

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION OF COLORED MEN.

HELD IN EDWARDS OPERA HOUSE.

PARSONS, KANSAS, APRIL 27 AND 28, 1882.

NOTE TO THE READER.—In order to give general information concerning the calling of the convention of May 27th in Parsons, Kansas, we re publish the following from the "Parsons Daily Wonder."

W. B. AVERY,

Secretary and Publisher.

Parsons, Kas., March 20, 1882.

Mrs. Annanys Wilson:

Dear Madam:—There will be a mass meeting of the Freedmen this evening in the Colored Baptist church, the object of which is to consult about matters of general interest to the colored people. Knowing of your deep interest in the cause of humanity, we respectfully invite you to meet with us and give us the benefit of your counsel for behalf of the meeting. I am respectfully, your humble servant.

W. B. AVERY.

Freedmen's Meeting.

At a mass meeting held by the colored citizens of Parsons and vicinity to consider the general interests of that class of our citizens, the following communication was presented and read, in answer to the above, and the suggestions therein were received and accepted, and a vote of thanks returned to Mrs. Wilson for the deep interest she has taken in our struggles and efforts to better our condition. A convention was decided upon to be held in Parsons, to be composed of delegates from the southern half of the state. A committee was appointed to prepare a call and report Friday evening March 25th. The committee consisted of the following gentlemen: J. W. French, Rev. W. B. Avery, E. W. Dorsey, T. P. Perkins and Mr. Foster.

E. W. DORSEY, Sec'y.

PARSONS, KANSAS,
March 20th, 1882.

To Mr. Willmer Walton, General Agent for Freedmen:

ESTEEMED FRIEND.—In answer to an invitation to attend the Freedmen's meeting, this evening, at the Baptist church, I am sorry to state that circumstances over which I have no control will prevent my being there. but pen a suggestion which you will please present to the meeting for me, knowing much of the distress of the colored people in our city and vicinity and being creditably informed of their distress and great need of the necessary comforts throughout the southern portion of the state, where their lots have been cast, and being a friend to all humanity, especially those who have been followed by misfortune all the days of their life more especially the colored people of the United States, who have been emancipated. They wanted their Liberty, justice required that they should have their Liberty and become a free people; and their liberty has been given to them; but while they have been made freemen they have been turned out upon the cold charity of the world as beggars and wanderers, to do as best they could, without wherewith to do, tossed to and fro by the storms and winds of adversity.

Knowing from personal observation that labor is inadequate to the demand, and that in the city of Parsons many would have starved and frozen in their tracks in pursuit of labor and comfort, had it not been for a few charitably disposed persons, and knowing too, that many of the noble people of the north and east have withdrawn their contributions of money, provisions and clothing because of the many calls and the failure of seeing any permanent good from their generosity, I therefore

suggest that the meeting of this evening resolve to call a mass meeting or convention for the freedmen of Southern Kansas, at the earliest convenience, to be held in the city of Parsons, and in said meeting or convention decide upon some plan to present their claims for redress to the authorities in power.

I will, if possible, attend your convention and assist you in whatever way I can to aid in meeting and to further your demands for justice.

Praying God in Heaven to hear your cries
And make the ear of the nation do like
wings

That you may yet be a happy people in a
sweeter home,
And truly say "The Year of Jubilee has
come."

Yours, for God and humanity,

MRS. AUGUSTUS WILSON.

At the adjourned mass meeting on the 24th of March, as referred to above, the needed committee were appointed and the following "call" was unanimously agreed to, and ordered, read and distributed.

A Call for a Convention of Colored Men.

A large portion of the present colored residents of Southern Kansas have arrived in this state during the last three years from Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Most of them have been cultivators of the soil before coming here, and will prefer that occupation. While the soil of them are well adapted to such employment, they could probably succeed in it; but they do not possess the requisite teams, farming implements, etc., to properly engage in it, or carry it on successfully. Some of the best white friends of our race think they have a plan in view, which if promptly and unitedly concurred in by the mass of our people, will eventually enable us, through the blessing of God and our own faithful individual efforts, to improve our pecuniary condition, as well as promote our intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement. "In unity there is strength," and if we can meet together as a representative body, and harmoniously work together essentially for one day in the near future, we believe that substantial benefit may result therefrom both to ourselves and our children after us. Hence we, the colored people of Parsons and vicinity, at a mass

meeting, held the above named day, have unanimously decided to call a convention of the colored people of all the southern half of Kansas especially, and invite our people at large, throughout this and other States, who see fit to assemble with us, to meet in the city of Parsons, at 10 o'clock, a. m., on Thursday, the 27th day of April, 1882, to consult upon the best course for our people to pursue under existing circumstances, and to take action upon a certain proposition which will be presented by our white friends. Although this invitation is extended to all adult colored people of Southern Kansas in particular and others in general, and will be cordially welcomed; yet want of room makes it necessary that the seats should first be reserved for, and that the official business of the convention must be transacted by the authorized delegates or representatives, in attendance. We respectfully suggest two modes of representation, either of which may be adopted in the different localities.

First—Let each community of five or more families of colored people, hold a mass meeting and send one man to Parsons to represent them; and where there are more than one hundred colored persons living in a neighborhood, let them send one man for every one hundred of their men, women and children.

Second—Let each colored church of any denomination in a locality, send one delegate to the convention. If there are more than one hundred members of any one church, let them send one delegate for every one hundred members (men, women and children). In either case each one should bring his written credentials. Arrangements are being made for securing a reduction of fare for delegates, and other colored persons who come to attend the convention.

For further information address Wilmer Watson, Parsons, Kansas, who was the Parsons Agent of Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association of Topeka, while it existed.

