

1837e. Mass Meeting in New York City

On November 7, 1837, Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered by a pro-slavery mob while attempting to defend the press of the Alton, Illinois Observer. No one was punished for this act. *The Colored American* of November 25, 1837 published the met in mass meetings throughout the North to condemn the act, and to raise money for the martyr's widow and children. Typical is a meeting held in New York City on December 18, 1837, in which \$60 was raised for the Lovejoys. Source: H. Aptheker (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, v. 1, 174-176.

An American Citizen Murdered! The Press Destroyed!! The Spirit Of Slavery Triumphant!!

Elijah P. Lovejoy, that fearless advocate of the press, has fallen a victim to the fury of a mob, thirsting for his blood, because he dared to lift up his voice against the oppression of the poor slave. ...

How horrible to contemplate, and how fearfully pregnant with danger to the safety of every institution in our country!

Whither shall we turn our aching eyes? Where shall we look for a redeeming spirit? To the Press? Gracious Heaven! how has it spoken? Read the New-York Gazette, the Courier & Enquirer, the Star and the Sun, and then let us hang our heads in shame. To the pulpit? It is recreant to its trust. With a few noble and splendid exceptions the Pulpit and the Press, have virtually by their silence and actual committal, espoused the side of the oppressor. Truly "on the side of the oppressor there is power."

Who are guilty in this matter? Is it the poor, ignorant, sunken and abandoned wretches who consummate the work planned out by "gentlemen of property and standing?" No! They know not what they do. But the Press, which from the commencement of the Anti-Slavery controversy, has kept alive by base misrepresentations, the worst passions of the human heart, and pointed at Abolitionists as fit subjects for the assassin's dagger-the press-Political and Religious, by baptising itself in all manner of abominations, in order to oppose the progress of pure principles, is guilty of this crime.

The Pulpit, also, standing aloof from the contest, or putting forth its bulls of condemnation, against the efforts making for Emancipation, is guilty. Upon it is the blood of the murdered Lovejoy, and before the gathering wrath of a just God it will stand condemned as recreant to its trust.

Resolutions of New York Meeting

That as American citizens, we the people of color of the city of New York, repose the utmost confidence in and respect for the character and principles of the Abolitionists, whose steady advocacy of our rights as men gives assurance that they rather desire to plead God than man.

That we condole with the widow of the Rev. Elijah P. J. Lovejoy, who fell a sacrifice to the demon of slavery and a corrupt public sentiment; whose labors in behalf of our oppressed countrymen were indicative of a mind and heart, that nobly sustained the private character of husband and father, as well as the public one of philanthropist and patriot.

That the blood of the martyred Lovejoy calls upon us, an oppressed people, to become more united in sentiment and effort, while two and a half millions of our brethren are dragging out a life of misery and degradation in that most detestable system of slavery which not only reduces its victims to brutes, but threatens slavery and death to those who plead their cause.

That among our rights, we hold none dearer than the freedom of speech and of the press; and that, whilst in the land of the free, we can never relinquish that freedom for the dumb eloquence of the downtrodden slave. That a letter of condolence be forwarded to the widow, expressive of our wish, that the God of the widow and orphan may support her mind through the hours of affliction and sorrow, and lead her to the contemplation of the time when the sorrows of earth shall be exchanged for the joys of heaven.

That we recommend a similar expression of sentiments upon this event to our fellow citizens, in all parts of the country.

The Liberator, December 29, 1837.