

1.

Some Believe

We cannot judge the
Actions of the past by the
Standards of today.¹

EXHIBIT²

COMMITTEE OF VIGILANCE AND SAFETY.
JOHN SHELBY, Chairman.

John Nichol,*
John Vault,
James P. Clark,
H.R.W. Hill,
Robert Woods,
Thomas H. Fletcher,
James Irwin,
Alpha Kingsley,*
A.A. Caseday*,
Mason Vannoy,
John Austin,
James A. Porter,
John M. Hill,
Thomas Wells,
Edward D. Hicks,
George Wilson,
Wm. Armstrong,*
W. Hasell Hunt,
Thomas Callender,
James Woods,
George Brown,
Greenwood Payne,
John Estell,
Thomas J. Read,
Joel M. Smith,
Joseph Miller,
Nicholas Hobson,
Samuel M. Barner,
Washington Barrow,
Joseph Smith,
George Crockett,

Thomas Crincher,
John P. Erwin,
H.L. Douglass,
Thomas Claiborne,
Allen A. Hall,
Robert Farquharson,
John Somerville,
Samuel Seay,*
Samuel Watkins,
Beverly W. White,
Robert W. Greene,
Robert I. Moore,
John M. Bass,
James Young,
Andrew Hynes,
James Nichol,
Floyd Hunt,
Anthony W. Johnson,
Edward Trabue,
J. B. Knowles,
S.V.D. Stout,*
S. C. Robinson,*
George S. Yerger,
Wm. M. Berryhill,
Theo. P. Minor,
Elihu S. Hall,
Foster G. Crutcher,
F. P. Wook,
H.R. Cartmell, and
W. H. Moore.
*Elder in the Presbyterian Church

¹ Let us instead apply the standards of the past .

² Dresser, Amos, Asa A Stone, and African American Pamphlet Collection. *The narrative of Amos Dresser, with Stone's letters from Natchez,--an obituary notice of the writer, and two letters from Tallahassee, relating to the treatment of slaves.* New-York, Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836.

JUDGEMENT: ³

GEORGE THOMPSON:⁴

“I proceed to notice the case of Amos Dresser; the young man who was so **inhumanely tortured** by the citizens and professing Christians of the city of Nashville, Tennessee.⁵ ... [T]hat Mr. Dresser, a pious and respectable young man, was apprehended in Nashville on suspicion of being an abolitionist — brought before a **Vigilance Committee** — and, according to ‘**Lynch Law**,’⁶ was sentenced to receive 20 //// //// //// //// //// lashes with cow skin, on his bare back. ...

The Committee,

found him guilty — 1st, ‘of being a member of an Anti-Slavery Society in Ohio;’ 2d, ‘of having in his possession periodicals published by the American Anti-Slavery Society;’ and 3dly, ‘they **BELIEVED** he had circulated these periodicals, and advocated in the community the principles they inculcated.’”

³ Thompson, George, et al. *Discussion on American Slavery, Between George Thompson: Agent of the British and Foreign Society for the Abolition of Slavery Throughout the World, and Robert J. Breckinridge, Delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to the Congregational Union of England and Wales: Holden in the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw's Chapel, Glasgow, Scotland, on the Evenings of the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th of June, 1836.* United States, I. Knapp, 1836.

⁴ British anti-slavery orator, activist & Member of Parliament

⁵ In the summer of 1834

⁶ lynch law: the administration of summary punishment, esp. death, upon a suspected, accused or convicted person by a mob action without legal process or authority. Origin: [1805-15, *Amer.*; after the self-instituted tribunals presided over by Capt. William Lynch (1742-1820), member of a vigilance committee in Pittsylvania, Va., c1776]

Some Still Believe

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Actions of the past by the
Standards of today.

VICTIM TESTIMONY:⁷

“There was no law forbidding what I had done. ...

Nearly half the whole number, professors of Christianity, the reputed stay of the church, supporters of the cause of benevolence in the form of Tracts and Missionary Societies and Sabbath-schools, several members, and **most of the elders of the Presbyterian church⁸ from whose hands, but a few days before, I had received the emblems of the brok**

en bo dy

and s h e d

blood of our blessed Saviour.

shaken

whilst some of the committee were in favor of //////////////////////////////////////, others were for inflicting ////////////////////////////////////// ////////////////////////////////////// lashes, whilst others still thought me worthy of death. ...

⁷ Amos Dresser, (1812–1904), see footnote 2.

⁸ John Nichol / Alpha Kingsley / A.A. Caseday / Wm. Armstrong / Samuel Seay / S.V.D. Stout / S.C. Robinson

My suspense prefaced by the chairman⁹, the decision;

“that they had acted with great caution deliberation, and however unsatisfactory their conclusion might be to me, **they** had acted conscientiously, with a full recognition of their duty to their God” ...

[This was not an hour previous to the commencement of the Sabbath.] ...

acted by conscientious motives what they, after mature deliberation, thought to be right; not so much the number of the stripes, as the disgrace and infamy of being publicly whipped.” ...

The sentence being again repeated, it was received with great applause, accompanied by stamping of feet and clapping of hands.

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chairman (accompanied by the committee)

express his gratification at the good order by which the whole proceeding had been characterized.

stripping me

a commotion
appeased only by the sound of their instrument of torture and disgrace upon my naked body.

I knelt to receive the punishment,

⁹ John Shelby

