

CONTEMPORARY EDITORIAL OPINION OF THE 1857 CONSTITUTION

[The following editorials and "letters to the editor," published in seven Iowa newspapers in the months preceding the August, 1857, vote on the new constitution, illustrate several points about the attitudes and opinions of the time. As Dr. Russell M. Ross has pointed out in his article on the constitution in this issue of the JOURNAL, the document has proved, over the one hundred years of its existence, to be a sound and stable instrument of government. It contains few changes from the 1846 Constitution, but these changes aroused a furious political battle in 1857.

In 1857 the nation was full of strife over the issue of slavery, and practically every public question was viewed in the light of that problem. The Dred Scott decision and the troubles in Kansas during that year only served to bring the slavery issue more and more to the fore. Thus, when the framers of the 1857 Constitution provided, in a "codicil," that the voters could decide whether to remove the word "white" from the section on the franchise, the prosouthern Democrats seized upon this as a basis for an attack on the whole constitution.

The most important change in the new constitution — the provision that banking should be legalized in Iowa — also came under Democratic attack. Since the framing of the 1846 Constitution, when Iowa had been governed by the Democrats, the Republican party had been born and was now fighting for control of the state government. Republican opposition to the anti-bank beliefs of the Democrats had been one of the causes for the calling of the constitutional convention in 1857.

These two features — the removal of the word "white" and the provision for banks — were the chief points of Democratic attack. The editors of the opposing newspapers promptly and enthusiastically entered into a bitter contest and filled columns with denunciation. These editorials are of interest in that they illustrate the points of view of the two parties on the constitution, their methods of approaching the problem, and their mastery of invective.

Unfortunately, only one Democratic newspaper was available for this

compilation, but the replies of the Republican editors give some idea of the position of the Democrats, if the reader will allow a certain latitude for partisan misquotation. Discounting the political animus which motivated the editors, it would seem that the Democratic "line" was to play up the Negro issue as a cover-up for their opposition to the banking provision. In the light of the fact that the 1856 Iowa census listed only 275 Negroes in a population of just under 518,000, the Democratic fear of granting the Negro the vote — a most unlikely eventuality in Iowa in 1857 — seems uncalled for, unless it actually was, as the Republicans claimed, a smoke screen to hide their real opposition to the section legalizing banking in the new constitution.

As predicted by the Republicans, the constitution was accepted by the voters, although by a slim margin — 1,600 out of a total of some 79,000 ballots cast. The vote on the "codicil" was overwhelmingly against the removal of the word "white" from the constitution: only 8,489 out of the 58,000 voting on this issue favored it. The smaller vote on the referendum indicates that many Iowans were not yet ready to stand up and be counted on the Negro question.

These editorials are typical of the political wars of the time and show how the two sides approached the issues which were soon to lead the nation into civil conflict. They also show how a constitutional decision could be clouded by the political and economic strife then current. A list of the framers of the constitution, and their vote on final passage, has been included, to clarify certain references in the editorials. — EDITOR.]

From the *McGregor North Iowa Times* (Democratic), June 26, 1857:

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Has a great many defects and the press of the North seems to be generally opposed to it. We shall follow suit and vote against it also, but several of the features condemned by our cotemporaries are not so unacceptable to us as they are to others. If we could secure the establishment of a sound *General* Banking system such as Wisconsin has we would "go in" for it, notwithstanding we might separate ourselves from the fellowship of many valued political friends; but we can not under the proposed Constitution get a *general* law without being cursed with a *chartered* monopoly, and knowing how the latter is got through a legislative body, how it is

based, how it will behave when its fangs are once buried in the flesh of business, we prefer to do without the good, to the acceptance of both propositions. So also are other good points rejected because of the alloy found in the new instrument. We have not time to dissect the subject carefully, nor do we suppose it would particularly please our readers to occupy a column or two in reviewing a work that they have quite generally decided to reject. Our Republican exchanges up this way so far as we have had expressions from them are strongly opposed to the *negro-equalizing* clause, and one of our acquaintances goes so far as to insist that "a Constitution with such a black tail to it ought to be 'spit upon' by the whites, if no other reason existed for its condemnation." He offers to wager a hundred pounds of wool against a Sharp's Rifle that not one of the members of the Convention who voted to submit this clause to the people, will give it support at the polls, the colored attachment being appended only to secure aid from a class of men whose abstract ideas of freedom and political equality have run away with all practical notions as applied by the American people in social life! We don't know much about these matters, but we think there is little danger of the whites of Iowa going from the extreme of a present statutory expulsion of blacks from the state, to the extravagant liberality involved in this negro-voting and negro-office-holding proposition!

Our sympathies for the black man are not less than those entertained by his loudest pitty-ers but we would not be so hypocritical as to tantalize him with political rights and then practice towards him the severest social excision. Better leave him in that humble position which his nature seeks and in which he seems most happy, than to proffer his elevation and then insult him with language and looks implying contempt for the mind, form and color of the unfortunate.

Ibid., July 24, 1857:

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

We have given our readers this document in the last two numbers of the *Times*. As before remarked there are many things in the new instrument which we would be glad to see ingrafted on the old, but as a whole we esteem the late article no improvement on the present organic law of the State, and hence we shall vote against it.

It is charged by many of our cotemporaries that it was the design of

the framers of the New Constitution to bring the laws of Iowa in conflict with those of the U. S., and particularly is this the case in relation to the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law. If this was their design, and the language will fairly bear this construction, it was a very silly move on the part of the assembled constitutional wisdom of the State of Iowa, and it will be still more silly for a people deriving so many blessings from the Union, to deliberately vote a denial of the obligations they are under for the enjoyment of these advantages. How futile too, the effort to resist the authorities of the general government! A defeat of the Federal Law when enacted according to the forms, and in harmony with the tenor of the Constitution of the U. S., will be the opening event in an era of anarchy that must be fatal to us as States and communities. Even the very "free discussion" of the pulpit and the forum as to "our duty to obey a law that may conflict with our individual opinions," is bearing its legitimate fruits in the Riots that unhappily are disgracing our country not only in the wilds of Kansas, but in cities eminent for their wealth, their schools and their colleges, their churches and the high mental and moral attainments of their citizens.

Shall Iowa add to the mob spirit already rife in her oldest neighborhoods, by a solemn repudiation of her duty as one of the members of the confederacy, because a portion of her citizens have become so sensitive as to be unable to obey any law except that of "conscience?" We sincerely trust that no such recorded folly will be reported to us after the 1st Monday in August. If the State in her sovereign capacity says we will observe the national charter only so far as it suits the latitude and longitude, the moral and political notions of Iowa, with what weight of influence can she demand of one of her humblest citizens any further obedience to *her* laws than that which may accord with *his* notions of right and wrong. Authority may not always be agreeable to observe, but we can have no security individual or national without it, and after the first sweet impulse of unconditional freedom is enjoyed, we will turn with anxiety to the contemplation of the dangers which our "free" but unprotected situation brings with it. We can have no liberty without law, because the arm of the ruffian would soon deprive us of the one, if the other were not ever present to defend us. We can have no law unless individual opinion observes that which the masses have decided to be the best rule of action for the government of the whole.

The New Constitution, by admission of its friends, abolishes all distinc-

tions as to the color or character of witnesses in our court of law! This we regard as so very objectionable as to be mentioned only to meet a ready condemnation from every man who refuses to see criminals or other degraded persons occupy the witness stand. We confess to a love for the present rules on the subject of witnesses' qualifications. If a man has been convicted of perjury or other infamous crime, we, as a juror, would not want to hear him speak in a matter involving the interests of a single human being — he is out-lawed, and politically is no more a man! Neither are we so tender-hearted towards the colored races as to render our laws more indulgent to them than they now are. We are sorry for the negro, but our sympathy does not cause us to regard him as competent to bear the political responsibilities of an American citizen, nor are we content to risk the effect of an abrogation of "distinctions of color" when Mexico and the Central American States present such mournful evidences of the utter impracticability of sustaining a government based upon the recognition of all races as co-partners.

