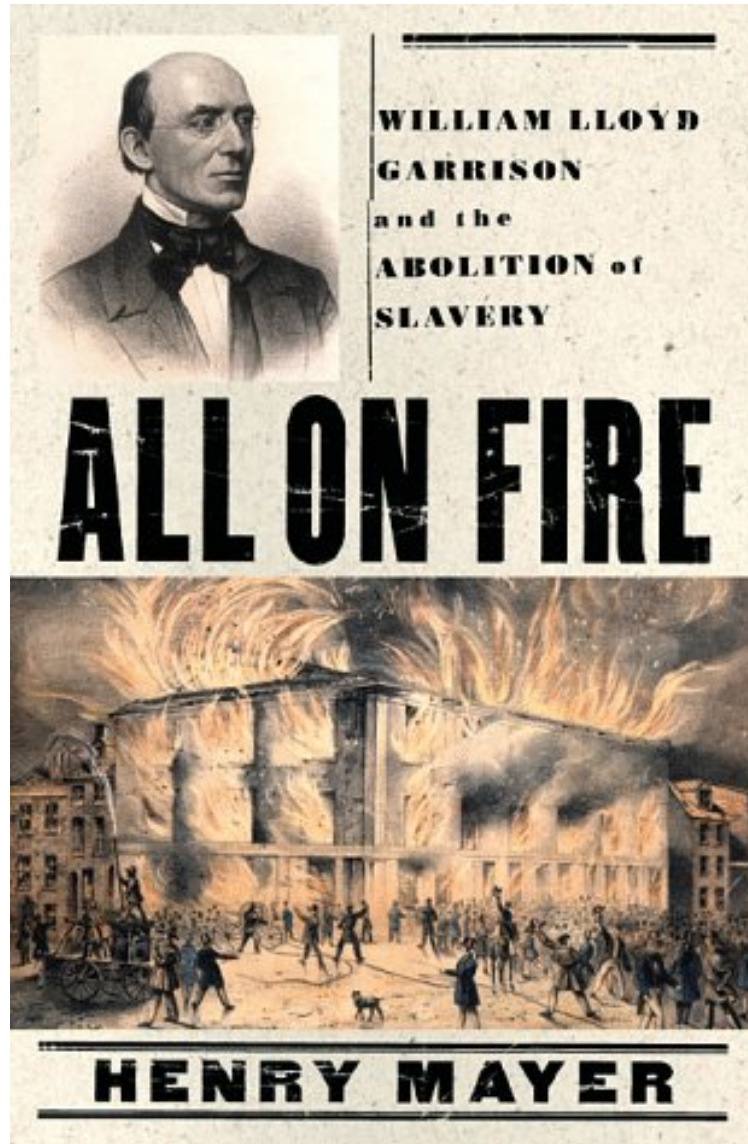


# All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery

Henry Mayer

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**Henry Mayer : All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of the best biographies ever By Shamgar with an Ox Goad I have read a lot of history books, in doing so I had largely given up on the idea of finding a "hero" in the past. Usually historical study reveals any figure you read about to be utterly human, with feet of clay. Henry Mayer has deftly

crafted a fine work of scholarship that shows that William Lloyd Garrison to truly be a hero whose arguments for equality and abolition resonate even today. Mayer does not shy away from the controversial bits of Garrison's character, in particular giving ample coverage to Garrison's feud with his friend Fredrick Douglass, but the portrayed ultimately is an average man whose human compassion leads him to do the extraordinary. The book is very readable thanks to Mayer's considerable skill as a writer. Certain scenes are dramatic to the point where I felt they had come from a feature film and Mayer maintains a tension that is rare for a history book. Mayer also is careful to explain the 19th century world that Garrison lives in, so the book should be valuable to anyone curious about the era. This is my favorite biography. It is readable enough for a layman and through enough for a scholar. Finally, it shows the life of a man that should be held up as an example for all Americans and the world. If you have any interest in the subject the book is certainly worth the time and money. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a great big book to enjoy