The Secretaries of all the mass meetings will please forward the names of delegates by mail to the Committee of Arrangements,—J. W. French, E. W. Dorsey, R. Stafford, P. Wamach, Edmund Clark, W. B. Avery, A. Ray.

Reception Committee—Willis Brown, S. Motely, T. F. Perkins, Harrison Jones, R. A. Johnson, Peter Brown.

RICHARD STAFFORD,
Ed. W. Dorsey, Chairman.
Secretary.

THE PROCEEDINGS.

Pursuant to call, the convention convened in Edwards' opera house in the city of Parsons, and, at ten o'clock a. m., Mr. Richard Stafford, Chairman of the Parsons Mass Meeting, called the Convention to order.

At the suggestion of Rev. T. J. Merritt, of Parsons, Mr. Wilmer Walton was invited to the rostrum and made introductory remarks, advising the delegates to seek for a higher than human wisdom to direct them in the transaction of the important business to come before them, to rid themselves, as far as possible, of satan's promptings in the way of envy, enmity and jealousy, and in memorializing Congress to endeavor to rightly ask for such needed favors as they can reasonably hope to have granted.

On motion of J. W. French, of Labette, Rev. A. Fairfax, of Chautauque, was elected temporary chairman.

On motion of J. B. Garrett, a committee of two was appointed to escort him to the chair, after which Mr. Fairfax delivered the following excellent and appropriate address.

Gentlemen of the Convention:

I thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me by electing me to preside over your convention, which I regard as the most important one ever held by the colored people since their emancipation. As to its primary object: to consider the best mode of bettering the condition of the colored race, and especially that of the refugees who have fled from the hand of oppression and wrong in the south, that had become so intolerable to bear. And thus we have arrived in this free and liberty-loving land, where we can breathe a purer atmosphere, and are free from oppression and wrong, yet, we find ourselves uncomfortable in many of our surroundings—and it needs but a glance over our past history and present surroundings to enable us to see the vast room still left for better-

ing our condition as a race. Years have passed since the shackles were stricken from our limbs that made us freedmen; and though we have made some progress in many things, and the world has been startled at the progress we have made in the midst of so much opposition, yet there are but a few of us that have secured that greatest of all earthly blessings a homestead for ourselves and children. It is this that will give self-reliance and independence to us as a race. It was to gain this that we left the places of our former bondage in the South; and it is to secure this that we are assembled here in convention to-day. Fellow citizens, we have assembled here to-day to draft a petition to Congress asking the grant of a portion of its unoccupied territory, that we may settle upon it and pursue our usual avocation—the cultivation of the soil. We have for years developed the resources of the South, but have received no credit for it. Why is it that we are not represented in the commerce of this grand republic? Is it not because we do not own homesteads? and raise products and ship and consign them, to the credit of our race? We raise the products and others get the credit. We are excluded from the commerce and manufacturing of the country; and it is said that it is on account of our color. This is true, to some extent, but I think it is mainly on account of the position we occupy in the midst of these branches of industry. Let us own a part of this great domain, and raise and ship our millions of bushels of grain and other products, raise and ship our millions of stock to the markets of this and other countries; there we can command the respect of other races and mingle in and be represented in the commerce of the country. Can we not reasonably expect the government that held us as slaves for more than one hundred years to help us to the much desired position by granting us the aid we shall ask for to-day?

Fellow citizens, let us be careful in framing our petition and make it so reasonable that not one Representative or Senator can refuse to support it without putting himself on record as opposing the most humble and just claims ever made. We are told by some that the government cannot grant our petition—that the land that we are going to ask for belongs to the Indians; others tell us that the freedmen mentioned in the treaty at the time the government secured this land are those who were held as

slaves in the Territory. Well, let us see. We find the following stipulation in the treaty made with the Creek Indians, June 14th, 1835. Said Indians ceded to the U. S. for the settlement of friendly Indians and freedmen, the west half of this entire domain, to be divided by a line running north and south. This land therefore certainly belongs to the government, and as the treaty provides for the settlement of freedmen thereon, the government certainly has the right to grant us the privilege of settling on this same. And as there has been complete provision made for the freedmen, who were held as slaves in the Territory, where they resided, by giving them this right in common with that of the Indians, I cannot believe that this land is held for that class of freedmen. I am of the opinion that the word freedmen in the treaty applies to the freedmen of the south.

On motion of Rev. A. W. Green, W. A. Price, of Chatauqua, was elected Secretary pro tem.

On motion of C. M. Johnson, a committee of five was appointed on credentials, as follows: C. M. Johnson, E. W. Dorsey, Thomas Scott, T. Glover, and W. A. Moore.

On motion of J. W. French of Labette, a committee of five was appointed on permanent organization.

The committee retired and the Convention was entertained with speeches by the following named gentlemen: Rev. W. F. Hedge- man, W. B. Avery, A. L. Teal and Z. C. Clark.

Address of Rev. W. B. Avery, of Parsons, before the Convention of colored men, April 27th, 1882.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have come together to deliberate—or, in other words, for the purpose of devising ways and means by which our condition may be bettered. This, and this alone, is the object for which we have called you from your homes and families. It is not politics that has brought us together. (I am glad to say that I, for one, am not a politician). I have not arrived at that state of mind that consents to pass a hot iron over the conscience, (a necessary

qualification to become a successful politician). Nor do I hope ever to reach it. Our object is of more importance to us than pulling strings for politicians, whose sole regard for us consists in our votes; and who forget us as soon as the election is over.

But, Mr. President, we have invited you here to sit with us and to carefully consider the situation in all its bearings, and, if possible, agree upon some plan by which we may reach the ear and the heart of this great nation, by an appeal to their sense of justice and humanity. Sixty thousand, out of the six million of our people in the U. S., have found shelter in this state. We need not look back at the bitter past, only to serve as a guide. For it is with the present and future we have to do.

