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THE SOUTHWARK RIOTS Philadelphia

Before our citizens had recovered from the shock of this unprovoked and [13]
appalling massacre, a fearful repetition by the same class of foreigners was
attempted in Southwark. What the motive could have been for this second
astounding outrage we will not undertake to say; but will furnish such
evidence as will enable Americans to draw their own conclusions. We point
to the drilling of soldiers in the church, the unlawful organization of a com-
pany of foreigners by a brother of the priest, himself an unnaturalized for-
eigner; the warlike array discovered on searching the church, the placing
of the Irish Greens in the church with an Irish Catholic commander, the
prevarication and falsehood manifested by the priest before his own altar;
the important testimony of the Episcopal Clergyman the Rev. M. Coleman, [14]
and above all the childish, frivolous excuse assigned by the priest of the
High Sheriff for turning his church into an armed fortress in the midst of
a quiet and peaceful community. When we look at the total absence of
all cause or provocation for this murderous array; at the deadly loss being
all on the American side, but one foreigner having been killed, while so
many of our countrymen were massacred, we are at a loss to conceive
whether these massacres were intended to show how far foreigners al-
ready dare to trample on Americans with impunity, or whether to create
a cry of persecution in order to enlist sympathy and collect funds and
other aid from the papists of Europe as they are now so largely doing,
or whether it is a part of some other Jesuit scheme against the people
and institutions of this country, some fatal conspiracy yet undeveloped,
we shall not surmise, but leave the reader to draw his own conclusions
from the following testimony.

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS [15] THE SOUTHWARK RIOT OF JULY

At the stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Dis-
trict of Southwark, held on Thursday evening, the following report was
read and adopted and ordered to be published:-

The Committee appointed on the 24th of July 1844, to inquire
into the origin of the tragic events which transpired in this district on
the 7th of July, 1844.

REPORT

These witnesses all concur in representing that the first alarm which was created in the district was occasioned by the taking into the church of St. Philip, in Queen Street, in open daylight a quantity of fire-arms; that the reports which were rapidly circulated throughout the city and districts, of the arming of the church had drawn great crowds of people into Queen street; that on Friday evening the Sheriff arrived on the ground, having been notified by several citizens of the prospect of a tumult; that the church was searched on that evening by the Sheriff and a committee of twenty, appointed by himself as deputies, who found and removed quantities of muskets, powder, balls, and slugs: that when the Sheriff first arrived he found the church under the guard of a civil posse, summoned together by the Aldermen, and also the watchmen and police of the district; a military company arrived on Friday night, and was stationed in the church.***

Peace and quietness had now been restored by the peaceable exertions of this civic guard, and as the witnesses nearly all concur whilst the guard and peaceable citizens were congratulating themselves upon the restoration of peace and order, and the success of their labors in preventing the building from being injured or fired, their attention was arrested by the sudden and unexpected arrival of a military force under the command of Gen. Cadwalader.

The witnesses describe the military array as marching down Queen Street towards the church with music playing and attended by a large crowd, who had followed them from the city, through the district, into Queen street. On reaching the front of the church, the officer commanding halted his troops; and after congratulating the civic guard for their exertions in successfully resisting the mob, and in preserving the building, he desired the guard should leave the church, and surrender it up to him for protection; this was complied with, and before the guard had all reached Second street, on their passage from the Church down Queen, distance of not more than two hundred feet, the soldiers had fired upon the citizens, at the corner of Queen and Second street in which fire several citizens, one of them a respectable quiet inhabitant of the district, Mr. William Crozier, in Plumb street, aged thirty six years, who was one of the civic guard who had charge of the church, and Isaac Freed, of Green street, Spring Garden, aged sixty one years, and a man named Ellis Lewis, aged about twenty years, a stranger, were shot dead besides several wounded. One of the witnesses represents himself to have been in Queen street, going towards Front; on hearing the report of guns he wheeled around and saw a number of persons lying in the street, some appeared to be dead, and some appeared to be undergoing great agony.

A number of these witnesses were standing in the immediate vicinity of Queen and Second streets at the time of the fire, who represents

that the confusion, terror, and horror of the multitude at that awful moment was intense and wild. They all concur in the opinion that the fire was cruel, unnecessary, and as they represent it, a wanton sacrifice of human life. They all represent that at, and immediately before the arrival of the soldiers, order, peace and quiet had been perfectly restored-that there existed no necessity whatever for their assistance-and that the dreadful scenes which were enacted in this district on that memorable Sunday evening, all resulted in some unaccountable, inexplicable and trifling dispute with an officer and a citizen standing at the corner of Queen and Second. The firing of the soldiers must have been precipitated by some sudden explosion of anger on the part of the officer in question, as all the witnesses concur in saying that from the first arrival of the soldiers in front of the church until the fire, not more than ten minutes could have elapsed. [16]