

TRANSCRIPTION:

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THE TROUBLE AMONG THE WHITE AND BLACK CAULKERS,--The difficulty between the white caulkers and colored caulkers still exists, we learn, to such an extent that Messrs. William Skinner & Sons have commenced suit against the city for damages growing out of the interruption of their business, on the alleged ground of the failure of the authorities to afford them adequate protection. Messrs. Skinner in a card, stated that the police having refused to accompany the colored caulkers from the yard, Mr. Jeremiah P. Skinner proceeded with them in a boat, and was intercepted by a number of armed men who had taken possession of the schooner Cambria in the river, and pointed their weapons at them and threatened to fire, and it was only by Mr. Skinner presenting his own weapon and calling out to some of the parties by name to desist, that the lives of the negroes were prevented from being sacrificed. The posse of police who were sent over to prevent any infraction of the peace at the yard of Messrs. Skinner were we learn instructed to remain on duty there until 6 o'clock in the evening, and another force started about five o'clock under charge of Marshal Herring, to escort the colored caulkers from the yard and protect them on their way to their homes, but on arriving, found that they had stopped work a half hour previous, and that their services were then not wanting. Had they have remained until the usual hour of stopping work, the adequate protection would doubtless have been afforded them.

It is a difficult matter to obtain all the facts with regard to outbreaks of this description, and still more difficult to give satisfaction to all parties concerned. AS to the origin of this outbreak both parties defend themselves and give their own version of the matter. The white caulkers complain that a most stringent combination and association exists among the black caulkers, who, from their superior numbers have not only oppressed the whites, but have obtained control of most of the yards. A case is cited of a party of black caulkers having been induced, after considerable permission to caulk a schooner ready for launching in a ship yard in which the proprietors had refused to acknowledge the sway of their society. When the work was done they received their pay, and the schooner was no sooner launched than she filled with water, the caulking having been done intentionally so bad that the vessel had to be hauled up and recaulked. Another case is mentioned of a ship foreman in a yard that acknowledged the society's regulations having done a day's work in another yard that resisted its authority, and his employers were compelled to discharge him forthwith, the black caulkers refusing any longer to work under him. It is also asserted that a party of black caulkers having found a white man at work on a vessel on which they were engaged threw down their tools and refused to work until he was discharged from the vessel. These charges, if true, were certainly provocative of resistance, but do not justify any violence or infraction of the rights and interference with the business of employers. The black caulkers on the other

hand allege that there are not, or was not until very recently, any white caulkers in the city, that the business has always been in their own hands, and that the regulations of their society were exclusively applicable to their own members—They also say that these men who are interfering with them are not caulkers, or such bad workmen that they are unwilling to work with them, and share in the blame that would fall on all if the work should prove defective. It is an undoubted fact that for many years past all the caulking done in the city has been performed by blacks, and it was not until this outbreak occurred that we were aware that there were any white men here who claimed a knowledge of the business.

The parties who committed the acts of violence at the yard of the Messrs. Skinner are known to those gentlemen, and should be at once arrested and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Every employer should be allowed, without lot or hindrance to employ black or white men, as he may think proper, and if the white caulkers here, as has been alleged, resolved that no black caulkers should work on the south side of the basin so long as the work is not more than sufficient for their employment, they should be taught that such requests cannot be carried into execution.

We visited the yards on the south side of the basin yesterday afternoon, and found black caulkers at work in some of the yards, and white caulkers in others, and great activity visible everywhere. Perfect quiet prevailed, and some to whom we spoke on the subject reported that they had witnessed or heard of but little of the outrages that they had read in some of the papers. Those employers who refuse to employ black caulkers allege many grievances that they have suffered at their hands, besides being compelled to pay them \$1.73, being fifty cents more per day than they could get the work done for by white men, whilst each journeyman caulker has two or three apprentices for whom they are compelled to pay \$1.50 per day. Other employers, however, allege that they are perfectly satisfied with the blacks, that they are good workmen and are in such numbers that the work can be done much more rapidly than by the white men, who do not number at present more than thirty, whilst a hundred or more are sometimes required in that locality. They also allege that the white men are, generally speaking, not as good workmen as the blacks, whilst others assert that the whites do better work than the blacks. It appears that there is also a Ship Masters' Society, the operations of which, are alleged to be connected with the difficulty, and that the black caulkers have been used to bring refractory members to terms.

The appearance of white caulkers in the city, who are now here in considerable numbers, we learn had been occasioned by the oppressive action of the blacks, who formerly monopolized the business and effectually excluded the whites from participation with them. We were yesterday informed by one of our extensive firms that they were compelled to advertise for them on account of the refusal of the blacks to work in their yard, leaving them at a time when they were crowded with business, and were willing, as they always had been, to pay them the wages they demanded. The following substance of an affidavit yesterday voluntarily made to Mayor Swann by Captain Adams Gray, formerly engaged in ship building, will probably throw some light on the subject:--

“In 1850 Captain Adams Gray rented upon Fardy's ship yard. He followed the business of building and repairing vessels for four years. There was then an association of black caulkers, whose President was Mr. Flannigan. It is the same association that exists now, but they have another President. Captain Gray was not a *regular* ship builder,

and gave dissatisfaction on this account. The colored caulkers were ordered to leaving working for Captain Gray, and he was left without hands in his yard. He had had no difficulty with colored men and had always given the highest wages. Captain Gray determined not to be made the victim of what he supposed to be a combination, and Mr. Cully, who was then in his employ, was instructed to go to Wilmington and procure *white* caulkers. He also threatened the foreman of the black caulkers, who had constracted to do the work, that he would sue him for damages for suffering himself to be controlled by the association. The Captain considered himself entirely at the mercy of the colored association. The black caulkers, finding Captain Gray determined and resolute, afterwards returned to their work.”