The living realities of the present and future demand our best thoughts now!

Some months ago friend Wilmer Walton, seeing the condition of our people; witnessing their struggles for bread and seeing the manifest dissatisfaction among them aroused his sympathy and he invited us to meet him in mass convention, which we did, about two hundred strong. It was turned into a farmers' "class" or "experience" meeting. Many of the farmers related their "experience;" not "of grace," but of difficulties in pursuing their avocation, and of success and failures in the culture of cotton, corn, sorghum, broom corn, castor beans, wheat, potatoes and other products. This may be termed "an experience of works." High rents for farms, lack of farm houses for renters and their families and unfavorable terms were considered. This may be termed an "experience of difficulties." Mr. Walton gave some good advice, but the men had reached a point bordering on desperation. Their children were crying for bread, water was upon them; there was no work to do. Gentleman, this was our condition. Mr. Walton advised us to emigrate to Harper county, and settle on those barren lands, without water or fuel. Perhaps he was not aware that this was the condition of the county. The proposition met with strong opposition. Judge Davis and Doctor Lamb assayed to advise us, but bread, and how to obtain it, was the all absorbing thought of those two hundred men, representing eight hundred souls in the city of Parsons and surroundings. The men became desperate! I felt for my people—they are my kindred, and from my own

any South. Acting upon the spur of the moment, I delivered an extempore address, in which I called attention to the fertile lands in the Oklahoma Territory, of its mild climate and advantages of timber and water, and of its adaptability to cotton culture. I suggested the possibility of obtaining the privilege of a home thereon, as it was originally designed, to the freedmen and friendly Indians. We adjourned to meet the following Monday, and weekly, thereafter, until something would turn up in our favor. I talked over the Oklahoma matter with my friend Richard Stafford every time we met. Finally, one evening on our way to the meeting the same subject was introduced. We agreed, Stafford and I, to make the effort. We met with opposition from our friends, white and colored, who are meant business and best satisfied with an Oklahoma. We went on our way without any compass or plot. Just at this time, learning of the interest in the welfare of humanity of that noble lady, Mrs. Augusta Wilson, of Parsons, I invited her to meet with us and to give us the benefit of her wisdom and experience. Not being able to attend in person, she addressed us a letter filled with expressions of earnest sympathy and wise counsel, and suggesting the calling of a convention. Her suggestions infused light and hope into our hearts, and were acted upon. We decided to call a convention, and the result of that decision is before you.

We have then, not as paupers, but as men—tillers of the soil—homeless, but not hopeless; strangers in a strange land; but not without friends, tried and true! We are here to deliberate, to decide, and then to act! Will you help us? Will you make common cause with us, and say to this nation that the hour has come and you must meet it? Several propositions will be laid before you for consideration. But I will only speak of mine; of one that has long occupied my thoughts; one to which I have given much prayerful thought, long before we had decided upon calling a convention. It is one that it is not hard to accede to. It is to ask this government to do an act of simple justice to a part of her loyal subjects. We expect to meet with some opposition, but we expect also success. If God be for us, we shall succeed. I propose to ask—not a gift, for we are too proud to beg (as beggars)—for a loan and the privilege of entering the Oklahoma lands, and settling down for once

where we can train our children in religion and virtue, and develop our own manhood, and do our part in making America a second Eden. This convention will have a bearing upon the future of our race in this State and in the United States, that no other has had; being the first of its kind ever held. The requests in the Memorial that will be adopted by you are very reasonable and can be granted. An opportunity will be given our professed friends in Congress (the President included) to prove their faith by their works. The eyes of the six millions of our race in America, including the sixty thousand in this state—forty thousand of whom are represented by you on this floor—are turned imploringly toward the National Congress. Shall they appeal in vain? Verily, nay, the members of Congress have hearts; they are human, and many of them are Christians!

The millions of this and other lands, of all races, are sitting as jurors upon the American Congress, and will render a just verdict at the proper time. Congress is not unmindful of this fact. Never before, Mr. President, in the history of this great nation has such an opportunity been presented to be truly great, as well as truly good, and to prove itself to be indeed the friend of the oppressed, of every race and clime! If the government can give the right of way and a bonus of every alternate section, forty miles wide, to a rich railroad corporation, it certainly has the power—if it has the will—to give every third section of the same lands to its true friends and supporters! I need not refer to the part we took in the first, nor the second war with Great Britain. But the part we took in the late civil war should entitle us to some consideration, to say nothing of subsequent trials through which we passed in our allegiance to the Republican party, through these long years of sorrow, suffering and death.

Committee being ready, the report was called for and submitted.

Report of the Committee on Credentials:

MR. PRESIDENT:—We, your Committee on Credentials, find the following named gentlemen entitled to seats in this convention, as duly accredited delegates:

Anderson county—W. A. Moore.
Cherokee county—A. Fairfax, W. A. Price and A. D. Perkins.
Cherokee county—J. C. Stewart, R.

Green, J. F. Atkins and J. W. Smith.
Oswego—P. Boits, Z. C. Clarke and H. C. Richardson.

Cherokee—G. W. Winn, C. F. Tillman and T. F. Finley.

Mathewson—Taylor Reed:

Labette—E. H. Miles.

Parsons—E. W. Dorsey, R. Stafford, J. W. French, W. B. Avery, T. J. Merritt, A. W. Green, A. Kay, R. Smith, William Rowe and F. Wornack.

Montgomery county—John A. Holt, B. Siler, A. L. Teal, W. F. Hedgeman and J. F. Jones.

Neosho county—C. M. Johnson, M. Bell and A. P. Myers.

Neosho county—John Clarke, J. S. Hall, F. A. Scott and Joseph B. Aldridge.

