

# Transcribed Excerpts from “Letter of Daniel R. Goodloe, to Hon. Charles Sumner, on the Situation of Affairs in North Carolina,” May 7, 1868

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### **NORTHERN SENTIMENT.**

Having disposed of this question of usurpation, on the part of the majority of the late Convention, as it regards Constitutional power, I now propose to review the situation of affairs from other aspects, in order that you may have the whole case before you: In doing so, I must advert for a moment, to the state of public opinion which prevailed at the close of the war, on the vexed question of conferring political franchises upon the colored population. You were then, as now, the uncompromising friend of universal suffrage, without regard to race, color, or former condition. But you cannot have forgotten that you had few sympathisers, even among Republicans. The great and good Mr. Lincoln, not long before his death, had signified his willingness to extend a qualified educational suffrage to the black people, coupled, perhaps, with the ownership of property; and there were not many members of either house of Congress who were willing to go beyond this point, by their votes, whatever some of them might think and say privately. They feared the revulsion of public sentiment at home, which has since developed itself, in the elections, in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and perhaps in other States, which have rejected the proposition to give suffrage to negroes, by decisive majorities. It is too true that the Northern people are unfriendly to civil and political equality with black men; and the prejudice is by no means confined to copperheads and rebel sympathisers.

Taking into view the difference in the numbers of the colored people in the two sections, I am inclined to the opinion that the prejudice against color is stronger in the Northern than the Southern States; and I cannot doubt, if the conditions were reversed--if the North contained the bulk of the black population--that we should see exhibitions of violent opposition to "negro equality," corresponding to those which are witnessed here.

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### **THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION OF NORTH CAROLINA.**

...the series of reconstruction acts were passed. They embrace the Constitutional Amendment as a part of the policy of reconstruction; and to insure its adoption, and to secure a loyal majority in the States, two other conditions were annexed to the terms of restoration. The right of suffrage, as well as the right to hold office, was taken away from the governing class, and at the same time, every negro and person of African descent in the ten States was enfranchised. I confess I thought these hard conditions. The utter incapacity of the negroes to exercise the elective franchise with discretion and for the best good of the State was manifest. But it was believed that at least, they would be true to themselves, and that they would vote for none but avowed friends to their rights. I never doubted them on this point, even when the demagogues who now lead them on to the destruction of whatever was venerable and valuable in the institutions of the past, were afraid to trust them, and opposed their enfranchisement.

The trouble is that they will vote for any man who makes a noisy demonstration of devotion to their rights, without the slightest regard to his past public career, or to his private character; and the result is, that they have placed the control of the State and its affairs in the hands of men who rose to eminence, or notoriety, as the champions of slavery and secession; or to wealth as dealers in slaves. I regret to say, also, that they elected quite a number of their own race, to the late Convention, and again to the legislature, most of whom could not stand an examination before a Massachusetts committee empowered to ascertain the educational qualification of voters. Men have been elected as judges of the circuit court who obtained their licenses to practice law within six months past. One of the "judges" is said never to have been licensed as a lawyer; and others, on account of character and qualifications, would be regarded as presumptuous if they should aspire to the office of justice of the peace in a well ordered and enlightened community. Still others, of both races, have been elected to office, who have been either convicted of or indicted for murder and other infamous crimes. The number of felonious aspirants for office, with their success and failure, would form a curious statistical inquiry. The vindictive partizan may exclaim that the rule of such men will be good enough for rebels. But the statesman, whose reputation for all time will rest upon the wisdom and success of his measures, must act on more generous principles, if he would have his name held in honor by future generations.