

Proceedings

OF THE

Colored Men's Convention

OF THE

STATE OF MICHIGAN,

Held in the City of Detroit,

Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 12th and 13th, '65,

With Accompanying Documents.

ALSO, THE

Constitution of the Equal Rights League of the
State of Michigan.

ADRIAN, MICH.:

PRINTED AT THE ADRIAN TIMES OFFICE.

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Report of the Committee on Publication.

To the Members of the State Convention :

GENTLEMEN:—The undersigned, Committee on Publication, in submitting the result of their labors in arranging and correcting the Journal of the proceedings of the late State Convention of colored men, beg leave to state, that owing to the continued indisposition of the Secretary, they were unable to publish the proceedings at an earlier date. They have now the pleasure of submitting to your consideration the proceedings as corrected and revised by your committee.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

G. W. LEWIS,

H. J. LEWIS,

B. DOLBEARE PAUL,

Com. on Publication.

Adrian, Oct. 23, 1865.

W. W. W. W.
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE
Colored Men's State Convention,

Held in the City of Detroit,

September 12th and 13th, 1865.

The State Convention of Colored men assembled in the 2d Baptist Church, in Detroit, Mich., Sept. 12th and 13th, at 12 o'clock, M. H. J. Lewis, Esq., of Hudson, called the Convention to order. B. Dolbeare Paul, of Detroit, read the call. G. W. Lewis, Esq., of Adrian, was chosen temporary Chairman, and James Richards, Esq., of Detroit, temporary Secretary. Prayer was offered by Mr. Grinton, of Marshall.

On motion of Mr. D. Roberts, of Adrian, the chairman appointed a committee on credentials, consisting of O. P. Anderson, of Battle Creek, Willis Washington, of Detroit, and S. W. Burton, of Hillsdale.

After the committee had retired, Mr. Paul, of Detroit, D. Roberts, of Adrian, J. W. Brooks, of Ann Arbor, and B. Grinton, of Marshall, in response to the chair, addressed the Convention upon the issues of the day, in an able and lucid manner.

The committee on credentials reported the names of delegates whose seats were not contested. The full list, as corrected, is as follows:

Hudson—H. J. Lewis.

Adrian—D. Roberts, G. W. Lewis.

Lenawee Co.—Robert Brown.

Hillsdale—S. W. Burton.

Ann Arbor—J. W. Brooks, A. Boyar.

Romeo, Macomb Co.—John Hackley.

Kalamazoo—Geo. Nichols.

Jackson—Wilberforce Johnson.

Coldwater—F. R. Jenkins.

Battle Creek—John J. Evans, O. P. Anderson.

Ypsilanti—S. Wells, A. Prichard.

Detroit—G. H. Parker, B. Dolbear Paul, Willis Washington, J. D. Carter, T. J. Rice, Lewis Pierce, A. Burgess, Chas. Gillam, Thomas Nichols.

“MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL UNION.”—Wayne Co.—J. W. Henry, J. T. Lee, James Richards.

State at large—O. C. Wood.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

James Fields, M. D., Adrian.

Capt. Buckner, Hillsdale.

James Hill, Hillsdale.

R. L. Cullen, Detroit.

T. J. Martin, Dowagiac.

Isaac Burdine, Niles.

S. Fowler, Eaton Rapids.

Wm. Watts, St. Johns.

On motion of Mr. D. Roberts, of Adrian, the chair appointed the following :

COMMITTEE ON RULES.

H. J. Lewis, of Hudson, T. J. Rice, of Detroit, J. J. Evans, of Battle Creek.

On motion of J. J. Evans, of Battle Creek, the chair appointed the following

COMMITTEE ON PERMANENT OFFICERS.

J. D. Carter, of Detroit; D. Roberts, of Adrian; H. J. Lewis, of Hudson; F. R. Jenkins, of Coldwater; S. W. Burton, of Hillsdale; J. W. Brooks, of Ann Arbor; B. Grinton, of Marshall; J. Henry, of Detroit; Geo. Nichols, of Kalamazoo; J. J. Evans, of Battle Creek.

On motion of Mr. J. Henry, of Detroit, the following were appointed a

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

T. J. Rice, of Detroit; J. D. Carter, of Detroit; R. Brown, of Lenawee Co.; A. Prichard, of Ypsilanti.

On motion of Mr. Anderson, of Battle Creek, the Convention appointed as

BUSINESS COMMITTEE.

G. W. Lewis, of Adrian, Chairman.

O. P. Anderson, of Battle Creek; J. H. Parker, of Detroit; R. L. Cullen, of Detroit; T. J. Rice, of Detroit; S. W. Burton, of Hillsdale.

On motion of J. D. Carter, of Detroit, Dr. Fields was made an honorary member.

On motion of Mr. Paul, A. Prichard, of Ypsilanti, J. J. Martin, of Dowagiac and J. Burdine, of Niles, were made honorary members of the Convention.

On motion of D. Roberts, of Adrian, G. H. Parker, of Detroit, and O. P. Anderson, of Battle Creek, were appointed a committee to instal the permanent officers of the Convention.

