

WILLIAM HENRY BRISBANE:  
SOUTH CAROLINA SLAVEHOLDER AND ABOLITIONIST

by

Blake McNulty

Department of History  
University of Wisconsin Center-Waukesha County  
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53186

WILLIAM HENRY BRISBANE:  
SOUTH CAROLINA SLAVEHOLDER AND ABOLITIONIST

Slavery underlay the world of the slaveholders in antebellum South Carolina. Yet, as several recent historians have argued, it was a particularly troublesome institution. On the one hand, masters were determined to maintain and defend this cornerstone of their civilization according to the economic and racial imperatives of their world. On the other hand, they harbored an abiding fear of their bondsmen and held deeply engrained values which conflicted with both the concept and everyday realities of slavery.<sup>1</sup> But more than this troubled the tranquility of Carolina masters. They also suffered from a siege psychology, for by the late antebellum period it was apparent how "peculiar" indeed their institution was, that slavery was increasingly regarded as a morally deplorable anachronism, not just in the North, but in England and western Europe as well. In the minds of many Carolinians, not only was the South a besieged section, but its defenses in the upper South had been breached by the abolitionist enemy. Governor David Johnson warned John C. Calhoun in 1848 that "there is great danger that the border slaveholding states will yield to the pressure of circumstances." "How long," he wondered, "will Maryland, Western Virginia, Kentucky, Eastern Tennessee and even the Western part of North Carolina feel it their interest to retain slaves...?"<sup>2</sup> Others would see in this a domino effect. "In Virginia, N.C. &, I may add, S.C., it is visibly on the decline," wrote William

Gilmore Simms. "In 15 years Va. will be a free soil state, and will be instantly followed by N.C. S.C. will be a frontier and where?"<sup>3</sup> White Carolinians, therefore, could look neither to the North, nor Europe, nor the upper South for firm support. Moreover, within the Palmetto State nonslaveholding whites were an uncertain ally. Apparently Carolina slaveholders could truly trust only themselves. Or could they? What if one of their own class, another Carolina master, turned abolitionist? What if the enemy had not only breached the wall but also lay unrecognized within the citadel? Whom could they trust? The story of William Henry Brisbane illustrates the panic such a perception could provoke in an already apprehensive and besieged slaveholding society. As James H. Hammond observed to Calhoun, a "Southern man who falters-- who apologizes--much less who denounces Slavery & regards abolition inevitable is...our very worst enemy."<sup>4</sup>

An ordained Baptist minister, in 1835 Brisbane was editor of the Southern Baptist and nearing completion of his medical studies in Charleston. Scion of a prominent Beaufort planter, he counted assets of \$21,000, a plantation valued at \$33,000, and a large number of slaves. In short, all avenues of success and status in the ranks of the gentry were open to him. He also appeared to be orthodox on the troublesome slavery issue, for the year before he had written a theological defense of the institution in a series of articles for the Charleston Mercury.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Brisbane seemed riddled with guilt. In June, 1835, he noted in his journal that he had "given my overseer a talk about using the whip with severity among my negroes," for he could "not

endure that they should have their backs cut up. It is inhuman. If their conduct is so deserving of punishment," he resolved, "I must dispose of them to so[me] other master but I cannot assume the responsibility of severe chastisements."<sup>6</sup> Then in July, two weeks before the discovery of "incendiary" tracts in the Charleston post office threw the state into a panic and sparked a national controversy,<sup>7</sup> Brisbane received an antislavery pamphlet containing an extract from Elements of Moral Science by Francis Wayland, president of Brown University. Brisbane was initially "very much distressed" by Wayland's argument, but soon was relieved to "have discovered the errors in it" so that he was "now easy on that score ag[ai]n."<sup>8</sup> His moral respite was shortlived, for within a few days, "in attempting to reply to Dr. Wayland's article," Brisbane was startled at his own argument." He discovered that Wayland's argument could be rebutted only by rejecting his own republican principles. Thus, after much prayer and struggle, Brisbane decided, in violation of state law, to free those slaves born into his possession and to allow them to "work for him as long as they desired & leaving when they chose."<sup>9</sup> He also forbade his overseer to whip his slaves and later discharged him.<sup>10</sup> Thus began the odyssey of William Henry Brisbane.

