

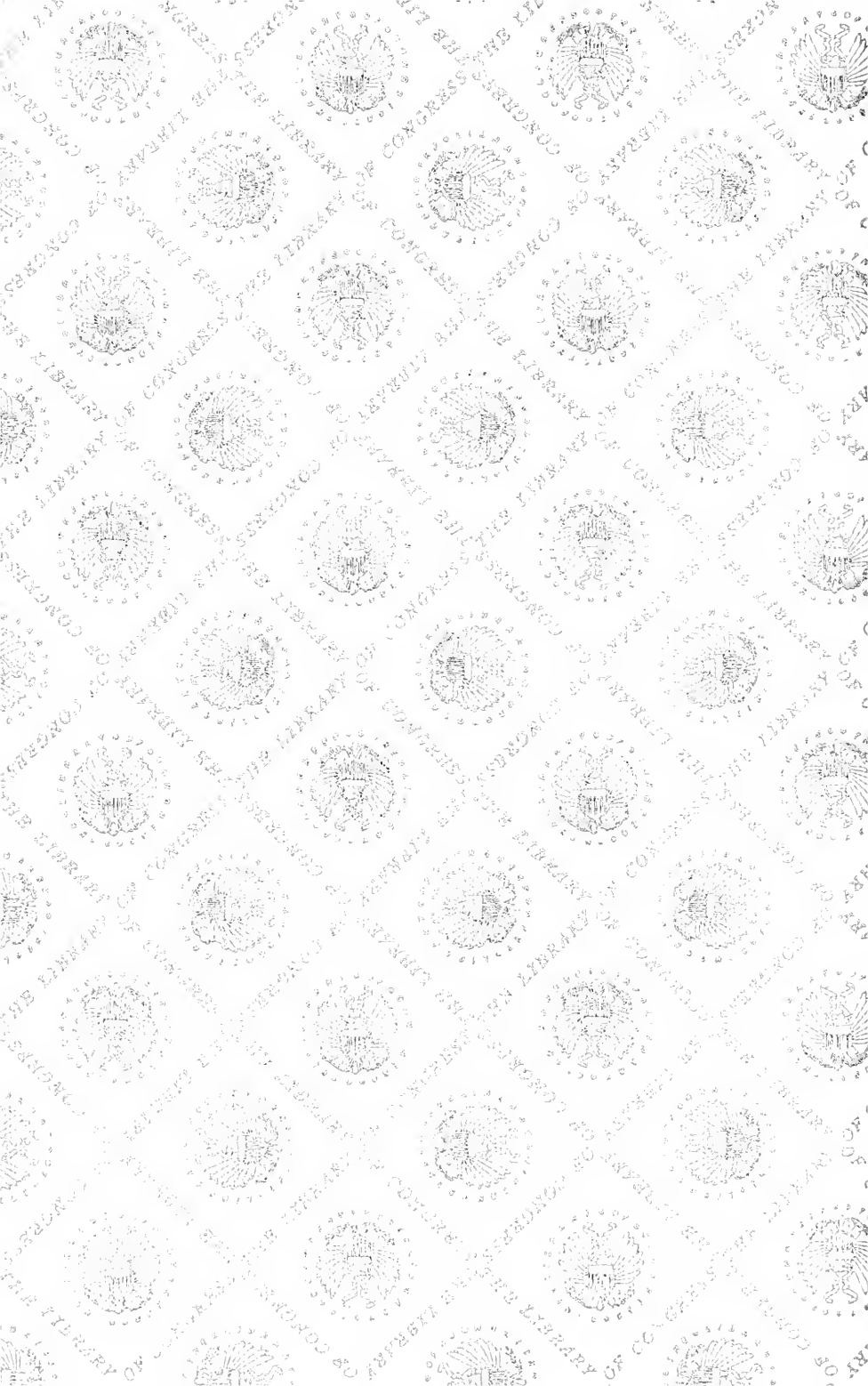
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