

**PAPERS RELATING
TO THE GARRISON
MOB PP. 1-72**

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Papers Relating to the Garrison Mob pp. 1-72 by Theodore Lyman

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THEODORE LYMAN

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P A P E R S

RELATING TO

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THE GARRISON MOB.

EDITED BY

THEODORE LYMAN, 3^d.

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10 May 11 C.S.

HARDLY a night passes in any of our large cities without greater violence done to person and to property than occurred in the so-called "Garrison mob." Although its results scarcely entitle it to the name of a riot, it has more historical importance than can be claimed by some battles. This wretched street fight was indeed the first muttering of that awful storm which was to burst over this country a quarter of a century later.

In October of 1835 there had come to Boston Mr. George Thompson, a Scotchman, who proposed to speak publicly in favor of the abolition of negro slavery. This was a discussion which few people then heard patiently, especially from the lips of a foreigner; and a considerable excitement followed.

There was to be a meeting of the Female Anti-slavery Society, and the Mayor, Theodore Lyman, Jr., sent a messenger to Mr. Garrison, editor of an anti-slavery paper called the Liberator, to ask if Thompson would then speak; because, in such a case, it would be necessary to provide additional police. Mr. Garrison replied that Thompson would not be

Ms. A. 3-28-33 A. 1A.

present, and consequently no unusual precautions were taken. The meeting took place at the rooms of the Society, No. 46 Washington Street, in the afternoon of October 21st.

The Mayor was soon told that the few constables on the spot were not enough to preserve order, and he went in person with more men. The mob became larger and more threatening, but was prevented by the police from entering the building. Mr. Garrison, considering his person in imminent danger, escaped by a back window into Wilson's Lane, where he was seized and roughly handled by the rioters, and was dragged into State Street. There he was rescued by the authorities, and taken into the Old State House, a portion of which was then used as a City Hall. As night was drawing on, and the mob seemed likely to grow too strong for the constables, it was thought best to place Mr. Garrison for safety in the jail, and to this end he was committed, *pro forma*, as implicated in a riot. He was taken from the City Hall, placed by dint of hard fighting in a carriage, and driven safely to the jail. The next morning he was set free, having sustained certain damage to his clothing, but none in his person.

Such is a sketch of this riot, and one that all parties will assent to as true. But there are other and important points which are by no means so easily settled. The following newspaper articles will bring out, quite emphatically, some of these points, and will serve to introduce a general consideration of the affair.

No. I.

[From the Boston Daily Advertiser of Wednesday, November 3, 1869.]

THE GARRISON MOB.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE BOSTON DAILY ADVERTISER:—

In your report of Mr. Phillips's lecture on the Question of To-morrow, he is made to say, concerning the Garrison or "Gentleman's" riot, "He saw the Mayor of the city, cap in hand, almost on his knees, entreating the men who were his social companions to have the kindness to obey the laws."

I beg to say that the above statement is false. The Mayor of the city, with the slender police force of that time, rescued Mr. Garrison by main force, and saved his life.

This statement I make for the information of the present generation. Those who knew the Mayor knew also that he was not a man to go on his knees to anybody, certainly not to mobs.

It seems a little hard, when there are so many *living* men at whom Mr. Phillips can throw mud, that he should not confine his pastime to them.

Very respectfully,

THEODORE LYMAN.

Ms. A. 9. 3-28-1

No. II.

THE GARRISON MOB.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE BOSTON DAILY ADVERTISER:—

I see the present Mr. Theodore Lyman denies the correctness of my statement as to his father's conduct at the Garrison mob. I said that Mayor Lyman "besought, instead of commanding, that day, and was, metaphorically speaking, on his knees to the mob." His son disbelieves this, because such conduct would be very unlike his father. He was in his cradle that day. I was in Washington Street. I *saw* his father beg and sue; I *heard* him beseech and entreat that mob to disperse and preserve order. He never once commanded or sought to *control* it. He never vindicated his office by even attempting to rally a force and *maintain* order. Had he issued one command, even one that was disobeyed, he would have done all that in him lay to redeem Boston, and I should have honored him. I saw him consent, if not assist, at tearing down the antislavery sign and throwing it to the mob, to propitiate its rage. The city was mine as well as his, and I hung my head, ashamed of it and him.

He was lamentably wanting on that occasion in all that befits a magistrate. He broke his pledge, made a week before, to the Female Antislavery Society. The only order he issued that day was one ordering its members, legally met in their own hall, to disperse. He never commanded the mob to disperse.

The Mayor did well in giving Mr. Garrison the only refuge which Boston, under such a mayor, could furnish, — its jail. He would have done his duty had he vindicated, or died in the attempt to vindicate, Mr. Garrison's right to speak what and where he pleased, and to sleep under his own roof in safety.

Then his career would have stood an honor to that generation and an example to all coming ones. He had ample means to control that mob. Ten men shot and sent to deserved graves would have scattered the mob in ten minutes. I could name a dozen men who would have been equal to that emergency. Mr. Hayes, lately of the Boston police, standing in Lyman's place, would have reversed the record of that hour. Mr. Garrison would have slept that night at home. Some of the gentlemen mobocrats would have slept in graves, and some would have filled Mr. Garrison's cell in the Boston jail.

Twenty years ago I said, "The time will come when sons will deem it unkind and unchristian to remind the world of acts their fathers take pride in." That hour has come. I refer to old shames, not to insult the dead, but to control the living. I have no ill-will toward Mayor Lyman. His services to the cause of education are an honor to his memory; and, if report can be trusted, he bitterly repented his weakness on that shameful day.

But evil-doers have one motive more to restrain them, if they can be made to feel that their children will blush for the names they inherit. I bring these