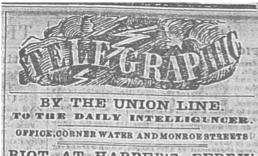
"Riot at Harper's Ferry," Wheeling (VA) Daily Intelligencer, October 18, 1859 https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/wheeling-va-daily-intelligencer-riot-harpers-ferryoctober-18-1859



RIOT AT HARPER'S FERRY!

BALTIMORE, Oct. 17.—The following dispatch has just been received from Frederick. It seems very improbable, and should be received with caution till confirmed:

FREDERICK, MD., Oct. 17 .- An insurrection is reported to have taken place at Harper's Ferry. An armed band of Abolitionists have full possession of the U. S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry. The Express train running East was fired into twice, and one of the railroad hands, a negro, was killed while trying to get the train through the town. The mob arrested two men who come in with a load of wheat, and took a wag-on, loaded it with rifles and sent it into Maryland. They are led by about 250 whites, with a gang of negroes fighting.

[SECOND DISPATCH]

BALTIMORE, Oct. 17.—A later dispatch received at the Railroad Office says the affair is greatly exaggerated. It has foundation in a difficulty at the armory. The negroes have nothing to do with it. nothing to do with it.

It is apprehended that the affair at Harper's Ferry is more serious than the people here are willing to believe. 'The telegraph wires have been cut from Harper's Ferry, and there is no communication beyond Monocacy. It is reported that there has been a stampede of negroes from Maryland. The train due here early this from Maryland. The train due here early this morning, has not yet arrived. Many wild ru mors are affoat, but no intelligence of authentic character has yet been received.

[FOURTH DISPATCH.] The Western train on the Ohio Road has just arrived. The officers confirm the statement first received. They say the bridge keeper discovered the light had been extinguished, and went to ascertain the cause, and was pursued and fired upon by a gang of blacks and whites. The colored assistant baggage master was shot and mortally wounded. Conductor Phelps was threatened that the train should not proceed. As it was uncertain as to the condition of the bridge, the train waited till after daylight, and was detained. It is said the insurrectionists number 200 whites and blacks. They have full possession of the armory, and are commanded or led by a man named Anderson, who lately arrived at Harper's Ferry. The rioters seized a wagen which was loaded with a quantity of muskets sent up to Virginia. The military of Frederick were ordered out. President Buchanan has also ordered out troops. A special train is now getting ready to convey troops from this city. He has also accepted the Zenicks Company, of Frederick, and has ordered companies from Old Point. This is authentic, and it seems now to be considered that something serious is going on.

Another account by the train says that the bridge across the Potomac was filled with insurgents, all armed. Every light in town had

been extinguished, hotels all closed, all the streets in possession of the mob, every road and lane leading thereto barricaded. Guarded men were seen in every quarter with muskets and bayonets. Citizens were arrested and pressed into service, including many negroes. This being done, the United States Arsenal, and Government Pay House, in which it was said there was a large amount of money, including all the other Public Works, were seized by the mob. Some are of the opinion that their object was entirely to plunder and rob the Government funds deposited on Saturday at the Pay House. During the night they made a demand on the Wager Hotel for provisions, and enforced their claim with a body of armed men. The citizens are in a terrible state of alarm, the insurgents having threatened to burn the town.

The following has just been received from Monocacy, this side of Harper's Ferry. The agent on the western bound train returned to Monocacy, reports the train unable to get through; town in possession of negroes, who arrest every one they can catch and imprison them. The train due here at 3 P. M. could not get through. The agent came down on an empty engine. The mail train bound west get as far as Sandy Hook. The baggage master and another party started on foot to the bridge; went through the bridge; were taken and imprisoned; went before the Capt. of insurrectionists, who refused to let anything pass. All of the eastward bound trains lying west of Harper's Ferry have been seized. The mail train bound west has returned to this station. There are from 500 to 700 whites and blacks.

At 4 o'clock a train filled the military, consisting of the Law Greys, City Guards, Shield Guards, and other companies left here for Har-per's Ferry. Several representatives of the Press accompany the train.

Ballimore, Evening.—A despatch from Martinsburg, which is situated west of Harper's Ferry, sent via. Wheeling and Pittsburg, has just been received. It confirms the report that the insurrectionists have taken possession of the Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, and adds that the mob has planted cannon at the bridge, and all the trains had been stopped. A body of armed men were getting ready to proceed thith-er to clear the road. Great excitement existed in that vicinity.

The American of this city, has sent a special reporter, by the military expedition, and some definite intelligence, it is expected will soon be received. The reporters telegraph from the Relay House, that the expedition was joined there by 90 marines from Wasnington, under command of Col. Harris, with two four

pound howitzers.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17.-3 o'clock P. M -On the receipt of the intelligence from Harper's Ferry, orders were issued for the three compa-nies of artillery at Old Point and the corps of marines in the Washington Barracks, to procoed to the scene of disturbance without delay. The marines, 98 in number, left in the 81 train , with two twelve pound howitzers and a full sup ply of ammunition. It is reported that they are under orders to force a passage over the bridge to-night at all hazards. Col. Faulkner accompanies them.

It is reported on good authority that some weeks ago Sec'y Floyd received an anonymous epistle stating that about the 15th of Oct. the Abolitionists, negroes, and other disaffected per"Riot at Harper's Ferry," Wheeling (VA) *Daily Intelligencer*, October 18, 1859 https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/wheeling-va-daily-intelligencer-riot-harpers-ferry-october-18-1859

sons, would make an attempt to seize the arsonal and hold the place, but the statement was so indefinite and improbable as to cause no fears of such an outbreak.

Ten o'clock P. M.—In view of the possibility of the disturbances at Harper's Ferry, extending to this vicinity, the Mayors of Washington and Alexandria have taken precautionary steps for their immediate suppression. The President, through the Mayor of Washington, ordered a strong detachment of the volunteer militia to be posted at the national and company armories, which was promptly done. Two hundred stand of musket and ammunition have also been placed in the City Hall for an emergency.

It has been suggested by well informed persons, that the cause of the insurrection, is the reported fact that not long since the contractor for the construction of the government dam at

Harper's Ferry absconded, largely indebted to several hundred employees, who have taken this step to indemnify themselves by the seizure of the government funds which, it was supposed, had been transported thither on Saturday. A gentleman who has just arrived from Harper's Ferry, thinks the blacks are only participants in the outbreak by compulsion.

RICHMOND, Oct. 17.—It is reported and believed that the Governor has ordered out the
volunteer troops to proceed to Harper's Ferry.
Nine o'clock P. M.—Great excitement exists
here in consequence of the insurrection at Harper's Ferry. The Greys are under leave for
Harper's Ferry and will start early in the morning. Company F., with full ranks, have just
left their armory, expecting to take a special
train to-night. This is a new company, wearing a similar uniform to the Greys. The Gov.
left to-night for Washington.

Baltimore, 10 P. M.—The American's special reporter telegraphs from Plane No. 4, 45 miles from Baltimore and 31 miles from Harper's Ferry, as follows:—8 o'clock P. M.—The train consists of 17 cars and 400 troops under Maj. Reynolds, with the road master and laborers to repair the track and telegraphers to mend the line. Three companies from Frederick are in advance of the train. Col. Harris' U. S. Marines follow in a special train. They will not reach Harper's Ferry before 10 o'clock.