

A Canterbury Tale: A Document Package for Connecticut's Prudence Crandall Affair

Andrew T. Judson, *et al*, "Appeal to the American Colonization Society (March 22, 1833)," published in *Fruits of Colonization*, 1833.

To the American Colonization Society:

To ameliorate the unfortunate condition of a portion of the human family, in the progress of benevolence, your Society has been devised, embracing many of our worthy, humane and patriotic fellow-citizens. The whole christian community are united in sentiment and action, to remove as fast as practicable, to their native land, those who are bound in slavery. A territory has been ceded for their occupancy upon the shores of Africa, and funds are now accumulating to meet all the expenses of their removal, where they may forever enjoy the blessings of education and freedom. It would seem that an institution so benevolent in its character, so well adapted to the condition of its beneficiaries, and our safety, would find none to oppose it. But in this we were mistaken. Dissatisfied with this great plan of christian charity—discontented with the prospect of good in store for them and us, and hostile to that spirit of enlightened wisdom which animates the cause, a few individuals in our country, have arrayed themselves against it, and are casting in its way every obstacle within their reach. Messrs. Buffum & Garrison are leaders in this opposition. They have set themselves up as dictators and the sum of misery to our country, should their project succeed, would be incalculable. A new association has been formed under the specious name of the 'Anti-Slavery Society.' In their public addresses and papers, their principles have been avowed. That Society, whose movements are under the guidance of these men, *oppose* the Colonization Society, on the ground that the blacks ought not to be sent out of the country, but should immediately be made free, and remain within the United States, participating in all the affairs of the Government, and on terms of *entire equality*, admitted within the bosom of our society. And last of all, in their wild career of reform, these gentlemen would justify intermarriages with the white people!!!! Sentiments like these are somewhat alarming, and we have been led to an examination of their consequences, by events which have recently transpired in Canterbury, Ct., to which we need only recur for the purpose of preventing the influence of statements, gross and exaggerated, which are pressed upon the public by these men. Miss P. Crandall, in 1831, having received the aid of all our fellow-citizens, engaged to establish a school for young ladies; in this place, which was continued down to the last month, when, without consulting a single individual with whom she had made that engagement, took a journey to Providence and Boston, and soon after, unceremoniously dismissed and sent home all the young ladies, and announced her intention to convert her *female seminary* into a *school for blacks*. Facts since communicated, go to show that *Arnold Buffum* and *Wm. L. Garrison*, both of whom she saw during her excursion, have had no share in effecting this change. The citizens of Canterbury assembled, and by a committee requested Miss C. to give up the project which she declined doing. A still larger meeting, by *their* committee, urged additional reasons to dissuade her, but to no purpose. A town

meeting was then held on the 9th of March, when the unanimous voice of the *town* was expressed in the following resolutions:

'WHEREAS it hath been publicly announced, that a school is to be opened in this town, on the 1st Monday of April next, using the language of the advertisement, 'for young ladies and little misses of color,' or in other words, for the people of color, the obvious tendency of which would be, to collect within the town of Canterbury, large numbers of persons from other States, whose characters and habits might be various and unknown to us, thereby rendering insecure the persons, property, and reputations of our citizens. Under such circumstances, our silence might be construed into an approbation of this project:

Thereupon Resolved, That the localities of a school, for the people of color, at any place within the limits of this town, for the admission of persons from foreign jurisdictions, meets with our unqualified disapprobation and it is to be understood, that the inhabitants of Canterbury protest against it, in the most earnest manner.

Resolved, That a Committee be now appointed, to be composed of the Civil authority and Selectmen, who shall make known to the person contemplating the establishment of said school, the sentiments and objections entertained by this meeting; in reference to said school, pointing out to her the injurious effects, and the incalculable evils, resulting from such an establishment within this town, and persuade her if possible to abandon the project.'