If the Republican party of Iowa desire to invite a colored emigration and fill our towns and villages with a class of persons who must ever remain socially degraded, they can effectually secure that object by offering the premiums for black citizens which this New Constitution and its separate *anti-white* codicil embodies. There is no man of our acquaintance, be his politics Republican or Democratic, who desires to see negroes come among us — the blighting effect of such people upon the portion of a village which they occupy, has been witnessed by all in older states, — why invite them here by the adoption of laws placing them in situations more flattering than they can attain in other states? Canada is now groaning under the incubus of large negro neighborhoods, and her enlightened statesmen are seeking to effect some governmental arrangement by which her territory may be relieved of their presence. — Let Iowa extend the hand of ill-judged sympathy to them and it will not be twelve months before our villages will be spotted with "negro quarters" and an indolent mass of ebony citizens who will blight any town they settle in. We all know this to be true, and yet there are newspaper conductors so sick with mawkish sentimentality as to urge the propriety of throwing open the doors of our political temple to the indiscriminate admission of *any thing* that bears a resemblance in shape to the Caucasian race. We thank God that we have not forgotten for whom and by whom the American Fabric of Constitutional Freedom was reared!

From the Burlington *Daily Hawk-Eye and Telegraph* (Republican), April 23, 1875:

With a view to the proposed alteration of our State Constitution, and the avowed intention of the Republicans to prepare the way for amalgamation, we would suggest the propriety of organizing, in every election precinct or school-district, a FREE WHITE MEN'S SOCIETY, &c. &c.

Thus speaks Father [Henry P.] Scholte, the editor of the *Gazette*, Alcalde of the City of Pella, Prairie Lake Township, Marion county, Iowa. We copy to endorse the wisdom and propriety of the suggestion. If there be no more white men there than at the time the marshal made his return, it is highly important that their blood should be preserved in its purity. We hope also that our venerable friend may be successful in fencing out those "niggers," and preserving in its purity the blood of his people, as it came from the ancient Holland stem, the "avowed intention" of the Republicans to "prepare the way for amalgamation," to the contrary notwithstanding.

Ibid., May 5, 1857:

It is somewhat singular that the only objection that has been urged against the new Constitution is one founded upon falsehood — Some half a dozen more or less of Buchanan newspapers, into the minds of whose Editors one honest impulse or manly emotion, had it ever found a lodgement would have been totally destitute of society, have attempted to get up a prejudice against it by asserting that there is appended to it a codicil giving the right of suffrage to the African. And they have thoroughly learned the rogue's maxim, viz: That a lie well stuck to is as good as the truth, and hence they repeat the falsehood day by day. But it is no use. Every body that is capable of finding out any thing has already found out that this story is all false. It is pretty generally understood that a Constitution against which no truthful objection has been raised after it has been before the people several months is a good one. Party lines cannot be drawn.

Ibid., June 20, 1857:

The close observer who looked beyond the surface of things readily discovers the secret reason which lies at the bottom of the opposition, violent and uncompromising, on the part of a few journals and individuals in this

MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, 1857*

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Party</i> | <i>County</i> | <i>Nativity</i> | <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Age</i> | <i>Vote on Const.</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Ayers, Squire | D | Van Buren | Penn. | Farmer | 56 | Nay |
| Bunker, David | R | Washington | Ind. | Farmer | 46 | Yea |
| Clark, John T. | R | Allamakee | N. Y. | Lawyer | 40 | Yea |
| Clarke, Rufus L. B. | R | Henry | Conn. | Lawyer | 37 | Yea |
| Clarke, William Penn | R | Johnson | Md. | Lawyer | 39 | Yea |
| Cotton, Aylett R. | D | Clinton | Ohio | Lawyer | 30 | Yea |
| Day, Timothy | D | Van Buren | Ohio | Farmer | 53 | Yea |
| Edwards, John | R | Lucas | Ky. | Lawyer | 42 | Yea |
| Ells, George W. | R | Scott | Conn. | Bookseller | 48 | Yea |
| Emerson, J. H. | D | Dubuque | Va. | Real Estate | 49 | Nay |
| Gibson, H. D. | D | Marion | Tenn. | Merchant | 37 | Nay |
| Gillaspy, George | D | Wapello | Ky. | Farmer | 42 | Yea |
| Gower, Robert | R | Cedar | Maine | Farmer | 53 | Yea |
| Gray, Hosea W. | R | Linn | Penn. | Farmer | 40 | Yea |
| Hall, Jonathan C. | D | Des Moines | N. Y. | Lawyer | 47 | Nay |
| Harris, Amos | D | Appanoose | Ohio | Lawyer | 34 | Nay |
| Hollingsworth, Jeremiah | R | Keokuk | Ind. | Farmer | 47 | Yea |
| Johnstone, Edward | D | Lee | Penn. | Lawyer | 41 | Yea |
| Marvin, A. H. | R | Jones | N. Y. | Farmer | 49 | Yea |
| Palmer, D. P. | D | Davis | N. Y. | Lawyer | 40 | Yea |
| Parvin, J. A. | R | Muscatine | N. J. | Farmer | 49 | Yea |
| Patterson, William | D | Lee | Va. | Pork Packer | 54 | Yea |
| Peters, John H. | D | Delaware | Conn. | Lawyer | 28 | Nay |
| Price, Daniel W. | D | Pottawattamie | Ky. | Lawyer | 30 | Yea |
| Robinson, M. W. | D | Des Moines | Ohio | Farmer | 42 | Yea |
| Scott, Alpheus | R | Clayton | Mass. | Real Estate | 32 | Yea |
| Seeley, Thomas | R | Guthrie | N. Y. | Farmer | 33 | Yea |
| Skiff, Harvey J. | R | Jasper | N. Y. | Banker | 36 | Yea |
| Solomon, Daniel H. | D | Mills | Va. | Lawyer | 27 | Nay |
| Springer, Francis | R | Louisa | Maine | Farmer | 44 | Yea |
| Todhunter, Lewis | R | Warren | Ohio | Lawyer | 35 | Yea |
| Traer, J. C. | R | Benton | Ohio | Banker | 30 | Yea |
| Warren, William A. | R | Jackson | Ky. | Mail Contractor | 45 | Yea |
| Wilson, James F. | R | Jefferson | Ohio | Lawyer | 28 | Yea |
| Winchester, Sheldon G. | R | Hardin | N. Y. | Druggist | 26 | Yea |
| Young, James A. | R | Mahaska | Va. | Merchant | 41 | Yea |

*Erik McKinley Eriksson, "The Framers of the Constitution of 1857," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 22:58-9, 78-9 (January, 1924).

State, to the New Constitution to be voted on in August next. Although in different latitudes different reasons are given for this opposition, yet the real and true one is the same for this throughout the State. These National Democrats are objecting to it in Northern Iowa because it does not give the right of suffrage to the Negro — while hereabouts they object to the same instrument on account, as they boldly assert, of its giving this right to Negroes and Indians! — Some assert that the clause authorizing banking is so loosely worded that it will invite men of straw to swindle our citizens by the establishment of banking institutions for the purpose of failing, while on the other hand it is claimed by those professing to be friendly to banks that this codicil is so very stringent that no man or company can or will bank under it and therefore we shall be no better off in this respect with the new than the old Constitution.

