

READING

South Carolina Freedpeople Demand Education

In November 1865, a convention of freedmen met in Charleston, South Carolina, to demand new rights for African Americans. Foremost among their demands was education for their children. The convention issued the following resolution:

*Whereas, "Knowledge is power," and an educated and intelligent people can neither be held in, nor reduced to slavery; Therefore [be it] Resolved, That we will insist upon the establishment of good schools for the thorough education of our children throughout the State; that, to this end, we will contribute freely and liberally of our means, and will earnestly and persistently urge forward every measure calculated to elevate us to the rank of a wise, enlightened and Christian people. Resolved, That we solemnly urge the parents and guardians of the young and rising generation, by the sad recollection of our *forced* ignorance and degradation in the past, and by the bright and inspiring hopes of the future, to see that schools are at once established in every neighborhood; and when so established, to see to it that every child of proper age, is kept in regular attendance upon the same.¹*

¹ *Proceedings of the Colored People's Convention of the State of South Carolina, Held in Zion Church, Charleston, November 1865* (Charleston: South Carolina Leader Office, 1865), 23–26.