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Opposition to the Constitution's Provisions Concerning Slavery

Robert Waln to Richard Waln Philadelphia, 3 October 1787 (excerpt)

. . . Thee wou'd not censure ye Convention so severely if thee knew every circumstance respecting ye Negroes—by far ye greatest part wished to abolish that trade entirely, & a resolution was offer'd for that purpose but ye Southern Delegates positively refus'd their consent & threatened to retire if ye motion was not withdrawn—and as their absence would have broken up ye House, it was thought best to withdraw it, and introduce another (which was carried) & which will put it in ye power of Congress at ye end of 21 years to put a total stop to that iniquitous traffic—and as each state is still at liberty to enact such laws for ye abolition of slavery as they may think proper, ye Convention cannot be charg'd with holding out any encouragement to it. . . .

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