Graben county—J. M. Myers.

Jackson county—A. D. Riley.

Shawnee county—W. L. Egleson, L. Fulbright and D. B. Garrett.

Wichita—Thomas Glover.

W. A. Price, Chairman.

The report was adopted.

The Committee on Permanent Organization submitted their report as follows:

Mr. Chairman:—We, your committee on Permanent Organization, beg leave to submit the following, and recommend its adoption.

For President: Rev. A. Fairfax, of Cherokee county.

Vice President: L. Fulbright, of Shawnee county.

Secretary: Rev. W. B. Avery, of Labette county.

Assistant Secretary: Rev. W. A. Moore of Garnett.

Committee: B. Shaw, J. W. Smith, J. W. French, G. W. Winn and L. Fulbright.

The report was received and adopted, and the Gloria Patri, "Praise God from whom all Blessings flow," was sung by the Convention, all standing; and a very impressive prayer by the Rev. J. W. Smith, of Cherokee, was offered, as follows:

Our Father in Heaven! We come before Thee at this hour with a sense of our unworthiness, but strong in the faith of thy love toward us. We beseech thee for thy blessing, now, upon thy servants assembled here for deliberation, for coun-

sel, and, most of all, for Divine guidance in our deliberations and in our decision as to what is best for us. Thou knowest our condition; all things are known to thee. O! be thou our leader. Be thou present with us by thy spirit. May the white-winged angel of Peace brood over us, and grant that in all of our doings, being furthered by thy continued help, may we have success in so framing our petition that it will not be rejected. We ask thee to precede us to the seat of government. Give us the ear of this great nation. Give us access to their hearts, and turn them toward us. May their consciences be touched and may they be guided by thee to accede to our requests. Bless this nation. Bless our law makers, and may it be said of them, "Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord, God of Hosts!" We ask this in the name of thy son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen!

On motion of L. Fulbright, a Committee on Memorial was appointed, consisting of the following named gentlemen: W. A. Price, chairman; W. L. Egleson, Shawnee; J. W. Smith, Cherokee; D. B. Garrett, Shawnee, secretary; C. M. Johnson, Morris; J. W. French, Labette; J. A. Holt, Montgomery; T. Glover, Wichita; T. J. Merritt, Labette; W. A. Scott, Neosho.

On motion, convention adjourned till 2 p. m.

A. FAIRFAX, PRESIDENT.

W. B. AVERY, Secretary.

The convention then 2 o'clock, p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The convention was called to order by the President, as per adjournment.

Rev. Mr. Hollman and Mr. T. S. Martin, of Independence, were introduced and invited to seats upon the rostrum. Both gentlemen declined the honor.

Mrs. Augustus Wilson having presented the convention with a beautiful bouquet, with expressions of her hearty sympathy in the work

of the convention, Rev. Mr. Avery offered a vote of thanks; but a portion of the delegates being absent in committee rooms, the action thereon was deferred until after the adoption of the Memorial.

Mrs. Augustus Wilson, Mrs. S. Simonson and Mrs. Rev. Dr. Hartley were introduced to the convention from the gallery. Each of the ladies arose, and, with a few appropriate remarks, addressed the convention, expressing a deep interest in the object of the convention, with a hope that it might result in success; being blessed and ruled by Him who doeth all things well, and whose tender mercy and loving kindness is not only extended to the wise and great, but to the poor and oppressed of every land.

From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strand

The Committee on memorial being ready reported the following:

Mr. President.—

Your Committee on Memorial beg leave to submit the following, and do recommend its adoption.

W. A. PAIR, Ch'm of Com.

A Memorial.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

We, your humble petitioners, would respectfully represent to you, as the lawmakers of this great Nation that, after the close of the "war of rebellion" in this country, the descendants of the African race residing in the United States were eventually legally declared to be free American citizens.

Ignorance and poverty mainly accompanied those of our people who had then recently emerged from slavery; surrounding circumstances have caused those same elements to still remain with us to a great extent, and as our people have already largely shown—both by word and deed—our loyalty to the national government, we honestly feel that we have a right—during this our time of need—to respectfully ask that same government to simply help us to help ourselves to become self-supporting.

We wish to avoid pauperism; but we find that a large portion of people, in these parts, desire to engage in farming for a livelihood, yet the greater part of us do not possess sufficient pecuniary means to start therein. We do not seek for the exclusive occupancy of our race of any portion of the public domain, in fact we would prefer having it otherwise; and have friendly disposed, intelligent people in our midst.

At a delegate convention of the colored people of Southern Kansas assembled in the city of Parsons on this 27th day of April, A. D. 1882, in accordance with a printed call (a copy of which is herewith enclosed) after prior deliberation and thorough consultation upon the important object of our coming together at this time. We, the delegates of said convention, are united in the opinion, that our race may be greatly benefited without any actual loss, possibly gain, to the United States government, by a compliance with the following requests.

1st. That congress appropriate every third section of land in the Oklahoma territory for the occupancy of colored emigrants from the south, leaving the two intermediate sections open for settlement as may be thought best.

2nd. That Congress appoint a government agent for each district in the territory.

3rd. Authorize said agents to give written permits to colored families to locate upon eighty acres of land each. Requiring each family to cultivate portions of said land for their own benefit and free of rent, during five successive years under written contract.

4th. Empower the agent to loan to each family suitable materials for erecting a comfortable dwelling house and stable, six months rations for team and families, a cook stove, needed seeds, a team, a wagon, a plow, and other necessary farming implements. Said family contracting to pay for the same in annual payments within five years; and in case of failure to do so, the property to revert to the agent. All of the previously described property (real and personal) shall be under the supervision and control of the agent.

