The Liberator
Inaugural Editorial by William Lloyd Garrison
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I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; -- but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest -- I will not equivocate -- I will not excuse -- I will not retreat a single inch -- AND I WILL BE HEARD.

Abolitionists stirred strong reactions. Most white Southerners believed abolition threatened their way of life, which required enslaved labor.

Even in the North, only a few white people supported abolition. Many white Northerners worried that freed African Americans would never blend into American society. Others feared that abolitionists could begin a war between the North and South.

Opposition to abolitionism sometimes led to violence. In Philadelphia a bloody race riot followed the burning of an antislavery group's headquarters. Police had to jail William Lloyd Garrison to protect him from a Boston mob.

Elijah Lovejoy in Illinois was not so lucky. Angry whites invaded his antislavery newspaper offices and wrecked his presses three times.

Three times Lovejoy installed new presses. The fourth time the mob attacked, it set fire to the building. When Lovejoy came out of the blazing building, someone shot and killed him.

Source: McGraw-Hill

This handbill urging opponents of abolitionists to obstruct an anti-slavery meeting demonstrates the depth of pro-slavery feeling. Although the handbill advocates peaceful means, violence sometimes erupted between the two factions. An emotion-laden handbill was a factor in the well-known Boston riot of October 21, 1835. In that incident, a mob broke into the hall where the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society was meeting, and threatened William Lloyd Garrison's life.