

Wilbur Young 12/21/38
Federal Writer's Project
Racial Group

William Lloyd Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison first saw the light of day on December 10th, 1805. His father, Abijah Garrison was a sailing master of old New England stock. His mother, Fanny Lloyd was a woman of exceptional physical beauty and strength of character.

Young William was the eldest of three children, a family which early in his youth became poverty stricken partly due to the inability of his father to desist from copious imbibement of alcoholic beverages. In an effort to get a fresh start, the family moved to Baltimore where young Garrison obtained his early education.

In 1818, Garrison was drawn back to Newburyport, Massachusetts, the home of his birth where he began as an apprentice in the offices of the "Newburyport Herald". In a short time, he soon began writing anonymous articles and by 1826, the end of his apprenticeship, he purchased from Isaac Knapp, the "Essex Covant" of Newburyport which he continued under the name of "The Free Press". It was in this publication that he first published the poetical gems of Whittier whose shy genius he detected.

Even at this early age, Garrison showed an inclination to hit at the wrongs of slavery. However, his main occupation at that time was politics. He followed very zealously the events of the National Republican party (Federals) to which he was attached and on one occasion, July 1827, he attended a caucus to nominate a successor to Daniel Webster in the House of Representatives. Speaking out of turn, Garrison made

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such an eloquent plea in behalf of Harrison Gray Otis that the meeting was broken up rather than nominate a person distasteful to the members. Later, a writer on the Boston Courier referred to the incident as "interference by a newcomer of low degree" to which Garrison replied, "I sympathize with the gentleman in the difficulty which he found to learn my cognomination. It is true that my acquaintance in this city is limited- I have sought for none. Let me assure him however that if my life be spared, my name shall one day be known to the world, at least to such an extent that common inquiry shall not be necessary. This I know will be deemed excessive vanity- but time shall prove it prophetic."

where is this quote from?

In January 1828, Garrison became editor of the National Philanthropist a paper in which he infused much vigor for the cause of temperance. During this same year he met Benjamin Lundy, a New Jersey Quaker and editor of the "Genius of Universal Emancipation" in Baltimore. Lundy succeeded in converting Garrison to the cause of Anti-Slavery. Due to his past political endeavors however, he was given the job as editor of "The Journal of Times" of Bennington, Vermont, in the support of John Quincy Adams for presidential reelection. He not only did this but took the opportunity to advocate temperance and gradual emancipation of slaves, From this point on, he began to bear down on the evils of slavery. He joined with Lundy for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and soon found himself as associate editor of the "Genius" in Baltimore. From his plea for gradual emancipation, Garrison soon went out for unconditional and total abolition of slavery and thus plunged into his lifelong work.

While in Baltimore, in 1829, Garrison found out that Francis Todd, a Newburyport merchant shipped a cargo of slaves from Baltimore to New Orleans on one of his ships. He blasted him so heavily in the "Genius" that it resulted in his being jailed for libel.

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In 1830, Garrison returned to Massachusetts where he began a series of lectures on the evils of slavery and also hit on the Colonization Society. He was supported by May, and Sewell, two influential men at that time. These three later got together and brought out a newspaper called "The Liberator", an anti-slavery periodical 14 by 9 which made its initial appearance on January 1st, 1831. Included in the first edition was the following poem by Garrison;

"Oppression! I have seen thee face to face
And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow
But thy soul withering glance I fear not now
For dread to prouder feelings doth give place
Of deep abhorrence! Scorning the disgrace
Of slavish knees at thy footstool bow,
I also kneel but with far other vow
Do hail thee and thy herd of hirelings base:
I swear while life blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart with heart and hand,
Thy brutalizing sway -till Africa's chains
Are burst, and freedom rules the rescued land,-
Trampling oppression and his iron rod:
Such is the vow I take so help me God!"

(Words of Garrison p.13)

It wasn't long before the Liberator began to make itself felt. It echoed far down in the Southland who in turn began to complain on the grounds that it encouraged insurrection and lawlessness among the slaves. The Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia was blamed on the Liberator and the state of Georgia went so far as to offer \$5,000 for the arrest of Garrison, its editor. (1831)

Garrison's next move was the organizing of anti-slavery societies. He founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society. In 1833, an anti-slavery convention was held in Philadelphia with representatives from nearly all the free states. This occasion marked the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

In September 1834, Garrison married Helen Eliza Benson, daughter

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of a Rhode Island philanthropist. She encouraged him in his work and he forged ahead with new vigor.

Garrison by this time had worked up such keen agitation in the cause against slavery that he was threatened with death and was mobbed on many occasions. However he held steadfast to his policy of protest through non-resistance and stuck to his guns.

In 1843, he called the Constitution of the United States a "Covenant with Death", and burned a copy of that document. The following year, he was made the president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, a position which he held for over twenty years until the cause was completed.

The Liberator, inspite of its stormy existance, survived until the end of slavery in America and ## in December, 1865, the last issue, the thirty-fifth volume was published. Mr. Garrison's occupation # as an abolitionist was gone and in that same year, he tendered his resignation to the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Garrison did not retire from public life however. Other causes received his attention such as "Women's Rights". He recognized no division of human interests between men and women, no natural power of one sex over the other and in this capacity, made several trips to Europe.

In 1876, Mrs. Garrison passed away, an event which left him broken in spirit and just a tired old man. Three years later in 1879 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Henry Villard in New York city, on May 24th, at the age of seventy-four, this country lost one of its greatest figures. William Lloyd Garrison bowed to the inevitable.

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So passed away a man whose life was a high exemplification of an anti...

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an untiring benevolence both in public and in private; whose conduct as a citizen was beyond reproach, whose moral behavior under all circumstances was flawless; who abhorred injustice and loathed violence, who never wished evil to any man; who had no enemy whom he could not and ~~##~~ did not forgive: whose sympathies were all embracing, and predisposed him to favor every movement for the amelioration of mankind; who was stern and inflexible at the application of principle but habitually modest, genial, and kindly to the last degree in his personal association with others; of extreme sociability of transparent ingenuousness, devoid of vanity or the smallest trace of self seeking; as amenable to counsel as he was prompt in initiative; inexhaustible in hopefulness and patience, he possessed an unflinching faith of that which is right will in the end succeed.

whom is this from?

following
(The ~~###~~ eulogy was taken from the biography of William Lloyd Garrison by his grandson Oswald Garrison Villard pages 62 and # 63)

"You~~#~~ called him an effeminate fanatic because he would stand up for the cause of women in a day when there were fewer suffragists than abolitionists and he went calmly on insisting that his platform was not yet occupied unless women stood on it. You called him a crack-brain because he crossed the ocean to plead for the slave and then declined to speak for what was dearest to his soul because the women delegates with him were not allowed in the convention hall. You denounced him as a friend and ally to Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone and even Mary Walker and Garrison, hopelessly addled brained, took it as a compliment and gloried in their spiritual alliances which some would have dubbed a shame.

Which Garrison was this?

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You certainly cannot wage polemical warfare with an antagonist like this. He will not play fair. He does not follow the rules of the game. He enters ~~##~~ combat in such a shining armor of happiness and personal righteousness and complete unselfishness as to make it impossible for the point of your sword to enter at any point and all the time, he is belaboring you with his heavy broadsword with the utmost calmness and the most amazing vigor.

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Sources of Information

William Lloyd Garrison in Non-Resistance

The Words of Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison by John Jay Chapman

William Lloyd Garrison by Oswald Garrison Villard