Initially, Brisbane was bewildered at the "popular excitement" against him and declared that he had "broken no law of the state." "I am no abolitionist," he protested.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, he was not, for in the next three years Brisbane sold more than twenty-eight slaves whom he had inherited and wrote a rebuttal to Wayland in

the Southern Baptist.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, when his brother-in-law, whose wife was "thorough going in favor of emancipation & says slavery is wrong," expressed reservations about bondage, Brisbane advised him not "to free his slaves because it would be an injury to the family." He was "opposed to general emancipation because it would affect the prosperity of the country." Still he was "opposed to Slavery because it was an evil to the slave."<sup>13</sup> He thought that his abolition-minded sister <sup>-in-law</sup> was "carrying the matter too far;" yet, he took heart that his mother "actually makes the same offer as I did to her own negroes."<sup>14</sup> The following summer Brisbane visited Wayland in Rhode Island and was much impressed by "this worthy man, notwithstanding our difference of opinion on the subject of slavery."<sup>15</sup>

Upon completing his medical studies in 1837, Brisbane returned to the small community of Lawtonville in Beaufort, a district in which 85% of the population was black. Here he practiced medicine, preached, and oversaw his plantation. During the course of the year, however, he began to feel "cramped & confined."<sup>16</sup> Finally in January, 1838 Brisbane convinced his wife that they should sell their land and Negroes and "abandon the whole plantation business with slave labor forever." He rejoiced that "we are now, therefore, quite free from the care of negroes. It is our design to move to Ohio as soon as possible." Brisbane was still only partially converted to abolitionism, for he sold all his remaining slaves except for two who were "reserved...to wait upon us" and "Old Frank" and his family who would receive wages for their services.<sup>17</sup>

After his arrival in Cincinnati, however, Brisbane's conversion was quickly completed. In October, 1839, he returned to South Carolina and arranged to buy back the slaves whom he had earlier sold so that "they should have their freedom."<sup>18</sup> "On this subject," he confessed, "I have suffered great distress of mind & since I have been in Cin ti I have never remitted my anxious study of the slavery question...." In early 1840, he declared: "My mind is now fully made up, not only that slavery is a wrong to man, both the slave & his master, & a sin against God having no justification in his word, but that to the principles of the abolitionists as set forth in their constitution can we alone look with any hope of success to put down the horrible system of human robbery & oppression." He prayed "that God would awaken christians to a feeling sense of this odious sin so that they may break every yoke & let the oppressed go free."<sup>19</sup> A Carolina slaveholder had evolved into a dedicated abolitionist.

Throughout the 1840s Brisbane labored tirelessly against the peculiar institution. He helped to organize the Cincinnati Antislavery Society, worked with the city's black community, aided runaway slaves, and edited an abolitionist newspaper, the Christian Politician, subsequently retitled the Western Transcript.<sup>20</sup> Antiabolitionist mob violence and threats convinced him "that the slave power will destroy our liberties unless we can check it in time."<sup>21</sup> In 1844 this Carolina expatriate made an unsuccessful bid for Congress on the Liberty party ticket, and the following year, working closely with James G. Birney, he arranged for a Liberty party convention in Cincinnati. In 1849

Brisbane was instrumental in founding a new abolitionist organization, the Philadelphion Society, and he served as editor of its monthly newspaper, The Epoch. Throughout these years he worked closely with his friend Salmon P. Chase, Levi Coffin, Joshua Giddings, James G. Birney and other less well-known abolitionists in Cincinnati. In 1846, Brisbane moved to Philadelphia where he served as a Liberty party agent and editor of the American Citizen, an organ of the Eastern Pennsylvania Liberty party. The next year he wrote a book on slavery which, with the encouragement of Theodore Dwight Weld and the financial backing of Lewis Tappan, was published by the American Antislavery Society. In the fall of 1848 he returned to Cincinnati.<sup>22</sup>