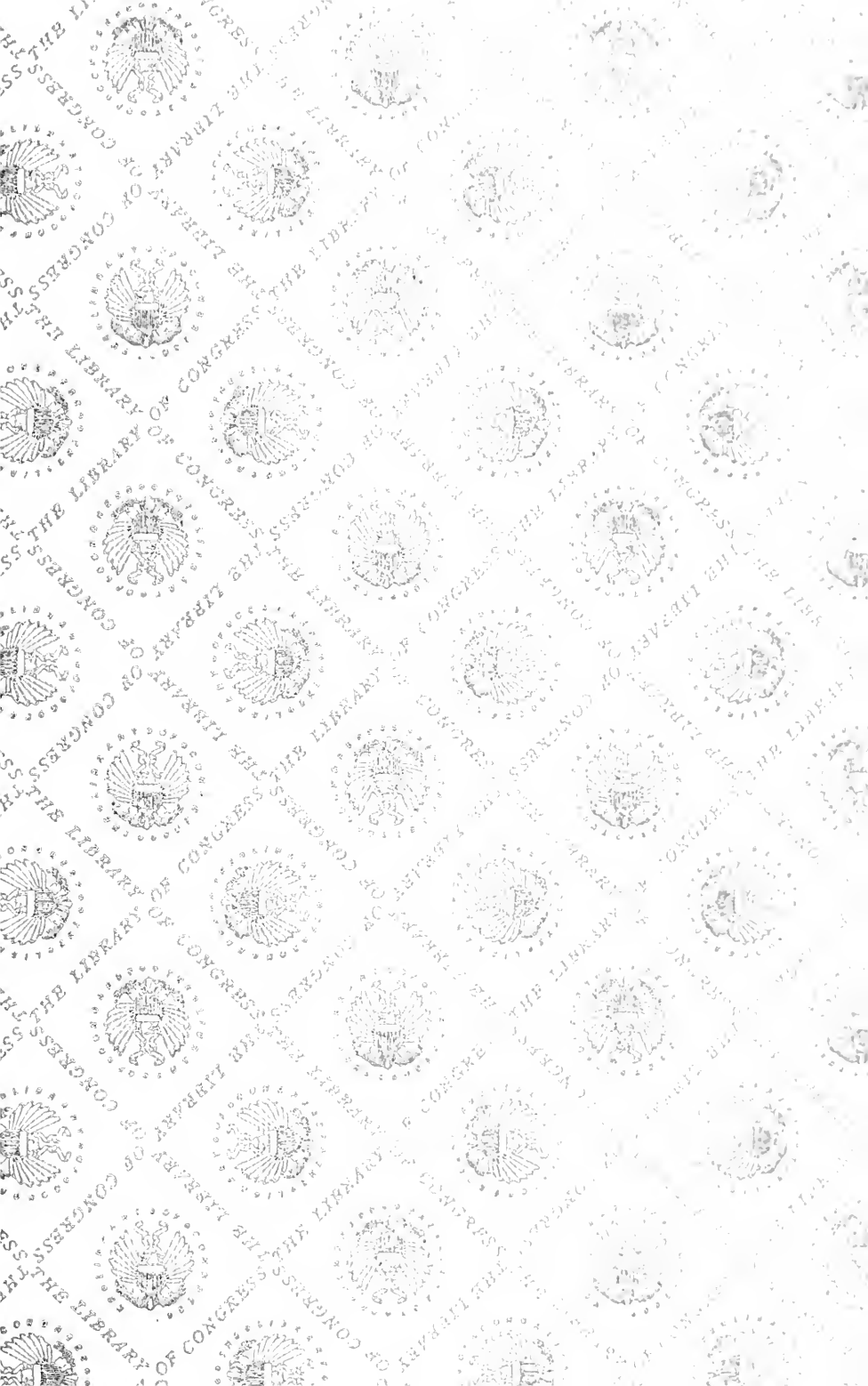
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