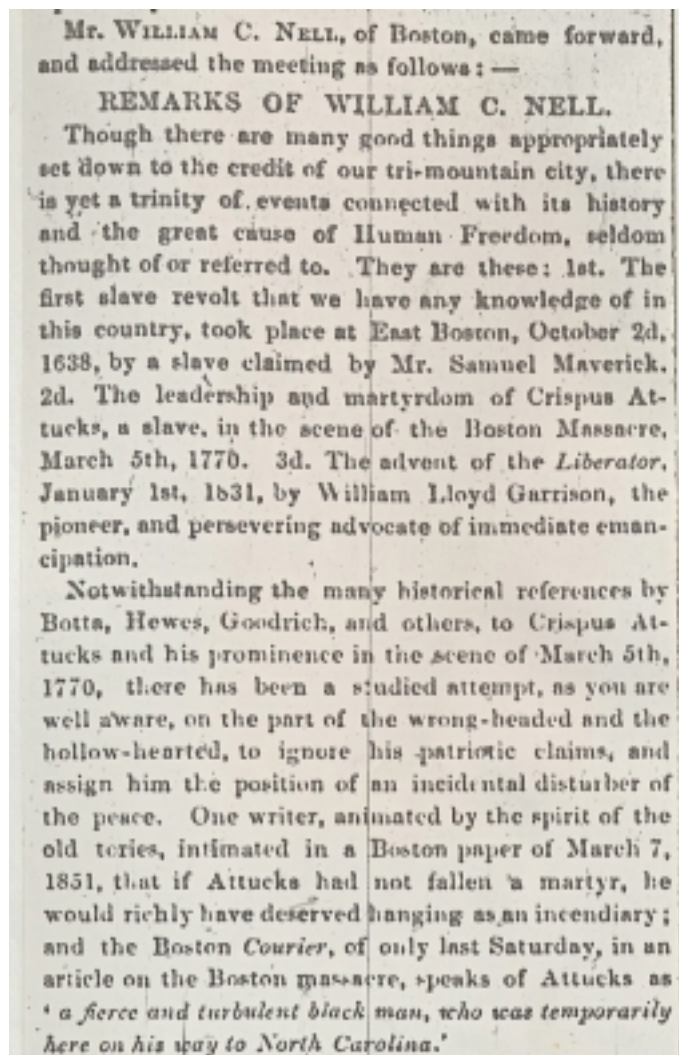


[Mr. WILLIAM C. NELL, of Boston, came forward, and addressed the meeting as follows:—

REMARKS OF WILLIAM C. NELL]

Though there are many good things appropriately set down to the credit of our tri-mountain city, there is yet a trinity of events connected with its history and the great cause of Human Freedom, seldom thought of or referred to. They are these: 1st. The first slave revolt that we have any knowledge of in this country, took place at East Boston, October 2d, 1638, by a slave claimed by Mr. Samuel Maverick[,] 2d. The leadership and martyrdom of Crispus Attucks, a slave, in the scene of the Boston Massacre, March 5th, 1770[], 3d. The advent of the *Liberator*, January 1st, 1831, by William Lloyd Garrison, the pioneer, and persevering advocate of immediate emancipation.

Notwithstanding the many historical references by Botta, Hewes, Goodrich, and others, to Crispus Attucks and his prominence in the scene of March 5th, 1770, there has been a studied attempt, as you are well aware, on the part of the wrong-headed and the hollow-hearted, to ignore his patriotic claims, and assign him the position of an incidental disturber of the peace. One writer, animated by the spirit of the old tories, intimated in a Boston paper of March 7, 1851, that if Attucks had not fallen a martyr, he would richly have deserved hanging as an incendiary; and the *Boston Courier*, of only last Saturday, in an article on the Boston massacre, speaks of Attucks as '*a fierce and turbulent black man, who was temporarily here on his way to North Carolina.*'



Without attempting to refute the aspersions thrown upon Attucks, though the materials are ample, I beg leave to submit, as pertinent to this occasion, some gleanings from historical documents, traditionary records, and private correspondence, significant and interesting.

I have a letter from a member of the present Legislature, dated 'House of Representatives, Boston, Feb. 18th, 1860,' from which I extract the following:—

'He (Crispus) was the slave of my great grandfather, Deacon William Brown, of Framingham. He returned after his runaway excursion, and was a faithful servant. He was allowed to buy and sell cattle on his own judgment. It was probably upon one of these trading tours that he was drawn into the affray of March 5th. He pressed close upon the British troops, who received him and the other people with loaded muskets.

