

Mr. Stokes—While as a people we are striving for our own advancement, and endeavoring to obtain a recognition in society as men, let us not in the selfishness of our own plans, lose sight of other things, equally our duty. Look abroad upon the varied face of this favored country, and do we not see in the mountain top, and in the valley, evils existing among our kind? sin stalking in the noon-day, and no hand put forth to stop its progress? Let us first correct ourselves, and become worthy of respect, then the world will not withhold its reward. One thing I have observed amongst our race, that while all are consumers, very few are producers. We see through this State very few colored farmers, or mechanics, or artisans; yet it can be proved we may become as proficient in these branches as other people. Still, there is no awakening of the importance of proving ourselves capable of conducting the affairs of business with skill and advantage. In this State, there are over three and a half millions of property owned by the colored population; from this several thousand dollars of tax is collected every year—we own mining claims valued at \$30,000 per share—we have every advantage for unfolding whatever talent we may possess, and yet we are doing nothing. In other countries there are mechanics and artisans whose proficiency has astonished the world. Here we have no energy. Why not have our stores, our stock exchanges, our banking houses, as others? If we have capacities let them not sleep forever. This Convention is the initiatory step to a great end. The goal is before us—let us press on. If like the Athenians, we sit over our feasts in fancied security while Philip thunders at the city gates, we shall be defeated in all our desires. All we have gained will be lost. We shall soon possess no identity as a people—no place or position. Why should we in California be behind our brethren of other States? In Massachusetts—that cradle of liberty—our cause has awakened much interest. The portals of society, so long closed, are being thrown open to us—there are colored ministers and doctors, and lawyers—educated men. Yes, and men for us to be proud of, and thank God for! Is all this nothing? Is ascendancy in the great scale of moral being worth nothing? Are the means of intellectual advancement nothing to us, that we lie thus supinely on our backs, with folded hands, without one effort to elevate our moral, social,

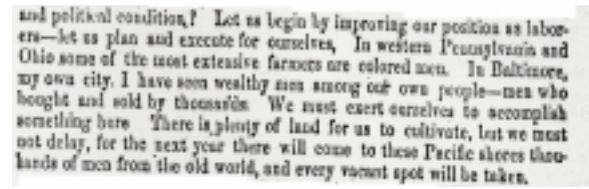
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Nov[ember] 20-22, 1855

Stokes, D. P.

*Proceedings of the First State Convention
of the Colored Citizens of the State of California
Presscopy – Harvard University, Cambridge –
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and political condition? Let us begin by improving our position as laborers—let us plan and execute for ourselves. In western Pennsylvania and Ohio some of the most extensive farmers are colored men. In Baltimore, my own city. I have seen wealthy men among our own people—men who bought and sold by thousands. We must exert ourselves to accomplish something here. There is plenty of land for us to cultivate, but we must not delay, for the next year there will come to these Pacific shores thousands of men from the old world, and every vacant spot will be taken.



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