

DeLarge, Robert C. (1842–1874)

South Carolina. Born free. Mulatto. Literate. Barber.



Born in Aiken, South Carolina, the son of a slaveholding free black tailor and a mother of Haitian ancestry, DeLarge attended primary school in North Carolina and high school in Charleston. He was a member of the Brown Fellowship Society, a fraternal and charitable association that admitted only mulatto members. During the Civil War, he was employed by the Confederate navy. In 1865, DeLarge obtained employment with the Freedmen's Bureau. Along with more than one hundred other Charleston free blacks, he signed a petition to the state constitutional convention of 1865 asking impartial suffrage but acknowledging that the "ignorant" of both races could be barred from voting. He attended the state black convention in that year and chaired the platform committee at the Republican state convention of 1867. He attended the South Carolina labor convention of 1869. According to the census of 1870, DeLarge owned \$6,650 in real estate.

DeLarge held numerous offices during Reconstruction. He was a delegate to the constitutional convention of 1868; served in the state House of Representatives, 1868–70, where he chaired the ways and means committee; and served as head of the state land commission. He was also a member of the Sinking Fund Commission, a member of the board of regents of the state lunatic asylum, and a magistrate in Charleston. He also worked for the Freedmen's Bureau. In 1870, DeLarge was nominated for the U.S. House of Representatives as part of an effort by black leaders to obtain more offices. If elected, he declared, "I shall demand for my race an equal share everywhere." DeLarge was elected to Congress, serv-

ing 1871–73, but spent most of his term fending off charges of electoral fraud. He was unseated in 1873. DeLarge's tenure on the land commission was marked by fraud and mismanagement, in which he was implicated. He died of consumption in Charleston.

See also Figure 4

Logan and Winston, *Dictionary*, 172–73. Holt, *Black Over White*, 17, 74, 108, app. Herbert Aptheker, "South Carolina Negro Conventions, 1865," *Journal of Negro History*, 31 (1946), 93. *Charleston Daily Republican*, 30 July 1870. Koger, *Slave-owners*, 198. Bleser, *Promised Land*, 52, 75. Reynolds, *South Carolina*, 123. Foner and Lewis, *Black Worker*, II, 25.