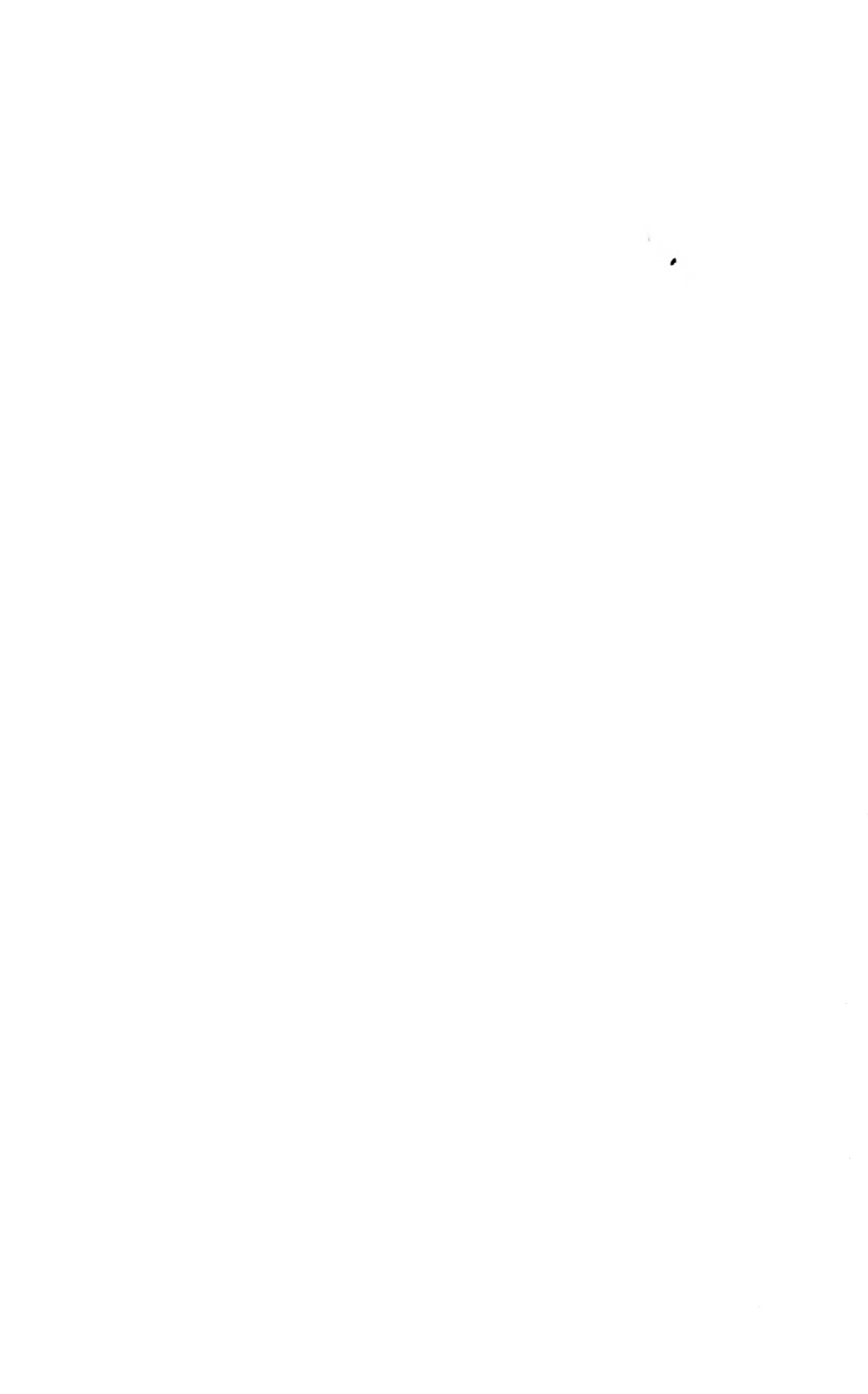
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