By Customer This book traces W. L. Garrison's life from boyhood to his demise. His personal story is interwoven with the political events of his life. However, it is not about everything that was transpiring in the 1830, 40's and 50's - only those directly touching on what Garrison thought pertinent in the struggle against slavery. The author admires Garrison, that is plain to see and by the time I was finished reading I admired him very much, too. I enjoyed sitting down with this book over a span of several days. I was always eager to get back and see what Garrison was up to or what setbacks he was suffering. Lots of history, lots of family love, lots to be proud of. A truly outstanding American character was William Lloyd Garrison. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great American biography for a great American life

By Mark Paul A few days before his death, Abraham Lincoln said, I have only been an instrument. The logic and moral power of Garrison, and the anti-slavery people of the country and the army, have done all. Henry Mayer's *All on Fire* captures Garrison, and the logic and moral power he gave to his country, as no other work has. It is one of the great American biographies of one of the greatest Americans: psychologically acute; sympathetic but open-eyed about its subject; deeply knowledgeable about the times it chronicles; keenly analytical; gracefully and powerfully written. For anyone who cares about American history, the place of religion in public life, and the role of the agitator in democratic politics, it is a book worth pondering and savoring.

William Lloyd Garrison, the most significant abolitionist in American history, is brought to life in this extensively researched and exquisitely nuanced biography. Long denied his well-deserved acknowledgment, Garrison finally appears in all his thunderous and prophetic brilliance in this inspiring work that will be read for years to come.

.com Born in poverty, and self-educated while working in a print shop, William Lloyd Garrison was one of the United States' greatest crusading editors, putting out a weekly anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, for 35 years, beginning in 1831. A product of the rough and tumble political journalism of the day, Garrison wrote with extreme passion and from an uncompromising point of view. Yet the man who emerges from the pages of *All on Fire* is a deeply thoughtful person who, despite barely escaping lynch mobs himself, had a great sense of humor and a very polite demeanor. Historians have tended to minimize Garrison's impact on America, and some consider him a fringe character. But Henry Meyer, in this hefty biography, places Garrison at the center of his century, noting that Garrison's thought and tactics influenced not only the country's changing view of slavery, but also inspired the incipient feminist movement. The Lincoln administration noted Garrison's influence by inviting him to help raise the flag over the recaptured Fort Sumter. *All on Fire* goes into great detail on Garrison's life and work, providing the close and copious examination this activist's life fully deserves. --Robert McNamara

From Publishers Weekly Dead for almost 120 years, Garrison (1805-1879) tends to be caricatured in U.S. history books, if he's mentioned at all. That caricature shows a single-issue fanatic who had right on his side but possibly did more harm than good by agitating abolitionists and slavery advocates alike. Garrison was raised largely by his mother, a Baptist who marched "through life with 'high views' of its duties, and with the firmness of a Christian soldier." For her son, once roused by the Quaker Benjamin Lundy to the evils of slavery, there could be no compromise. There must be complete, immediate emancipation grounded in the U.S. Constitution. Anything less would cheapen human life and national dignity. Mayer's triumph is to show Garrison as a complicated human being, a fanatic to be sure, but one with a devoted family, a sense of humor and a brilliance of mind unexpected of one with so little formal education. Mayer, an independent historian living in Berkeley, Calif., and author of a biography of Patrick Henry (*Son of Thunder*), has done impressive research, especially in his use of Garrison's Boston-based newspaper, the *Liberator*, to explain its editor. The writing is first rate, and Mayer bucks contemporary trends by both his relentless adherence to chronology and his generous assessment of his subject. Few historians make the past more accessible than Mayer has. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal William Lloyd Garrison, founder and editor of the abolitionist newspaper the *Liberator*, led the fight against slavery in antebellum America. His example inspired later civil rights and women's rights activists. This revisionist biography focuses on his intellectual life and the radical stands he advocated. Mayer, a former secondary school teacher who has turned to writing (e.g., *Son of Thunder: Patrick Henry and the American Republic*, Univ. of Virginia, 1992), has written a detailed narrative arguing that Garrison is, in fact, an underrated figure. Garrison, he maintains, had the imagination to dream of a better America, the energy to fight for his dream, and the perseverance to

spend his entire life working toward it. While thoroughly researched and carefully documented, this extensive work is written in a dry, verbose style that would discourage all but the most determined reader. Recommended only for academic libraries and for public libraries that specialize in this subject area. (Illustrations not seen.) A Grant A. Fredericksen, Illinois Prairie Dist. P.L., Metamora Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.