It must be very apparent to the most casual observer that an opposition so very eccentric in the ground occupied must have some reason for its violent course concealed from the public. Such is the fact. The opposition attempted to be fomented against it is stirred up by a set of men who obtained charters for and started a number of banks in Nebraska and are now flooding our State with a paper currency for which we are utterly unable to obtain gold and silver because it is impossible for us to run their paper home upon them. There is no conveyance to Nebraska save by the old stage coach and when we have reached there by this conveyance we should probably be compelled to travel half the territory over to find the local habitation of these banks whose owners live and do business in Iowa; and after we had found them we should not probably find provision made for the proper redemption of the paper. The truth is we are furnished with a paper currency which is not convertible, in regard to the solvency of which we can know nothing, by a set of banks whose interest it is to fail (we do not say that they will.) These bankers are making money by this operation. If we adopt the new Constitution and under it establish banks of our own, their occupation is gone! . . .

The paper in this city is controlled and its editor, [David] Sheward, owned by Bernhart Henn, of Fairfield, one of the Nebraska rag barons. Other newspapers are in the same condition. But as one rose can hardly be said to make a summer so a few newspaper editors are not the People and when following a corrupt line of policy will meet but a very faint response.

The Democratic party, as a party is not and cannot be arrayed against this Constitution. — All party opposition to it was dropped in the Convention when it received on its final adoption all but four votes. [sic. The final vote in the convention was 25 yeas to 7 nays.] It is destined to an almost equally unanimous endorsement at the hands of the people, the opposition of a few corrupt newspapers to the contrary notwithstanding.

Ibid., June 24, 1857:

STILL HARPING

Our neighbor over the way [the Burlington *Gazette*, a Democratic paper] with a persevering energy worthy of a better cause, is still harping on the New Constitution, and trying to prevent its adoption. But he is evidently "kicking against the pricks" — fighting against light and knowledge — against his own convictions and against the popular sentiment. The *Gazette* would fain retain the old Constitution *because* it prohibits banking — it would prevent the adoption of the New because it *permits* and *legalizes* banking, and under it we might have, as in Ohio and most of the States, a paper currency convertible into gold and silver, at the pleasure of the bill holder, instead, as now, of an illegal and depreciated currency in the soundness of which there can be little confidence.

The inconsistency of the course is very palpable. The editor opposes Banks and cries aloud for hard money, hoping thus to enable his employers to furnish us a paper currency from Nebraska, and ultimately enable them to make fortunes by exploding these rag factories, leaving thousands of dollars of their worthless paper in the hands of the people of Iowa, a dead loss. The editor of the *Gazette*, instead of being true to the people of the State — has sold himself like Judas, not, however, for thirty pieces of silver, but for Nebraska rags, to Bernhart Henn and the paper Barons of Nebraska. — He advocates hard money for the sake of the shin plaster manufacturers, because they pay him to do it; just as he did last year advocate Popular Sovereignty, under which he defended the right of Missourians to do the voting of the people of Kansas. He then thought it no harm for his right good masters, the nigger-drivers, to commit murder, arson, and kindred crimes in Kansas and Missouri — and now he is equally chivalrous in defending the sharks of Nebraska, and anxious to keep the ground clear for them in Iowa.

Ibid., June 27, 1857:

It shows to what straits the opposition are driven when it is stated that about the strongest stands taken against the New Constitution have either been upon its best points or upon articles common to the Constitutions of the several States and of the United States. — As an instance in point it is proper to state that the Dubuque Express and Herald is objecting to its adoption on account of the following: "No person shall be deprived of his life, liberty or property, without due process of law." In this enlightened nineteenth century a public journal professing Democratic principles objects to a Constitution because it guarantees to every person "life, liberty, and property," until they are deprived of these rights by "due process of law." This objectionable feature of the new Constitution is found in the first article and first section of the old Constitution now in force — is promulgated in the Declaration of Independence — and on it securely rests our free and Republican Institutions and the whole fabric of Government in all civilized countries. And what objection does the reader suppose the knowing editors of the Express and Herald can find against a clause which guarantees such important rights. They say it will interfere with the execution of the Fugitive Slave law!!

They would sweep away the bill of rights — habeas corpus — trial by jury, and everything guaranteeing the rights of person and property to the three quarters of a million of white persons living in Iowa in order that the owners of human chattels may have a clear field for the capture of a few hundred negroes. Such is the most disgraceful phase of the "nigger question," and the most abject and pitiable exhibition of doughfacedness ever seen north of Mason and Dixons line! The Dubuque paper has made the opposition of the Iowa State Gazette not only respectable but dignified and manly.

Another objection is pertinaciously urged. — The new Constitution requires for the passage of every law a majority of all the members in each branch of the legislature. This upon trial will be found an excellent section. It will compel a full and constant attendance of all the members, prevent pairing off and greatly facilitate the transaction of public business. A full attendance upon the sessions of the Legislature will be compelled, and we believe the people of the State will have cause to rejoice that the framers of this Constitution did so wise a thing as to incorporate this new feature.

This is a fair sample of the character of the opposition and shows how frivolous and heartless it is — we had almost said how false and corrupt!

Ibid., July 2, 1857 (quoting article from the *Iowa City Republican*):

THE DISINTERESTED WITNESS!

Bernhart Henn, Esq., is out with a letter against the New Constitution; and the *Crescent* publishes it with a gusto peculiarly refreshing, all things considered. What think you, gentle reader, could have induced the immaculate *Henn* to set up such a cackling? Can it be possible that his connection with shaving shops at Fairfield, Council Bluffs, Fort Dodge, Sioux City, and a half dozen other points, has any possible connection with his ferocious assault upon the New Constitution? Isn't there room for a suspicion that his extensive interest in the *Nebraska Shinplasters*, — with which he is helping to flood the state, by a tricky evasion of law, — has a little influence in inducing the deposit of such an addled egg, as that on which the *Crescent* is setting, with the hope of hatching out something in the likeness of a Democratic cock? — Democrats of Iowa! Isn't there something exceedingly suspicious in the opposition of such men to the New Constitution? Look at the matter. This Mr. Henn professes to be a simon-pure democrat; yet he is head over ears in illegitimate banking, and the issue of *Nebraska shinplasters*! He is a pretty adviser of the people, in this matter of the New Constitution. Wouldn't it be advisable for him to come into the arena with cleaner hands, if he desires to influence the mind of plain, common sense people? Indeed, would not even the smallest modicum of prudence and modesty induce him to seal his lips? The opposition of such a man, in such a position, is the strongest possible argument in favor of the New Constitution and a legitimate Banking Law.

The bungling manner in which Mr. Henn approaches the matter, renders his assault perfectly harmless. It would not do for him to give the true reason of his opposition; his hostility to the Banking feature of the New Constitution. — His position and pursuits effectually seal his lips on that point. But that he should hatch out any thing so ridiculous, as that story about 300 blacks coming from *Ohio*, if the New Constitution is adopted, betrays a weakness which casts discredit upon the whole barnyard brood.

The provisions of the new Iowa instrument, on the subject of Testimony and Education, correspond almost literally with those of the instrument

given to Ohio, by a Democratic Constitutional Convention. Where the Constitution of our sister State fails to enunciate exactly the same rules, the statutes of the State have made up the deficiency. What possible motive then could 300 blacks have in coming from Ohio to Iowa. The defeat of the codicil is admitted, on all hands, to be inevitable. The extension of suffrage has not a half dozen outspoken advocates in the State. While in Ohio, under the rulings of a Democratic Court and a Democratic Constitution, colored men vote in every county, at every election; it being necessary only for them to prove or swear that they are more than half white! We have seen men as black as the ace of spades, vote there year after year, before Democratic Judges. Call your next witness, gentlemen. We doubt whether Mr. Henn will pass muster.

Ibid., July 9, 1857:

The back-bone of the opposition to the new constitution comes from a dozen or two of our citizens, who being men of substance, have undertaken, in violation of the spirit of the organic law, to furnish a paper currency to the People of Iowa. The prime object with them, as with all men, is to make money, and hence their paper currency, although purporting to be, is not convertible into gold and silver at the pleasure of the note holder, because the banks are out of the way over in Nebraska and elsewhere and their notes cannot be sent home for redemption without great delay and expense.

