

# Donaldsonville Chief

## ADDRESS

Of the Southern Colored Convention to the People of the United States.

In the convention of the colored people of the Southern States, begun to be held in the City of Columbia, South Carolina, on Wednesday, the eighteenth day of October, 1871, the following was submitted by the Committee on Address:

To the People of the United States of America:

FELLOW-CITIZENS—The colored people of the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and the District of Columbia, have delegated to us, their representatives, assembled in Convention, authority to give expression to their purposes, desires and feelings, in view of the relation they bear to the Government and the people of the United States, under the course of events that has arisen since, and as a consequence of the war of rebellion.

We owe to the Almighty God and the spirit of liberty and humanity that animates the great body of the people of this country, the personal liberty and rights of citizenship that we enjoy, and shall, under the promptings of duty, labor for the permanence and perfection of the institutions that have served as the great instrument of consummating this act of justice.

In seeking more perfect recognition as members of the great political family to which the interests of humanity have been peculiarly committed, we desire to recognize our obligations and responsibilities as members of this great family, and to assure the American people that we stand among them imbued with a national spirit—with confidence in and devotion to the principles of representative popular government, and with ideas of policy that embrace every individual and interest of our common country.

The fruits of the great legal measures that were intended to establish our rights and interests on a common footing with all other citizens of the nation, have, to some extent, and in particular locations, been withheld from us by the prejudices and passions of the hearts of a portion of our fellow-citizens as a remnant of former ideas and associations. We need your aid and sympathy to complete the great work begun and carried on in our behalf. We desire to lay before you the facts of our case in a brief, but truthful statement. We have not at command the all-important instrument of a local public press, as the medium of communication with you; the press of the South, with a few exceptions, being in the hands of those interested to lower us in your esteem. We have deemed a convention of our representatives as the most efficient means of laying before you the true state of our condition and feeling.

Since the close of the war, a settled policy has controlled the public and private action of the great body of the white people of the South towards us. They have sought to hold us in a condition of modified servitude, so that we should not be able to compete with the industry of the country. They have not been contented to employ the advantages of that capital and experience in public and private affairs confer, but resorted to compulsory means, un sanctioned by the laws of the country, the spirit of American institutions, and the practice of civilized nations.

The first great effort to carry into effect this line of policy, was, perhaps, most conspicuously displayed in the adoption of the code of laws, commonly known as the "Black Code," passed by the provisional government of South Carolina, in the year of 1865, and followed by other States. It is unnecessary to give in detail the features of this system. It established caste of the Oriental type. It furnished courts for the trial of questions of caste. It provided for legal compulsion, as a means of procuring our labor, and fixing the rates of compensation and rules of performance. It provided separate laws—civil and criminal—and secured separate courts for their enforcement. Finally, it allowed us no voice in the passing of the laws that were to govern us, or hand in disposing of the proceeds of our labor taken from us as taxes for the support of the government of our respective States.

The action of the military authorities, followed by that of Congress, and, finally, the amendments to the Constitution of the United States, took from the hands of those seeking to establish a system of slavery scarcely less objectionable than that which had just been overthrown, the means of accomplishing their purpose through the forms of law.

The next resort was to subsidize and control, through the motives of favor and fear, the political and civil powers conferred by the liberality of the Government. On the one hand, the friendship and patronage of the white citizens were offered as the condition of complete political subservience, while on the other hand, threats of being deprived of homes and employment as a means of subsistence, were made by the landholders and employers of our respective States. These threats were in many instances carried into effect. It was found, however, that the necessity that existed for our labor, left in our hands power sufficient to thwart the effort for our subjection.

To meet this new difficulty, resort was had to secret organizations, with a view to the control of the masses of the colored people by the murder of the prominent men of our class, and by the infliction of bodily pain upon a certain number of their followers. As

the means proposed involved the commission of the highest crimes known among men, the protection of oaths, secret organizations and disguises were resorted to. We have been hunted like beasts by armed men and women, have been killed; vast numbers have received severe corporal punishment, and many more found shelter in the swamps by day and by night, from this storm of human hatred.

We owe it to ourselves and to our government to acknowledge the well directed efforts that are now being made to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. We are assured that the American people are in earnest to secure to us the fruits of the great measures for our political and civil habilitation, and that the Executive and Judicial departments of the Government are thoroughly sincere in their determination to give effect to the Constitution and the will of Congress in our behalf.