At the national level, Brisbane was active, not only in the Liberty party, but also in the American Antislavery Society and the executive committee of the American and Foreign Antislavery Society. On trips to the East he came in contact with Tappan, Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Horace Greeley, John P. Hale, and other notable abolitionists.<sup>23</sup> Of Garrison he wrote: "Do not admire him."<sup>24</sup>

Brisbane also crusaded against human bondage within the Baptist church. After splitting the church he pastored in Cincinnati on the slavery issue, he formed a new one on an antislavery basis. He also labored on the executive committee of the Antislavery Convention of Western Baptists and the national Baptist Antislavery Society to rid his denomination of the taint of slavery.<sup>25</sup> Arguing that even to join in fellowship with a slaveholder was "to partake of his evil deeds," Brisbane helped

to precipitate the 1845 split between the northern and southern wings of the Baptist church.<sup>26</sup>

While a hard-shell, teetotalling Baptist who apologized for writing "a short letter" or travelling on the Sabbath, Brisbane nonetheless had an unconventional mind. Like many abolitionists, he engaged in a wide variety of reforms. Over the years he dabbled with phrenology, mesmerism, and electrology, visited and considered joining the Brook Farm experiment, worked with black schools and churches, the peace movement, and the National Reform Association, and had a longstanding commitment to the temperance cause.<sup>27</sup>

Brisbane was especially interested in ridding his native state of slavery. He carried on a steady correspondence with friends and relatives in South Carolina. In the fall of 1847 he rejoiced that a visiting relative had concluded "American slavery to be sinful" and had "made up his mind to abandon slavery & emancipate the slaves over whom he has ownership."<sup>28</sup> In January, 1848 Brisbane returned to the Palmetto State. Although a declared abolitionist, he was warmly greeted and hosted by friends and relatives as he journeyed from Charleston to St. Peter's Parish in Beaufort District. At Lawtonville he was even invited to conduct a service at his old church.<sup>29</sup> In his sermon he argued that his views were "consistent with the principles of evangelical christianity" and he prayed for "'the enjoyment of life and liberty by all mankind.'" Brisbane toned down his remarks because slaves were in the audience, but he was certain that "the white congregation fully understood me, & for the most part were liberal or tolerant enough to pay me strict attention." One angry worshiper stormed out of the church, but after the service Brisbane "received the affectionate salutations



of my old acquaintances."<sup>30</sup>

Nine days later there was a meeting at Lawtonville to discuss Brisbane's activities. Despite protests by a few that Brisbane was only a "'liberty party man,'" not an abolitionist, the meeting denounced him as "an open and unscrupulous abolitionist in our midst" and resolved that "WM. H. BRISBANE was once of us, he went out from, and has turned against us, publishing at various times his reasons for becoming an abolitionist, and sending those reasons to his friends and acquaintances throughout this region...." A committee was designated to inform him that he had forty-eight hours to leave the state.<sup>31</sup> Forewarned, Brisbane and his wife fled the state, but the circumstances of his visit and departure only exemplified the anxieties under which Carolina masters labored.<sup>32</sup>

Safe in the North, Brisbane wrote two pamphlets addressed to "the citizens of South Carolina."<sup>33</sup> In them he appealed to the class interests of nonslaveholding whites, much as Hinton R. Helper would a decade later in The Impending Crisis of the South (1857). In one, signed "A True Carolinian," Brisbane claimed "that even in South Carolina, there is in very many minds a private sentiment of repugnance to slavery" and asserted that "the great mass of citizens of the State have no PERSONAL INTEREST in slaves, and they know that the benefits of the institution are confined to a very small number of the whole white population."<sup>34</sup> In another, using the pseudonym of "Brutus," he warned that slavery would "forever blast the hope of elevation and prosperity to the mass of our population." While South Carolina reputedly had a republican

form of government, "Brutus" charged that in fact "the great mass of the people are virtually disfranchised, their interests utterly disregarded, and their voice not heard in the Councils of the State...."<sup>35</sup>