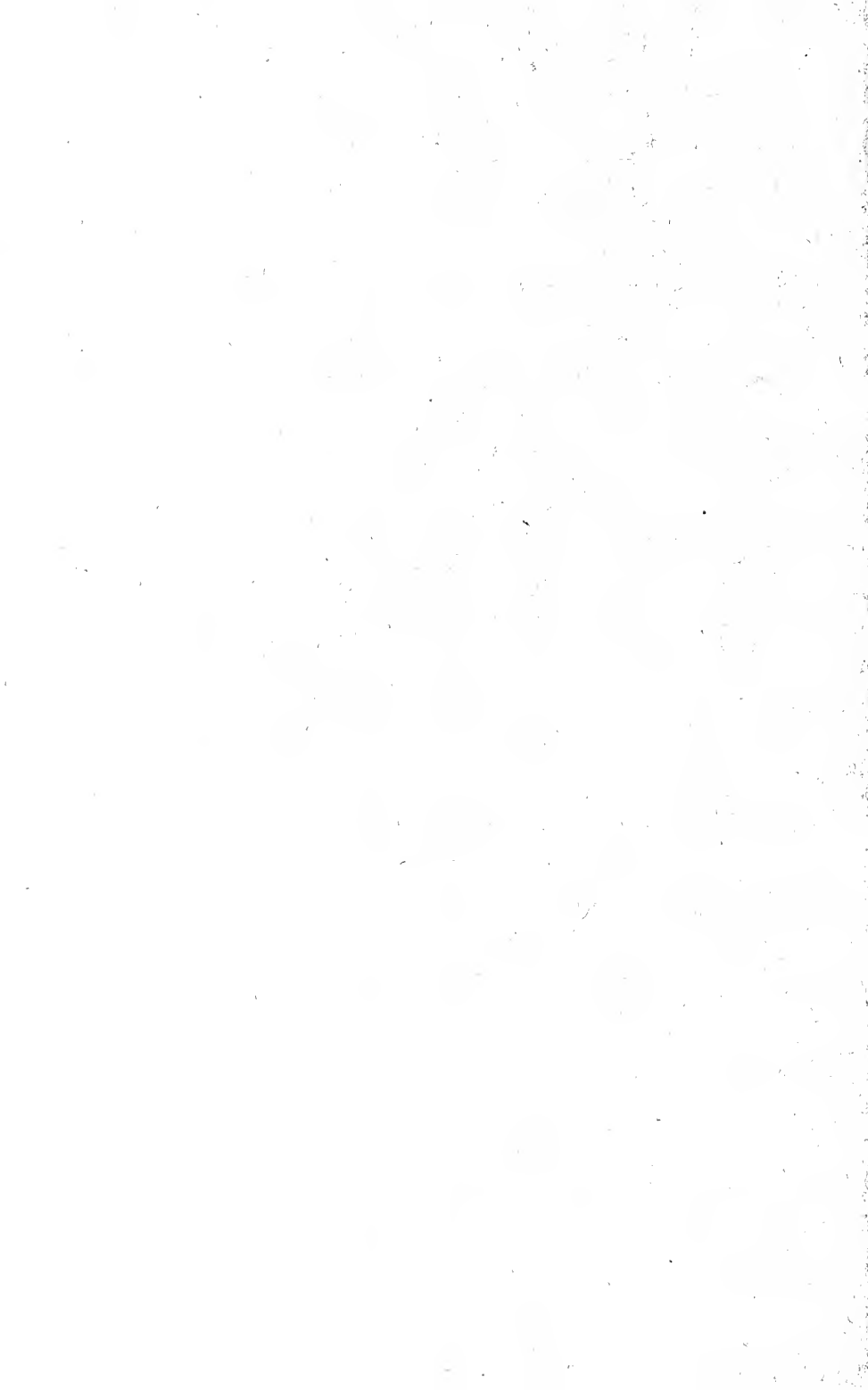
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AN APPEAL TO THE

