

Lewis Hayden's Last Dream: the Meaning of the American Revolution and Crispus Attucks to African Americans in Boston

ルイス・ヘイデンの最後の夢：ボストンのアフリカ系アメリカ人に与えた
アメリカ革命とクリスパス・アタックス氏の持つ意味

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要 約

ボストンで共和党員の一人であった、ルイス・ヘイデン (Lewis Hayden) は、かつて奴隷として働き、そして奴隷廃止運動を行った人物である。彼の引退後、1876年から1889年に彼が亡くなるまで、アフリカ系アメリカ人のコミュニティにおいて多くの活動を行い続けた。ここでは、そのルイス・ヘイデンがアメリカ革命の歴史と民俗学に対してどのような影響を与えてきたかについて紹介していく。

キーワード: Lewis Hayden, African American History, Crispus Attucks Monument, Centennial of 1876, Boston, abolitionist, folklore of the American Revolution

ABSTRACT

Lewis Hayden, born a slave in Kentucky, moved to Boston in the mid-1840s to start a career as an anti-slavery and civil rights agitator. He joined forces with the early Massachusetts Republican Party in the 1850s and received a patronage job in the State House following the Republican victory in state elections. Hayden was active in the recruitment of the first African American regiment of infantry to fight in the Civil War. He was a well known and loved figure in Boston's African American community until his death in 1889 (Robboy & Robboy, 1973). This paper will examine Hayden's position and attitudes towards two public commemorative events: the Centennial of the American Revolution in 1876 and the movement to erect a statue to the African American community's hero of that Revolution, Crispus Attucks.

The *New York Globe* reported in 1883 that:

... Mr. Lewis HAYDEN, who is now an old man, knows all of the ins and outs of the State House, and can put his hand upon the oldest and most historical documents of the commonwealth without a moment's hesitation. Mr. HADEN [sic] is a stalwart republican and looks with distrust upon any course that deflects in the least from the "good old way." (*New York Globe*, 6 January 1883)

Following his term in office, he seems to have retired from active public work. However, he

retained his State House job until his death and was active in community organizations such as the Masons. He spoke at special gatherings commemorating the anti-slavery struggle, represented the old abolitionist presence at community occasions and participated in the funerals of his anti-slavery comrades. At the end of his life he was active in bringing about one of his dreams-- the unveiling of a statue that honored Crispus Attucks, a hero of the American Revolution for African Americans.

As one of the grand old men of the community, a former slave, fugitive, abolitionist, state legislator, one of the first of Massachusetts' African American civil servants during his era, and with connections throughout the community, Hayden's name continued to appear in the *New York Globe's* reports of life in Boston. Hayden became somewhat of a legend. Many things were attributed to him. The *Globe* claimed that "Lewis Hayden, it is rumored, is the originator of the word contraband. Gen. Butler borrowed it from him." The contraband system had allowed northern generals to free slaves in the South before the US government had given official permission. George Stearns' son claimed that Hayden was the originator of the plan for Massachusetts to raise the first regiment of African American troops during the Civil War (*New York Globe*, 11 August 1883). While it is difficult to authenticate the accuracy of these reports, they do show that Hayden had a very respected place in the community.

The revolution was a special symbol to Americans and African Americans also felt its importance in their identity as Americans. During the anti-slavery struggle William C. Nell (1851, 1855) published two books on the services of African Americans during the Revolution and the War of 1812. However, celebrations of the revolution for freedom evoked a two sided response while slavery existed. The Fourth of July was looked on as a day of mourning for many African Americans at this time. Frederick Douglass stated in 1852,

"I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! The Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. . . ." (Foner, 1978, 134)

Instead in the period before the Civil War, March 5, the anniversary of the Boston Massacre, was celebrated as Crispus Attucks Day. African Americans recalled one of their "revolutionary heroes" and used the occasion to remind white Americans that since African Americans fought and died in the revolution that founded the United States, they had a moral right to full citizenship (Gettings, 1993).

When the Centennial of American independence was celebrated throughout the United States on 4 July 1876, many of the old anti-slavery workers of Hayden's generation had died. Racism, however, was still an integral part of American culture. During the Centennial, one orator in Kentucky told an audience how lucky they were that their ancestors had been taken to the United States as slaves.

But for that they would be living on a continent with "scarce any society superior to that of the gorilla and monkey," existing on the edge of "the dividing line between man and brute," practicing the "lowest vices of both, and spending their lives in chaos

without change." (Foner, 1978, 142)

Frederick Douglass, was one of the guests invited to participate in the official ceremonies for the opening of the Centennial in Philadelphia. He was almost refused admission. The Philadelphia police refused to believe that a African American man would be allowed to sit on the same the platform with President Grant and other white dignitaries. They tried to keep Douglass from entering.

Despite this continued racism, many believed that the Centennial should be used to make whites aware of the African American contribution to American freedom. Women's Centennial Committees were organized around the country to establish an African American presence in the celebrations.