Brisbane's class appeal had a sectional overtone, for he showed that six major slave districts in the lower part of the state, with only 20% of the white population, enjoyed a majority in the senate. As a result, "Brutus" claimed, while "the upper districts may go to ruin, the rice and cotton plantations are amply protected....The interests of men who have to work with their own hands are entirely unprotected." At the same time, the insatiable slaveholders were attempting to deny nonslaveholders refuge in the territories by threatening disunion if slavery was not allowed to spread there. Brisbane called upon the yeomanry to "teach these masters of overgrown plantations that we cannot always endure this state of things."<sup>36</sup> These pamphlets were printed by the Philadelphon Society and mailed, often with an unsigned letter from Brisbane, to prominent Carolinians under the franks of Congressman Joshua R. Giddings and Senator Salmon P. Chase. The Philadelphon Society also sent John M. Barrett on an "agency" to South Carolina to recruit additional addresses for future mailings.<sup>37</sup>

In late March, 1849 scores of Carolina masters stood aghast in their local post offices as they read unsigned letters enclosed with copies of the "Brutus" and "True Carolinian" pamphlets. These

scenes would be reenacted many times until the flood of letters and pamphlets slowed to a trickle in the fall and then dried up. In keeping with Brisbane's appeal to sectional antagonisms, the mailings were especially intense in the up-country districts.<sup>38</sup> After fifty copies of "A True Carolinian" were discovered in an up country post office, the Spartanburg Spartan warned of "an incendiary attack, in our very midst....an effort to raise an Abolition party in South Carolina...." It asserted that, while the pamphlet might touch off an insurrection, "the great and darling object of the incendiary author" was "to excite the nonslaveholding voters of the State to make the question at the ballot-box--assuring them that they are in the majority, and that they are themselves oppressed by the institution of slavery." The alarmed editor of the Spartan guessed that the pamphlet's author was living in South Carolina, "a viper that has nestled in the bosom of the State...."<sup>39</sup> Because so many prominent Carolinians had received pamphlets and letters, it was also suggested that "Brutus" had many personal contacts throughout the state. Since the letters were mysteriously unpostmarked, it was even charged that local postmasters were abetting abolitionists. Rumors were rampant, demands were made for increased vigilance, and several individuals were charged with being covert abolitionists.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile John Barrett traveled through the upper part of the state gathering the names and addresses of Carolinians, especially those of clergymen. As a secret agent he was inept,

however, for he was quickly detected in Columbia and was forced to flee after a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was later stopped in Winnsboro but was released for lack of evidence. Finally, he was apprehended in Spartanburg in early June when "Brutus" pamphlets and encoded letters from "B.H.W." were found in his room. By late July it was learned that "B.H.W." was William H. Brisbane, and that he was the notorious "Brutus." By mid-summer the state was in the throes of a panic of fear that slavery was threatened from within as well as from without.<sup>41</sup> The Columbia Telegraph castigated Brisbane, Barrett, and John C. Vaughan, a former Carolina politician currently editing a free soil sheet in Cleveland. The Telegraph warned that "this is one branch only of a wide-spread web of machinations directed against our peace and property by domestic renegades and foreign fanatics. A thousand evidences are around us, denoting the presence in our midst of secret spies and emissaries...."<sup>42</sup> When Garrison's Liberator and other northern newspapers rushed to the defense of Barrett and "Brutus," suspicions of a plot were only confirmed.<sup>43</sup>