These men are furnishing the sinews of the present war upon the new Constitution, and they can afford to bleed freely to prevent its adoption, for they are now putting money in their pockets and will continue to do so as long as they can keep out legitimate banks.

Does the reader wish to know how these "rag-barons" are now tinkering with our currency and keeping their paper in circulation in spite of our teeth [*sic*]? The *modus operandi* is thus: Bernhart Henn, for instance, is the owner in part or whole of a Bank in Nebraska and another in Indiana, and has a Broker's office in this State, where all the business of these two banks is really done and where he *professes* to redeem the notes of both of them in *currency*! A. sells his farm, and gets a thousand dollars in paper of the Indiana wild-cat, redeemable by Mr. Henn. As he feels no great confidence in the paper he at once presents it at the counter in Fairfield for

redemption and gets in return one thousand dollars in Nebraska "Red Dog!" B. has in his possession Nebraska rags to the same amount and presenting it for redemption is handed over the same thousand but just redeemed, of Indiana trash. Mr. Henn thus keeps all this trash afloat in our midst without being in any manner troubled except to count it as often as folks like to swap cats and dogs. He is thus putting money in his pocket all the time while the business and production of the country is taxed in the shape of exchange for his benefit and to pay the difference between his rags and specie!

Ibid., July 13, 1857:

THE OPPOSITION TO THE NEW CONSTITUTION

We propose to submit a few facts in regard to the men who oppose the adoption of the new Constitution. The opposition comes from the Jones [George Wallace Jones, Iowa Democratic Senator in Congress] and Henn clique of the spoils party of Iowa, who have already grown rich, fabulously rich, upon government favors commanded by their position and used to enrich themselves and friends. They have had the control of all the land offices in the State for years, moving them wherever they could thus best subserve their own private ends. They purchased Ft. Dodge and Sioux City, and then had the Land offices located there. Not content with this they made these places points in the Railroads to which Government grants of lands were made and thus added very largely to their before great wealth.

These are but single items. We might name other instances of practice more reprehensible whereby they have enriched themselves through their influence with the General Government. We might go on and mention the blackest of all their black transactions, the effort to swindle the settlers in western Iowa and drive them off the farms they had improved, which occurred last year. They attempted to seize, under a law which these blood-suckers had smuggled through Congress, through their tools and creatures, some forty thousand acres of swamp land, already taken possession of and sold by Iowa to the men who occupied it. But they were foiled in this.

These men are cormorants — they are the most unscrupulous and heartless set of plunderers that ever cursed any State or country. And they are among us with their great wealth, which is power, and are determined to control the destinies of our State. During the last two years their money has procured Bank Charters for them from the Territorial Legislature of

Nebraska; an exercise of sovereignty, by the by, on the part of the "Squatters" of that Territory, not only of questionable propriety, but of doubtful power. Having thus secured Bank Charters and set their "rag mills" at work over among the "Buffalo haunts and gopher holes," they are prepared to supply Iowa with a currency. But they must prevent the adoption of the new Constitution, which allows the people of this State to charter Banks of their own, or they will totally fail in their plan of making still other fortunes by furnishing a depreciated currency. If they can prevent the people from voting [for] this Constitution, what will be the results? Should it be defeated, *six years* must intervene before another can be adopted! — What then? The Nebraska Banks will in that time have an abundant opportunity to expand their circulation — to get millions of their trash into the pockets of the people, and then explode — blow up, involving the State in a calamity which must blight it for years! We do not know that this will be so and do not assert it, but we do know that they have obtained charters and set banks in operation, and their present interest is to fail!

On the other hand we have a system of Banking to be legalized by the New Constitution, which makes it the interest of the Banker not to fail. This is the true plan and the only one that ever will give us good Banks. Let the Constitution be adopted, and under it will spring up sound and safe banks that will not only redeem their bills with specie but put down the price of exchange and reduce the rate of interest.

From the *Des Moines Iowa Citizen* (Republican), June 17, 1857:

We have a word to say respecting those papers in the State which, while they are nominal friends to the new Constitution, are doing comparatively nothing to advance its interests. Quite a majority of the organs in the State are friendly to the amended instrument; but of this number there are few that are engaged in its defense with the energy that the occasion requires. This supineness and indifference are the more reprehensible from the fact, that the most unscrupulous advantage is taken by the enemies of the Constitution to defeat it. They distort it by misquotations — slander it by falsely representing its provisions, and they resort to the most unprincipled measures to defeat its adoption. Some of its sections are villainously abridged by striking out important words, and others are made to read differently by the most unblushing interpolations. All these efforts against the Constitution carry with them a certain amount of influence; and it is

our duty, and the duty of every paper in the State that has committed itself to the defense of the revised law, to assist in rolling back the tide of falsehood and malignity that is sweeping widely through our communities. This is a time for action. We may have bright and glorious visions of ultimate success, but these will avail us nothing unless our efforts correspond with our desires. Let us not leave for others to do what we are capable of doing ourselves. Let each friend of the Constitution do his duty, and let each paper that proposes to vindicate its claims be faithful to the interests of the people, and we will plant the standard of our triumph over the ruined fortresses of the enemy.

While we deplore the indifference of many of our cotemporaries, we must commend the ability and energy displayed by others. The Davenport Gazette has shown itself to be a fearless and able champion in the present canvass. The Muscatine Journal is doing a good work. The Iowa City Republican gives an occasional thrust at the Opposition, which is felt through all their ranks. The Fairfield Ledger is waging a spirited and successful warfare against its cotemporary — the Sentinel; and the Iowa State Journal has found its way, very fortunately, to the path of duty, and has come up to the help of the Constitution against the Philistines. Other papers are laboring with much ability and industry to promote the interests of the revised law; and it would be gratifying to us, if we could truthfully state, that every organ in Iowa that is professedly friendly to a righteous cause, is actively exerting its influence in behalf of the Constitution. We regret to say that this is not the case.

The course that is taken by our adversaries attests the utter feebleness of their cause. They endeavor to supply every deficiency in argument by unbounded impudence and meanness. The Muscatine Enquirer makes out its strongest objection to the Constitution, by directly assailing the Declaration of Independence. The Chariton Mail exhibits its impotent malice, by fulminating about imaginary negro equality. The Fairfield Sentinel and its invisible confederate in transgression, "*Iowa*," charge away from their feeble batteries, by striking out important words in the Constitution, and presenting this instrument, in a mutilated and disfigured form, to the people. The Maquoketa Sentinel, unable to originate an editorial on the subject, steals the thunder of the Muscatine Enquirer, and because no flashes of lightning attend this stolen thunder, no fatal results have followed. The Oskaloosa Times reciprocates the favor of the Sentinel by