Mr. Carter, from the committee on Permanent Organization, reported the following gentlemen as permanent officers of the Convention:

President—REV. J. W. BROOKS, of Ann Arbor.

1st Vice President—H. J. LEWIS, Hudson.

2d Vice President—BENJAMIN GRINTON, of Marshall.

3d Vice President—JAMES RICHARDS, of Detroit.

4th Vice President—GEO. NICHOLS, Kalamazoo.

Secretary—B. DOLBEARE PAUL, of Detroit.

1st Assistant Secretary—J. J. EVANS, Battle Creek.

2d Assistant Secretary—C. H. GILLAM, of Detroit.

The chairman, having been escorted to the chair, made an appropriate speech, thanking the Convention for the honor conferred upon him.

On motion of Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, a vote of thanks was accorded the retiring temporary officers, for the able manner in which they had conducted the business before the Convention, and the Convention adjourned to meet at 3 o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

SEPTEMBER 12th, 1865, 3 o'clock.

The Convention re-assembled at 3 o'clock. Roll called, a quorum present. Religious services were conducted by Rev. Mr. McIntosh, of the African Methodist Episcopal church. Minutes of morning session read and adopted.

Mr. Lewis, of Hudson, from the Committee on Rules, presented the following Report on Rules, which was, on motion, adopted.

REPORT ON RULES.

1st. There shall be three sessions of the convention daily. The convention shall meet at 9 o'clock A. M., and adjourn at 12 o'clock, M. The afternoon session of the convention shall meet at 3 o'clock, P. M., and adjourn at 5 o'clock, P. M.

2d. The majority of the members of the convention shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at either of its sessions.

3d. The rules of order as laid down in Channing's Manual shall be the standing rules of order of this convention in all points not herein provided for.

4th. No member shall be allowed to speak more than twice upon the same subject without special leave of the convention, and not longer than ten minutes each time.

Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, moved that Mr. Rice be relieved from the Finance Committee, he having been appointed on the Business Committee. Carried.

On motion of Mr. Prichard, of Ypsilanti, Mr. Washington was elected to fill vacancy. Mr. Hackley, of Macomb Co., was on motion of Mr. Henry, added to the committee.

Rev. Mr. McIntosh, having been requested to address the convention, declined making a speech, but stated that he desired to sit near the Secretary's stand, so that he might report the proceedings of the convention to the paper which he represented, the Christian Recorder.

The President called upon Mrs. M. A. Shadd Carey. Mrs. Carey said she declined making a speech, but she would say, that so far as the object contemplated was concerned, she heartily desired to see it accomplished.

While the Business Committee were absent the Convention were entertained with very fine music by Miss Sherman, of Marshal, Miss Hattie Berry and Miss Josephine Warren, assisted by Messrs. Russell and Warren, of Cleveland.

Mr. Lewis, from the Business Committee, reported the following

DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS.

WHEREAS, For reasons to be hereinafter stated, we deem it expedient that the Equal Rights League of Colored People, established in January, the 25th and 26th, 1865, should be dissolved, and an association formed, to be known as the "Equal Rights League of Michigan," for reasons set forth in the following circular, issued August, A. D., 1865.

CIRCULAR.

TO THE PEOPLE OF COLOR OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN.

The State Equal Rights League, organized under and by virtue of the constitution of the National Equal Rights League, by the people, through their representatives in convention assembled, January 25th and 26th, respectively, 1865, having failed to meet the object for which it was instituted, the undersigned, members of the Equal Rights League for the State of Michigan, and others, do hereby call a mass convention of the colored people of the State, for the following, among other reasons, to-wit:

1st. That your representatives were not permitted to take part in the deliberations of the meeting of the Equal Rights League on the 1st day of August, as provided in the constitution.

2d. That the officers of the Bureau, at Detroit, did, without the consent of the Executive Board, or your representatives, set aside the constitution and institute another, which your representatives could not and did not adopt.

3d. That in defiance of the expressed will of your representatives, the said Bureau did, then and there, in the aforesaid meeting of the Equal Rights League, held in the Methodist church at Detroit, proceed to transact business for and in the name of the people, without the sanction, and in defiance of the expressed wish of your representatives, and that the said Bureau did furthermore elect representatives for the people, to represent the people in the National Equal Rights League meeting, to be held in the city of Cleveland in September ensuing, under protest.

For these reasons, we the undersigned, members of the State Equal Rights League, and others, do hereby call a mass convention of the people of the State, to be held in the city of Detroit, on the twelfth day of September next, A. D., 1865, for the purpose of organizing another Equal Rights League, and for the purpose of obtaining an opinion of the people of the State. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That that portion of the officers of the State Bureau, located in the city of Detroit, who were instrumental in perpetrating such a gross outrage upon the people's rights, by first insulting and then excluding their representatives, and that too, without the sanction of law, merit our hearty disapproval.

Resolved, That the alteration of the constitution of the State League, in order to cater to the wishes of men whose only object is to rule, should meet with the reprobation and contempt of all honest men and women.

Resolved, That we, as legitimate members of the State Equal Rights League for the State of Michigan, do most solemnly

enter our protest against this outrage, upon the principles of right and justice.