Brisbane, the apostate, and "Brutus," the fomenter of class conflict, had clearly touched a raw nerve. A month before the "Brutus" mailings began, a Charleston confidant had informed Calhoun that even in South Carolina many masters were despondent and beginning "to think that the Institution of Slavery is doomed. That all the world is opposed to it and that we ourselves will not or cannot do any thing to avert it." "This feeling of despondence," he warned, "is the only danger of the South."<sup>44</sup>

In the fall, after the "Brutus" scare, Governor Whitemarsh B. Seabrook recommended that the legislature give "special notice" to the "extensive dissemination of highly inflammatory essays and letters, intended to awaken jealousy in the minds of our citizens...." He suggested that such an offense be made punishable with severe and definite penalties.<sup>45</sup> Even later, during the 1851 secession crisis, a writer in the Charleston Courier asked how, even if secession was successful, "the constantly undermining process of sapping the foundations of institutions among ourselves, by the circulation of incendiary papers, and the more active exertions of traitors [will] be arrested?"<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the aftershocks of Brisbane and "Brutus" continued to be felt throughout the remainder of the antebellum period.<sup>47</sup>

The Palmetto State, however, had not seen the last of this determined abolitionist to which it had given birth. After moving to Arena, Wisconsin in 1853, Brisbane continued his crusade against slavery, played a role in the formation of the Republican party, and served as clerk of the Wisconsin senate. In 1862 his old friend Salmon P. Chase appointed Brisbane tax commissioner for the sea islands in his native Beaufort District, which had been captured by a union fleet the previous November. It was a fitting climax to Brisbane's war against slavery that he would participate in the famous "Port Royal Experiment." His odyssey completed, Brisbane would spend much of the next twelve years working among the former slaves in Beaufort and attempting to reconstruct the society from which he had sprung.<sup>48</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1941); Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham, 1940); Kenneth M. Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York, 1956); Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "The Travail of Slavery," in Sellers, ed., The Southerner as American (Chapel Hill, 1960); Ralph E. Morrow, "The Proslavery Argument Revisited," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVIII (June, 1961), 70-94; William W. Freehling, Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836 (New York, 1966); Steven A. Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina (New York, 1970); Ronald T. Takaki, A Pro-Slavery Crusade: The Agitation to Reopen the African Slave Trade (New York, 1971); Robert Nicholas Olsberg, "A Government of Class and Race: William Henry Trescot and the South Carolina Chivalry, 1860-1865" (unpublished dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1972). Channing minimizes the experience of guilt but places great stress on that of fear.

<sup>2</sup>David Johnson to J.C. Calhoun, 18 Oct. 1848, in Chauncey S. Boucher and Robert P. Brooks, eds., "Correspondence addressed to John C. Calhoun, 1837-1849," American Historical Association Report, 1929 (Washington, 1931), 482. In the same year J.H. Hammond wrote a prominent Charlestonian: "Let Kentucky & Western Virginia emancipate, it is inevitable that they should do so before long & I would not retard the event a moment after they believe it to be their interest. The culture of Tobacco has alone kept slaves this long in those regions." J.H. Hammond to W.M. Wightman, 7 June 1848, W.M. Wightman Papers, South Carolina Historical Society (hereafter cited as SCHS). See also Robert Duncan Bass, ed., "The Autobiography of William J. Grayson" (unpublished dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1933), 142.

<sup>3</sup>W.G. Simms to J.H. Hammond, 24 Nov. [1849], J.H. Hammond Papers, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC). Earlier on 15 July 1847, Simms had written Hammond that in a few years Maryland "with Virginia and the states south of her including the Carolinas & Georgia will have incorporated among themselves new interests, which will greatly change their characteristics." Hammond on 23 July 1847 responded fatalistically: "As to going with it westward, I say no. If it was abolished in South Carolina to-morrow and not in Georgia I would not cross the river. The institutions that succeed it might drive me off, but I would try them." See also Avery O. Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (2nd ed. rev., Chicago, 1966), 246.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. Hammond to J.C. Calhoun, 26 Sept. 1845, J.C. Calhoun Papers, South Caroliniana Library (hereafter cited as SC).

