

BOSTON RACE LEADERS FIGHT BIRTH OF A NATION

Editor William Monroe Trotter
and Rev. Puller Are Arrested
When They Seek Admission to
Tremont Theater—Police Re-
serves Are Called Out.

MAYOR PERMITTED SHOW.

Indignant White and Colored Citizens
Hold Mass Meeting and Appeal Is
Made to Governor—Fight is Hot
One.

(Special to Chicago Defender.)

Boston, Mass., April 23.—The scenes where State, Beacon and Tremont streets swarmed with abolitionists during the early fifties voicing their protest against the iniquitous slave trade, were re-enacted here this week when the management of the Tremont theater attempted to show "The Birth of the Nation," a "movie" version of Rev. Thomas Dixon's "Clansman." White and colored citizens, men and women to the number of five thousand gathered near the Tremont theater opposite historic Boston Commons on the opening night protesting against the exhibition of the pictures. Representations had previously been made to Mayor Curley that the photo-play was of a character tending to incite prejudice against Afro-Americans. Notwithstanding these protests the mayor failed or refused to prohibit the exhibition. Meetings of protest were held in a number of churches, white and black, and resolutions were passed calling on the mayor to act. The mayor had promised a delegation of prominent Afro-Americans he would see that the objectionable features of the pictures were eliminated.

Race Refused Tickets.

On the opening night several thousand Afro-Americans gathered early in front of the theater, money in hand, to buy tickets. They were refused. Then the crowd, bent on obtaining admission, began to surge forward. Riot calls were sent out and within ten minutes two hundred uniformed police responded in charge of Superintendent of Police M. H. Crowley. They used their clubs freely and finally succeeded in driving the crowd across the Commons. Those arrested were Monroe Trotter, editor of "The Boston Guardian," the Rev. A. W. Puller, Joseph Gould, Fred Banks and John Hines. All were immediately bailed out.

Following the disturbance incident to the first attempt to show the pictures a call was sent out for a mass meeting at historic Faneuil Hall. Boston's liberty loving population responded ten thousand strong. Overflow meetings by the dozens were held upon the adjacent highways.

Sage of Concord Speaks.

Frank D. Sanborn, "the sage of Concord," one of the few living abolitionists, presided. Addresses were made by Michael J. Jordon, president of the United Irish League, Mr. Wm. D. Brigham, Mrs. Anna Phillips Williams, niece of Wendell Phillips, Monroe Trotter, and William H. Lewis, former assistant attorney general. Mayor Curley was scathingly denounced for his failure to stop the play. Mr. Brigham in the course of his fiery speech among other things said: "There could not be a worse place in the world than Boston to bring a play like this; in fact it is not fit to be produced in any part of the world."

Appeal to Governor.

Resolutions were passed appointing a committee of sixty to call on Governor Walsh. This was done the next day. After listening to the many speeches on the subject by both white and black the governor promised to have the law looked up at once, and if there was no law to prevent such exhibitions he would recommend to the legislature the immediate passage of a law prohibiting the production of such plays. Meanwhile this photo-play continues to bring in revenue for the promoters at the expense of the Afro-American race everywhere.

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