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A Statement Concerning the Mob at Enfield

Enfield Monday May 25th 1818

This week we have been very much disturbed by day and Night This morning being Monday we received information that a Mob was gathering to be here on the Morrow about 8 o'clock; That Eunice Chapman had been in town concealed about a week, that she and Mary Dyer were coming with their forces as they termed it to take their children, Eunice her three, and Mary Dyer her three youngest, this to us appeared an alarming circumstance as we were left without protection, The Deacon was gone away and True Heath had set out on his Journey, Joseph Dyer was away from home; in the Evening Judge Evans called in we related to him what we had heard he said it could not be, he did not believe it, but said he would inquire into the circumstance on his return home. He called into the tavern and found it matter of fact, he found that they were as he expressed it all tiptoe raised up in arms, he had an opportunity of conferring with Eunice Chapman, he told her she had better be calm he did not think there would be any difficulty occur to prevent her seeing the children. She said she did not want to see them unless she could have them. He told her as she was a stranger he would go with her and three or four more if she would be calm and peaceable, and he would pledge himself that she should see the children; and would converse with her and James Chapman upon the matter and see if there could not be an agreement between them that the matter might be settled. She agreed to his proposals; accordingly he prepared himself the next morning to bring her up thinking that matters were going on well; when he arrived at the tavern to take her into his chaise he found there was a disturbance. Squire Merrill enquired of him to know if he had not had conversation with the Shakers since last night; and told him that he was interested for the Shakers, The Judge replied that he was interested solely for the truth and equity of the case. Eunice interfered and said she would not go without such and such persons could go with her to the number of about twelve, men and women. Mary Dyer was to be one of them; the Judge said he could not promise her that we should let her see the children with such a Company. Joseph Dyer being away from home, and likewise that we were afraid of an assault: but he would take a list of their Names and see what we thought about it and return and let them

know: Accordingly he produced the paper but we did not deem it prudent to allow such a Company to see the Children. So James selected a certain number (and Mary Dyer had permission to come if she chose) to see the children. The Judge took the the names and was returning with them (to the tavern) he had not proceeded far 'ere he met Mary and Eunice in the Stage he proceeded onward and met some more some in Gigs and some on horseback the Company seemed so averse to our proposals he thought it best for him to stay away. The Company soon gathered but James was unwilling to suffer them all to see the children, he said he did not want all the town to come on so small an occasion just to see his children next thing said he the whole country would want to come. However he told them that he was willing Squire Merrill, & his Wife, Fogg & his Wife Mary and Eunice should go down to the house and see the Children. Eunice refused to go for some time; she said that she wanted to have the Children brought to the office she chose to see them there, after a while Fogg, Merrill and their Wives concluded to go and see their children at the dwelling House; after some time Mary Dyer came down to the house; and said she wanted to see her Children; they were brought to her and she spoke to them in a very rigid manner apparently with a desire to have them say something that she might lay hold of against the people. She told them that they were told what to say Marshall and Betsy promptly replied that they were not[.] Her language was very unbecoming for a parent to her Children therefore the Deacon spoke to Betsy to have the Children withdraw but Mary desired them to stop she had not seen them enough, however they all went out but Joseph she held him fast, and said she did not mean he should go, but Marshal[l] and Betsy were determined that he should, there seemed to be a little strife on her part which it is probable will be the occasion of her deposing that children are taught to be disobedient to their parents. But we are of opinion that any candid person will admit that we indulged her a great deal in suffering her to see them at all, considering that their Father was absent and that (Mary, Eunice, and their associates) they had threatened to assault us. After Eunice had staid without about two hours she came to the house to see her children, previous to her coming to the House James sent George to the office to invite his Mother to come and see her little girls but she kept him awhile. When he had disengaged himself from her he went away and hid himself so that she did not see him any more that time. When Eunice came into the room where the little girls were she took them into her lap and made great appearance of weeping she asked them if they