<sup>5</sup>William Henry Brisbane Journal, Vol. I, 1835-1837 passim, William Henry Brisbane Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society (hereafter cited as WHS). Vol. I (1835-1842) consists of "notes and quotations" copied into an 1865 diary by Brisbane. See also biographical sketch of Brisbane in the description of the collection and "Proslavery Essay," [1834], Vol. 34. I am indebted to Nicholas Olsberg for helping me locate the Brisbane Papers. Abbott Hall Brisbane, full brother of W.H. Brisbane's adopted brother, was a leading Carolina apologist of slavery as well as a planter, railroad promoter, civil engineer, founder of the South Carolina Industrial Institute, militia brigadier-general, West Point colonel in the Seminole War, novelist and professor of humanities at the Citadel. South Carolina Historical Magazine, 14 (1913), 175-77; David Duncan Wallace, The History of South Carolina (4 vols., New York, 1934), III, 20. For a series of ten proslavery letters by A.H. Brisbane, a convert to Catholicism, to Archbishop Hughes, see Charleston Courier, 24 Dec. 1850, 25-27 Nov. 1851.

<sup>6</sup>Brisbane Journal, Vol. I, entry for 13 June 1835, WHS.

<sup>7</sup>This was the initial mass mailing of abolitionist material by the American Antislavery Society in its "moral suasion" campaign. See Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, 340-42.

<sup>8</sup>Brisbane Journal, Vol. I, entry for 8 July 1835, WHS.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., entries for 14-17 July 1835.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., and entry for 24 Aug. 1835.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., entry for 18 July 1835. See also entries for 23, 29 Aug. 1835. By freeing his slaves and allowing them to hire their own time Brisbane was in fact violating state law.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., entries for 20 July, 23 Aug., 14 Oct. 1835; 2 April, 7 Nov. 1836; 18 Jan. 1838; 19 Dec. 1841.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., entry for 20 July 1835.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., entry for 4 June 1836.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., entries for 27 Jan., 24 Sept. and passim 1837.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., entry for 18 Jan. 1838.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., entry for 24 Oct. 1839. See also entries for 4 Jan. 1840, 21 Aug., 19 Dec. 1841. On the latter date Brisbane freed twenty-five slaves whom he had earlier sold.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., entry for 4 Jan. 1840.

- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., Vols. I, II, 1841-1844 passim.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., entry for 12 Oct. 1841.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., Vols. II-VI, 1844-1848 passim. Brisbane wrote the introduction to Levi Coffin's Reminiscences of Levi Coffin (New York, 1968) and is mentioned several times therein. See, ii-iii, 272, 294.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., Vols. II-VI, 1845-1848 passim; Dwight L. Dumond, Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America (New York, 1961), 286.
- <sup>24</sup>Brisbane Journal, Vol. I, entry for 11 May 1841.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., Vols. I-II, 1841-1845 passim.
- <sup>26</sup>W.H. Brisbane, A Speech Delivered April 30, 1844, Before the Baptist Home Mission Society on the Question of the Propriety of Recognizing Slaveholding Ministers as Proper Missionaries of the Gospel (n.p., n.d.), 2-6, quoted in H. Shelton Smith, In His Image But... Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910 (Durham, 1972), 124. See also Brisbane, A Letter to the Baptist Denomination in South Carolina (Cincinnati, 1840) and Speech of the Rev. W.H. Brisbane, Lately a Slaveholder in South Carolina: Delivered before the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Cincinnati, February 12, 1840 (Cincinnati, 1840).
- <sup>27</sup>Brisbane Journal, Vols. I-VI, 1835-1850 passim.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., Vol. V, entry for 4 Oct. 1847.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., entries for 28, 29 Jan. 1848.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., entry for 30 Jan. 1848.
- <sup>31</sup>A description and the preamble and resolutions of this meeting of 8 Feb. 1848 are reprinted in Courier, 29 Aug. 1849 and Charleston Mercury, 29 Aug. 1849. Dr. T.D. Mathews, a relative of Brisbane, was one of those who denied that Brisbane was an abolitionist. He appears to have sympathized privately with Brisbane's abolitionist views. In August, 1849 the committee of safety reconvened and accused Mathews of writing an unfavorable account of the "indignation meeting" which had banished Brisbane and of having it published in the Cincinnati Globe. Mathews admitted to having written the article and then sending it to Brisbane, but he falsely claimed that Brisbane distorted the original article. This explanation was accepted by the committee. Courier and Mercury, 29 Aug. 1849; Columbia Telegraph, 30 Aug. 1849; Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entries for 1, 15 Aug., 6, 12 Sept., 1, 3 Oct. 1849.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., Vol. V, entry for 8 Feb. 1848.