borrowing largely from the Burlington Gazette; and the Gazette makes sundry convulsive efforts to supply the great drain that is made upon its resources, by attacking the Constitution of the United States. Having been exposed in this treasonable effort, the Gazette, like all other great criminals when they are arraigned, denies its guilt, and then suddenly begins to talk about its most familiar acquaintance — the *Devil*. It is always true to its degenerate instincts, and it is about as well qualified to represent the interests of that sable functionary around whom its affections linger, as any of its Democratic associates. — The Pella Gazette, which is a tolerable transcript of its melancholy namesake at Burlington, is so intensely foreign and anti-American in its feelings, that we suggest the propriety of its removal to Holland or Terra Del Fuego. It has a wrong location in an intelligent county, and if it can find a community in some foreign land in which intelligence is at a discount, and ignorance and impudence are at a premium, a transfer of the Gazette to that congenial locality would be very desirable. It might do something in softening the ruder outline of barbarism in other nations, but it is entirely out of its proper sphere in assuming airs dictatorial over native Americans. The Council Bluffs Bugle, an offshoot of Mormonism and political bigotry, concludes that the new Constitution should be defeated because the [Council Bluffs] Nonpareil happens to be in its favor. It is ludicrous to observe its tortuous windings in trying to escape from merited castigation. It had better join the march of the Mormon brethren, and hasten its exodus from Iowa to Salt Lake. Deseret opens up a theater in which its ambition to do evil might be fully gratified. Its notes, as a *Bugle*, would be very serviceable in calling to its assistance the brigands and land-pirates of Utah. The organ of Senator Jones in Dubuque, trembling for the safety of its distinguished patron of the Senate, makes a violent effort to defeat the Constitution, because it provides for the creation of banks. This paper has already given us a history of the banking system, and the uninitiated might infer from its perusal, that paper money has produced every evil under the sun, not even excepting the Cholera and the Comet! It deals altogether in extremes — has an impulsive and excitable temperament, and the greatest difficulty it experiences in discussing the merits of a question, is a general want of ability to comprehend its own arguments. If its judgment were co-extensive with its taste for the unreal and fictitious, it might live a semi-remove, at least, from its present obscurity. It has a copious expectoration of words, which

would be of singular advantage to it, if they meant anything at all; but in the present state of the case, we regard an editorial in the "Northwest" as a mass of empty and unmeaning verbiage.

These are a portion of the Iowa papers that stand opposed to us in the present contest. Collectively considered, they form a delectable group, and some skillful ambrotypist would confer a favor upon the public by taking an impression of their physiognomies. The Editor of the Burlington Gazette should be represented on the plate as scowling defiantly at the American Constitution. The Editor of the Muscatine Enquirer should be exhibited as trampling upon the Declaration of Independence, while the gentleman who presides over the destinies of the Maquoketa Sentinel, should be represented as filching an empty editorial from the pocket of a political brother. The editor of the Northwest should be fully displayed as kneeling at the feet of Senator Jones, and the editor of the Bugle should be exhibited as running toward Salt Lake in hot haste, with his neighbor of the Nonpareil in close pursuit.

THE SENTINEL

The most shameless, unblushing and unprincipled article which we have yet seen in opposition to the new Constitution, appeared recently in the Fairfield Sentinel. It was written by an anonymous scribbler who styles himself "Iowa." This invisible representative of all untruth, states that the material amendment to the Article on the Right of Suffrage consists in the erasure of the word "*white*" in the first Section. According to the misrepresentation of "Iowa," the first Section would read thus: "Every male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years" &c.

We can hardly conceive how it is possible for any one to be guilty of a falsehood, so villainously notorious. It is well known to every voter in the State who is not a verdant representative of unmixed ignorance, that the word "*white*" has never been expunged from the amended Constitution. It remains there still, occupying the same position which it does in the present Constitution; and in view of this fact, which is conspicuously obvious to every reader of the amended law, the writer in the Sentinel is reduced to the miserable condition of pleading guilty either to the most transparent ignorance, or the basest misrepresentation. We deem it a duty that we owe to the public, and to the new Constitution which has been so unscrupulously invaded by dishonorable partizans, to unmask the imper-

minent visage of the Sentinel's correspondent, and drag him from his suspicious concealment. He professes to give us a grave and dispassionate article on the Constitution, and yet he is so conscious of the weakness of his cause, and his utter destitution of every manly and noble principle, that he must, in order to escape public odium, throw over himself the specious covering of a false signature. Like all other enemies of truth and justice, he acknowledges the instincts of the coward, and skulks, assassin-like, in the dark. His motives for concealment are weighty, because he knows that if the anonymous veil is torn away from his countenance, a leprous decay will seize his reputation for truth, and he will be known on the streets as a walking libel on humanity.

We charge the Fairfield Sentinel with being *particeps criminis* in this disgraceful communication. The editor well knew that he was giving publicity to a falsehood for which an apology would be the veriest mockery; and he stands convicted before the world of aiding and abetting an untruthful correspondent, to perpetrate one of the most shameless falsities that ever disgraced an Iowa paper. Let the different organs of the State, friendly to the Constitution, expose this foul calumny of the Sentinel, until that paper is known, as well as its fictitious adjunct, "Iowa," as a byword and a hissing among the people.

Ibid., July 29, 1857:

HO, FOR THE CONSTITUTION!

If the new Constitution is defeated, the present organic law, with all its defective and contracted provisions, will be fastened upon the people for years to come.

If the new Constitution is defeated, have we any reason to believe that any future Constitutional Convention will frame for us a better one, or have we any assurance that when it is framed, it will be approved by the popular vote of the people?

If we suffer defeat in the present Constitutional contest, how much time, and how many thousand dollars of the people's money, must be employed in the reorganization of a Convention whose work, at last, may be overthrown by the voters of the State?

If our banner, in this canvass, is destined to trail in the dust, how long must we remain at the mercy of domestic shipplasters, and at the mercy, too, of every banker of every other State in the Union? How long must

we continue without any means of defense, with our hands and our feet manacled by the present Constitution? We say, how long? and let the people answer.

If a repulse awaits us on the first Monday of August, will not this result strongly indicate the fact, that the people of Iowa are perfectly satisfied with the present Constitution? If they are satisfied with it, why did they petition for the convocation of a Constitutional Convention whose only object in assembling was to frame a new fundamental law? If the present law is unexceptionable, why demand another? Why appropriate over fifty thousand dollars to defray the expenses of our delegates in Convention, when their services were not needed?

If the Constitution is defeated, every department of business in the State will become chilled and paralyzed. Improvements of every kind will receive a check from which they will not recover; and it will be found, when too late, that by throwing our influence in opposition to the Constitution, we have brought down ruin upon our own heads.

By voting against the new Constitution, we will virtually declare to the world, that the citizens of Iowa are not capable of SELF-GOVERNMENT. It will be equivalent to the declaration on our part, that the people have but few reserved rights, and that the Constitution should have power to control despotically the popular will, and chain down public sentiment on many of the great questions of the day.

On the other hand, by the adoption of the new Constitution, the good old doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, that "ALL POLITICAL POWER IS INHERENT IN THE PEOPLE," will be established on a broad and permanent foundation. The rights of the masses will be respected, and the true citizenship of WHITE MEN will be vindicated.

Adopt the Constitution, and the means of defense against the paper issues of foreign corporations, will be placed in the hands of the people. A healthy banking system, endorsed by the ruling power — the people — will diffuse its blessings — the gold and silver which have been drained from us by the importation of foreign paper issues, will be returned to us — exorbitant rates of interest for money loaned will be modified to such an extent that usury will hardly be known — improvements of a useful and durable character will spring up in every part of the State, and in a year from this time, every man who now opposes the Constitution, will hide his diminished head in shame and mortification.

Adopt the Constitution, and the common school system of the State, which is the fortress, the stronghold, the great citadel in the midst of our civilization, will acquire a vigor and an efficiency which have not been hitherto known; and parents who wisely seek the moral and intellectual improvement of their children, will bless the day in which their votes secured the adoption of the new Constitution.

Ratify the Constitution, and every interest of the State, including education, agriculture, the mechanical departments, commerce and trade, and railroad improvements, will receive an impetus which will ultimately place Iowa, in point of wealth and importance, far in advance of a majority of her sister States. Let the people vote right, and all this will be accomplished.

We say again, "Ho, for the Constitution!" Let its friends rally to the standard, and work for victory. Let the fetters of party be broken. Let the prejudices of faction be hushed into silence, that the united voice of the people, untrammelled by party, and by partizan demagogues, will be lifted up in advocacy of the new Constitution. Men of all parties and of all honorable vocations, have a common and an undivided interest in this subject; and as they desire the prosperity of the State by the establishment of a more liberal form of government, they will deposit their votes in favor of right and of justice.