did not want to go away with her they replied they did not, they had rather live here She said you must not say so you are told what to say; they told her they were not (James told her, Squires Merrill, Fogg, and their Wives that they might take the children alone and talk with them, and if they said they wanted to go with their Mother they should but Eunice would not consent to that she chose to have him present) She exerted all her influence to gather their feelings to her, but all in vain. — Eunice appears to be a very haughty Person, in this visit the following are some of her expressions; Wo. Wo. Wo. to you James Chapman and to all your society throughout the land if you do not give up my Children. James Pettingill being in the room she spoke to him in the following effect; I will scare you yet and make you tremble, it is a mercy you are not all dashed to pieces you know what I have done in the state of New York James P. replied you do look some scarish scarish said she I could scare you to non-existence I have scared six smarter Men than you are. I think it is a pitty said James that the United States are so reduced as to be stirred up by two old women running up and down the streets; Again said she I have written a great deal about you and I shall write more if you do not give up my Children, what I have purposed to do that I will accomplish—She was invited to take supper she said no, my meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father—however she consented to have some—and six of them sat down together, Eunice said she meant to eat as much as she could Betty told her that she was welcome, welcome said she I do not want any body to make me welcome. They were all treated kindly upon this visit and I believe they all acknowledge it but Eunice and Mary—when they went away they left here about dusk Tuesday Night. Next day (it being Wednesday) towards night Mary Dyer came with six or eight women, we had received such threatenings we concluded it was not safe to admit such a company within our door yard, but she was very high and said she did not mean to give it up she would have her children if she died in the cause that there were a great number that were ready at a minutes warning however she went away without our seeing them making great threats of what she was going to do. James Chapman hearing of the mobs' coming and knowing that the feelings of the people were greatly irritated and that there were no doors that would stand against a mob, if they were determined to have the Children thought that they would not be safe in any of our buildings. Therefore he took them to the barn on the hill. Monday and Tuesday Nights they stayed in our house. Wednesday night he hid them in the woods were they were

comfortable; Thursday in the afternoon Samuel Cochran and his Wife and Eunice came to see James, Samuel said that he wanted to converse with them together, and see if there could not be a compromise so that the matter could be settled for he said it was spread from Champlain to Boston. The Deacon told him that James resided at the North House and if he wanted to see him he had better go there, however he was sent for but he was gone away with his little girls and could not be found, Eunice said she did not mean to go in 'till James came tho' she was invited to go into the office a number of times. She remained in the street nearly two hours, hailing every one that passed along, and telling them how bad the Shakers used her, this continued 'till about six O'Clock about which time Squire Merrill and twelve or fourteen more men came with him, he spoke loudly in the course of the evening and asserted that James Chapman was a Scape Gallows from New York, that he came into this state to evade the laws the laws there, and to be protected by the laws of the state, and that it was too much to be borne people's minds were all stirred up, continually sending word from Salisbury and other parts to know why they did not help the woman, he likewise asserted that he could raise five hundred men in a short time and that he did not mean to leave the ground until she (Eunice) had her Children that it was contrary to the laws of God and Man to use a woman so that he (James) ought to be drummed out of the state and much more to the same effect — In the beginning of Merrill's discourse he said they did not come for a riot; that he would pledge himself that the Dyer Children should not be meddled with, his manner of acting however was contrary to his declaration they kept gathering 'till after dark In the night it was probable that there was near a hundred for they were in all directions over the fields, and hid down beside the fences, after it was dark James appeared and they assembled in the Shop at the North House some believers and some world's people they made their propositions to James, which were for him to have the Boy and the woman one of the Girls and to cast lots which should have the other to this James would not comply he opened the matter and stated that he had done according to law, and that he had a lawful right so to do. Which conference lasted 'till about eleven O'Clock at Night when they made a prisoner of James by something which they called a warrant at which time a part of the concourse withdrew but the woman declared she would not leave the ground till she had recovered the Children. The remnant of the party were employed in searching until they found George, which was about One O'Clock AM. upon hearing

which the whole party departed about two OClock during the whole of this night there were but few of us that had any rest. The following Day we called upon Judge Blaisedell who attended to the matter and gave them some severe lectures upon the illegality of their proceedings which seemed to check them in some measure since which time they have made no further movements

[docketed]

1818 A Statement concerning the Mob at Enfield