33 "A True Carolinian" [W.H. Brisbane], To the Voters of South Carolina [Cincinnati, 1849]; "Brutus" [W.H. Brisbane] An Address to the Citizens of South Carolina [Cincinnati, 1849] are discussed below. In his journal Brisbane also refers to a third pamphlet, the Junius Letters to Calhoun, which I have been unable to locate. In addition to these works, Brisbane wrote Slaveholding Examined, published by the American Antislavery Society, and Amanda, an abolitionist novel." Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entries for 1 Dec. 1848, 5 Feb., 6 Mar., 26 April, 2 Sept. 1849.

34 Quoted in Spartanburg Spartan, 24 April 1849. Given Brisbane's fundamentalist religious orientation, it is surprising that he did not make a dogmatic, emotional, moral argument against slavery in these pamphlets. Instead, he pragmatically presents a calculated appeal to self interest.

35 "Brutus" [Brisbane], An Address to the Citizens of S.C.

36 Ibid. At the end of the pamphlet Brisbane backed away from its revolutionary thrust by calling upon Carolinians to draft a new state constitution, "in which the interests of the free laborer shall be provided for," demand that the legislature adopt it and, if it did not, to appeal to Congress.

37 Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entries for 6, 23, 28 Feb. and May-July passim 1849. The Spartan, 26 July 1849 printed one of Brisbane's unsigned letters received by ex-state senator H.C. Young of Laurens: "Mr. Young--Sir: Study your country's good. Give freedom to your negroes and do not go to the expense of building negro houses. Let the negroes look to their own interests and build houses for themselves. They will not be so liable to be burned down. Hire them. Pay wages....Yours for Carolina

TRUE PATRIOT"

38 Post offices in Pickens, Pendleton, Abbeville, Newberry, Laurens, Richland, Sumter, and Marlboro Districts received large numbers of the pamphlets. Spartan, 2 Aug., 27 Sept. 1849; Telegraph, 25 June, 16, 23 July, 24 Aug. 1849; Mercury, 21 Sept. 1849; Abbeville Banner, 21 Aug. 1849; Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entries for 28 May, 2, 5, 26 June, 5, 17, 18, 25, 30 July 1849.

39 Spartan, 24 April 1849.

40 Telegraph, 16 May, 23, 24, 30 July, 11, 14, 24, 30 Aug., 17 Sept. 1849; Banner, 21 Aug. 1849; Spartan, 24 April, 19, 23, 26 July, 28 Aug., 6, 13 Sept. 1849; Courier, 29 Aug. 1849; Mercury, 29 Aug. 1849; printed letter from the General Committee of Safety, 11 Aug. 1849, Williams-Chesnut-Manning Papers, SC; Daniel Wallace to Chairman of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety in Columbia, S.C., 8 Nov. 1849 (copy), McLean Family Papers, SC