Ho, for the new Constitution! Let every neighborhood, precinct and county be organized. Arouse the spirit of enthusiasm everywhere. Marshal your forces for the engagement. Let the voice of discord be hushed into everlasting silence; and as you go forth to battle on the first Monday of August, let your war-cry, as it rings out upon the breeze above the commotion of party, bear the stirring burden: The new Constitution is embalmed in the hearts of the people. We will fight for it upon the common field of citizenship at the ballot box; and we will never give over the struggle, until victory perches upon our glorious banner. Ho, for the Constitution!

From the Cedar Rapids *Cedar Valley Times* (Republican), July 2, 1857:

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The adoption of a fundamental law by the people of a free sovereign State is the highest prerogative of sovereignty and the most important of all political transactions. Since the days of *Magna Charter* [sic] the English

and English American people have alike claimed the right to guard their liberties, secure the general welfare, and promote the highest interests of the citizen by firm, unchangeable constitutional guarantees, made by themselves and changed only by themselves. Particularly is this a part of our American system. We claim the right not only to make at the outset a constitution for the State, but to modify and change the same from time to time as experience or changing necessity may demand. The people of this State have for several years past felt the necessity for a change in the organic law of this State. Some three years ago the legislature voted to submit the proposition for a convention to the people, but the bill got lost in the pocket of Gov. HAMSTEAD [*sic.* Governor Stephen Hempstead] but, finally the people had an opportunity of voting upon this question and although the bogus Democratic papers of the State howled out their opposition to the holding of the convention, the vote was largely in favor of the measure, and bungtown Democracy slunk away to watch for some turn in the wheel more auspicious for their peculiar kind of attack. They tried very hard to get the control of the convention, but found that the people gave them but fifteen out of thirty-six members. The Convention once assembled, some of said bogus democratic papers ignored its existence (like the *State Democrat* at Davenport,) never once alluding to its organization or action, others became very differently affected (like the *Reporter* at Iowa City) and grew noisy and excited because republican delegates elected by republican votes in a republican State, should desire a republican Constitution, not in the party sense of the word, but a Constitution free and equal in its provisions and operations. The Democratic members of the Convention were also alive to party interests, and by a system of severe tactics tried to divide and distract the republican members, but with little success.

Finally the Convention of 1857 finished its labors, and its work is before the people of the State for rejection or approval at the polls in August. Bogus Democracy is now making its last effort against the progressive and liberal propositions contained in the New Constitution. It carries on a guerrilla warfare, the most diverse and conflicting arguments being made use of in different portions of the State. Here in Linn [County] we are told to vote against the New Constitution, for the reason that it does not entirely restrict county indebtedness for works of internal improvement, while the Scott county Democracy are adjured to vote against it for the

reason that it contains *any* such restriction. Thus it is that Democratic editors, with a few honorable exceptions, are waging an unprincipled fight upon the new and improved Constitution — a mere war of personal and local objections, a series of side thrusts, without making a single issue in which they unitedly contend for some great principle. Their object has become too transparent to escape the notice of the most casual observer. It is to defeat the Constitution because the Republican party had a majority in the Convention, and then to charge upon that party an imbecility which rendered them incapable of making a Constitution, and an extravagant and useless expenditure of public funds to defray the expenses of the Convention. If the new Constitution is not an improvement upon the old one, if it is not a step in advance, the people should not ratify it — no matter what party made it. If it *is*, then the people should allow no party policy or private interest to cheat them of its incalculable advantages. . . . If, on the whole, its provisions are BETTER, it is clear that it should be adopted, now that it is made.

From the *Dubuque Daily Times* (Republican), July 13, 1857:

The statement was made in a previous article, that the Democratic party was arrayed, by the political tricksters of the party, against the New Constitution, not because there was anything in it conflicting with the principles of democracy, but because the majority of the delegates which adopted the amended Constitution, were not Democrats. It was further stated that even had the New Constitution been framed in a conclave consisting of simon-pure Democrats, yet it would be opposed by the party, because it issued from a body in which the Republicans had a majority of six delegates. The convention consisted of thirty-six members; fifteen Democrats and twenty-one Republicans. They were the select men of the State, and the people had so much confidence in their wisdom and integrity, that, had the instrument been submitted to them, immediately after its passage by the convention, and before party prejudice would be arrayed against it, they could have adopted it almost unanimously, on the strength of their confidence in the delegates. Nor would the democratic party have uttered a murmur against it; on the other hand, would claim that nearly every change in the Constitution was democratic in its principles, that it was brought about by the Democrats of the convention, and that the instrument, as a whole, was a Democratic triumph. Such, to some extent, are actually the facts. And

yet in the face of these facts, we see the leaders of the party, everywhere trying to whip into the traces, the members of that party, and array them against their own principles. There is not, we repeat, a single feature in the proposed New Constitution, antagonistic to democratic principles; neither is there anything conflicting with Republicanism. It is just what it should be; a platform roomy enough for all to stand on, and unite in harmonious action; and we question if there can be found a single disinterested man in the State, who has any reputation for wisdom and integrity, that would pronounce it, in a single feature, one sided — party biased. It is singularly free from it. There is but one point, on which it can be said to even look one sided, and that is whether the word "white" shall be stricken out. — But this is made a side issue, and it is quite possible that there will be as many Democrats as Republicans that will go for striking it out. That is, there will be but few that will molest the word at all. We are now speaking of what we believe will be the fact, and not on what we think should be done. But why, it may be asked, are the Democracy so anxious to defeat the New Constitution? There may be many reasons. It is essential, to the permanence of the party, that offices be abundant, and knowing the people to be dissatisfied with the existing Constitution, the defeat of the New would result in another election, which would furnish some offices for hungry and disaffected members of the party. Besides this, the Republicans being in the majority in the convention, and the instrument being so creditable, the party, unjustly we admit, get all the credit for it. But, probably the main and meanest reason why the tricksters of the Democracy seek to defeat the constitution, is to revenge themselves on the whole people for the defeat of the party in the last Gubernatorial and Presidential elections. They are anxious to keep the party alive by finding something for it to do, however dirty that work may be; and if by the oversight or indifference of the Republican party, they can succeed in carrying an election, as they did last Spring, when nearly thirteen thousand Republicans did not go near the polls, they hope that the temporary triumph will give prestige to the party, and enable it to recover its ascendancy in the State. Under any circumstances, this is a base course to pursue; but how utterly contemptible, for such a purpose, to array the party against its own principles, and in a matter in which the greatest good of the Commonwealth is so deeply concerned. And how absurd to reason with such demagogues.

From the *Washington Press* (Republican), July 1, 1857:

NEW CONSTITUTION

The August Election is fast approaching, and one of the most important issues to be decided at that time, is the adoption or rejection of the new Constitution. We have already published that instrument, and trust our readers gave it a careful perusal. From this time till the election we shall devote a liberal share of space to the discussion of its merits. . . .

There has been a studied effort on the part of certain Journals recently to make the Constitutional question a party issue, and to array the Democratic party in open hostility to the New Constitution, notwithstanding some of the ablest members of that party were in the Convention that framed it, and are still its warm advocates.

It is asserted that the most active opposition journals are under the control of parties who are interested in the circulation of the Nebraska currency with which our State is at present flooded, and whose interests would be jeopardized by the establishment of a sound and reliable banking system within our own borders. If this be true, it will cast an imputation upon the honesty of their opposition to the new Constitution, which will cause right-minded and honest men, even of their own party, to spurn their control. . . .

Letter signed "Iowa" in *ibid.*, July 8, 1857:

NEW CONSTITUTION — ITS OPPONENTS

A correspondent of the *Chicago Democratic Press*, writing from Keokuk, shows up the motives which actuate many of the opponents of the new Constitution in so clear a light that we cannot refrain from quoting a few passages for the benefit of our readers. Speaking of the merits of the new Constitution, he says:

I think it will be very acceptable to the moderate and conservative men of both parties. The opposition to it will come from the ultra of all sides, and probably for very opposite causes.