**President and Congress of the  
United States**

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AN APPEAL TO THE

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RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED EXPOSITION  
COMMEMORATIVE OF THE

**Semi-Centennial of the Negroes' Freedom  
in America**

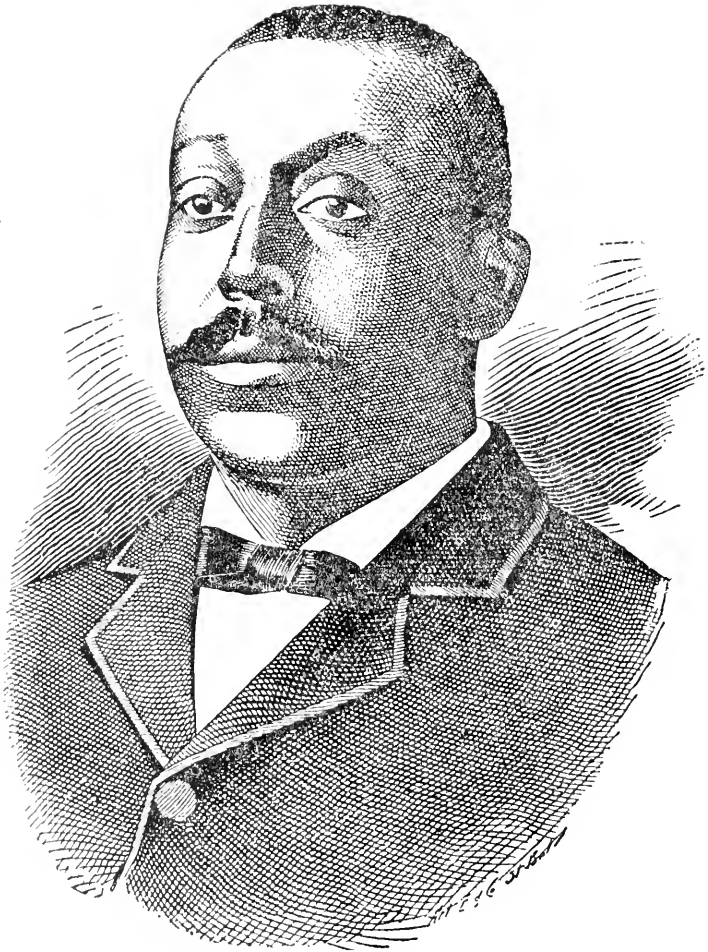
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*Passed by the Illinois Conference of the A. M. E. Church  
at Springfield, Illinois, September, 1910*

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By transfer  
The White House  
March 3rd, 1913



REV. S. B. JONES.

*Pastor St. Luke A. M. E. Church, East St. Louis, Illinois,  
and Leader of the Delegation of the Illinois Conference  
to the General Conference at Kansas City, May,  
1912, who offered the Resolution herein Mon-  
day, September the 10th, 1910.*





HON. W. A. RODENBERG.

*Congressman of the Twenty-second District of Illinois, who introduced the First Resolution touching the proposed Exposition, commemorative of the Semi-Centennial of the Negroes' Freedom in America.*

*Senate Bill No. 180 offered by HON. W. O. BRADLEY of Kentucky, which was reported favorably to the Senate last February, 1912, calling for an appropriation of \$250,000 for the holding of a Negro Exposition, finally passed the Senate Thursday, April 4, 1912.*

## HISTORY OF MOVEMENT.

President Taft in his December message to Congress, 1909, in accordance with a suggestion of Prof. Booker T. Washington and other prominent members of the Negro Race, recommended that a preliminary Commission be appointed to consider the advisability of holding an exposition in the year of 1913 commemorative of the Semi-Centennial of the Negroes' Freedom in America.

In accordance with the President's recommendation, Congressman W. A. Rodenberg of the Twenty-second District of Illinois, chairman of the Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, immediately introduced a joint resolution in Congress, providing for the appointment of such a Commission.

The Resolution was called up for consideration on Suspension Day and failed of passage because of opposition of the Southern members of Congress. This opposition being sufficient to overcome the two-thirds majority necessary to pass the Resolution.

But the failure to pass the Resolution did not necessarily mean the defeat of the Exposition.

The Negroes of Illinois were alive to the importance of such an event. Therefore, the Thirty-ninth Session of the Illinois Conference of the A. M. E. Church, which convened in Springfield September, 1910, in order to show its appreciation of the event and its gratitude to Congressman Rodenberg, unanimously passed the following Resolution:

## RESOLUTION.

REV. S. B. JONES, pastor St. Luke A. M. E. Church, East St. Louis, Illinois, and leader of the delegation of the Illinois Conference to the General Conference at Kansas City, May, 1912, offered the following resolution, Monday, September the 19th, 1910:

In the year 1619 a ship supposed to be Dutch, touched at James Town, Virginia, and landed nineteen Negro slaves. The first that ever set foot on the soil of North America.

The coming of these nineteen negroes was the beginning of an evil, that has left its impress in many forms, upon the growth and progress of this nation.

