

1834. Garrison Literary and Benevolent Association

Henry Highland Garnet, William H. Day and David Ruggles formed The Garrison Literary and Benevolent Association of New York in March, 1834. At their first meeting one hundred and fifty African American youth under the age of twenty years gathered in a public school. A city official told them they would have to choose a different name for their society if they wanted to continue using public facilities. The young men decided to retain their name and rent a meeting place. The preamble to the constitution of this organization was published in *The Liberator*, April 19, 1834. Source: H. Aptheker (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, v. 1, 151-152.

If acting conformably to the will of our Creator, -if promoting the welfare of our fellow creatures around us, -and if securing our own happiness, are objects of the highest moment, we are loudly called upon to cultivate and extend the great interests of religion, virtue and literature. Feeling ourselves obligated to God for His mercies towards us, we think it our duty to begin, in early life, to assist each other to alleviate the afflicted. And whereas we believe the downfall of prejudice, slavery, and oppression, and the moral and intellectual improvement of the rising generation of our race depend on early improvement; and whereas faithful philanthropists have engaged in our cause, through the press and otherwise, we think it would encourage them with persevering energy to vindicate our cause, to see the youth of color distinguish themselves by their good conduct and intellectual attainments: -we believe, therefore, that the forming ourselves into an associated body will be the means of spreading information and diffusing knowledge, and we hope to do good to soul and body; we therefore, looking to Heaven for direction, do form ourselves into an association. . . .