COLORED CONVENTION IN INDIANA

The Western papers bring us brief accounts of a State Convention of the Colored Citizens of Indiana. Pursuant to a call of the State Executive Committee some one hundred and fifty delegates representing the colored citizens of most of the counties of the State met in convention at the African Methodist Church in Indianapolis, at 9 o’clock, Oct. 24. After some discussion an organization was effected and the following officers chosen: President, W. S. Lankford, Indianapolis; Vice Presidents, J. G. Britton, Rev. Moses Broyles; Secretary, W. G. Robinson, of Richmond; Corresponding Secretary, E. E. Outland, of Indianapolis. Adjourned till 2.

Afternoon Session.

After the Convention was called to order a Committee on Business was appointed and one on Resolutions, the latter of which reported the following:

Whereas, The founders of this Government endeavored to establish for the people of the United States a republican form of government, in which a majority of the governed should have an undisputed right to rule in making, executing and repealing laws in such a manner as best to secure their welfare, and that of their posterity, and

Whereas, The Declaration of Independence declares life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to be the God-given, and inalienable rights of all men, and whereas thousands of our fathers, sons, and brothers, have fought, bled, and died in order to secure them; therefore,

Resolved, 1. That these rights are now, henceforth and forever ours by a three-fold title; ours by endowment from our beneficent Creator; ours by the right of inheritance from our forefathers who fought in the war of the Revolution and of 1812, and ours by purchase on many a blood-stained field during the late rebellion.

2. With the Revolutionary fathers that to secure these inalienable rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

3. That these rights have long been flagrantly, wickedly, and most inhumanly violated by the degenerate sons of noble sires, and that we hereby in vindication of republican principles, call upon the Federal and State Governments to repeal the unwholesome and tyrannical laws which have bereft us of the rights guaranteed to other American citizens, and which by the founders of our institutions were understood to be guaranteed by the Constitution to all men alike, regardless of color.

4. That we pledge ourselves to do all in our limited power to secure that intellectual and moral worth necessary to sustain a republican form of
government, and for the encouragement of our race. We will petition the Legislature of this State, at its next session, to grant us access to the public school funds, and that we be permitted, with other men of other races, to testify in all cases before the courts of justice in this State.¹

5. That we are proud of the noble part which our people have taken in the suppression of the rebellion, and claim for them equal rights with other men before the law.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted and the Convention adjourned till 9 o'clock.

National Anti-Slavery Standard, November 4, 1865.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. It is perhaps instructive to note that in Indiana and throughout the Midwest, embracing the states of Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, there was a pronounced and visible hostility toward blacks. It found its most perfect embodiment in the famous Black Laws, passed in Ohio in 1804 and later instituted in the other states. While Ohio repealed its Black Laws in 1849, the attitudes that engendered them continued to persist as discrimination became woven into the legal and social fabric of the region. While this discrimination varied from state to state, according to V. Jacques Voegeli, every state imposed legal disabilities upon its black residents. In all the states of the Midwest, blacks were barred from suffrage and from the militia. In Illinois and Indiana there were no provisions for the education of their children; blacks also could not testify against white persons in court. Exclusion or anti-immigration laws carrying severe penalties barred blacks from selling in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.