We ask of you that you will give to the Government the fullest measure of moral support to enable it to complete that which it so auspiciously began, and that minor differences of sentiment and policy may be hushed while the nation is gathering up its length to purge the land of the foulest crimes by the hand of justice. When the nation was threatened with division, the political differences yielded to the necessity of maintaining its territorial integrity. Now that it is again threatened from the vortex of passion and crime afflicted, let the same devotion to right and justice induce equal efforts to preserve its moral integrity.

While there remains anything to be accomplished in order to secure for ourselves the full enjoyment of civil and political rights, we shall have class interests calling for the united efforts of persons of color. The moment these interests are secured, the motives for separate action will cease, and, in common with all other citizens, we can take our places wherever the interest of the government, industry or humanity may appoint—recognizing only one standard of duty, interest or policy for all citizens.

We do not ask the government or people of the United States to treat us with peculiar favor, but that, in the policy of the laws, our interests may be grouped with those that receive the consideration of our legislative bodies, and that, in the administration of the laws, no invidious distinctions be made to our prejudice.

We affirm that the colored people of the States represented by us have no desire to strike out a line of policy for their action involving interests not common to the whole people.

While we have, as a body, contributed our labor in the past to enhance the wealth and promote the welfare of the community, we have as a class been deprived of one of the chief benefits to be derived from industry, namely: the acquisition of education and experience, the return that civilization makes for the labor of the individual. Our want in this respect not only extends to general education and experience, such as fits the man to adorn the society of his fellows, but to that special education and experience required to enable us to enter successfully the departments of a diversified industry.

We ask that your representatives in Congress may be instructed to afford such aid in extending education to the uneducated classes in the States as we represent as may be consistent with the financial interests of the nation. Although we urge our unrequited labors in the past as the ground of this appeal, yet we do not seek these benefits for ourselves alone, but for the white portion of the laboring class in our States, whose need is as great as ours.

In order to secure the promotion of our industrial interest, you can render us assistance. It is true we have no demands to make of the National Government in this respect; but it is in the power of the people of the United States to aid us materially. In order to advance our knowledge and skill in the industrial arts, it is necessary that we should have the advantages of the means employed in the country at large for these purposes. That in preparing for industrial pursuits and in putting our skill in operation, we should come in contact with educated and experienced workmen and be put in possession of the results of their skill and knowledge. If the trades and workshops are shut against us, we cannot reach that point of excellence to which we desire to attain. We ask your aid and sympathy in placing us on the same footing in reference to the pursuit of industry as that enjoyed by other citizens. If after having access to the means of becoming skillful workmen, we fail to attain that standing we are content to take rank among the industrial classes of the country according to the degree of our proficiency. Should we be excluded from these benefits, a state of things will arise, most prejudicial to the interests of the skilled laborer, namely: the existence of a great body of workmen ready to supply the market with poor work at cheap rates. While slavery existed, the Northern States were not affected by the low state of the industrial arts in the Southern States; but labor being now free to find the best market, it is, beyond question, the interest of the artificers of the North to raise the standard of proficiency at the South. It is clearly the interest of the great industries of the North to strengthen themselves by alliance with those at the South. This result would be practicable to the fullest extent, if those of our color throughout the North could be placed in a position to bring among us the best knowledge and skill in the departments of trade to which they belong.

We would do injustice to ourselves if, forgetting our own personal indebtedness for the blessings of liberty, and the pursuit of independence and happiness, to that outgrowth of Christian

civilization, the benignant spirit of our country and century, we should pass unnoticed the condition of those of our race who are still in the state of slavery. The public sentiment of this great nation combined with that of Europe, with the good offices of our Government, is surely sufficient to hasten the abolition of African slavery throughout the world. We sincerely trust that expression may be given to such sentiment as will attract the attention and influence the conduct of those few remaining nations that still maintain slavery as a legal institution.

It is our privilege, in addressing you, to utter the voice of four millions of citizens of this great country. That voice is addressed to those whose humane feelings rendered practicable that consummate act that elevated so vast a body at once to the enjoyment of civil and political manhood. It is not too much to anticipate that partially for the work that owes its legal completion to you, will influence you to watch carefully the development of its practical results; that no perversion from the purposes of your bounty shall prevent the full fruition of the great principles of justice that actuated you.

