

Campaigning for the African American vote in Georgia, 1894

**COLORED VOTERS
READ**

Here is one instance of the treatment the Colored People of Georgia receive at the hands of the State Democratic Party.

What Evidence have the Negroes of this State that Schools will be provided for their Children in case the Third Party gets into Power?

School Fund derived from Taxes, Direct and Specific	\$1,043,657 82
School Fund derived from Poll Tax, appropriation	180,833 00
Total of School Fund for 1893	\$1,224,490 82
Of the School Fund raised by Direct and Specific Taxes, the white property of the State paid (School Tax)	\$1,037,493 45
The Colored property paid (School Tax)	20,104 36
Total of School Fund by Direct and Specific Taxes	\$1,057,597 81
Of the Poll Tax (the Whites paid)	\$114,000 00
The Negroes paid	70,000 00
Total Common Schools from Poll Tax	\$184,000 00
On the Disbursement of the School Fund in 1893 the total amount paid to White Teachers was	\$93,877 37
The total paid to Colored Teachers was	443,289 24
Total amount paid into School Fund by whites, including polls in 1893 was	\$1,151,503 45
Total paid to by negroes, including polls	112,104 36

Total amount of taxes paid by negroes in 1893 for all purposes and from all sources was \$122,806.31, showing that in the matter of schools alone the negroes received more than three times as much money, as he pays to the Public Treasurer from all sources.

Democratic Party campaign broadside aimed at winning African American voters in Georgia, 1894. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

In the gubernatorial and local elections of 1894, the Democrats and the newly formed People’s Party or Populist Party vied for black votes in Georgia. Neither the Democrats nor the Populists called for racial equality in their platforms. Georgia’s Populist Party, led by Tom Watson, however, invited two black delegates from the Colored Farmers’ Alliance to their convention in 1892, and in 1894 appointed an African American to the state campaign committee in an attempt to garner support. The “third party” even called for an end to the state’s convict lease system, which kept African American convicts in bondage. The incumbent

Democrats fought back by showcasing their record of “supporting” education for African Americans, as shown in this broadside.

The broadside is an account of the school and poll taxes levied on citizens as well as the amounts given to schools. Although poll taxes, or voting fees, existed sporadically throughout American history, in 1877 Georgia had been the first state to enact a “poll tax” to effectively disenfranchise many poor black voters. A grandfather clause allowed anyone who could vote prior to the Civil War (white men) to retain their right to vote regardless of literacy tests, poll taxes, or other mechanisms.

The Democrats attempted to demonstrate, using the statistics in the

broadside, that the system of taxation benefited the education of African American children. In this view, taxes collected from African American Georgians paid for approximately 25 percent of the salaries for black teachers while money collected from white Georgians paid for the other 75 percent. The document ends with the assertion that “the negro received more than three times as much money, as he pays in to the Public Treasurer from all sources.” Democrats wanted to convince African Americans with voting eligibility that their schools had been and would continue to be funded if they only voted for the Democratic candidates.