

TO THE PEOPLE OF POUGHKEEPSIE

Fellow-Citizens

The undersigned, representing a large portion of the community, feeling themselves deeply aggrieved by the late measures pursued toward them, deem no apology necessary for appealing to you on the subject. Experience has shown that abolitionists have multiplied more by the unjustifiable opposition of their enemies than the zeal of their friends or the goodness of their cause. But they cannot rejoice over any temporary prosperity which is purchased at so dear a rate as the destruction of public order.

They feel that they are citizens of the same commonwealth—members of the same community—and that their interests are too intimately blended with those around them, not to suffer when the laws are violated and public order outraged.

If their notions upon the abstract principles of slavery are wild and enthusiastic, and especially if they are dictated by an incendiary spirit, they will perish with their authors, and the well deserved execrations of the wise and good; but if they are based upon the broad and changeless principles of civil and religious liberty, they will flourish and bear the rich fruits of peace and prosperity, when their present friends and enemies are alike forgotten. In either case, the acknowledged importance of the subject to the moral and political well being of our country, commend it to the serious and dispassionate examination of every patriot and philanthropist.

And, fellow-citizens, should this fair investigation, their free discussion of an abstract principle, which involves with it the freedom of speech and the liberty of the press, shall it be put down by mob law and violence? Is abolition a charmed word, before which eloquence is dumb and truth powerless? Are you willing to countenance this invasion of the dearest rights of freemen, because it suited the convenience of politicians during an exciting election to misrepresent the sentiments and vilify the measures of the abolitionists? We beg you to pause long before you establish a precedent that may one day put a seal upon your lips which may not be broken except at your own peril.

SAMUEL THOMPSON

IRA ARMSTRONG