Fellow Citizens:-In the exercise of a liberty which we hope, you will not deem unwarrantable, and which is given us, in virtue of our connection and identity with you, the undersigned do hereby, most earnestly and affectionately, invite you, by your appropriate and chosen representatives, to assemble at ROCHESTER, N.Y., on the 6th of July, 1853 under the form and title of a National Convention of the free people of color of the United States.

After due thought and reflection upon the subject, in which has entered a profound desire to serve a common cause, we have arrived at the conclusion, that the time has now fully come when the free colored people from all parts of the United States, should meet together, to confer and deliberate upon their present condition, and upon principles and measures important to their welfare, progress and general improvement.

The aspects of our cause, whether viewed as being hostile or friendly, are alike full of argument in favor of such a Convention. Both reason and feeling have assigned us to a place in the conflict now going on in our land between liberty and equality on the one hand, and slavery and caste on the other-a place which we cannot fail to occupy without branding ourselves as unworthy of our natural post, and recreant to the cause we profess to love. Under the whole heavens, there is not to be found a people which can show better cause for assembling in such a Convention than we.

Our fellow-countrymen now in chains, to whom we are united in a common destiny demand it; and a wise solicitude for our own honor, and that of our children, impels us to this course of action. We have gross and flagrant wrongs against which, if we are men of spirit we are bound to protest. We have high and holy rights, which every instinct of human nature and every sentiment of manly virtue bid us to preserve and protect to the full extent of our ability. We have opportunities to improve-difficulties peculiar to our condition to meet-mistakes and errors of our own to correct-and therefore we need the accumulated knowledge, the united character, and the combined wisdom of our people to make us (under God) sufficient for these things.

The Fugitive Slave Act, the most cruel, unconstitutional and scandalous outrage of modern times-the proscriptive legislation of several States with a view to drive our people from their borders-the exclusion of our children from schools supported by our money-the prohibition of the exercise of the franchise-the exclusion of colored citizens from the jury box-the social barriers erected against our learning trades-the wily and vigorous efforts of the American Colonization Society to employ the arm of government to expel us from our native land-and withal the propitious awakening to the fact of our condition at home and abroad, which has followed the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"-call trumpet-tongued for our union, cooperation and action in the premises.

Convinced that the number amongst us must be small, who so far miscalculate and undervalue the importance of united and intelligent moral action, as to regard it as useless, the undersigned do not feel called upon here for an argument in its favor. Our warfare is not one where force can be employed; we battle against false and hurtful customs, and against the great errors of opinion which support such customs. Nations are more and more guided by the enlightened and energetically expressed judgment of mankind. On the subject of our condition and welfare, we may safely and properly appeal to that judgment. Let us meet, then, near the anniversary of this nation's independence, and enforce anew the great principles and self-evident truths which were proclaimed at the beginning of the Republic.

Among the matters which will engage the attention of our Convention will be a proposition to establish a NATIONAL COUNCIL of our people with a View to permanent existence. This subject is one of vast importance, and should only be disposed of in the light of a wise deliberation. There will come before the Convention matters touching the disposition of such funds as our friends abroad, through Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, may appropriate to the cause of our progress and improvement. In a word, the whole field of our interests will be opened to enquiry, investigation and determination.

That this be done successfully, it is desirable that each delegate to the Convention should bring with him an accurate statement as to the number of colored inhabitants in his town or neighborhood-the amount of property owned by them-their business or occupation-the state of education- the extent of their school
privileges and the number of children in attendance, and any other information which may serve the great purposes of the Convention.

It is recommended that all colored churches, literary and other societies, banded together for laudable purposes, proceed at once to the appointment of at least one, and not more than three, delegates to attend the National Convention. Such persons as come from towns, villages or counties, where no regular delegate may have been chosen, shall be received and enrolled as honorary members of the Convention.