Colored Democrat – 1900.

“A Colored Democrat: Oskaloosa’s Black Boom for Bryan.” This article is the first sketch of Taylor and was written by him at the request of the press. It was written following Taylor’s election as president of the National Negro Democratic League in 1900. This is the first appearance of information about his early life. Much information from this sketch appears later in Taylor’s campaign literature in 1904. Source: *Times Picayune*, 12 August 1900, p22.

Oskaloosa, Iowa, Aug. 4 [1900].

During all the years that have passed since the negro was granted suffrage we have drifted along with the tide of politics (Republican) without seriously contemplating the issues that have been prosecuted by the different parties up to the campaign of 1896. I do not mean by this that we have all voted the Republican ticket up to 1896, but it cannot be denied that there were comparatively but few among us who voted any other than the Republican ticket up to that time. Not because we favored the so-called protective tariff policy of the party, nor because we favored any particular issue which that party stood for, but because we were once slaves, and that Abraham Lincoln pronounced the proclamation declaring us free, and because Lincoln was elected president on the Republican ticket. It seemed hard for us to realize that Lincoln died many years ago, that every issue that maintained during his administration had long since been buried and forgotten by the Republican party.

The present administration has impressed the negro as being un-American, out of tune with the constitution and ruinous. We have concluded that President McKinley and his advisers are more concerned about the acquisition of foreign territory and the success of corporations than they are about the welfare of the republic and the common people, hence, we are waking up and studying the issues, which force us to ally ourselves with
the party that pledges protection to American institutions, the American masses and the promulgation of American principles, namely, the Democratic party.

There are nearly 2,500,000 negro voters in the United States, of which number about 10 per cent voted for Bryan in 1896, and it is conservative to estimate that 25 per cent of the negro vote will be cast for Bryan this year. In 1896 there was but one issue to which the negro clung tenaciously, and that was the free silver coinage issue.

No Republican or gold bug will ever live long enough to convince an intelligent, thoughtful negro that it is good, proper or right to discriminate against silver to the aggrandizement of gold; so long as the negro breathes the atmosphere of freedom and feasts upon the acorns of history and the fruit of modern facts he cannot be persuaded to sanction unjust discrimination of any character, either between money, metals or men and women, because of natural difference of complexion or peculiar characteristics. All negroes are by nature, contact and instinct bimetallists, and by temporal acquisition and inherent devotion to the laws of God and the teachings of Christ, supplemented by the declaration of independence and the constitution, immutable adherents to the broad principles of justice, equality and freedom, hence our opposition to the Republican policy of finance and expansion or imperialism.

As a race we worship the constitution and the amendments thereto; we adore the history made by Washington, Jefferson, Monroe and Lincoln; indeed the public utterances and acts of this illustrious quartette are to be sacred, and if this be true, how could we favor the gold standard theory of basic money, when the constitution and the utterances of the founders and savior of the republic declare that gold and silver are primary basic money? How can we favor militarism, expansion by “criminal aggression”
or imperialism, when every tenet of our republic, every sentence of the declaration of
independence and every precept of American law and every argument of American
statesmen from Washington down to McKinley’s administration, including McKinley
himself, up to the date of his “unconditional surrender” to Dictator Mark Hanna, stand
out in bold and defiant relief in opposition to the same, and for freedom, liberty and
justice, not for freedom according to the ancient idea of imperialism, but for the modern
American idea of freedom, which holds that it is slavery to force people to submit to
government without their consent.

As a race, we yield to no class of American citizens in point of patriotic zeal to
secure to the Cuban freedom from the yoke of Spanish tyranny, but we bitterly condemn
the McKinley Cuban and Porto Rican policy since the abandonment of the islands by
Spain. We contend for the absolute freedom of the islands. Whether the inhabitants are
capable of governing themselves or not, is a question for them and their God to determine,
and not McKinley, Mark Hanna or the American trusts and corporations.

A majority of the intelligent negroes of the country endorse the position of the
Democratic party upon the proposition above mentioned.

When the negro contemplates the fact that President McKinley has contracted
with the Sultan of Sulu, admitting him with his 300 wives and innumerable slaves to
come under the flag, in direct opposition to the injunctions of the constitution, the
declaration of independence and the proclamation of emancipation issued by Lincoln, he
becomes overawed with consternation and proclaims: “Can it be that the leader of the
party of Lincoln has so forgotten himself?”
In tears he droops his head and vows to revenge the treacherous action by sustaining the candidacy of Bryan and Stevenson, believing that to defeat McKinley and Roosevelt will possibly cause the Republican party to reflect and go back to its “first love.”