The growth of this nation has shown that its institutions are capable of blending into an harmonious brotherhood all nationalities and all interests and industries. In all other instances than that of the accession of our race to citizenship, the accretion of the elements of its population has been gradual—giving time to complete the process of assimilation. In our case we are well aware that there was much to alarm the apprehension of those careful statesmen who hesitated to speculate as to the strength of our institutions much beyond what was demonstrated by the precedents in parallel cases in Europe and in our own country. The instantaneous embodiment of four millions of citizens who had for years looked upon the government as not only denying them citizenship, but as preventing them from acquiring that capacity under any other national existence, was, it must be admitted, a startling political feat.

But we are hazy to point to the proof of the wisdom of those who regarded that course the safest which was indicated by the demands of justice. We are proud to be able to point to the history of our people since they have been admitted to citizenship as proof that they understand what is due from the citizen to the government owing him protection. Although they have suffered much at the hands of those who would deprive them of their rights, they have appreciated the difficulties and embarrassments that necessarily surrounded the attempts of the government to vindicate their rights and have waited uncomplainingly until relief could be afforded; although many times they could have found instantaneous relief by imitating their oppressors and taking the law into their own hands.

We would call attention to the fact that the conferring of citizenship upon our people, though the occasion, is not the cause of the agitations that have affected the country. The true cause is the spirit of opposition to whatever is enlarged and unselfish in our government, and that does not inure to the exclusive interest of the privileged few which has seized upon the act of the Government as a means of shutting out of the Southern States liberal and national ideas.

We affirm, without fear of contradiction that the colored people of the United States have conducted themselves as good citizens, and have displayed aptness to discharge their civil and political duties, as well as an intuitive fitness for that form of government which we justly regard as the highest expression of civic wisdom. Under these circumstances, and with the proofs of the truth of our statement abundant on every hand, we ask your fullest confidence and sympathy. We cannot point to the work of our fathers commingled with that of yours in the noble structure of Government we all delight to admire and to guard, but we can claim to have embodied their animating spirit as displayed in our devotion to the truths that they inculcated and our zeal to render their work immortal and imperishable.

With this brief presentation of our views and feelings, we beg to subscribe ourselves, in behalf of those we represent, very respectfully, your humble fellow-citizens and obedient servants.

ROBERT B. ELLIOTT,  
JAS. M. SIMMS,  
RICHARD NELSON,  
J. T. WALLS,  
ISAAC MYERS,  
B. A. BOSEMAN,  
P. C. ANTOINE,  
J. F. QUARLES,  
F. G. BARBOEES.

I do hereby certify that the foregoing address was unanimously adopted by the Convention, on the 21st day of October, 1871.  
A. J. RANSIER, President.  
Attest: J. H. DEVEAUX, Secretary.

**The Texas Election.**  
We copy this from the New Orleans Times, and give it for what it is worth:

The four gentlemen just elected to Congress from this State, were all, we are informed, recently of the Republican party, and were supported as Conservatives, and elected by the opponents of Grant and Davis. They were not regarded or ever styled Democrats in their several districts. Judge Hancock was opposed in the New Braunfels District by a German, who made speeches through the German vote with his adversary. Had he been able to obtain copies of Carl Schurz's speech in German, and circulated them through the district, he would have received a large majority of the German votes. Of the other members elect, Mr. Combs served in

the Federal army through the war. Mr. Giddings has settled in the State from one of the Northern States since the war. All four previous to the election were classed as Conservatives, but stood strongly committed against both the Federal and State Administrations. Their triumph was a complete, and to the rest of the South, a most instructive and encouraging one. By a similar organization and policy it is practicable to oust the Radicals in all the Southern States; and this, we fear, never will be done on the old Democratic line, with the old banners, chiefs, cries and platitudes. Missouri, Virginia, Tennessee and Texas are guide posts pointing to the only path which will conduct Louisiana out of the present political slough.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

### Post-office Notice.

DONALDSONVILLE, La., September, 1871.

Mails Arrive—From New Orleans on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings.  
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For St. Francisville Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 6 P. M.

