

1856. Reverend Pennington's Resistance to Streetcar Segregation

(Katz, Eyewitness, 158)

[In the 1850s Black New Yorkers were compelled to ride on the front platform of Sixth Avenue horse-drawn streetcars. One of many instances of opposition to that policy was the direct action of Reverend James W. Pennington. John P. Early, a white merchant, told the Superior Court of New York of Pennington's efforts.]

. . . as the doctor took his seat on the right side of the car, the [white] passengers near him rose up and left a vacant space on both sides of him for three or four seats. A number of the passengers went to the conductor and requested him to turn Dr. P. out. *[Pennington denied this.]* He was approached and asked civilly to take a seat on the front platform, as that was the regulation on the road. He declined, but the conductor insisted on his leaving his seat to which he replied that he would maintain his rights. . . . The conductor then asked the driver to stop the car, and remove the doctor. He stopped, took Dr. P. in his arms, embraced him, and carried I him backward through the car, the doctor apparently making all the resistance in his power. He was, however, forced through the car, over the platform and into the street, near the sidewalk. . .