

White Declaration of Independence

Believing that the Constitution of the United States contemplated a government to be carried on by an enlightened people; Believing that its framers did not anticipate the enfranchisement of an ignorant population of African origin, and believing that those men of the State of North Carolina, who joined in forming the Union, did not contemplate for their descendants subjection to an inferior race: —

We, the undersigned citizens of the City of Wilmington and County of New Hanover, do hereby declare that we will no longer be ruled, and will never again be ruled by men of African origin. This condition we have in part endured because we felt that the consequences of the War of Secession were such as to deprive us of the fair consideration of many of our countrymen. We believe that, after more than thirty years, this is no longer the case.

The stand we now pledge ourselves to is forced upon us suddenly by a crisis and our eyes are open to the fact that we must act now or leave our descendants to a fate too gloomy to submit.

We therefore, believing that we represent unequivocally the sentiment of the White People of the County and City, hereby for ourselves, and as representing them, proclaim:

- *First*

That the time has passed for the intelligent citizens of the community owning 90% of the property and paying taxes in like proportions, to be ruled by negroes.

- *Second*

That we will not tolerate the action of unscrupulous white men in affiliating with the negroes so that means of heir votes they can dominate the intelligent and thrifty element in the community, thus causing business to stagnate and progress to be out of the question.

- *Third*

That the negro has demonstrated by antagonizing our interest in every way, and especially by his ballot, that he is incapable of realizing that his interests are and should be identical with those of the community.

- *Fourth*

That the progressive element in any community is the white population and that the giving of nearly all the employment to negro laborers has been against the best interests of this County and City and is a sufficient reason why the City of Wilmington, with its natural advantages has not become a city of at least fifty thousand inhabitants.

- *Fifth*

That we propose in future to give to white men a large part of the employment heretofore given to negroes because we realize that white families cannot thrive here unless there are more opportunities for the employment of the different members of said families.

- *Sixth*

That the white men expect to live in this community peaceably; to have and provide absolute protection for their families, who shall be safe from insult or injury from all persons, whomsoever. We are prepared to treat the negroes

with justice and consideration in all matters which do not involve sacrifices of the interest of the intelligent and progressive portion of the community. But are equally prepared now and immediately to enforce what we know to be our rights.

- *Seventh*

That we have been, in our desire for harmony and peace, blinded both to our best interests and our rights. A climax was reached when the negro paper of this city published an article so vile and slanderous that it would in most communities have resulted in the lynching of the editor. We deprecate lynching and yet there is no punishment, provided by the courts, adequate for this offense. We therefore owe it to the people of this community and of this city, as a protection against such license in the future, that the paper known as the "Record" cease to be published and that its editor be banished from this community.

We demand that he leave this City forever within twenty-four hours after the issuance of this proclamation. Second, that the printing press from which the "Record" has been issued be packed and shipped from the City without delay, that we be notified within twelve hours of the acceptance or rejection of this demand.

If the demand is agreed to, within twelve hours we counsel forbearance on the part of all white men. If the demand is refused or if no answer within the time mentioned then the editor, Manly, will be expelled by force.