For Two Hundred and Fifty years the Negro was subjected to a system of slavery more brutal, in many respects, than any similar condition in the history of the world. The lash, the shackles, the branding irons, the auction block, and blood-hounds were the controlling forces for its perpetration. These forces were backed by unjust laws. Chained, as it were, in this great national prison; is it not a wonder that the race was not reduced to cannibals?

But instead, after two and a half centuries of involuntary servitude, the Emancipation Proclamation found him possessed of mental and moral strength and creative ability, that is the marvel of the world. American slavery with all its brutality, did not destroy the endowments of the souls shrouded in black skin.

The possibilities and capabilities of the race were there; planted by the hand of God; waiting for the opportunity to come, when the race would be born into the unrestrained aid of freedom, and by proper development triumph over every foe and establish itself among the progressive races of earth. This the Negro is doing step by step and day by day.

His achievements since Immortal Lincoln swung wide the door of hope, is an illustration of that Biblical truth, "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty."

When the Czar of Russia freed his serfs he gave to each, ten acres of land. But the American Negro immersed into freedom homeless and penniless.

Today the greatest miracle since Christ rose from the dead, is the splendid achievements of the race, in its steady march through discrimination and proscription and injustice, that have ever been, and are yet prominent in these United States.

In 1901 Rev. J. T. Jennifer, D. D., published a pamphlet "The Light of Africa," from which I quote a few statistics of the progress of the race. Dr. Jennifer says his progress is in evidence in \$2,250,000,000 as the result of Negro thrift and industry. In the ten years previous to the publishing of his pamphlet he says Negroes produced 50,000,000,000 pounds of cotton on 40,000 square miles. The annual product of Negro industry in corn, wheat, oats, and cotton amounts to \$431,320,000. The Negro occupies 1,500,000 farms and owns 270,000 of them and pays into the public treasury State and National taxes on \$400,000,000. 5,000,000 attend church or are under some religious influence. The race owns \$40,000,000 in churches and contribute annually \$13,000,000 for religious purposes.

In 1909 the Negro Business League held in New York City, Aug. 17, 18, 19, represented <sup>over</sup> One Hundred different business enterprises, besides ~~Doctors~~<sup>Doctors</sup>, Lawyers, Pharmacists, Architects, and Bank Presidents, of which institutions the race has nineteen.

The only absentees from this notable gathering were Railway and Trust Presidents.

The high standard of the race as we see it today in Religion, Education, the Professions, the Sciences, in Art, the Trades, in Agriculture and in Business, are undeniable proofs, that it has not betrayed the confidence of great and good Abraham Lincoln, or been recreant to the trust imposed by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments nor ignorant of the meaning of Citizenship.

If as many people believe the race question is Industrial and Educational, the proposed Exposition in 1913 Commemorative of the Semi-Centennial of the Negroes

Freedom in America, will undoubtedly go far toward settling it.

Because through it his Manhood, Industry, Thrift, Intelligence, Business Ability and Artistic Skill will find convincing and effective expression. The Exposition will have no political significance whatever, but backed by the Federal Government the intent and purpose is, to destroy as far as possible bitter race feeling, and thus make the nation stronger and grander by establishing the fact within the borders of these United States, "The Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man." Therefore,

### I.

Resolved; That we accept the recommendations of President Taft in his December Message, 1909, "That a preliminary commission be appointed, to consider the advisability of holding such an Exposition," as an evidence of his profound interest in the welfare of the race.

### II.

Resolved; That we recognize in Prof. Booker T. Washington in whose mind the idea was conceived, and upon whose suggestion with other representatives of the race the President acted, a true watchman on the wall of race advancement, ever alert and ready to direct the race how to outflank the enemy.

### III.

Resolved; That the race ever hold in grateful remembrance Congressman W. A. Rodenberg, Chairman of Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, whose efforts, backed with the eloquence of Wendel Phillips, the courage of Lovejoy, the firmness and determination of Lincoln on this and all <sup>the latter</sup> other occasions, where the interest of the race was concerned, have proven him to be a tried and true friend.