There is a great deal of "noise and confusion" attempted to be made about "niggers," but this is all bosh. The new Constitution is almost verbally identical with the present one on the "nigger" question. It is true there is a separate clause submitting the question of "Negro Suffrage" to a vote of the people, but that has nothing more to do with the main body of the new Constitution than the *Dred Scott* decision. The question of "Negro Suffrage" is presented as a separate and distinct question, just as

it was presented by the Democratic Convention in Michigan in November, 1850. A great effort is being made, however, by a few dishonest persons to identify this separate question with the new Constitution itself, but the people are too intelligent to be caught by such shallow trickery.

The article on corporations in the new Constitution is assailed. You will observe that this article does *not* establish any banking system whatever, but merely gives the people an opportunity of voting for or against any banking system presented by the Legislature. To this the "hard money" Nebraska Bank men object most strenuously! The people are NOT to be trusted on the subject! They will, if permitted, fix a dangerous system of banking on themselves — dangerous to their prosperity and liberty, and, worse than all, dangerous to — the glorious monopoly of the financial affairs of the State, enjoyed at present by the owners of Nebraska wild cat banks!

These "hard money" Nebraska Bank gentry, through their presses, tell the people that it is not Democratic to issue and circulate paper as money — they are anti-bank — go for gold and silver, &c. They forget, in their zeal, that they are issuing, or at least circulating, paper as money, some of which is not even authorized by any law, but is against law — they forget, in their great anxiety for the welfare of the Democratic party, that the Democratic Conventions of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois all authorized banking, and they forget, too, that during the last winter the Democratic Legislature of Wisconsin increased the banking capital of that State many millions!

The Convention evidently intended, if the people hereafter desire a banking system, that it should be one which should protect the bill-holders. This is right, for they are persons who need and deserve protection. I think the provisions on this subject are salutary, and believe they will meet the approbation of all who desire a safe currency.

Many of the prominent Democrats of the State are against Nebraska banking, and, I understand the article on Corporations was voted for nearly unanimously in the Convention, only three or four old fossils, belonging to the "age of the drift," going against it.

Copies of the new Constitution are being distributed, and I find, as people examine it, they are generally pleased with its provisions. It is not expected that it will be acceptable in every particular. If as a whole it is satisfactory, it is all one can ask.

Notwithstanding the assumption of leadership of a few of the "hard money" (?) presses, and their attempts to make a party question of the vote on the new Constitution, they will fail in their efforts, as many of the oldest and strongest Democrats of the State are openly in favor of its adoption.

I think there is no doubt of its success by at least twenty thousand majority.

Letter signed "Burroughs" in *ibid.*, July 29, 1857:

THE NEW CONSTITUTION — SHALL IT BE ADOPTED?

The general feeling of our State has been, for years, in favor of a fundamental law adopted and fitted to our expanding condition. Hence, the Convention was called in spite of the barriers of the old Constitution, by an overwhelming majority. This Convention met last February at our Capitol. No better body of men ever assembled at our Capitol than went into this Convention. The oldest settlers of our territory, the founders of the State, men whose voices and counsels have been heard in halls of legislation and swayed the decision of the Judicial department of our State much of the time she has had an existence, were there; others too, formerly private citizens, whose business capacity and wisdom have secured the unbounded confidence of their fellow citizens, came up together bringing the industry, honesty and skill of successful private enterprise into public action. Hall, Johnstone, Gillaspay, Day, Harris, and Solomon, with Springer, Bunker, Parvin, the Clarks, Wilson, Skiff, Todhunter, Ells, and others, give us an array of names of all parties and all honest occupations of which the State may well be proud. After mature deliberation, these men, with *singular unanimity*, present a plan upon which you are called to pass your verdict. Consider first the objections of those who oppose it; and 1st, It contains "special legislation," says one sapient editor, who gathers his cue from the very disinterested *Henn* that is now nursing a very prolific brood of wild cats, which our new Constitution would slay at one fell swoop. As an instance of "special legislation" this editor quotes Section 4 — "Bill of Rights" — as follows: "And any party to any judicial proceeding shall have the right to use as a witness, or take the testimony of, any other person, not disqualified on account of interest, who may be cognizant to any fact material to the case." "This was done," says Scholte of the *Pella Gazette*, "to admit negroes and Indians as witnesses against white men, a

provision which places the life, liberty, and property of the whites at the mercy of Indians and negroes." Had this astute editor learned his a-b-c of American institutions, he would know that *no honest man holds life, liberty, or property by virtue of mercy of any witness, white, red, or black.* Courts are established, our government supported "to maintain justice." We ask of *witnesses the truth, of juries justice, of God only, mercy;* and whoso seeks to make a suit in Court a game of *hard swearing*, not only ruins his own cause but also may find his own liberty hedged in by iron bars. To give or withhold testimony is *no man's prerogative.* It is the duty of Courts, and the privilege of suitors to follow out and detect the truth through the fogs of ignorance, the bewilderings of folly, and the mazes of knavery. To do this successfully, we question with the chemist's art, and microscopic skill, the material universe; we examine the instincts of the brute creation, and gather in the widest scope and range of human knowledge. This is common sense and ordinary justice, yet these are lost sight of by the slave drivers besotted today, and the insensate cry of "niggerism," "woolies," "amalgamation," is relied upon to drive people from the real issue involved in the contest. Sections 9 and 10 — Bill of Rights — guarantee that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or happiness, without due process of law, and gives to every man in cases involving life or liberty, an impartial trial by jury. This, to our Fourth-of-July-liberty-loving objector, is rank with nullification, because inconsistent with the Fugitive Slave Law. There is the rub is it? Now might it not be possible that the provisions of this slave law is [sic] *inconsistent with our rights?* Would you be willing to put yourself, or your child, among strangers, at the mercy of unprincipled slave hounds, to be hurled by *summary process* from all the inalienable rights you boast to be your own, without trial by jury, into endless hopeless bondage? May not justice and freedom have equal claims to *constitutionality*, and consistency, with oppression and slavery? I will not pause to consider now the objection to the alteration in our school system, only to say that while the old plan is expensive and inefficient as the few years past proves, the new is much more economical and safe. I believe it will be found thorough and practical in its working.

A fourth objection is the increased pay of officers. When our old Constitution was adopted wheat was worth 37 to 50 cts per bushel, and other things in proportion, and the farmer who made \$1 per day from his farm was satisfied. Now all expenses are doubled, the labor of the citizen is

twice as remunerative. Is an addition of 50 per cent extravagant to the wages of public officers? Many of these officers have more than twice the labor once attached to these offices at twice the cost. I know that no man fit to represent thrifty hawkeyes can leave his business and serve a term in the Legislature at \$3 per day and save anything.

As to the 5th objection to Banking privileges, I would say that the people have passed upon this in voting the Convention. A noisy clamor for popular sovereignty has but an indifferent comment in your objection to the submission of a banking system to a popular vote. One leading politician of the State owns one Nebraska pet and another located down in Hoosierdom. He advertizes to redeem these notes in current Bank paper in the morning. He takes \$1000 of Nebraska money and pays out the cat skins of Indiana. After dinner his Hoosier bank notes come back and out goes again the Nebraska kittens, leaving a credulous public at night just where it started in the morning; a *disinterested cackler that*, against allowing the people to choose their Bank issues.

The question of striking out "white" from the article on suffrage, though no part of the Constitution, unless made so by the people, creates a wonderful furor. Notwithstanding, Democratic Michigan and *ultra* Democratic Illinois submitted the same vote, one would think that the idea was born of modern black amalgamation Republicans. We might suppose that "par excellence" popular sovereigns might submit *even this* to the vote of the people, especially when it is so evident that the proposition will be lost; but so holy is the horror of these Don Quixots [*sic*] at all *tho'ts of amalgamation* (and they can't help thinking of it when the subject of "niggers" is mentioned,) unless between the brutal master and his chained serf, so that the infamous offspring can be sold by its father, that their own pet doctrine must go to the wall for the sake of amalgamation in the patriarchal and christian order.