Having been subjected to persecution and servitude for nearly 300 years, the negro, like the Irish, naturally sympathizes with a downtrodden weak, semi-civilized nation like the Filipinos. We realize that should we favor the civilization of the people of the eastern archipelago, by that stern argument, the bullet, we would be in a measure be heaping condemnation upon our own head, for our unceasing clamor has been since 1868 for “protection” against the very treatment the McKinley administration is forcing upon the Filipino, the Cuban and Porto Rican.

We firmly believe that the tendency of the McKinley administration is toward an imperial form of government, which we believe to be ruinous, dangerous and fatal to every interest and principle.

It is unnecessary to produce argument to convince the negro that he should oppose trusts and combines, and the same is true as to the McKinley tariff policy. There is not an intelligent negro in the country who has the hardihood to declare in favor of trusts or protective tariff. Why? Because among the entire 10,000,000 negroes in the country not one holds an interest, claim, or stock in a single “trust combination,” or a single enterprise that is materially fostered by the protective tariff policy. Indeed, the negro laborer is excluded by every corporation or combination that is included in the “trust” or “protected” class. Then it is clear that we are forced by natural laws to oppose
the propagation of trusts and the promulgation of the so-called protective tariff policy so sacred to President McKinley and his adherents.

It only remains to establish in the minds of the negro the undisputed fact that the re-election of McKinley means the indorsement of trusts and combines, and die is cast so far as the negro vote is concerned.

That the McKinley administration has forced Uncle Sam to make a secret alliance with Johnnie Bull, thus committing the sympathy of the United States, officially, with the British monarchy as against the Boer republic, no student of international affairs can even doubt, much less deny. The Republican party leaders have made and are making a gigantic struggle to capture the sympathy of the negro by digging up the bloody shirt of 1820 and flaunting it before his vision, saying: “You must sustain McKinley in this measure, because it was the Dutchmen who first brought negro slaves to this country and planted them upon Virginia soil.” This net is too delicately woven to hold many or large fish.

Admit that the Hollander introduced slavery to the United States, then also admit that it was England who fought through two wars to enslave our country. But neither of those propositions are germane to the issue as to whether or not the Boer is entitled to the sympathy of Americans.

The principle upon which rests the war in South Africa is that of human liberty. Have the Boers the God-given right to govern themselves according to their own dictates, or should they be coerced by England because of her superior strength? Shall we stand for the freedom and liberty guaranteed by our own modern ideal of a republican form of government, or must we go back to the decayed theory of expansion by conquest, which
means the survival of the fittest, or “might makes right?” This is the only principle involved in the British invasion of the Transvaal. The question of who introduced negro slavery to the territory now known as the United States is not and cannot be made an issue.

Hence, as the negro above all others should stand for human freedom and the principle of self-government, we are forced to oppose President McKinley’s South African policy and favor the position of Bryan and the Democratic party on this issue.

In addition to the above, there are many minor reasons why the negro opposes the re-election of McKinley, each of which are in the race very significant, but time or space allotted me for this brief statement will not admit more at this time. I may suggest that every leader of the race from Booker Washington and Bishop Walters down, has for the past two years advised the negro to quit voting the Republican ticket en masse, and the stretching out of our political arms. We have learned by bitter experience the necessity of acquiring new friends (our old friends either died or forgotten us), and by the platform adopted by the Democracy at Kansas City we see that the principles we stand for are advocated by the party of Bryan and Stevenson, and not by the party of McKinley and Roosevelt.

The race, like the nation, has lost faith in McKinley, for he has proven untrue to the trust reposed in him in 1896. He has violated every pledge he made to the people. He has proven his unfriendliness to the negro in every instance, from the beginning of the Spanish-American war to the close of the Philadelphia convention.

As for Colonel Roosevelt, we never counted him a friend; he comes from the kid-gloved aristocracy that has ever and [one word] been an enemy to the common folk. He
has thrust against the teeth of the negro an insult that grates upon the sensibilities of every member of the race, and he will get his just reward (?) from the negro next November.

Summing up this brief review, I cannot see how the negroes of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Kansas and other eastern and western states can do otherwise than support Bryan and Stevenson in the coming campaign. Very respectfully.

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