



Colored Rule in a Reconstructed (?) State, from "Harper's Weekly"

Date
published March 14, 1874

Primary Maker
Thomas Nast

Medium
Wood engraving on newsprint

Description
Captioned "(The members call each other thieves, liars, rascals, and cowards) / Columbia 'You are [imitating] the lowest Whites. If you disgrace your Race in this way you had better take back seats' typeset beneath title in black ink. "This print may be Nast's only cartoon that has something negative to say about the freed blacks. While three black state representatives aggressively argue, Columbia pleads, "Let us have peace." This cartoon is a reference to the few black politicians who won seats in state Senates, but as a product of their bickering did little to help the population they represented. Though Nast constantly defended the African-American community, in this cartoon he chose to depict the representatives in the same pejorative, mocking style that his racist contemporaries used to ridicule blacks. This was particularly effective because many white Americans did not think that newly freed slaves were capable of serving in the

government. By using the typical racist style, Nast encouraged the African-American members of the government to rise above insignificant conflicts and prove that they were full members of American society." (SOURCE: Susanna White, "Emancipation and Denigration: Thomas Nast Pictures Black America", 2008)

Dimensions
Composition: 10 1/2 x 8 7/8 in. (26.7 x 22.5 cm) Sheet: 15 1/2 x 10 7/8 in. (39.4 x 27.6 cm)