5th. Every family that complies with the terms of the contract and who within five years return or pays the agent for all the loaned articles will be entitled to receive from the agent a government deed

for the property at the time of final payment.

6th. That congress donate a sufficient number of school house and lots, and employ teachers therein for one year, under a compulsory educational law.

7th. Prohibit the sale of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

"LAST BUT NOT LEAST," Earnestly desiring that one great God and Father of all races of mankind, may mercifully fill your hearts with true Christian sympathy, and your mind with pure wisdom, in remembrance of the great "golden rule," while you are engaged in discussing the merits of this our first appeal to you, we will anxiously await a wise and favorable decision by you.

On the motion to adopt the memorial, as reported by the committee, with a spirited discussion ensued, on the proposition to amend by inserting after the word Oklahoma, "and other lands."

The following gentlemen ably supported their propositions: Messrs Price, Avery, Fulbright, Merritt, Garrett, Johnson and Stafford. Pending which the previous question was called by Mr. Avery, and lost.

ADDRESS BY W. A. PRICE.

2—

Delivered before the Convention of Colored men, April 27th, on the Memorial.

Int.

MR. PRESIDENT: The grand object of this assembly is to better the condition of our people, from the day of emancipation until some three years ago the refugees, who now reside in Kansas bore the burden of persecution, robbery, and deprivation of every right that is most sacred to the human heart. This people Mr. President have year after year been systematically swindled out of thousands of dollars by the land owners of the south, they were debarred from the

enjoyment of their civil rights, in the courts of the states, they were tried by juries whose prejudices were so great that they only would consider the color of the contesting parties and give their verdict for the white man. Thus deprived of all other privileges, we cried for aid, and clung to the only boon left, that is our Franchise, but too soon was this too, to be arrested from our feeble grasp. Our white friends who had come among us were notified to leave, and if they dared to remain, a markless grave holds the earthly remains of each that so dared. Our own men of intelligence were told they must cease to instruct the colored man or tell him how to vote or they would be murdered. If the angel Gabriel would blow his trumpet and call to earthly existence the decaying bones of those who were murdered in the south for their political views, what an army would present itself. Mr. President could you but read the true history of the colored mans political trials and troubles in the south, could the American people but see a printed list of the names of those who have been murdered for upholding their political convictions it would cause them to cry for shame, and say "How could a just God allow such?" The tales of sorrow that have come up from the Yazoo Valley, and the Louisiana swamps are yet, too fresh in your minds to need recalling. I need but say that the half was not told as in all the interior country no notice was made of the killing of a negro, hence to my own knowledge over twenty deaths of negroes occurred in 1879 in the fifth district of Louisiana, not one of which was published. Thus you see Mr. President, one by one our rights were

abridged, cut off, and entirely obliterated, till at last, they by murder and robbery took our ballot from us. Then the oppressed could no longer stand it, they silently moved away and the exodus became general. At this crisis Mr. President, they followed him to the river to force him back. This would not do. They then cried aloud to the few intelligent colored men that he remained, to help them check the depopulation of their plantations. They called a convention at Vicksburg and invited the colored men to participate, passed resolutions promising to secure every man his rights. The colored men trusted them, but as soon the exodus was checked, the old persecution was begun again. Robbery and murder held sway and the colored people are to-day more oppressed than ever. As I have said Mr. President, those who are herded from the bright and beautiful Sunny South to seek a home where they might serve their God under their own vine and fig-tree, preferring the chances of starvation to that of bondage. They are here and Mr. President, what is their condition. Ah, if it is indeed sad to relate, but it is true, many of them are in the most destitute circumstances. Not because of their indolence, but because of the scarcity of labor from which to earn their maintenance. What are we to do? How can we secure the means to make a living? The unoccupied land in this part of the state is of but little value, and the private lands we are unable to buy because we have not the money, and but few of us have the teams to cultivate the land, so I ask again, what are we to do? The resolu-

tion offered here is one that is intended to meet the demand. We must appeal to the National government for assistance, we propose to ask them to donate to us a portion of its public domain and to aid us in getting on it. It may be urged that we have no claims upon the government that we should ask this! Let us reason for a moment. No Nation ever emancipated its slaves and then abandoned them to the six shooters of the old master but this. Did not the blood of the Black men assist in cementing and perpetuating this great republic. They gave us the right to vote, but left us at the mercy of our old master by leaving him the lord of the soil, and we as his serfs. They gave us a civil rights bill, but gave us a Judiciary that would not enforce it. Yet we are thankful for what we have. Our forefathers, our fathers and ourselves have spent 87 years building up the southern portion of the government. We were slaves, they gave us freedom, but is that equity, we are told that slavery was wrong. Is it righting that wrong by giving us alone our liberty without either recompense for past injuries, or assistance to start in the race of life? We have thanked this governm't for our freedom, we thank it for the right to vote, but still, is it right and just that we, who served it as slaves, and when the nation was in peril, responded to the call and washed the ramparts of Wagner and Hudson with the crimson gore of black heroes. I ask is it right that we should be oppressed by the very rebels who were seeking to tear this government asunder? When we were made citizens is it not the duty of the government to protect the citizen in his rights.

This we find the government unable or unwilling to do. What then? Because of this we left the state we now appeal to the government to donate to us a portion of its territory for homes for our people and assist us to make the start. The Indians are cared for by the government but we do not ask even the goodness shown to them, we only ask to give us a start such as will enable us to have an equal show in the race of life. It may be said that we want the government to do more for us than it does for the whites. To all such I would say have not your fathers and forefathers for 340 years drawn the life blood from our race, and do they begrudge to us sufficient aid to enable us to make a start. Let it be in the shape of a loan, or of a gift, or of a donation of sufficient land to enable us to get the necessary assistance to cultivate the soil and by our industry repay what is given us. Now if the general government can do no more for us let it make us a gift of 160 acres of the Territory named we could then manage through the loans given us on that land to be enabled to go forward and in a single year be self sustaining.

