

## Transcription

### Wendell Phillips Speaks at Fundraiser

From *The Liberator* – March 27, 1863

#### LEVEE IN AID OF THE COLORED REGIMENT

Last evening a subscription levee was held at Chickering's Rooms, for the purpose of supplying the 54th Regiment with an outfit similar to that of other Massachusetts regiments. There was a large attendance, including many ladies. Hon. Thomas Russell presided, and after explaining the object of the meeting, introduced Mr. Wendell Phillips, who said the colored regiment was entitled to liberal aid, and who should be tenderly and generously welcomed into the service. These men whom we are now enlisting were three years ago chased into their houses, beaten, bruised, and half dead, while today one of the very men who led the attack implores the Senate to make him a Brigadier General. If any man asks if the slave will fight or work, tell him no—no, thank God—the *slave* will not, but the black man will.

But why should the emancipated slave work? The only marks of freedom he ever saw were idleness—why should he not desire it? God has given us the lesson of the Revolution and of 1812, and now he crowns it with the lesson of 1863, when the nation hangs on the brink of Niagara, held back by a black hand. Ought we not to bless it? But a short time since, Robert Toombs said he would not yet call the roll of his slaves upon Bunker Hill—not very near it today—but, instead of it, a Massachusetts boy calls the roll of his regiment almost within hearing distance of Toomb's plantation. Massachusetts is nearer wiping out Georgia than our sister State is to annihilating us.

Lieut. Col. Hallowell of the 54th regiment said the men of that regiment were very much, in every respect, like white soldiers. The ranks had been open for three weeks, and 350 men had been sworn in and now were at Readville. He closed by inviting such of the audience as were disposed to come out and visit them.

Mr. J. H. Stephenson, treasurer, reported that he had received \$636.75 from private subscription, prior to the meeting, including \$100 by letter, from a citizen interested in the movement.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was introduced, and in the course of his remarks he said the hostility of races is a uniform fact, and the only way of reconciling it is by a closer acquaintance between the opponents. We have kept the black man down until his name has become a synonym of all that is low and degraded. But finally the Government has decided to organize negro regiments, and

Massachusetts is endeavoring to do a part, and elevate the hitherto oppressed race to a position where they may strike for their rights. The speaker thought there was no doubt that the black man would make a good soldier.

Rev. Dr. Neale spoke of the change of sentiment noticeable in Washington within a few years in relation to slavery.

Rev. Father Taylor was the last speaker. He thought the country was now getting into a condition to conquer the rebellion.

The levee was a great success, both socially and financially, and will have a good influence in favor of the regiment—*Boston Traveller, March 21st.*