

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Early Voice for Abolition Took Risks

Was jailed and beaten in fight against slavery

BY RON WEBER
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

While the historic Lewis and Clark Expedition spent another dismal rainy day bartering with Indians and approaching the Pacific Ocean, a seemingly uneventful birth was occurring across the country. In Massachusetts, William Lloyd Garrison was born.

While these two events would appear unconnected, a closer look might change your mind. While the Lewis and Clark trek included a black man named York, that very same day would bring another "black" event.

Born to Canadian parents, Garrison settled into Newburyport, Mass. as a child. His fiery New Brunswick mother generally had the job of raising him. His father spent most of his adult life as a sea captain.

While his family decided on a shoemaker's career for Garrison, he had other ideas. At 14, Garrison started a journalism career that would keep him fired up until his death many decades later.

His passion for the written word became very clear well before his 20th birthday. Finding Newburyport too small for his opinions on the abolition of slavery, Garrison went on to Boston. Here, he started as a journeyman printer and moved up to

Editor of the National Philanthropist, a paper dedicated to abstinence from alcohol.

In 1829, he met an abolitionist named Benjamin Lundy. The two of them had equal enthusiasm regarding the issue of slavery. Garrison did

landed at nearby Baltimore.

After seven weeks of imprisonment and much publicity, Garrison was bailed out of jail. But Lundy cared little for the chaotic circus of attention that the incarceration brought and they agreed to go their separate ways.

In 1830, Garrison delivered three intense lectures on the sinfulness of slavery holders. He then launched the Liberator with his new partner Isaac Knapp. The new paper carried the motto, "Our Country, our Whole Country, and nothing but our

protesters through the streets of Boston. He was finally jailed for his own safety.

At the end of the Civil War in 1865 when slavery was abolished, Garrison knew his career as an abolitionist was finally over. While he knew of the need to monitor the progress of the new rights of African Americans, the Liberator had run its course and was shut down after 35 years of fiery rhetoric.

After a lifetime of service to the liberation of African Americans and to women's rights, Garrison died on May 24, 1879 at the age of 74.

As a white man who risked life and limb for minorities, Garrison made a huge mark in our history books. While no one can ever really



William Lloyd Garrison wrote passionately for abolition of slavery.

I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard.

—William Lloyd Garrison

the editing work and Lundy went on to lecture and bring in subscriptions. Their paper was called the Genius.

While Lundy focused on the idea of gradual emancipation of slaves and their moving to back to Africa, Garrison stressed the need for immediate freedom for America's slave population and their remaining here in the United States.

As Boston was a slave trade center, their newspaper drew much anger and criticism. Garrison was charged with libel and fined \$50 for criticizing a shipment of slaves that

Country."

Garrison's passion boiled over in writing these words: "I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard."

He gained a large following in London, but not without a lot of pain and suffering. Americans in favor of slavery mounted a campaign to shut down his paper. In the mid 1830s they heard Garrison was planning rallies that supported the rights of women and blacks, Garrison was drug from a rope by a mob of angry

know why he took such risks, there is one thing we know for sure. Garrison truly forced an entire nation to take a closer look at what he called our "sins."

Without the tremendous efforts of Garrison and other abolitionists, human bondage and the struggle for women's rights might have continued for decades longer than they did. To stand up against overbearing odds the way William Lloyd Garrison did takes a kind heroism and uncommon valor that is rarely ever found.

Civil Rights Leaders Quiz


Test your knowledge of leaders in the Civil Rights Movement; select one of the multiple-choice answers for each question.

1. Who triggered a boycott of the Montgomery, Alabama bus systems in 1955, when she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus?
2. Who was the first African-American woman to serve in the United States Congress?
3. Who was the first African-American justice of the Supreme Court of the United States?
4. Who became in 1977 the leader of the Nation of Islam, a religious organization that favors racial separation, Black Nationalism and economic independence for African Americans?
5. Who was known as the Nation of Islam's most effective minister until he broke from the group in 1964 and formed his own group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity?
6. Who was the main leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, and won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize for leading nonviolent civil-rights demonstrations?

- a. Shirley Chisholm
- b. Louis Farrakhan
- c. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- d. Thurgood Marshall
- e. Rosa Louise Parks
- f. Malcolm X

Answer Key:

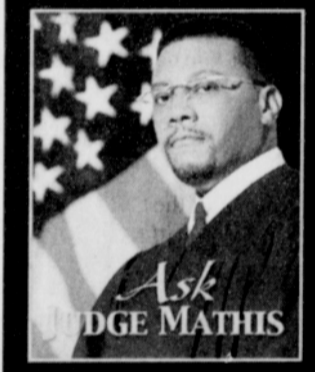
1. e
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. f
6. c



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