Resolved, That we, the people of the State of Michigan, in convention assembled, on this twelfth day of September, 1865, do hereby declare that all proceedings and doings of the former conventions, meetings, societies, and leagues, heretofore convened for the object contemplated, by the National Equal Rights League, null and void, and of no effect whatsoever.

Mr. Anderson moved to strike out the second resolution of the Declaration of Sentiments.

Mr. Lewis, of Hudson, said he thought the section ought to be modified, and proceeded to argue at length in defence of his position.

Mr. Rice, of Detroit, said that some gentlemen had been insulted, and if concessions were to be made it ought to come from the so-called Bureau.

Mr. Parker, of Detroit, said that he was decidedly opposed to any concessions being granted, if any overtures were to be made they should come from the other side. He had been informed that a prominent gentleman of this city had gone to the President of the so-called Bureau, and stated that he deprecated the course pursued by them, and he was sure that the people would not sanction their proceedings. The President replied, that he did not care for the people. Mr. Parker proceeded to relate the proceedings of the League on the first of August.

Mr. Lewis, of Hudson, argued against the section, and in favor of its being struck out.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, in an eloquent and forcible speech, urged the expediency of the resolution being struck out.

Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, said that he had conversed with the gentleman of the Bureau, and they had stated that they did not intend to conciliate parties, but they were prepared to carry the matter to the National League. He was in favor of the report.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Washington moved the previous question, which, however, was withdrawn, and Messrs. Washington and Paul, of Detroit, proceeded to argue at length, the former in favor of the section being struck out, and the latter against its rejection. The question to strike out, being put, was carried, and the report, as amended, adopted. The Convention then adjourned to meet at half-past seven o'clock in the evening.

EVENING SESSION.

The convention re-assembled ; quorum present.

Religious services were conducted by Mr. Burton, of Hillsdale.

Mr. Anderson, from the Committee on Credentials, presented the names of Wilberforce Johnson, as a representative from Jackson, and Thos. Nichols, to be members of the convention.

Mr. Cullen, of Detroit, proceeded to address the convention.

Mr. Cullen said: I want you to understand that I am working for the people, and not for any aggrandizement of mine own. I want a unit of the people of Michigan. We have the question of equal rights to fight, which we have fought for years. The colored men of Michigan ought to be united. His motto was, "Procure our own Rights at home," then we could help our friends in Kentucky or elsewhere. He therefore moved the following resolution:

Resolved, That the members of the so-called Bureau of the Michigan State Equal Rights League be invited to participate in the proceedings of this Convention.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, supported the resolution.

Resolution lost.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, moved the following resolution:

Resolved, That any person or persons favorable to the object of this Convention, and for the good of the people of color of the State of Michigan, be invited to participate by laying down all party spirit, and conform to the rules by which, and the object for which we are here assembled.

Mr. Rice, of Detroit, rose to support the resolution. He had voted for Mr. Cullen's resolution. We could not ask equal rights from the whites, when we were unwilling to accord equal rights among ourselves. While he would stand upon his manhood, he was in favor of the resolution.

Mr. Washington, of Detroit, in reply, said he thought this Convention had assembled in accordance with the circular, to denounce the proceedings of the so-called Bureau. He was in favor of the gentlemen of the so-called Bureau coming here as individual members, but not as a State Bureau.

Mr. Cullen, of Detroit, said: I understood from your proceedings to-day that you had done away with the State Bureau.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, said: This resolution in my judgment I offer for the good of the people of the United States, as well as Michigan. We have said that we would not emigrate, but

would remain here as long as our brethren were in bondage. Now they have been set free, and we are here for the purpose of uniting for the good of the cause. Our acts are for the good of the whole. All persons who have an interest in our welfare we invite to come here for the purpose of aiding the good cause. Our motives are pure.

Mr. Carter, of Detroit, said he was not here to parley with rebels. They had altered the constitution to suit themselves, regardless of the people, and so long as they held office in the so-called Bureau he could not act with them.

Mr. Parker, of Detroit, said they must bring forth fruit meet for repentance first, before we can receive them.

Mr. Cullen said, the most cowardly way to treat any one was to stab him in the dark. Now we are arguing against a set of men who are not here to defend themselves.

Mr. Parker—The gentleman is a member of the City League. Have they ever given me a hearing?

Mr. Cullen—That is just the point. He was a peoples' man. Do you want to take this matter to the National League?

A Voice—(No, no.)

Mr. Parker—Who proposes to take it there?

Mr. Cullen—The delegates appointed by the Bureau will be in Cleveland, and their seats will no doubt be contested by you. What he wanted was that the Bureau should be admitted here the same as he.

Mr. Rice, of Detroit—He was in favor of the resolution.

Mr. Paul, of Detroit—Have any of the gentlemen applied for admission?

Mr. Rice—I am not aware that they have.

By request the Secretary read the resolution again, and

Mr. Rice moved to amend it by striking out the word "invite."

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian—I did not offer the resolution for a contention. If we are not capable of acting for the people of the State, why there must be some great men here (Detroit.)

The amendment being put was carried.

Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, moved the following resolution:

Resolved, That this Convention appoint a committee of one to learn what concessions the so-called Bureau are willing to make, so as to effect a union, and report the result to this Convention in writing.

Mr. Cullen would support the resolution.

Resolution lost.

Mr. Anderson, of Battle Creek, moved "That we do now proceed to form a State Equal Rights League."

Mr. Carter, from the Finance Committee, made the following

REPORT ON FINANCE.

Your Committee on Finance would respectfully submit that they have received in contributions the sum of two hundred and seven dollars (\$207 00) to meet the expenses of the Convention, and to qualify the delegates from the State Equal Rights League to seats in the National Equal Rights League. The committee desire to express their gratification at the generous manner in which the delegates have responded to the solicitation of your committee—which they view as another mark of the confidence reposed and interest felt in the objects contemplated by the Convention.

Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, moved that the report be received and adopted. Carried.

Mr. Anderson's resolution was then considered and adopted.

After some desultory conversation

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, moved to refer the matter to the Business Committee, to report to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock. Carried.

Mr. Rice, of Detroit, moved that the Secretary be instructed to forward the proceedings for publication to the *Christian Recorder* and *Anglo-African* of New York. Carried.

The Convention then adjourned until to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

SEPTEMBER 13th, 1865, 9 o'clock A. M.

The Convention re-assembled pursuant to adjournment, the President in the chair.

Prayer by the Rev. J. W. Brooks, of Ann Arbor. Minutes of preceding sessions read and adopted.

Mr. Anderson, from the Committee on Credentials, presented the names of S. Wells, of Ypsilanti, and O. C. Wood, of Detroit. Mr. Wells being qualified took his seat. Mr. Wood was admitted on motion of O. P. Anderson.

On motion, S. Fowler, of Eaton Rapids, and Wm. Watts, of St. John, were made honorary members of the Convention.

Mr. Parker, of Detroit, introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, That we point with exultation and pride to that epoch

in history which records the noble, patriotic, philanthropic and humane deeds of our much beloved and ever to be praised late Chief Magistrate, Abraham Lincoln, who, though tardy, yet sure in the march to the prison house, there to unlock the door and let the poor slave go free. May his name be ever cherished in the memory of all impartial lovers of liberty until the last day of recorded time.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, moved to receive the resolution.

Mr. Anderson, of Battle Creek, moved to refer the resolution to the Business Committee. *Lost.*

Mr. Roberts moved that the resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lewis, from the Business Committee, presented the following report in regard to the organization of a League for this State.

REPORT.

WHEREAS, For reasons stated in the circular convening this mass Convention, and in the judgment of those who have responded to the call, they believe that the interest of the whole people would be better subserved by organizing an Equal Rights League, to be known as the "Equal Rights League for the State of Michigan." Therefore

Resolved, That we proceed to organize an association to be called the State Equal Rights League for Michigan, having for its object the securing of the rights of the colored people of this State and United States, acting in harmony with the intentions of the National League.

Resolved, That we adopt for the government of the State Equal Rights League for the State of Michigan, so much of the constitution of the National Equal Rights League for the United States, held in the city of Syracuse, October 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 1864, as far as found adapted to the wants of the State League.

Resolved, That the officers of said League shall consist of a President, one Vice President from each county represented, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Committee of 5 others.

The consideration of the resolution of Mr. Parker, was resumed.

Mr. Johnson, of Jackson, offered an amendment, which was accepted, amending the resolution as follows:

Resolved, That we point with exultation and pride to that epoch in history which records the noble, patriotic, philanthropic and humane deeds of our much beloved and ever to be praised late Chief Magistrate, Abraham Lincoln, who, ever ready to favor human rights, was sure in his march to the prison house, there to unlock the door and let the poor slave free. May his name be

ever cherished in the memory of all impartial lovers of liberty, until the last day of recorded time.

The report of the Business Committee was then considered.

Mr. Washington moved that the report be adopted.

Mr. Roberts moved as an amendment that the report be considered and adopted by sections. Carried.

The report after some discussion was adopted.

Mr. Anderson, Battle Creek, offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That in the judgment of this Convention the policy of reconstruction, as developed by the present administration in restoring the seceded States to their former practical relations to the general government, is unwise, unfaithful to the colored American who has been faithful and self-sacrificing during the four years of desperate war, in which the existence of the unity of the nation trembled in the balance. And that this Convention pledges itself to use all intelligent and legitimate means to reconstruct upon no basis other than the basis of Universal Suffrage.

Mr. Rice moved to accept the resolution. Carried.

Mr. Anderson moved its adoption.

Mr. Lewis, of Hudson, said he favored moderation. Although we had not been treated as we ought to have been, yet he thought it unwise to censure the administration. Its policy had been at all times not to admit that the Southern States had been out of the Union at any time.

Mr. Anderson, of Battle Creek, said that it had been shown by the President that he was in favor of our people only so far as it subserved his own interests. Mr. Anderson proceeded to speak at length, making a most eloquent and able speech.

Mr. Parker, of Detroit—I do not think Mr. Johnson is right upon this question. He has said that he is too old to change, and has referred to his former acts as an indication of what his policy will be hereafter.

Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, read in support of Mr. Parker's position a speech of Mr. Johnson's, made on the 11th of September.

Mr. Parker, resuming—He wanted it to be known throughout the Union that the black man is alive to that which is for his interest, and will submit no longer to his own degradation. He had become convinced that the elevation of the black man depended upon the black man.

Mr. Johnson, of Jackson, would support the resolution. Resolution adopted.

On motion of Mr. Paul, the resolution was ordered to be sent to the Hon. Chas. Sumner, Maj. Gen. B. F. Butler, Wendell Phillips, Esq., and Mrs. Laura Haviland.

Mr. Rice, of Detroit offered the following :

Resolved, That in view of the many obstacles, difficulties, and embarrassments that our brethren the freedmen of the South have to encounter in their struggles from a state of slavery to that of liberty, causes our very hearts to burn within us. We assure them that we as their brethren—many of us have worn the same galling yoke—fully comprehend their position, and they have our united sympathies, believing that the day for equal rights and justice at home to all men is near.

On motion of Mr. Washington the resolution was received and considered, and on motion of Mr. Evans, of Battle Creek, adopted.

Mr. Washington, of Detroit, moved that the constitution be read and considered by sections.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, moved a substitute to the resolution, that a committee of three be appointed to revise and correct the constitution, and report to this convention. Substitute agreed to. The chair appointed Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, Paul, of Detroit, and J. D. Carter, of Detroit.

Mr. Paul moved that the committee have power to add to their number not to exceed two. Agreed to. The committee afterward added Messrs. Woods, of Detroit, and Johnson, of Jackson. On motion the convention adjourned until 3 o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

SEPTEMBER 13th, 1865, 3 o'clock.

The Convention re-assembled. Roll called and quorum present. Religious services were conducted by Mr. Grinton, of Marshall. Minutes read, corrected and adopted.

Mr. Roberts moved that the Convention appoint a committee on printing. Carried.

Mr. Roberts moved that G. W. Lewis, of Adrian, be chairman of the Printing Committee. Carried.

On motion of Mr. Parker, H. J. Lewis, of Hudson, was also appointed on the Printing Committee.

On motion of Mr. Roberts, Mr. Paul was added to the Printing Committee.

Mr. Rice, from the Business Committee, read the address to the people of the State of Michigan. Received and adopted.

Mr. Roberts, from the Committee on Constitution, reported, recommending the constitution of the National Equal Rights League, (with certain amendments to meet requirements of the State,) for the government of the Equal Rights League for Michigan. [NOTE—This was the constitution adopted in the January convention—Secretary.]

Mr. Parker moved that the report be received. Carried.

Mr. Rice moved that the constitution as read be adopted. Carried.

Mr. Anderson moved to reconsider the vote, which after considerable discussion was adopted.

Mr. Washington moved to adopt by sections. Carried.

Mr. Wells, of Ypsilanti, took exceptions to the last section, and asked for explanations, after which the constitution was adopted.

Some considerable discussion arose as to when the League should meet. Several gentlemen proposed September, and Mr. Parker proposed the 22d of February. The first Tuesday in September was at last agreed upon.

On motion of Mr. Lewis, of Adrian, the chair appointed Messrs. Rice, Anderson and Parker to nominate officers for the League.

On motion of Mr. Roberts the chair appointed Messrs. Roberts, Gillam and Parker a committee to nominate representatives to the National Equal Rights League at Cleveland.

Mr. Rice, from the Committee on Officers, presented the following gentlemen as officers of the Equal Rights League for Michigan:

President—JAMES FIELDS, Esq., M. D., of Adrian.

Recording Secretary—H. J. LEWIS, of Hudson.

Corresponding Secretary—B. DOLBEARE PAUL, Detroit.

Treasurer—GEO. W. LEWIS, of Adrian.

Executive Committee—T. J. RICE, Detroit; T. R. JENKINS, Coldwater; J. J. EVANS, Battle Creek; DR. GREENBERRY COUSINS, Cass county.

VICE PRESIDENTS FOR EACH COUNTY.

J. W. JOHNSON, Lenawee county.

S. W. BURTON, Hillsdale county.

A. BOYER, Washtenaw county.

JOHN HACKLEY, Macomb county.

GEORGE NICHOLS, Kalamazoo county.

WILBERFORCE JOHNSON, Jackson county.

F. R. JENKINS, Branch county.

G. H. PARKER, Wayne county.

BENJAMIN GRINTON, Calhoun county.

S. FOWLER, Eaton county.

I. BURDINE, Berrien county.

T. J. MARTIN, Cass county.

WILLIAM WATTS, Gratiot county.

The report was received and adopted.

Mr. Roberts, from the Committee on Representatives, presented the names of the following gentlemen to represent the State Equal Rights League for Michigan in the National Equal Rights League :

B. DOLBEARE PAUL, Detroit; O. P. ANDERSON, Battle Creek; J. W. JOHNSON, Adrian.

The report was received and adopted.