Attucks beat down their guns with a heavy stick, and shouted, '*They dare not fire!*' They *did* fire, and with what effect is known to all. Of stout and vigorous frame, athletic, bold and patriotic, had he lived, he would, doubtless, have acted a conspicuous and useful part in our great revolutionary struggle.

Yours, &c. _____

From a letter dated 'Natick, Feb. 17th, 1860,' I select the following:—

'Several persons are now living in Natick, who remember the Attucks family — viz., Cris, who was killed March 5th; Sam, whose name was abbreviated into Sam Attucks, or Smattox; Sal, also known as Slattox; and Peter, called Pea Tattox.

My mother, still living, aged 89, remembers Sal in particular, who used to be called the gourd-shell

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squaw, from the fact that she used to carry her rum in a gourd shell. [This unfortunate drinking propensity, in accordance with the all-prevailing custom of the times, gives evidence that Sal was, at least, an *ardent-spirited* member of a patriotic family.]

The whole family are described as having been uncommonly large, and are said to have been the children of Jacob Peter Attucks, who lived with Capt. Thomas Buckminster, of Framingham.

It has been conjectured that Jacob and Nanny were of Indian blood; but all who know the descendants, describe them as negroes. Crispus lived in many different places in Natick and Framingham.

When the inhabitants were detained in Boston, he used to smuggle their horses out of the town. He brought out three or four horses, which he took to Framingham, and then returned to kill the red-coats. His sister used to say that if they had not killed Cris, Cris would have killed them. Cris is said to have been in every street fight with the soldiers for some time previous to March 5th, 1770.'

John Adams, counsel for the British soldiers, admitted that 'Attucks appeared to have undertaken to be the hero of the night, and to lend the people.' He was foremost in resisting, and the first slain. As proof of a front engagement, he fell face to the foe, having received two balls, one in each breast.

It is easy to infer that he had an intelligent appreciation of his mission, which should long since have secured to all other colored Americans an equality of those rights, to-day, so unjustly monopolized by the dominant class.

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In the popular compilation, entitled 'The Hundred Boston Orators,' are narrated the following facts:—

'The Boston Athenaeum overlooks the cemetery where were deposited the remains of our fellow-citizens, martyred in the cause of liberty, March 5th, 1770. Four of the victims were conveyed on hearses, and buried on the 8th of March in one vault, in the middle burying-ground. The funeral consisted of an immense number of persons in ranks of six, followed by a long train of carriages belonging to the principal gentry of the town, at which time the bells of Boston and adjoining towns were tolled. It is supposed that a greater number of people attend the funeral than ever assembled on this continent on any occasion.'

Attucks and Caldwell, not being residents of Boston, were both buried from Faneuil Hall. A stone was erected, and on it carved this inscription:—
'Long as in Freedom's cause the wise contend,
Dear to your country, shall your fame extend;
While to the world the lettered stone shall tell[,]
How CALDWELL, ATTUCKS, GRAY and MAVERICK fell.'

No remains of the stone are now visible, as it was probably destroyed by the British regulars.

On the 5th of March, 1851, a petition was presented to the Legislature, asking an appropriation for the erection of a monument to the memory of Attucks; but that body decided it to be inexpedient; though the same session awarded one to Isaac Davis, of Concord! Both were active promoters of the American Revolution; but one was white, the other black—and this is the only solution of the problem, why justice was not fairly meted out.

But, if I rightly interpret the signs of the times, they warrant the prediction that, by the 5th of March,

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1870,—the centennial anniversary of the Boston massacre,—a monument will be erected, commemorative of the day, and of the man whose martyrdom invests it with a halo of historical glory.

Among some of the early races of the North, each man who passed the tomb of a hero cast a stone upon it as his contribution to a commemorative monument. The pile rose high, and furnished a most impressive lesson to new generations, appealing to them in like manner to secure the grateful remembrance of mankind.

In view of the zeal with which the Bunker Hill, Lexington, and other monuments, typical of events and persons of revolutionary fame, have been erected, let the claims of Attucks not be forgotten, inasmuch as his offering upon the altar of American freedom preceded them all.

Senator Toombs is reported to have said, in a lecture in the Tremont Temple, a few years since, that *'if the colored race were blotted out to-day, there would be no record left to tell that they had ever existed.'*

Let this aspersion of a whole race be offset by the Attucks' monument, and by keeping green the memories, in each locality throughout the Union, of all other Colored Patriots of the American Revolution!