On the 14th of March these resolutions were communicated to Miss C. by the Civil authority and Selectmen, who renewedly stated the various objections entertained by the town, and urged the impropriety of placing such an establishment in the town *against all their wishes*. She was informed that the citizens of Canterbury were opposed to this school, which was to be under the patronage of Arnold Buffum—his extravagant views were to be taught in that school—and in return that school was to become auxiliary in the work of *immediate abolition*, as well as in opposing colonizing efforts. The *Liberator* was to be the mouth piece of this school, and Miss Crandall herself had declared, that '*colonizing the people of color* was a system of fraud, from beginning to end. When *she* justified her *proceedings* and *principles* on the ground that *Moses* married a 'colored woman,' it was suggested, that she might as well advocate *polygamy* now, because it was lawful in the days of antiquity. In the language of the resolution, we endeavored still to 'persuade her to abandon this project.' That she might not be the loser, in consequence of the original purchase of her house which was made for the *other school*, and not for this, responsible individuals offered and urged upon her, the sum she had paid for the house, upon condition, that she would abandon the proposed school. This she has declined. We might here rest our cause in the hands of the public. We might ask the citizens of *any town* in New-England, wherever situated, would it be well for *that town* to admit the blacks from slave States, or other States, to an unlimited extent? Once open this door, and New-England will become the Liberia of America!! An excitement has been spoken of by some of the public journals, and who shall be accountable for that excitement? The town and all its inhabitants have proceeded with deliberation in their entreaties, remonstrances and votes. Committee after committee have urged—individuals have pleaded with her—and the town has by an unanimous vote remonstrated, but to no purpose. The school, we are now told, shall proceed. If there has been *excited feelings*, sure there has been no unlawful or improper act done, and for those feelings, there are adequate causes. Some days before the 9th of March,

the town was inundated with threats, that opposition should not avail any thing. There was a large amount of money, and sufficient power in store for us, if the citizens presumed to object to this school. They would coerce the town by the use of this money and this power. The town meeting then assembled, and *Arnold Buffum*, the agent of the Anti-Slavery Society, from R.I., the Rev. Samuel J. May, the Unitarian Minister of Brooklyn, and a Vice President of the name Society, with two boisterous young men, also from R.I., entered the town meeting, *and took conspicuous posts in it*. To render the array still more imposing, some two or three stout negroes came into the meeting house, and took their places also. Who they were, or from whence they came, we know not. This was the first time, since the incorporation of the town, that persons from "other towns, and other States, have *presumed* to interfere with deliberations of a Town Meeting here! This array of foreign power, bringing with it boasted foreign influence, found the meeting perfectly orderly when they came in. While the resolutions were under discussion, these gentleman from abroad conducted in an improper manner.

Their *talking, laughing, and note-taking* became offensive, and necessarily disturbed the progress of the meeting, and aroused a spirit of manly indignation, which they doubtless saw and felt. While an inhabitant of the town was addressing the Moderator, in support of the resolutions, two of these *foreign gentlemen* presented to the moderator a request to speak in behalf of Miss Crandall. This was a proceeding so novel in Connecticut, that the moderator was obliged to say to those who thus interrupted the meeting, that it was not admissible. The independent electors of Canterbury would conduct their own meetings, and would not permit persons from abroad to interfere, or disturb them. And what town, let us ask, would have done otherwise? We had been acquainted with their threats and their object, and let us ask the freemen of every town in the State, would they have submitted to such an imposition?—A full discussion of the levelling principles imbibed by Miss C. took place, and after deliberating upon the dangerous and degrading tendency of those principles, the resolution were unanimously adopted, and the meeting was dissolved. After this undivided expression of public opinion, the gentlemen from abroad, made an effort to recall some of the people, and give them a specimen of their principles, *in this disorganizing work*, but the Society Committee, who had the care of the house, gave them notice to retire, and that notice was complied with. Mr. Garrison now says— '*This scandalous excitement is one of the genuine flowers of the Colonization garden.*' Be it so. We appeal to the *American Colonization Society*, to which our statement is addressed—we appeal to every philanthropist and every Christian—we appeal to the enlightened citizens of our native State, and the friends of our country; and in making that appeal, we assure them all, that they may rely upon the facts here stated, and we ask them to apply to these facts, those *wholesome principles* which we believe are universally cherished in New-England, and the issue, we will abide.

Civil Authority.

ANDREW T. JUDSON,
ASAEL BACON,
RUFUS ADAMS,
CHESTER LYON,
WALTER WILLIAMS,
SOLOMON PAINE,
PETER MORSE,

COMFORT S. HYDE,
SAMUEL L. HOUGH,

Select Men.

PETER MORSE,
ASAEL BACON,
ANDREW T. JUDSON,
EBENEZER SANGER,
ROSWELL ALLEN,

Dated at Canterbury, this 22d day of March, 1833.