The new Constitution was adopted with singular unanimity in Convention. It provides for needed amendments by submission to the people without the expense of another Convention, and it is changed and fitted to our growing and expanding State, and is in harmony with the spirit of freedom and progress. No work of man is perfect; yet, a work so far in advance of the old Constitution, will not surely be rejected by an intelligent constituency. . . .

From the *Montezuma Republican* (Republican), May 30, 1857:

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The *Ottumwa Courier* in speaking of the new Constitution and the war waged against it by the pro-slavery democracy, says: "The sham-Democracy are making prodigious efforts to defeat the new Constitution. There is a furious storm; the political elements are let loose, and there is a commotion in the political world as dire as was that among the elements of nature on Friday last. Some of us are naturally enough surprised at all this, and put ourselves to some trouble to discover the wherefore of the storm. We must acknowledge that we have groped considerably in the dark and have been in pursuit of knowledge under great difficulties, but so far as our researches have as yet extended, this fact is established, namely: that the Constitution itself is all right, acceptable generally to the "nationals." The provision in regards to Banks is one of the most important of the changes in the Constitution, and there is no extensive organized opposition to this provision. And so with most of the new features in the Constitution. They do not please all, but they are not sufficiently objectionable to call forth an open and systematic opposition to the Constitution itself. It is true some of the sham Democratic journals occasionally make furious attacks upon the Constitution, with a mighty flourish of trumpets, and sometimes apparently are about to annihilate the thing. Some of them, among the rest our neighbor, the *Fairfield Sentinel*, vow strenuously that they are against it in toto, that they are opposed to it, in their own classic phrase, from "head to tail," and when we set out to read one of their articles, we always expect to see the Constitution beheaded and curtailed, and its body otherwise horribly mutilated, but when the very worst is done, nothing is damaged but the tail, no other part is vulnerable; indeed, there has been no blow aimed except at the tail. Aye, it is a fact; the valiant Democracy can do nothing but batter and bag away at the caudal appendage of the new Constitution. Nevertheless, they have raised a storm; and a furious one, and it rages with increasing fury from day to day. — On the political heavens otherwise so clear, there is a cloud, a *black* cloud. — That famous, that awful, and most terrible "codicil!" It is the spirit of this "pitiless storm."

Let us see what there is about this "codicil" so awful, with what fiendish qualities it is endowed that it should be able to raise such a dreadful commotion. In the schedule to the new Constitution there is a provision that,

when the people vote on its adoption, they may also vote on a provision to strike out the word "white" from the article defining the qualifications of voters. This is the head and front of the offending, simply giving the people an opportunity to vote upon a certain proposition. If in the Constitution the word "white" had been stricken out, and the instrument had been presented to the people in that shape for their adoption or rejection, this furious opposition to the Constitution would be reasonable, and there would have been some pertinency in all the objurgations and dismal croakings in which the shamies are indulging. But as the question now stands, there is not the slightest excuse for the course which the Democracy are pursuing, and their strenuous efforts to make the question of the adoption of the Constitution a party question are unnecessary and uncalled for. The demagogical arts of the sham-Democracy are more conspicuous, if possible, in this business than usual. In the first place, they sought to make the people believe that the provision to strike out the word "white" was a part of the new Constitution, and when this falsehood became bare, and the people got to understanding it, they turned their attention to the work of forcing upon the people the belief that the "codicil" was essential to the Constitution, and that a consistent support of one involved the support of the other. Now, all this is transparent humbuggery. It is only a feint, by means of which it is hoped to damage the new Constitution. These sham-Democratic leaders are a desperate set, and do not scruple to resort to desperate measures in order to accomplish any party purpose. And it is by means inconsistent with their tactics and wire-working schemes, to make all sorts of insidious and covert attacks upon the measures of their opponents. Of this character is the warfare they wage upon the new Constitution. In secret opposed to Banks and other features of the Constitution, they are afraid to avow it openly through fear of its unpopularity. — Hence the subterfuge. They strike all manner of furious blows at the "codicil," all the while intending that they shall hit banks. If they are opposed to the new Constitution there is a way in which to manifest that opposition. The Constitution is separate and distinct from the "codicil," — they are to be voted upon separately, and a man can vote in favor of the Constitution and against the "codicil" if he chooses to do so. Then why cannot there be an honest opposition to the Constitution? If there are any objections to its provisions, let them be made known; let it be discussed fairly and thoroughly; let the opposition tear it to flinders if they can. But

on the other hand, if it is a good Constitution, if its provisions are calculated to advance the interests and promote the welfare of our noble young State, let it be adopted. There is no need that the "codicil" should destroy it. The democracy can oppose that to their heart's content, and yet favor the Constitution. They may vote against it in solid array, and in this they will doubtless be joined by the great body of the Republican party; the "codicil" may be voted down by an overwhelming majority, and the Constitution may be voted up by a like majority, and there will be nothing inconsistent in it. Let there be fairness in the business. It is not meet that the interests of Iowa, her welfare, and the development of her greatness should be hindered by a petty political squabble. We care not how many dire anathemas are thundered against the "codicil," it is at the best an unnecessary appendage, and we have no sympathy for it; but in the name of candor and truth, let the new Constitution be dealt with fairly, and as it deserves. We ask no more than that.

From *ibid.*, June 13, 1857 (quoting the *Iowa City Republican*):

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

We must insist that the few rabid journals in the ranks of the Slave Democracy that are trying to get up party feeling against a Constitution, nearly all the provisions of which were adopted by an almost unanimous vote in the Convention, advance some objections better grounded, than those they have thus far specified. To object to the Bill of Rights, because it reiterates the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, — that "all men are, by nature, free and equal," — is the very essence of stupidity; for it will inevitably secure votes among the freemen of Iowa, who are supposed to have some respect yet for that good old declaration. To object to giving the citizens of the State the privilege of voting whether franchise shall be extended to all citizens, or confined to whites only, is another blunder; because the voters of Iowa suppose themselves capable of deciding this question justly; and imagine that the right to decide it really belongs to them. The people are too jealous of their prerogatives, to regard favorably a position that implies a censure of the Constitutional Convention for confiding power in their hands. To object to the Constitution because it permits the people of Iowa to establish a Banking System of their own instead of being longer dependent upon the neighboring States and Territories for a Currency, over which they have no control, and which they cannot ex-

clude, is to run right in the face of that universal public conviction that led to the demand for a Constitutional Convention. To intimate that the Banking feature is too closely restricted, is to honor the fidelity of those who controlled the Convention; showing that they, at least, were not Bank-bought; and that they justly regard it as the first duty of a state that permits Banks of Issue, to provide for the safety of the bill-holder.

The last, however, and the most unfortunate objection yet advanced to the New Constitution, is that it provides for the education of all the children of the State. The justice and wisdom of such a proposition, would seem past controversy; self-evident. But, in their intense hatred of the colored man, a few of the more rabid journals of the pro slavery school, pretend to see in this annunciation of a general principle, a forerunner to a statutory provision compelling whites and blacks to attend the same schools and receive their education in common. Is this not trenching a little too far upon public credulity? Objectors to the new constitution may have a low estimate of public intelligence, but they ought not to reveal the fact so glaringly. There is not a voter of ordinary intelligence in the State, who will fail to see that the Constitution leaves it entirely to the Legislature to regulate the details of the School System, to say how and under what circumstances education shall be bestowed; confining itself to a mere declaration of the general principle, that it is not wise to deny the benefits of education to any intelligent being whose lot is cast within the limits of the State.