A letter of congratulation was received from James Fields, Esq., M. D., President of Lenawee Co. League, read and ordered to be incorporated and printed in the minutes.

Mr. Johnson, of Jackson, offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That this Convention instruct its delegates, immediately on their return home, to organize city, town and county Leagues, subordinate to the State Equal Rights League. Carried.

Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, offered the following :

Resolved, That we, the members of this Convention, do tender a vote of thanks to the officers of this body for the gentlemanly and efficient manner in which they have discharged their duties. Carried.

A vote of thanks was accorded Mrs. Dales and the other ladies of the committee appointed to provide accommodations for the delegates.

On motion of Mr. Anderson, of Battle Creek, a vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Paul, of Detroit, Lewis, of Adrian, and Parker, of Detroit, for the praiseworthy manner with which they had labored for the success of the League.

A subscription list was opened and the handsome sum of \$207 raised within fifteen minutes to pay the expenses of the Convention, and the expenses of the representatives to the National League. (See Finance report.)

On motion of Mr. Roberts, of Adrian, the State Equal Rights League for Michigan adjourned to meet at Battle Creek, the first Tuesday in September, 1866.

B. DOLBEARE PAUL, Secretary.

ADDRESS OF THE CONVENTION.

TO THE PEOPLE OF COLOR OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN :

When the convention of colored men assembled in Syracuse, N. Y., October 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1864, the friends of impartial freedom rejoiced, because they felt that the days of tyranny and oppression were numbered.

Those among you who had the happiness to know and appreciate that assemblage of earnest representative men, coming up from Maine to Florida, who then and there inaugurated plans looking to the freedom and elevation of our entire race from the blighting and crushing effects of American slavery, felt renewed hope in the future, and under the leadership of such veterans of the anti-slavery army as Douglass, Garnett and others, pledged themselves to return to their homes to labor with renewed zeal for the dissemination of those great principles and labors laid down in that convention as the legitimate work for every member to perform during the recess of the convention.

Doubtless many of the representatives of the Northern, Southern and Western States, true to their pledges to their constituents at home, have labored faithfully to spread before their people the necessity and importance of the preliminary measures adopted at the convention, and have spared neither time or money thoroughly to canvass every county in their respective States.

All honor to such men who have labored to organize auxiliary Leagues, and strove to impress upon the mind of every colored citizen the vast importance of united action, in order to dispel the clouds that slavery and prejudice have cast upon our brethren in their native land. In this war between slavery and freedom there can be no neutrals.

The eternal principles of truth and liberty need and must have the united support of every man and woman throughout the land. Hence any failure by any colored community to develop the entire strength of every portion of a State where colored people's rights are withheld, or only partially granted, is a virtual abandonment of those rights without which life is a miserable blank.

In this connection it is a matter of painful regret that the State Equal Rights League established in January, 1865, has ceased to possess the confidence of the colored portion of the community, through an extraordinary use of power (not provided in the constitution,) on the part of that portion of the officers of the State Bureau residing in the city of Detroit. These gentlemen, without the knowledge or consent of the other members of the executive committee of the State Equal Rights League, ignored the existence of the constitution and provided another which deprived a majority of the members of the association of any participation in the proceedings of the meeting of the association on the first day of August, 1865.

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The members of the association who had been thus treated, as well as a large portion of the people of color throughout the State, felt that they had been grossly misused—that their intelligence had been insulted by the very men in whom they had reposed the most implicit confidence, and selected in preference to all others to carry out their views as expressed in the constitution of the Equal Rights League. At the first annual meeting, on the first day of August, 1865, the acts of the gentlemen of the Bureau were severely criticised and condemned by the very men they had calculated would support them. But true to their pre-concerted plan of policy, they refused to listen to words of warning, and still persisted in a course of conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the people. Having become sincerely imbued with an earnest desire to assist our brethren in their effort to procure for themselves "Equality before the Law," we have in convention assembled this 12th day of September, 1865, dissolved the State Equal Rights League of Michigan, organized in January last, for reasons heretofore stated, and have formed an association to be known as the State Equal Rights League of Michigan, wherein the rights and wishes of the colored people of the State shall be respected, and the object contemplated by the National Equal Rights League attained. It now remains for the people to say whether or not our efforts in their behalf shall be appreciated, and whether they are willing to assist us with their means to carry out the work so auspiciously begun. We have, as already stated, organized an association upon the basis of justice and right, wherein the wishes of the people may be more generally consulted and promoted. In presenting this address to you, we desire to impress upon your minds the importance of aiding the good work in which we are now engaged in your behalf. The great question of colored suffrage will occupy the minds and attention of the electors of this State in November, 1866, at which time they will be required to vote for or against the proposed amendment to the constitution. The Equal Rights League propose to employ agents to canvas the State in support of the proposed amendment. This will necessarily require a considerable amount of money, which can only be met by your generous and liberal contributions. A great work is before us. To you, "Colored men of Michigan," we look for support. Upon you we rely for sympathy and pecuniary assistance in the attainment of a principle of justice fraught with so much importance to you and us. Let us, then, act promptly and with energy.

ADRIAN, September 8th, 1865.

