

JULY · 1903

“The colored citizens of Boston as a whole should not be held responsible for the unwise acts of a few rioters. Nine-tenths of the colored people in Boston have stood by and supported me in my work, and they were never more hearty in their approval than they are today. The men who disturbed the meeting have found this an easy way to get their names into the daily newspapers and to secure a little notoriety, which they otherwise could not obtain.”

Boston Globe, July 31, 1903, 3.

An Account of the Boston Riot¹

Boston, Mass., July 31. [1903]

RIOT AND CONFUSION IN BOSTON

Last night, at the A. M. E. Zion Church, on Columbus Avenue, at a public meeting of the Boston branch of the National Negro Business League, one of the most disgraceful and riotous scenes in the history of Boston was precipitated by five men, under the leadership of William Monroe Trotter, editor of the *Boston Guardian*, who has become insane in his opposition to Dr. Booker T. Washington, and his methods of leadership. The plan to break up the meeting was deliberately premeditated, and was of the coarsest, most vulgar sort, such as is employed everywhere by the hoodlum, rowdy elements to create riot and confusion. Trotter was backed up in his rowdyism by a half-dozen women of the street, whose vulgar services were obviously purchased. Martin, the man who began the interruption, and was most persistent in rowdyism, insisting that Mr. Washington is opposed to social equality, is a butler in a white family, and appeared at the meeting in his waiter's jacket.

But behind Trotter are the following men, who have more brains, if no more character, than he: Archibald H. Grimké, brother to Rev. Francis J. Grimké, of Washington, and recently appointed consul to San Domingo, as a democrat, by President Cleveland, Clement G. Morgan, George W. Forbes, W. H. Ferris, all college-bred men, and Jno. W. A. Shaw, a democratic soldier of fortune, who has always been down at the heels. By their action these men