

In the Spring of 1837, more than 1,000 Black and white New Yorkers gathered outside City Hall and attempted to liberate William Dixon, an alleged fugitive slave. Here, the Liberator reprints coverage from a local newspaper. The racism evident in this coverage might suggest why the Black activist Samuel Cornish was so opposed to this violent attempted rescue.

“Tremendous Riot in the Park,” *Liberator* April 21, 1837

TREMENDOUS RIOT IN THE PARK – *Rescue and Recapture of the Slave Dixon.*—Upon the termination of the proceedings in the case of Dixon, the alleged fugitive slave, and while deputy Sheriffs Lowndes and Fountain were conveying him down the stoop into the park, they were attacked by a body of colored men and women, most of whom were armed with clubs, and various kinds of weapons. At the time the attack was first made, Dixon did not seem very desirous to escape, although the mob appeared, and really was, bent on getting him away, which they finally succeeded in doing. At about the very moment of his flight, Justice Bloodgood and several officers came up to the aid of the deputy sheriffs. The Justice however was prevented doing much by a strapping negro wench, who extended both her arms round his neck, and hugged him to her sweet face almost as violently as though one of the bears from the Zoological Institute had had the justice in its paws. While Justice B. Was being thus treated, a smart dapper looking buck negro caught hold of one of his legs, and with the aid of some others got him down, pretty well pummeled him, and tore the coat completely off his back. Mr. Bloodgood, however soon got up, when he pinioned one of his assailants, and held him until some citizen came to his aid, and handed the mobolitionist over to officer Waldron, who was escorting him to the office, when he in his turn was attacked by Mr. Russel C. Wheeler, who was formerly considered a very respectable white lawyer of this city, and Waldron also had his coat literally torn from him by the man of law, who not only seemed bent on ill using Waldron, but also in rescuing his prisoner. In the latter attempt he failed, as Waldron, with the aid of other officers, conveyed the darkey and the black sheep of the law to the office, where Mr. Wheeler was afterwards admitted to bail in the sum of \$10,000 for his appearance at the sessions. Two other negroes were also apprehended, and have been committed to prison for participating in the riot. Now, to return to Dixon. Dixon as soon as he made his way through the crowd, which we supposed consisted of two or three thousand persons, ran as fast as possible towards Broadway, but was intercepted in his flight by the Mazeppa horse on which Mr. Blakely was at the time riding. The negroes then vented their vengeance on the horse because he obstructed Dixon’s flight, beating it about with their clubs, and finally served Mr. Blakely in a similar manner, because he ventured to complain of what they had done. As soon as the horse was cleared, Dixon ran on to a coal cellar up a passage in Duane street, whither he was followed at a respectable distance by Mr. Wilder, a very spirited and honorable, though little young man. Mr. W. very prudently left some one to watch that Dixon did not escape from his hiding place, while he returned to the police office and thence back to the cellar, on the latter occasion accompanied by officers Boyers, Gilbert Hays, Dunshee and Bring, who recaptured Dixon, and conveyed him in safety to the city jail. A large dirk and a Spanish knife were concealed on Dixon’s person. —from the *New Era*.