The "Lenawee County Equal Rights League," located in the City of Adrian, to the State Convention of Colored Men, Assembled in the City of Detroit, Send Greeting:

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—Identified with you in all that is embraced in the objects contemplated by the Colored National Convention,

that assembled in Syracuse October 4th, 1864, permit me through our delegates, (whose appointment and proper credentials are herewith presented,) to assure you of the united and friendly interest felt by each and all of us as brothers working in the common cause of a loyal but oppressed people, determined henceforth to use all legal and peaceful means to secure the ends of a perfect equality before the law, that guarantees to all men the right to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

We pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your united labors while in convention, and that pursuing calm and deliberate means to ensure the ends proposed by our National League, you may be permitted to realize the momentous interests involved in the questions of the day, and the grand future, rapidly unfolding before the colored people of the United States, unlimited by mere geographical boundaries.

For and on behalf of the "Lenawee County Auxiliary League," permit me to subscribe myself,

Very respectfully, yours, &c.,

JAMES FIELDS, President.

LENAWEE COUNTY LEAGUE.

RESOLUTIONS ON THE FIFTH RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

The Lenawee County League respectfully beg leave to lay before the members of the Michigan State Equal Rights League when assembled in convention at Detroit, the following views entertained by the majority of the members of the Lenawee County League, together with the why and wherefore they felt impelled to pass the resolution herein contained, founded on the perusal of a resolution contained on the 34th page of the National Convention minutes, and the 5th resolution in relation to the freedmen of the South, and our efforts in their behalf.

The advocates of the freedmen of the South maintain that the nominal freemen of the North and West, by the resolution above alluded to, have renewed their past pledge to labor for the freedmen's elevation by contributing educational facilities at the South, even if the elective franchise at the North be left to a more distant day.

Through the long night of slavery and oppression (say they) that has obscured the moral atmosphere of the colored race on this continent, the nominally free people of the North have strove to identify themselves with the four millions of bondmen and women of the South—resisting manfully pro-slavery pressure at the South, as well as its supple tool, prejudice against color at the North. Now protesting against the passage of oppressive and unjust enactments, both State and National, at the bidding of the slave power.

At times flying before the wrath of pro-slavery mobs; wrought up to frenzy by designing politicians and demagogues for their

own base purposes; hunted like the partridge on the mountains; their manhood crushed and humbled in the dust; their homes desolated; the chastity of their wives and daughters violated—nay their very lives sacrificed in the very sanctuary of the living God.

Through all these horrors, and others still untold, have the free people of color passed in their Northern homes, still asserting their undying love for their brethren in Southern bonds, and their fixed resolve to maintain the principle of the universal brotherhood of man, irrespective of color or country, and that come weal or woe, come life or death, to labor and to wait for the entire civil and political liberty of themselves and brethren of the South.

This state of facts being conceded as to our past course, and in view of the present apparent lifting of the dark clouds that have so long delayed the rising beams of the "Sun of Liberty" on ourselves and our Southern brethren, shall we, *can* we, as an organized League, labor exclusively to obtain our elective franchise at the North, while contenting ourselves with the display of our *past* sympathy for the bondman of the South, leave him at such a crisis to seek his political rights alone, and without means to educate themselves and little ones? In a word, shall we leave our struggling brethren, just emerging from the prison house of bondage, to find their way to the temple of liberty as best they may?

The last clause of the fifth resolution referred to, we consider clear and explicit language, which, if it means anything, means our entire surrender of self, and a voluntary pledge to help the freedmen of the South in every possible way to obtain, if no more, at least equal privileges with ourselves, and thus go on unitedly to obtain equal privileges before the law.

The foregoing views and further discussion by the members generally of the County League being concluded, it was

Resolved, Unanimously, that apart from all proper and necessary expenditures for the maintenance and support of our organization and proper representation at our State and National Leagues, we will devote all other moneys received into our treasury in future in the redemption of our national pledge to the freedmen, as contained in the fifth resolution above quoted, and that our delegates to either State or National Leagues be instructed to confer with the several delegates at such conventions, as to the most feasible plan to direct all surplus funds of the Leagues in aid of the freedmen's educational and political advancement, as the first requisite to redeem our pledge as expressed in the last clause of the fifth resolution of the National League.

ADRIAN, September 11, 1865.

Constitution of the State Equal Rights League for Michigan.

PREAMBLE.

WHEREAS, The purposes entertained by the callers of this Convention and those who have responded to that call, can be best promoted by a close union of all interested in the principles of justice and right sought to be established. Therefore,

Resolved, 1st, That we proceed to organize an association to be called the State Equal Rights League of the State of Michigan, with auxiliary and subordinate associations in the different counties of the State.

2d. That in the establishment of the Colored Men's State League, we do not seek to disorganize or in any way interfere with any existing society or institution of a benevolent or other character, but believing that the interest of colored men generally will be best subserved and advanced by a union of all our energies, and the use of all our means in a given direction, we therefore invoke the co-operation of such societies in the advancement of the object of the League.

CONSTITUTION.