Hayden delivered an historical paper before the Colored Ladies Centennial Club in Boston (Foner, 1978, 130-1, 140). Hayden spoke about the contributions of Crispus Attucks, Peter Salem, Salem Poor, and others who had been involved in the Revolution. Hayden, himself, had been involved in the recruitment of the Massachusetts 54th and 55th Infantry, the first regiments of African American troops from the North to fight in the Civil War. He described their courage and dedication to the cause of the nation. Finally, Hayden discussed the contributions of African American women during and after the American Revolution. In the end, he linked these contributions to a demand for equal rights:

E'er another Centennial rolls around, may you be possessed of these rights for which your sisters during and after the War for Independence fought to achieve not alone for men, but for women as well. Since it is written, "There is no rest for the wicked, saith my God," who can doubt that ere another century shall spread its pages before the world, even this wrong will be repaired, and that our country will stand forth triumphantly as the living exponent of the principles of self government, liberty, justice, and humanity for all its people--women as well as men! (Foner, 142-143; *The Christian Recorder*, 8 July 1876)

Hayden also spoke or presided over other commemorations, those of the victories and high water marks of the anti-slavery struggle. The *Globe* describes one such occasion:

The anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies fifty years ago was celebrated in an appropriate manner in New Bedford and Providence. Large delegations left Boston on the early trains. Hon. Lewis Hayden delivered an address at New Bedford. (*New York Globe*, 11 August 1883)

Hayden was present to mark the civil rights high water marks of the community in the 1880's as well. When the historian George W. Williams gave a dinner for George L. Ruffin, the first African American judge to be appointed in Massachusetts, Hayden and the old guard were there to honor him (*New York Globe*, 1 December 1883).

He remained active in the Masonic movement. In 1883, he was elected Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, took part in a parade of the Knights Templar, and acted as pall bearer or addressed mourners at the funerals of old associates, such as Thomas Dalton, who died in

September of that year (*New York Globe*, 13 January, 17 August, and 8 September 1883).

Hayden was a pall bearer at the funerals of William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and William Wells Brown. He spoke at Brown's funeral. With age came illness for both Hayden and his wife. The *Globe* reported that Harriet Hayden was "dangerously ill with pneumonia" in April 1883. Lewis Hayden was "confined to his residence on account of illness" one month later (*Boston Daily Globe*, 10 November 1884; *Boston Herald* 10 November 1884).

Despite age and illness, Hayden had a long cherished project that finally came to fruition towards the end of his life -- the erection of a monument to Crispus Attucks. Attucks was a symbol to nineteenth century African American Bostonians. Since the 1770's there has been much historical controversy over Attucks' personal history and the details of the "massacre." Were the "victims" of the Massacre freedom fighters or members of a vicious mob? Was Attucks really African American?

The nearly anonymous victim of British gunfire has held a controversial and tenuous place in Revolutionary iconography for two hundred years. In the late eighteenth century, printers supposedly debated whether to suggest his partially African ancestry in color reprints of the Paul Revere engraving depicting his death, and in the late nineteenth century, renewed efforts to honor him aroused hot debate. (Wood, 1978, 119)

During and after the Revolution, the story of the Boston Massacre took on an important place in American history and folklore. In a similar fashion, Attucks' role took on an important place in the African American history and folklore. By commemorating Crispus Attucks as a African American hero, Bostonians were using the powerful public images of this folklore to claim that African Americans were real Americans and should have full citizenship rights (Ryan, 1977, 656).

Beginning in 1858, the fifth of March had been celebrated as Crispus Attucks Day. The first celebration was to protest the Dred Scott decision, which had stripped African Americans of citizenship rights. A commemoration was held every year in Boston until the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which restored those rights (Quarles, 1974,234).

For many years, Hayden had taken part in these celebrations and had been a leader of the drive to erect a monument to Attucks' memory. In 1850 William C. Nell and others petitioned the legislature for a monument to Attucks alone. The petition was denied. After this failure, Hayden joined in a new approach. Rather than honoring just Attucks alone, he attempted to get a monument that would include Attucks and the others who died in the Boston Massacre (*Boston Globe*, 8 April 1889).

One of the five men who died in the Massacre, Patrick Carr, was Irish. The coalition for this new statue brought together traditional political enemies, African Americans and Irish, to face the opposition of Boston's traditional ruling coalition of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

. . . the Irish and Negroes, both hungering for social and racial recognition, were determined to protect the historical legacy of their King Street comrades. To them, the deeds of Crispus Attucks and Patrick Carr were no less important in the colonies' struggle

for independence than those of Samuel Adams, George Washington, or Thomas Jefferson. And no white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant historical society, newspaper, or politician was going to convince them otherwise. (Ryan, 1977, 656)

In May 1887, the state legislature voted \$10,000 to erect a monument to Attucks. At once protests arose. On the surface, these protests took the form of a debate that dealt with historical questions.

This controversy, however, involved more than mere differences of opinion over the historical question as to whether or not the Massacre victims were heroes or hoodlums.

For in the ensuing debate, the deep racial, ethnic, and social divisions within post Civil War Boston became quickly apparent as participants accused one another of racial prejudice, historical distortion, and political opportunism. With their political influence on the wane, and as men of property and standing living in an era when America was experiencing violent labor strikes and riots, the Brahmins of Boston had become greatly disturbed when officials sought to honor the "troublemakers" and "rioters" of King Street. (Ryan, 1977, 656)

The statue was unveiled on 14 November 1888. Twenty-five thousand spectators viewed the festivities. Representatives from the Crispus Attucks Lodge, Knights of Pythias, and other African American groups took part in the ceremonies. At the site, a young African American girl pulled the cord which unveiled the monument. Hayden joined Governor Ames and the mayor of Boston on the speaker's platform (Ryan, 1977, 657). Hayden was reported to have said, after the unveiling,

"I am happy and ready to die now. They cannot take from us this record of history showing that we participated in the revolution to secure American Liberty, as we have participated in every great movement in the best interests of the country since."

(*New York Age*, 10 April 1889)

He died six months later. But he died, active to the end in the fight against racism. And many of his dreams had been accomplished. Slavery was abolished in the United States. Discriminatory laws against non-whites were repealed in Massachusetts. He took part in many small skirmishes in the battle against racism such as the coalition to honor Attucks. Hayden used the history and folklore of the Revolution as a tool--to support his fight for justice for African Americans. African Americans had had their participation in the founding of the United States, their right to call themselves Americans, accepted by the whites who ran the government of Boston. Hayden was able to participate in a struggle that started before his birth and still continues today.

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