

**To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States and
to the Honorable the Senate
and House of Representatives
of the United States of
America in Congress
Assembled**

The undersigned respectfully submit the following:

That they are natives of Louisiana and Citizens of the United States; that they are legal citizens, they are ready to sacrifice there fortunes and their lives.

That a large portion of them are owners of real-estate and all of them are owners of personal property: that many of tem are engaged in the pursuits of commerce and industry, which others are employed as artisans in various trades; that they are all fitted to enjoy the privileges and immunities belonging to the conditions of citizens of the United States and among them may be found many of the descendents of those men whom the illustrious Jackson styled "his fellow citizens" when he called upon them to take up arms to repel the enemies of the country.

Our petitioners further respectfully represent that over and above the right which in the language of the Declaration of Independence they possess to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they are supported by the opinion of just and loyal men, especially by that of Edward Bales, Attorney General, in the claim to the right of enjoying the privileges and immunities pertaining to the condition of citizens of the United States; and to support the legitimacy of this claim; they believe it simply necessary to submit to Your Excellency and to the Honorable Congress; the following considerations which they beg of you to weight in the balance of law and justice.

Notwithstanding their forefathers served in the United-States 1814-1815, and aided in the repelling from the Soil of Louisiana, a haughty enemy, over confident of success, yet they and their descendents have ever since, and until the era of the present rebellion been estranged and even repulsed, excluded from all rights, from all franchises, even the smallest, when their brave fathers offered their bosoms to the enemy to insure the industrial integrity of the republic.

During this period of the forty-nine years they have never ceased to be peaceable citizens, paying their taxes on an assessment of more than fifteen millions of dollars.

At the call of Gen'l Butler, they hastened to rally under the banner of union and liberty. They have spilled their blood, and still pouring it out for the maintenance of the Constitution of the United States; in a word they are soldiers of the Union, and they will defend it so long as their hands have strength to hold a musket.

While Gen. Banks was at the siege of Fort Hudson and the city threatened by the enemy His Excellency Gen'l Shipley called for troops for the dfense of the city, and they were foremost in responding to the call having raised the first regiment in the sort space of forty eight hours.

In consideration of this fact, as true and as clear as the sun which lights this great continent, in consideration of the services already performed and still to be rendered by them to their common country, they humbly beseech Your Excellency and Congress to cast your eye upon a loyal congregation awaiting with confidence and dignity the ploclamation of those inalienable rights which belong to the condition of Citizens of the great American Republic.

Theirs is but a feeble voice claiming attention in the midst of the grave questions raised by this terrible conflict, yet confident of the justice which guides the action of the government, they have no hesitation in speaking what is prompted by his hearts, "We are men, treat us as such."

Mr. President and Honorable members of Congress! the petitioners refer to your wisdom they task of deciding whether they, loyal and devoted men, who are ready to make every sacrifice for the support of the best Government which man has bee permitted to create are to be deprived of the right to assist in establishing a civil government in our beloved state of Louisiana, and also in choosing their representatives, both for the legislature of the State, and of the Congress of the Nation.

Your petitioners aver that they have applied in respectful terms to Brigadier General, Geo. F. Shipley, military Governor of Louisiana and to Major Gen. N. P. Banks, commanding the Department of the Gulf, praying to be placed upon the Registers as voters to the end that they might participate in the reorganization of Civil Government in Louisiana, and that their petition has met with no response from those officers, and it is feared that, none will be given, and that therefore appeal to the justice of the representatives of the nation, and ask that all the citizens of Louisiana of African descent, born free before the rebellion; may by proper order be directed to be admitted to be inscribed on the Registers, and admitted to the rights and privileges of electors:

And your petitioners will ever pray:

New Orens, LA January 5, 1864

J. B. Roudanez
Arnold Bertonneau
Delegates of the Free Colored Representatives Louisiana

To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States, and
to the Honorable the Senate
and House of Representatives
of the United States of
America in Congress
assembled.

The undersigned respectfully submit the following,

That he, as a native of Louisiana and a citizen of the United States, that he as a loyal citizen, sincerely attached to the Union and the Constitution, and ardently desirous to maintain the Union, is ready to sacrifice his fortunes and his life.

That a large portion of them are owners of real estate, and all of them are owners of personal property: that many of them are engaged in the pursuits of commerce and industry, while others are employed as artisans in various trades, that they are all fitted to enjoy the privileges and immunities belonging to the condition of citizens of the United States, and among them may be found many of the descendants of those men whom the illustrious Jackson styled "his fellow citizens" when he called upon them to take up arms to repel the enemies of the country.

Your petitioners further respectfully represent that ever and above the right which in the language of the Declaration of Independence they possess of liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they are impelled by the opinions of just and legal men, especially by that of Edward D. White, Attorney General, in the case of the rights of citizens, the questions and immunities pertaining to the condition of citizens of the United States; and to support the legitimacy of this claim, they believe it simply necessary to submit to Your Excellency and to the Honorable Congress the following considerations which they lay before you to weigh in the balance of law and justice.

Understanding their fathers had in the year of the United States in 1803-1805, and aided in repelling from the soil of Louisiana a hostile army, ever confident of success, yet they and their descendants have ever since, and until the war of the present rebellion, been ostracized and even repulsed, excluded from all rights, from all franchises, even the smallest, when their brave fathers offered their persons to the enemy to purchase the restoration in equity of the Republic.

During this period of forty seven years, they have never ceased to be peaceable citizens paying their taxes on an assessment of more than fifty two millions of dollars.

At the call of Genl. Taylor they hastened to rally under the banner of Union and Liberty, they have sacrificed their lives, and are still paying it out for the maintenance of the Constitution of the United States, in a word they are Soldiers of the Union, and they will defend it so long as their hands have strength to take a musket.

With Genl. Grant's war at the Siege of Fort Mifflin, and the only threat made by the enemy, His Excellency Genl. Sigbee called for troops for the defense of the city, and they were foremost in responding to the call, having raised the first regiment in the short space of forty eight hours.

In consideration of this fact, as true and as clear as the sun which lights this Great Continent, in consideration of the services already performed and still to be rendered by them to their Common Country, they humbly beseech Your Excellency and Congress to cast your eyes upon a loyal population awaiting with confidence and dignity the proclamation of their inalienable rights which belong to the condition of Citizens of the Great America. In justice.

There is but a single plea claiming attention in the midst of the grave questions raised by this terrible conflict, yet independent of the justice which underlies the action of the Government, they have no hesitation in expressing what we deem to be their hearts, "We are men, but we are such."

Your petitioners and Honorable members of Congress, the petitioners refer to your wisdom the task of deciding whether they, loyal and true men, who are ready to make every sacrifice for the support of the best Government which man has ever permitted to create, are to be deprived of the right to assist in establishing a Civil Government in our beloved State of Louisiana, and also in choosing their representatives, both for the Legislature of the State, and for the Congress of the Nation.

Your petitioners are that they have applied on respectful terms to Brigadier General Geo. F. Smith, Military Governor of Louisiana and to Major Genl. J. S. Grant, Commanding the Department of the Gulf, praying to be placed upon the Register as before, to the end that they might participate in the reorganization of Civil Government in Louisiana, and that their petition had met with no response from those officers, and it is feared that now will be given, and they therefore appeal to the justice of the representatives of the Nation, and ask that all the citizens of Louisiana of African descent, born free before the rebellion, may by proper action be directed to be admitted to be enrolled on the Register, and admitted to the rights and privileges of citizens.

And your petitioners will ever pray;

Sp. Orleans La. January 5. 1864.

Wm. J. ...
Harris ...
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