Sec. 1st. The objects of this League are to encourage sound morality, education, temperance, frugality and industry, and promote everything that pertains to a well ordered and dignified life; to obtain by appeals to the minds and consciences of the people of the State, or by legal process when possible, a recognition of the rights of the people of the State to citizenship.

Sec. 2d. The members of this Convention shall be constituted members of the State Equal Rights League for the first year. Hereafter such persons as shall be duly accredited representatives of the auxiliary associations hereinafter provided for, shall constitute its members. Provided, that no auxiliary society shall be entitled to more than one representative for each ten dollars contributed by such society, with an additional member for any amount over five dollars thus contributed. Provided, also, that any locality that shall not have population sufficient to form an

auxiliary association, may be represented in the League by a delegate or delegates, by paying into the treasury of the State Equal Rights League three dollars for each delegate.

Sec. 3d. The officers shall be a President, one Vice President for each county represented in the convention, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee consisting of the President, first and second Vice Presidents, Recording Secretary, and five other persons to be elected by the League at the same time with the other officers.

Sec. 4th. The President shall preside at all meetings of the League, and of the Executive Committee, see that all decrees of the League are duly executed, and perform such other duties as may be imposed by the League.

The Vice Presidents in the order of their election shall, in the absence of the President, perform his duties. The Recording Secretary shall duly record the proceedings of the League and Executive Committee, draw all orders on the Treasurer when directed by the proper authorities, receive all money paid to the League, pay the same to the Treasurer and take his receipts therefor, and the Treasurer shall give two or more sureties for the due performance of his duties.

The Corresponding Secretary shall, under the guidance of the League and Executive Committee, conduct the correspondence of the League, receive from the agents of the League or other persons all documents of historical, statistical or general interest, and shall carefully preserve and tabulate such documents for the use of the League.

The Treasurer shall keep all moneys collected by the agents or contributed by the auxiliary Leagues. He shall report to the League annually, and to the Executive Committee whenever required, the condition of the treasury. He shall pay out money only upon order of the Executive Committee, and when properly signed by the President and Recording Secretary.

Sec. 5th. The Executive Committee shall establish an office in the city of Adrian, in which place they shall hold such sessions as may be necessary to promote the purposes of the League. They shall hire an agent or agents, who shall visit the different counties of the State accessible to them, and shall call the people of those counties together in convention or otherwise, and urge them to take the steps necessary to secure the rights and improve-

ments for the attainment of which this League is formed. They shall encourage the publication of such documents as may be of advantage to our cause, and may at their discretion publish brief appeals, arguments or statements of facts which may have a tendency to promote the ends of the association. Provided, that such documents shall be furnished to the public at such rates as shall admit of their general distribution. They shall apportion among the auxiliary leagues, according to the number of members reported, the amounts which the League shall determine to raise, and shall urge upon the officers of such auxiliary societies a prompt response to such demand. They shall cause orders to be drawn on the Treasurer for the payment of such expenses as may be incurred in carrying out the purposes of the association. They shall make an annual report to the association of their labors, and shall recommend such improvements as may be suggested by their official experience.

Sec. 6th. The officers shall hold their offices for one year or until their successors are elected. The officers of the League may receive such compensation as may be determined by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 7th. Persons in the different counties friendly to the purposes of this League, may form county Leagues auxiliary to this, with such subordinate organizations as they may deem proper. Provided, that no distinction on account of color or sex shall be permitted in such auxiliary or subordinate associations. Such Leagues may at their discretion employ agents and issue such documents as they may deem conducive to the end for which this League is formed. They shall collect and pay into the treasury of the State Equal Rights League such sums as may be assessed upon them by a vote of the majority at any meeting, and shall co-operate with that association in all movements which it shall inaugurate for the accomplishment of the purposes for which it was formed.

Sec 8th. The sessions of the State Equal Rights League shall be held annually on the first Tuesday in September, at 10 o'clock A. M., for the election of officers and the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

Sec. 9th. At any annual meeting of the State Equal Rights League this constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of a majority of the members present.

Officers of the State E. R. League.

President.

JAMES FIELDS, Esq., M. D., of Adrian.

Vice Presidents.

J. W. JOHNSON.....Lenawee county.
S. W. BURTON.....Hillsdale county.
A. BOYER.....Washtenaw county.
JOHN HACKLEY.....Macomb county.
GEORGENICHOLS.....Kalamazoo county.
WILBERFORCE JOHNSON...Jackson county.
F. R. JENKINS.....Branch county.
G. H. PARKER.....Wayne county.
BENJAMIN GRINTON.....Calhoun county.
S. FOWLER.....Eaton county.
I. BURDINE.....Berrien county.
T. J. MARTIN.....Cass county.
WILLIAM WATTS.....Griiot county.

Secretaries.

Recording Secretary—H. J. LEWIS, of Hudson.

Corresponding Secretary—B. DOLBEARE PAUL, Detroit.

Treasurer.

GEORGE W. LEWIS, of Adrian.

Executive Committee.

T. J. RICE.....Detroit.
F. R. JENKINS.....Coldwater.
J. J. EVANS.....Battle Creek.
DR. GREENBERRY COUSINS...Cass county.

State Bureau at Adrian, Mich.