<sup>41</sup>In October, 1849 Barrett was released on \$1,000 bail and allowed to leave the state. His ill-fated agency and the panic it provoked may be followed in Telegraph, 4, 18, 25 June, 23, 24, 30 July, 21, 24 Aug. 1849; Spartan, 14 June, 16 July, 2, 16, 23, 30 Aug. 1849; Fairfield Herald, 2 June 1849, reprinted in Telegraph, 4 June 1849; Mercury, 24, 30 July, 6, 9, 13, 16, 23, 27 Aug., 21 Sept. 1849; Courier, 18 June, 8, 9 Oct. 1849; Spartanburg Court of General Sessions, 5 Oct. 1849, microfilm, South Carolina Archives, Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entries for 21 June- Oct. 1849.

<sup>42</sup>Telegraph, 21 August 1849: See also Spartan, 30 Aug. 1849. After converting to abolitionism, Vaughan abandoned slavery and his political career in South Carolina and moved to Kentucky and Ohio where he collaborated with Cassius M. Clay, served as secretary of the Free Soil Convention, and edited antislavery sheets in Louisville, Cincinnati, and Cleveland. Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War (New York, 1970), 118; Asa Earl Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850 (New York, 1970), 118-20.

<sup>43</sup>Spartan, 26, 30 Aug., 6 Sept. 1849; Brisbane Journal, Vol. VI, entry for 14 Aug. 1849.

<sup>44</sup>H. Conner to J.C. Calhoun, 12 Jan. 1849, in J.F. Jameson, ed., Correspondence of John C. Calhoun, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1899 (Washington, 1900), II, 1188-90. See also Herschel V. Johnson to J.C. Calhoun, 20 July 1849, in ibid., 1197-99.

<sup>45</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina; Being the Annual Session of 1849 (Columbia, 1849), 14.

<sup>46</sup>"Cincinnatus," "Is Secession a Practical Remedy...", in Courier, 13 May 1851.

<sup>47</sup>See for example letter to Mercury, n.d., reprinted in Edgefield Advertiser, 16 Nov. 1854; Governor J.H. Adam's message to the legislature, 24 Nov. 1856, Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina; Being the Annual Session of 1856 (Columbia, 1856), 35-37.

<sup>48</sup>Brisbane Journal, Vols. XI-XXX, 1853-1874 passim; Willie Lee Rose, Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment (New York, 1964), 196, 201-202, 276, 278, 285, 291, 294, 380, 402.

In annotating a Pope Family manuscript by Col. Joseph Daniel Pope (6 Apr 1820-21 Mar 1908), sometime Dean of the Law School of the University of South Carolina, son of Joseph James Pope (18 Apr 1792-1864), owner of Leamington Plantation, Hilton Head Island, David McCord Wright, his great-nephew, wrote in 1958: "During the Revolutionary War the South Carolina coast, particularly the area we are describing, was repeatedly ravaged. Thousands of slaves and quantities of livestock were carried off by the British to the West Indies... In 1861 the "golden age" of Sea Island culture came abruptly to an end...on almost no notice the planters of St. Helena, Hilton Head and the surrounding islands were forced to flee...there was no time to take heirlooms, family papers, records...but they did take their "house servants". My old nurse, Clarinda had been a Pope family servant (slave) as indeed had her known ancestors for several generations. When I was a boy she would entertain us with tales of the violent adventures which befell her while Columbia was burning... It cannot be said that the treatment of the occupied islands reflects much credit upon the moral sense of the U.S. government and its agents. The Island plantations were "sold" by the U.S. Direct Tax Commission for "non-payment of taxes" but of course, taxes were being paid by their owners to Confederate governments. This was obviously a form of disguised confiscation both arbitrary and unfair. Had all slave plantations in the C.S.A. been similarly treated, it would have been drastic but not discriminatory. But to single out for ruin, in effect, those families who happened through accident of geography to be among the first occupied, is difficult to excuse. Few of the owners were ever able to redeem their lands. On Edisto...many of the owners retained their lands. But on St. Helena and Hilton Head there was an almost complete break."