Mr. Wilmer Walton asked and obtained leave to make some remarks relative to the Memorial, as originally introduced; after which Mr. Avery again called for the previous question. The call was sustained and the motion to adopt, without amendment, prevailed.

On motion the convention adjourned to meet at 3 o'clock p. m.

EVENING SESSION.

The convention was called to order by the President.

Rev. Mr. Avery, of Labette, offered the following:

RESOLVED, That Mrs. Augustus Wilson, of Parsons, Labette county, be requested, and is hereby appointed, to bear this memorial to its destination, and lay it before congress.

RESOLVED, That Mrs. Wilson be requested to present the matter in person to our own Senators and Representatives in Congress and urge them to press its claims upon that body with as little delay as possible.

MR. PRESIDENT:—Believing in the power and influence of women in doing good, I offer these resolutions. In every age of the world women, physically feeble, has ever been powerful. Strange contrast, but none the less true. Her influence in the world is felt and acknowledged. I may, with your permission, refer to our own great republic. To whom does she owe her greatness. I answer: to the moral training of her sons, by God fearing mothers. Washington, who was "first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," was indebted to his mother, who under God sowed the seeds of virtue, truth and justice into the young and tender heart of her darling boy, who could not tell a lie, even at the risk of his father's displeasure. J. Q. Adams, the great Lincoln, Garfield, the beloved, and a host of the brightest lights in American history owe that greatness to women. Timid, yet courageous. Look at the beautiful Queen Esther, a Jewess, sharing the throne of the Persian king through her moral courage. Risking her life, saved her nation from annihilation at the hands of the powerful but wicked Haman. Had I the time, Mr. President, I could take up hours in calling up the heroic

deeds of women.

The world was sad,
The garden was a wild;
Man, the hermit, sighed
'Til women smiled.

God bless them!

I therefore hope, Mr. President, that the resolution will be adopted.

Rev. A. Fairfax supported the motion in a brilliant speech, in which he said, "Wine is strong—women is stronger; man is mighty—God is Almighty, and truth beareth away the victory." He referred to the noble mothers in Israel, and particularly of Deborah, the Prophetess, of her strong and abiding faith in an overruling Providence. Though but a "weakly" woman, she was strong in the faith that the God of Israel would deliver his people. And He did deliver them. There may be another Deborah that Providence has in reserve for the special purpose of leading us to pleasant places, where we too may be permitted to worship the God of Israel under our own vine and fig tree.

He found ladies as missionaries visiting prisons and caring for the dying during our late terrible civil war, women—noble women; next to the savior, heaven's best gift to man—proved her strength. And in the judgment, Oh! how many thousands will rise up and bless the hands that administered to them in their hour of need! This is a mission of mercy, of truth and justice. Who is more qualified to enter upon it than tender-hearted, yet strong in faith and purpose woman? Ask the Apostles during the first ages of christianity who were the most useful in cheering and comforting the church and leading her on toward her high destiny. They will answer, L. dia, Phoebe, Priscilla and others of the "weaker"

sex. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." (Denoting success or victory.)

"Honor to her who self complete and brave, Though weak, in strength can carve her pathway to the grave;

And heeding naught what others think and say,

Make her own heart her world upon the way."

The motion prevailed.

In reply to the requests of the Convention that Mrs. Wilson present the Memorial to the Congress of the United States, she said:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention:

I thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me in selecting me to present your Memorial to the consideration and wisdom of the honorable body of our National Congress, now assembled at our nation's capital. There are others who, no doubt, could serve you better and return to you, not with a memorial of words written upon paper, but bearing to you, from the rulers of our nation the boon which you seek, and so richly deserve. But, Mr. President and Gentlemen of the convention, in accepting the honor you have conferred upon me, I will say that while I may not be able to serve you well, and bear to you this boon, and may not have the faith of Queen Esther, the prophecy of Deborah, or the strength of Moses, or Joshua to save a nation, to direct an army, or to divide the waters of the Red Sea and the River Jordan, and lead you safely to the other side; I will, by the help of God, serve you to the best of my ability. Though weak in body I am zealous in your interest; strong in confidence in the integrity and honor of those to whom you appeal, and strong in the faith of God.

Your cause is one of humanity and your claims reasonable and just, and I believe it will be granted you. The United States should give you at least a burying ground for yourselves, your wives and your children; for your loyalty to the government in times of war, and for your services at the ballot-box in time of peace. It may at be to-day, or to-morrow; you may

have to wait and wander under trials and difficulties, like the Israelites in the Wilderness, but do not return back to Egypt. Press onward; the promised land is before you and will be an inheritance to your children and your children's children. I may be like Moses, buried in the valley; but God will raise to you a Joshua that will convey you across the river Jordan into the Land of Canaan. Then earnestly, humbly, and prayerfully ask it, believing God will help you to secure it. Honor God in your works and praise Him in song, and in the language of the poet, ask that He will abide with you.

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
Thine darkness deepens; Lord abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee;
Help of the helpless abide with me.

Mr. Augustus Wilson, of the Commercial Bank of this city, was introduced from the gallery, whereupon the Convention arose. After assuring the convention of his interest in the success of the colored people, and of his sympathy and endorsement of the objects in view, Mr. Wilson said: "I shall take pleasure in assisting Mrs. Wilson to carry out your wishes and the work you have entrusted to her hands, and do what I can to further the object of your convention." To which a rising vote of thanks was tendered.

