

PRUDENCE CRANDALL MUSEUM

The site of New England's first academy for black girls, established by Prudence Crandall, 1833-1834



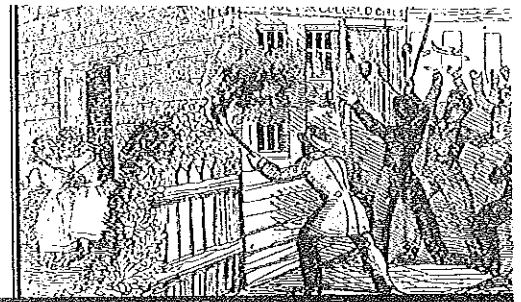
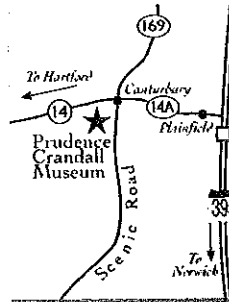
The
PRUDENCE CRANDALL MUSEUM

CANTERBURY, CONNECTICUT

A National Historic Landmark



Home of Connecticut's State Female Hero For information (860)546-9916



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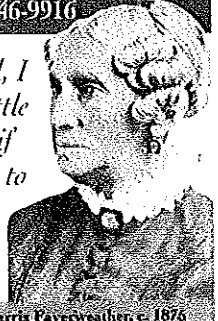
In 1833, one of the earliest battles for African-American citizenship was waged in the village of Canterbury. The unlikely arena was the Canterbury Female Boarding School, a private academy operated by Miss Prudence Crandall. The battle commenced when Crandall admitted a young black woman, Sarah Harris, to her previously all-white school. The ensuing uproar inspired Crandall to turn her academy into one for African-American girls only. The school soon attracted scholars from free black families throughout the Northeast.

Crandall's action infuriated many people, in part because it highlighted the controversy over whether blacks were citizens under the U.S. Constitution. Opponents vandalized the school and harassed the students. Abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, rallied to Crandall's cause. The bold endeavor continued.

The Connecticut legislature passed a law to shut down the Canterbury school. Prudence Crandall was jailed, tried, and found guilty. The state Supreme Court of Errors overturned her conviction on a technicality without taking a position on the issue of black citizenship.

"Miss Crandall, I want to get a little more learning, if possible enough to teach colored children..."

-Sarah Harris, 1832



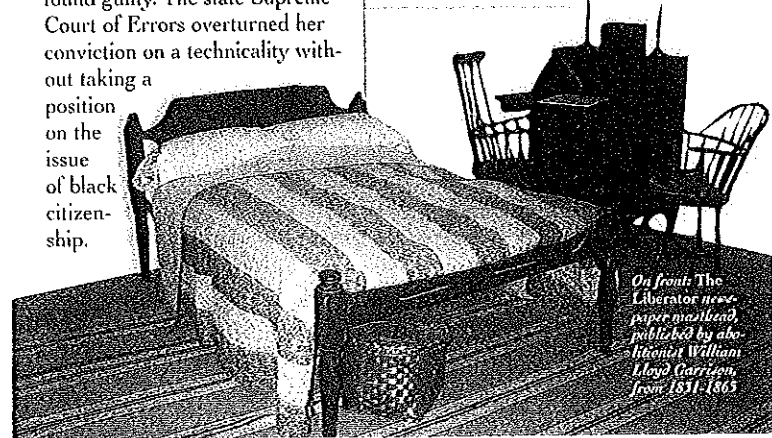
Sarah Harris Fayerweather, c. 1876

On the night of September 9, 1834, a mob armed with clubs stormed the school. Fearing for her safety and that of her students, Crandall closed the school, which had become one of the first milestones on the long road to equal rights for African Americans.

Today the restored Prudence Crandall Museum commemorates the teacher, the students, and their supporters. Permanent and changing exhibitions, tours, and special events recount the events of those 18 turbulent months, as well as black, women's, and local history.

The museum also includes a small research library for in-house study (by appointment only) and a museum shop.

Open Wednesday-Sunday, 10:00 am-4:30 pm, April 1 through December 14 and by appointment for groups. Admission is charged.



On front: The Liberator news paper masthead, published by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, Jan. 1831-1863