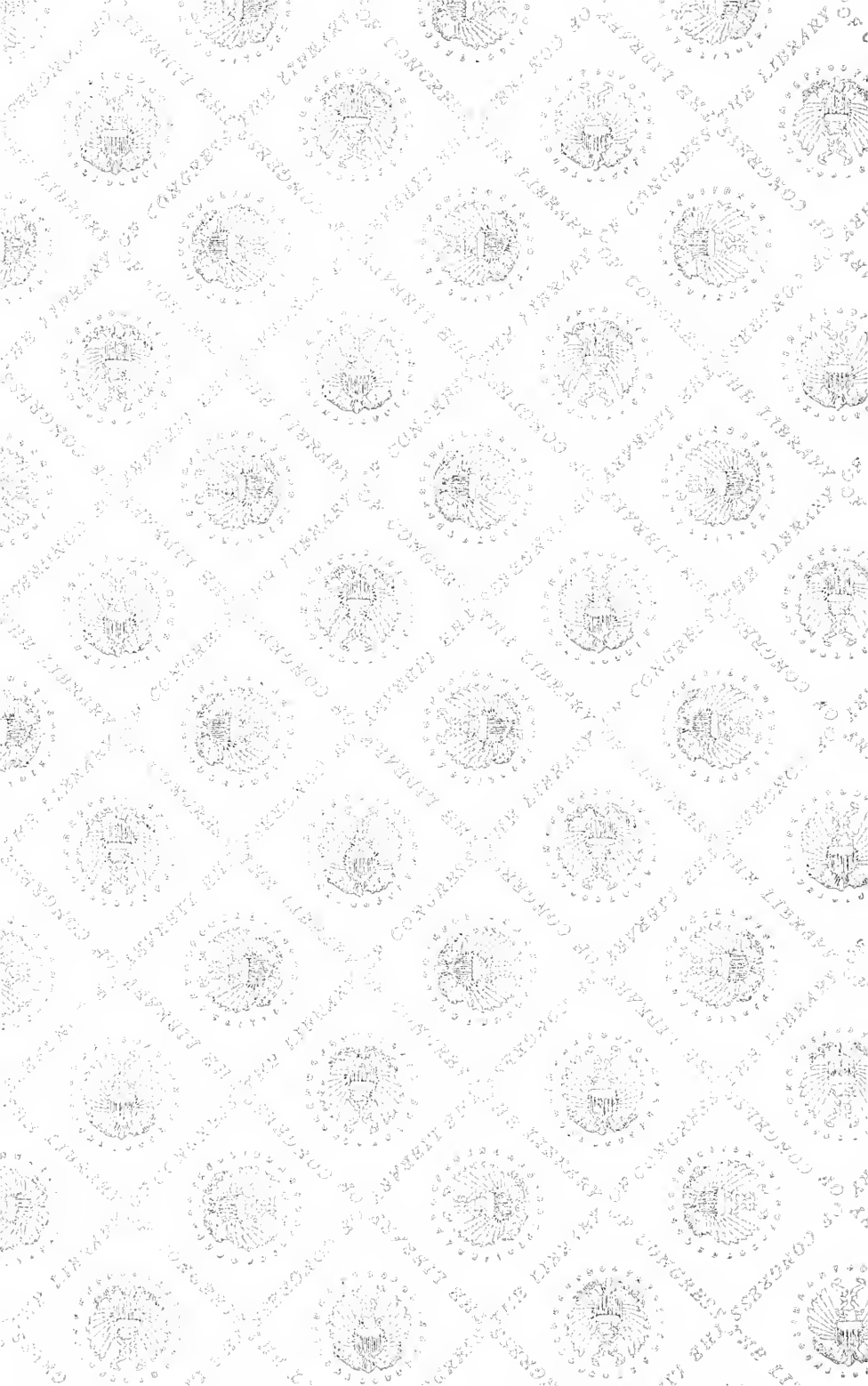
#### IV.

Resolved: That the Illinois Conference through the organs of the A. M. E. Church, appeal to members of the race, to address letters to the Congressional Representatives of their respective districts, requesting them to give their unfaltering support to the passage of this bill.

#### V.

Resolved: That this Conference go on record strongly in favor of the holding of this Exposition, which will give to the race an opportunity to show to the world, what it has accomplished in Religion, Education, the Sciences, the Arts, the Professions, the Trades, in Business, in fact in all the peaceful industries, in less than a half century.







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BOOKBINDING  
Grantville Pa  
Jan Feb 1988  
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