The Parsons Cornet Band having entertained the convention during the evening, with excellent music, the following was offered by W. A. Price, and adopted.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the convention be tendered Mr. J. W. Smith, leader of the Parsons Cornet Band, and the other members for having so highly entertained the convention this evening.

RESOLVED, That we highly appreciate the compliment and shall ever remember it with pleasure.

L. Fulbright offered the following, which was adopted:

RESOLVED, That the following named papers, and all others friendly to the interest of the colored people, be requested to publish the proceedings of the convention:

The Kansas Weekly Witness, of Parsons; *The Colored Patriot*, of Topeka; *The Wonder*, of Parsons; *The Sedalia Sun*, *The People's Advocate*, of Washington, D. C.; *The Christian Recorder*, Philadelphia. *The South Kansas Tribune*, *The Austin Citizen*, and *The Mobile Gazette*, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Committee on Finance submitted the following:

Mr. PRESIDENT:—We, your committee, beg leave to submit the following:

RESOLVED, That each delegate be assessed twenty-five cents to assist in defraying the expenses of the hall; leaving the balance to be raised from the audience. Total amount of expenses, \$18.00

Committee—J. W. French, W. L. Egleson, William Rowe, J. F. Akin and T. J. Merritt.

On motion of W. B. Avery, report was laid on the table.

Moved by Mr. Avery, of Labette, that the Finance Committee proceed to lift a general collection to defray the expenses. Motion adopted, and a collection taken up, amounting to \$12.25.

The Secretary read the following resolutions:

By L. Fulbright:

Resolved, That Mrs. Gov. St. John, Mrs. Senator Plumb, Mrs. I. B. Johnston and Mrs. Judge Thatcher, be requested to accompany Mrs. Wilson on her mission to Washington. Carried.

By T. J. Merritt:

Resolved, That we the Colored Representatives of the Southern part of the state of Kansas, and being now assembled in convention in the city of Parsons, Kansas, do highly endorse the prohibition amendment to the constitution of this, our noble state of Kansas.

By L. Fulbright:

Resolved, That we the colored men of the state of Kansas, in convention on this 27th day of April, 1882, do highly endorse the

indignation meeting of the colored people of Philadelphia, against the outrage perpetrated against Right Rev. Bishop Payne, by the railroad conductor in Florida.

By L. Fulbright.

Resolved, That we the members of this convention from Shawnee county, Kansas, respectfully ask that each delegate to this convention on his return home, request his people to appoint one or more delegates, to attend a state convention of colored men, to be held in Topeka, Kansas, May 31, 1882.

By W. L. Egleson.

Whereas, The Hon. D. C. Haskell, M. C., by voting with the democrats in the Lynch-Chalmers election case in which the glaring frauds of this bill was fully shown, has shown how little regard he has for the rights of our people, therefore be it

Resolved, That the said D. C. Haskell has by his course in this case forfeited all claims to the suffrages of the colored voters in the Second District.

By W. B. Avery:

Whereas, Mrs. A. Wilson having presented this convention with a beautiful bouquet culled by her own hands, with expressions of co-operation with the convention in their objects, therefore be it

Resolved, That the thanks of the convention be tendered to Mrs. A. Wilson. Adopted.

By L. Fulbright:

Resolved, That 1000 copies of the minutes of this convention be printed in pamphlet form.

Resolved, That in order to keep up an interest, that each delegate be requested to form clubs in their localities and hold stated meetings for the discussion of matters of in-

terest to our people.

By W. B. Avery:

Resolved, That when the convention adjourns this evening, it will be to meet in the A. M. E. church to-morrow morning at 7 o'clock, sharp. Carried.

On motion, convention adjourned with singing the Doxology,

A. FAIRFAX, PRESIDENT.

W. B. AVERY, Secretary.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

April 28, 1882.

The convention met, pursuant to adjournment, the President in the chair, who called the house to order. An impressive prayer was offered by the Rev W. A. Moore, invoking the Divine aid in the future deliberations, etc.

The Secretary being absent the convention proceeded to appoint W. A. Price Secretary, pro tem.

The following was offered and adopted:

Resolved, That the convention be empowered to appoint a delegate from each division of the state, two from the state at large and that the president of this convention be chairman of said delegation. The said delegation to accompany Mrs. Augustus Wilson and the delegation of ladies to Washington to present the memorial to Congress.

The following gentlemen composed the committee so ordered:

Rev. A. Fairfax, Chatauqua, chairman, postoffice Peru, Kas.

C. M. Johnson, Morris, postoffice Dunlap.

Rev. T. J. Merritt, Labette, postoffice Parsons.

Rev. J. B. Wallace, Miami, postoffice Paola.

At large:

W. A. P. Price, Chatauqua, post

office Peru.

L. Fulbright, Shawnee, postoffice Topeka.

The secretary having returned, the reading and correcting of the minutes was ordered. Pending the reading of the minutes J. S. Hall was appointed assistant secretary, pro tem.

By Rev. J. C. Stewart;

Resolved, That the thanks of this convention be returned to the citizens of Parsons for the kindness extended to the delegates attending this convention. Also, to the president of this convention for the able manner in which he has discharged the duties of his office and to the other officers of the convention.

By, G. A. Pricey

Resolved, That a committee of two, residing in the city of Parsons, whose duty it shall be to assist the secretary in revising the minutes for publication.

The following is the Committee on Revision, as appointed: Rev. W. B. Avery, chairman; Rev. T. J. Merritt and J. W. French.

The convention having closed its labors, the President being quite ill, the Vice-President—L. Fulbright—took the chair; and, on behalf of the President, thanked the delegates for the courtesy shown him while presiding over them, and hoped that success would crown our efforts, and commending them to the kindly care of the Good Shepherd, bade the convention adieu.

