but he was also a teacher and a leader. Importantly he wanted to advocate black self-improvement and work to instill faith and optimism in those who suffered from racism.

Chronology

1798

Born in Middleborough, Massachusetts on September 1

1816

Attends manual labor school his father opens for black male youth

1829

Family moves to Boston

1833

Becomes pastor of the Talcott Street Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut

1834

Elected president of the Hartford Literary and Religious Institution

1836

Founds the Colored Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

1837

Delivers "A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and the Civil and Political Condition of the People of the United States; and the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them: With a Sermon on the Church to Them" in Boston; dies

In 1831, Easton attended the first annual National Convention of Free People of Color in Philadelphia. One outcome of this meeting was that Easton began working to raise money to build a manual labor school for young men of color. The plan was to build the school in New Haven, Connecticut in partnership with Yale University. The plan failed, however, because of white resistance. Easton served as president of the Hartford Literary and Religious Institution, one of many Negro school improvement organizations in northern cities. The expressed purposes of these organizations were to promote education and encourage discussion of social, political, and economic issues, help

express themselves in a public forum. Thus, while he advocated abolition, Easton also tried to help black people by preparing them to function as social equals to whites.

As a minister, Hosea Easton used scripture to argue for racial equality. In his "A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and the Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the United States and the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them: With a Sermon on the Duty of the Church to Try to explain the social problem in hopes of creating a change of heart in white society. According to Stewart in *To Heal the Scourge of Prejudice: The Life and Writings of Hosea Easton*, the book is revered for its "analytical scope and its expressive power" in these regards and for the two purposes which the whole work stands: that people of all colors are created by God and the nobility of African American ancestry is worthy to be recognized and praised. Hosea Easton died in Boston in 1837.

Sponsored Results

Chitika | [Premium](#)



Download iPod to Computer

Copy Music, Photos and More from any iPod or iPhone. For PC & Macs.
www.TouchCopy.com



Ipods' at Amazon

Low prices on Ipods'. Qualified orders over \$25 ship free.
Amazon.com



iPod Nanos under \$50

All Sizes & Colors. 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Gen Nanos at Discount Prices.
DiscountiPodNanos.com

Citing this material

Please include a link to this page if you have found this material useful for research or writing an article. Content on this website is from high-quality, licensed material originally published on the source website. You can always be sure you're reading unbiased, factual, and accurate information.

Highlight the text below, right-click, and select "copy". Paste the link into your website, email, or other HTML document.

```
<a href="http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/4226/Easton-Hosea-1798-1837.html">Easton, Hosea(1798–1837) - Abolitionist, minister, lecturer, Abolitionist and minister, Chronology</a>
```