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No letters will be registered on Sunday after 8 o'clock A. M.  
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## Resolutions

Adopted by the Republican State Convention, August 10th, 1871.

**Resolved,** That we declare the Republican party of Louisiana to be the true and only national Republican party; that we endorse the platform of principles laid down by the Chicago Convention.

**Resolved,** That we believe that the congressional measures of reconstruction have proved a complete success for the States, in the manner of honest folks and the wives, and civil liberty. We believe that if honestly and fairly executed, these statutes will conduce to the prosperity of the South and to the strengthening of the Republican institutions.

**Resolved,** That we specially endorse those planks of the Republican platform which pledged our party to the payment of the public debt.

**Resolved,** That we advocate the reduction of national taxation and a redistribution of the burden of taxation so as to impose the least possible burden upon the people.

**Resolved,** That we pledge ourselves and our party to faithful execution of the constitutional and statutory provisions for the public education of all the children of the State without distinction.

**Resolved,** That we endorse the Republican administration of the national and State governments. We especially endorse and commend the official career of our Governor, G. Warmoth. We do this because, in our opinion, his administration of the government of Louisiana under reconstruction has been so successful as to bring about the condition of peace and order which characterizes our State above all the other Southern States. By means of the execution of the law, it is possible for Republicans to assemble in any part of the State, and the Republican party consequently presents a united front and compact organization.

**Resolved,** That we pledge our party to the reduction of the custom duties, we denounce an economical administration of the government. We condemn indiscriminate appropriations to individual enterprises, and we urge upon the Legislature the curtailment of its expenses.

**Resolved,** That we advocate a policy of reasonable and wise appropriations by the State to internal improvements. We call upon the national Congress to give to the South its full quota of aid and assistance to the improvement of our harbors and rivers. We have no objection to an appropriation to assist in opening the mouth of the Mississippi, and in constructing our levees.

**Resolved,** That we tender our thanks to Messrs. Harris, Garstank, Strups, S. Orde and other members of the late Convention, who were true to the party, and refused to enter the combination for its overthrow.

**Resolved,** That we denounce the outrageous acts of the federal officials connected with the late State Central Convention, and we are determined to seek this convention with their own adherents, against the expressed will of the Republicans of the State. We denounce them for having called the convention to meet in a United States courtroom, in a United States building, and we denounce them for having attempted to intimidate the convention by surrounding it with armed special deputy marshals; we denounce them for having closed the door of the courtroom, and having barred the entrance of the delegates; we denounce them for attempting to exclude from this convention ninety-five delegates of the people, who were met at the threshold by two companies of the United States army, called out by these men to assist in carrying this their whole conduct in connection with the calling out and assembling of this body. They were guilty of very unfairness in the progress of the election for delegates. They were guilty of simulation and fraud in connection with the determination of the time and place of meeting. They finally established, without authority, certain pretended rules relative to the admission of delegates, calculated to further their scheme. They admitted to the convention hall, or to an adjoining room, with an open door, their fraudulent delegates, while the doors of the hall were closed against the bona fide members of the convention until the hour of meeting, in order that they might spring and force an organization under the protection of the revolvers of their marshals, and the bayonets of their soldiers.

**Resolved,** That we express our conviction that these outrages were not perpetrated with the knowledge or consent of President Grant; we disbelieve the statement of Marshal Packard to that effect; we proclaim our earnest hope that our President will repudiate the acts of these men; and we declare that we will only withdraw our hearty support and endorsement of him when we shall learn that they were outraged and insulted by his officers after consultation with him, and by his advice and consent.

**Resolved,** That we believe that the President alone can unite and harmonize the Republican organization in our State. Several of his office holders have formed a combination with an insignificant bolting faction of Republicans, but they seem determined to rule or ruin the party. Therefore, for the purpose of healing these differences, and to insure our success in 1872, we respectfully ask the removal of Marshal Packard, Collector General, Assessor Jonbert, Revenue Collector Sney, and Deputy Collector Henry Herwig and Postmaster Lowell, and we ask the appointment of men who will support the Republican party of Louisiana.

**Resolved,** That the President of this convention be requested to appoint a committee of twenty-five members to visit our President Grant, and to represent to him the facts stated in the above and foregoing resolutions.

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CHARLES A. DANA, EDITOR.

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