The Doxology was sung and a fervent prayer was offered by Rev. W. F. Hedgman, of Montgomery county.

The President then announced the convention adjourned.

Thus closed one of the most im-

portant gatherings ever held in the state.

A. FAIRFAX, PRES.

L. FULBRIGHT, Vice-Pres.

W. B. AVERY, Sec.

W. A. MOORE, Assist. Sec.

From The Kansas Weekly Witness :

The convention of colored men recently held in this city, was largely attended; and the intelligence, dignity and order would have done credit to a convention of national representatives—far in advance of the colored men.

Nearly every part of the state was represented. The delegates were alive to the business before them. The session was harmonious, though at times during the discussions excitement ran high, yet each one seemed to have complete self-control. The dignified bearing and decorum exhibited has been the subject of remark. It was not generally known that in a caucus the members had agreed to set an example to similar bodies.

It is worthy of remark, that while some of our best friends—ladies and gentlemen—representing the wealth and intelligence of the city, attended the convention and manifested a deep interest in its proceedings, the representatives of the city press and politicians, of both parties, held themselves aloof and maintained an expressive silent endorsement. Had it been a political meeting or convention, or near the time for nominations or elections it would have been different. But one of our city papers noticed the call or the convention.

Prominently among the delegates stood the Rev. Alfred Fairfax, of Chatauqua county, who was elected, first temporary, then permanent President; and whose election reflected credit upon the convention in their selection. A better choice could not have been made. Able and dignified, yet pleasant and agreeable in the chair, and impartial in his rulings. His opening address—which we publish in this issue—shows of what material he is made.

The Hon. L. Fulbright, Vice-President, is pre-eminently gifted as a politician, and we predict for him a brilliant future in that particular field, should he choose it as a profession. Politics seem to be his forte.

The same can be said of C. M. Johnson, who made a good fight and showed considerable political tact and ingenuity in

pressing his claims.

Judge W. A. Price, whose speech we publish to-day, singularly gifted as a debater, and makes his point with telling effect. We notice among the future statesmen of *Oklahoma* the following named gentlemen, whose addresses gave evidence of future usefulness—*provided* they have an opportunity: Rev. W. F. Hedgman, Rev. W. B. Avery, Rev. T. J. Merritt, Rev. A. W. Green, Rev. D. B. Garrett, William Rowe, J. W. French, E. W. Dorsey, W. L. Egleson, R. Stafford, Clarke, of Oswego, and others of whom we shall speak hereafter.

Never before has Congress been called upon to put itself upon record, as in hearty sympathy with the weaker portion of the citizens of the United States and its true and able defenders. Much depends upon the action of the National Government, at Washington, in this matter. They hold in their hands the destiny—moral, intellectual, social and political—of six million of her most loyal subjects, and it is hoped (and earnestly hoped) that she will prove equal to the occasion.

A Word About Parsons.

The rapid increase in the population of this city is remarkable, and speaks volumes for the enterprise and public spirit of her intelligent and energetic people. We now have a population of about six thousand whites and eight hundred colored. It is said that no less than four hundred new buildings were erected last spring and summer, and the indications are that equally as many will be built this summer. Prominent among the improvements now going on are the commodious two story brick of Angell Mathewson & Co., on the corner of Forrest ave. and 18th street, and the Public Library, on the opposite corner of the street. This building is 60x100 feet built on the most modern style, three stories high, at a cost of about fifteen thousand dollars. When completed it will be an ornament to the city, and an honor to the association of noble ladies, through whose efforts and skillful management, it was projected and will be completed. It was

founded by the Womans' Christian Temperance Union, of Parsons. Its officers are: Mrs. Augustus Wilson, President, Mrs. S. Simonson, Treasurer; Mrs. J. L. Watt, Sec'y. Here will be the reading room and library, that will be the means of supplying wholesome, religious and temperance food to the mind of our youth, and thus save them from the haunts of vice, generally found in all of our large cities.

The public park too will be another improvement that will reflect credit upon the wisdom and intelligence of our city, and our streets are also being macadamized. Besides the improvements mentioned above, we have three large brick school houses worth fifteen thousand dollars each. One Normal school established by the Society of Friends of Iowa worth thirty-five hundred dollars. This is for training colored teachers and other colored adults. Churches—three colored and one white Baptist, one M. E. and one A. M. E. church, one Presbyterian, one Protestant Episcopal, one Christian, one United Brethern, one Congregational and Roman Catholic, total 12 churches. The mercantile profession—A more honorable class of merchants can not be found than those of Parsons, Kansas.

Banks—The Commercial, First National, and the City Bank of Mathewson & Co., are all reliable, and each is doing a good business.

The press is well represented by the following name papers: Three dailies, viz: *Wonder*, *Sun* and *Eclipse* and four weeklies, viz: the three above named and the *Weekly Witness*; the last published in the interest of the freedmen. Also the opera house Bu'liten. If this is not evidence of public spirit where can it be found? The citizens of Parsons are high toned, generous, Benevolent, temperate and law abiding. It is truly a model city.

OSAGE COAL & MINING CO.,

Miners and Dealers in

COAL & COKE

Proprietors of the celebrated McAlester
Mines, Indian Territory.

General Office :—Parsons, Kansas.

H. T. LEMIST, Superintendent,

S. W. KNIFFIN, Sec. and Treas.

A. H. TYLER,

ATTORNEY AT LAW

AND CITY ATTORNEY.

PARSONS, KANSAS.

SUBSCRIBE!

FOR THE

Freedmen's Religious Family News-
paper, the

Kansas Weekly Witness!

Terms of Subscription, in advance, one year
\$1.25, 6 months 75 cents, 3 months 50 cents.

Address the Editor,

**REV. W. B. AVERY,
PARSONS, KANSAS.**